

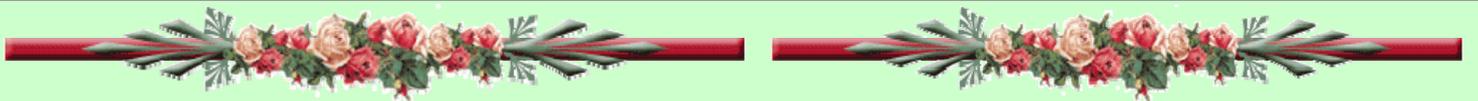
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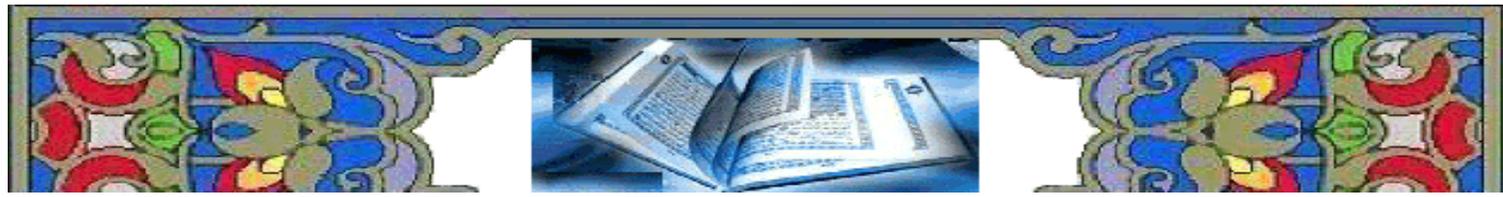
Tafheem-ul

Quran

Syed Abul Aala

Maududi





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Tafheemul Quran

An Introduction to the understanding of the Quran

Tafheemul Quran is the most prominent exegesis, *tafseer* and explanation of the Quran by Syed Abul Aala Maududi. *Tafheemul Quran* was originally written in Urdu. The English rendering of the Urdu meanings of the Arabic Quran was first done by Muhammad Akbar Muradpuri and Abdul Aziz Kamal. The explanatory portion which is the *Tafseer* of the Quran was translated from Urdu into English by Muhammad Akbar Muradpuri. The Introduction of the *Tafseer* written by Syed Abul Aala Maududi in Urdu was translated in English by Zafar Ishaq Ansari. The complete *Tafheemul Quran* is a combination of both, the translation of the Quran and the *Tafseer*.

The following work is the enhancement in several areas.

* The image-based *Tafheemul Quran* has been transformed into text-based high resolution graphic English and Arabic font document. The resulting optimization also allows electronic portability across Computers, Smart Phones and Electronic Book Readers.

* The Arabic text of the entire Quran has been replaced by

high resolution font based *Uthmani* Script. Arabic text has also been verified for accuracy.

* In the last decade of 20th century, the hard copy of *Tafheemul Quran* was transformed into editable soft copy text using OCR (Optical Character Recognition Hardware/Software). However, in those days the OCR being primitive, introduced a fairly large number of inaccuracies in the spellings, grammar and punctuation. In many places the words were changed to the extent that the entire sentences did not make any sense. Later on, when Internet became widely available, many Islamic Web sites copied this English part of the *Tafheemul Quran*, added poor quality scanned Arabic and made it available to the readers on line. No effort was made towards any correction. As a result, *Tafheemul Quran* available on almost all the web sites is full of errors.

A major effort has been done here. The entire *Tafheemul Quran* has been reviewed. All spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors have been corrected. Where necessary, vocabulary and words has been replaced to contemporary English. We hope this brings the entire *Tafheemul Quran* close to an error free document.

* Syed Maududi's translation of the Quran from Arabic into Urdu was based on his unique approach which was not based: 'ayat by ayat'. He took the freedom of translating several ayats together based on a subject, topic or event. This approach, when later, translated from Urdu to English created opportunity for additional work in two areas. First, translating Quranic Arabic into Urdu and then Urdu into

English caused loss of the exact Arabic meanings of several words in each Surah as they should have been understood in contemporary English. Second, subdividing the translation of multiple ayats into individual ayats caused a major misalignment of the meanings. An effort has been made to rectify this.

In order to rearrange and bring the closest Quranic Arabic meaning into contemporary English, the English translation of the Arabic Quran has been revised with the help of the following authentic translations. Extreme care has been exercised to ensure that the meanings that Syed Maududi had intended in his original work do not change.

* *The Meaning of the Glorious Quran, An explanatory Translation (Revised)* by Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

* *The Glorious Quran, Translation and Commentary* by Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

* *The Noble Quran in the English Language.* By Muhammad Taqi al-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan.

* *The Quran: The First American Version.* By Thomas B. Irving (Taalim Ali).

* *The Quran with corresponding English Meaning.* Sahih International.

* The PDF, in 114 Surahs files as well as eBook and iBook can be downloaded on Personal Computers, Smart Phones, and Electronic Book Readers and can be permanently stored without the need for reading on line via Internet.

* There are no restrictions. This work is available free of cost. CDs can be made and distributed. Web sites can copy

and redistribute without seeking any permission.

* My sources of studies, references, and material collection for this work included Wikipedia, Department of Religious Studies, University of Southern California, Islamicnet and hard copy print (six volumes) of *Tafheemul Quran* translated in English by Muhammad Akbar Muradpuri.

* In the course of several years of effort of transforming and enhancing the *Tafheemul Quran* in the present format, I constantly received help, guidance and encouragement from several of my dear friends and acquaintances. I greatly appreciate Umar Ahmed for providing valuable assistance in reviewing my work, Saeed Malik (Author of a very precious book, *A perspective on the Signs of Al-Quran*) for his advice on numerous topics, and Ilyas Choudhry for helping further elaborate the biological sciences related discussion by the author of *Tafheemul Quran* in the matters of human embryology.

* It will be unfair if I do not express my appreciation to my wife Brenda, daughter Sabeena and son Javed. After my full time job in the fast lanes of Silicon Valley, my evenings and weekends, while working on *Tafheemul Quran* and other Quranic related projects, have been mostly absent from their lives. A human being cannot pay back the sacrifices endured by others for a noble cause such as this. May Allah reward them of their patience and understanding.

May Allah *Subhanuhu wa ta'ala* accept this effort.

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July 2011

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Tafheemul Quran

An Introduction

By

Syed Abul Aala Maududi

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١﴾

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ

يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا

أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٣﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ

عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٤﴾

This is the book which contains no doubt, (it is) guidance for the heedful who believe in the Unseen, keep up prayer, and spend from what We have provided them with; Who believe in what has been sent down to you as well as what was sent down before you; while they are certain about the Hereafter, such people hold guidance from their Lord, such will be successful. (The Quran 2:2-5).

This introduction has been written with two objectives: First to acquaint the reader with certain matters which he

should grasp at the very outset so as to achieve a more than superficial understanding of the Holy Book. Second, to clarify those disturbing questions that commonly arise in the mind of the reader during the study of the Quran.

Unique Book

We are accustomed to reading books that present information, ideas and arguments systematically and coherently. So when we embark on the study of the Quran, we expect that this book too will revolve around a definite subject, that the subject matter of the book will be clearly defined at the beginning and will then be neatly divided into sections and chapters, after which discussion will proceed in a logical sequence. We likewise expect a separate and systematic arrangement of instruction and guidance for each of the various aspects of human life. However, as soon as we open the Quran, we encounter a hitherto completely unfamiliar genre of literature. We notice that it embodies precepts of belief and conduct, moral directives, legal prescriptions, exhortations and admonition, censure and condemnation of evildoers, warning to the deniers of the truth, good tidings and words of consolation and good cheer to those who have suffered for the sake of God, arguments and corroborative evidence in support of its basic message, allusions to anecdotes from the past and the signs of God visible in the universe. Moreover, these myriad subjects alternate without any apparent system; quite unlike the books to which we are accustomed. The Quran deals with the same subject over and over again, each time couched in a different phraseology. The reader also encounters abrupt

transitions between one subject matter and another. Audience and speaker constantly change as the message is directed now to one and then to another group of people. There is no trace of the familiar divisions into chapters and sections. Likewise, the treatment of different subjects is unique. If an historical subject is raised, the narrative does not follow the pattern familiar in historical accounts. In the discussion of philosophical or metaphysical questions, we miss the familiar expressions and terminology of formal logic and philosophy. Cultural and political matters, or questions pertaining to man's social and economic life, are discussed in a way very different from that usual in work of social sciences. Juristic principles and legal injunctions are elucidated, but quite differently from the manner of conventional works. When we come across an ethical instruction, we find its form entirely differs from anything to be found elsewhere in the literature of ethics. The reader may find all this so foreign to his notion of what a book should be that he may become so confused as to feel that the Quran is a piece of disorganized, incoherent and unsystematic writing, comprising nothing but a disjointed conglomeration of comments of varying lengths put together arbitrarily. Hostile critics use this as a basis for their criticism, while those more favorably inclined resort to far-fetched explanations, or else conclude that the Quran consists of unrelated pieces, thus making it amenable to all kinds of interpretations, even interpretations quite opposed to the intent of God Who revealed the Book.

What kind of book is the Quran? In what manner was it

revealed? What underlies its arrangement? What is its subject? What is its true purpose? What is the central theme to which its multifarious topics are intrinsically related? What kind of reasoning and style does it adopt in elucidating its central theme? If we could obtain clear, lucid answers to these and other related questions, we might avoid some dangerous pitfalls, thus making it easier to reflect upon and to grasp the meaning and purpose of the Quranic verses. If we begin studying the Quran in the expectation of reading a book on religion, we shall find it hard, since our notions of religion and of a book are naturally circumscribed by our range of experience. We need, therefore, to be told in advance that this Book is unique in the manner of its composition, in its theme and its contents and arrangement. We should be forewarned that the concept of a book that we have formed from our previous readings is likely to be a hindering, rather than a help, towards a deep understanding of the Quran. We should realize that as a first step towards understanding it we must divest our minds of all preconceived notions.

Divine Guidance

The student of the Quran should grasp, from the outset, the fundamental claims that the Quran makes for itself. Whether one ultimately decides to believe in the Quran or not, one must recognize the fundamental statements made by the Quran and by the man to whom it was revealed, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to be the starting point of one's study.

These claims are: The Lord of creation, the Creator and

Sovereign of the entire universe, created man on earth (which is merely a part of His boundless realm). He also endowed man with understanding, with the ability to distinguish between the good and evil, with the freedom of choice and volition, and with the power to exercise his latent potentialities. In short, God bestowed upon man a kind of autonomy and appointed him His vicegerent on earth. Although man enjoys this status, God made it abundantly plain to him that He alone is man's Lord and Sovereign, even as He is the Lord and Sovereign of the whole universe. Man was told that he was not entitled to consider himself independent and that only God entitled to claim absolute obedience, service and worship. It was also made clear to man that life in this world, for which he has been placed and invested with a certain honor and authority, was in fact a temporary term, and was meant to test him; that after the end of this earthly life man must return to God, Who will judge him on the basis of his performance, declaring who has succeeded and who has failed. The right way for man is to regard God as his only Sovereign and the only object of his worship and adoration, to follow the guidance revealed by God, to act in this world with the consciousness that earthly life is merely a period of trial, and to keep his eyes fixed on the ultimate objective, a success in God's final judgment. Every other way is wrong. It was also explained to man that if he chose to adopt the right way of life and in this choice he was free, he would enjoy peace and contentment in this world and be assigned, on his return to God, the Abode of eternal bliss and happiness known as

Paradise. Should man follow any other way, although he was free to do so, he would experience the evil effects of corruption and disorder in the life of this world and be consigned to eternal grief and torment when he crossed the borders of the present world and arrived in the Hereafter. Having explained all this, the Lord of the Universe placed man on earth and communicated to Adam and Eve, the first human beings to live on earth, the guidance which they and their offspring were required to follow. These first human beings were not born in a state of ignorance and darkness. On the contrary, they began their life in the broad daylight of divine Guidance. They had intimate knowledge of reality and the Law which they were to follow was communicated to them. Their way of life consisted of obedience to God (i.e. total submission) and they taught their children to live in obedience to Him (i.e. to live as those who submit to God).

In the course of time, however, men gradually deviated from this true way of life and began to follow various erroneous ways. They allowed true guidance to be lost through heedlessness and negligence and sometimes, even deliberately, distorted it out of evil perversity. They associated God with a number of beings, human and non-human, real as well as imaginary, and adored them as deities. They adulterated the God-given knowledge of reality (*al-ilm* in the Quranic terminology) with all kinds of fanciful ideas, superstitions and philosophical concepts, thereby giving birth to innumerable religions. They disregarded or distorted the sound and equitable principles of individual morality and of collective conduct (*Shariah* in

Quranic terminology) and made their own laws in accordance with their base desires and prejudices. As a result, the world became filled with wrong and injustice. It was inconsistent with the limited autonomy conferred upon man by God that He should exercise His overwhelming power and compel man to righteousness. It was also inconsistent with the fact that God had granted a term to the human species in which to show their worth, that He should afflict men with catastrophic destruction as soon as they showed signs of rebellion.

Moreover, God had undertaken from the beginning of creation that true guidance would be made available to man throughout the term granted to him and that this guidance would be available in a manner consistent with man's autonomy. To fulfill this self assumed responsibility, God chose to appoint those human beings whose faith in Him was outstanding and who followed the way pleasing to Him. God chose these people to be His envoys. He had His messages communicated to them, honored them with an intimate knowledge of reality, provided them with the true laws of life and entrusted them with the task of recalling man to the original path from which he had strayed (These men were the Prophets and Messengers of God). These Prophets were sent to different people in different lands and over a period of time covering thousands and thousands of years. They all had the same religion; the one originally revealed to man as the right way for him. All of them followed the same guidance; those principles of morality and collective life prescribed for man at the very outset of

his existence. All these Prophets had the same mission; to call man to this true religion and subsequently to organize all those who accepted this message into a community (*ummah*) which would be bound by the Law of God, which would strive to establish its observance and would seek to prevent its violation.

All the Prophets discharged their mission creditably in their own time. However, there were always many who refused to accept their guidance. On the other hand, those who did accept it became a submitting community (That is, a group of people committed to the true guidance of God as revealed to His Prophets). The community with total submission to the commandment of one God is referred to as a Muslim community. Here the word Muslim is not used in the sense of the followers of the last Messenger of God, Muhammad (peace be upon him), but in the wider sense, meaning all those who, at various periods, committed themselves to live in submission to God. However, over a period of time, this community of those who had submitted to the will and commands of God gradually degenerated causing the Divine Guidance to be lost, distorted or adulterated.

At last the Lord of the Universe sent Muhammad (peace be upon him) to Arabia and entrusted him with the same mission that He had entrusted to the earlier Prophets. This last Messenger of God addressed the followers of the earlier Prophets (who had by this time deviated from their original teachings) as well as the rest of humanity. The mission of each Prophet was to call men to the right way of life, to

communicate God's true guidance afresh and to organize into one community all who responded to his mission and accepted the guidance vouchsafed to him. Such a community was to be dedicated to the two-fold task of molding its own life in accordance with God's guidance and striving for the reform of the world. The Quran is the Book which embodies this mission and guidance, as revealed by God to Muhammad (peace be upon him).

General Theme

If we remember these basic facts about the Quran, it becomes easy to grasp its true subject, its central theme and the objective it seeks to achieve. Insofar as it seeks to explain the ultimate causes of man's success or failure the subject of the Book is MAN.

Its central theme is that concepts relating to God, the universe and man, which have emanated from man's own limited knowledge run counter to reality. The same applies to concepts which have been either woven by man's intellectual fancies or which have evolved through man's obsession with animal desires. The ways of life which rest on these false foundations are both contrary to reality and ruinous for man. The essence of true knowledge is that which God revealed to man when He appointed him as His vicegerent. Hence, the way of life which is in accordance with reality and conducive to human good is that which we have characterized above as the right way. The real object of the Book is to call people to this right way and to illuminate God's true guidance, which has often been lost either through man's negligence and heedlessness or

distorted by his wicked perversity.

If we study the Quran with these facts in mind it is bound to strike us that the Quran does not deviate one iota from its main subject, its central theme and its basic objective. All the various themes occurring in the Quran are related to the central theme; just as beads of different color may be strung together to form a necklace. The Quran speaks of the structure of the heavens and the earth and of man, refers to the signs of reality in the various phenomena of the universe, relates anecdotes of bygone nations, criticizes the beliefs, morals and deeds of different people, elucidates supernatural truths and discusses many other things besides. All this the Quran does, not in order to provide instruction in physics, history, philosophy or any other particular branch of knowledge, but rather to remove the misconceptions people have about reality and to make that reality manifest to them. It emphasizes that the various ways men follow, which are not in conformity with reality, are essentially false, and full of harmful consequences for mankind. It calls on men to shun all such ways and to follow instead the way which both conforms to reality and yields best practical results. This is why the Quran mentions everything only to the extent and in the manner necessary for the purposes it seeks to serve. The Quran confines itself to essentials thereby omitting any irrelevant details. Thus, all its contents consistently revolve around this call.

Background

Likewise, it is not possible fully to appreciate either the style of Quran, the order underlying the arrangement of its

verses or the diversity of the subjects treated in it, without fully understanding the manner in which it was revealed. The Quran, as we have noted earlier, is not a book in the conventional sense of the term. Allah did not compose and entrust it in one piece to Muhammad (peace be upon him) so that he could spread its message and call people to adopt an attitude to life consonant with its teachings. Nor is the Quran one of those books which discusses their subjects and main themes in the conventional manner. Its arrangement differs from that of ordinary books, and its style is correspondingly different.

Makkan Surahs

The nature of this Book is that Allah chose a man in Makkah to serve as His Messenger and gave him the task to preach His message, starting in his own city (Makkah) and with his own tribe (Quraish). At this initial stage, instructions were confined to what was necessary at this particular juncture of the mission. Three themes in particular stand out: Directives were given to the Prophet (peace be upon him) on how he should prepare for his great mission and how he should begin working for the fulfillment of his task. A fundamental knowledge of reality was furnished and misconceptions commonly held by people in that regard, misconceptions which gave rise to wrong orientation in life were removed. People were exhorted to adopt the right attitude towards life.

Moreover, the Quran also elucidated those fundamental principles which, if followed, lead to man's success and happiness. In keeping with the character of the mission at

this stage the early revelations generally consisted of short verses, couched in language of uncommon grace and power, and clothed in a literary style suited to the taste and the temperament of the people to whom they were originally addressed, and whose hearts they were meant to penetrate. The rhythm, melody and vitality of these verses drew rapt attention, as such was their stylistic grace and charm that people began to recite them involuntarily. The local color of these early messages is conspicuous, for while the truths they contained were universal, the arguments and illustrations used to elucidate them were drawn from the immediate environment familiar to the first listeners. Allusions were made to their history and traditions and to the visible traces of the past which had crept into the beliefs, and into the moral and social life of Arabia. All this was calculated to enhance the appeal the message held for its immediate audience. This early stage lasted for four or five years, during which period the following reactions to the Prophet's message manifested themselves: A few people responded to the call and agreed to join the ummah (community) committed, of its own volition, to submit to the Will of Allah. Many people reacted with hostility, either from ignorance or egotism, or because of chauvinistic attachment to the way of life of their forefathers. The call of the Prophet (peace be upon him), however, did not remain confined to Makkah or the Quraish. It began to meet with favorable response beyond the borders of that city and among other tribes.

The next stage of the mission was marked by hard,

vigorous struggle between the Islamic movement and the age old ignorance (*Jahiliyah* - all those world-views and ways of life which are based on the rejection or disregard of the heavenly guidance which is communicated to mankind through the Prophets and Messengers of Allah; the attitude of treating human life - either wholly or partially - as independent of the directives revealed by Allah) of Arabia. Not only were the Makkans and the Quraish bent upon preserving their inherited way of life, they were also firmly resolved to suppress the new movement by force. They stopped at nothing in the pursuit of this objective. They resorted to false propaganda; they spread doubt and suspicion and used subtle, malicious insinuations to sow distrust in people's minds. They tried to prevent people from listening to the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They perpetrated savage cruelties on those who embraced Islam. They subjected them to economic and social boycott, and persecuted them to such an extent that on two occasions a number of them were forced to leave home and emigrate to Abyssinia, and finally they had to emigrate *en masse* to Al-Madinah.

In spite of this strong and growing resistance and opposition, the Islamic movement continued to spread. There was hardly a family left in Makkah, one of whose members at least had not embraced Islam. Indeed, the violence and bitterness of the enemies of Islam was due to the fact that their own kith and kin - brothers, nephews, sons, daughters, sisters, brothers-in-law and so on - had not only embraced Islam, but were even ready to sacrifice their

lives for its sake. Their resistance, therefore, brought them into conflict with their own nearest and dearest. Moreover, those who had forsaken the age old ignorance of Arabia included many who were outstanding members of their society. After embracing Islam, they became so remarkable for their moral uprightness, their veracity and their purity of character that the world could hardly fail to notice the superiority of the message which was attracting people of such qualities.

During the Prophet's (peace be upon him) long and arduous struggle, Allah continued to inspire him with revelations possessing at once the smooth, natural flow of a river, the violent force of a flood and the overpowering effect of a fierce fire. These messages instructed the believers in their basic duties, inculcated in them a sense of community and belonging, exhorted them to piety, moral excellence and purity of character, taught them how to preach the true faith, sustained their spirit by promises of success and Paradise in the Hereafter, aroused them to struggle in the cause of Allah with patience, fortitude and high spirits, and filled their hearts with such zeal and enthusiasm that they were prepared to endure every sacrifice, brave every hardship and face every adversity.

At the same time, those either bent on opposition, or who had deviated from the right way, or who had immersed themselves in frivolity and wickedness, were warned by having their attentions called to the tragic ends of nations with whose fates they were familiar. They were asked to draw lessons from the ruins of those localities through

which they passed every day in the course of their wanderings. Evidence for the unity of Allah and for the existence of after-life was pointed to in signs visible to their own eyes and within the range of their ordinary experience. The weaknesses inherent in polytheisms, the vanity of man's ambition to become independent even of Allah, the folly of denying the after-life, the perversity of blind adherence to the ways of one's ancestors regardless of right or wrong, were all fully elucidated with the help of arguments cogent enough to penetrate the minds and hearts of audience. Moreover, every misgiving was removed, a reasonable answer was provided to every objection, all confusion and perplexity was cleared up, and ignorance was besieged from all sides till its irrationality was totally exposed. Along with all this went the warning of the wrath of Allah. The people were reminded of the horrors of the doomsday and the tormenting punishment of the Hell. They were also censured for their moral corruption, for their erroneous ways of life, for their clinging to the ways of ignorance, for their opposition to truth and their persecution of the believers.

Furthermore, these messages enunciated those fundamental principles of morality and collective life on which all sound and healthy civilizations enjoying Allah's approval had always rested. This stage was unfolded in several phases. In each phase, the preaching of the message assumed ever wider proportions, as the struggle for the cause of Islam and opposition to it became increasingly intense and severe, and as the believers encountered people

of varying outlooks and beliefs. All these factors had the effect of increasing the variety of the topics in the messages revealed during this period. Such, in brief, was the situation forming the background to the Makkan Surahs of the Quran.

Madani Surahs

For thirteen years the Islamic movement strived in Makkah. It then obtained, in Al-Madinah, a haven of refuge in which to concentrate its followers and its strength. The Prophet's (peace be upon him) movement now entered in its third stage. During this stage, circumstances changed drastically. The Muslim community succeeded in establishing a full-fledged state; its creation was followed by prolonged armed conflicts with the representatives of the ancient ignorance of Arabia. The community also encountered followers of the former Prophets, i.e. Jews and Christians.

An additional problem was that hypocrites began to join the fold of Muslim community; their machinations needed to be resisted. After a severe struggle, lasting ten years, the Islamic movement reached a high point of achievement when the entire Arabian peninsula came under its sway and the door was opened to the world-wide preaching and reform. This stage, like the preceding one, passed through various phases each of which had its peculiar problems and demands. It was in the context of these problems that Allah continued to reveal messages to the Prophet (peace be upon him). At times these messages were couched in the form of fiery speeches; at other times they were characterized by

the grandeur and stateliness of majestic proclamations and ordinances. At times they had the air of instructions from a teacher; at others, the style of preaching of a reformer. These messages explained how a healthy society, state and civilization could be established and the principles on which the various aspects of human life should be based. They also dealt with matters directly related to the specific problems facing Muslims. For example, how should they deal with hypocrites (who were harming the Muslims and the Muslim community from within) and with the non-Muslims who were living under the care of the Muslim society? How should they relate to the People of the Book? What treatment should be meted out to those with whom the Muslims were at war, and how should they deal with those with whom they were bound by treaties and agreements? How should the believers, as a community, prepare to discharge their obligations as vicegerents of the Lord of Universe?

Through the Quran the Muslims were guided in questions like these, were instructed and trained, made aware of their weaknesses, urged to risk their lives and property for the cause of Allah, taught the code of morality they should observe in all circumstances of life - in times of victory and defeat, ease and distress, prosperity and adversity, peace and security, peril and danger. In short, they were being trained to serve as the successors of the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him), with the task of carrying on the message of Islam and bringing about the reform in human life. The Quran also addressed itself to those outside

the fold of Islam, to the People of the Book, the hypocrites, the unbelievers, the polytheists. Each group was addressed according to its own particular circumstances and attitudes. Sometimes the Quran invited them to the true faith with tenderness and delicacy; on other occasions, it rebuked and severely admonished them. It also warned them against, and threatened them with punishment from Allah. It attempted to make them take heed by drawing their attention to instructive historical events. In short, people were left with no valid reason for refusing the call of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Such, briefly, is the background of the Madani Surahs of the Quran. It is now clear to us that the revelation of the Quran began and went hand in hand with the preaching of the message. This message passed through many stages and met with diverse situations from the very beginning and throughout a period of twenty three years. The different parts of the Quran were revealed step by step according to the multifarious, changing needs and requirements of the Islamic movement during these stages. It therefore, could not possibly possess the kind of coherence and systematic sequence expected of doctoral dissertation.

Moreover, the various fragments of the Quran which were revealed in harmony with the growth of Islamic movement were not published in the form of written treatises, but were spread orally. Their style, therefore, bore an oratorical flavor rather than the characteristics of literary composition. Furthermore, these orations were delivered by one whose task meant he had to appeal

simultaneously to the mind, to the heart and emotions, to the people of different mental levels and dispositions. He had to revolutionize people's thinking, to arouse in them a storm of noble emotions in support of his cause, to persuade his companions and inspire them with devotion and zeal, and with the desire to improve and reform their lives. He had to raise their morale and steel their determination, turn enemies into friends and opponents into admirers, disarm those out to oppose his message and show their position to be morally untenable. In short, he had to do everything necessary to carry out his movement through to a successful conclusion. Orations revealed in conformity with the requirement of a message and movement will inevitably have a style different from that of a professional lecture. This explains the repetitions we encounter in the Quran. The interests of a message and a movement demand that during a particular stage emphasis should be placed only on those subjects which are appropriate at that stage, to the exclusion of matters pertaining to later stages.

As a result, certain subjects may require continual emphasis for months or even years. On the other hand, content repetition in the same manner becomes exhausting. Whenever a subject is repeated, it should therefore be expressed in different phraseology, in new forms and with stylistic variations so as to ensure that the ideas and beliefs being put over find their way into the hearts of the people. At the same time, it was essential that the fundamental beliefs and principles on which the whole movement was based should always be kept fresh in people's minds; a

necessity which dictated that they should always be repeated continuously through all stages of the movement. For this reason, certain basic Islamic concepts about the unity of Allah and His Attributes, about the Hereafter, about man's accountability and about reward and punishment, about prophethood and belief in revealed scriptures, about basic moral attributes such as piety, patience, trust in Allah and so on, recur throughout the Quran. If these ideas had lost their hold on the minds of the people, the Islamic movement could not have moved forward in its true spirit. If we reflect on this, it also becomes evident why the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not arrange the Quran in the sequence that it was revealed.

Order

As we noted, the context in which the Quran was revealed in the course of twenty three years was the mission and the movement of the Prophet (peace be upon him); the revelations correspond to the various stages of this mission and movement.

Now, it is evident that when the Prophet's (peace be upon him) mission was completed, the chronological sequence of the various parts of the Quran - revealed in accordance with the growth of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) mission - could in no way be suitable to the changed situation. What was now required was a different sequence in tune with the changed context resulting from the completion of the mission. Initially, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) message was addressed to people totally ignorant of Islam. Their instruction had to start with the most

elementary things. After the mission had reached to a successful completion, the Quran acquired a compelling relevance for those who had decided to believe in the Prophet (peace be upon him). By virtue of that belief they had become a new religious community - the Muslim *ummah*. Not only that, they had been made responsible for carrying on the Prophet's (peace be upon him) mission, which he had bequeathed to them, in a perfect form, both on conceptual and practical levels. It was no longer necessary for Quranic verses to be arranged in chronological sequence. In the changed context, it had become necessary for the bearers of the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to be informed of their duties and of the true principles and laws governing their lives. They also had to be warned against corruptions which had appeared among the followers of earlier Prophets. All this was necessary in order to equip the Muslims to go out and offer the light of Divine Guidance to the world steeped in darkness. It would be foreign to the very nature of Quran to group together in one place all verses relating to specific subject; the nature of the Quran requires that the reader should find teachings revealed during the Madani period interspersed with those of the Makkan period, and vice versa. It requires the juxtaposition of early discourses with instructions from the later period of the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This blending of the teachings from different periods helps to provide an overall view and an integrated perspective of Islam, and acts as a safeguard against lop-sidedness.

Furthermore, a chronological arrangement of the Quran would have been meaningful to the later generations only if it had been supplemented with explanatory notes and these had to be treated as inseparable appendices to the Quran. This would have been quite contrary to Allah's purpose in revealing the Quran; the main purpose of its revelation was that all human beings, children and young people, old men and women, town and country dwellers, laymen and scholars should be able to refer to the Divine Guidance available to them in composite form and providentially secured against adulteration. This was necessary to enable people of every level of intelligence and understanding to know what Allah required of them. This purpose would have been defeated had the reader been obliged solemnly to recite detailed historical notes and explanatory comments along with the Book of Allah. Those who object to the present arrangement of the Quran appear to be suffering from a misapprehension as to its true purpose. They sometimes almost seem under the illusion that it was revealed merely for the benefit of students of history and sociology.

Compilation

The present arrangement of the Quran is not the work of later generations, but was made by the Prophet (peace be upon him) under Allah's directions. Whenever a Surah was revealed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) summoned his scribes, to whom he carefully dictated its contents, and instructed them where to place it in relation to the other Suras. The Prophet (peace be upon him) followed the same

order of Suras and verses when reciting during ritual Prayer as on other occasions, and his companions followed the same practice in memorizing the Quran. It is therefore a historical fact that the collection of the Quran came to an end on the very day that its revelation ceased. The One who was responsible for its revelation was also the One who fixed its arrangement.

The one whose heart was the receptacle of the Quran was also responsible for arranging its sequence. This was far too important and too delicate a matter for anyone else to become involved in. Since Prayers were obligatory for the Muslims from the very outset of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) mission, (It should be noted that while five daily Prayers were made obligatory several years after the Prophet (peace be upon him) was commissioned, Prayers were obligatory from the very outset; not a single moment elapsed when Prayers, as such, were not obligatory in Islam) and the recitation of the Quran was an obligatory part of the Prayers, Muslims were committing the Quran to memory while its revelation was continued.

Thus, as soon as a fragment of the Quran was revealed, it was memorized by some of the companions. Hence the preservation of the Quran was not solely dependent on its verses being inscribed on palm leaves, pieces of bone, leather and scraps of parchment - the material used by the Prophet's (peace be upon him) scribes for writing down Quranic verses. Instead those verses came to be inscribed upon scores, then hundreds, then thousands, then hundreds of thousands of human hearts, soon after they had been

revealed, so that no scope was left for any devil to alter so much as one word of them. When, after the death of Prophet (peace be upon him), the storm of apostasy convulsed Arabia and the companions had to plunge into bloody battles to suppress it, many companions who had memorized the Quran suffered martyrdom. This led Umar to plead that the Quran ought to be preserved in writing, as well as orally. He therefore impressed the urgency upon Abu Bakr. After slight hesitation, the latter agreed and entrusted the task to Zayd ibn Thabit al-ansari, who had worked as a scribe of the Prophet (peace be upon him). (For an account of the early history of the Quran see Subhi-al salih, *Mabahith fi Ulum al-Quran*, Beriut, 1977, pp. 65 ff Ed). The procedure decided upon was to try and collect all written pieces of the Quran left behind by the Prophet, as well as those in the possession of the companions. (There are authentic traditions to the effect that several companions had committed the entire Quran, or many parts of it, to writing during the lifetime of the Prophet. Especially mentioned in this connection are the following companions of the Prophet: Uthman, Ali, Abd Allah bin Masud, Abd Allah bin Amr al Aas, Salim themawla of Hudhayfah, Muaudh bin Jabal, Ubbay bin Kaab, and Abu Zayd Qays bin al-Sakan.) When all this had been done, assistance was sought from those who had memorized the Quran. No verse was incorporated into the Quranic codex unless all three sources were found to be in complete agreement, and every criterion of verification had been satisfied. Thus an authentic version of the Quran was

prepared. It was kept in the custody of Hafsa (a wife of the Holy Prophet) and people were permitted to make copies of it and also to use it as the standard of comparison when rectifying the mistakes they might have made in writing down the Quran.

Difference of Dialects

In different parts of Arabia and among its numerous tribes there existed a diversity of dialects. The Quran was revealed in the language spoken by the Quraish of Makkah. Nevertheless, in the beginning, people of other areas and other tribes were permitted to recite it according to their own dialects and idioms, since it facilitated its recitation without affecting its substantive meaning. In course of time, in the wake of the conquest of a sizeable part of the world outside of the Arabian peninsula, a large number of non-Arabs entered the fold of Islam. These developments affected the Arabic idiom and it was feared that the continuing use of various dialects in the recitation of the Quran might give rise to grave problems. It was possible, for instance, that someone hearing the Quran in unfamiliar dialect might pick a fight with the reciter, thinking that the latter was deliberately distorting the Word of Allah. It was also possible that such differences might gradually lead to the tampering of the Quran itself. It was also not inconceivable that the hybridization of the Arabic language, due to the intermixture between the Arabs and non-Arabs, might lead people to introduce modifications into the Quranic text, thus imparting the grace of the Speech of Allah. As a result of such considerations, and after

consultations with the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Uthman decided that copies of the standard edition of the Quran, prepared earlier at the order of Abu Bakr, should be published, and that publication of the Quranic text in any other dialect or idiom should be proscribed. The Quran that we possess today corresponds exactly to the edition which was prepared on the orders of Abu Bakr and copies of which were officially sent, on the orders of Uthman, to various cities and provinces. Several copies of this original edition of Quran still exist today.

Anyone who entertains any doubt as to the authenticity of the Quran can satisfy himself by obtaining a copy of the Quran from any bookseller, say in West Africa, and then have a hafiz (memorizer of the Quran) recite it from memory, compare the two, and then compare these with the copies of the Quran published through the centuries since the time of Uthman. If he detects any discrepancy, even in single letter or syllable, he should inform the whole world of his great discovery! Not even the most skeptical person has a reason to doubt the Quran as we know today is identical with the Quran which Muhammad (peace be upon him) set before the world; this is an unquestionable, objective, historical fact, and there is nothing in human history on which the evidence is so overwhelmingly strong and conclusive. To doubt the authenticity of the Quran is like doubting the existence of Roman empire, the Mughals of India, or Napoleon! To doubt historical facts like these is a sign of stark ignorance, not a mark of erudition and scholarship.

Universality

It is well known that the Quran claims to be capable of guiding all mankind. Yet the student of the Quran finds it generally addressed to the people of Arabia, who lived in the time of its revelation. Although the Quran occasionally addresses itself to all mankind, its contents are, on the whole, vitally related to the taste and the temperament, the environment and history, and the customs and usages of Arabia. When one notices this, one begins to question why a Book which seeks to guide all mankind to salvation should assign such importance to certain aspects of a particular people's life, and to the things belonging to a particular age and time. Failure to grasp the real cause of this may lead one to believe that the Book was originally designed to reform the Arabs of the particular age alone, and it is only the people of later times who have forced upon the Book an altogether novel interpretation, proclaiming that its aim is to guide all mankind for all time. Some might say this with no other purpose than to vent their irrational prejudice against Islam. Leaving such people aside, a word may be said to those whose critical comments are motivated by the desire to understand things better. The latter would do well to study the Quran carefully, noting down any places where they find that it has propounded any doctrine or concept, or laid down some rule for practical conduct, relevant for the Arabs alone and exclusively conditioned by the peculiarities of a certain place or time. If, while addressing the people of certain area at a particular period of time, attempting to refute their polytheistic beliefs and adducing arguments in

support of its own doctrine of the unity of Allah, the Quran draws upon facts with which those people were familiar, this does not warrant the conclusion that its message is relevant only for that particular people or for that particular period of time. What ought to be considered is whether or not the Quranic statements on refutation of the polytheistic beliefs of the Arabs of those days apply as well to other forms of polytheism in other parts of world. Can the arguments advanced by the Quran in that connection be used to rectify the beliefs of other polytheists? Is the Quranic line of argument for establishing the unity of Allah, with minor adaptations, valid and persuasive for every age? If the answers are positive, there is no reason why a universal teaching should be dubbed exclusive to a particular people and merely because it happened to be addressed originally to that people and at that particular period of time. No philosophy, ideology or doctrine consists only of mere abstractions and is totally unrelated to the circumstances in which it developed. Even if such an absolute abstraction were possible it would remain confined to the scraps of paper on which it was written and would fail totally to have an impact on human life. Moreover, if one wishes to spread any intellectual, moral and cultural movement on an international scale, it is by no means essential, in fact it is not even useful, for it to start on a global scale. If one wishes to propagate certain ideas, concepts and principles as the right bases for human life, one should begin by propagating them vigorously in the country where the message originates, and to the people

whose language, temperament, customs and habits are familiar to its proponents. It will thus be possible to transform the lives of the people into a practical model of the message.

Only then will it be able to attract the attention of other nations, and intelligent people living elsewhere will also try to understand it and to spread it in their own lands. Indeed, what marks out a time-bound and a particularistic national doctrine from an eternal universal one, is the fact that the former either seek to exalt a people or to claim special privileges for it or else comprises ideas and principles so vitally related to the people's life and tradition as to tender it totally inapplicable to the conditions of other peoples. A universal doctrine, on the other hand, is willing to accord equal rights and status to all, and its principles have an international character in that they are equally applicable to other nations. Likewise, the validity of those doctrines which seek to come to grips merely with questions of a transient and superficial nature is time-bound. If one studies the Quran with these considerations in mind, can one really conclude that it has only a particularistic national character, and that its validity is therefore time-bound?

Complete Code

Those who embark upon a study of Quran often proceed with the assumption that this Book is, as it is commonly believed to be, a detailed code of guidance. However, when they actually read it, they fail to find detailed regulations regarding social, political and economic matters. In fact, they notice that the Quran has not laid down detailed

regulations even in respect of such oft repeated subjects as Prayers and Zakah (Purifying alms). The reader finds this somewhat disconcerting and wonders in what sense the Quran can be considered a code of guidance. The uneasiness some people feel about this arises because they forget that Allah did not merely reveal a Book, but that He also designated a Prophet (peace be upon him). Suppose some laymen were to be provided with the bare outlines of a construction plan on the understanding that they would carry out the construction as they wished. In such a case, it would be reasonable to expect that they should have very elaborate directives as to how the construction should be carried out. Suppose, however, that along with the broad outline of the plan of construction, they were also provided with a competent engineer to supervise the task. In that case, it would be quite unjustifiable to disregard the work of the engineer, on the expectation that detailed directives would form an integral part of the construction plan, and then to complain of imperfection in the plan itself. (This analogy should elucidate the position of the Prophet (peace be upon him) vis-a-vis the Quran, for he clarified and elaborated the Quran, supplementing its broad general principles by giving them precise and detailed forms, and incorporating them into practical life, his own as well as that of his followers.

The Quran, to put it succinctly, is a Book of broad general principles rather than of legal minutiae. The Book's main aim is to expound, clearly and adequately, the intellectual and moral foundations of the Islamic program for life. It

seeks to consolidate these by appealing both to man's mind and to his heart. Its method of guidance for practical Islamic life does not consist of laying down minutely detailed laws and regulations. It prefers to outline the basic framework for each aspect of human activity, and to lay down certain guidelines within which man can order his life in keeping with the Will of Allah. The mission of the Prophet was to give practical shape to the Islamic vision of the good life, by offering the world a model of an individual character and of a human state and society, as living embodiments of the principles of the Quran.

The Quran is strong in the condemnation of those who indulge in schismatic squabbling after the Book of Allah has been revealed, so causing a weakening of faith; (See Quran 98:4, 3:105, 42:14) yet there has been considerable disagreement over the correct interpretation of the Quranic injunctions, not only among the later scholars, but even among the founders of the legal schools and Successors (The word Successors has been used as the equivalent of Tabeun, i.e. those who benefited from the companions of the Prophet). Indeed, disagreement can be traced back even to the times of the companions of the Prophet (The word companions has been used as an equivalent of Sahabah, i.e. those, who in state of belief, enjoyed the companionship of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

One can hardly point to a single Quranic verse of legal import which has received complete unanimity as regards to its interpretation. One is bound to ask whether the Quranic condemnation applies to all who have disagreed in

this way. If it does not, then what kind of schism and disagreement does the Quran denounce? This is quite a problem and its ramifications cannot be considered at length here. The reader may rest assured that the Quran is not opposed to differences of opinion within the framework of a general agreement on the fundamentals of Islam and broad unity of Islamic community. In addition it is not opposed to disagreement arising from an earnest endeavor to arrive at the right conclusions on a particular subject; the only disagreements condemned by the Quran are those arising out of egotism and perversity, leading to mutual strife and hostility.

The two sorts of disagreements are different in character and give rise to different results. The first kind is a stimulus to improvement and the very soul of a healthy society. Differences of this kind are found in every society whose members are endowed with intelligence and reason. Their existence is a sign of life, while their absence serves only to demonstrate that a society is made up not of intelligent men and women but rather of blocks of wood. Disagreements of the second kind, however, are of altogether different character and lead to ruin and destruction of the people among whom they arise. Far from being a sign of health, their emergence is symptomatic of a grave sickness.

The first kind of disagreement exists only among scholars who are all agreed that it is their duty to obey Allah and His Prophet. They also agree that the Quran and the Sunnah are their main sources of guidance. Thus, when scholarly investigation on some subsidiary question leads two or more

scholars to disagree, the disagreement is not upon fundamentals of faith; or when two judges disagree in their judgment, the disagreement is not on questions on which their opinion has been expressed. They do not accuse those who disagree with their opinion of having left the fold of true faith. What each does is rather to proffer his arguments showing that he has done his best to investigate the matter thoroughly. It is then left to the courts (in judicial matters) and to public opinion (if the matter relates to the community at large) either to prefer whichever opinions seems sounder, or to accept both opinions as equally permissible. Schism occurs when the very fundamentals are made a matter of dispute and controversy. It may also happen that some scholar, mystic, mufti, or leader ponders and weighs in on a question to which Allah and His Messenger have not attached any fundamental importance, exaggerating the significance of the question to such extent that it is transformed into a basic issue of faith. Such people usually go one step further, declaring all those who disagree with their opinion to have forsaken the true faith and set themselves outside the community of true believers. They may go even so far as to organize those who agree with them into a sect, claiming that sect to be identical with the Islamic community, and declaring that everyone who does not belong to it is destined to hell-fire.

Whenever the Quran denounces schismatic disagreements and sectarianism, its aim is to denounce this later kind of disagreement. As for disagreements of the first category, we

encounter several examples of these even during the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) not only accepted the validity of such disagreements, he even expressed his approval of them. For this kind of disagreement shows that the community is not lacking in capacity for thought, for inquiry and investigation, for grasping or wrestling with the problems it faces. It also shows that the intelligent members of the community are earnestly concerned about their religion and how to apply its injunctions to practical problems of human life. It shows too that their intellectual capacities operate within the broad framework of their religion, rather than searching beyond its boundaries for solutions to their problems. And it proves that the community is following the golden path of moderation. Such moderation preserves its unity by broad agreement on fundamentals, and at the same time, provide its scholars and thinkers with full freedom of inquiry so that they may achieve fresh insights and new interpretations within the framework of the fundamental principles of Islam.

Suggestions for Study

The Quran is a book to which innumerable people turn for innumerable purposes. It is difficult to offer advice appropriate to all. The readers to whom this work is addressed are those who are concerned to acquire a serious understanding of the Book, and who seek the guidance it has to offer in relation to the various problems of life. For such people we have a few suggestions to make, and we shall offer some explanations in the hope of facilitating their

study of Quran.

Anyone who really wants to understand the Quran irrespective of whether or not he believes in it, must divest his mind, as far as possible, of every preconceived notion, bias or prejudice, in order to embark upon his study with an open mind. Anyone who begins to study the Quran with a set of preconceived ideas is likely to read those very ideas into the Book. No Book can be profitably studied with this kind of attitude, let alone the Quran which refuses to open its treasure-house to such readers.

For those who want only a superficial acquaintance with the doctrines of the Quran, one reading is perhaps sufficient. For those who want to fathom its depths several readings are not enough. These people need to study the Quran over and over again, taking notes of everything that strikes them as significant. Those who are willing to study the Quran in this manner should do so at least twice to begin with, so as to obtain a broad grasp of the system of beliefs and practical prescriptions that it offers. In this preliminary survey, they should try to gain an overall perspective of the Quran and to grasp the basic ideas which it expounds, and the system of life it seeks to build on the basis of these ideas. If, during the course of this study, anything agitates the mind of the reader, he should note down the point concerned and patiently persevere with his study. He is likely to find that, as he proceeds, the difficulties are resolved (when a problem has been solved, it is advisable to note down the solution alongside the problem). Experience suggests that any problem still

unsolved after a first reading of the Quran are likely to be resolved by a careful second reading. Only after acquiring a total perspective of the Quran should a more detailed study be attempted. Again the reader is well advised to keep noting down the various aspects of the Quran's teachings. For instance, he should note the human model the Quran extols as praiseworthy, and the model it denounces. It might be helpful to make two columns, one titled as praiseworthy qualities, the other titled as blameworthy qualities, and then to enter into the respective columns all that is found relevant in the Quran.

To take another instance, the reader might proceed to investigate the Quranic point of view on what is conducive to human success and felicity, as against what leads to man's ultimate failure and perdition. An efficient way to carry out this investigation would be to note under separate headings, such as conducive to success and conducive to failure, any relevant material encountered. In the same way, the reader should take down the notes about the Quranic teachings on the questions of beliefs, morals, man's rights and obligations, family life and collective behavior, economic and political life, law and social organization, war and peace, and so on. Then he should use these various teachings to try to develop an image of the Quranic teachings vis-a-vis each particular aspect of human life. This should be followed by an attempt at integrating these images so that he comes to grasp the total scheme of life envisaged by the Quran.

Moreover, anyone wishing to study in depth the Quranic

view-point on any particular problem of life should, first of all, study all the significant strands of human thought concerning the problem. Ancient and modern works on the subject should be studied. Unresolved problems where human thinking seems to have gotten stuck should be noted. The Quran should then be studied with these unresolved problems in mind, with a view to finding the solutions the Quran has to offer. Personal experience again suggests that anyone who studies the Quran in this manner will find his problems solved with the help of verses which he may have read scores of times without it ever crossing his mind that they could have any relevance to the problems at hand. It should be remembered, nevertheless, that full appreciation of the spirit of the Quran demands practical involvement with the struggle to fulfill its mission. The Quran is neither a book of abstract theories and cold doctrines which the reader can grasp while seated in a cozy armchair, nor is it merely a religious book like other religious books, the secrets of which can be grasped in seminaries and oratories. On the contrary, it is the blueprint and guidebook of a message, of a mission, of a movement. As soon as this Book was revealed, it drove a quiet, kind-hearted man from his isolation and seclusion, and placed him in a battlefield of life to challenge a world that had gone astray. It inspired him to raise his voice against falsehood, and pitted him in a grim struggle against the stand-bearers of unbelief, of disobedience to Allah, of waywardness and error. One after the other, it sought out everyone who had a pure and noble soul, mustering them together under the standard of the

Messenger (peace be upon him). It also infuriated all those who by their nature were bent on all mischief and drove them to wage war against the bearers of truth.

This is the Book which inspired and directed the great movement which began with the preaching of a message by an individual, and continued for no fewer than twenty three years, until the Kingdom of Allah was truly established on earth. In this long and heart-rending struggle between the truth and falsehood, this Book unfailingly guided its followers to the eradication of the latter and the consolidation and enthronement of the former. How then could one expect to get to the heart of Quranic verses, without so much as stepping upon the field of battle between faith and unbelief, between Islam and ignorance? To appreciate the Quran fully one must take it up and launch into the task of calling people to Allah, making it one's guide at every stage. Then, and only then, does one meet the various experiences encountered at the time of its revelation. One experiences the initial rejection of the message of Islam by the city of Makkah, the persistent hostility leading to the quest for a haven of refuge in Abyssinia, and the attempt to win a favorable response from Taaif which led, instead, to cruel persecution of the bearer of the Quranic message. One experiences also the campaigns of Badr, of Uhad, of Hunayn and of Tabuk. One comes face to face with Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab, with hypocrites and Jews, with those who instantly respond to this call as well as those who, lacking clarity of perception and moral strength, were drawn into Islam only at a later

stage. This will be an experience different from any so-called mystic experience. I designate it the Quranic mystic experience. One of the characteristics of this experience is that at each stage one almost automatically finds certain Quranic verses to guide one, since they were revealed at similar stage and therefore contain the guidance appropriate to it. A person engaged in this struggle may not grasp all the linguistic and grammatical subtleties, he may also miss certain finer points in the rhetoric and semantics of the Quran, yet it is impossible for the Quran to fail to reveal its true spirit to him. Again, in keeping with the same principle, a man can neither understand the laws, the moral teachings, and the economic and political principles which the Quran embodies, nor appreciate the full import of the Quranic laws and regulations, unless he tries to implement them in his own life. Hence the individual who fails to translate the Quranic precepts into personal practice will fail to understand the Book. The same must be said of any nation that allows the institutions of its collective life to run contrary to the teachings of Quran.

It is not intended here to survey all the questions that may arise in the mind of a student of Quran. Many questions relate to the specific Surahs or verses, and are explained in the notes to these in various commentaries. This introduction confines itself to basic questions related to the understanding of the Quran as a whole.

A Brief Life History of Syed Abul Aala Maududi

Syed Abul Aala Maududi (September 25, 1903 - September 22, 1979), also known as Molana (Maulana) or Shaikh Syed

Abul Aala Maududi, was a Sunni Pakistani journalist, theologian, Muslim-revivalist leader and political philosopher, and a major 20th century Islamic thinker. He was also a prominent political figure in his home country (Pakistan). He was also the founder of Jamaat-e-Islami the Islamic revivalist party.

Early life

Syed Maududi was one of the descendants of Khwaja Qutb ad-din Maudud al-Chishti, a notable of the *Chishtiyya Tariqa*. Muinuddin al-Chishti of Ajmer (Rahmatullahi Alayh) was Qutb ad-din's khaleefa, one of those who were ordered and given permission by him to guide the people who wanted to learn.

Syed Abul Aala Maududi was born on September 25, 1903 (Rajab 3, 1321 A.H.) in Aurangabad, then part of the princely state of Hyderabad (presently Maharashtra), India. Syed Abul Aala Maududi was born to Maulana Ahmad Hasan, a lawyer by profession. Syed Abul Aala Maududi was the youngest of his three brothers. His father descended from the Chishti line of saints; in fact his last name was derived from the first member of the Chishti Silsilah i.e. Khawajah Syed Qutb ul-Din Maudood Chishti (d. 527 AH). At an early age, Syed Maududi was given home education. He received religious nurturing at the hands of his father and from a variety of teachers employed by him. He soon moved on to formal education and completed his secondary education from Madrasah Furqaniyah. For his undergraduate studies he joined Darul Uloom, Hyderabad (India). His undergraduate studies,

however, were disrupted by the illness and death of his father, and he completed his studies outside of the regular educational institutions. His instruction included very little of the subject matter of a modern school, such as Western education. He reportedly translated Qasim Amin's *The New Woman* into Urdu at the age of 14 and about 3500 pages from *Asfar*, a work of the mystical Persian thinker Mulla Sadra.

Journalistic career

After the interruption of his formal education, Syed Maududi turned to journalism in order to make his living. In 1918, he was already contributing to a leading Urdu newspaper, and in 1920, at the age of 17, he was appointed editor of *Taj*, which was being published from Jabalpure (now Madhya Pradesh). Late in 1920, Maududi went to Delhi and first assumed the editorship of the newspaper *Muslim* (1921-23), and later of *al-Jamiyat* (1925-28), both of which were the organs of the *Jamiyat-i Ulama-i Hind*, an organization of Muslim religious scholars. According to Israr Ahmad he worked for sometime at Darul Islam, an Islamic research academy.

In 1941, Syed Maududi founded *Jamaat-e-Islami* (JI) in British India as a religious political movement to promote Islamic values and practices. After the Partition of India, JI was redefined in 1947 to support an Islamic State in Pakistan. JI is currently the oldest religious party in Pakistan. With the Partition of India, JI split into several groups. The organization headed by Syed Maududi is now known as *Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan*. Also existing are

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, and autonomous groups in Indian Kashmir, and Sri Lanka.

Syed Maududi was elected Jamaat's first Ameer (President) and remained so until 1972 when he withdrew from the responsibility for reasons of health.

Political Struggle

In the beginning of the struggle for the state of Pakistan, Syed Maududi and his party were against the idea of creating a separate state of Pakistan. He did criticize other leaders of the Muslim league for wanting Pakistan to be a state for Muslims and not an Islamic state. After realizing that India was going to be partitioned and Pakistan created, he began to support the idea. Syed Maududi moved to Pakistan in 1947 and worked to turn it into an Islamic state, resulting in frequent arrests and long periods of incarceration. In 1953, he and the JI led a campaign against the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan resulting in selective declaration of martial law. He was arrested by the military deployment, which included Rahimuddin Khan, and sentenced to death on the charge of writing a seditious pamphlet about the Ahmadiyya issue. He turned down the opportunity to file a petition for mercy, expressing a preference for death rather than seeking clemency. Strong public pressure ultimately convinced the government to commute his death sentence to life imprisonment. Eventually, his sentence was annulled.

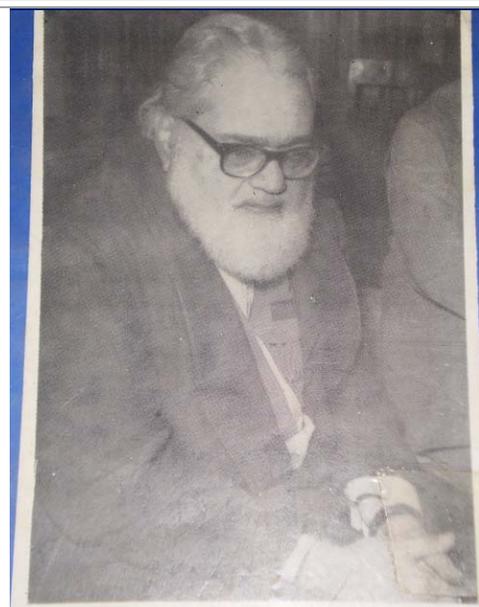
Syed Maududi wrote over 120 books and pamphlets and made over a 1000 speeches and press statements. His magnum opus is the *translation* and *Tafseer* of the Quran

known as *Tafhimul Quran* in which he intended to give the Quran a practical contemporary interpretation. It became widely read throughout the subcontinent and has been translated into several languages around the globe.

Last Days

In April 1979, Syed Maududi's long-time kidney ailment worsened and by then he also had heart problems. He went to the United States for treatment and was hospitalized in Buffalo, New York, where his second son worked as a physician. During his hospitalization, he remained intellectually active. Following a few surgical operations, he died on September 22, 1979, at the age of 76. His funeral was held in Buffalo, but he was buried in an unmarked grave at his residence in Ichhra, Lahore after a very large funeral procession through the city.

May Allah shower His Mercy upon him



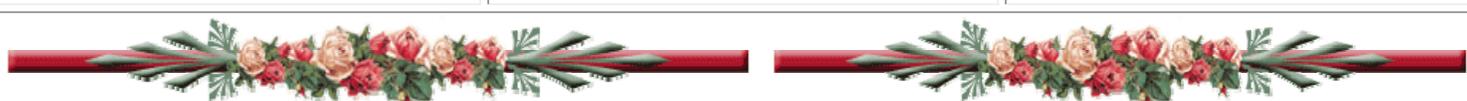
Syed Abul Aala Maududi



Main entrance of the House of Syed Abul Aala Maududi 4-A, Zaildar Park, Ichhra, Lahore



Grave of Syed Abul Aala Maududi



الفَاتِحَة Al-Fatihah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah is named *Al-Fatihah* because of its subject matter. *Fatihah* is that which opens a subject or a Book or any other thing. In other words, *Al-Fatihah* is a sort of preface.

Period of Revelation

It is one of the earliest revelations to the Prophet (peace be upon him). As a matter of fact, we learn from authentic traditions that it was the first complete Surah which was revealed to Muhammad (peace be upon him). Before this, only a few miscellaneous verses were revealed which form parts of *Al-Alaq*, *Al-Muzzammil*, *Al-Muddaththir*, etc.

Theme and Subject Matter

This Surah is in fact a prayer which Allah has taught to all those who want to make a study of His Book. It has been placed at the very beginning of the Book to teach this lesson to the reader: if you sincerely want to benefit from the Quran, you should offer this prayer to the Lord of the universe.

This preface is meant to create a strong desire in the heart

of the reader to seek guidance from the Lord of the universe, Who alone can grant it. Thus *Al-Fatihah* indirectly teaches that the best thing for a man is to pray for guidance to the straight path, to study the Quran with the mental attitude of a seeker-after-truth and to recognize the fact that the Lord of the universe is the source of all knowledge. He should, therefore, begin the study of the Quran with a prayer to Him for guidance.

From this theme, it becomes clear that the real relation between *Al-Fatihah* and the Quran is not that of an introduction to a Book but that of a prayer and its answer. *Al-Fatihah* is the prayer from the servant and the Quran is the answer from the Master to his prayer. The servant prays to Allah to show him guidance and the Master places the whole of the Quran before him in answer to his prayer, as if to say, “This is the Guidance you begged from Me.”

1. In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.*¹

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*¹ One of the many practices taught by Islam is that its followers should begin their activities in the name of God. This principle, if consciously and earnestly followed, will necessarily yield three beneficial results. First, one will be able to restrain oneself from many misdeed, since the habit of pronouncing the name of God is bound to make one wonder when about to commit some offence how such an act can be reconciled with the saying of God’s holy name. Second, if a man pronounces the name of God before starting good and legitimate tasks, this act will ensue that

both his starting point and his mental orientation are sound. Third, and this is the most important benefit, when a man begins something by pronouncing God's name, he will enjoy God's support and succor. God will bless his efforts and protect him from the machinations and temptation of Satan. For whenever man turns to God, God turns to him as well.

2. Praise^{*2} be to Allah, the Lord^{*3} of the entire universe.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ



*2 As we have already explained, the character of this Surah is that of a prayer. The prayer begins with praise of the One to whom our prayer is addressed. This indicates that whenever one prays one ought to pray in a dignified manner. It does not become a cultivated person to blurt out his petition. Refinement demands that our requests should be preceded by a wholehearted acknowledgement of the unique position, infinite benevolence and unmatched excellence of the One to Whom we pray. Whenever we praise someone, we do so for two reasons. First, because excellence calls for praise, irrespective of whether that excellence has any direct relevance to us or not. Second, we praise one who, we consider to be our benefactor; when this is the case our praise arises from a deep feeling of gratitude. God is worthy of praise on both counts. It is incumbent on us to praise Him not only in recognition of His infinite excellence but also because of our feeling of gratitude to Him, arising from our awareness of the

blessings He has lavished upon us. It is important to note that what is said here is not merely that praise be to God, but that all praise be to God alone. Whenever there is any beauty, any excellence, any perfection, in whatever thing or in whatever shape it may manifest itself, its ultimate source is none other than God Himself. No human beings, angels, demigods, heavenly bodies, in short no created beings, are possessed of an innate excellence; where excellence exists. It is a gift from God. Thus, if there is anyone at all whom we ought to adore and worship, to whom we ought to feel indebted and grateful, towards whom we should remain humble and obedient, it is the creator of excellence, rather than its possessor.

***3** In Arabic the word *Rabb* has three meanings: (i) Lord and Master; (ii) Sustainer, Provider, Supporter, Nourisher and Guardian, and (iii) Sovereign, Ruler, He Who controls and directs. God is the *Rabb* of the universe in all three meanings of the term.

3. The Merciful, the Compassionate.*4

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

***4** Whenever we are deeply impressed by the greatness of something, we try to express our feelings by using superlatives. If the use of one superlative does not do full justice to our feelings, we tend to re-emphasize the extraordinary excellence of the object of our admiration by adding a second superlative of nearly equivalent meaning. This would seem to explain the use of the word *Rahim* following *Rahman*. The form of the word *Rahman* connotes intensity. Yet God's mercy and beneficence towards His

creatures is so great, so extensive and of such an infinite nature that no one word, however strong its connotation, can do it full justice. The epithet Rahim was therefore added to that of Rahman.

4. The Master of the Day of Recompense.*5

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

*5 God will be the Lord of the Day when all generations of mankind gather together in order to render an account of their conduct, and when each person will be finally rewarded or punished for his deeds. The description of God as Lord of the Day of Judgment following the mention of his benevolence and compassion indicates that we ought to remember another aspect of God as well, namely that He will judge us all, that He is so absolutely powerful, that on the Day of Judgment no one will have the power either to resist the enforcement of punishments that He decrees or to prevent anyone from receiving the rewards that He decides to confer. Hence, we ought not only to love Him for nourishing and sustaining us and for His compassion and mercy towards us, but should also hold Him in awe because of His justice, and should not forget that our ultimate happiness or misery rests completely with Him.

5. You alone do we worship*6, and You alone do we turn for help.*7

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ
وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

*6 The term *ibadah* is used in three sense: (i) worship and adoration; (ii) obedience and submission; and (iii) service and subjection. In this particular context the term carries

all these meanings simultaneously. In other words, we say to God that we worship and adore Him, that we are obedient to Him and follow His will, and also that we are His servants. Moreover man is so bound to none save God, that none but He, may be the subject of man's worship and total devotion, of man's unreserved obedience, of man's absolute subjection and servitude.

*7 Not only do we worship God, but our relationship with Him is such that we turn to Him alone for help and succor. We know that He is the Lord of the whole universe and that He alone is the Master of all blessings and benefactions. Hence, in seeking the fulfillment of our needs we turn to Him alone. It is towards Him alone that we stretch forth our hands when we pray and supplicate. It is in Him that we repose our trust. It is therefore to Him alone that we address our request for true guidance.

6. Direct us on to the Straight Way.*8

أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

*8 We beseech God to guide us in all walks of life to a Way which is absolutely true, which provides us with a properly based outlook and sound principles of behavior, a Way which will prevent our succumbing to false doctrines and adopting unsound principles of conduct, a Way that will lead us to our true salvation and happiness. This is man's prayer to God as he begins the study of the Quran. It is, in short, to illuminate the truth which he often tends to lose in a labyrinth of philosophical speculation; to enlighten him as to which of the numerous ethical doctrines ensures a sound course of conduct; to show which of the myriad ways and

by-ways is the clear, straight, open road of sound belief and right behavior.

7. The way of those whom You have favored,^{*9} who did not incur Your wrath, who are not astray.^{*10}

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ
غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
الضَّالِّينَ



***9** This defines the ‘Straight Way’ which we ask God to open to us. It is the way which has always been followed by those who have enjoyed God’s favors and blessings.

***10** This makes it clear that the recipients of God’s favor are not those who appear, briefly, to enjoy worldly prosperity and success; all too often, these people are among those whom God has condemned because they have lost sight of the true path of salvation and happiness. This negative explanation makes it quite clear that innaam (favor) denotes all those real and abiding favors and blessings which one receives in reward for righteous conduct through God’s approval and pleasure, rather than those apparent and fleeting favors which the Pharaohs, Nimrods and Korahs (Qaruns) used to receive in the past, and which are enjoyed even today by people notorious for oppression, evil and corruption.



البقرة Al-Baqarah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

Al-Baqarah (the Cow) has been so named from the story of the cow occurring in this Surah (Ayats 67-73). It has not, however, been used as a title to indicate the subject of the Surah. It will, therefore, be as wrong to translate the name *Al-Baqarah* into “The Cow” or “The Heifer” as to translate any English names into their equivalents in other languages or vice versa. This would imply that the Surah dealt with the subject of “The Cow”. Many more Surahs of the Quran have been named in a similar way because no comprehensive words exist in Arabic (in spite of its richness) to denote the wide scope of the subjects discussed in them. As a matter of fact, all human languages suffer from the same limitation.

Sequence

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

The greater part of *Al-Baqarah* was revealed during the

first two years of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life at Al-Madinah. The smaller part which was revealed at a later period has been included in this Surah because its contents are closely related to those dealt with in this Surah. For instance, the verses prohibiting interest were revealed during the last period of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life but have been inserted in this Surah. For the same reason, the last verses (284-286) of this Surah which were revealed at Makkah before the migration of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to Al-Madinah have also been included in it.

Historical Background

In order to understand the meaning of this Surah, we should know its historical background:

1. At Makkah the Quran generally addressed the mushrik Quraish who were ignorant of Islam, but at Al-Madinah it was also concerned with the Jews who were acquainted with the creed of the Unity of Allah, prophethood, revelation, the Hereafter and Angels. They also professed to believe in the law which was revealed by Allah to their prophet Moses (peace be upon him), and in principle, their way was the same (Islam) that was being taught by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). But they had strayed away from it during the centuries of degeneration and had adopted many un-Islamic creeds, rites and customs of which there was no mention and for which there was no sanction in the Torah. Not only this: they had tampered with the Torah by inserting their own explanations and interpretations into its text. They had distorted even that

part of the word of God which had remained intact in their Scriptures, and they taken out of it the real spirit of true religion, and were now clinging to a lifeless frame of rituals. Consequently their beliefs, their morals and their conduct had gone to the lowest depths of degeneration. The pity is that they were not only satisfied with their condition but loved to cling to it. Besides this, they had no intention or inclination to accept any kind of reform. So they became bitter enemies of those who came to teach them the right way and did their best to defeat every such effort. Though they were originally Muslims, they had swerved from the real Islam and made innovations and alterations in it and had fallen victims to hair splitting and sectarianism. They had forgotten and forsaken Allah and begun to serve mammon. So much so that they had even given up their original name "Muslim" and adopted the name "Jew" instead, and made religion the sole monopoly of the children of Israel.

This was their religious condition when the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to Al-Madinah and invited the Jews to the true religion. That is why more than one third of this Surah has been addressed to the children of Israel. A critical review of their history, their moral degeneration and their religious perversions has been made. Side by side, with this, the high standard of morality and the fundamental principles of the pure religion have been put forward in order to bring out clearly the nature of the degeneration of the community of a prophet when it goes astray. This was to draw clear lines of demarcation between

real piety and formalism, and the essentials and non-essentials of the true religion.

2. At Makkah Islam was mainly concerned with the propagation of its fundamental principles and the moral training of its followers. But after the migration of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to Al-Madinah, where Muslims had come to settle from all over Arabia and where a tiny Islamic state had been set up with the help of the Ansar (local supporters), naturally the Quran had to turn its attention to the social, cultural, economic, political and legal problems as well. This accounts for the difference between the themes of the Surahs revealed at Makkah and those at Al-Madinah. Accordingly about half of this Surah deals with those principles and regulations which are essential for the integration and solidarity of a community and for the solution of its problems.

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

- a. The Community should work with the utmost zeal to propagate its ideology and win over to its side the greatest possible number of people;
- b. It should so expose its opponents as to leave no room for doubt in the mind of any sensible person that they were adhering to an absolutely wrong position;
- c. It should infuse in its members (the majority of whom were homeless and indigent and surrounded on all sides by enemies) that courage and fortitude which is so indispensable to their very existence in the adverse circumstances in which they were struggling and to prepare them to face these boldly;
- d. It should also keep them ready and prepared to meet any armed menace, which might come from any side to suppress and crush their ideology, and to oppose it without minding the overwhelming numerical strength and the material resources of its enemies;
- e. It should also create in them that courage which is needed for the eradication of evil ways and for the establishment of the Islamic way instead.

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

4. During this period, a new type of Muslims called “*munafiqin*” (hypocrites) had begun to appear. Though signs of duplicity had been noticed during the last days at Makkah, they took a different shape at Al-Madinah. At Makkah there were some people who professed Islam to be true but were not prepared to abide by the consequences of

this profession and to sacrifice their worldly interests and relations and bear the afflictions which inevitably follow the acceptance of this creed. But at Al-Madinah different kinds of *munafiqin* (hypocrites) began to appear. There were some who had entered the Islamic fold merely to harm it from within. There were others who were surrounded by Muslims and, therefore, had become Muslims to safeguard their worldly interests. They, therefore, continued to have relations with the enemies so that if the latter became successful, their interests should remain secure. There were still others who had no strong conviction of the truth of Islam but had embraced it along with their clans. Lastly, there were those who were intellectually convinced of the truth of Islam but did not have enough moral courage to give up their former traditions, superstitions and personal ambitions and live up to the Islamic moral standards and make sacrifice in its way.

At the time of the revelation of *Al-Baqarah*, all sorts of hypocrites had begun to appear. Allah has, therefore, briefly pointed out their characteristics here. Afterwards when their evil characteristics and mischievous deeds became manifest, Allah sent detailed instructions about them.

Theme: Guidance

This Surah is an invitation to the divine guidance and all the stories, incidents etc. revolve around this central theme. As this Surah has particularly been addressed to the Jews, many historical events have been cited from their own

traditions to admonish and advise them that their own good lies in accepting the guidance revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him). They should, therefore, be the first to accept it because it was basically the same message that was revealed to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him).

Topics and their Interconnection

Ayats 1-20. These introductory verses declare the Quran to be the Book of guidance: enunciate the articles of the faith (belief) in Allah, prophethood and life-after-death; divide mankind into three main groups with regard to its acceptance or rejection, believers, disbelievers and hypocrites.

Ayats 21-29. Allah invites mankind to accept the guidance voluntarily and to submit to Him, the Lord and the Creator of the universe, and to believe in the Quran, His guidance, and in the life-after-death.

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

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

Ayats 121-141. The Jews have been exhorted to follow Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who had come with the same guidance and who was a descendant and follower of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) whom they highly honored as their ancestor, and professed to follow as a prophet. The story of building of the Kaabah by him has been mentioned because it was going to be made the qiblah of the Muslim community.

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

Ayats 153-251. In this portion practical measures have been prescribed to enable the Muslims to discharge the heavy responsibilities of the leadership that had been entrusted to them for the promulgation of guidance. Salat, fasting, Zakat, Hajj and Jihad have been prescribed for the moral training of the *ummat* (Muslim community). The believers have been exhorted to obey authority, to be just, to fulfill pledges, to observe treaties, to spend wealth etc. in the Way of Allah. Laws, rules and regulations have been laid down for their organization, cohesion and conduct of daily life and for the solution of social, economic, political and international problems. On the other hand, drinking, gambling, lending money on interest etc. have been prohibited to keep the *ummat* safe from disintegration. In

between these, the basic articles of the faith have been reiterated at suitable places, for these alone can enable and support one to stick to the guidance.

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

Ayats 261-283. The earlier theme has been resumed and the believers have been exhorted to spend in the Way of Allah in order to please Him alone. In contrast to this, they have been warned against the evils of lending money on interest. Instructions have also been given for the honest conduct of day-to-day business transactions.

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

1. Alif. Lam. Mim.*¹



*¹ Letters of the Arabic alphabet like Alif, Lam, Mim, called the *muqattaat*, which are prefixed to a number of the

Surahs of the Quran, were in common use in the Arabic literature of the period when the Quran was revealed. The poets and rhetoricians made use of this style. Instances of this can even be found in the pre-Islamic prose and poetry which has survived. As their significance was appreciated by all concerned, none objected to or questioned their use, because it was no enigma to them. Even the bitterest opponents of the Quran, who never missed an opportunity, did not raise any objection against their use. But as their use was abandoned with the passage of time, it became difficult for the commentators to determine their exact meaning and significance. An ordinary reader, however, need not worry about their meanings because they make no difference as far as the guidance of the Quran is concerned.

2. This is the Book about which there is no doubt,^{*2} a guidance for those who fear (Allah).^{*3}

ذَٰلِكَ ٱلْكِتَٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ ۚ فِيهِ
هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢﴾

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

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

3. Those who believe in the unseen,^{*4} and establish prayer,^{*5} and spend out of what We have provided for them.^{*6}

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ



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

***5** The third condition to benefit from the Quran is that one should be willing and ready to put into practice the teachings of the Quran. As the Salat (prayer) is the first

and foremost obligatory duty enjoined by the Quran. It is the practical proof and permanent test of the sincerity of one's faith. Therefore, after a person's profession of Islam, the moment he hears the call to the prayer (which sounds regularly five times a day from every mosque in the Muslim world), he should join the congregation for the Salat, because this determines whether he is sincere in his profession or not. If he does not attend to the call and does not join the congregation, it is an indication that he is not sincere in his profession. It must also be noted that *iqama-tus-salat* (the establishment of prayer) is the comprehensive term. It means that Salat should be performed in congregation and that permanent arrangements should be made for it in every habitation; otherwise Salat will not be considered to have been established, even if every inhabitant of a place offers the Salat individually.

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

4. And those who believe in that which has been revealed to you (Muhammad) and that which was revealed before you,^{*7} and they are certain of the Hereafter.^{*8}

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ
وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ
هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ

*7 The fifth condition is that one should believe in the truth of all those Books which Allah sent down by revelation to

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

***8** This is the sixth and last condition. Hereafter is a comprehensive word which applies to the collection of many beliefs, which are as follows: (a) Man has not been created irresponsible in the world but he is answerable to Allah for all his deeds here; (b) The present world order is not everlasting, but has to come to an end at a time only known to Allah; (c) After the present order has been brought to an end, Allah will create a new world, when He will bring back to life all human beings, born from the beginning of creation till resurrection, simultaneously and

will call them to account for their deeds, and then will reward them justly according to what they had done in the world; (d) Those, who will be judged as good by Allah, will go to Paradise, and those who will be judged as bad will be cast into Hell; (e) The criterion of success or failure is not the prosperity or adversity of this worldly life, but successful in actual fact will be he who comes out successful in Allah's final judgment, and a failure for him who is a failure there. Those who do not believe, in the life-after-death with the above implications, cannot benefit from the Quran because the one who entertains even the slightest doubt about these, not to speak of rejecting them, can never follow the way of life which the Quran prescribes.

5. Those are on guidance from their Lord. And those, they are the successful.

أُولَئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

6. Certainly, those who disbelieve,^{*9} it is the same to them whether you (O Muhammad) warn them, or do not warn them, they will not believe.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ
ءَأَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ

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

7. Allah has set a seal upon their hearts, and upon their hearing, and on their eyes there is a

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ
سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ

covering.*¹⁰ And for them is a great punishment.

غَشَوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ



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

8. And among mankind there are some who say: "We believe in Allah and in the Last Day," while they are not believers.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَيَوْمَ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ



9. They deceive Allah and those who believe, and they do not deceive except themselves, and they do not perceive (it).*¹¹

يُخَدِّعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَمَا يُخَدِّعُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ



*11 They deceive themselves by imagining that their

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

10. In their hearts is a disease, then Allah increased their disease.*12 And for them is a painful punishment because they used to lie.

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ
مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا
كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

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

11. And when it is said to them: “Do not cause corruption on the earth,” they say: “We are only reformers.”

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي
الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ
مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١١﴾

12. Beware, it is indeed they who are the corruptors, but they do not perceive (it).

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِن
لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

13. And when it is said to them: “Believe as the people have believed,”^{*13} they say: “Should we believe as the foolish have believed.”^{*14} Beware, it is they who are the foolish, but they do not know (it).

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا كَمَا ءَامَنَ
النَّاسُ قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا ءَامَنَ
السُّفَهَاءُ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاءُ
وَلَكِن لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ

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

***14** They regarded as fools the people who had accepted Islam sincerely and exposed themselves to troubles, hardships, and dangers. In their opinion it was nothing but foolishness to earn the hostility of the whole country merely for the sake of truth and righteousness. They considered it wisdom not to bother about the right and the wrong at all but to look only after one’s own interests.

14. And when they meet those who believe, they say: “We believe,” and when they are alone with their evil ones,^{*15} they say: “Indeed we are with you, we were only mocking.”

وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ ءَامِنُوا قَالُوا
ءَامِنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ شَيْطَانِهِمْ
قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ
مُسْتَهْزِءُونَ

***15** Shayatin, plural of Shaitan, is an insurgent, haughty and devilish person, or an evil genius. This word is used both for the men and the jinn. Though it has mostly been used in the Quran for the jinn devils, in some places it has

also been applied to human devils, and from the context it can easily be judged where it refers to human and where to jinn devils. Here it refers to the Arab chiefs who were in the forefront in their opposition to Islam.

15. Allah (Himself) mocks at them, and He prolongs them in their transgression, (while) they wander blindly.

اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

16. It is those who purchased error for guidance, so their transaction has brought no profit, nor were they guided.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالََةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَنَحَتْ تُجْرَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

17. Their example is as the example of him who kindled a fire, then when it lighted all around him, Allah took away their light and left them in darkness, (so) they could not see.^{*16}

مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلْمَةٍ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

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

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

18. Deaf, dumb, blind,^{*17} so they will not return (to right path).

صُمُّ بَكْمٌ عُمَىٰ فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ



*17 “Deaf” to hear the truth, “dumb” to speak the truth and “blind” to see the truth.

19. Or like a rainstorm from the sky, wherein is darkness, and thunder, and lightning. They thrust their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps, for fear of death. And Allah is encompassing the disbelievers.^{*18}

أَوْ كَصَيْبٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصْبِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ مِّنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ



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

20. The lightning almost snatches away their sight.

يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ تَخْطَفُ أَبْصَارَهُمْ

whenever it lights up (the way) for them, they walk therein. And when darkness comes upon them, they stand still.*¹⁹ And if Allah willed, He could have taken away their hearing,*²⁰ and their sight. Certainly, Allah has power over all things.

كَلَّمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ مَشَوْا فِيهِ وَإِذَا
أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَرِهِمْ
إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ



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

***20** That is, Allah could, if He so willed, totally deprive these hypocrites also of the power to see the truth just as He

deprived the hypocrites described in the first parable. But Allah does not do so because it is His will to give them respite to see the truth and hear the truth to the extent they want to see and hear it. That is why He left them with only as much power as they made use of in seeing and hearing the truth.

21. O mankind,^{*21}
 worship your Lord, who
 created you and those
 before you, so that you
 may become righteous.^{*22}

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ
 الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

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

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

22. He who made the earth
 a resting place for you,
 and the sky a canopy, and
 He sent down water (rain)
 from the sky, then brought
 forth thereby of the fruits

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا
 وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
 مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ

as provision for you. So do not attribute equals to Allah, while you know (it).^{*23}

رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أُندَادًا
وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ



***23** That is, when you yourselves admit and acknowledge that all this has been done only by Allah, then you should serve and worship Him alone. “So do not attribute equals to Allah” means to hold others besides Allah as worthy of some kind of service and worship. As will be explained by the Quran below, there are certain kinds of worship which should exclusively be performed for the sake of Allah; associating others with these is the shirk for the eradication of which the Quran was sent down.

23. And if you are in doubt about that which We sent down (the Quran) to Our servant (Muhammad), then produce a Surah the like thereof,^{*24} and call your witnesses besides Allah if you are truthful.

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا
عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّنْ
مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِّنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ



***24** This challenge had been given several times in the Quran at Makkah. It was meant to convince the opponents that the Quran is divine word and could not be produced by human mind. Now it was reiterated at Al-Madinah. See Yunus: Ayats 38-39, Hud: Ayats 13-14, Bani-Israel: Ayat 88, At-Tur: Ayats 33-34.

24. So if you do not, and you can never do (it), then fear the Fire, that whose fuel is people and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.*25

فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا
فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا
النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ
لِلْكَافِرِينَ



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

25. And give good tidings to those who believe and do righteous deeds, that for them are Gardens underneath which rivers flow. Whenever they are provided there from with a provision of fruit, they will say: "This is what we were provided with before,"*26 and they will be given this in resemblance. And for them will be therein pure companions.*27 And they will abide therein forever.

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ
تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ
رِزْقًا قَالُوا هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا
مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأُتُوا بِهِ مُتَشَبِهًا
وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ
فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ



*26 It will be a pleasant surprise for the dwellers of

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

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

26. Certainly, Allah disdains not to describe the example of that of a mosquito, or of that even more insignificant than this.*²⁸ So as for those who believe, they know that this is the truth from their Lord. And as for those who disbelieve, they say: “What did Allah intend by this as an example.”*²⁹ He misleads

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَنْ يَضْرِبَ
مَثَلًا مَّا بَعُوضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا
فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ
أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ
اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا يُضِلُّ بِهِ

many thereby, and He guides many thereby.^{*30} And He misleads not thereby except those who are disobedient.

كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا
يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

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

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

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

27. Those who break the covenant of Allah after ratifying it,^{*31} and sever that which Allah has ordered to be joined,^{*32} and they cause corruption on the earth.^{*33} It is those who are the losers.

الَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ
بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ
اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوَصَلَ
وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

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

***32** That is, these people break off the relations which Allah has enjoined to be established, and upon the establishment and strength of which depends man's individual and collective well being. This concise sentence is so vast in meaning that it covers the whole of the moral world, ranging from relations between two persons to international relations. "Breaking off relations" not only implies violation of human relations but it also implies abuse of relations in any way, because the result will be the same if and when these relations are not observed rightly and properly. The Quran, therefore, abhors not only their violation but also their abuse as it causes chaos, conflict, and disorder in the world.

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

28. How can you disbelieve in Allah when you were dead, and He gave you life.

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ
أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ

Then He will give you death, then (again) He will bring you to life, then to Him you will be returned.

ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ



29. He it is who created for you all that is on the earth. Then turned He to the heaven, and made them seven heavens.*³⁴ And He is the All knower of every thing.*³⁵

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى
السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ
وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ



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

***35** Here, the people have been warned of two things. First, that they cannot, and should not, adopt an attitude of disbelief and rebellion against Allah, who knows everything and from whom nothing that one does remains hidden. Second, that the God who knows everything is, in fact, the source of true knowledge. Anyone who turns away from

Him, will surely go astray into the darkness of ignorance. When none beside Him is the source of knowledge, and none beside Him can provide the light by which one may walk one's way of life, what is then the good of turning away from Him.

30. And^{*36} when your Lord said to the angels:^{*37} "Indeed, I will make a vicegerent^{*38} upon the earth." They said: "Will you place upon it one who will cause corruption therein, and will shed blood,^{*39} while we glorify Your praise and sanctify You."^{*40} He said: "Surely, I know that which you do not know."^{*41}

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً^ط قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

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

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

***37** *Malak*: literally means a messenger, which is translated *farishta* (angel). Angels are not mere abstract powers without personality; they are beings with personalities and are so to speak the agents of Allah, who employs them for the administration of His Kingdom. Ignorant people mistook them for associates in Godhead; others thought they were related to God and started to worship them as deities.

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

***39** This was not an objection but a query raised by the angels, for the angels dare not object to any scheme of Allah. From the word *Khalifah* they had understood that

the one, who was about to be created, was going to be entrusted with some powers, but they could not understand how an autonomous creature could fit in this totalitarian system of the universe. They also could not understand how that part of the universe, in which someone was entrusted with autonomy, could be free from disorder.

***40** By this, the angels did not mean to say that they should be entrusted with the vicegerency because they deserved it. They simply meant to say, “We are carrying out orders obediently, faithfully and earnestly and are keeping the whole universe clean and in order, and sing hymns of Your praise and sanctify You as Your humble servants. Therefore, we are unable to understand what need then is there for a vicegerent.” The word *tasbih* has a double meaning: it means to sanctify as well as to work earnestly and do one’s utmost. Similarly *taqdis* also means both to sanctify and to purify.

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

31. And He taught Adam the names,^{*42} all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said: “Inform Me of the

وَعَلَّمَ ءَادَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ
عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ
أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَٰؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ

names of these, if you are truthful.”

صَدِيقِينَ

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

32. They said: “Glory be to You, we have no knowledge except that which You have taught us.^{*43} Indeed, it is You, All Knower, the All Wise.”

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا
مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ
الْحَكِيمُ

***43** It appears that the knowledge of each angel and of each species of angels is confined only to his or its own special sphere. For example, the angels who deal with the air, know everything about the air but nothing about water. The same is true about the angels who are responsible for other spheres. In contrast to them, man has been granted comprehensive knowledge. He may not know as much about these things as the angels in charge of a special sphere do but the comprehensiveness of knowledge that man has been granted has not been granted to the angels.

33. He said: “O Adam, inform them of their names.” Then when he had informed them of their names,^{*44} He said: “Did I not say to you that I know

قَالَ يَتَعَادُمْ أَنْبِيَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ
فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ
أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنَّي أَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ

the unseen of the heavens and the earth. And I know that which you reveal and that which you have concealed.”

السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا
تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

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

34. And when We said to the angels: “Prostrate before Adam,” so they prostrated,^{*45} except Iblis.^{*46} He refused, and was arrogant, and he became of the disbelievers.^{*47}

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ
فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى
وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

***45** This was symbolic of the submission and subjugation to man of all the angels appointed to manage the earth and that part of the universe which is connected with it in any way. As man was being appointed vicegerent in this part by Allah’s command, it was ordained that all the angels, who worked in it must, as far and as long as Allah willed, cooperate with him in their respective spheres whether he wanted to use the powers given to him rightly or wrongly. This implied: You must help him in whatever he wants to

do, irrespective of whether it is right or wrong. If he wants to commit theft or offer the prayer, or intends to do another good or evil, you must cooperate with him in both cases as long as We allow him to act according to his will and choice. This may be illustrated by the example of a government officer. He is obeyed within his jurisdiction by every official but no sooner is he deposed by the government than those very officials, who carried out his orders promptly cease to obey him. They even handcuff him and take him to prison, if the government so orders. The command given to the angels to bow down before Adam was in the same nature. Possibly the word *sajdah* (bowing down) here is symbolic of only submission, but this also is possible that the angels were ordered to perform some such act actually to signify their subordination, and this seems to be more correct.

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

***47** From the words of the text it so appears that probably Iblis was not alone in refusing to bow down before Adam, but a group of the jinn also was bent upon disobedience.

Iblis has been particularly mentioned because he was their chief who led the rebellion. But this verse can also be translated as: He was of the disbelievers. In this case, it would mean that there already existed a group of rebellious and disobedient jinn and Iblis belonged to it. The word *shayatin* in the Quran has generally been used for these jinn and their species, and wherever there is no basis for taking *shayatin* to imply men, this same jinn satans are implied.

35. And We said: “O Adam, dwell, you and your wife in the Garden, and eat there from in abundance, from wherever you will. And do not go near this tree,^{*48} lest you become among the wrongdoers.”^{*49}

وَقُلْنَا يٰٓءَادَمُ اَسْكُنْ اَنْتَ
وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا
حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ
الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِيْنَ



***48** This shows that Adam and Eve were first kept in the Garden for a trial of their inclinations before they were to be sent to the earth, the place where they were appointed as vicegerent. A tree was chosen for this purpose and they were forbidden even to go near it. They were duly warned that if they violated the command, they would be considered guilty of iniquity in the sight of Allah. The discussion as to what tree it was and why they were forbidden to go near it, is unnecessary. They were not forbidden because there was something intrinsically evil in the tree itself by which Adam and Eve could be harmed. It

was chosen for the purpose of trial to see how far they remained constant on obedience to Allah's command as against the temptations of Satan. For this purpose it was enough to select a tree. That is why Allah has not mentioned the name and any characteristics of the tree. The Garden was a very suitable place for this trial because it was meant to show to man that Paradise alone was the fit place for Allah's vicegerent, but if he yielded to satanic temptations, he would deprive himself of it. The only way to regain it was to oppose the enemy successfully who was always on the look-out to mislead him.

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

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

against himself when he brings the wrath of Allah on himself by his disobedience. That is why the Quran, in many places has used the term *zulm* for sin and *zalim* for the sinner.

36. Then Satan made them slip from there, and caused them to be expelled from the state in which they had been. And We said: “Go down, one of you to the other as enemy.^{*50} And there shall be for you on earth a dwelling place and provision for a time.”

فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا
فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا
أهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ
وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ
إِلَىٰ حِينٍ

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

37. Then Adam received from his Lord words, and He accepted his repentance.^{*51} Indeed, He is

فَتَلَقَىٰ آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ
فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ

the One who forgives, Most
Merciful. *52



*51 When Adam felt sorry for his guilt and wanted to repent and return to Allah, he could not find appropriate words for asking Allah's pardon. Then Allah took pity upon him on account of his grief and helplessness and taught him the appropriate words. The Arabic word *taubah* means both "to turn back" and "to turn to". When applied to man, it means that he has turned back from rebellion to submission, and, when it is ascribed to Allah, it means that He has again turned with compassion to the penitent person.

*52 Here the Quran rejects the theory that the consequences of sin are inevitable and every man shall bear these anyhow. This is one of those self invented, misleading theories which have done great harm to humanity. As a result of this, one loses for ever all hope of reform, when once one is involved in sin. Even if he feels sorry for a past sin and wants to make amends for it and changes his life for the better, this theory confronts him with despair: there is no hope for you because you are doomed for ever: you must bear the consequences of what you have done in the past. In contrast to this, the Quran says, "It lies absolutely in Allah's power to reward a virtue or to punish a sin. If you are rewarded for a virtue, it is not on account of the natural result of your virtue, but it is through Allah's grace. He has full power to reward it or not. In the same way, if you are punished for a sin, it is not because of the inevitable consequences of the sin but because Allah has full power to

punish or pardon it. Of course, being All-Wise, He does not use these powers indiscriminately, but takes into consideration the intention of the doer. If He rewards a virtue, He does so when He sees that His servant performed the good deeds to please Him. And if He rejects an apparent virtue, He does so because He knows that it lacked sincerity. In the same way, He punishes the crime which is committed in a spirit of rebellion and is not followed by self reproach but by an evil desire to commit more crimes. He, however, exercises His grace, and forgives the sins for which His servant feels sorry and makes up his mind to change for the better. It is thus clear that the rejection of the theory of the inevitability of punishment for sin holds out new hopes of reform for sinners. Even the worst criminals and the staunchest unbelievers need not despair of forgiveness from Allah, provided that they confess their sins (of course, before their Lord and not before a priest), feel ashamed of their disobedience, give up their attitude of rebellion and adopt the attitude of submission instead.

38. We said: "Go down from here, all of you."^{*53} Then whenever there comes to you a guidance from Me, and whoever follows My guidance, then there shall be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve."

قُلْنَا أَهْبَطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا فَإِمَّا
يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ
هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ



***53** The repetition of this command after forgiveness is

very significant. In the preceding verse, it has been said that Adam repented and Allah accepted his repentance. Thus Adam was not only absolved from the sin of disobedience, but his future descendants also were made immune from its effect. There was, therefore, no need for Allah to crucify “His only son” for the atonement of the sin of Adam and of his offspring. On the contrary, Allah not only accepted his repentance but also appointed him as His Messenger to show guidance to his children. The repetition of the command, “Go down from here”, shows that the real purpose of Adam’s creation was to make him vicegerent on the earth. He was kept in the Garden merely for trial and training, (see E.N. 48). That is why he was not kept in the Garden after the acceptance of his repentance. He was sent to the earth not by way of punishment but as a matter of course.

39. “And those who disbelieve, and they deny Our revelations,^{*54} those are the companions of the Fire. They will abide therein forever.”^{*55}

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا
خَالِدُونَ

^{*54} *Ayaat* is plural of *ayat*, which literally means a sign or a symbol that points to something. The Quran has used this word in four different senses. At some places, it means merely a sign or symbol. At other places, the different phenomena of nature have been termed as *ayat* of Allah, because each phenomenon points to the reality which is hidden behind such curtains. Then the miracles which were

given to the Messengers have also been called *ayat* (signs) because these showed that they were the representatives of the Ruler of the universe. At some places the verses of the Book have been called *ayat* because they point not only to the truth and the right but also to the Great Author of the Book. It is not only the subject matter of the Book but also its words and mode of expression and its style that point to its Author. The meaning of the word *ayat* in a particular place becomes clear from the context in which it occurs.

***55** The law of Allah, contained in Ayats 38-39 about the guidance, has been in force ever since the creation of man and will remain so up to the last day. It has been called Allah's covenant in Ayat 27. It is meant to warn man not to invent a way of life for himself but to follow the guidance of his Lord, for he is His servant as well as vicegerent. And there are only two means of knowing this: either a man should receive direct revelation from Allah, or follow the one who has received revelation from Him. There is no third way of knowing Allah's Will. Therefore, every other way than these two is not only wrong but also rebellion which will lead ultimately to Hell. The story of the creation of man and the advent of mankind has been described in six other places in the Quran: Al-Aaraf: Ayats 11-25; Al-Hijr: Ayats 26-48; Bani-Israil: Ayats 60-65; Al-Kahf: Ayat 50; Ta-Ha: Ayats 116-123, Suad: Ayats 71-85. It will be useful to read the same story in the Old Testament (Genesis, Chapters 1 to 3). The comparison of the Quranic version with the Biblical one, will conclusively show that the Quran has remained intact in its pure, original and

unadulterated form just as it was revealed by Allah, while the Bible has been tampered with. It will also be interesting to contrast the conversation between Allah and the angels as has been given here in the Quran with that cited in the Talmud. The latter is not only void of spiritual values but is also ridiculous. According to it when the angels asked Allah why He was going to create man, He answered that He was doing that so that good people should be born on the earth. He did not mention the birth of bad people lest the angels should withhold their permission for the creation of man.

40. O Children of Israel, ^{*56} remember My favor which I bestowed upon you, and fulfill My covenant (with you), I shall fulfill (My obligations to) your covenant. And fear Me.

يَبْنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِي
الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَوْفُوا
بِعَهْدِي أَوْفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ
فَارْهَبُونِ



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

understand the full significance of this address, the following should be kept in view. First, it aims to appeal to those few followers of the former prophets, who were still capable of reforming themselves to believe in the truth which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had brought and to cooperate with the mission which he had been appointed to perform. They are, therefore, told that the message of the Quran is the same as of the Scriptures of the former Prophets, and the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him) also was the same as theirs. It means to say: First this mission was entrusted to you so that you may put the Message into practice and then invite the world to accept it. But, not to speak of carrying out the mission, you discarded the guidance and went on degenerating. The past history of your community and its present moral and religious degeneration are a standing witness against you. Now Allah has sent another servant of His with the same Message and mission and there is nothing new or strange in this for you. You should not, therefore, oppose the truth knowingly. The best thing for you is to accept it and cooperate with those who are doing the same work that was once entrusted to you. Secondly, it aims to argue the Jews out of their wrong position and to expose their moral and religious degeneration thoroughly. Therefore, it proves conclusively that their attitude towards Islam was absolutely wrong; for they were opposing it, whereas they knew that its fundamentals were exactly the same as of their religion and that there was nothing in the teachings of the Quran that was different from or opposed to the teachings of the Torah

in principle. It also shows that they had utterly failed to follow the guidance which was given to them and fulfill the obligations of the leadership entrusted to them. As a proof thereof, such incidents have been cited as they could not deny. Moreover, this address unraveled the plots they were hatching, the doubts they were arousing, the crooked arguments they were advancing and the evil machinations they were contriving to defeat the mission of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), though they knew it to be from Allah. This also exposed their piety, for it lacked sincerity and righteousness and was motivated by obduracy, prejudice and self-worship. It also proved beyond any shadow of doubt that they did not really want virtue to thrive. This produced the desired effect: it opened the eyes of the righteous element among the Jews and put an end to the spiritual and moral superiority they enjoyed against the common and polytheistic Arabs of Al-Madinah. Besides, when they themselves were once exposed, they were so dismayed that they dared not oppose Islam openly with the courage of conviction. Thirdly, in the preceding verses, mankind had been invited to accept the guidance of Allah. Now the example of the Israelites is being cited to show the consequences of discarding that guidance. The reason why the Israelites have been held out as an example is that they are the only community whose history during the last four thousand years has been a living object lesson for all the nations of the world. In its history one can see all the ups and downs which result from following the divine guidance or from discarding it. Fourthly, though the

appeal is addressed to the Jews, it is also meant to forewarn the Muslims against the pitfalls of degeneration into which the followers of the former Prophets had fallen. That is why, on the one hand, the moral weaknesses of the Jews, their wrong notions about religion, their wrong ways of thinking and living, have been pointed out, one by one. While, on the other, the demands of the true faith have been stated so that the Muslims are able to see the right way clearly and avoid wrong ways. The Prophet (peace be upon him) knew by divine inspiration that, by and by, the Muslims also would follow the same ways that had been pointed out in this discourse. Therefore, according to a tradition, he forewarned that they would discard the guidance and follow, step by step, the communities of the former prophets, that is, the Jews and the Christians, in their wrong ways. It is a pity that they have not paid any heed to this warning and adopted the same ways of degeneration.

41. And believe in that which I have sent down, confirming that which is with you, and do not be the first to disbelieve in it, and do not trade my verses for a small price,^{*57} and fear Me.

وَأَمِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا
مَعَكُمْ وَلَا تَكُونُوا أُولَٰ كَافِرِينَ
وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِعَايَتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا
وَإِيَّايَ فَاتَّقُونِ

*57 “Small price”: worldly gains for the sake of which these people discarded the commandments and precepts of Allah. As a matter of fact, even the whole wealth of the world put

together is worthless, if it is gained in exchange for Allah's guidance.

42. And do not cover the truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth while you know (it).

وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ
وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْمُونَ



43. And establish the prayer,^{*58} and give the poor due,^{*59} and bow with those who bow down (in worship).

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ
وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ



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

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

***59** The Salat and the Zakat have always formed the

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

44. Do you enjoin the righteousness upon mankind and you forget yourselves, while you recite the Scripture. Will you then not understand.

﴿ أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴾

45. And seek help through patience and prayer.*60 And truly, it is hard except for those who humbly submit (to Allah).*61

﴿ وَأَسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ ﴾

*60 That is, “If you face some difficulties in following the righteous way, *sabr* and Salat will help remove the difficulties and strengthen you to walk the way easily.” Lexically, *sabr* means to check and tie, but in usage it stands for patience, perseverance, endurance and fortitude. The Quran uses this word to express that fortitude, that moral strength, that firmness of purpose and decision, that determination, moral discipline and self-control which enable a person to proceed with patience and courage in the face of afflictions, privations and temptations on the way he

chooses in accordance with the dictates of his conscience. What the Quran means to stress is that the Muslims should develop this moral quality in themselves and should observe the Salat regularly to reinforce it from without.

*61 Salat is a hard task, only for the one who is disobedient to Allah and does not believe in the Hereafter. But it is a joyful duty for the one who is willingly and happily obedient to Allah and who believes that one day he will meet Him. It is expected that this will lead him on the paths of virtue and piety.

46. Those who are certain that they will meet their Lord, and that to Him they will return.

الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ
وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

47. O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you over the worlds (people).^{*62}

يَبْنَىٰ إِسْرَائِيلَ أَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِي
الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي
فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَىٰ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

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

48. And fear a Day (when) a soul will not avail to (another) soul at

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَّا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ
نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا

all, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be helped.*63

شَفَعَةٌ وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ
وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ



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

49. And when*64 We saved you from Pharaoh's people,*65 who were afflicting you with dreadful torment, slaughtering your sons, and keeping your women alive. And in that was a great trial from your Lord.*66

وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ
يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ
يُذَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ
نِسَاءَكُمْ ۚ وَفِي ذَٰلِكُمْ بَلَاءٌ مِّنْ
رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ



*64 The events recalled here were well known to all and

sundry among the Jews. Therefore, only brief references have been made to these historical events to show that they had remained ungrateful and had persisted in evil deeds in spite of the continuous favors showered upon them by Allah.

*65 “*Aal-i-Firaun*” includes both the people of Pharaoh's own family and the people belonging to the ruling class of Egypt.

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

50. And when We parted the sea for you, then We saved you and drowned the people of Pharaoh while you were looking on.

وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمْ الْبَحْرَ
فَأَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا
فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ

51. And when We did appoint for Moses forty nights.^{*67} Then you took the calf in his absence,^{*68} and you were wrong doers.

وَإِذْ وَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً
ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ

*67 When after their escape from Egypt the Israelites entered the Sinai Peninsula, Allah invited the Prophet Moses to Mount Tur for forty days and forty nights to give him laws, instructions and commands for the guidance of the people who had recently been liberated from slavery.

(For details, see Exodus, 24-31). It should, however, be noted that the Tur, referred to here, is not the modern port of Tur on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Suez.

***68** Cow-worship was very common in Canan, Egypt and the neighboring countries. When the Israelites degenerated and became slaves of the Copts after the death of the Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him), they learned this evil practice from their rulers along with other evils.

52. Then We forgave you, even after that, so that you might be grateful.

ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنْكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

53. And when We gave Moses the Scripture, and the criterion^{*69} that you might be guided.

وَإِذْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ
وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

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

54. And when Moses said to his people: “O my people, indeed, you have wronged yourselves by your taking the calf (for worship), so turn in repentance to your Creator, and kill (the guilty among) yourselves.^{*70} That will be better for you with your

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يٰقَوْمِ
إِنَّكُمْ أَنْظَمْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ
بِاتِّخَاذِكُمُ الْعِجَلِ فَتُوبُوا إِلَىٰ
بَارِيكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ
خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِنْدَ بَارِيكُمْ فَتَابَ

Creator.” Then He accepted your repentance. Certainly, He accepts repentance, the Most Merciful.

عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ
الرَّحِيمُ

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

55. And when you said: “O Moses, we will never believe you until we see Allah plainly.” So the thunderbolt seized you while you were looking on.

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَمُوسَىٰ لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ
حَتَّىٰ نَرَىٰ اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ
الصَّاعِقَةُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ

56. Then We raised you up after your death, so that you might be grateful. ^{*71}

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاكُم مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

***71** When Moses went up to Mount Tur for forty days and forty nights, he was also told to bring with him seventy of the chiefs of Israel. Then Allah bestowed upon him the Book and criterion and gave him the stone tablets with instructions and commandments inscribed on them for the guidance of the people, and he presented these to the chiefs. The Quran says that at that time some wicked people from among them began to say: “How can we believe, on a mere statement of yours, that Allah has had a talk with you?” At this Allah became angry with them and punished them. But the Bible says, “And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.

And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink”. (Exodus, 24: 10-11). Strange though it may appear, the same Bible also tells us that Moses said, “I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And He said, “Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me, and live.”

57. And We caused the clouds to overshadow you, and We sent down on you^{*72} the manna and the quails,^{*73} (saying): “Eat of the good things with which We have provided you.” And they wronged Us not, but they did wrong to themselves.

وَضَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْغَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا
عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّاءَ وَالسَّلْوَىٰ كُلُوا مِنْ
طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا
وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ



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

*73 Manna and salva were the natural relief provisions supplied by Allah to feed the Israelites in the wilderness. Manna fell on the ground like dew-drops and salva flew in thousands like quails. There was such a plenty of these provisions that a whole nation lived on them for forty years and was never confronted with starvation or famine. In

modern times even a well developed and resourceful country finds it extremely difficult to make adequate food arrangements for a few hundred thousand emigrants if they happen to enter it suddenly and unexpectedly.

58. And when We said: “Enter into this township,^{*74} then eat therein wherever you will to your heart’s content, and enter the gate in prostration, and say: ‘Forgive us,’^{*75} We will forgive you your sins, and We will increase for those who do good.”

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا أَدْخُلُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ
فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَدًا
وَأَدْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُولُوا
حِطَّةً نَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطِيئَتَكُمْ
وَسَنَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ



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

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

have two meanings: You should enter the town:

- (1) Begging Allah's forgiveness for sins, and;
- (2) Granting general amnesty and refraining from plundering and murdering the inhabitants.

59. Then those who did wrong changed (the words) to a saying other than that which had been said to them, so We sent down upon those who wronged a plague from the heaven because they were disobeying.

فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا قَوْلًا غَيْرَ
الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى
الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

60. And when Moses asked for water for his people, so We said: "Strike with your stick the rock." Then there gushed forth from it twelve springs.*76 Each (tribe of) people knew their drinking place. Eat and drink from the provision of Allah, and do not make mischief in the earth, spreading corruption.

وَإِذِ اسْتَسْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ
لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ
الْحَجَرَ فَانْفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَا
عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ
أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرَبَهُمْ كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا
مِن رِّزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِي
الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

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

among their twelve clans.

61. And when you said: “O Moses, we can never endure upon one (kind of) food. So call upon your Lord for us, that He bring forth for us of that which the earth grows, of its herbs, and its cucumbers, and its corn, and its lentils, and its onions.” He said: “Would you exchange that which is lower for that which is better.*77 Go down to a settled country, then indeed, you will have that which you have asked for.” And humiliation was covered on them, and misery, and they drew on themselves the wrath from Allah. That was because they used to disbelieve in the signs of Allah,*78 and killed the prophets without right.*79 That was because they disobeyed and used to transgress the bounds (of Allah).

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَىٰ لَنْ نَصْبِرَ عَلَىٰ
طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ فَادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ
يُخْرِجْ لَنَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْ
بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّائِهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِهَا
وَبَصَلِهَا قَالَ أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ
الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِالَّذِي هُوَ
خَيْرٌ أَهْبَطُوا مِصْرًا فَإِنَّ لَكُمْ
مَا سَأَلْتُمْ^ق وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ
الذِّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَاءُوا
بِغَضِبِ اللَّهِ^ق ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ
كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِعَايَةِ اللَّهِ
وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ^ق
ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا
يَعْتَدُونَ

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

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

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

(1) After the death of the Prophet Solomon, the kingdom of the Israelites was split into two states: the kingdom of Judah with its capital at Jerusalem; and the kingdom of Israel with its capital at Samaria. As the two were often at war with each other, the things came to such a pass that the kingdom of Judah asked for help from the Aramaic kingdom of Damascus against their own brethren. At this the Prophet Hanani by God’s command severely rebuked Asa king of Judah for relying on the king of Syria instead of relying on “the Eternal your God.” But Asa instead of

heeding the warning sent the Prophet of God to the prison house. (2 Chronicles, 16: 1-10).

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

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

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

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

(6) About the Prophet Amos, it is written that when he rebuked the Israelite state of Samaria for its evil and immoral doings and warned them of their evil acts, "These are the people who have preferred the worldly life to the life in the Hereafter. Therefore their torment shall not be lightened, nor shall help be given to them (from any quarter)." He was served with the notice: "O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah and prophesy there." (Amos, 7: 10-13).

(7) When John the Baptist raised his voice against the immoralities which were being openly practiced in the court of Herod, king of Judah, he was arrested and bound in prison. Then at the request of Herodias, his wife, who had a grudge against him, he sent one of the guards to

bring his head. The man went and beheaded him in the prison and brought his head on a dish to be presented to her. Thus, the Prophet of God was killed without any cause. (ark, 6: 17-29).

(8) The last victim of the evil designs of the high priests and the elders of the Jews was Jesus Christ, who took them to task for their sins and hypocrisies and advised them to lead a righteous life. For this crime of his, they plotted against him: bought Judas, one of his twelve disciples, and sent a large mob with swords and cudgels to seize him and take him away to the house of the high priest. After binding him, they led him off, and handed him over to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor. They tried to procure false evidence against him in order to have him put to death. They had become so hard-hearted that they asked Pilate to release Barabbas, a murderer, as a boon at the festival but to “crucify him”. In this verse, the Quran briefly refers to this most shameful chapter of the history of the Israelites and declares that they fully deserved the curses and condemnation of Allah. They chose their worst offenders against law and morality and made them their chiefs and leaders, and sent their most pious and righteous men to the gallows.

62. Certainly, those who believe (in the Quran), and those who are Jews, and Christians, and Sabaeans, whoever believed in Allah and the Last Day and did

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ
هَادُوا وَالنَّصْرَى وَالصَّبِئِينَ
مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ

righteous deeds, shall then have their reward with their Lord, and there shall be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve.*80

وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

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

63. And when We took your covenant and We raised above you the Mount,*81 (saying): "Hold that which We have given to you firmly, and remember that which is

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا
فَوْقَكُمْ الطُّورَ خُذُوا مَا
ءَاتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ

therein, so that you may become righteous.”

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

*81 The way this incident has been described at different places in the Quran, shows that it was at that time a well known incident among the Israelites, but now it is difficult to understand and know what actually happened. One may, however, understand that at the time of making the covenant at the foot of the mountain a dreadful situation was created and it so appeared that the mountain was going to fall upon them. A similar scene has been depicted in Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayat 171. (See E.N. 132 of Al-Aaraf). Although its description in the Bible is a little different from that of the Talmud, it depicts the scene very vividly: “And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.” (Exodus, 19: 18). “And all the people saw the thundering, and the lightning, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” (Exodus, 20 :18-19).

64. Then you turned away after that. So if it had not been for the grace of Allah upon you and His mercy, you would have been among the losers.

ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ
فَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

65. And indeed, you knew those who transgressed in the Sabbath amongst you.^{*82} So We said to them: “Be you apes,^{*83} despised.”

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ الَّذِينَ اعْتَدَوْا مِنْكُمْ فِي السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ



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

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

66. Then We made this an example for those who were present, and those who

فَجَعَلْنَاهَا نَكَالًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلْفَهَا وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

succeeded them, and an admonition for the righteous.



67. And when Moses said to his people: “Indeed, Allah commands you that you slaughter a cow. They said: “Do you take us in ridicule.” He said: “I seek refuge in Allah, that I should be among the ignorant.”

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقْرَةً قَالُوا أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُؤًا قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ



68. They said: “Call upon your Lord for us that He may make clear to us what (cow) it is.” He (Moses) said: “Verily, He (Allah) says, it is a cow neither old nor virgin, (but) median between that. So do what you are commanded.”

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ لَّا فَارِضٌ وَلَا بَكْرٌ عَوَانٌ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ فَافْعَلُوا مَا تُؤْمَرُونَ



69. They said: “Call upon your Lord for us that He may make clear to us what its color is.” He (Moses) said: “Verily, He (Allah) says, it is a yellow cow, bright in its color, pleasing to the beholders.”

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا لَوْنُهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ صَفْرَاءٌ فَاقْعُ لَوْنَهَا تَسْرُّ النَّظِيرِينَ



70. They said: “Call upon your Lord for us that He may make clear to us what (cow) it is. In fact, cows are much alike to us. And surely, if Allah wills, we will be guided.”

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ إِنَّ الْبَقَرَ تَشَبَهَ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

71. He (Moses) said: “Verily, He (Allah) says, it is a cow, neither yoked to plow the land, nor to irrigate the crops. Whole, without blemish on it.”

قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ لَّا ذَلُولٌ تُثِيرُ الْأَرْضَ وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسَلَّمَةٌ لَّا شِيَةَ فِيهَا ۚ قَالُوا أَلَّعَنَّ جِئْتَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ فذَنبُوهَا وَمَا كَادُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

They said: “Now you have come with the truth.”

So they slaughtered it, though they almost did not do (it).^{*84}

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

the other in order to put it off, but the more questions they asked the more they were driven into a tight corner. So much so that at last they were specifically told to sacrifice that very golden colored cow, which was being specially chosen for worship at that time. The Bible also mentions this incident, but does not tell how the Israelites tried to put it off by asking a number of unnecessary questions.

72. And when you killed a man, then disputed over it. And Allah was (bound) to bring forth that which you were hiding.

وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَادَّارَأْتُمْ فِيهَا
وَاللَّهُ مَخْرُجٌ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ



73. So We said: “Strike him (the slain man) with a part of it (the cow).” Thus Allah brings to life the dead, and He shows you His signs so that you may understand.*85

فَقُلْنَا أَضْرِبُوهُ بِبَعْضِهَا كَذَلِكَ
يُحْيِي اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَى وَيُرِيكُمْ
آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ



***85** The wording of the Quran clearly shows that the murdered man came to life for a little while and told the name of his murderer. However, there is some ambiguity concerning the method applied for discovering the murderer, that is, the striking of the dead body of the murdered man with a piece of the sacrificed cow. A method similar to this described in Deut. 21: 1-9, confirms the interpretation put forward by the ancient scholars, that is, the dead body was struck with a piece of the flesh of the

sacrificed cow and it came to life. In this way, a sign of Allah was shown and at the same time it was demonstrated that the object of their worship was so powerless that its slaughter did not cause any harm. On the contrary, its slaughter proved useful.

74. Then after that your hearts became hardened, so they being like rocks, or even worse in hardness. And indeed, of the rocks are that, out of which rivers gush forth. And indeed, of them (rocks) are that, which split open so the water comes out from them. And indeed, of them (rocks) are that, which fall down for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.

ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ
ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ
قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا
يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا
لَمَا يَشَقُّ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ
وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ
اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا
تَعْمَلُونَ



75. Do you have any hope that they would believe^{*86} in you, and indeed there was a faction among them who used to listen to the word of Allah (Torah), then they used to change it, even after what they had understood it, while they were knowing.^{*87}

أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا لَكُمْ
وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ
كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تَحَرَّفُونَهُ مِنْ
بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ



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

be upon him) as the Prophet about whom prophecies have been made in their own Books. They have been warned that they should not entertain such expectations from the people whose history has been so and so. This was necessary because they were liable to become disheartened because of the rejection of Islam by them. As to the Jews, they had become so degenerate and hard hearted that they were not moved even by those verses which melted the hearts of the pagans who formerly used to kill their own daughters. Not only this, these hard hearted Jews made fun of those very verses also. Therefore, the zealous Muslims were warned that they should understand the real condition of the Jews, who had corrupted the truth to suit their own desires and then had the audacity to have their hopes centered on the religion which they had themselves perverted. It was wrong to entertain any vain hopes that such people would accept the truth as soon as it was presented before them.

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

76. And when they (Jews) meet with those who believe, they say: “We believed.” And when they are alone, with one another, they say: “Do

وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قَالُوا
ءَامِنًا وَإِذَا خَلَا بِبَعْضِهِمْ إِلَى
بَعْضٍ قَالُوا أَتُحَدِّثُونَهُمْ بِمَا فَتَحَ

you tell them of what Allah has disclosed to you, that they (Muslims) may argue with you about it before your Lord.*88 Have you then no understanding.”

اللَّهُ عَلَيكُمْ لِيَحْجُبُوا بِهِ
عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾

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

77. Do they not know that Allah knows that which they conceal, and that which they proclaim.

أَوَلَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا
يُسْرُونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

78. And among them are illiterates, who do not know

وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

the Scripture, except wishful thinking. And they do nothing but conjecture.*89

الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا أَمَانِيَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا
يُظُنُّونَ



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

79. Then woe be to those who write the Scripture with their own hands, then they say, "This is from Allah," that they may sell it for a small price.*90 Then woe be to them for that which their hands have written, and woe be to them for that which they earn.

فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ
بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ
عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا
فَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا كَتَبَتْ
أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا
يَكْسِبُونَ



*90 This refers to what their learned people did. They not only perverted their Scriptures to suit their desires and vanities, but also blended with the text of the Bible their own interpretations, their national history, their superstitions, their self made theories, philosophies and laws. Then they presented all this mixture before the people

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

80. And they say: “Never will the Fire touch us, except for a certain number of days.^{*91} Say (O Muhammad): “Have you taken a covenant with Allah, so that Allah will not break His covenant. Or do you say about Allah that which you do not know.”

وَقَالُوا لَنْ تَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا
مَعْدُودَةً قُلْ أَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
عَهْدًا فَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ عَهْدَهُ ۗ أَمْ
تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ



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

81. Nay, but whoever has earned evil, and his sin has surrounded him. Then such are the companions of the Fire. They will abide therein forever.

بَلَىٰ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ
بِهِ خَطِيئَتُهُ ۗ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۗ هُمْ فِيهَا
خَالِدُونَ



82. And those who believe and do righteous deeds, such are the companions of the Garden. They will abide therein forever.

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ
الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

83. And when We took a covenant from the Children of Israel, (saying): “Do not worship (any) except Allah, and be good to parents, and the kindred, and the orphans, and the needy, and speak good to mankind, and establish prayer, and give the poor due. Then you turned away, except a few among you, while you are backsliders.”

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ
لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ
إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ
وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ
حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا
الزَّكَاةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
مِّنْكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ

84. And when We took your covenant, (saying): “Do not shed your blood, nor expel yourselves (each other) from your homes.” Then you acknowledged, and you are a witness (to it).

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ لَا
تَسْفِكُونَ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَلَا تُخْرِجُونَ
أَنفُسَكُمْ مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ
وَأَنتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ

85. Then, you are those who kill yourselves (each other), and expel a faction of you (your people) from their homes, supporting (one another) against them by sin and transgression. And if they come to you as captives, you would ransom them, although it was forbidden to you their expulsion. Then do you believe in part of the Scripture, and disbelieve you in part.*92 Then what is the recompense of those who do so among you, except disgrace in the life of the world, and on the Day of Resurrection they will be sent back to the severest of punishment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.

ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ هَٰؤُلَاءِ تَقْتُلُونَ
 أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتُخْرِجُونَ فَرِيقًا مِّنْكُمْ
 مِّن دِيَارِهِمْ تَظَاهَرُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ
 بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَإِن يَأْتُوكُمْ
 أُسْرَىٰ تَفْدُوهُمْ وَهُوَ مُحْرَمٌ
 عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجُهُمْ أَفْئُتُونُونَ
 بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ
 بِبَعْضِ ۗ فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَن يَفْعَلُ
 ذَٰلِكَ مِنكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْيٌ فِي
 الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
 يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ ۗ وَمَا
 اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

*92 As a concrete example of this may be cited the strange conduct of the different clans of the Jews, who lived in the neighborhood of Al-Madinah. Before the migration of the Prophet (peace be upon him), they had entered into alliances with the neighboring Arab clans, Aus and Khazraj. When one Arab clan went to war with the other clan, their respective Jewish allies also went to war against

each other. Thus Jews waged war upon Jews, whereas this was clearly against the teachings of their Scriptures which they knowingly violated. But when the Jews of one clan fell into the hands of the other clan as prisoners of war, they would redeem them after taking ransom for them. When they were questioned about this inhuman trade of their own brethren, they tried to justify it, saying that it was allowed by the Scriptures. It is strange that they forgot the same Scriptures which they brazen facedly violated by going to war against each other. Thus on the one hand, they accepted that part of the Scriptures which allowed ransom for prisoners and, on the other hand, rejected that part which prohibited war against their own brethren in faith.

86. Such are those who have bought the life of the world (in exchange) for the Hereafter. So the punishment will not be lightened from them, nor will they be helped.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ
الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ ۗ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ
عَنَّهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ



87. And certainly, We gave Moses the Scripture, and followed up with a succession of messengers after him. And We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear signs, and We supported him with the Holy spirit.^{*93} Is it that, whenever

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ
وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ
وَءَاتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ
وَإَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ ۗ أَفَكُلَّمَا

there came to you a messenger with that which you yourselves did not desire, you were arrogant. Then a group you disbelieved, and (another) group you killed.

جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَى
أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَتَكْبِرْتُمْ فَفَرِيقًا
كَذَّبْتُمْ وَفَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ



***93** *Ruh-ul-Qudus* (Holy Spirit) may refer to revelation or to angel Gabriel who brought it to the Prophets or to the Holy soul of Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) which Allah had created pure. “Clear signs” refer to his miracles and to his wonderful personal qualities and his miraculous birth, which were to every lover of truth a clear proof of the fact that he was a true Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah.

88. And they say: “Our hearts are covered over.”^{*94} Nay, but Allah has cursed them for their disbelief. So little is that which they believe.

وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ بَل لَّعَنَهُمُ
اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلًا مَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ



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

89. And when there came to them a Book (the Quran) from Allah, confirming that which is with them, though before that they used to ask for a victory over those who disbelieved. Then when there came to them that which they recognized (to be the truth), they disbelieved in it.*95 So the curse of Allah is upon the disbelievers.

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ كِتَابٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
 مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ وَكَانُوا مِنْ
 قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مَا عَرَفُوا
 كَفَرُوا بِهِ ۗ فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى
 الْكَافِرِينَ



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

understand the attitude of the Jews who, instead of accepting him as the Prophet for whom they had been so anxiously waiting, had become his greatest opponents. As to the fact that they did recognize the Prophet (peace be upon him), many proofs were furnished at that very time. The most authentic evidence is that of Safiyyah (one of the wives of the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with her), who was the daughter of one learned Jew and the niece of another. She says, "When the Prophet (peace be upon him) migrated to Al-Madinah, my father and uncle went to see him. When they returned home, I heard the following conversation between them: Uncle: Is he really the same Prophet about whom there occur prophecies in our Books? Father: By God, he is the same. Uncle: Are you quite sure of it? Father: Yes. Uncle: Then what is your intention? Father: I will oppose him as long as I live and will not let his mission succeed.

90. How evil is that for which they have sold their own selves,^{*96} that they would disbelieve in that which Allah has revealed (the Quran), grudging that Allah would send down of His favor upon whom He wills from among His servants.^{*97} So they have drawn on themselves wrath upon wrath. And for the

بِئْسَمَا أَشْتَرُوا بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ أَنْ
يَكْفُرُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بَغْيًا أَنْ
يُنزِلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ عَلَى مَنْ
يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ فَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ
عَلَى غَضَبٍ ۗ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ
عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ



disbelievers there is a humiliating punishment.

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

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

91. And when it is said to them: “Believe in that which Allah has revealed,” they say: “We believe in that which was revealed to us.” And they disbelieve in that which came after it, though it is the truth confirming that which is with them. Say (O Muhammad): “Then why did you kill the prophets of Allah before, if you are believers.”

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ
اللَّهُ قَالُوا نُوْمِنُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْنَا
وَيَكْفُرُونَ بِمَا وَرَاءَهُ وَهُوَ
الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَهُمْ ۗ قُلْ
فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْبِيَاءَ اللَّهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

92. And certainly, Moses came to you with clear signs, then you took the calf (for worship) after he

﴿٩٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَىٰ
بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ

was away, and you were wrongdoers.

مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ



93. And when We took your covenant, and We raised the Mount above you, (saying): “Hold to that which We have given you firmly, and hear (Our Word).” They said: “We hear and we disobey.” And was made to absorb in their hearts (the worship of) the calf because of their disbelief. Say: “Evil is that which your faith enjoins on you, if you are believers.”

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ الطُّورَ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَأَسْمِعُوا قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَشْرَبُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ قُلْ بَسْمًا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِهِ إِيمَانُكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ



94. Say: “If the home of the Hereafter with Allah is exclusively for you, instead of (other) people, then wish for death, if you are truthful.”*98

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أَلْدَارُ الْآخِرَةِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَالِصَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ



***98** This was a retort which implied that if they really were sure and enamored of the Hereafter, they would not dread death, but would prefer it to the life in this world. They,

however, were (and are) so much given to this worldliness that they were terrified by the very thought of death and the Hereafter.

95. And never will they wish for it, ever, because of that which their own hands have sent forth. And Allah is All Aware of the wrongdoers.

وَلَنْ يَتَمَنَّوْهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ
أَيْدِيهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

96. And you will surely find them the most greedy of mankind for life,^{*99} and (even) more than those who associate partners (to Allah). Everyone of them wishes if he could be given life of a thousand years. But it would not remove him in the least from the punishment, even (grant) of a life. And Allah is All Seer of what they do.

وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ
عَلَىٰ حَيَوٰةٍ ۖ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ
أَشْرَكُوا ۗ يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ
أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمُزَحِّزِهِ
مِنَ الْعَذَابِ ۗ أَنْ يُعَمَّرَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

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

97. Say: “Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel,^{*100} for indeed he brought it (Quran) down to your heart by

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِجِبْرِيلَ
فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ ۖ عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

Allah's permission,^{*101} confirming that which was (revealed) before it,^{*102} and a guidance and glad tidings^{*103} for the believers.”

مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ
وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

***100** The Jews not only reviled Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the believers, but also spoke abusively of Gabriel, the chosen divine messenger. They said. “He is our enemy: He is not an angel of blessings but of affliction.”

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

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

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

98. “Whoever is an enemy to Allah, and His angels, and His messengers, and Gabriel, and Michael, then

مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِلَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ
وَرُسُلِهِ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَالَ

indeed, Allah is an enemy to the disbelievers.”

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾

99. And indeed We have sent down to you manifest verses, and none disbelieve in them except those who are disobedient.

وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ
وَمَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَا إِلَّا الْفَاسِقُونَ

100. Is it (not true) that every time they took a covenant, a party of them threw it away. But most of them do not believe.

أَوْ كَلَّمَا عَاهَدُوا عَهْدًا نَبَذَهُ
فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ ۚ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

101. And when there came to them a messenger from Allah, confirming that which was with them, a party of those who had been given the Scripture, threw the Scripture of Allah behind their backs as if they did not know.

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ
اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ نَبَذَ فَرِيقٌ
مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ
كَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

102. And they follow that which the devils had recited during the kingdom of Solomon. ^{*104} And Solomon did not disbelieve, but the devils disbelieved, teaching

وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُوا الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَى
مُلْكِ سُلَيْمَانَ ۗ وَمَا كَفَرَ
سُلَيْمَانُ وَلَٰكِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ

people magic, and that which was sent down to the two angels in Babylon, Harut and Marut. And they (the two angels) did not teach (it) to anyone, till they had said: "We are only a trial, so do not disbelieve (in the guidance of Allah)."^{*105} Then from these two (angles) they learned that by which they could cause separation between man and his wife.^{*106} And they could not harm through it any one, except by Allah's permission. And they learned that which harmed them, and did not benefit them. And surely they knew that whoever purchased it (magic), will not have in the Hereafter any share. And surely evil is that for which they have sold themselves, if they only knew.

كَفَرُوا يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ
وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَى الْمَلَكَيْنِ بِبَابِلَ
هَرُوتَ وَمَرُوتَ ۚ وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ
مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّى يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ
فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ ۗ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ
مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ
الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ ۚ وَمَا هُمْ
بِضَارِينَ بِهِ مِنَ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ
اللَّهِ ۗ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا
يَنْفَعُهُمْ ۚ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا لَمَنِ
اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ
خَلْقٍ وَلَبِئْسَ مَا شَرَوْا بِهِ
أَنْفُسَهُمْ لَوْ كَانُوا
يَعْلَمُونَ

***104** *Shayatin* may refer both to the devils from among the jinn or to the devils from among human beings. Here it

refers to both. When the Jews fell to the lowest depths of degeneration, morally and materially, and lost all the noble qualities because of their captivity, ignorance, poverty, homeless wanderings, etc. they turned to magic, sorcery, enchantment, witchcraft and other black arts and occult sciences. They began to adopt methods through which they could attain all their ends without putting in any kind of labor and toil. Then the devils began to beguile them by ascribing the origin of the occult sciences to Solomon and proclaimed that Solomon owed his wonderful kingdom and his extraordinary powers to the occult sciences which they were teaching the people. Jews at once succumbed and welcomed these as a great boon: so much so that even their rabbis began to practice magical arts. Consequently they lost all their interest in the Scriptures and would not listen to those who invited them to Allah's guidance. Here the Quran refutes not only the false accusation of sorcery against Solomon, but also the other charges leveled against him in the Bible (Kings, Chapter 11). According to it, Solomon was a lover of women and his wives seduced him to follow foreign gods, and he did what was evil in the eyes of the Eternal and put up shrines and idols of their gods. The Quran refutes these charges, so as to say, Solomon was never involved in any practices of disbelief, and only that one who was a disbeliever could be guilty of love of women, worship of gods and idols, and what was evil in the eyes of the Eternal.

*105 The incident referred to in this verse has been interpreted in different ways, but what I have been able to

understand is this: It appears that when the Istraelites were captives in Babylon, Allah sent two angels in human guise to test them. Just as the angels were sent to the people of the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) as handsome boys, so they were sent to the Israelites as saints and religious guides. For this purpose, they might have set up an institution to teach magic and might also be warning everyone who came to learn these things, saying: We are holding out these temptations merely for your trial. You should not, therefore, ruin your Hereafter by seeking this science. But in spite of this warning, the people came to them in large numbers for talismans, charms and amulets. There is nothing strange in the coming of angels in human guise. Being agents of divine kingdom, they are endowed with extraordinary powers to perform their respective duties. As to the question why they taught magic to the people, we can understand this by an illustration. It is like the case of the police who sometimes arrange to hand over signed currency notes to corrupt officials as bribes in order to catch them red handed. Just as there is nothing wrong in this, so there is nothing wrong in what the angels did for the trial of the degenerate Jews.

***106** The greatest demand on this occult science was for an amulet or a device to help separate a wife from her husband in order to entice her. This shows how depraved they had become. Their greatest enjoyment was to make love with other people's wives and to separate them from their husbands. This was the worst form of depravity because it struck at the root of family life which is the very

foundation of society. If the relations between husband and wife are sound, the whole society will be sound and solid. But if they are bad, the whole society will become rotten. Thus they were the worst offenders because they cut at the root of those relations on which depended their own solidarity and that of their society. A tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) says that Satan sends his agents to the four corners of the world. When they come back to him to report, they relate the deeds they have performed. One says that he has created such and such dispute, and the other says that he has spread chaos and so on, but Satan goes on commenting, “You have done nothing.” Then comes another who says; “I have caused division between a man and his wife.” Satan hugs him and says, “You have indeed done a great deed.” In the light of this tradition, it becomes clear why the two angels were sent to the Israelites with the charm that caused division between man and wife; that was, in fact, the very standard which could measure accurately their moral degradation.

103. And if they had believed and feared (Allah), then the reward from Allah would have been better, if they only knew.

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ ءَامَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَمَثُوبَةٌ
مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَّوْ كَانُوا
يَعْلَمُونَ

104. O those who believe, ^{*107} do not say (to the Prophet): “Raina (word of insult but sounding as ‘listen

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا
تَقُولُوا رَاعِنَا وَقُولُوا أَنْظِرْنَا

to us’),” but say “Look upon us,” and listen.*108 And for the disbelievers there is a painful punishment.

وَأَسْمَعُوا
وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

*107 From this verse onward, the believers have been warned to be on their guard against the different kinds of mischief which the Jews were fomenting against Islam and the Islamic community. Besides this, doubts and suspicions which were being disseminated by them in the minds and hearts of the Muslims have been removed and those special problems which came up for discussion between the Muslims and the Jews have been dealt with. Here it should also be kept in view that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to live at Al-Madinah, and Islam began to spread in the country around it, the Jews tried to involve the Muslims in various kinds of religious disputes and theological controversies. They also tried to affect the simple and sincere Muslims with the same disease from which they themselves were suffering, that is, the malady of hair splitting and asking frivolous and irrelevant questions. For this purpose, they attended even the meetings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and resorted to cunning and subtle talk, which showed how depraved they had become.

*108 Whenever the Jews came to attend the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) assembly, they showed every kind of outward respect to him but surreptitiously tried their best to insult and slight him. They would use ambiguous words derisively or twist them into an insult by a slight

mispronunciation. For instance, if they wanted to invite his attention to any particular thing they would say “Raina” which means “Just pay attention, please,” but it has other meanings also. In Hebrew there was a word of similar sound which meant, “Listen, may you become deaf,” and in Arabic itself it also meant, “a proud and ignorant person.” Besides this, in colloquial speech it meant, “If you listen to us, we will listen to you.” Then with a little twist of the tongue it could be turned into “Raiyana” which means “Our shepherd”. In order to guard against the use of such ambiguous words as sounded complimentary but might be abused by wicked people. The believers were advised to say, “unzurna” means “kindly pay attention to us,” which could serve the same purpose without having any secondary bad sense like “raina”. They were also advised to listen attentively to the Prophet (peace be upon him) so that there should be no need of inviting his attention.

105. Neither wish those who disbelieve among the people of the Scripture, nor those who associate others (with Allah), that there should be sent down to you any good from your Lord. And Allah selects for His mercy whom He wills. And Allah is the owner of great bounty.

مَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ
الْكِتَابِ وَلَا الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ
عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ
يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

106. We do not abrogate any verse, or cause it to be forgotten, ^{*109} (but) We bring better than it, or similar to it. Do you not know that Allah has power over all things.

﴿ مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا ۗ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴾



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

107. Do you not know that it is Allah to whom belongs the dominion

﴿ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَكُمْ ﴾

of the heavens and the earth. And you do not have, other than Allah, any protector, nor helper.

مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا
نَصِيرٍ ١٠٧

108. Or do you intend that you ask your messenger (Muhammad) as Moses was asked before.^{*110} And whoever exchanges faith for disbelief, then indeed, he has strayed from a right way.

أَمْ تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَسْأَلُوا
رَسُولَكُمْ كَمَا سَأَلَ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ
قَبْلُ ۗ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الْكُفْرَ
بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ
السَّبِيلِ ١٠٨

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

109. Many of the people of the Scripture wish if

وَدَّ كَثِيرٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ

they could turn you back as disbelievers after your belief. Out of envy from their own selves, after what has become manifest to them of the truth. So forgive and overlook,^{*111} until Allah brings His command. Indeed, Allah has power over all things.

لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِكُمْ
كُفَّارًا حَسَدًا مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ
فَاعْفُوا وَاصْفَحُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ
اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

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

110. And establish prayer, and give the poor due. And whatever you send forth before (you) for yourselves of good, you will find it with Allah. Indeed, Allah is All Seer of what you do.

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا
الزَّكَاةَ ۚ وَمَا تَقَدَّمُوا
لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ
اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
بَصِيرٌ

111. And they say: “None shall enter paradise except he be a Jew or a Christian.” That is their own wishful thinking.^{*112} Say: “Bring your proof if you are truthful.”

وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصْرِيًّا تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ



***112** It means, in fact these are merely their own wishes, but they assert these as if they were actually going to happen.

112. Nay, but whoever submits his face (self) to Allah, and he is a doer of good, then for him is his reward with his Lord. And no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve.

بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ



113. And the Jews say: “The Christians are not upon any thing (true faith).” And the Christians say: “The Jews are not upon any thing (true faith).” And they (both) read the Scripture.^{*113} Thus speak those (pagans) who do not know, same as their words. So Allah will judge

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتْ النَّصْرِيُّ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَقَالَتِ النَّصْرِيُّ لَيْسَتْ الْيَهُودُ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ

between them on the Day of Resurrection about that in which they used to differ.

فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

*113 It refers to the idolaters of Arabia, who were ignorant of the Scriptures, and sanctuary for mankind and enjoined the people to dedicate to worship the place where Abraham (peace be upon him) used to stand for prayer.

114. And who is more unjust than the one who forbids, in the places of worship of Allah, that His name should be mentioned therein, and strives for their ruin. Those, it was not for them that they should enter them (places of worship) except in fear.*114 For them in this world is disgrace, and for them in the Hereafter is a great punishment.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن مَّنَعَ مَسْجِدَ
اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذَكَّرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَى
فِي خَرَابِهَا أُولَئِكَ مَا كَانَ
لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا
خَافِينَ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا
خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيمٌ

*114 That is, the places of worship should not be in the hands of such transgressors, who become their trustees, but under the management of those who possess power and fear Allah. This arrangement will prevent the wicked people from doing any mischief there for fear of retribution. It also implied that the disbelievers of Makkah had quite unjustly prevented their own brethren (who had

embraced Islam) from entering the Kabah which they themselves called the House of Allah.

115. And to Allah belong the east and the west. So wherever you turn, there is the Face of Allah.*115 Indeed, Allah is All Encompassing, All Knowing.*116

وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ ۚ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

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

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

116. And they say: “Allah has taken unto Himself a son.” Be He glorified. But to Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. All surrender with obedience

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا ۚ سُبْحٰنَهُ ۗ بَل لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۗ كُلُّ لَّهُ قٰنِطُوْنَ

to Him.

117. The Originator of the heavens and the earth. And when He decrees a matter, He only says to it: "Be." And it is.

بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ
كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿١١٧﴾

118. And those who have no knowledge say: "Why does not Allah speak to us, or (why not) comes to us some sign."*¹¹⁷ So said those before them, similar to their words. Their hearts are alike.*¹¹⁸ We have indeed made clear the signs for the people who believe with certainty.*¹¹⁹

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ لَوْلَا
يُكَلِّمُنَا اللَّهُ أَوْ تَأْتِينَا آيَةٌ
كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ مِن
قَبْلِهِم مِّثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ تَشَبَهَتْ
قُلُوبُهُمْ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ
يُوقِنُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾

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

***118** That is, the objections and demands of those who are opposing the truth today are not new. These are exactly the same as have always been put forward by those who go astray from the right way, as all the wicked people of all

ages think alike and follow the same line of argument.

***119** The demand that Allah Himself should speak to them was so absurd that it needed no reply. As to the other demand that Allah should show them a sign, Allah answers that He has shown many clear signs but those who are not inclined to believe cannot see them.

119. Certainly, We have sent you (O Muhammad) with the truth, as a bringer of good tidings, and a warner.^{*120} And you will not be asked about the companions of Hell fire.

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا
وَنَذِيرًا وَلَا تُسْأَلُ عَنْ أَصْحَابِ
الْجَحِيمِ



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

120. And the Jews will never be pleased with you, nor the Christians, until you follow their religion.^{*121} Say: “Indeed, the guidance of Allah, it is the (only) guidance.” And if you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of the

وَلَنْ تَرْضَىٰ عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا
النَّصَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ قُلْ
إِنَّ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ
وَلَئِنْ أَتَبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ
الَّذِي جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ

knowledge, (then) you would not have against Allah any protector, nor a helper.

مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٢٠﴾

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

121. Those to whom We have given the Book, they recite it with its true recital. Those (are the ones who) believe in it.^{*122} And whoever disbelieves in it, then such are those who are the losers.

الَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ
حَقًّا تِلَاوَتِهِ ءَأُولَئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِهِ ؕ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهِ ءَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾

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

122. O Children of Israel, *123 remember My favor which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you over the worlds (people).

يَبْنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِي
الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي
فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ



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

(1) After Noah, Abraham (peace be upon them) was the first prophet who was appointed by God to spread the universal message of Islam (submission to One God). He began his mission in his own country, Iraq, and invited the people to Islam (submission to One God). Then he visited Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Arabia with the same mission. Afterwards he appointed his deputies in different places. He deputed Lot (peace be upon them), his nephew, to Trans-Jordan, Isaac (peace be upon them), his son, to Syria and Palestine, and Ismail (peace be upon them), the elder son, to Arabia. Then he was commanded by Allah to build at Makkah the house of worship which is called the Kabah and to make it the centre of his mission.

(2) From the two sons of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) sprang two nations Ismailites and Israelites. The former were the descendants of Ishmael (peace be upon him) who settled in Arabia. The Quraish and some other Arab clans were his direct descendants but even those Arab clans which were not his descendants claimed to be Ismailites because they were more or less influenced by his mission. The latter, the Israelites, were the descendants of

Jacob, son of Isaac. Jospheh, Moses, David, Solomon, John, Jesus (peace be upon them all) and many other prophets rose from among them. They were called Israelites after Israel, the second name of Jacob (peace be upon him). Some other people who accepted their religion also merged into them. All the Prophets of Israel, including Jesus (peace be upon him), preached Islam (submission to One God), but when the Israelites became degenerate and lost their religion (Islam), they invented Judaism and later Christianity.

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

(4) In the foregoing address (Ayats 40-121), Allah has charged the Israelites with their sins of omission and

commission during their leadership. Therefore the Quran points out their moral condition and tells them plainly, “You have proved yourselves quite unworthy of the favor shown to you. You have not only neglected to perform the obligations of leadership but have also discarded the guidance of Allah from your own lives. Now the things have come to such a pass that you have become a community utterly unfit for leadership.”

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

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

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

prayer of Abraham and Ismail. It is, because he followed the same way as was followed by Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and all the Prophets (peace be upon them) before him. He and his followers believed in all the prophets sent by Allah, and invited the world to the same way that was shown by the former prophets. Therefore the followers of this Prophet alone were worthy of that leadership.

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

(9) After declaring the Muslims to be the leaders, with the Kabah as their centre, Allah gives instructions (Ayats 153-286) for their guidance to enable them to carry out their

obligations as leaders of the world.

123. And fear a Day (of Judgment) when no soul will avail (another) soul at all, nor will compensation be accepted from it, nor will intercession benefit it, nor will they be helped.

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ
نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ
وَلَا تَنْفَعُهَا شَفَعَةٌ وَلَا هُمْ
يُنصَرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

124. And when Abraham was tried by his Lord with certain words (commands),^{*124} so he fulfilled them. He (Allah) said: “Surely, I have appointed you a leader for mankind.” He said: “And of my descendants.” He (Allah) said: “My covenant does not reach the wrongdoers.”^{*125}

﴿١٢٤﴾ وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ
بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي
جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ
ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

***124** At different places, the Quran has described in details the hard test to which Abraham (peace be upon him) was put before he was made the leader and guide of mankind. When he passed successfully through all those trials and proved himself fit and capable of performing this great responsibility, he was exalted to this high position. Ever since the truth was revealed to him, his whole life was a series of sacrifices in its cause. He sacrificed everything which is valued in life, and encountered every kind of

danger in the way of truth.

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

125. And when We made the House (Kaaba) a place of return for mankind, and a safety. (Saying): “And take, from the place where Abraham stood, as a place of prayer.” And We commanded to Abraham and Ishmael that: “Purify My house for those who go around, and those who stay therein and those who bow down (and) prostrate.”^{*126}

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ
وَأَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلِّينَ وَعَهْدَنَا إِلَىٰ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَن طَهِّرَا
بَيْتِي لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ
وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ



***126** The purification of the House was not only to be from rubbish but also from all kinds of false worship so that the name of Allah alone should be glorified in it. The real purification of Allah’s House is that no other name than His should be mentioned in it. For the worship of anyone else or the invoking of any other name for help really polluted the House. This verse charges, in a subtle manner, the Quraish with the crime of keeping idols in the Kabah and worshipping them instead of Allah. It implies that these idolaters who were proud of being the heirs of Abraham

and Ismail (peace be upon them) were not discharging the obligations of that heritage. Hence they, like the Israelites, have forfeited all rights to the promise of Allah made to Abraham (peace be upon him). It refers to the idolaters of Arabia, who were ignorant of the Scriptures, and sanctuary for mankind and enjoined the people to dedicate to worship the place where Abraham (peace be upon him) used to stand for prayer.

126. And when Abraham said: “My Lord, make this a secure city, and provide its people with fruits, those among them who believe in Allah and the Last Day.” He (Allah) said: “And whoever disbelieves, so I shall give him enjoyment for a little while,^{*127} then I shall force him to the punishment of the Fire. And (it is) an evil destination.”

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ
هَذَا بَلَدًا ءَامِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ
مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ مَنْ ءَامَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ
فَأَمْتَعُهُ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ أَضْطَرُّهُ إِلَى
عَذَابِ النَّارِ وَيُسَّ الْمَصِيرُ

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

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

127. And when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House, and Ishmael. (Saying): “Our Lord, accept (this) from us. Indeed, You are the All Hearer, the All Knower.”

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ
الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ
مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ



128. “Our Lord, and make us submissive to You, and from our offspring, a nation submissive to You. And show us our rituals (of pilgrimage), and accept our repentance. Indeed, You are the one who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful.”

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِن
ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا
مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ



129. “Our Lord, and raise in them a messenger from among them, who shall recite to them Your verses, and shall teach them the Book and wisdom and purify

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ
يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ

them.*128 Indeed, You are
the All Mighty, the All
Wise.”*129

أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ
١٢٩

*128 “Purify them”, purify their beliefs, ideas, deeds, habits, customs, culture, politics, in short, every aspect of life.

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

130. And who would be averse to the religion of Abraham, except him who befools himself. And We had indeed chosen him in the world. And indeed, in the Hereafter, he will be among the righteous.

وَمَنْ يَرْغَبُ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا
مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدْ
أَصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي
الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ
١٣٠

131. When his Lord said to him: “Submit.”*130 He said: “I have submitted myself to the Lord of the Worlds.”

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ
أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
١٣١

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

and attitude. This was the religion of all the Prophets who came to different countries and different nations.

132. And Abraham enjoined the same (submission to Allah) upon his sons, and Jacob, (saying):^{*131} “O my sons, indeed, Allah has chosen for you this religion,^{*132} so do not die except while you have submitted.”^{*133}

وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ
وَيَعْقُوبُ يَبْنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ
لَكُمْ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ
مُسْلِمُونَ



***131** Special mention of Jacob (peace be upon him) has been made because the Israelites were his direct descendants.

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

***133** Though Jacob’s (peace be upon him) death has been described in details in the Bible, no mention has been made of this last will of his. It, however, has been given in details in the Talmud and its substance is more or less the same as that contained in the Quran: At the time when Jacob (peace be upon him) quitted this world, he summoned his sons and said to them, “Serve the Lord your God, and He will deliver you from all trouble, even as He delivered your fathers. Teach your children to love God, and observe His commandments, for God will guard those who do justly and walk in righteousness through all his ways.” The sons

of Jacob (peace be upon him) responded, “All that you have commanded us, our father, we will do. May God be with us.” And Jacob (peace be upon him) answered: “The Lord will be with you if you shall depart not from His Ways to the right hand or the left.” The same thing about the Prophet Jacob’s (peace be upon him) will has been cited in Midr. Rabbah, “Have you any doubts in your hearts concerning the Holy One, Blessed be He.” They said, “Hear O Israel, our Father. As there is no doubt in thy heart, so neither is there in ours. For the Lord is our God, and He is One.”

133. Or were you present when death approached Jacob, when he said to his sons: “What will you worship after me.” They said: “We shall worship your God, and the God of your fathers, Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, One God, and to Him we have submitted.”

أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ
 يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتُ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا
 تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ
 إِلَهَكَ وَإِلَهَ آبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
 وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًا
 وَاحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

134. That was a nation which has passed away. For them is that which they earned, and for you is what you earn. And you will not be asked of what they used to do. *134

تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا
 كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا
 تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

***134** That is, though you are their descendants, you have no real connection with them; nor have you any right to claim relationship with them, when you have swerved from their way. Allah will not ask you what your forefathers did but He will ask you what you yourselves did. What we call our actions and deeds are, according to the Quran, our earnings, because every action and every deed either produces a good result or a bad consequence. If it is good, Allah will be pleased with us and give us its due reward. If it is bad, He will inflict due punishment upon us. The Quran refers to actions and deeds as earnings in order to focus attention on the serious results produced by them.

135. And they say: “Be Jews or Christians, you will be guided.” Say: “Nay, (we follow) the religion of Abraham, the firm in faith, and he was not of those who associate partners (with Allah).”^{*135}

وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ
 نَصْرَىٰ تَهْتَدُوا ۗ قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ
 إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا ۗ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ
 الْمُشْرِكِينَ



***135** In order to understand the true significance of this answer, two things should be kept in mind:
 (1) Judaism and Christianity were born long after the death of Abraham (peace be upon him). Judaism, with its special rituals, peculiar regulations, etc., took its birth and name some four hundred years before Christ. As to Christianity, it took its name and adopted its special creed and form long after the recall of Jesus (peace be upon him). Thus it is clear that their claim that one must become a Jew

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

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

136. Say (O Muslims):
“We believe in Allah and
that which has been sent
down to us, and that which
was sent down to Abraham,
and Ishmael, and Isaac, and

قُولُوا ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا
وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ
وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ

Jacob, and the tribes, and that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and that which was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any one of them,^{*136} and to Him we have submitted.”

وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا
 أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا
 نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ
 مُسْلِمُونَ



***136** “We make no distinction between any one of them”, means that we believe in all the Prophets of Allah and reject none. It is obvious that all the Prophets who came from Allah brought the same truth and invited the people to the same guidance and the right way. Hence anyone who follows the truth must accept all the Prophets. Those who accept one Prophet and reject the other really reject even the one whom they profess to accept. Had they followed the universal Guidance taught by Moses, Jesus and other Prophets (peace be upon them), they could not have rejected any other Prophet, i.e. Muhammad (peace be upon him). As a matter of fact, they were not following the teachings of any Prophet, but merely professing to accept their own Prophets just because their fathers did so. Thus their real religion was prejudice, race worship and blind imitation of their forefathers.

137. So if they believe in the same that which you believe in, then indeed they are (rightly) guided. And if they

فَإِنْ ءَامَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ
 فَقَدْ أَهْتَدُوا وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا

turn away, then they are only in schism. So Allah will be sufficient for you against them. And He is the All Hearer, the All Knower.

هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمْ
اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

138. (Take) color (religion) of Allah,^{*137} and whose color (religion) can be better than Allah's. And we are His worshippers.

صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنْ
اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً وَنَحْنُ لَهُ عَابِدُونَ

***137** It may also mean, "We took Allah's color." Before the advent of Christianity, it was a custom among the Jews to give a bath to those who accepted Judaism. It meant to imply that all the sins of the baptized person were washed away and he had received a new color of life. This same custom was later on adopted by the Christians and it was termed Baptism, which is a ceremonial immersion in water or an application of water as an initiatory rite or sacrament of the Christian church. It is applied not only to the new converts but also to all new born babies. The Quran says that there is nothing substantial in this ceremonial coloring, since it is not necessary for salvation. For this purpose one should take color from Allah by adopting His way and submitting to His law.

139. Say (O Muhammad): "Do you argue with us about Allah, and He is our Lord and your Lord."^{*138} And for

قُلْ أَتَحَاجُّونَنَا فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا
وَرَبُّكُمْ وَلَنَا أَعْمَلْنَا وَلَكُمْ

us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds. And we are sincere to Him.”*139

أَعْمَلُكُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ



*138 That is, what we only say is that Allah is Lord of all of us, and we should all submit to Him. Why should you then have any dispute with us concerning Allah? Is it a thing concerning which you should have any dispute with us? As a matter of fact, it is we who have a cause of dispute and not you, for it is you (and not us) who associate other objects of worship with Allah. The original Arabic words may also mean: “Are you having a dispute with us for the sake of Allah?” It would then mean: “If you really are having a dispute with us for the sake of Allah and not for the sake of prejudice or worldly interests, it can be settled amicably.”

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

140. Or do you say that Abraham, and

أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes were Jews or Christians. Say: “Do you know more, or (does) Allah.*140 And who is more unjust than one who conceals a testimony which he has from Allah. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.”*141

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ
وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطَ كَانُوا
هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى قُلْ ءَأَنْتُمْ
أَعْلَمُ أَمِ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن
كَتَمَ شَهَادَةً عِنْدَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ



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

*141 This question was addressed to their scholars, who were not ignorant of the fact that Judaism and Christianity with their special rituals, etc., were the products of a later age. In spite of this they were under the delusion that the truth was confined to their own sects, and they kept their common people under the delusion that salvation depended on those beliefs, ways and regulations, which had been invented, long after the Prophets, by their own rabbis and priests, spiritual leaders and interpreters. Whenever they were confronted with the question: “To which of these sects of yours did Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and other Prophets (peace be upon them) belong?”, they would never answer

this directly. For they could not claim that those Prophets belonged to their particular sect as they knew that history proved that claim to be absurd. But, in spite of this established fact, they could not admit it in clear words that the Prophets were neither Jews nor Christians, because this would have automatically refuted their claims.

141. That was a nation which has passed away. For them is that which they earned, and for you is that which you earn. And you will not be asked of what they used to do.

تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا
كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا
تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



142. The foolish among the people will say: “What has turned them away from their qiblah which they used to face.”*142 Say: “To Allah belong the east and the west. He guides whom He wills to a straight path.”*143

❖ سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ
مَا وَلَّيْنَاهُمْ عَنْ قِبَلَتِهِمْ الَّتِي كَانُوا
عَلَيْهَا قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ
يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ
مُسْتَقِيمٍ



*142 After the Hijrah the Prophet (peace be upon him) continued to turn his face in the prayers towards the Temple (at Jerusalem) for about 16 or 17 months; then he was commanded to turn his face towards the Kabah (at Makkah). This change of the qiblah (direction for prayers)

with its implications has been described in details in the succeeding verses.

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

143. And thus We have made you a middle nation, that you may be witnesses against mankind, and the messenger may be a witness against you.^{*144} And We did not make the qiblah which you used to face, except that We might know him who follows the messenger, from him who would turn back on his heels.^{*145} And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allah has guided. And Allah would never

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا
لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ
وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا
وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ
عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ
الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى
عَقْبَيْهِ ۚ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا
عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ

cause your faith to be wasted. Indeed, Allah, towards people, is Kind, Most Merciful.

اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ



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

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

The meaning of, We have appointed you as *ummat wasat* so that you may be witnesses in regard to mankind and the Messenger may be a witness in regard to you, is: On the

Judgment Day, when all mankind will be called to account together, the Messenger, as Our authorized representative, will give evidence in regard to you to prove that he had imparted to you, by word and by deed, without any reservation, the whole teaching of sound thought, righteous deed and justice given by Us. Then you, being representatives of the Messenger, in your turn, will be required to give evidence to prove that you had done your utmost to impart, by word and deed, to mankind whatever the Messenger had imparted to you just as you had received it from the Messenger.

Thus, a person or group's being appointed by God a witness by itself amounts to its being exalted to the office of leadership and religious guide in the world. Though it is a position of honor, it carries very onerous responsibilities with it. It requires that the Muslim community should become a living witness of piety, truth and justice before the world just as the Prophet (peace be upon him) bore witness before it, and its words and deeds should suffice to demonstrate to the world the meaning of truth, justice and piety. It also implies that it is a great responsibility for which the Muslim community is accountable. Just as the Prophet (peace be upon him) was responsible for conveying the guidance of Allah, so the Muslims are responsible for conveying it to the people of the world. If they fail to prove in the court of Allah that they have discharged this responsibility to the best of their ability, they will be condemned there. And they along with their evil geniuses and accomplices shall be accountable for all the evils which

prevailed during their term of leadership, if they had shown any relaxation in the performance of their obligation as witnesses of the truth. On the Day of Judgment, Allah will surely ask, “What did you do to prevent it when you saw the epidemic of sin, tyranny and impiety breaking out in the world?”

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

144. We have certainly seen the turning of your face (O Muhammad) toward heaven. So, We shall surely turn you to a qiblah that you will be pleased with. So turn your face toward Al Masjid al Haram, and

قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي
السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا
فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ
الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا

wherever you (O Muslims) may be, so turn your faces toward it.*146 And indeed, those who have been given the Scripture know that it is the truth from their Lord. And Allah is not unaware of what they do.

وَجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ



*146 This is the commandment for the change of the qiblah, which was enjoined in Rajab or Shaban, A.H. 2. When this was revealed, according to Ibn Saad, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was leading the Zuhr (early afternoon) prayer in the house of Bishr bin Bara bin Maarur where he had gone in response to an invitation. This verse was revealed when he had gone through half of the prayer. He at once turned his face towards the Kabah during the prayer and those who were saying their prayers, following his lead did the same. Afterwards, it was announced publicly in Al-Madinah and its suburbs that the qiblah had been changed. Bara bin Azib says that at one place this announcement was heard at a time when the people had bent down in the prayer. But when they heard the commandment, they turned about in the same posture towards the Kabah. Anas bin Malik says that the people of Bani Salamah heard of the change of the qiblah next morning at a time when they had already gone through half of the prayer. As soon as they heard the announcement: Beware, the qiblah has been changed to the Kabah, the whole congregation turned about towards the Kabah.

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

Moreover, it is quite clear from “We have certainly seen the turning of your face (O Muhammad) toward heaven” and “So, We shall surely turn you to a qiblah that you will be pleased with”, that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray for, and was expecting this change. For he himself was feeling that the term of the leadership of the Israelites had come to an end and consequently Jerusalem had also ceased to be the centre. Therefore Kabah which had been set up by the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) should be the qiblah.

AlMasjid AlHaram means the “Inviolable place of worship and reverence”. It refers to that place of worship at Makkah which has the Kabah in its centre.

The commandment “So turn your faces toward it (the Kabah)” does not mean that one should turn one’s face exactly to the point of the Kabah from every part of the globe. Obviously it is very difficult for everyone to do so at all times from all places of the globe. That is why the Quran directs us to turn our faces towards the Kabah and not to the point of the Kabah : We should do our best to find out the exact direction of the Kabah: then if we are satisfied that a certain direction is most probably the correct

direction, we should turn our faces towards it. But when it is not possible to ascertain the exact direction (for example, in a boat or a train, etc.) one should turn ones face to the probable right direction, and if during the prayer the correct direction is found out, one should turn one's face towards it at once.

145. And even if you were to bring to those who have been given the Scripture every sign, they would not follow your qiblah. Nor would you be a follower of their qiblah. Nor are some of them followers of the qiblah of others. And if you were to follow their desires after that which has come to you of the knowledge, indeed, you would then be among the wrongdoers.*147

وَلَيْنَ أَتَيْتَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَا تَبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ وَمَا
أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتِهِمْ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ
بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ وَلَيْنَ آتَبَعْتَ
أَهْوَاءَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ
مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّكَ إِذَا لَمِنَ
الظَّالِمِينَ



*147 That is, you cannot convince by argument those who are disputing with you about the wisdom of the change of the qiblah because they are not disposed to listen to any reasoning on account of their deep prejudices and obduracy: nor can you end this dispute by adopting the qiblah of anyone of them; for all of them have different qiblahs, and, as a Prophet of Allah, you cannot make compromises on the principle of give and take. Therefore the only thing you have to do is to adhere to Our

commandments strictly and firmly. If you turn away from these, you will be transgressing the limits of prophethood and showing ingratitude towards the favor of leadership with which We have blessed you.

146. Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize this as they recognize their sons.*¹⁴⁸ And indeed, a party of them conceal the truth and they know (it).

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ
كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ
أَبْنَاءَهُمْ
وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا
مِّنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ
الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ
يَعْلَمُونَ



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

147. (This is) the truth from your Lord, so do not be of those who doubt.

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ
الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

148. And to each there is a direction, he turns to it, so hasten towards what is good.*149 Wherever you may be, Allah will bring you all together. Indeed, Allah has power over all things.

وَلِكُلِّ وِجْهَةٌ هُوَ مُوَلِّئُهَا
فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ ۚ أَيْنَ مَا
تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٤٨﴾

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

149. And from wherever you go out (for prayer, O Muhammad) turn your face toward Al Masjid al Haram. And indeed, it is the truth from your Lord. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ
وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
وَإِنَّهُ لَلْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ ۚ وَمَا اللَّهُ
بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

150. And from wherever you go out (for prayer, O Muhammad) turn your face toward AlMasjid al Haram. And wherever you may be (O Muslims), turn your faces toward it, so that people may not have an argument against you,^{*150} except for those who do wrong among them. So do not fear them, and fear Me. And that I may complete My favor^{*151} upon you, and that you may be guided.^{*152}

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ
وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا
وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ
لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا
الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ فَلَا
تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي وَلَا تَمَّ
نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ



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

***151** The blessing refers to the blessing of leadership which Allah had wrested from the children of Israel and invested in the Muslims. This is the greatest reward which is given to any community when it adopts and follows the righteous way and is entrusted by Allah with the work of guiding the

world on the path of virtue. Here Allah tells the Muslims, “The change of qiblah is symbolic of the change of leadership. You should, therefore, observe this commandment strictly, lest leadership should be wrested from you on account of your disobedience or ingratitude. This favor will be conferred on you in perfection, if you obey the commandment.”

*152 That is, you should expect this blessing if you submit to this commandment about the change of the qiblah. This promise is very encouraging for a servant of Allah. The assurance gives him great consolation that he should expect such a great reward from his King, if he obeys His commandments with all his heart and soul.

151. Just as We have sent among you a messenger from yourselves, reciting to you Our verses, and purifying you, and teaching you the Book and wisdom, and teaching you that which you did not know.

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا
مِّنْكُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا
وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ
تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾

152. So remember Me, I will remember you. And give thanks to Me, and do not be ungrateful.

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي
وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ ﴿١٥٢﴾

153. O those who believe, *153 seek help through

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا

patience and prayer.
Indeed, Allah is with those
who are patient. *154

بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ
الصَّابِرِينَ



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

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

154. And do not say of those who are killed in the Way of Allah: "They are dead." Nay, they are

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَّا

living, but you do not
perceive.*155

تَشْعُرُونَ
١٥٤

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

155. And certainly We shall test you with something of fear, and hunger, and loss of wealth, and lives, and fruits. And give glad tidings to those who are patient.

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ
وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ
وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالْثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ
الصَّابِرِينَ
١٥٥

156. Those who, when a calamity befalls them, say: "Indeed, we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return."*156

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا
إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ
١٥٦

***156** These words are to be uttered merely with the tongue, but we should believe sincerely from the core of our hearts that "Indeed, we belong to Allah." Thus, if anything is sacrificed in the Way of Allah, if is spent rightly because it has gone to His service to Whom it really belonged. "Indeed, to Him we will return": We shall not live here

forever but shall have to leave this world one day. Thus, sooner or later we must die and go to Allah. It is, therefore, far better to fight in His Way and lay down our lives for His sake than to pass our lives in self seeking and self worship and then die of some disease or accident.

157. Those are, upon whom are blessings from their Lord, and mercy. And it is those who are rightly guided.

أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ
وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

158. Indeed, As Safa and Al Marwah are among the symbols of Allah. So whoever is on pilgrimage to the House (of Allah) or Umrah,^{*157} it is then no sin for him that he goes between them,^{*158} And whoever does good voluntarily, then indeed, Allah is Appreciative, All

﴿١٥٨﴾ إِنَّ الصَّافَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ
اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ أَوْ اعْتَمَرَ
فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطَّوَّفَ
بِهِمَا وَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٨﴾

***157** Hajj is pilgrimage to the Kabah during the fixed days of the month of *Dhul-Hijjah* and *Umrah* is the voluntary visit to the Kabah in other than the Hajj days. Directions about Hajj and Umrah are being given at this place because the Kabah had recently been made the qiblah and naturally questions and problems connected with it had arisen.

***158** The running between *Safa* and *Marwah* (the two hills)

near the Kabah was one of the rituals taught by Allah to Abraham in connection with Hajj. But afterwards when the people began to associate false gods with Allah, they built temples on Safa and Marwah and dedicated these to two idols, Asaf and Nailah, and went round them in reverence to them. When the Arabs embraced Islam, a question arose whether running between Safa and Marwah was one of the original rituals of Hajj or whether this had been invented by the worshippers of false gods and whether they would not be guilty of practicing shirk by running between the two hills.

Besides this, a tradition related by Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) says that the people of Al-Madinah had an old aversion to running between Safa and Marwah even before they accepted Islam for they were devotees of Manat and did not worship Asaf and Nailah. Therefore, now when the Kabah was made the qiblah, Allah removed their misunderstanding concerning the running between Safa and Marwah and told them that this ritual had really been connected with Hajj ever since the time of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and was not the invention of the ignorant people after him.

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

159. Indeed, those who conceal what We have sent down of clear proofs and the guidance, after what We

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ
الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَهْدَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا

had made it clear for the people in the Scripture. They are those cursed by Allah and cursed by those who curse.*160

بَيْنَهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَوْلِيَاكَ
يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّاعِنُونَ



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

160. Except those who repent and correct themselves, and make manifest (the truth). Then those, I will accept their repentance. And I am the One who accepts repentance, the Merciful.

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَبَيَّنُوا
فَأَوْلِيَاكَ أَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنَا
التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ



161. Certainly, those who disbelieve,*161 and die

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ

while they are disbelievers, it is they on whom is the curse of Allah, and of angels, and of mankind, all together.

كُفَّارٌ أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ



***161** The literal meaning of the word *kufr* is to conceal. By and by it came to be used for the concealment of the truth and then for its rejection, as the antonym of *iman*. *Iman* means to believe, to accept and to admit, and *kufr* means to disbelieve, to reject and to oppose. According to the Quran, one shall be guilty of *kufr*.

- (1) If one does not believe in Allah at all or refuses to accept Him as the supreme authority or as one's Master and that of the entire universe, or as the only God of worship, or
- (2) If one professes to acknowledge Allah but refuses to accept His commandments and guidance as the sole source of the knowledge of truth and of law, or
- (3) If one accepts on principle the guidance of Allah, but refuses to accept the authority of the Messengers whom Allah has sent with His commandments and guidance, or
- 4) If one accepts a particular Messenger (or Messengers) and rejects others according to one's whim or prejudices, or
- (5) If one discards the whole or any part of the Islamic creed, or its code of life, or the teachings of the Messenger, or
- (6) If one accepts all these things in theory but discards the commandments of God deliberately in practice and persists

in this conduct and leads a life of rebellion instead of submission.

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

162. Abiding forever therein. The punishment will not be lightened from them, nor will they be reprieved.

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ
الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ

163. And your God is one God. There is no deity except Him, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

وَاللَّهُمَّ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا
هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

164. Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships which sail through the sea with that which benefits mankind, and that which Allah sends down of rain from the sky, giving life thereby to the earth after its death, and dispersing therein every (kind of) of moving creatures, and (in) the changing of the winds, and the clouds held between the sky and the earth are sure signs (of Allah's Sovereignty) for people of understanding.*162

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَأَخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ
الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ
النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ
السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ
الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ
كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ
وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ
السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ
يَعْقِلُونَ



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

Godhead.

165. And among mankind are those who take other than Allah as equals (to Him).^{*163} They love them as they (should) love Allah. And those who believe are stronger in love for Allah.^{*164} And if only they, who have wronged could see, when they will see the punishment, that all power belongs to Allah, and that Allah is severe in punishment.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ أُنْدَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ
اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ
وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرُونَ
الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ



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

Again it is the exclusive right of Allah that His subjects should acknowledge Him as the supreme authority, bow down their heads before Him and fear Him alone in open and secret. But as they render all or some rights to others

than Allah, they set up compeers with Him. In fact, Allah alone is entitled to prescribe what is lawful and what is unlawful, what is clean and what is unclean. He alone has the authority to define the rights and duties of His subjects, lay down commands and prohibitions for them, etc. Therefore those who arrogate to themselves any of these rights shall be guilty of shirk. Again, He alone deserves to be acknowledged as the Sovereign and, as His subjects, the people should consider His commandments to be final and turn to Him for guidance; therefore those who ascribe any of these rights to others than Allah, set up compeers with Him; likewise those institutions or persons who claim to possess any of these qualities or rights or assume to themselves any of these qualities or rights or demand that others should accede these to them, set themselves as compeers with Allah, whether or not they put forward formal claims to Godhead.

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

166. When those who have been followed would disassociate themselves from those who followed (them). And they would see the punishment. And all the ties (of relationship) would be cut off from them.

إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا مِنَ
الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا وَرَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ
وَتَقَطَّعَتْ بِهِمُ الْأَسْبَابُ

167. And those who followed will say: “If indeed another return (to worldly life) was (possible) for us, we would disassociate from them as they have disassociated from us.”*165 Thus will Allah show them their deeds as regrets for them. And they will never get out from the Fire.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا لَوْ أَنَّنَا
كَرَّةً فَنتَبَّرًا مِنْهُمْ كَمَا تَبَرَّأُوا مِنَّا
كَذَلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ اللَّهُ أَعْمَلَهُمْ
حَسْرَاتٍ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا هُمْ
بِخَارِجِينَ مِنَ النَّارِ



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

168. O mankind, eat of that which is lawful (and) good on the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of the devil.*166 Indeed, he is an open enemy to you.

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ كُلُّوا مِمَّا فِي
الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا
خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ
عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ



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

169. He only commands you to evil and indecency, and that you should say against Allah that which you do not know.*167

إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوءِ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ
وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ

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

170. And when it is said to them: “Follow that which Allah has sent down,” they say: “Nay, we will follow that upon which we found our fathers.”*168 Even though their fathers were (such as who) did not understand anything, nor were they guided.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ
اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَلْفَيْنَا
عَلَيْهِ ءِآبَاءَنَا ؕ أَوْلَوْ كَانِ
ءِآبَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا
يَهْتَدُونَ

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

171. And the example of those who disbelieve, is as the example of him who shouts to that (flock of sheep)

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا كَمَثَلِ
الَّذِي يَنْعِقُ بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا

which hears nothing except a call and a cry.*169 (They are) deaf, dumb, blind, so they do not understand.

دُعَاءٌ وَنِدَاءٌ صُمُّ بِكُمْ عُمَى
فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ



*169 This parable has two aspects:

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

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

172. O those who believe, eat of the good things which We have provided you, and be grateful to Allah if it is (indeed) Him you worship.*170

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُلُوا
مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا
لِلَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ



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

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

declared lawful.

According to a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him), “One who offers the Salat in the way we offer, turns his face towards the qiblah to which we turn our face, and eats what we have slaughtered, is a Muslim.” Therefore if one has any scruples regarding the eating of those things which Allah has declared lawful, he has not as yet become a true Muslim, even if he offers the Salat, turning his face towards the Kabah. He should give up the prejudices and superstitions of ignorance if he really and sincerely has become a Muslim. For the very observance of old traditions and customs is a proof that he is still imbued with the poison of ignorance.

173. He has forbidden to you only carrion, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that which has been immolated to other than Allah.*¹⁷¹ So whoever is forced by necessity, without willful disobedience, nor transgressing, then it is no sin for him. Truly, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.*¹⁷²

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ
وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ
بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ أَضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ
بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ



***171** This applies both to the flesh of the animal which is slaughtered in the name of any other than Allah and to the food which is offered as a vow to any other than Allah. As a matter of fact, everything whether animal, corn, or another

eatable, actually belongs to Allah and is given by Him. Therefore it should be offered as charity, or as vow, only in His name as a mark of gratitude to Him. If it is offered in any other name, it means that one regards it also, instead of Allah, or along with Allah, as supreme and the bestower of favors and blessings.

*172 In this verse, permission for the use of an unclean thing has been given on three conditions:

(1) It must be really a case of extremity. For instance, if one is dying of hunger or thirst or if one's life is in danger because of some disease and there is nothing available except an unclean thing, one is permitted to take it.

(2) One should not cherish any desire in one's heart to break the law of Allah.

(3) One should not take even a bit more than what is absolutely necessary. For example, if in a certain case, a few bits or drops of an unclean thing can save life, then nothing more than this absolute minimum should be taken.

174. Certainly, those who conceal what Allah has sent down of the Book, and purchase therewith a small gain, those, they eat into their bellies nothing but fire.*173

And Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them.*174 And for

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلَ
اللَّهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَشْتُرُونَ
بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَئِكَ مَا
يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ إِلَّا النَّارَ
وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

them will be a painful punishment.



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

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

175. Those are the ones who purchased error for the guidance, and punishment for the forgiveness. So how

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالََةَ
بِالْهُدَى وَالْعَذَابَ بِالْمَغْفِرَةِ

patient are they (in the pursuit) to the Fire.

176. That is because Allah has sent down the Book (the Quran) with the truth. And indeed, those who disputed over the Book are far away in dissension.

177. Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east and the west.*175 But righteousness (is in him) who believes in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angels, and the Book, and the prophets. And gives wealth out of love for Him, to the relatives, and the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer, and to those who ask, and to set slaves free. And establishes prayer, and gives the poor due. And those who fulfill their promise when they make a promise. And (those who) are patient in tribulation and adversity,

فَمَا أَصْبَرَهُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ ﴿١٧٥﴾

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ آخْتَلَفُوا فِي الْكِتَابِ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿١٧٦﴾

﴿ لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَءَاتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ

and at the time of battle. Those are the ones who are the truthful. And it is those who are the righteous.

وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ
الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُتَّقُونَ



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

178. O those who believe, prescribed for you is legal retribution in (the matter of) those murdered.^{*176} The free for the free, and the slave for the slave, and the female for the female.^{*177} So he who is forgiven by his brother something,^{*178} then there is a following up with fairness, and payment toward him in kindness.^{*179} This is an alleviation from your Lord and mercy. So whoever transgresses after that, then for him is a painful

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ
الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلِ الْحَرُّ بِالْحَرِّ
وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأُنثَىٰ بِالْأُنثَىٰ
فَمَنْ عَفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ
فَاتَّبَاعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدَاءٌ إِلَيْهِ
بِإِحْسَانٍ ذَلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِّنْ
رَّبِّكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ فَمَنْ أَعْتَدَىٰ
بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ



punishment.^{*180}

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

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

Before the advent of Islam, they put a higher value on the blood of a member of their own clan and demanded the life of a man of the same rank from the clan of the murderer or the lives of scores or even hundreds from the tribe of the murderer according to the value put on the blood of the slain. On the other hand, if the murderer happened to belong to a higher rank than that of the slain, their judgment was that the life of the murderer should not be taken for the life of the slain. And this inequality in the evaluation of blood was not confined only to that age of ignorance. Even today the civilized nations are not ashamed of declaring openly that if one person of their nation is killed, they will take the lives of fifty men from the nation of the murderer. And they put these challenges into practice. We often hear that so many people belonging to the subject nation have been put to death to avenge the

murder of one person belonging to the ruling nation. But if the murderer belonged to a civilized ruling nation and the slain to an uncivilized subject nation, their judges would not pass the sentence of death on him. In order to guard against these unjust rules, Allah has ordained that the life of the murderer and the murderer alone should be taken for the life of the slain, irrespective of the rank or race of the murderer or that of the slain.

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

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

***179** The word *maaruf* has been used in many places in the Quran. It refers to those just and rational rules of conduct which are generally known and accepted by all fair-minded people. They are so clear and well known that everyone who is not blinded by self interest and prejudice will acknowledge them as right and just, and the Islamic law recognizes them in all those matters for which it has not

laid down any regulations. Such common laws and general usages are termed *maaruf*.

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

179. And for you there is life in legal retribution, O (men) of understanding, *181 that you may become righteous.

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيٰوةٌ يٰٓاُوْلِي
الْاَلْبٰبِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ

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

180. It is prescribed for you, when death approaches any of you, if he leaves wealth, that he make a bequest to parents and near relatives according to what is reasonable. (This is) a duty upon the righteous. *182

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذَا حَضَرَ اَحَدُكُمْ
الْمَوْتُ اِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةُ
لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْاَقْرَبِيْنَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
حَقًّا عَلٰى الْمُتَّقِيْنَ

*182 This commandment about making a will for the

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

181. Then whoever changes it (the bequest) after what he has heard it, then its sin is only upon those who changed it. Indeed, Allah is All Hearer, All Knower.

فَمَنْ بَدَّلَهُ بَعْدَ مَا سَمِعَهُ فَإِنَّمَا
إِثْمُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يُبَدِّلُونَهُ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

182. But he who fears from a testator some unjust or sinful clause, then makes peace between them (the parties), then there is no sin upon him. Certainly, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

فَمَنْ خَافَ مِنْ مُوصٍ جَنَفًا أَوْ
إِثْمًا فَاصْلَحَ بَيْنَهُمْ فَلَا إِثْمَ
عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

183. O those who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become righteous.*183

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ
عَلَيْكُمْ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ
عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

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

In a lengthy statement quoted by Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Muaaz bin Jabal says: "The Salat and the fasting took their present form gradually. At first the Muslims faced Jerusalem during the Salat but after some years they were commanded to turn their faces towards the Kabah in Makkah. Besides this, at first they used to inform one another about the time of each Salat but afterwards the same was proclaimed by means of Azan (the call for prayer). As to the fasting, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) migrated to Al-Madinah, he observed fasts for three days in a month and also on the tenth of Muharram. Then Allah made it obligatory to fast during the whole month of Ramadan but allowed the feeding of one person as an expiation for one who did not observe fasts, though he

could. Afterwards this concession of feeding one person for one day of fast was cancelled in the case of healthy persons and the one not on a journey.

Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud and other scholars have also quoted traditions from Aishah, Abdullah bin Umar, and Abdullah bin Masud (may Allah be pleased with them) to the same effect. In support of the same, Ibn Jarir Tabari, a famous commentator of the Quran, has quoted traditions citing the authority in full from several companions and their followers. In one of these traditions, he quotes the following explanation of Muaz bin Jabal: As the Arabs were not used to of fasting, it was hard for them at first to observe fasts. They were, therefore, given the option to feed one poor person on the day they did not observe fast during the month of Ramadan. Afterwards, a commandment was revealed, cancelling this concession except in the case of a sick person or one on a journey. He quotes another tradition from Ibn Abbas to this effect. In the first commandment (Ayat 184), Allah had allowed expiation for fasts even for an able-bodied person who could fast but did not. In verse 185 which was revealed next year, the concession for an able-bodied person was cancelled but was retained for a sick person or a wayfarer.

184. (Fasting) a certain number of days. So whoever among you is sick, or on a journey, then an equal number of other days (should be made up). And for those

أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ ۚ فَمَنْ كَانَ
مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ
مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ

who can afford it there is a ransom, the feeding of a needy person. Then whoever does good of his own accord,^{*184} so it is better for him. And that you fast, it is better for you if only you knew.^{*185}

يُطِيقُونَهُ، فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ
فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ
وَأَنْ تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ



***184** “Good of his own accord”, to feed more than one person for each fasting day, or to feed one as well as observe the fast.

***185** The first commandment about fasting contained in Ayats 183-184 was revealed in the second year of Hijrah before the battle of Badr. The subsequent verses were revealed a year later but were inserted here because they dealt with the same matter.

185. The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of guidance, and the criterion. So whoever of you witnesses (this) month, then he must fast (in) it. And whoever is sick or on a journey, then an equal number of other days (should be made up).^{*186}

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ
الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ
مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَنْ
شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَنْ
كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ
فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ

Allah intends for you ease, and He does not intend hardship for you, and (He wants) that you should complete the count, and that you should glorify Allah for having guided you, and that you may be grateful (to Him).^{*187}

بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ
الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ
وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا
هَدَانَكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ



***186** It has been left to the option of the individual to observe or not to observe fasts during a journey. Some of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) observed fasts and some did not when they were on a journey with him and neither raised any objection against the other. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself sometimes observed fasts on a journey and sometimes did not. Once he saw people gathered around a man who had fallen to the ground and asked what was the matter with him. He was told that he had become too weak to stand on account of observing fasts; he remarked that it was no virtue to observe fasts in such a condition.

During war time, The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to issue orders for postponing the fasts. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) has related that they did not observe fasts twice during the month of Ramadan when they went to war under the command of the Prophet (peace be upon him), on the occasion of the battle of Badr and at the conquest of Makkah. Ibn Umar says that on the eve of the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet (peace be upon him)

declared, “As we are going to fight our enemy you should postpone your fasts so that you may conserve your strength to fight.” There is no clear injunction from the Prophet (peace be upon him) for the prescription of a minimum standard of distance for postponing the fasts. His companions also differed in practice with regard to the standard. But it is obvious that the fast may be postponed for that distance which is commonly understood to be a journey and in which one begins to feel being on a journey. There is a difference of opinion as to whether the people of a city, which is attacked by an enemy, can postpone the fasting for the sake of Jihad, in spite of being the residents. Some scholars do not allow this. But Imam Ibn Taimiyyah has maintained with strong arguments that postponement of the fasting under such circumstances is permissible.

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

It is clear from this verse that fasting in Ramadan has been prescribed not only as a form of worship and a training for piety, but also to show gratitude for the great blessing of the revelation of the Quran during the month of Ramadan. And the best way to show gratitude for a favor is to fulfill the object for which it was bestowed and to prepare oneself

for its completion as best as one can. The object for which Allah has bestowed the Quran upon us is to reveal His will so that we may fulfill it ourselves and persuade others to do the same. Fasting provides the best training for the fulfillment of this object and is both a devotion and a sign of gratitude for the favor shown in the form of the Quran.

186. And when My servants ask you about Me, then indeed I am near. I respond to the invocations of the suppliant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me, ^{*188} and let them believe in Me, that they may be guided. ^{*189}

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ



***188** That is, although you cannot see Me nor perceive Me with your senses, yet you must never imagine that I am far from you. Nay, I am so near to every servant of Mine that he can invoke Me and place his request before Me wherever he is. So much so that I hear and answer even those requests which are not expressed in words but are made only in the innermost heart. As to the false and impotent gods you have created in your ignorance and folly, you have to travel to them, and even then they do not hear and answer you. But here am I, the sovereign, the absolute ruler of the boundless universe and possessor of all powers and authority, so near to hear and answer you that you need no recommendation of intercession for making any request anywhere at any time you like. Therefore, you

should free yourselves from the folly of running from door to door after false gods, and accept My invitation and turn to Me and trust in Me and submit to Me and become My servants.

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

187. It has been made lawful for you in the night of the fasting to go in unto your wives. They are as a garment for you, and you are as a garment for them. ***190** Allah knows that you were deceiving yourselves, so He has turned to you and forgave you. So now have intimate relations with them, ***191** and seek that which Allah has decreed for you. ***192** And eat and drink until, it becomes distinct to you the white thread from the black thread of the dawn. ***193** Then complete the fast till the nightfall. ***194** And do not have intimate relations with them (your wives) while you are in Itikaf (confining

أَحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ
الرَّفْتُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ
لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ
أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ
أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا
عَنْكُمْ فَالْعَنَ بَشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَبْتَغُوا
مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا
وَأَشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمْ الْخَيْطُ
الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ
الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتَمُّوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى
الَّيْلِ وَلَا تُبَشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ
عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ تِلْكَ

yourselves) in the mosques.^{*195} These are the limits by Allah, so approach them not.^{*196} Thus does Allah make clear His verses to mankind that they may become righteous.

حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ



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

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

***192** There was also a misunderstanding about the timings of eating and drinking during Ramadan. Some people were of the opinion that eating and drinking was prohibited after the Isha (night) prayer up to sunset of the next day. Others thought that one was permitted to eat and drink as long as one kept awake after the Isha prayer, but could not do so after one had fallen asleep; they were often put to great inconvenience on account of these notions of their own

creation. In this verse their misunderstandings were removed and the duration of the period of fasting was fixed from the dawn of the morning to the sunset, and eating and drinking and intercourse with wives were permitted from sunset to dawn. Besides, the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed that a meal should be taken before the dawn (of morning) as a preparation for fasting.

***193** Islam has set a standard of time for its practices which can be applied universally by people at every stage of civilization and in every part of the globe. That is why it does not fix the boundary lines of its religious practices by watches and clocks but by clear signs in the sky. This is a standard which can suit the people of every age and country, and can be set by watches between these prescribed bounds to suit their circumstances and convenience. But those people who do not understand its philosophy raise foolish objections. For example, they say that this standard cannot work near the Poles, because there the duration of the day and the night is of many months. They forget that even in the polar regions, the signs of morning and evening and midnight appear as regularly as in other places and the inhabitants regulate the timings of work, play, sleep, etc. in accordance with the appearance of these signs. When there were no watches and clocks, the inhabitants of the Arctic Circle fixed their timings by these signs. Thus when these signs can help them to fix the timings in other matters of life, they can also serve them to fix the timings of the prayer and of the commencement and end of the fasting.

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

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

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

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

188. And do not devour your property among each other unjustly, and (do not) offer it (as bribery) to the rulers, that you may devour a portion of the property of the people in sin, and you know (it).^{*197}

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ
بِالْبَطْلِ وَتُدْءُوا بِهَا إِلَى
الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنْ
أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَأَنْتُمْ
تَعْلَمُونَ



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

189. They ask you, (O Muhammad) about the new moons. Say: “These are signs for marking times

﴿ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهْلِ قُلْ
هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ

for mankind, and the pilgrimage.”*198 And it is not righteousness that you go to the houses from their backs, but the righteousness is (in) him who fears (Allah). And go to houses from their doors, and fear Allah, that you may be successful.*199

وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ
مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ
اتَّقَىٰ ۗ وَآتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ
أَبْوَابِهَا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُفْلِحُونَ



*198 The phases of the moon have attracted the attention of mankind in every age, and different kinds of rites and superstitions have been connected with these in every country. The Arabs also had some superstitions connected with these. They took omens from them for journeys, marriage ceremonies, business, etc. and performed some superstitious practices. For they believed that the phases and the eclipse of the moon affected their fortunes. Therefore they questioned the Prophet (peace be upon him) concerning this. Allah answered their question and informed them that the phases of the moon were nothing but natural calendar in the sky to indicate dates of the month to the people simultaneously throughout the world. Hajj has been specially mentioned in this connection because of its religious, cultural and economic importance to the Arabs. Four months of the year were fixed for Hajj and Umrah during which war was suspended and the routes were made safe, and business flourished on account of peace.

*199 This was one of their superstitious customs. As soon as

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

190. And fight in the Way of Allah those who fight you,^{*200} and do not transgress the limits. Indeed, Allah does not love the transgressors.^{*201}

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ



***200** That is, fight with those people who hinder you from the Way of Allah; who have become your enemies because you are trying to reform the way of life in accordance with the guidance of Allah; who are preventing you from the work of reform by force and persecution. Before this, when the Muslims were yet weak and scattered, they were commanded to propagate Islam and bear all tyrannies with fortitude. But when they had established a tiny state at Al-Madinah they were, for the first time, allowed to go to war against those who were opposing this reformative movement with force. The battle of Badr took place after this and a series of battles started with it.

***201** The Muslims were warned that the aim of their war should not be self interest, nor material gain, nor

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

191. And kill them wherever you overtake them, and expel them from wherever they have expelled you, and persecution is worse than killing.*202 And do not fight them at Al Masjid al Haram, until they fight you there. Then if they fight you, then kill them. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers.

وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ
 وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ
 أَخْرَجُوكُمْ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنْ
 الْقَتْلِ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ
 الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّىٰ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ
 فِيهِ فَإِنْ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ
 كَذَٰلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكٰفِرِينَ

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

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

192. But if they desist, then indeed, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful. *203

فَإِنْ أَنْتَهُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ



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

193. And fight them until there is no persecution, and the Way is for Allah. *204 Then if they desist, then (let

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أَنْتَهُوا فَلَا

there be) no hostility except
against the wrongdoers. *205

عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ

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

*205 It does not mean that Islam incites the believers to go to war to force unbelievers at the point of sword to give up disbelief and polytheism and adopt the Way of Allah instead. War is to be waged only to make them give up *fitnah*. As a matter of fact, Islam allows freedom of belief to all non-Muslims. One may adopt any way of life that one chooses and may or may not worship anyone or anything. It exhorts the believers to preach and to persuade the unbelievers and the wrong doers by argument to give up their false faith and evil ways, but it does not allow the

unbelievers the right to enforce on God's earth any ungodly law and make the servants of Allah the servants of someone else. In order to remove such an unjust condition, Islam allows both preaching and fighting according to the requirements of the occasion. The believers, therefore, cannot rest content unless this *fitnah*, political domination and legal sovereignty of unbelievers, is eradicated and freedom for the Way of Allah is secured.

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

194. (Fighting in) the sacred month is for (the aggression committed in) the sacred

الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ

month.*²⁰⁶ And for (all) violations there is legal retribution. So whoever has transgressed against you, then you transgress against him in the same way that he has transgressed against you. And fear Allah, and know that Allah is with those who are righteous.

وَأَحْرَمْتُ قِصَاصٌ فَمَنْ
أَعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ
بِمِثْلِ مَا أَعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ
الْمُتَّقِينَ



*206 This verse answered the question that arose about fighting during the four sacred months of the lunar year, that is, Dhul-Qadah, Dhul-Hijjah and Muharram dedicated to Hajj, and Rajab to Umrah. These were called the prohibited months because ever since the time of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) war, murder, robbery and every sort of violation and infringement of law were forbidden during these months so that pilgrims might go to and return from the Kabah in peace and security. But by and by the Arabs began to violate their sanctity by a crooked device. They used to alter the usual order of the months to suit their convenience: If they wanted to attack for robbery, revenge, etc., they would violate a sacred month and then consecrate another month instead. The Muslims were, therefore, at a loss to know what to do if the unbelievers committed a breach of the sanctity of a sacred month by resorting to this vicious practice and attack them in that sacred month. This verse removed their difficulty by allowing them to

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

195. And spend in the cause of Allah, and do not throw (your selves) by your own hands into destruction.*207 And do good. Indeed, Allah loves those who do good.*208

وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا
بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ



*207 To spend in the cause of Allah, is to make monetary sacrifices for the establishment of the way of life prescribed by Allah. The verse implies, if you behave selfishly and do not spend your wealth to establish the Way of Allah; you will bring yourselves to ruin in this world and to damnation in the Hereafter. In the world, Allah will set the unbelievers to dominate over you. And in the Hereafter, He will condemn you and hold you accountable for not spending the wealth given by Him in His Way.

*208 The word *ihsan* as used in the original is from *husn* which means to do a thing well. One kind of action is that a person should rest content with the mere performance of duty: this is obedience, which requires nothing more than the fear of Allah. The superior kind of deed, however, is that he should do it well: should put all his abilities and

resources into it: should exert his utmost to complete it with all his heart and mind and body. This is *ihsan* which is motivated by a deep love for and dedication to Allah.

196. And complete the pilgrimage and the Umrah for Allah. Then if you are prevented, then (offer) what can be obtained with ease,^{*209} of sacrificial animals. And do not shave your heads until the sacrificial animal has reached its place of slaughter.^{*210} So whoever among you is sick or has an ailment of the head, then (he must pay) a ransom of fasting, or charity, or sacrifice.^{*211} Then when you are in safety,^{*212} then whoever performs Umrah with the pilgrimage, (must offer) what can be obtained with ease, of the sacrificial animals. So whoever cannot find (it), then fasting of three days while on the pilgrimage, and of seven when you have returned. That is, ten in total.

وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ
أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنْ
أَهْدَى وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ
حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَهْدَىٰ مَحَلَّهُ ۚ فَمَنْ
كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِ
أَذَىٰ مِنْ رَأْسِهِ ۖ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِّنْ
صِيَامٍ أَوْ
صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ ۚ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَمَنْ
تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا
اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنْ أَهْدَىٰ ۚ فَمَنْ لَّمْ
يَجِدْ فَصِيَامٌ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ
وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ ۖ تِلْكَ عَشْرَةٌ
كَامِلَةٌ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ لَّمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلُهُ
حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۚ

That is for him whose family is not present at Al Masjid al Haram.*213 And fear Allah, and know that Allah is severe in punishment.

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ

شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

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

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

*211 According to a tradition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) directed that in such a case, one should observe fast for three days or feed six indigent persons or sacrifice at least a goat.

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

prevention.

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

In order to understand the references to the Hajj rites in the succeeding verses, it will be worthwhile to state these briefly. The pilgrims should put on the pilgrims' garment (ihram) as soon as they reach a *miqat*, one of the fixed points on all the roads to Makkah. After this they should abide by the code prescribed for Hajj. If on reaching Makkah, a pilgrim wished to perform Umrah, he might then put off, ihram and release himself from restrictions imposed by it up to the 7th of Dhul-Hijjah. On the 8th, he should again put on ihram at Makkah and go to Mina, a valley, about six miles from there. On the 9th he should proceed to the valley of Arafat, which is about five miles further from Mina and stay there up to the evening. Then he should return to Masharil-Haram (Muzdalifah) which is midway between Arafat and Mina, and pass the night between the 9th and the 10th there in prayer, meditation

and devotion. On the morning of the 10th, he should come back to Mina and offer sacrifice there. After this he should get his head shaved, put off the ihram and return to Makkah and perform *Tawwaf-i-Ziarat* (going around the Kabah). Then he should go to Mina and stay there for two or three days. The three days (from the 11th to the 13th of Dhul-Hijjah) are called the days of *Tashriq*.

197. The pilgrimage is (in) the well known months, so whoever has made obligatory (on himself) the pilgrimage in these (months), then there is no sexual relations,^{*214} nor disobedience,^{*215} nor disputing^{*216} during the pilgrimage. And whatever you do of good, Allah knows it. And take provision with you, but indeed, best provision is righteousness. And fear Me, O people of understanding.^{*217}

الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَةٌ ۖ فَمَنْ
فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ
وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي
الْحَجِّ ۗ وَمَا تَفَعَّلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ
يَعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ ۗ وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ
الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ ۗ وَاتَّقُونِ يَا أُولِي
الْأَلْبَابِ

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

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

***216** One cannot even rebuke a servant.

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

198. It is no sin upon you that you seek the bounty of your Lord (by trading during pilgrimage).^{*218} Then, when you depart from Arafat, so remember Allah at Al Mashar al Haram. And remember Him as He has guided you. And though you were, before that, among those who were astray.^{*219}

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا
 فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَإِذَا أَفْضْتُمْ
 مِّنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ
 عِندَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ
 وَأَذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَىٰكُمْ وَإِنْ
 كُنْتُمْ مِّن قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ
 الضَّالِّينَ

***218** The Arabs had another wrong notion about Hajj.

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

***219** That is, you should give up all those ungodly customs of ignorance which you used to practice in pre-Islamic days along with the worship of Allah. Now worship Allah exclusively in accordance with the guidance He has revealed.

199. Then depart from where all the people depart, and ask forgiveness of Allah. ^{*220} Indeed, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

ثُمَّ أَفِيضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ
النَّاسُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ



***220** Ever since the time of the Prophet Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them), the pilgrims used to go to Arafat from Makkah on the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah for the performance of Hajj and then returned from there to Muzdalifah on the morning of the 10th. But later when the Quraish established their own priesthood, they arrogantly asserted: It is below our dignity to go to Arafat along with the common Arabs because we live in the Sanctuary. Accordingly, they reserved this mark of distinction for themselves and would halt at Muzdalifah and let others proceed on to Arafat. Then this distinction was extended to

Bani Khuzaah and Bani Kinanah and the other tribes with whom the Quraish had marriage relations. Later, even the allies of the Quraish adopted this privilege of distinction and they too would stop short of Arafat. In this verse the same privilege of distinction and pride has been abolished. Addressing the Quraish, their relatives and allies in particular and the common Arabs in general it has been enjoined that they should accompany others to perform the essential ceremonials at Arafat, halt there and return along with them to Makkah, and should ask Allah's forgiveness for their breach of the Prophet Abraham's (peace be upon him) way, which they committed in the past on account of tribal pride and distinction.

200. Then when you have completed your (pilgrimage) rites, then remember Allah as you remember your forefathers, or with greater remembrance.*221 Then of mankind is he who says: "Our Lord, give us in this world," and he will not have any portion in the Hereafter.

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمْ مَنَاسِكَكُمْ
فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ
ءَابَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا
فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا
ءَاتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي
الْآخِرَةِ مِن خَلْقٍ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

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

remembering and glorifying Allah instead of singing praises of their ancestors.

201. And of them is he who says: “Our Lord, give us in this world (what is) good, and in the Hereafter (what is) good, and save us from the punishment of the Fire.”

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي
الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ
حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿٢٠١﴾

202. Those, for them is a portion of what they have earned. And Allah is swift at reckoning.

أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا
وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٠٢﴾

203. And remember Allah during the appointed days. Then whoever hastens in two days, then there is no sin upon him, and whoever delays, then there is no sin upon him, ^{*222} for him who fears (Allah). And fear Allah, and know that to Him you will be gathered.

﴿٢٠٣﴾ وَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْدُودَاتٍ
فَمَنْ تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْمَ
عَلَيْهِ وَمَنْ تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ
لِمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا
أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٠٣﴾

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

204. And of the people is he whose speech pleases you (O Muhammad) in worldly life, and he calls Allah to witness as to what is in his heart.^{*223} And he is the fiercest of opponents.^{*224}

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ
فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهَ
عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ
الْخِصَامِ



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

***224** “And he is the fiercest of opponents.” Because in his enmity, he does not hesitate to employ any kind of falsehood, dishonesty, treachery or any other crooked method, in spite of his smooth tongue, plausible talk and solemn oaths in the name of Allah.

205. And when he turns away (from you),^{*225} he strives in the land to cause corruption therein, and to destroy the crops and the cattle. And Allah does not love corruption.

وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ
لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ
وَالنَّسْلَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْفُسَادَ



***225** It may also mean, when he returns to everyday life

after this glib.

206. And when it is said to him: “Fear Allah,” arrogance takes him to sin, so sufficient for him is Hell. And indeed, it is an evil resting place.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ
الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ فَحَسْبُهُ جَهَنَّمُ
وَلَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ



207. And of mankind is he who would sell himself, seeking the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is Kind to (His) slaves.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ
أَبْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ
رءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ



208. O those who believe, enter into Islam completely,^{*226} and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Certainly, he is an open enemy to you.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَدْخُلُوا
فِي السِّلْمِ كَآفَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا
خُطَوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ
لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ



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

209. Then if you slide back after what has come to you as the clear proofs, then know that Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.*227

فَإِنْ زَلَلْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
جَاءَتْكُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ
اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

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

210. Do they await but that Allah should come to them in the shadows of the clouds, and the angels, and the matter would be judged.*228 And to Allah all matters are returned (for judgment).

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ
فِي ظُلَلٍ مِنَ الْغَمَامِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَإِلَى
اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ

***228** Particular attention should be paid to these words for they enunciate a great universal truth. Allah has sent man to this world to undergo a test. He has revealed the Truth through His Messengers and given man the freedom to believe or not to believe in it, and after believing in it to submit or not to submit to it. He keeps the reality hidden from man and leaves it to him to judge it rationally in the light of the teachings of his Messengers, His Books and the signs shown by His Messengers. He never makes the reality so bare as to leave no alternative but to acknowledge it, for after that no question of a trial is left and success or failure in the test becomes meaningless. That is why Allah gives warning, as if to say, do not wait for that time when Allah

with His angels will come before you in His glory. At that time your doom shall be sealed and no more chance left for any test. Then belief and submission will have no value. Belief has a value only as long as the reality remains hidden from your senses and you recognize and acknowledge it by means of your own reasoning and then prove your moral courage by submitting to it without any coercion. When you see with your own eyes Allah on the throne of His glory and angels functioning on the earth and in the heavens and find yourself completely in His power, then belief and submission will have no value. At that time even confirmed sinners and obdurate unbelievers will not dare to disbelieve or disobey. But then it will be useless because the time for test will be over. When the curtain is raised and the reality is seen by everyone, then no more chance shall be given, nor shall there be any more test because that will be the time of the judgment.

211. Ask the Children of Israel how many of clear signs We have given them. And whoever changes the favor of Allah after what has come to him, then surely Allah is severe in punishment.*229

سَلَّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَمْ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمْ
مِّنْ ءَايَةٍ بَيِّنَةٍ وَمَنْ يُبَدِّلْ نِعْمَةَ
اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

*229 The Muslims have been told to enquire about it especially from the children of Israel because the latter were a living object lesson for the former who were now replacing them as leaders of the world. The children of

Israel had been favored with prophethood and divine Book and had been entrusted with leadership for the guidance of the world but they had deprived themselves of this blessing (leadership) for involving themselves in wretchedness in the lusts of this worldliness, duplicity and in the evil deeds of pseudo knowledge. Therefore the Muslims who were replacing them were forewarned to be on their guard against these evils and learn a lesson from their history.

212. Beautified for those who disbelieve is the life of this world, and they ridicule of those who believe. And those who fear (Allah) will be above them on the Day of Resurrection. And Allah gives provision to whom He wills without measure.

زَيْنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

213. Mankind were one community, then Allah sent (to them) prophets as bearers of glad tidings, and as warners, and sent down with them the Scripture with the truth, that it might judge between mankind in that wherein they differed. And none differed over it (the Scripture), except those

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ
اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ
وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ
لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا
اختلفوا فيه ۗ وَمَا اختلف فيه
إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا

who were given it, after what had come to them as clear proofs, out of jealous animosity among themselves.*230 Then Allah guided those who believed concerning that in which they had differed, to the truth, by His permission. And Allah guides whom He wills to a straight path.

جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ
فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِمَا
اٰخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِاِذْنِهِ
وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ اِلَى صِرَاطٍ
مُسْتَقِيمٍ



*230 Here the theory of evolution in religion has been refuted. The so called scholars say that man began his religious life in the darkness of polytheism: then by and by he began to worship God, but associated other gods with Him. This went on for a long time; at last he recognized and accepted the Oneness of God. But the Quran contradicts this and says that human life began in full divine light. When Allah created the first man, Adam, He revealed the truth to him and showed him the right way. Adam's descendants followed his way for a long time and all of them were members of one and the same community. Then they began to follow new ways and invented new religions. And they did so in spite of the fact that the truth had been shown to them just because they wanted to misappropriate to themselves more than their own due share and rights sanctioned by it. In order to prevent the misguided people, from this evil, Allah sent His Messengers to invite them to the original divine way. They were not

sent to found new religious communities after their own names, but to bring those who had swerved from the right path to the original religion of mankind and to the same one community which was formed in accordance with the guidance of Allah, at the time when man began his life on the earth.

214. Or do ^{*231} you think that you will enter Paradise, while such (trial) has not come to you as the like of (that which came to) those who passed away before you. They were afflicted with poverty and adversity, and they were shaken until the messenger and those who believed with him said: "When will be the help of Allah." Yes certainly, Allah's help is near.

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ
وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا
مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ
وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ
الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ
مَتَى نَصْرُ اللَّهِ ؕ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ
قَرِيبٌ

***231** A whole story has been left out between this verse and the preceding one, for this verse itself points to it and because it had already been related in detail in the Surahs which were revealed before this at Makkah. In the preceding verse it was stated that the Messengers, were sent to remove those differences which had arisen in religion, but the story of their hardships and long persecutions was omitted because it had already been described in detail in the Makki revelations. Hence the believers are warned that the Messengers and their followers have always had to

struggle hard with the rebels against Allah in order to establish His Way, and that the true faith of Islam has never been a bed of roses. One has to exert one's utmost to establish it and to fight against all those evil forces that oppose its establishment, even at the sacrifice of one's life, if need be.

215. They ask you (O Muhammad), what should they spend. Say: "Whatever you spend of good (must be) for parents, and near kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer. And whatever you do of good, then indeed, Allah is Aware of it."

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلْ مَا
 أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ
 وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسْكِينِ
 وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ
 خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢١٥﴾

216. Fighting has been ordained upon you, though it is hateful to you. But may be that you hate a thing and it is good for you. And it may be that you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, but you do not know.

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ
 لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا
 وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ
 تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ
 يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢١٦﴾

217. They ask you about the sacred month (and) fighting therein. Say: "Fighting therein is a great (sin). But

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ
 قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ

averting (people) from the Way of Allah, and disbelief in Him, and (preventing access to) AlMasjid alHaram, and expulsion of its people there from, is greater (evil) in the sight of Allah. And persecution is greater than killing.”*232 And they will not cease from fighting against you until they turn you back from your religion, if they can. And whoever of you reverts from his religion, and dies while he is a disbeliever, then those, their deeds have become worthless in this world and the Hereafter. And those are the companions of the Fire. They will abide therein forever.*233

وَصَدُّهُ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرًا
بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ
أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا
يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرُدُّوكُمْ
عَنْ دِينِكُمْ إِنْ أَسْتَطَعُوا
وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنِ دِينِهِ
فِيمَتٍ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَئِكَ
حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ
النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ



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

The Prophet (peace be upon him) sent a detachment of eight men to Nakhlah, a place midway between Makkah and Taaif. He told them to watch the movements of the Quraish and find out their future plans. Though he had not

given them permission to fight, they attacked a small trading caravan of the Quraish, killed one man and took the rest prisoners and brought them to Al-Madinah along with their goods.

As this incident took place at a time when it could not be said with certainty whether the month of Rajab had come to an end and the month of Shaban had commenced, it was doubtful whether the attack was made in Rajab, a prohibited month, or in Shaban. Nevertheless, the Quraish and their secret allies, the Jews, and the double faced Muslims of Al-Madinah, took it as a God given opportunity to make strong propaganda and raise serious objections against the believers. They ironically remarked, what a pious people they are. They do not hesitate to shed blood even in a prohibited month. Such objections have been answered in this verse which implies, no doubt, bloodshed is a very bad thing but their objection is not reasonable, coming as it does from the mouths of those people who themselves had carried on for thirteen years the most cruel form of persecution against hundreds of their own brethren for no other reason than that they believed in one Allah. They not only forced these brethren of their own to leave their beloved homes but also prevented them from paying a visit to the Kabah, although this sacred place was not the property of anyone. Their crime was all the more heinous because such a wicked antagonism had never existed during the previous two thousand years or so. Therefore those workers of iniquity, the list of whose crimes was so black, had no right to raise objections on the basis of a

trivial border incident. Moreover, this incident took place without the permission of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and was, therefore, nothing more than an irresponsible act on the part of a few members of the Islamic party.

It should also be kept in view that when this detachment came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) with the prisoners and the spoils, he said, I never gave you permission to fight. He also refused to accept the share due to the public treasury from the spoils. This clearly showed that it was an unlawful and unauthorized act. The common Muslims also took their men to task for this incident and there was not a single Muslim in the whole of Al-Madinah who approved of this act of theirs.

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

who tries to rob them of their wealth, for the latter tries to ruin only their life in this world, which is after all transitory, while the former tries to ruin their life in the Hereafter, which is eternal.

218. Certainly, those who have believed, and those who have emigrated and have fought in the Way of Allah,^{*234} those have hope of Allah's mercy. And Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ



***234** The word Jihad means to exert one's utmost for the achievement of an object. It is not a synonym for holy war, but has a far wider meaning than this and covers every kind of effort. And the mujahid is one who is always after the achievement of his ideal, plans for it, propagates it with his tongue and pen and struggles for it with all his heart and body. In short, he spends all his efforts and resources for its achievement and fights against all those forces that oppose it; so much so that he does not hesitate to put even his very life in danger for his ideal. The struggle and fight to such a person will be technically Jihad. A Muslim, however, is required to do all this in the Way of Allah alone under certain moral restrictions for establishing the way prescribed by Him and for elevating His word above all. And there should be absolutely no other object than this before a Muslim in performing Jihad. It has thus become clear that the Jihad of a Muslim is not general war of

extermination against infidels.

219. They ask you (O Muhammad) about wine and gambling. Say: “In them is great sin, and (some) benefit for people. And the sin of them is greater than their benefit.”^{*235} And they ask you what they should spend. Say: “That which is beyond your needs.” Thus Allah makes clear to you (His) verses that you might give thought.

﴿ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ
وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ
وَمَنْفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ
مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا ۚ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا
يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ ۗ كَذَلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴾

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

220. In the world and the Hereafter. And they ask you about the orphans. Say: “Improvement for them is best.”^{*236} And if you mix your affairs with theirs, then (they

﴿ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۚ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ
عَنِ الْيَتَامَىٰ قُلْ إِصْلَاحٌ لَهُمْ
خَيْرٌ وَإِنْ تُخَالِطُوهُمْ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ ۚ

are) your brothers. And Allah knows him who corrupts (orphan's property) from him who improves (it). And if Allah had willed, He could have put you into difficulties. Indeed, Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.”

وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ
الْمُصْلِحِ ۚ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
لَأَعْنَتَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

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

221. And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a woman who associates (with Allah), even though she pleases you. And do not marry polytheistic men until

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَةَ حَتَّىٰ
يُؤْمِنَ ۚ وَلَا امَةٌ مُّؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّن
مُّشْرِكَةٍ ۚ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ ۗ وَلَا
تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنُوا

they believe. And a believing slave man is better than a man who associates (with Allah), even though he pleases you. They invite to the Fire,^{*237} and Allah invites to the Garden and forgiveness by His permission. And He makes clear His verses to the people that they may remember.

وَلَعَبْدٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكٍ
 وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكُمْ ؕ أُولَٰئِكَ يَدْعُونَ
 إِلَى النَّارِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُوٓا۟ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ
 وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِ ۖ وَيُبَيِّنُ ؕ آيَاتِهِ
 لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ



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

his progeny.

222. And they ask you about menstruation. Say: “It is a hurt,^{*238} so keep away from women during menstruation, and do not approach them until they are cleansed. So when they have purified themselves,^{*239} then go to them from where Allah has ordained upon you.^{*240} Indeed, Allah loves those who turn to Him in repentance and He loves those who purify themselves.”

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ
هُوَ أَذًى فَاعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي
الْمَحِيضِ وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ حَتَّى
يَطْهَرْنَ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ
مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ
الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ



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

***239** The Quran uses indirect and covert hints and suggestions for the expression of such delicate matters. The instructions, they should be separated, and do not go near them, do not mean that the women should be made untouchables during their monthly periods, as they are made by the Jews, the Hindus and some other communities. The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained that this commandment meant only to prohibit intercourse with them during the menses. All other relations with them may

be continued as before.

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

223. Your women are a cultivation (for sowing seed) for you, so go to your place of cultivation however you will, ^{*241} and send (good) before you for your selves, ^{*242} and fear Allah, and know that you will meet Him. And give glad tidings to the believers.

نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ فَاتُوا
حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ وَقَدِّمُوا
لِأَنفُسِكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا
أَنَّكُمْ مُلَاقُوهُ وَبَشِّرِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

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

***242** The Arabic words are comprehensive. They may imply: You should try to produce children for the continuation of your race, or you must take special pains to bring up and train them morally to be good men. Here both

the aspects are implied. That is why they have been warned, in the next sentence, that they shall be called to account by Allah for any deliberate disregard of these obligations.

224. And do not make Allah (His name) an excuse in your oaths, against your being righteous, and acting piously, and making peace among mankind.*243 And Allah is All Hearer, All Knower.

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ عُرْضَةً
لِأَيْمَانِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوا وَتَتَّقُوا
وَتُصَلِّحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

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

225. Allah will not call you to account for that which is unintentional in your oaths.*244 But He will call you to account for that which your hearts have earned. And Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Forbearing.

لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ
حَلِيمٌ

***244** There is neither expiation nor any punishment for

those oaths that one utters unawares as a byword.

226. For those who take an oath to keep away from their wives, the waiting is four months.^{*245} Then, if they return, then indeed, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.^{*246}

لِّلَّذِينَ يُؤْلُونَ مِن نِّسَائِهِمْ تَرَبُّصُ
أَرْبَعَةِ أَشْهُرٍ فَإِن فَاءُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ



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

From the words "Those who take an oath" the jurists belonging to the Hanafi and Shafie schools of thought conclude that this period of four months applies only to those cases of separation which are made on oath; if they remain separate for any length of time without an oath, this law would not apply to them. On the other hand, the jurists belonging to the Maliki school of thought are of the opinion that the maximum period of four months applies to all cases of separation. A saying of Imam Ahmad also supports this opinion.

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

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

227. And if they decide upon divorce,^{*247} then indeed, Allah is All Hearer, All Knower.

وَإِنْ عَزَمُوا الطَّلَاقَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ



*247 According to the verdict of Caliph Uthman, Ibn Masud, Zaid bin Thabit and some other jurists (may Allah be pleased with them), they can reunite only within four

months. The expiry of this term itself is a proof that the husband has decided upon divorce. Hence after its expiry, divorce will automatically take place and the husband will forfeit the right of reunion during the waiting term. If, however, both of them agree, they can remarry. There is a verdict to the same effect from Umar, Ali, Ibn Abbas and Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) and the jurists of the Hanafi school have accepted the same.

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

As against this, Aishah, Abud-Darda and many other jurists of Al-Madinah (may Allah be pleased with them) are of the opinion that after the expiry of four months the case should be taken to a court so that the judge may order the husband either to reunite with his wife or divorce her. There is also a verdict of Umar, Ali and Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) to this effect and the same has been accepted by Imam Malik and Imam Shafie also.

228. And divorced women shall wait, for themselves (from getting remarried) for three menstrual periods. And it is not lawful for them that they should conceal that which Allah has created in

وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ
بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ وَلَا يَحِلُّ
لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي
أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنَنَّ بِاللَّهِ

their wombs, if they believe in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands have more right to take ^{*248} them back in that (period), if they desire a reconciliation. ^{*249} And they (women) have (rights) similar to those over them according to what is equitable, and men have a degree above them. And Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.

وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَتُعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا وَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْنَّ دَرَجَةٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

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

***249** Jurists differ in the interpretation of this verse. According to one section of them, divorce does not take place and the husband retains the right of reunion up to the time of the purification of the wife by a bath after the third monthly course. This is the opinion of Abu Bakr, Umar, Ali, Ibn Abbas, Abu Musa Ashari, Ibn Masud and some other companions of the first rank (may Allah be pleased with them), and the Hanafi jurists have accepted the same. On the contrary, the other section says that the husband forfeits the right of reunion as soon as the wife has a discharge of the third monthly course. This opinion is held by Aishah, Ibn Umar and Zaid bin Thabit (may Allah be pleased with them), and the Shafie and the Maliki jurists have adopted the same. It must, however, be clearly

understood that the husband retains the right of reunion only in the case when he has pronounced one divorce or two divorces, but he forfeits the right of reunion when he has pronounced three divorces.

229. Divorce is twice, then (a woman) must be kept on reasonable terms,^{*250} or be separated in kindness. And it is not lawful for you that you take anything back from that which you have given them (women),^{*251} except that both fear that they may not keep the limits (ordained by) Allah. Then if you fear that they may not keep the limits of Allah, then it is no sin for either of them in that by which she ransoms herself.^{*252} These are the limits by Allah, so do not transgress them. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.

الطَّلُقُ مَرَّتَانِ ^ط فَإِمْسَاكِ ^م
بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٍ بِإِحْسَانٍ ^ط
وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا مِمَّا
ءَاتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَخَافَا
أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ ^ط فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ
أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْهِمَا فِيهَا ^ط إِفْتَدَتْ بِهِنَّ ^ط تِلْكَ
حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا ^ج وَمَنْ
يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الظَّالِمُونَ

***250** This brief verse was meant to reform a serious social evil common in Arabia before the advent of Islam. A husband was allowed to pronounce divorce as often as he

pleased. Whenever his relations were strained with his wife, he would pronounce a divorce and then reunite as and when it suited him. As there was no limit to this, it was repeated over and over again. Thus the wife could neither have conjugal relations with him, nor was free to marry anyone else. This verse of the Quran shuts this door of cruelty. During his whole married life, a husband may use the right of divorce and reunion with one wife only twice. After that whenever he pronounces divorce for the third time, wife shall be separated from him permanently.

In order to check hasty action and leave the door open for reconciliation at many stages, the right method of pronouncing divorce as taught in the Quran and the traditions is that if and when it becomes inevitable, it should be pronounced only when she is not in her menses and even if a dispute arises during the monthly period, it is not right to pronounce divorce during that condition, but he should wait for her to cleanse herself and then may pronounce a single divorce, if he so likes. Then he should wait for the next monthly course and pronounce the second divorce if he so wishes after she is cleansed. Then he should wait for the next monthly course to pronounce the third and final divorce after she is cleansed. It is, however, better to wait and reconsider the matter after the first and second pronouncements, for in the case of one or two divorces, the husband retains the right to take her back as his wife before the expiry of the term, and even if the term has expired, the couple has a chance to remarry by mutual consent. But if divorce is pronounced for the third time in

the third period of purity, the husband forfeits the right to take her back nor can the couple remarry.

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

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

***252** When divorce is obtained by the wife from her husband by compensation, it is called *khula* in the Islamic law. If the husband and the wife agree between themselves on some terms regarding this, the same shall be enforced. But if the case goes to the court, it will first of all try to ascertain whether the wife really dislikes her husband so much that she cannot live with him any longer. Then if the court is satisfied that they cannot live together happily, it shall fix as compensation anything that it considers proper,

and the husband shall have to accept that and divorce his wife. The jurists are generally of the opinion that the compensation should not exceed the dower given by the husband.

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

According to the majority of Muslims, the term for the wife in the case of *khula* is the same as that of divorce. But Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, and others have related traditions to the effect that the Prophet (peace be upon him) prescribed only one monthly course as the term for the wife after the divorce, and Caliph Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) decided a case in accordance with this.

230. So if he has divorced her (for the third time), then she is not lawful to him afterward, until she marries a husband other than him. Then if he (the other husband) divorces her,^{*253} then it is no sin upon them both (woman and the former husband) that they reunite together, if they think that they may keep the limits of Allah. And these are the limits (ordained by) Allah,

فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدُ
حَتَّى تَنْكِحَ زَوْجًا غَيْرَهُ ۖ فَإِنْ
طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ
يَتَرَاجَعَا إِنْ ظَنَّا أَنْ يُقِيمَا
حُدُودَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ
يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

which He makes clear for the people who have knowledge.

***253** Authentic traditions warn against any pre-arranged scheme that a certain man should marry a certain divorced woman with the understanding that he would divorce her again to enable the former husband to remarry his divorced wife. This shall be an unlawful act and such a marriage shall be no marriage at all but adultery and the woman shall not become the lawful wife of the first husband by such a pre-arranged scheme. Ali, Ibn Masud Abu Hurairah and Uqbah bin-Amir, (may Allah be pleased with them) all relate the tradition to the effect that the Prophet (peace be upon him) cursed all the persons who indulge in such devices.

231. And when you have divorced women, and they have reached their term, then keep them on reasonable terms, or separate them on reasonable terms. And do not keep them (intending) to harm, that you transgress (the limits). And whoever does that, then he has indeed wronged himself. ^{*254} And do not take the verses of Allah in jest, and remember the favor of Allah upon you, and that

وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ
فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ
سَرَحوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَلَا
تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِّتَعْتَدُوا وَمَنْ
يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ
وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوًا
وَأذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا
أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ الْكِتَابِ

which He has sent down to you of the Book (the Quran) and wisdom, by which He instructs you.*255 And fear Allah and know that Allah has knowledge of all things.

وَالْحِكْمَةَ يَعِظُكُمْ بِهَا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ



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

*255 It means, do not forget the fact that Allah has appointed you to a position of the highest responsibility. He has given you the Book and taught you wisdom and entrusted you with the duty of guiding the world. You have been made the community of the golden mean, and the witnesses of virtue and truth. It does not, therefore, behoove you to play with the revelations by means of sophistry and take undue advantage of the letter of the law and lead wicked and unjust lives in your homes, when you are expected to show the right way to the world.

232. And when you have divorced women, and they have reached their term, then do not prevent them that they marry their husbands (former or new),

وَإِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ أَنْ يَنْكِحْنَ أَزْوَاجَهُنَّ إِذَا تَرَاضُوا بَيْنَهُمْ

when they agree among themselves on reasonable terms.*256 This is instructed to him, who among you believes in Allah and the Last Day. That is more virtuous for you, and purer. And Allah knows, and you do not know.

بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ذَٰلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَن
كَانَ مِنْكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَزْكَىٰ لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٢٢﴾

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

233. And (divorced) mothers shall nurse (breastfeed) their children two complete years, for whoever intends to complete the nursing.*257 And upon the father of the child is their (mothers') provision and their clothing on a reasonable basis. No soul should be burdened beyond

﴿ وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ
حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُتِمَّ
الرِّضَاعَةَ وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ
رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ لَا
تُكَلِّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَا

its capacity. A mother should not be harmed because of her child, nor should he (be harmed) whose child it is because of his child. And on (father's) heir is (the duty) like that (of the father). And if they desire weaning through mutual consent of them both, and consultation, then it is no sin for them. And if you intend to have your children nursed (by other women),*258 then it is no sin for you, provided you pay what is due from you on reasonable basis. And fear Allah, and know that Allah is Seer of what you do.

تُضَارَّ وَالِدَةٌ بِوَلَدِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ
لَهُ بِوَلَدِهِ^ج وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ
ذَلِكَ^ط فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنْ
تَرَاضٍ مِّنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْهِمَا^ط وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ
تَسْتَرْضِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَا آتَيْتُمْ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ^ط وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا
أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ



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

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

234. And those who die among you and leave behind wives, they (the wives) shall wait, keeping themselves

وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ
أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ

(from remarrying), four months and ten (days).^{*259}

Then when they have reached their term, then there is no sin for you in that which they may do with themselves in honorable manner. And Allah is Well Acquainted of what you do.

أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ
فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي
أَنْفُسِهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ



***259** This prescribed term for waiting also applies to those widows who might not have had any intercourse with their husbands. The pregnant widow is, however, an exception. Her prescribed term is her delivery whether it takes place just after the death of the husband or several months after it.

They (the wives) shall wait, implies that they must not remarry during the term, nor adorn themselves in any manner during this period. traditions give clear instructions that widows should not wear ornaments and colored and showy dresses, nor adorn themselves with any kind of make up during the term. There is, however, a difference of opinion as to whether a widow should pass the term in the house of the deceased husband or not. Umar, Uthman Ibn Umar, Zaid bin Thabit, Ibn Masud, Umm Salamah, Saeed bin al-Musayyib, Ibrahim Nakhai, Muhammad bin Sirin, and the four Imams (may Allah be pleased with all of them) are of the opinion that she should reside in the house of the deceased husband. On the contrary, Aishah, Ibn Abbas, Ali, Jabir bin Abdullah, Ata,

Taus, Hasan Basri, Umar bin Abdul 'Aziz, and all the Zahiris (may Allah be pleased with all of them) are of the opinion that she is free to pass the period wherever she likes, and can also go on a journey.

235. And there is no sin for you in that to which you make indirect proposal of marriage to the women (during their waiting term), or keep it concealed within yourselves. Allah knows that you will be thinking of them. But do not promise them secretly, except that you speak honorable words. And do not resolve on the tie of marriage, until the prescribed term is reached. And know that Allah knows what is within yourselves, so fear Him. And know that Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Forbearing.

وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا عَرَّضْتُمْ
بِهِ مِنْ خِطْبَةِ النِّسَاءِ أَوْ
أَكْنَنْتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ
أَنَّكُمْ سَتَذْكُرُونَهُنَّ وَلَكِنْ لَا
تُوَاعِدُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا
قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا وَلَا تَعْزَمُوا عُقْدَةَ
النِّكَاحِ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابُ
أَجَلَهُ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا
فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ وَأَعْلَمُوا
أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

236. (It is) no sin for you if you divorce women while you have not touched them, or appointed for them an obligatory bridal gift. But provide them

لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمْ
النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ أَوْ
تَفَرَّضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَمَتَّعُوهُنَّ

(a compensation).^{*260} The wealthy according to his means, and the poor according to his means, a provision that is reasonable. A duty upon those who do good.

عَلَى الْمُوْسِعِ قَدْرُهُ وَعَلَى الْمُقْتِرِ
قَدْرُهُ مَتَعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا
عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ

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

237. And if you divorce them before that you touched them, while you have already appointed for them an obligatory bridal gift, then (give) half of that which you appointed, unless that they (women) forego the right, or foregoes it he in whose hand is the marriage contract. And to forego is nearer to righteousness. And do not forget kindness among yourselves.^{*261} Indeed, Allah is All Seer of what you do.

وَإِنْ طَلَّقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ
تَمْسُوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ
فَرِيضَةً فَنِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ
يَعْفُونَ أَوْ يَعْفُوَ الَّذِي
بِيَدِهِ عَقْدَةُ النِّكَاحِ وَأَنْ
تَعْفُوا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى وَلَا
تَنْسُوا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

***261** That is mutual generosity in dealings is essential for the harmony and betterment of human relations. Social life

can never be happy if each and every person insists on his own legal rights.

238. Guard upon (obligatory) prayers,^{*262} and the middle prayer,^{*263} and stand in front of Allah devoutly obedient.

حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ
وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَى وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ
قَانِتِينَ



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

***263** Interpreters differ in regard to the meaning of *salat-al-wusta* but the majority of them are of the opinion that it refers to one of the five prayers, and most of them have opined that it is the Asr prayer. There is, however, no definite saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in support of any of these interpretations. Those who are in favor of the Asr prayer infer their opinion from this tradition: In the battle of the clans, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was so engaged in repelling the invasion of the enemies that he got no time to offer the Asr prayer till sunset. Then he said, may Allah fill their graves with fire for depriving us of our *salat al-wusta*. From this they infer

that the *salat al-wusta* is meant the Asr prayer. But in my opinion what the Prophet (peace be upon him) meant by this was that they were responsible for the spiritual loss the Muslims had suffered by their inability to offer their Asr Prayer in time and with peace of mind. As the prayer whose loss the Prophet (peace be upon him) regretted happened to be the Asr prayer, the interpreters were led to conclude that the Asr prayer itself was the *salat al-wusta*. The Arabic word *wusta* means both middle and excellent. Thus, *salat al-wusta* implies both the middle prayer and also an excellent prayer which is said in time and with full attention to Allah, that is, a prayer which has all the excellent qualities of Salat. The subsequent sentence, “And stand in front of Allah devoutly obedient” itself supports the interpretation that it meant an excellent prayer offered to Allah, having all the excellent qualities of Salat, and not any one particular prayer out of the five prescribed prayers.

239. And if you fear (the enemy), then (pray) on foot or riding. Then when you are in safety, then remember Allah, as He has taught you that which you did not know.

فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا
فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَمَا
عَلَّمَكُمْ مَا لَمْ تَكُونُوا
تَعْلَمُونَ



240. And those^{*264} who die among you, and leave behind wives. For their wives is a

وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ
وَيَذُرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا وَصِيَّةً

bequest, a provision for one year without turning (them) out (of their homes). But if they go out (of their own accord), then there is no sin for you in that which they do with themselves in honorable manner. And Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.

لَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ مَتَعًا إِلَى الْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ
إِخْرَاجٍ فَإِنْ خَرَجْنَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي
أَنْفُسِهِنَّ مِنْ مَّعْرُوفٍ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

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

241. And for divorced women is a provision that is reasonable, a duty upon those who are righteous.

وَالْمُطَلَّقاتِ مَتَعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ

242. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you may understand.

كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ
آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

243. Did you ^{*265} not see (reflect) at those who went out from their homes, and they were in thousands, fearing death. So Allah said to them: "Die." Then He raised them back to life. ^{*266} Indeed, Allah is full of bounty to mankind, but

۞ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ
دِيَرِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ
الْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ مُوتُوا ثُمَّ
أَحْيَاهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ
عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَئِنَّ أَكْثَرَ

most of mankind do not
give thanks.



النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ

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

***266** This refers to the exodus of the children of Israel (for details see Al-Maidah: Ayats 20-26), when they had left Egypt in large numbers and were wandering as homeless in the deserts and wildernesses and were very anxious to find a home for themselves. But when inspired by Allah, the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) ordered them to fight against the Canaanites and expel them from Palestine and conquer that territory, they showed cowardice and refused to march forward. Consequently Allah left them to wander in the land for forty years so that their generation should

come to an end and a new one be brought up in the hardships of the desert. Then Allah gave them victory over the Canaanites. Probably “Die. Then He raised them back to life” refers to these two aspects of the exodus.

244. And fight in the cause of Allah, and know that Allah is All Hearer, All Knower.

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَاعْلَمُوا
أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

245. Who is he that would loan to Allah a goodly loan,^{*267} so that He may multiply it for him many times. And it is Allah who restricts and grants abundance. And unto Him you will be returned.

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا
حَسَنًا فَيضْعِفُهُ لَهُ أضعافًا
كثيرةً وَاللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْصُطُ
وإِلَيْهِ تُرجعونَ

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

246. Did you not see (reflect) at the leaders of the Children of Israel after Moses, when they said to a

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الْمَلَأِ مِنْ بَنِي
إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى إِذْ

prophet of theirs: “Appoint for us a king, we will fight in the cause of Allah.”*268 He said: “Would it perhaps be, if fighting was prescribed for you, that you would not fight.” They said: “And what is it with us that we should not fight in the cause of Allah, and indeed we have been driven out from our homes and our children.”

But when fighting was prescribed for them, they turned away, except a few of them. And Allah is aware of the wrongdoers.

قَالُوا لِنَبِيِّهِمْ أَتَبَعْتُمْ لَنَا مَلِكًا
نُقَاتِلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَالَ هَلْ
عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ
الْقِتَالُ أَلَّا تُقَاتِلُوا قَالُوا وَمَا
لَنَا أَلَّا نُقَاتِلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ
أُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ دِيَارِنَا وَأَبْنَائِنَا
فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا
إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
بِالظَّالِمِينَ



*268 This incident has been mentioned here to fore-warn the Muslims about the hardship and trials of Jihad. About 1000 B.C. the Amalikites tyrannized over the Israelites and usurped many parts of Palestine from them. At that time the Prophet Samuel (peace be upon him), who was at the helm of the affairs of Israel, had grown very old. So the elders of Israel went to Prophet Samuel (peace be upon him) and said, “You are old. Now appoint a king for us to rule over us and march in front of us and fight in the Way of God.” They asked for a king to rule over them like all other nations. They made this demand because under

the evil influence of the irreligious foreign rulers, they had forgotten the very distinction between the divine rule and kingship. That is what displeased Samuel and incurred the wrath of the Lord. Here are given some details from Chapters 7, 8, 12 of I Samuel.

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

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

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

consumed, both ye and your king. (12:12-23)

From the above quotations, it is quite clear that God and His Prophet did not approve of their demand for a king. As to the question, why has not God condemned in the Quran this demand of the elders of Israel for a king, the answer is obvious. The story has been related here only for the benefit of the Muslims so that they may learn a lesson from this. Therefore there was no occasion for the condemnation or approval of the institution of kingship, and it would have been irrelevant to discuss whether this demand was right or wrong. Here the only object in view is to state the cause of the downfall of the Israelites, their cowardice, self-worship and lack of discipline so that these might serve as a fore-warning to the Muslims and they should avoid the nourishment of such weaknesses amongst themselves.

247. And their prophet said to them: “Certainly, Allah has appointed for you Saul^{*269} as a king.” They said: “How can he have kingship over us and we are more deserving of the kingship than he is, and he has not been given any abundance in wealth.” He said: “Indeed, Allah has chosen him over you, and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature.

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ
بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا
قَالُوا أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ
عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ
وَلَمْ يُوْت سَعَةً مِّنَ الْمَالِ
قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَزَادَهُر بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ

And Allah bestows His Sovereignty on whom He wills. And Allah is All Encompassing, All Knower.”

وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مَلَكَهُ مَن يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

***269** The Bible says, now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish. And he had a son whose name was Saul, a choice young man and a goodly person: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people. And the asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses. And when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them. And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, behold the man whom I spake to thee of this same shall reign over my people. And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlor and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden which were about thirty persons. Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head and said, the Lord hath appointed thee to be captain over his inheritance. And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen. (I Samuel, chapters 9, 10).

Saul was appointed to be leader of Israel at the command of God like Aaron. David and Christ (peace be upon them all), but the Quran or the traditions do not say explicitly whether he was appointed as a Prophet as well. His appointment as a king by God does not necessary mean that he was also made a Prophet.

248. And their prophet said to them: “Certainly, the sign of his kingship is that there shall come to you the ark in which is reassurance from your Lord, and a remnant of that left behind by the family of Moses, and the family of Aaron, the angels carrying it.^{*270} Indeed, in that shall be a sign for you if you are believers.”

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ
مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ
فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ
مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آءَالُ مُوسَىٰ وَآءَالُ
هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِنَّ فِي
ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُم إِن كُنْتُمْ
مُؤْمِنِينَ



***270** Though the Bible differs a little from the Quran about the details of the ark, yet we learn much from it.

The Israelites considered the ark to be very sacred, that is the ark of the covenant. They believed that by means of it, God may come among us and rescue us from the power of enemies. That is why its return gave them peace of mind and courage.

The ark contained the sacred relics of the house of Moses and Aaron (peace be upon them). These were the fragments of the tablets given to Moses on the Mount Sinai. Besides, there was the original copy of the Torah which was written under the guidance of Moses and given to the Levites. It also contained a bottle of manna so that the future generations of Israel should be grateful to Allah for the blessing which He had bestowed upon their forefathers in the desert. Probably it also contained the staff of Moses,

which was a great sign of Allah.

Probably the Quran refers to the incident mentioned in chapters 4, 5, 6, of I Samuel.

The ark of the Lord was captured by the Philistines in a battle in which the Israelites were routed. The Israelites were so disheartened that they cried, the glory is gone from Israel on account of the capture of the ark of God. The ark remained in the land of the Philistines for seven months but there was deadly panic in every town to which it was driven, for "God laid a heavy hand upon them there." So much so that they began to cry, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain amongst us any longer for His hand is severer on us." Then they decided to send it back to Israel. They took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart. And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh .

As the cart was driven without any driver, obviously it was being driven by the angels towards the children of Israel under the direction of God.

249. Then when Saul went out with the soldiers, he said: "Indeed, Allah will be testing you with a river. So whoever drinks from it, is then not of me. And whoever does not taste it, he is indeed of me, except him who takes (from it) in the hollow of his hand."

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ
قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ
فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَنْ
لَمْ يَطْعَمَهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنْ
أَغْرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ فَشَرِبُوا

Then they drank from it, except a few of them.*271

Then when he had crossed it (the river), he and those who believed with him, they said: “There is no power for us this day against Goliath and his soldiers.”*272 Those who knew that they would meet Allah said: “How many a small company has overcome a large company by Allah’s permission. And Allah is with those who are patient.”

مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ فَلَمَّا
جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ
بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ ۗ قَالَ
الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلَاقُوا
اللَّهِ كَم مِّن فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ
فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ
الصَّابِرِينَ



*271 The river might have been the Jordan or some other stream or rivulet, which Saul had to cross with the army of Israel. As he knew there was very little discipline in his community, he applied this test to sift the competent from the incompetent, and the brave from the cowardly. It is obvious that those, who could not control their thirst for a little while, could not be trusted to keep discipline in the face of that enemy by whom they had previously been defeated.

As the same test was applied by Gideon before Saul. Critics of the Quran have come to the strange conclusion that Gideon and Saul are here (Ayat 249) confused. Of course, by this they wanted to show that the Quran was not a

revealed Book but was the invention of Muhammad (peace be upon him). This objection is absurd on the face of it. If two similar events had happened and only one of these is mentioned in the Bible, it does not prove that the other did not happen just because it was not mentioned in it. Moreover, it has never been claimed that the Bible contains the complete history of the Israelites with its full details. The very fact that the Talmud contains many incidents which are not mentioned in the Bible is a proof thereof.

*272 Probably these were the people who had shown lack of endurance by the riverside.

250. And when they went against Goliath and his soldiers, they said: "Our Lord, Bestow on us endurance, and make firm our foothold, and give us victory against the disbelieving people."

وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ
 قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا
 وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى
 الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٥٠﴾

251. So they defeated them by Allah's permission, and David killed Goliath, and Allah gave him the kingship and wisdom, and taught him of that which He willed. And if Allah had not repelled people, some of them by others, the

فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ
 دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ وَءَاتَاهُ اللَّهُ
 الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ
 مِمَّا يَشَاءُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ
 النَّاسِ بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ

earth^{*273} would have been corrupted.^{*274} But Allah is full of bounty to the worlds.

لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَكِنَّ
اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ



***273** According to the Bible, David was a youth at that time. Once he reached the army of Saul at the time when Goliath, the champion of the Philistines, was uttering his challenge: “I defy the force of Israel. Give me a man and let us have a fight.” Hearing these words the Israelites were dismayed and daunted, but David said to Saul, “Let not my Lord’s courage fail him: Your servant will go and fight the Philistines.” Saul would not agree but David persisted and was allowed to fight with him. When Goliath saw him, he despised him for his youth and said, come here and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. Then David answered, the Eternal will deliver you into my hands so that all the world may learn that Israel has a God, till all here present, learn that the Eternal does not save by sword and spear. The fight is in the Eternal’s hands, and He will put you in our power. Then David slew him and became very popular among the Israelites. Saul gave his own daughter to him in marriage and after him he became the king of Israel.

***274** In order to keep peace and order on the earth, Allah allows different groups, different nations and different parties to gain and retain power to a certain limit but when they transgress that limit, He replaces them by others and

breaks their power. If Allah had allowed any one party or nation to continue in power forever, Allah's earth would have been filled with utter confusion and disorder.

252. These are the verses of Allah which We recite to you (O Muhammad) with truth. And indeed, you are from among the messengers.

تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ
بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ
الْمُرْسَلِينَ

253. Those messengers, We raised in ranks some of them above the others. Among them were some to whom Allah spoke, and He raised some of them in degrees. And We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs, and We supported him with the holy Spirit. And if Allah had so willed, those who succeeded them would not have fought (each other) after that the clear proofs had come to them. But they differed, then among them were some who believed, and among them were some who disbelieved. And if Allah had willed, they would not have fought. But

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ
عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ
وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ وَءَاتَيْنَا
عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ
وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ وَلَوْ شَاءَ
اللَّهُ مَا أَقْتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ
وَلَكِنْ اخْتَلَفُوا فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ ءَامَنَ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَفَرَ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا
أَقْتَلُوا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا

Allah does what He intends. *275

يُرِيدُ
۲۰۳

*275 Naturally a question arises: Why does not then Allah will it? Why does He allow differences that sometimes result in wrangling, even fights? Is He helpless to stop these? Of course, He is All-Powerful and could have stopped these and none would have dared to swerve even the least from the guidance He sent through His Messengers. But it is not His will to force people to follow a particular, defined fixed way, because He has sent man on the earth for a trial. If He had taken away freedom of action from man, the trial would have become meaningless. He sent His Messengers to invite the people to the right way and convince them by arguments and signs. The Messengers were not sent to force people to believe and submit to Allah. Differences and fights took place because the people abused the limited freedom of will and freedom of action which was given to them by Allah and then invented ways of life different from that way which was sent down by Allah. Thus it is quite obvious that differences did not arise because Allah failed (though He willed) to force the people to choose the right way. Of course, Allah is able to do anything He wills.

254. O those who believe, spend of that which We have provided for you *276 before that a day comes in which there will be no bargaining, nor friendship, nor

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا
رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ
لَا بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ وَلَا شَفِيعَةٌ

intercession. And the
disbelievers, they are the ^{*277}
wrongdoers.

وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ
٢٥٤

***276** Believers have been exhorted to make monetary sacrifices for the achievement of the cause they believe in.

***277** Those who adopt the way of disbelief, may either refer to those who refuse to obey the commands of Allah and consider the hoarding of wealth to be dearer than the winning of His approval, or to those who do not believe in the Day about which warning has been given, salvation in the Hereafter through somebody's friendship or intercession.

255. Allah, there is no god except Him. ^{*278} The Ever Living, the Self Existent. Neither slumber overtakes Him, nor sleep. ^{*279} To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens, and whatever is on the earth. ^{*280} Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission. ^{*281} He knows that which is in front of them, and that which is behind them. And they do not encompass anything of His knowledge except for what He wills. ^{*282} His throne ^{*283} extends over the

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ
لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا
فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا
بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ
وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ
بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ
وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ

heavens and the earth. And He feels no fatigue in guarding them. And He is the Most High, the Supreme. *284

وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا
وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ



***278** Though ignorant people might make several gods and set up objects of worship, the fact remains that the whole of creation belongs to the Eternal, who has no partner whatsoever. He is the living Allah who sustains the whole universe. He alone is the Master of His kingdom. None else is a partner in His attributes, characteristics, powers and rights. Hence a lie is invented whenever any false god is set up beside Allah on the earth or in the heavens and a war is waged against the truth.

***279** This refutes the conception of Allah which is based on the assumption that He has weaknesses and limitations like imperfect human beings. For instance the Bible says, “And on the seventh day God ended His work which he had made: and He rested on the seventh day from all the work which He had made” (Genesis 2:2), and “Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.’ (Psalms 78:65). Of course, Allah is absolutely free from such weaknesses.

***280** He is the Master and Owner of the earth and the heavens and each and every thing contained in them, and none else has any part or share in His ownership, His Authority, His kingdom, His sovereignty and His rule. Anyone or anything that can be conceived as god will surely be a part of the universe and every part of this universe is Allah’s property and cannot, therefore, be His partner or

rival.

***281** This refutes the wrong notion of those who are under the delusion that saints, angels, etc., wield great influence with Allah, and they will intercede with Him and force Him to pardon them. They are being warned that no creature of His can stand before Him and intercede for others, not to speak of forcing Allah to pardon them. No prophet, no angel, and no saint will dare utter a word without the permission of the Sovereign of the universe.

***282** According to the Quran, it is an unpardonable sin to associate any partner or set up any rival to rank with Allah or to assume for oneself His rights or characteristics in any way whatsoever. This is called shirk. In the preceding verse, the Quran strikes at the very root of shirk by declaring that Allah's Sovereignty is unlimited and His Power is absolute. In this verse the same thing is presented from another point of view, by posing the question: How can anyone interfere in the management of the universe when none possesses that knowledge which is a prerequisite for this? The knowledge of the angels and human beings is so imperfect that none of them can understand the system of the universe and, therefore, any interference in its management would invariably result in chaos. Not to speak of the management of the universe, people cannot even know in what lies their own good. It is thus obvious that they should have full confidence in the guidance of Allah who is the real source of all knowledge and who knows in what lies their own good.

***283** The word *kursi* (chair) has been used here figuratively

as a symbol of power and authority. Even in English the word chair is used for the seat of authority, and government.

*284 This verse is known as *Ayat al-Kursi*. It gives such a perfect knowledge of Allah that has no parallel elsewhere. That is why a tradition has declared it to be the best verse of the Quran.

Here a question arises: In what connection has Allah and His attributes been mentioned in this place? In order to answer this question, we should survey the address which begins from verse 243. First of all the believers have been exhorted to exert their utmost in the Way of Allah and make sacrifice of life and property for its establishment. They have also been warned to ward off those weaknesses in which the Israelites were involved. Then it has been impressed upon them that success does not depend merely upon numbers, provisions and armaments, but upon faith, fortitude, discipline and firm determination. Then the wisdom of war as a weapon with which Allah repels one group by another has been stated; that is, if only one group or one party had been allowed to continue in power, it would have made life difficult for its rivals and opponents. Then it has been shown that Allah is not powerless to remove differences from among the people but it is not His will to remove these forcibly. Therefore He sends His Messengers with the truth for this purpose, but leaves the people free to accept or reject it. Again as in the beginning of this discourse, the Muslims have been enjoined to spend their wealth in the Way of Allah. Then in this verse it has

been declared that in spite of the differences in the creeds and the religions of the people, the fact is that Allah sustains and controls the whole universe. Of course, it is not His will to force the people to believe in Him, but He only warns them through His Messengers that those, who will believe in Him and sacrifice their lives and properties in His Way in order to please Him, will be gainers and those, who will disbelieve, shall be losers.

256. There shall be no compulsion in the religion.*285 The right path has indeed become distinct from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in false deities,*286 and believes in Allah, then certainly he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is All Hearer, All Knower.

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ
الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ
بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِرْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ
اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا
أَنْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ



*285 The word *deen* implies the concept about Allah as stated in the *Ayat al-Kursi* above as well as the entire way of life built on it. The verse means that the creed of Islam and its way of life cannot be thrust upon anyone forcibly. As a matter of fact, this cannot be forced upon anyone.

*286 The word *taghut* literally applies to everyone who transgresses the limits. The Quran uses this word for one who rebels against Allah and claims himself to be the master and sovereign of His servants and forces them to

become his servants.

Man's rebellion against Allah has three degrees of criminality:

- (1) One is *fasiq* (disobedient) if one professes to be His subject but practically acts against His commandments;
- (2) One is *kafir* (disbeliever) if one becomes independent of Him or owes allegiance to someone else;
- (3) One is *taghut* if one rebels against Allah and exerts to make His subjects subservient to himself. Such a one may be Satan or a priest or a religious or a political leader or a king or a state. Therefore no one can be a true believer of Allah unless he disowns *taghut*.

257. Allah is the protector of those who believe. He brings them out from darkness^{*287} into light. And those who disbelieve, their supporters are false deities.^{*288} They take them out of light into darkness. Such are the companions of the Fire. They will abide therein forever.

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
يُخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى
النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
أَوْلِيَآؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُمْ
مِنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ
أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ
فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ



***287** "Darkness" stands for the darkness of ignorance that causes one to go astray from the right way, and to spend all one's efforts and energies in wrong way. In contrast to this,

“light” stands for the light of the truth which enables one to see clearly the reality and perceive the real aim of life and follow consciously and deliberately the right way.

*288 Though *taghut* is singular in form, here it is plural in meaning, for the one who rejects Allah becomes a slave not of one but of several forms of *taghut*, One of these is Satan who goes on tempting him with many false and alluring temptations. Another is his own self that makes him a slave of passions and lusts and misleads him into crooked ways. Then there are others, his wife and children, his kith and kin, his clan and family, his friends and nation, his political and religious leaders and his government. All these are *taghut* for him and desire to make him a slave of their wishes and ambitions. And this slave of all these masters wastes his whole life in trying to accomplish the impossible feat of pleasing each and every one of them.

258. Have^{*289} you not seen (come to know) of him who had argued with Abraham^{*290} about his Lord, because Allah had given him kingship.^{*291} When Abraham said: “My Lord is the one who gives life and causes death,” he said: “I give life and cause death.” Abraham said: “Indeed, Allah brings up the sun from the east, so bring it

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ
إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي
يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِي
وَأُمِيتُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ
فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ

up from the west. Thus was confounded he who disbelieved.*292 And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.

الَّذِي كَفَرَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الظَّالِمِينَ



*289 In the foregoing verse it was declared that Allah is the helper and protector of a believer and brings him out of darkness, and *taghut* is the helper of the unbelievers and misleads them into darkness. Now three events are cited as a proof thereof. The first is the instance of a person to whom the truth was presented with so clear arguments that he could not find any answer against them. But in spite of this, he did not accept it because he was misled by *taghut* and so he went on wandering in the darkness. The other two instances are of those who had full confidence in Allah, so Allah not only took them out of darkness into light but also made them eye witnesses of the unseen reality to enable them to give testimony concerning it.

*290 The person referred to is Nimrod who was the king of Iraq, the land of the birth of Abraham (peace be upon him). The Bible does not mention this dispute but the Talmud relates it in detail and its version is substantially the same as that of the Quran. It says that Abraham's father was the chief officer of king Nimrod and a great favorite with his royal master. His son Abraham (peace be upon him) was a lover of the Lord from his earliest childhood. When he grew up he began to preach openly the Oneness of God and condemn the association of any partner or rival with Him. In order to demonstrate this, he

broke the idols and his father hastened before king Nimrod and denounced Abraham (peace be upon him), saying, “He has acted so and so; let him be brought before thee for judgment.” Abraham (peace be upon him) was summoned before the king and the dispute mentioned here took place between them.

***291** The point at issue in the dispute was as to whom Abraham (peace be upon him) acknowledged as his Lord, Allah or Nimrod. The dispute arose because of the arrogance of Nimrod whom Allah had given kingdom. In order to understand the true nature of the dispute the following should be kept in view:

(1) It has always been a common characteristic of all the mushrik societies to accept Allah as the God of gods and the Lord of lords but, at the same time, to associate other gods and lords with Him, so as not to acknowledge Him exclusively as the Lord and God and worship Him as the Deity.

(2) They have always divided Godhead into two parts the supernatural Godhead and the sovereign Godhead. They assign to God the supernatural Godhead which controls every kind of cause that produces an effect: so they turn to Him for help in their needs and difficulties but in their ignorance they set up spirits, angels, jinns, stars and many others as partners with the Supreme God, and pray to them, worship them and present offerings to them at temples dedicated to them. As to the sovereign Godhead, which really belongs to God and entitles Him alone to prescribe the way of life and to demand obedience to His

commandments and to have absolute authority over all the affairs of the world, the mushrikin have in every age either totally usurped this rank of Godhead from God and handed it over to royal families, priests, guides, elders of society, etc. or divided it between these gods and God. That is why the royal families have often claimed the rank of Godhead in the second sense, and in order to strengthen their claim, have declared themselves to be descendants of gods in the first sense, and the priests have always strengthened and supported them, in their evil designs of becoming gods.

(3) Nimrod claimed to be a god possessing the rank of sovereign godhead. He did not deny the existence of God nor did he claim to be the creator of the heavens and the earth nor the sustainer and ruler of the universe. He only claimed to be the absolute lord and sovereign of Iraq and its inhabitants. His claim was that whatever he said was law and there was none over him to whom he might be held accountable: therefore any inhabitant of Iraq who did not acknowledge him exclusively as his lord was a rebel.

(4) The dispute referred to arose when Abraham (peace be upon him) declared, "I acknowledge the Lord of the universe exclusively as my Lord and God of worship and I disown categorically the lordship and godhead of everyone else." Obviously, the declaration of this creed not only struck at the root of the national religion and religious gods but at the national state and its central power, king Nimrod, who claimed to be the absolute lord of Iraq. That is why it was not tolerated and the Prophet Abraham

(peace be upon him) was brought before Nimrod for trial as a rebel.

***292** Although Abraham (peace be upon him) had made it quite clear in his very first sentence that there can be no other lord than Allah, yet Nimrod impudently tried to refute his argument. But after the second argument, Nimrod was so shocked that he could not find any further argument to continue the dispute, as he himself knew and acknowledged that the sun and the moon were under the command of that God whom Abraham (peace be upon him) acknowledged as Lord. He, however, would not accept this truth which had become quite clear even to him because to accept it meant the giving up of his claim to despotism. As the rebel within him was not ready for this, he would not come out from the darkness of self worship into the light of the truth, even though he was dumbfounded. If he had made Allah his patron instead of his own self, he would have found the right guidance from Abraham's preaching. The Talmud says that after this dispute the king sent him to prison, where he remained for ten days. Then the king and his council sentenced him to be burnt alive and cast him into the flaming furnace. This incident has been mentioned in the Quran in Surah Al-Anbiya (Ayats 51-74).

259. Or as the one who passed by a township, and that had fallen down upon its roofs.^{*293} He said: "How shall Allah bring it to life after its death."^{*294}

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَىٰ قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّىٰ يُحْيِي هَٰذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا

So Allah caused him to die for a hundred years, then He raised him back to life. He (Allah) said: “How long did you remain (dead).” He (the man) said: “I have remained a day or part of a day.” He (Allah) said: “Nay, you have remained (dead) for a hundred years. So look at your food and your drink, they have not become spoiled. And look at your donkey, and that We may make you a sign to mankind,^{*295} and look at the bones, how We bring them together, then clothe them with the flesh.” Then when it became clear to him, he said: “I know that Allah has power over all things.”

فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ
 قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ
 يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ
 لَبِثْتَ مِائَةَ عَامٍ فَانظُرْ إِلَى
 طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ
 وَانظُرْ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ
 وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ
 وَانظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ
 نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا
 فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ
 اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

***293** It is useless to form conjectures as to who the person and which the township was, for it is not only irrelevant but also impossible to know this. There is no mention of these things in the Quran or the authentic traditions either, and we have no other reliable source. The purpose for which the incident has been related here is that Allah brings into light those who make Him their patron. It is, however, clear

from his subsequent words that he must have been a Prophet.

*294 This question did not mean that he disbelieved in resurrection or he had any doubt about it. It simply meant that he, like other Prophets, wanted to see the reality with his own eyes.

*295 The resurrection of a person who had been dead for a hundred years was itself a living sign for the people of his age.

260. And when Abraham said: "My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead. He (Allah) said: "Do you not believe." He said: "Yes, but (I ask) that my heart may be satisfied."*296 He (Allah) said: "Then take four of the birds, and tame them with yourself, (cut them into pieces) then place on each hill a portion of them, then call them, they will come to you in haste, and know that Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.*297

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي
كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى قَالَ أُولَئِم
تُؤْمِنُونَ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ
قَلْبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ
فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ أَجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ
كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ
يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا ۚ وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ



*296 That is, I want that peace of mind which is gained by actual experience.

*297 Some people have offered strange interpretations for the two above mentioned extraordinary events. But there is

no need to make far-fetched interpretations, for Allah is able to do everything He wills, as the person referred to in the first event declared this. Moreover, Allah's dealings with His Prophets are of an extraordinary nature; for an ordinary believer does not need to see actually the reality with his own eyes for the performance of his duties but it is essential for the mission of a Prophet that he should see with his own eyes those realities towards which he has to invite the people. The Prophets have to tell the people with full and firm conviction: "We have seen with our own eyes those realities about which your knowledge is based on mere guess-work. You are ignorant; but We possess knowledge; you are blind, but We possess sight." That is why the angels came to them in person so that they should see them with their own eyes. They were also shown the actual working of the system of the heavens and the earth, and Paradise and Hell and resurrection after death. Though the Prophets believed in all these things even before their appointment as Messengers, they were made witnesses of the realities after their appointment as a special favor and distinction of prophethood. (For further reference, see E.N.s 17, 18, 19, 34 of Surah Hud).

261. The example of those who spend their wealth^{*298} in the Way of Allah^{*299} is as the example of a grain (of corn), it grows seven ears, in each ear is a hundred grains. And Allah increases

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ سُنْبُلَةٍ مِائَةٌ

manifold for whom He
wills. And Allah is All
Encompassing, All
Knower. *300

حَبَّةٌ وَاللَّهُ يُضْعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ



*298 In the address which began with verse 243, the believers were exhorted to make sacrifices of life and property for the success of the great and noble cause they believed in. After strengthening their faith in Allah, for whose cause they were required to make sacrifices, the same theme has been resumed from this verse, and instructions have been given for the development of that attitude which is essential for making such sacrifices. It is obvious that people cannot make monetary sacrifices for a moral cause unless their economic point of view is totally changed. The materialists, who live and die in order to amass wealth and weigh everything in the scales of profit and loss, can never be expected to spend anything for higher ends. Even when they seem to be spending for some noble cause, they do so after calculating how far it would benefit their tribe, their own person or their nation. Obviously with such a mental attitude, one cannot move even a step forward in the Way of Allah. In order to uplift the word of Allah, one has to spend one's life, energy and wealth, irrespective of any worldly gain or loss. This way requires a broad view, great courage, a big heart and, above all, a sincere desire to win Allah's approval. Moreover, it requires radical changes in the social system in order to eradicate the materialistic morality and create spiritual values instead. That is why from here on up to

verse 281, instructions have been given for the creation of that kind of moral attitude.

***299** All that wealth which is spent in accordance with the divine law and only for the achievement of Allah's approval is spent in the Way of Allah, even though it might have been spent for one's own needs or those of one's relatives or for the indigent or for public works or for the propagation of Islam or for Jihad.

***300** As Allah has limitless resources and knows everything, one must rest assured that the more sincere one is and the deeper feelings of devotion one has in spending the wealth in the Way of Allah, the greater will be the reward one will get from Him. One must have a firm conviction that Allah, who produces seven hundred grains from one grain, has most surely the power of developing the charity seven hundredfold.

After stating this fact, two attributes of Allah have been specially mentioned in this connection to show that the resources of Allah are boundless and He is able to reward deeds to the extent they deserve, and to show that He knows everything and is not unaware of what is spent and with what intention. Therefore there is absolutely no risk of losing one's due reward.

262. Those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah, then do not follow what they have spent with reminders of generosity, nor (with) abuse. For them their

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَّبِعُونَ مَا
أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا أَذَىٰ لَهُمْ

reward is with their Lord. And there shall be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve.*301

أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ



*301 There is neither any fear of losing their due reward nor shall there ever come a time when they will regret what they have spent.

263. A kind word and forgiveness are better than charity followed by hurt. And Allah is Self Sufficient, Forbearing.*302

قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ
صَّدَقَةٍ يَتَّبِعُهَا أَذَىٰ وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ
حَلِيمٌ



*302 This implies two things. First, Allah does not stand in need of anybody's charity, for He is self-sufficient. Secondly, He likes those people who are generous, but does not like frivolous and narrow-minded people, for He Himself is generous, clement and forbearing. How, then Allah, who bestows on the people the necessities of life without stint, and forgives and pardons them over and over again in spite of their errors, would like those who mar the self-respect of a person by sending repeated reminders of their charity and making pointed references to it even though they themselves might have given only a small thing.

A tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) says that on the Day of resurrection, Allah will neither speak a word nor even so much as look at a person who makes pointed references to the gift he gave to someone.

264. O those who believe, Do not render in vain your charities by reminders of your generosity and hurting, as him who spends his wealth to be seen by the people, and does not believe in Allah and the Last Day.*303 So his example is as the example of a smooth rock upon which is dust, then a heavy rain falls upon it, which leaves it bare.*304 They are not able upon anything of what they have earned. And Allah does not guide the ungrateful people.*305

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُبْطِلُوا
صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى
كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِثَاءَ النَّاسِ
وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ
تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ
صَلْدًا ۖ لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ
مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي
الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ



*303 His hypocrisy itself clearly shows that he does not believe in Allah and the Hereafter. The very fact that he practices charity so as to be seen by men, shows that they are his gods (and not Allah), from whom he expects to get his reward. A hypocrite does neither expect any reward from God nor he believes that one day all deeds will be judged and rewarded.

*304 In this parable the rain is the charity. The hard barren rock on which the rain falls is the evil intention with which that charity is practiced. The thin layer of the earth is the seeming virtue which hides the evil intention. Though

rainfall makes the crop grow, it does actual harm, if it falls on a rock which has only a thin layer of soil on it, by washing away even that thin soil and leaving the rock bare. In the same way, though charity has the power of developing virtue, it fails to do so, if it is not practiced with good intentions. Without these things the wealth spent in charity is nothing more than the wealth wasted like the rainfall on the rock with a thin layer of soil.

***305** The word *kafir* here stands for the ungrateful person. Anyone who does not spend the wealth given to him by Allah in His Way and for His pleasure but spends it to gain approbation from people, is an ungrateful wretch because he forgets the favor of Allah. It is equally true of him who spends something in the Way of Allah but at the same time does harm to the recipient. When such a person himself does not want His approval, it is not Allah's will to show him the Way of His approval.

265. And the example of those who spend their wealth seeking the pleasure of Allah, and to strengthen their own selves, is as the example of a garden on a high ground. A heavy rain falls upon it, so it brings forth its fruit twice as much. And if the heavy rain does not fall upon it, then a drizzle (is sufficient). ***306** And Allah is

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ
 ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَتَثْبِيتًا
 مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ
 أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَآتَتْ أُكُلَهَا
 ضِعْفَيْنِ فَإِن لَّمْ يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ
 فَطَلٌّ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

All Seer of what you do.



***306** Heavy rainfall is that charity which is practiced with the best intentions and the deepest feelings of devotion. The light shower or drizzle is that charity which, though sincere, does not have that much depth and intensity of feelings behind it as in the former case.

266. Would any of you like that there is for him a garden of palm trees and grapevines, rivers flowing underneath it, all kinds of fruits for him in it, and he is afflicted by old age, and he has weak offspring, then it is struck by a whirlwind with fire in it, so that it is burnt.^{*307} Thus does Allah make clear (His) verses for you, that you may give thought.

أَيُّودٌ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ
لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُ
فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ
وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَّةٌ ضُعَفَاءُ
فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ
فَأَحْتَرَقَتْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ
لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَتَفَكَّرُونَ



***307** That is, it is quite obvious that you do not like the earnings of your whole life to be consumed at that critical period of your old age when you need them very badly and when there is no more chance for you to earn anything afresh. Exactly the same shall be your condition when you enter into the life-after-death without any provision for it.

You shall then realize all of a sudden, like the old man of the parable, that the earnings of your whole life were left behind in the world and were as useless for you in the other world as the consumed garden to the old man. Besides this, you shall find yourself as helpless as the old man of the parable because in the life-after-death there would be no more chance for you to earn anything for the next world. If you do not practice charity etc. in this world in the way it has been enjoined, but spend your whole life and its energies for the interest of this world only. You will meet, at your death, with the same critical and helpless situation as the old man of the parable met. He lost his only garden, the earnings of his whole life and the support of his old age at that period of his life when he himself was unable to plant a new garden, and his children were unable to do anything because of their tender age.

267. O those who believe, spend from the good things which you have earned, and from that which We bring forth for you from the earth, and do not seek the bad (with intent) to spend from it (in charity), and you would not take it (for yourselves), except that you will disdain about it. And know that Allah is Free of all wants, Worthy of all

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ
 طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا
 أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا
 تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ
 وَلَسْتُمْ بِتَاخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ
 تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ
 غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

Praise. *308

*308 It implies that Allah who does not stand in need of anything or anyone enjoins the people to spend the best things in His Way, not for Himself but for their own good. As He has all the praiseworthy attributes and all the excellent qualities. He does not approve of anyone who has a low character. He himself is so generous that He is always showering His blessings on His creatures; therefore He does not love the narrow-minded, mean people who pick out worthless things for charity.

268. Satan threatens you with poverty and orders you of lewdness. And Allah promises you forgiveness from Himself and bounty. And Allah is All Encompassing, All Knower.

الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ
وَيَأْمُرُكُم بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ
يَعِدُكُم مَّغْفِرَةً مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلًا وَاللَّهُ
وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

269. He gives wisdom to whom He wills. And whoever has been given wisdom, then certainly he has been given abundant good. *309 And none remember except men of understanding.

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ
يُؤْتِ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا
كَثِيرًا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو
الْأَلْبَابِ

*309 *Hikmat* which has been translated as wisdom, stands for the knowledge with the power of discerning what is true and right. Hence anyone who has wisdom will not

adopt the narrow ways of Satan but will follow the broad Way of Allah. According to the narrow-minded disciples of Satan, it is wisdom and cleverness to be parsimonious with their wealth and to be always on the look-out for acquiring more and more of it. On the contrary, those, who have been given true wisdom, consider this course to be very foolish. According to them wisdom is to spend one's wealth generously in good works after fulfilling one's own necessities of a moderate standard. It is just possible that the former may enjoy a more prosperous life here in this world but this is not the whole life. It is only a very small portion of the real life which continues after death. He, therefore, must be a big fool who gets enjoyment in this short life at the expense of happiness in the eternal life. The wise one is he who makes the best use of this short life and makes provision for the prosperity of the eternal life, even if he has been given small wealth here.

270. And whatever you spend of any spending, or make you a vow of vows, then indeed Allah knows it. And for the wrong doers there are not any helpers. ^{*310}

وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِّنْ نَّفَقَةٍ أَوْ نَذَرْتُمْ
مِّنْ نَّذْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُهُ^ط وَمَا
لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ

***310** Allah is fully aware of the intentions and actions of everyone and knows whether one spends in the Way of Allah or in the way of Satan and whether one makes a vow to Allah or to someone else. Therefore those, who spend for His cause and make vows to Him, will surely get their rewards from Him. And those evil doers, who speed for the

cause of Satan and make vows to others, shall have no helper to protect them from His punishment.

Nadhar (a vow) is a solemn promise made by a person to perform some act, or make some offering or gift etc. not binding on him, in case some wish of his should be fulfilled. If that wish is lawful and is asked of Allah and the vow is made to Allah alone, such a vow must be fulfilled as a religious duty, for it is in obedience to Allah. But if the wish is unlawful or the vow is made to someone other than Allah, then the making of the vow is sinful and its fulfillment would merit condemnation.

271. If you disclose (your) almsgiving, it is good, and if you conceal it, and give it to the poor, then that is better for you.^{*311} And He will remove from you some of your misdeeds.^{*312} And Allah is well Informed of what you do.

إِنْ تُبْدُوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ
وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاءَ
فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَيُكَفِّرُ
عَنْكُمْ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

***311** It is better to practice the obligatory charity (Zakat) openly and every other kind of charity secretly. The same principle applies to all other religious practices. It is better to perform the obligatory duties openly and the voluntary ones secretly.

***312** It helps reform the character of a man if he performs good deeds secretly. It develops virtues in him and eradicates vices. As a result, one becomes such a favorite of

Allah, that Allah in view of one's virtue and sincerity, forgives any minor sins of commission or omission He wills.

272. Not (a responsibility) upon you (O Muhammad) to guide them, but Allah guides whom He wills. And whatever you spend of good, it is for yourselves. And you do not spend except seeking the pleasure of Allah. And whatever you spend of good, it will be repaid to you in full, and you will not be wronged.*313

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ
يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ
فَلِأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ
إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا
مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُؤَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا
تُظْلَمُونَ



*313 In this verse a misunderstanding of the Muslims has been removed. At first they hesitated to give monetary help to their non-Muslim relatives and other non-Muslims. They thought that monetary help to Muslims alone was in the Way of Allah. Here they have been told that they have not been made responsible for thrusting guidance upon the unbelievers: their responsibility ends when they have conveyed the truth to them. It lies with Allah to bestow (or not to bestow) the light of perception. The Muslims, therefore, should not hesitate to fulfill the needs of the non-Muslims just because they have not accepted the guidance. If they fulfill the need of anyone to please Allah, He will give them their reward.

273. (Charity is) for the poor, those who have been restricted for the cause of Allah, they are not able to travel in the land (to earn their livelihood). The ignorant person would think of them wealthy because of their restraint. You shall know them by their mark (condition). They do not ask people with importunity. And whatever you spend of good, then indeed Allah knows of it.*314

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أُحْصِرُوا فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ
ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ تَحْسِبُهُمْ
الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعْفُفِ
تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ
النَّاسَ إِحْفَافًا وَمَا تَنْفِقُوا
مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

***314** This refers to the people who devote themselves wholly to the service of Islam and are, therefore, unable to earn their livelihood. There was a regular band of such volunteers of Islam known as *As-hab as-suffah*. They numbered about 400 and were always at the beck and call of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who had imparted to them the knowledge of Islam and trained them for its service. They imparted their acquired knowledge to others and went on different missions and expeditions under the instruction of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Obviously, such people specially deserve help because they are full time workers of Islam and have no spare time to earn their livelihood.

274. Those who spend their wealth by night, and day, secretly, and publicly, so for them, their reward is with their Lord. And there shall be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve.

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ
بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً
فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُونَ



275. Those who devour usury^{*315} will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the standing of him who is lead into insanity by Satan through (his) touch.^{*316} That is because they say: “Trade is only like usury.”^{*317} Whereas Allah has permitted trade and forbidden usury.^{*318} So to whom comes an admonition from his Lord, and he refrains (from usury), then he may keep (the profits of) that which is past. And his affair is with Allah.^{*319} And whoever returns (to usury), then such are the

الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا
يُقِيمُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ الَّذِي
يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ
مِثْلُ الرِّبَا وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ
وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا فَمَنْ جَاءَهُ
مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَانْتَهَى فَلَهُ
مَا سَلَفَ وَأَمْرُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَمَنْ
عَادَ فَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ
هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ



companions of the Fire.
They will abide therein
forever.

***315** The Arabic word *riba* literally means “increase in” or “addition to” anything. Technically it was applied to that additional sum which the creditor charged from the debtor at a fixed rate on the principal he lent, that is, interest. At the time of the revelation of the Quran, interest was charged in several ways. For instance, a person sold something and fixed a time-limit for the payment of its price, and if the buyer failed to pay it within the fixed period, he was allowed more time but had to pay an additional sum. Or a person lent a sum of money and asked the debtor to pay it back together with an agreed additional sum of money within a fixed period. Or a rate of interest was fixed for a specific period and if the principal along with the interest was not paid within that period, the rate of interest was enhanced for the extended period, and so on.

***316** The Quran likens the money-lender to a madman. Just as a madman loses his sense on account of his disordered intellect, so the money-lender is so mad for money-making that he divorces himself from commonsense. He is so senselessly foolish and impudent that he does not mind how his selfishness and greed are cutting at the very root of human love, brotherhood and fellow-feeling, and destroying the common good of mankind. He does not care at all that he is gaining prosperity at the expense of many. That is how he behaves like a madman in this world. In the next world he will rise

like a madman at the time of resurrection, for, in the Hereafter a person will rise in the same condition in which he dies here.

***317** They based their vice on a wrong theory and did not see the fundamental difference between profit and interest. They argued like this: When profit on capital is lawful in trade, why should the interest on money invested in loans be unlawful? And the Arab money-lenders were not alone in arguing like this; the bankers and money-lenders of today also put forward similar arguments for charging interest. They argue that a person, who lends a sum of money to another, could himself make profit from it and that the debtor actually does invest it in a profitable business. Why should not the creditor then get a portion of that profit from the debtor for his productive credit? However, what they forget is that there is no business in the whole world where there is a fixed and guaranteed profit without any risk. In trade, commerce, industry, agriculture etc. one has to spend both labor and capital and at the same time one has to face risks, without any guarantee of a fixed profit. Let us for the present leave aside the case of the debtor who borrows money for consumption and not for production, and also the issue of the rate of interest. Let us compare the case of the money-lender who lends money at a moderate rate of interest for profitable business with the case of those engaged in other kinds of business. They devote their entire time, labor, talent and invest their own capital, etc. and work day and night so that their business may become profitable by virtue of their own efforts. But

even then they are not guaranteed any fixed profit, and have to bear all the risks. On the contrary, the money-lender, who lends only his capital, goes on receiving a fixed amount of profit without any risk whatsoever. By what reasoning and on what principles of logic, justice and economics is it right for him to receive a fixed amount of profit? How can one be justified in lending on a fixed rate of interest to a factory a sum of money today for twenty years, when none can say what rise or fall in price may take place during these twenty years? And how is the subscriber to a war loan justified in charging interest at a fixed rate for a full century, and that too, from his own nation, whereas the whole nation has to face risks, bear losses and make sacrifices?

***318** The fundamental difference between profit and interest that produces different moral and economic results is this :

(I) The settlement of profit in trade between the buyer and the seller is made on equal terms. The buyer purchases the article he needs and the seller gets profit for the time, labor and brains he employs in providing that article to the buyer. In contrast, in the case of interest, the debtor cannot settle the transaction on equal terms with the creditor because of his weaker position. As far as the money lender is concerned, he gets that fixed sum of interest which he considers his profit. If the debtor spends the borrowed money in fulfilling his personal needs, the time factor definitely does not bring any profit at all. And if he invests that money in trade, commerce, industry, agriculture, etc.

then there are equal chances of profit or loss. Thus lending money at interest might bring a guaranteed and fixed profit to one party and loss to the other, or a guaranteed and fixed profit to one party and an uncertain and indefinite profit to the other.

(2) The trader charges his profit, however high it may be, once for all but the money-lender goes on charging interest over and over again and it goes on increasing with the passage of time. The profit which the debtor makes on the money of the creditor, however large it may be, has after all its own limits, but there is no limit to the interest the creditor may charge on his money. He may, as sometimes it actually happens, receive all the earnings of the debtor, nay, may even deprive him of all the means of livelihood or of the articles of his personal use and still might have the same amount of debt against him that was at the time of borrowing.

(3) The transaction in trade comes to an end as soon as the article and its price change hands. After this the buyer is not required to return anything to the seller. As regards the rent of furniture, house, land, etc. the lent thing is not itself spent up but is returned to the owner after the term. But in the case of the principal the debtor has to spend it first and then to reproduce it and return it to the creditor along with its interest. Thus the debtor runs a double risk; he has to reproduce the principal and also to produce its interest.

(4) One engaged in trade, industry, agriculture, etc. earns profit by spending time, labor and intelligence but the money-lender becomes the stronger partner in the earnings

of the debtor without any risk or labor on his part simply because he invests the money which is over and above his need. He is a partner only to the extent that he is entitled to a fixed guaranteed interest, irrespective of whether there is any profit at all or how much, or whether there is even a loss.

From the above it becomes clear that even from the economic point of view, trade helps construct society but interest leads to ruin. As for the moral point of view, interest, by its very nature, creates parsimony, selfishness, cruelty, hard-heartedness, money-worship, etc., and kills the spirit of fellow-feeling and cooperation. It is, therefore, ruinous for society both morally and economically. As to the question what should one do with the money for which one has no use, the answer is that one may invest it in commerce, industry, etc. on the basis of partnership and share profits and losses alike.

***319** This allowance applies only to the legal aspect of the interest which had been taken before the revelation of this verse about prohibition and does not mean that the income from that interest had also been made lawful. From the very wording of the verse, it is clear that the case will go to Allah for decision and that it has not been pardoned outright by Allah in order to avoid endless litigation on this account, it has been declared that no legal demand for its return should be made. But from the moral point of view, it remains unclean and one who has taken it must do his best to cleanse himself of it. He should abstain from spending it on himself and try his best to find out the people from

whom he received it and return it to them. In case he is unable to locate or find out anyone of those people, he should spend the unclean and unlawful wealth on social welfare. This is the only way in which he can save himself from the punishment of Allah who will decide his case on the Day of Judgment. As to the person who goes on enjoying this unlawful wealth, he may be liable to punishment even for his money-lending in the past.

276. Allah destroys usury and gives increase for charities.*³²⁰ And Allah does not like all disbelievers, sinners.*³²¹

يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا وَيُرْبِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ

٢٧٦

***320** This is true from the social, economic, moral and spiritual points of view. Though apparently interest enriches and charity impoverishes, it is really just the opposite of it. According to the law of Allah, interest is, in its very nature, a hindrance to the social, economic, moral and spiritual progress and charity (including a loan without interest) helps their development.

If we look at interest from the moral and spiritual points of view, we see clearly that it is based on greed, selfishness, parsimony, narrow-mindedness, hard-heartedness and the like and nurtures the same evils in the money-lender. On the other hand, charity is based on generosity, sympathy, broad-mindedness, and the like and develops the same high qualities. Can anyone deny that these qualities are far better than the former?

From the social point of view, even a little thinking will show that a society can never become strong and stable if its individual members base their mutual dealings on selfishness and if one is not willing to help the other without self-interest. If the rich people believe that the poor people exist merely to afford them an opportunity for exploitation, there will be a clash of interest which will result in the disintegration of society. If other factors also help this evil state of affairs, these will surely produce class struggle. On the other hand, if the individual members of a society base their dealings on mutual sympathy and treat each other with generosity, they will most surely strengthen it. If everyone tries to help the other in need, and if the “have” treat the “have not” with sympathy or at least with justice, mutual love and fellow-feeling will develop in society and it will become strong and stable. Obviously, its progress will be accelerated by mutual cooperation and fellow-feeling.

Now let us consider interest from the economic point of view. Loans are of two kinds. The consumptive loan is borrowed by the helpless needy persons for their personal needs and the economic loan is taken by businessmen for trade, commerce, industry, agriculture, etc. As to the first kind of loan, everyone knows that interest on it produces ruinous results. In every country the money-lenders and bankers are sucking the blood of the laborers, peasants and the common poor, and making their condition miserable. The interest charges render the payment of debt almost impossible for such people and they have to borrow one loan after the other to get out of this mess. Even after

paying interest equal to many times the original principal, the principal still remains as it was before. The major portion of the income of the debtor is taken away by the money-lender and the poor debtor finds himself unable to make ends meet. Naturally this kills the interest of the laborers in their work. When the fruit of their labor is taken away by others, they cannot put their whole heart into their work. More than that: when worry, anxiety, poor food, etc. spoil their health, they cannot afford even to buy the necessary medicine for want of money. Thus money-lending leads to the fattening and battenning of a few at the expenses of the blood-sucking of the majority and results in the general deterioration of the nation. The inefficiency caused in their way lowers the quality and standard of national production. In the end the blood suckers themselves fall a prey to their own iniquity. When the suppressed anger and hatred of the depressed people engendered by the selfishness of the cruel money-lenders, bursts out into a bloody revolution, it sweeps away their honor and lives along with their ill gotten wealth.

As to the fixed interest on economic loans, three out of the many evils are given below

(1) Those concerns that cannot pay an interest higher than or equal to the market rate cannot draw in capital howsoever useful they may be for the nation. All the available money flows into those channels of commerce and industry which can bring interest equal to or greater than the market rate of interest, howsoever harmful or ruinous they might be from the national point of view.

(2) There is no business commercial, industrial, agricultural that can guarantee a fixed and uniform rate of profit, say five, six or ten percent or more under all circumstances. Not to speak of such a guarantee, there cannot be any guarantee against loss in any business. Therefore, the business which borrows capital at a fixed rate of interest can never be free from risk or loss.

(3) As the money-lender himself is not directly a partner in the profit or the loss of the business but keeps in view only his guaranteed fixed interest, he is not interested in its welfare. His only concern is his own interest; therefore he very selfishly tries to withdraw and withhold his money whenever he has even the slightest fear of a slump in the market. In this way he creates panic by his selfishness and paves the way for a further crisis and when there is already a crisis, he accelerates it into a disaster.

The above mentioned three evils of interest are so obvious that they are well known to everyone who knows even the basics of economics. Can then anyone deny the truth of the natural law enunciated by Allah that interest does not increase but decreases the national economic wealth?

Now let us consider charity from the economic point of view. If the well-to-do people of a society spend money liberally in buying their own necessities of life and those of their dependents and distribute a part of their wealth among the needy to enable them to buy their necessities of life, or if they lend it to businessmen without interest, or invest it in business on the basis of partnership, or lend it without interest to their government for national service,

then obviously, commerce, industry, agriculture, etc. will thrive to a very high standard. The standard of national prosperity will rise higher and higher and the production of its wealth will become larger as compared with the country where interest is lawful. Thus it is clear that interest hinders the progress of a nation and charity helps its development.

***321** The money-lender is no doubt an ungrateful wretch. As a grateful servant of Allah, who gives him spare money, the least he ought to do is to lend it to his other servants without interest. And if, instead of this, he uses the bounty of Allah to exploit His other servants who are getting less than him, he becomes not only ungrateful but also cruel and wicked.

277. Indeed, those who believe, and do righteous deeds, and establish prayer, and give the poor due. For them, their reward is with their Lord. And there shall be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve. ^{*322}

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَأَتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ



***322** In this passage Allah has presented two characters for contrast. One is the selfish worshipper of wealth, the Shylock, who, unmindful of Allah and His creatures, is engaged day and night in amassing and hoarding wealth. The other is the worshipper of Allah, the generous and sympathetic person who observes the rights of Allah and

His creatures; who earns wealth and spends it on himself and on others and in doing good works. Allah disapproves of the first type of people because they cannot build any good and stable society: nay, they even make themselves and others miserable in this world, and they shall meet with grief, sorrow and affliction in the Hereafter. In contrast to this, Allah approves of the second type of people for they help build a good and stable society and achieve real success. They have also peace of mind in this world and will be blessed with all kinds of heavenly pleasures in the Hereafter.

278. O those who believe, fear Allah, and give up what remains (due to you) from usury, if you are believers.

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن
كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ



279. So if you do not do (it), then be informed of war (against you) from Allah and His messenger.^{*323} And if you repent, then you may have your principal. Do no wrong, and you shall not be wronged.

فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِن تُبْتُمْ
فَلَكُمْ رُءُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ لَا
تُظْلَمُونَ وَلَا تَظْلَمُونَ



***323** This verse was revealed after the conquest of Makkah, but was inserted here because it also deals with interest.

Even before its revelation, interest was regarded as a hateful thing though it had not yet been legally forbidden. But after its revelation, money-lending on interest became a criminal offence in the Islamic state. Those clans who carried on this business in Arabia, were duly warned to give it up for otherwise a war would be declared against them. When the Christians of Najran were granted autonomy within the Islamic state, it was specified in the treaty that if they continued their money-lending business, the treaty would come to an end and there would be a state of war between the parties.

From the concluding portion of this verse, Ibn Abbas, Hasan Basri, Ibn Sirin and Rubai-bin-Anas (may Allah be pleased with them) have concluded that the one who takes interest in the Islamic state should be warned to repent of it, and if he does not give it up, he should be put to death. But the other jurists are of the opinion that he should be put in prison and kept there until he undertakes to give up this business.

280. And if (the debtor) is in hardship, then (let there be) postponement until (the time of) ease. And that you remit (the debt) as charity, it is better for you, if you did know.*324

وَإِنْ كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ وَأَنْ تَصَدَّقُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

*324 This verse empowers an Islamic court of law to compel the creditors to give more time to the debtors for

the payment of debts, if they are in such straitened circumstances that they cannot pay back their debts. Under certain circumstances, the court is entitled to write off the debt altogether or a part of it. A tradition says that a man suffered loss in his business and came heavily under debt. When his case was taken to the Prophet (peace be upon him), he made an appeal to the people to help him out of it. Accordingly, the people made monetary contributions, but even then he could not clear all his debts. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) addressed the creditors and told them that they would have to be satisfied with whatever was collected for the payment of their debts. The jurists have explained that the house in which a man lives, his utensils, clothes and tools of trade can in no case be confiscated.

281. And fear a day in which you will be returned to Allah. Then every soul will be paid in full that which it has earned, and they will not be wronged.

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى
 اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا
 كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨١﴾

282. O those who believe, when you contract a transaction of debt for a fixed term,^{*325} then write it down.^{*326} And let a scribe write (it) down between you in justice. And let not the scribe

يَتَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا
 تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى
 فَاكْتُبُوهُ ۚ وَلْيَكْتُب بَيْنَكُمْ
 كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ وَلَا يَأْب

refuse to write, as Allah has taught him, so let him write.

كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ
اللَّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ

***325** From this it is deduced that the term for a debt must be specified.

***326** This warns against a common practice: friends and relatives do not put debt agreements into formal writing, for such a thing, according to them, shows lack of trust. Allah admonishes that agreements concerning debt and business should be recorded and testified by witnesses in order to keep the affairs of the people clean. A tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) says that three kinds of the people cry out to Allah for help but are not answered: first, those who have ill tempered wives but do not divorce them; second, those who are entrusted with the property of orphans but return it to them before they attain maturity; third, those who lend money to others without any document or evidence.

And let him dictate who has the liability on him (the debtor). And let him fear Allah, his Lord, and not add or leave anything out of it. Then if he is, who has the liability on him, (the debtor) mentally deficient, or weak, or is not able to dictate it, then let his guardian

وَلْيَمْلِلِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ
اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا يَبْخَسَ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا
فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ
سَفِيهًا أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ
أَنْ يُمِلَّ هُوَ فَلْيَمْلِكْ وَلِيُّهُ

dictate in justice.

بِالْعَدْلِ

And bring to witness two witnesses from among your men,^{*327} then if there are not two men (available), then a man and two women, from those you agree for witnesses, so that if one of them (women) errs, then the other one of them can remind her.

وَأَسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِدَيْنِ مِنْ رَجَالِكُمْ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ مِمَّن تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى^ج

***327 From among your men: from among the Muslims. Imam Abu Hanifah, holds the opinion that the non-Muslims also can be made the witnesses.**

And let the witnesses^{*328} not refuse whenever they are called (for evidence). And do not be weary to write (your contract) for its fixed term, (be it) small or large.

وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا^ج
وَلَا تَسْأَمُوا أَنْ تَكْتُبُوهُ صَغِيرًا
أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلِهِ^ج

***328 As the establishment of the truth of a case depends to a great degree on the reliability of witnesses, a very high standard of qualification is demanded of them. Only those persons who are known to lead respectable lives and bear good moral character and are honest should be made the witnesses.**

This is more just in the sight of Allah, and stronger as evidence, and nearer to that you prevent doubts among yourselves.

ذَالِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمٌ
لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا

Except that it be on the spot trade which you carry out among yourselves,^{*329} then there is no sin upon you if you do not write it. And take witnesses whenever you make a commercial contract.

إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً
تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ
جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا وَأَشْهَدُوا
إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ

***329** Even in the case of those transactions which are carried out on the spot in everyday business, it is better to record them; nevertheless there is no harm if commercial transactions carried on daily between neighboring traders are not recorded.

And let no scribe be harmed, nor any witness.^{*330} And if you do (such harm), then indeed, it would be wickedness in you. And fear Allah. And it is Allah who teaches you. And Allah is well acquainted with all things.

وَلَا يُضَارَّ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ وَإِنْ
تَفَعَّلُوا فَإِنَّهُ فَسُقٌ بِكُمْ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ
وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ



***330** It implies two things. No one should be forced to

become a scribe or a witness against his will, and no one should harass the scribe or the witness just because he gives true evidence against the interests of a party.

283. And if you are on a journey and cannot find a scribe, then (transact) on a pledge with possession.^{*331} So if one of you entrusts another, then let him, who is entrusted, deliver his trust and let him fear Allah, his Lord. And do not conceal the testimony.^{*332} And he who conceals it, then indeed, his heart is sinful. And Allah is All Knower of what you do.

﴿ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا فَرِهْنَ مَقْبُوضَةً فَإِنْ أَتَىٰ مِنْ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا فليؤدِّ الَّذِي أُوتِيَ مِنْ أَمْنَتِهِ وَليَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ إِثْمٌ قَلْبُهُ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴾



***331** It does not mean that a pledge may be held on security only while on a journey. It has been specially mentioned in this connection because such a condition generally occurs on a journey. Moreover, inability to get a scribe is not an essential condition for holding something as a pledge. If a needy person cannot obtain a debt unless he delivers something as security for it, he is allowed to do so. The Quran deliberately omits the mention of this latter condition, because it intends to teach generosity to the believers. It is obviously below the dignity of a man of high character not to lend money to a needy person without having a pledge in hand. It is, however, understood that if

the pledge is productive, the creditor should keep a regular account of the produce and deduct it from the debt; otherwise any profit drawn from the pledged property would be interest. In this connection, one should also know that the only object in view of holding a pledge is the security of the repayment of the debt and it does not entitle the creditor in any way to make profit out of it. For instance, if a creditor himself lives in the house which he holds as a pledge for his debt or if he lets it to someone else, he in fact is guilty of taking interest, if he does not credit the rent of the house to the debtor, for there is no difference between taking direct interest on a debt or earning money from it or making use of the property delivered as a pledge. The creditor, however, may benefit from the milk of a pledged head of cattle, or may ride or carry burden on a horse, camel, etc. because that would be the compensation for the fodder given to them.

***332** Concealing of evidence applies both to the evasion of evidence and to the concealment of the true facts while giving evidence.

284. To Allah belongs whatever^{*333} is in the heavens, and whatever is on the earth.^{*334} And whether you make known what is within yourselves, or conceal it,^{*335} Allah will bring you to account for it. Then He will forgive whom He wills,

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
 الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبَدُّوا مَا فِي
 أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُمْ
 بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ
 وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ

and He will punish whom He wills. And Allah has power over all things.*336

كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ
٢٨٤

***333** In the concluding portion of the Surah, the basic creeds of Islam have been stated just as they were stated at its beginning. Therefore it will be useful to compare verses 284-285 with verses 1-4.

***334** This is the first article of faith. The acceptance of the fact that Allah is the Master of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, leaves no alternative for man but to submit to Him.

***335** In this sentence two more articles of faith have been stated. First, every person is individually responsible and accountable to Allah for his actions. Second, the Sovereign, to whom man is accountable for his actions, has full knowledge of what is hidden and what is open; He even knows those intentions and thoughts that are hidden in the hearts.

***336** It means that Allah is the absolute Sovereign and not a constitutional ruler. His powers are not bound by any law so as to force Him to act in accordance with it. He is the sole Master and has full authority to punish anyone or to forgive anyone He wills.

285. The Messenger has believed in that which has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allah, and His angels,

ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ
رَبِّهِ ۚ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ
بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ ۖ وَكُتُبِهِ ۖ وَرُسُلِهِ ۖ

and His Books, and His messengers. (Saying): “We make no distinction between any of His messengers,” and they say: “We hear, and we obey.” (We seek) Your forgiveness, our Lord. And to You is the return.”*337

لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّن رُّسُلِهِ
وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا
غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

٢٨٥

*337 In this verse, the basic articles of faith have been restated briefly. Belief in Allah, His angels, His Books, and in all of His Messengers without exception and discrimination against any, and in the accountability to Him at the end of this life are the five basic articles of faith. After the acceptance of these, the attitude for a Muslim is to submit obediently to each and every commandment of Allah. At the same time, he should not become vain on account of his good acts but should pray to Allah to forgive and show forbearance to him.

286. Allah does not burden a person beyond his capacity.*338 For him (is reward of) what (good) he earned, and upon him (is punishment of) what (evil) he has earned. Our Lord, take us not to punish if we forget, or fall into error.*339 Our Lord, and lay not upon us a burden as that You

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا
لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا
اَكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تَأْخِذْنَا
إِن نَّسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَاْنَا رَبَّنَا
وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا كَمَا
حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا

laid upon those before us.^{*340} Our Lord, and burden us not with that which we have no strength to bear.^{*341} And pardon us, and forgive us, and have mercy upon us. You are our protector, so give us victory over the disbelieving people.^{*342}

رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا
بِهِ ۗ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا
وَارْحَمْنَا ۗ أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا
عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ



***338** That is, Allah will not call to account anyone for not doing something which he could not possibly do: nor will He punish him because he did not abstain from a thing, when he could not possibly abstain from it. It must, however, be clearly understood that an individual himself is not his own judge to decide what he can do and what he cannot do. It is Allah, who will decide what a certain person could do and what he could not do.

***339** This is the other general principle of the law. Both the rewards and the punishments are really the results and consequences of the acts and deeds of every individual. One will get a reward only for the good deed one has himself done and not for the good acts of someone else. It must, however, be noted that if someone has done some good act which goes on producing good results long after his death, all those acts will also be put to his credit in his balance sheet as long as they last. In the same way, if someone has done some evil, which goes on producing evil results long after one's death, all those also will be put against one's

account as long as they last. But all these results, both good and bad, will be the consequences of one's own deeds. In short, a person shall be rewarded or punished only for that thing to which he himself contributed intentionally and actually. There is no transfer of accounts in the divine law of retribution.

***340** That is, O Lord, save and protect us from such trials, persecutions and obstacles as were encountered by those who went Your way before us. Although it is the law of Allah that those, who make up their minds to follow the way of truth, must undergo hard trials and suffer from cruel persecutions, a believer should pray to Allah to make the way easy for him and should face them with courage when he actually meets with them.

***341** That is, lay on us only that much burden of trouble and tribulations that we can bear, and put us only to those trials that we can endure, lest we should fail to bear them and swerve for the right path.

***342** In order to understand the true spirit of this prayer, it should be kept in view that these verses were revealed on the occasion of the Miraj (Ascension to Heaven) of the Prophet (peace be upon him) about a year before his migration to Al-Madinah. At that time the struggle between Islam and kufr had reached its climax and the persecution of the believers was at its worst. And this was not confined to Makkah alone: there was no place in the whole of Arabia where a Muslim was allowed to live in peace. It was to cope with these circumstances that the Muslims were taught to utter this prayer to Allah. It is self-evident that when the

Master Himself teaches the servant the way of begging from Him, the servant gets the conviction that his request will be granted. That is why this prayer filled the Muslims with extraordinary courage and brought peace of mind to them in the hour of their worst persecution. Moreover, this prayer taught them to keep their passions under control and within the limits contained in this prayer and not to allow them to turn into wrong channels. That is why it is free from any kind of bitterness against their enemies, and there is not any tinge in it of revenge or of worldliness. This was urgently needed at that time because the Muslims were undergoing greater hardships, and monetary losses, and suffering untold cruelties, and were pressed hard both physically and economically. Incidentally, the contrast between the high ideals contained in their prayer and the persecution which the believers were suffering at that time brings out clearly the high standard of the spiritual and moral training they were receiving even at that critical time. And that is the high standard of morality that has been laid down for every true believer to attain.



Aal-Imran آلِ عِمْرَانَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from Ayat 33. *Aal-Imran*, like the names of many other Surahs, is merely a name to distinguish it from other Surahs and does not imply that the family of Imran has been discussed in it.

The Period of Revelation

The Surah consists of four discourses:

The first discourse (Ayats 1-32) was probably revealed soon after the battle of Badr.

The second discourse (Ayats 33-63) was revealed in 9 A.H. on the occasion of the visit of the deputation from the Christians of Najran.

The third discourse (Ayats 64-120) appears to have been revealed immediately after the first one.

The fourth discourse (Ayats 121-200) was revealed after the battle of Uhd.

Subject

Though these discourses were revealed at different periods and on different occasions, they are so inter-linked and so inter-connected in regard to their aim, object and central theme that they make together one continuous subject. This

Surah has been especially addressed to two groups, the people of the Book (the Jews and the Christians), and the followers of Muhammad (peace be upon him).

The message has been extended to the Jews and the Christians in continuation of the invitation in Surah *Al-Baqarah*, in which they have been admonished for their erroneous beliefs and evil morals and advised to accept, as a remedy, the truth of the Quran. They have been told here that Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught the same right way of life that had been preached by their own prophets. That it alone was the right way, the Way of Allah. Hence any deviation from it will be wrong even according to their own scriptures.

The second group, the Muslims, who had been declared to be the best community in Surah *Al-Baqarah* and appointed torch bearers of the truth and entrusted with the responsibility of reforming the world, have been given additional instructions in continuation of those given in the preceding Surah. The Muslims have been warned to learn a lesson from the religious and moral degeneration of the former communities and to refrain from treading in their footsteps. Instructions have also been given about the reformative work they had to perform. Besides this, they have been taught how to deal with the people of the Book and the hypocrites who were putting different kinds of hindrances in the Way of Allah. Above all, they have been warned to guard against those weaknesses which had come to the surface in the battle of Uhd.

Background

The following is the background of the Surah:

1. The believers had met with all sorts of trials and hardships about which they had been forewarned in Surah *Al-Baqarah*. Though they had come out victorious in the battle of Badr, they were not out of danger yet. Their victory had aroused the enmity of all those powers in Arabia which were opposed to the Islamic movement. Signs of threatening storms had begun to appear on all sides and the Muslims were in a perpetual state of fear and anxiety. It looked as if the whole Arabian world around the tiny state of Al-Madinah - which was no more than a village state at that time - was bent upon blotting out its very existence. This state of war was also adversely affecting its economy, which had already been badly disturbed by the influx of the Muslim refugees from Makkah.

2. Then there was the disturbing problem of the Jewish clans who lived in the suburbs of Al-Madinah. They were discarding the treaties of alliance they had made with the Prophet (peace be upon him) after his migration from Makkah. So much so that on the occasion of the battle of Badr, these people of the Book sympathized with the evil aims of the idolaters, in spite of the fact that their fundamental articles of the faith, Oneness of Allah, prophethood, life after death, were the same as those of the Muslims. After the battle of Badr, they openly began to incite the Quraish and other Arab clans to wreak their vengeance on the Muslims. Thus, those Jewish clans set aside their centuries old friendly and neighborly relations

with the people of Al-Madinah. At last when their mischievous actions and breaches of treaties became unbearable, the Prophet (peace be upon him) attacked the Bani-Qainuqaa, the most mischievous of all the other Jewish clans who had conspired with the hypocrites of Al-Madinah and the idolatrous Arab clans to encircle the believers on all sides. The magnitude of the peril might be judged from the fact that even the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself was always in danger. Therefore his companions slept in their armors during that period and kept watch at night to guard against any sudden attack, and whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) happened to be out of sight even for a short while, they would at once set out in search of him.

3. This incitement by the Jews added fuel to the fire which was burning in the hearts of the Quraish and they began to make preparations to avenge the defeat they had suffered at Badr. A year after this an army of 3,000 strong marched out of Makkah to invade Al-Madinah and a battle took place at the foot of Mount Uhd. The Prophet (peace be upon him) came out of Al-Madinah with one thousand men to meet the enemy. While they were marching to the battle field, three hundred hypocrites deserted the army and returned to Al-Madinah, but there still remained a small band of hypocrites among the seven hundred who accompanied the Prophet (peace be upon him). They played their part and did their worst to create mischief and chaos in the ranks of the believers during the battle. This was the first clear indication of the fact that within the fold

of the Muslim community there was quite a large number of saboteurs who were always ready to conspire with the external enemies to harm their own brethren.

4. Though the devices of the hypocrites had played a great part in the set back at Uhd, the weaknesses of the Muslims themselves contributed no less to it. And it was but natural that the Muslims should show signs of moral weakness for they were a new community which had only recently been formed on a new ideology and had not as yet got a thorough moral training. Naturally in this second hard test of their physical and moral strength, some weaknesses came to the surface. That is why a detailed review of the battle of Uhd was needed to warn the Muslims of their shortcomings and to issue instructions for their reform. It should also be noted that this review of the battle is quite different from the reviews that are usually made by generals on similar occasions.

Subject: Guidance

This Surah is the sequel to, *Al-Baqarah* and the invitation therein is continued to the people of the Book. In *Al-Baqarah* the Jews were pointedly invited to accept the guidance and in this Surah the Christians have particularly been admonished to give up their erroneous beliefs and accept the guidance of the Quran. At the same time, the Muslims have been instructed to nourish the virtues that may enable them to carry out their obligations and spread the divine guidance.

Topics and their Interconnection

Ayats 1-32 In these introductory verses, the fundamental

truths about Allah, revelation and life after death have been reiterated to serve as fitting preliminaries, leading to the main topics discussed in the Surah.

Ayats 33-65 This discourse is particularly addressed to the Christians and invites them to accept Islam. It clears Jesus (peace be upon him) and his mother not only from the stigma maliciously set upon them by the Jews, but also refutes the erroneous Christian creed of the divinity of Jesus (peace be upon him) which had been formulated because of his miraculous birth. For this purpose the instances of John the Baptist (peace be upon him) to a barren woman and an extremely aged man and that of Adam without father and mother have been cited to show that there is nothing in the birth of Jesus (peace be upon him) without a father to entitle him to divinity.

Ayats 66-101 In these verses the people of the Book, the Jews, have been invited to give up their sinister ways and accept the divine guidance. At the same time the Muslims have been warned to be on their guard against their malicious intentions, erroneous ways and absurd objections.

Ayats 102-120 The Muslims have been instructed to learn lessons from the history of the people of the Book and also to guard themselves against their machinations, and to prepare and train themselves to establish virtue and eradicate evil.

Ayats 121-175 In this portion, a review of the battle of Uhd has been done to teach and reassure the Muslims that the machinations of their enemies could do them no harm, if

they would practice restraint and fortitude and have fear of Allah. It has been pointed out that the setback they had suffered was due to the lack of some moral qualities and the existence of some evils. Since the main cause of the defeat was the greed of the archers, guarding the pass. The taking of interest has been prohibited to eradicate this evil.

Ayats 175-189 The main theme of the verses 109-120 has been resumed to reassure and encourage the Muslims against the dangerous plots of their enemies.

Ayats 190-200 This is the conclusion of the Surah and is not directly connected with the verses immediately preceding it but with the theme of the Surah as a whole.

1. Alif. Lam. Mim.

الم

2. Allah, there is no god except Him, the ever Living, the Sustainer of all that exists.*1

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ

٢

*1 Though ignorant people might make several gods and set up objects of worship, the fact remains that the whole of creation belongs to the Eternal, who has no partner whatsoever. He is the living Allah who sustains the whole universe. He alone is the Master of His kingdom. None else is a partner in His attributes, characteristics, powers and rights. Hence a lie is invented whenever any false god is set up beside Allah on the earth or in the heavens and a war is waged against the truth.

3. He has sent down to you (Muhammad) the Book

نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ

(the Quran) in truth, confirming that which was before it, and He revealed the Torah and the Gospel.

مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنْزَلَ
التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ

4. Before this, as a guidance for mankind.*² And He sent down the Criterion (the Quran). Indeed, those who disbelieve the verses of Allah, for them is a severe punishment. And Allah is All Mighty, the Owner of Retribution.

مِنْ قَبْلُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَنْزَلَ
الْفُرْقَانَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ
وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انتِقَامٍ

*² There exists a common misconception about the Torah (Taurat) and the Gospel (Injil) for the people generally take the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) for the Torah, and the Gospels (the first four books of the New Testament) for the Injil. The misconception creates doubts about revelation itself and a question arises, “Are these books really the word of God? And does the Quran really confirm all their contents”? As a matter of fact, the Torah, which the Quran confirms, is not the Pentateuch but is contained in it, and the Injil is not “the four Gospels” but is within these books.

The Taurat consists of those commandments and injunctions which were given to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) during his prophethood, which lasted for about forty years. Of these were the ten commandments which were inscribed on stone tablets and delivered to Moses

(peace be upon him) on Mount Tur: as regards the remaining commandments and injunctions, he himself had put down in writing. Then he handed one copy of the Torah to each of the twelve tribes of Israel for guidance. One copy was entrusted to the Levites for safe custody, which along with the stone tablets, was deposited in the Ark.

That Taurat remained quite safe and sound as an entire book up to the first destruction of Jerusalem. But, by and by, the Israelites grew so indifferent to and negligent and unmindful of it that when the Temple of Solomon was under repair during the reign of Josiah, Hilkiah the high priest came across it by chance but did not know that it was the Torah. He thought it was only a law book and passed it on to the royal scribe as a curio. The latter presented it to king Josiah who tore his clothes and ordered Hilkiah and others to consult the Eternal about the terms of the book. Such was the condition of the Israelites when Nebuchadnezzar sacked Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple, and they lost forever even the very few copies of the Torah which had long lain neglected in some forgotten niches.

The Old Testament was compiled by Ezra, when the Israelites returned home to Jerusalem after their captivity in Babylon and built the Temple anew. Ezra gathered together some prominent men of his community, and with their help compiled the whole history of Israel which now comprises the first 17 books of the Bible. Of these Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy tell the life history of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and include those

verses of the real Taurat which became available to Ezra and his assistants, who incorporated them in those books at appropriate places in the chronological order of their revelation. Thus it is obvious that the Pentateuch as a whole is not the Taurat but includes it. The real Taurat comprises those verses which are scattered all over the life story of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), and it is not difficult even today to locate and recognize them. Such portions where the author says, "God said to Moses," or Moses said, "The Lord your God says," the Taurat begins, and where the narrative of the life story is resumed, there that part of the Taurat ends. At those places the author of the Bible has inserted certain things by way of explanation or commentary, and it is here that the ordinary reader fails to distinguish the real Taurat from the commentary. However, those who have an insight into the nature of divine Scriptures, can distinguish, to some degree of exactness, the explanatory notes from the revealed verses. According to the Quran, only such scattered portions in the Pentateuch are the Taurat and it confirms them alone. And this can be testified by putting together these verses and comparing them with the Quran. Here and there one might come across a minor difference in their details, but one cannot find even the slightest difference between the fundamental teachings of the two. Even today one can see clearly that both the Scriptures have come from the same source.

Likewise, the Injil is the name of those inspired discourses and sayings which Jesus (peace be upon him) uttered as a

prophet during the last couple of years of his life. We have no means now of ascertaining whether these pious utterances were recorded and compiled during the lifetime of Jesus (peace be upon him). In the introduction to his translation of the Bible, Moffat says, Jesus (peace be upon him) wrote nothing and for a time his immediate disciples felt no impulse to write any account of him. The data of the historical Jesus (peace be upon him), therefore, is based on the vivid recollections and traditions of the primitive Palestinian disciples. How soon their materials took written shape we cannot tell, but at least one written record of them was probably in existence by about A.D. 50. Anyhow, when, long after his recall, the stories of Jesus (peace be upon him) were compiled in the shape of four Gospels, (the period of the composition of Mark, the first to be composed was 65-75 A.D.). Some of his written or inspired sayings were also inserted at appropriate places in the historical sketches. Thus it is obvious that the first four Gospels are not the Injil, the discourses and sayings of Jesus (peace be upon him), but they contain portions of it. We have no means of recognizing that as from the works of the authors except this: Wherever the authors say "Jesus said so or taught so and so," there the Injil begins and where they resume the narration, there it ends. According to the Quran, only such portions are the Injil and these alone are condensed by it. If these portions are compiled together and compared with the Quran, one will find no serious difference between the two, and, if somewhere a trivial difference appears, it can be removed very easily with

unbiased thinking.

5. Indeed, not a thing is hidden from Allah,^{*3} in the earth, nor in the heavens.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا تَخْفَىٰ عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٥﴾

***3** That is, He has full, perfect, and exact knowledge of the whole universe. Hence the Book revealed by Him will contain nothing but the truth. As a matter of fact, one can learn pure truth from that Book alone which has been sent down by the All-Knowing and All-Wise."

6. He it is who shapes you in the wombs however He wills.^{*4} There is no god except Him, the All Mighty, the All Wise.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي
الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ ۚ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا
هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦﴾

***4** This implies two important things here:

(1) Allah knows your nature better than yourself or anybody else: therefore, there is no other alternative for you but to trust in the Guidance sent down by Him.

(2) The Benevolent Allah who has been providing for all your needs, great and small, throughout all the stages of your life, ever since your mothers conceived you, could not possibly have neglected to provide for your guidance, which is after all the greatest need of your life.

7. He it is who has sent down to you the Book (the Quran). In it are clear verses, which are the foundation of

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ
مِنْهُ ءَايَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ

the Book,^{*5} and others (that are) allegorical. Then as for those in whose hearts is a deviation, they will follow that which is allegorical in them, seeking mischief, and seeking (their own) interpretation of it. And no one knows its interpretation except Allah.^{*6} And those firm in knowledge say: "We believe in it, all is from our Lord."^{*7}

And no one receives admonition except those with understanding.

الْكِتَابِ وَأُخْرُ مُتَشَبِهَاتٍ فَأَمَّا
الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ
مَا تَشَبَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ
وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ ۗ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ
تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۗ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي
الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ ءَامَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ
مِّنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا ۗ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا
أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٧﴾

***5 Muhkam** is that which is precise, exact, clear and decisive. *Muhkamat* are those verses of the Quran which have been so couched as to make their meaning quite plain without any shade of ambiguity. They have been purposely so worded as to make their meaning definite and precise leaving little room for misinterpretation. These verses constitute the fundamental principles of the Book, i.e. they alone determine the aim and object for which the Quran has been sent down. They invite the world to Islam, teach morals and give warnings. They refute wrong beliefs and practices, and lay down the way of right living. They expound the fundamentals of religion and state beliefs and practices, morals and duties, commandments and

prohibitions. Therefore a seeker after truth should turn to these verses as these alone can satisfy his needs. Naturally such a person will concentrate on these verses and endeavor to derive the greatest benefit from them.

*6 *Mutashabihat* are those verses in which there is a possibility of more than one meaning. Their object is to give a certain minimum knowledge about the universe, its beginning and end, the position of man therein, and such other basic things, for these things are essential for the formulation of any system of life. It is obvious that no human language possesses words, expressions, idioms etc. to depict clearly those supernatural things, which have never yet been grasped by human senses, nor seen, nor heard, nor smelt, nor touched, nor tasted by human beings. That is why such supernatural things have to be described in terms of human life. That is why the Quran uses ambiguous verses in human language which are liable to give rise to more than one meaning. Thus it is clear that the main benefit of such verses is that they help one approach the reality and form a conception of it. Hence the more one tries to determine their precise meaning, the more one gets involved in doubts and ambiguities. As a result of this, one will not be able to find the reality but will be led further away from it and cause mischief. Therefore those, who seek after the truth and do not hanker after superfluities, rest content with the simple idea of reality they get from the ambiguous verses, which suffices them for an understanding of the Quran; they concentrate their whole attention on a fuller comprehension of the verses which are

precise in meaning. On the other hand, those who love superfluities or seek after mischief, spend their time and energies in giving arbitrary interpretations to the ambiguous verses.

*7 This might give rise to a question: How can one believe in the truth of the ambiguous verses, if one does not know their precise meaning? The answer is that a study of the precise verses, and not of the different interpretations of the ambiguous verses, confirms a sensible man in his belief that the Quran is the word of Allah. When the study of the precise verses once convinces him that the Book is really from Allah, then the ambiguous verses do not create any doubt in his mind and he accepts the simple meanings which are within his comprehension and leaves alone any complicacies if and when they appear. Instead of hair splitting and probing into them, he believes in the word of Allah as a whole and turns his attention to more useful things.

8. (They say): “Our Lord, let not our hearts deviate after when You have guided us, and bestow upon us mercy from Yourself. Indeed, You are the Bestower.”

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ
هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ
رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ﴿٨﴾

9. “Our Lord, surely You will gather mankind on a Day in which there is no doubt. Indeed, Allah does not go against the promise.”

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ جَامِعُ النَّاسِ لِيَوْمٍ لَا
رَيْبَ فِيهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ
الْمِيعَادَ ﴿٩﴾

10. Indeed, those who disbelieve,^{*8} neither their wealth, nor their children will avail them against Allah anything at all. And it is they who will be the fuel for the Fire.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ تُغْنِيَ
عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا
أَوْلَادُهُمْ
مِّنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا
وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُم
وَقُودُ
النَّارِ



***8** The literal meaning of the word *kufir* is to conceal. By and by it came to be used for the concealment of the truth and then for its rejection, as the antonym of *iman*. *Iman* means to believe, to accept and to admit, and *kufir* means to disbelieve, to reject and to oppose. According to the Quran, one shall be guilty of *kufir*.

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

(2) If one professes to acknowledge Allah but refuses to accept His commandments and guidance as the sole source of the knowledge of truth and of law, or

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

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

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

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

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

11. Like the behavior of the people of Pharaoh and those before them. They denied our signs, so Allah seized them for their sins. And Allah is severe in punishment.

كَدَابٍ ءَالٍ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِينَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ
شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ



12. Say (O Muhammad) to those who disbelieve: “You shall be overcome, and you shall be gathered to Hell. And (that is) an evil resting place.”

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
سَتُغْلَبُونَ وَتُحْشَرُونَ إِلَىٰ
جَهَنَّمَ ۚ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ

13. Indeed, there has been a sign for you in the two armies which met (in Badr). One army fighting in the cause of Allah, and the other disbelieving. They (the believers) saw them (the disbelievers) twice their number with their very eyes.*⁹ And Allah supports with His victory whom He wills. Indeed, in that is a lesson for those who have eyes to see.*¹⁰

قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فِي فِئَتَيْنِ
الَّتَقَا ۖ فِئَةٌ تَقَاتِلُ فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ وَأُخْرَىٰ كَافِرَةٌ يَرَوْنَهُمْ
مِثْلِهِمْ رَأَىٰ الْعَيْنُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ يُؤَيِّدُ
بِنَصْرِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ إِنَّ فِي
ذَٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ

***9** Although the actual ratio was three to one, yet even a casual observer could not have failed to notice that the number of the unbelievers was at least twice as great as that of the Muslims.

***10** A brief review of the battle of Badr, which had recently taken place, is being made with a view to imparting lessons by making a reference to its events and its results. This battle taught three important lessons:

(1) It taught that even on the battlefield the believers, who

fight in the Way of Allah, behave in quite a different manner from the disbelievers. The latter, like the Quraish, indulge in merry making and enjoying wine, women, music, dance etc., while the former, like the Muslims, practice piety, and fear Allah and absorb themselves in prayer.

(2) The victory of the Muslims, in spite of their smaller number and less equipment, over the disbelievers who had a larger number and better weapons was a clear proof that they had Allah's succor with them.

(3) The defeat was a shocking lesson for the disbelievers, who were neglectful of Allah's power and proud of their equipment and the large number of their helpers. By this, Allah taught that He can bestow power on a small number of poor migrants from Makkah and the farmers of Al-Madinah, to inflict crushing defeat on the Quraish, the most influential and powerful clan of Arabia.

14. Beautified for mankind is love of that they desire of women, and sons, and heaped up sums of gold, and silver, and horses branded, and cattle, and tilled land. That is enjoyment of the life of the world. And Allah, with Him is the excellent return.

زَيْنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ
مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ
الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ
وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ
وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ
مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ
عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَبَاقِ

15. Say: “Shall I inform you of (something) better than these. For those who fear (Allah), with their Lord are, Gardens underneath which rivers flow wherein they will abide forever, and pure companions,^{*11} and the good pleasure of Allah. And Allah is All Seer of His servants.”^{*12}

قُلْ أَؤُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْ ذَٰلِكُمْ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَأَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

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

***12** That is, Allah does not shower His favors erroneously, nor whimsically, nor does He make cursory and superficial decisions. He is fully aware of the actions, deeds and intentions of His servants, and evaluates them correctly and knows full well who should deserve His favor and who should incur His displeasure.

16. Those who say: “Our Lord, indeed, we have believed, so forgive us our sins and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.”

الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا إِنَّنَا ءَامِنَّا
فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَقِنَا عَذَابَ
النَّارِ

17. The steadfast,^{*13} and the truthful, and the obedient, and those who spend (in the cause of Allah), and those who seek forgiveness in the early hours of the morning.

الصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّادِقِينَ
وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقِينَ
وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ

*13 It means, they stand steadfast for the sake of truth, are not daunted by losses or hardships, are not disheartened by failures, and are not turned aside from the right path by temptations. They adhere to the truth even when there appears to be no chance of success. In Sura *Al-Baqarah* the Quran says, If you face some difficulties in following the righteous way, *sabr* and Salat will help remove the difficulties and strengthen you to walk the way easily. Lexically, *sabr* means to check and tie, but in usage it stands for patience, perseverance, endurance and fortitude. The Quran uses this word to express that fortitude, that moral strength, that firmness of purpose and decision, that determination, moral discipline and self control. This enables a person to proceed with patience and courage in the face of afflictions, privations and temptations on the way he chooses in accordance with the dictates of his conscience.

18. Allah bears witness that there is no god except Him.*¹⁴

And (so do) the angels and those with knowledge, (that He is) maintaining (creation) in Justice.*¹⁵ There is no god except Him, the All Mighty, the All Wise.

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُوا الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا
بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ



***14** That is: This is the testimony of Allah himself that He alone in the whole universe possesses the attributes of Godhead and the authority and the rights of Godhead. This is His testimony, and who could be a more reliable testifier than He who has direct knowledge of all the realities of the universe? He sees His whole creation spread before Him, and from Him nothing is hidden in the heavens or in the earth.

***15** Next to Allah, the most trustworthy witnesses are angels, who are the managing agents of the affairs of His kingdom of the universe. Their evidence is based on their personal knowledge, that is;

None but Allah wields command in this kingdom and none but He gives orders for the administration of the affairs of the earth and the heavens. Then all those people, who have been bestowed with the knowledge of the realities, have been unanimously bearing witness, since the beginning of the world to the present day, that Allah alone is the Master and the Designer of the entire universe.

19. Truly, the religion with Allah is Al-Islam.*¹⁶ And

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

those who were given the Scripture did not differ except after what had come to them as knowledge,^{*17} out of jealousy among themselves. And whoever disbelieves in the signs of Allah, then indeed, Allah is swift in taking account.

وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ اُوتُوا
الْكِتَابَ اِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
جَاءَهُمْ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا
بَيْنَهُمْ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَاِنَّ اللَّهَ
سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ



***16** It implies that in the sight of Allah, there is only one correct system and one right way of life for man. It is this: Man should worship Allah, acknowledge Him as his Master and surrender himself completely to Him in His worship and service. He should not invent his own way of worship but should faithfully follow that guidance alone which Allah has revealed through His Messengers (peace be upon them), without adding anything to or taking away anything from it. This way of thinking and behaving is called “Islam.” And it is the absolute right of the Creator and the Master of the universe that He should not accept as lawful from His subjects, His own creation, any way other than Islam. One might ignorantly think it to be one’s right to follow any system, atheism, idolatry, etc. but the Ruler of the universe will regard this behavior as rebellious.

***17** It means that originally Islam and Islam alone was professed and preached by every messenger who was sent by Allah at any time in any corner of the world. Hence any Scripture sent down to any community in any language

taught the same Islam. Afterwards, the people distorted this original religion and added to it something to suit their interests or to gratify their lusts, and omitted those things from it which went against their interests. They invented new religions just because they wanted to transgress the prescribed limits and run after undue privileges and gains and distinctions. Thus they made changes in the beliefs, principles and injunctions of the true faith to make it subservient to their own desires and lusts.

20. So if they argue with you, say: “I have submitted my face (self) to Allah, and (so have) those who follow me.” And say to those who were given the Scripture, and those who are illiterates: “Do you (also) submit.”*¹⁸ So if they submit, then truly they are rightly guided, and if they turn away, then it is upon you only to convey (the message). And Allah is All Seer of (His) servants.

فَإِنْ حَاجُّوكَ فَقُلْ أَسْلَمْتُ
 وَجْهِيَ لِلَّهِ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِ ۗ وَقُلْ
 لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْأُمِّيِّينَ
 ءَأَسْلَمْتُمْ ۗ فَإِنْ أَسْلَمُوا فَقَدِ
 اهْتَدَوْا ۗ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا
 عَلَيْكَ الْبَلْغُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِصِيرٍ
 بِالْعِبَادِ



*¹⁸ The same thing may be expressed thus: Say, my followers and I have been convinced of this same pure Islam and have accepted the true religion of Allah; now tell us whether you also will give up the innovations which you and your elders have introduced into it and turn to the original true religion.

21. Indeed, those who disbelieve in the signs of Allah, and kill the prophets without any right, and kill those who order justice from among mankind, so give them tidings of a painful punishment.*19

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ
 اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّنَ بِغَيْرِ
 حَقٍّ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الَّذِينَ
 يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْقِسْطِ مِنَ
 النَّاسِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ



***19** This is an ironical way of bringing home to the disbelievers the consequences of those mischievous deeds in which they rejoice today, regarding them as nice things.

22. They are those whose deeds will be lost in this world and the Hereafter,*20 and they will not have any helpers.*21

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ حَبِطَتْ
 أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ
 وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ



***20** That is, as they have spent all their energies and powers in evil ways, their works will bring them to ruin both in this world and in the next world.

***21** That is, there is no such power which can bring out good results from their wrongly directed efforts or at least make them harmless. All the various agencies, which they believe will help them in this world or in the next world or in both, shall be absolutely of no avail to them anywhere.

23. Have you not seen at those who were given a portion of the Scripture. They are invited to the Book of Allah that it should arbitrate between them, then a party of them turn away, and they are averse.*22

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
نَصِيبًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يُدْعَوْنَ
إِلَى كِتَابِ اللَّهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ
ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّى فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ وَهُمْ
مُّعْرِضُونَ



***22** That is, they are asked to acknowledge the Book of Allah as the final authority and bow before its decrees and accept as true whatever is proved to be true by it, and reject whatever is proved to be false by it. It should be noted that here by the Book of God is meant the Torah or the Gospel, and by the people who have received a share of the knowledge of the Book are meant the learned people of the Jews and the Christians.

24. That is because they say: “The Fire shall never touch us except for a certain number of days.”*23
And they are deluded in their religion by that which they used to invent.

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَن تَمَسَّنَا
النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ
وَعَرَّهَمُ فِي دِينِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا
يَفْتُرُونَ



***23** As such people regard themselves to be the favorites of God, they delude themselves that they are going to enter into Paradise anyhow, irrespective of the quality of their

deeds. They foolishly believe that the fire of Hell dare not touch them because they are true believers and the children of such pious ancestors, and the followers of such and such prophets and the disciples of such and such saints, etc. And if at all they are cast into Hell, they argue, they will be kept there only for a few days to be cleansed of the impurity of sins and then will go into Paradise permanently. Such misleading ideas and conceptions have made them so bold that they commit the gravest crimes and the most heinous sins fearlessly: so much so that they openly disown the truth without the least fear of Allah.

25. So how (will it be) when We gather them on a Day about which there is no doubt. And each soul will be paid in full what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جَمَعْنَهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ لَا
رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ
مَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا
يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. Say: “O Allah, Owner of sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will, and You take away sovereignty from whom You will. And You honor whom You will, and You abase whom You will. In Your hand is the good. Indeed, You have Power over all things.”

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَلِكُ الْمَلِكِ تُؤْتِي
الْمَلِكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ
الْمَلِكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ
تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِيَدِكَ
الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٦﴾

27. “You cause the night to enter into the day, and You cause the day to enter into the night. And You bring the living out of the dead, and You bring the dead out of the living. And You give sustenance to whom You will without measure.”*24

تُؤَلِّجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَتُؤَلِّجُ
النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ
مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ
مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَتَرْزُقُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ

حِسَابٍ

*24 Verses 26 and 27 fit in beautifully between the preceding and the subsequent verses. From verse 19 begins a warning and challenge to the opponents of Islam, and in verse 25, the Muslims have been consoled with the assurance that their enemies shall be paid in full on the Day of Judgment. But in order to reassure them, Allah has in these verses, answered an unasked question which arises when one sees that the disbelievers and the disobedient to Allah are prospering in the world, while the believers and the obedient servants of Allah are starving and suffering from hardships. The question is: What wisdom underlies this disparity in the prosperity and adversity of the two groups? At the time (A.H. 3) of the revelation of this discourse the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions were so hard pressed on all sides that the same question was arising in the people's minds. Its answer is contained in these verses: Allah to whom belongs all authority, power, wealth, prosperity etc. gives a portion of these to whomsoever He wills, and they should not feel uneasy and anxious about this disparity because He is All

Wise and All Knowing. Moreover Allah gives wealth to whomsoever He wills; therefore it is not to be made the criterion of honor and friendship. Hence in the subsequent verses, the Muslims have been prohibited from making the prosperous disbelievers their friends.

28. Let not the believers take the disbelievers for their friends instead of the believers. And whoever does that, then has nothing (to do) with Allah in anything at all, except that you guard yourselves against them by way of precaution.*²⁵ And Allah warns you against Himself (His punishment), and to Allah is the final return.*²⁶

لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ
أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَنْ
يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ
فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ
تُقْلَةً وَيُحَذِّرْكُمْ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ
وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ

*²⁵ That is, if a believer falls into the hands of the enemies of Islam and is afraid of maltreatment and high handedness, he may conceal his faith, and live among them as if he were one of them. Or, if they come to know of his faith, he may make a show of his friendship towards them to save his life. In case of extreme fear, he is permitted even to disown his faith, if he feels that he is not strong enough to endure their oppression.

*²⁶ This is the admonition: Let not the fear of the people dominate over you so much as to drive out the fear of Allah from your hearts. The greatest harm the people can do to

you is confined to the worldly life only, but Allah has the power to inflict an everlasting torment on you. Therefore, if you are forced in a case of extremity to hide your faith due to any danger to your life, you may save your own life and property, provided that you do not in any way harm the interests of the Islamic mission and the Islamic community or the life or property of any Muslim. At the same time you must remain on your guard against becoming the instrument in the hands of disbelievers so as to strengthen the evil forces against Islam and render any service to the disbelievers that might enable them to overpower the Muslims. Remember that, if to save your life you do any kind of harm to the religion of Allah, or to the community of the faithful or even to the person of a single believer, or if you render any real service to the rebels against Allah, you will never be able to save yourselves on the Day of Reckoning, when you shall have to return to Allah.

29. Say, (O Muhammad):
 “Whether you hide that which is in your breasts or reveal it, Allah knows it. And He knows that which is in the heavens and that which is on the earth. And Allah has Power over all things.”

قُلْ إِنْ تَخْفُوا مَا فِي
 صُدُورِكُمْ أَوْ تُبْدُوهُ يَعْلَمُهُ
 اللَّهُ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا
 فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
 شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

30. On the Day (when)
 every soul will find what

يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا

it has done of good to be present (in front of it), and what it has done of evil. it will wish if there were, between itself and its (evil) a far away distance. And Allah warns you against Himself (His punishment). And Allah is Kind to (His) servants.*27

عَمِلْتَ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُحَضَّرًا وَمَا
عَمِلْتَ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ
بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا
وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَاللَّهُ
رءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

*27 That is, it is simply out of His extreme compassion for you that Allah warns you beforehand of those things that might lead you to ruin.

31. Say (O Muhammad): “If you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you, and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ
فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحِبِّكُمْ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ
لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

32. Say (O Muhammad): “Obey Allah and the messenger. But if they turn away, then indeed, Allah does not love the disbelievers.”*28

قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ
تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكٰفِرِينَ

*28 Here the first discourse ends. If we consider its theme, and especially its reference to the battle of Badr, we come

to the conclusion that the probable period of the revelation of this was some time after the battle of Badr and before the battle of Uhd, that is 3 A.H. A tradition of Muhammad bin Ishaq has generally misled people to fix the period of the revelation of the first 80 verses to 9 A.H., for according to that tradition it was sent down on the occasion of the deputation from Najran. But obviously, that is wrong for two reasons: first, the subject of this introductory discourse shows clearly that it was revealed much earlier. Second, the tradition of Mugatil-bin-Sulaiman is explicit on the point that on the occasion of the said deputation only those verses (33-63) were revealed which give an account of John the Baptist and Jesus (peace be upon them).

33. Indeed,^{*29} Allah chose Adam, and Noah, and the family of Abraham, and the family of Imran^{*30} above all people.

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا
وَأَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَأَالَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾



*29 From here begins the second discourse. It was sent down in 9 A.H. on the occasion of the visit of the deputation from the Christian state of Najran, which lay between Hijaz and Yemen. It is said that it comprised 73 villages and towns and was capable of raising an army of more than one hundred thousand strong. The population was wholly Christian and was governed by the “Aqib,” who was the head of the community, and the “Sayyid,” who was in charge of the social and political affairs and the Bishop, who looked after the religious affairs of the people. The

above mentioned deputation was one of the many who visited the Prophet (peace be upon him) after the conquest of Makkah, when the whole of Arabia came to realize that the future of the country was now in his hands. This deputation from Najran to Al-Madinah consisted of 60 men and the three heads of the government. As they had no intention to go to war, the question before them was either to embrace Islam or to live as zimmi (proteges). On this occasion Allah sent down this discourse to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to invite the members of the deputation to Islam.

***30** Imran was the name of the father of Moses and Aaron and has been mentioned as Amram in the Bible.

34. Descendants, some of them from others. And Allah is All Hearer, All Knower.*31

ذُرِّيَّةٌ بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ



***31** The main cause of the misguidance of the Christians is that they consider Jesus (peace be upon him) to be the son of God and a partner in Godhead, instead of His servant and messenger. Therefore this basic error is being corrected with a view to making them understand the true and real Islam. That is why the introduction to the discourse begins with the assertion that Adam and Noah and the prophets from the family of Abraham and from the family of Imran (peace be upon them), were all human beings and none of them was God. Their only distinction was that Allah had chosen them for the preaching of His religion and reforming the world.

35. When the woman of Imran^{*32} said: “O My Lord, I have indeed vowed to You that (child) which is in my womb to be dedicated for Your services. So accept (this) from me. Indeed, You are the All Hearer, the All Knower.”^{*33}

إِذْ قَالَتْ أُمُّرَاتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي
نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا
فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ
الْعَلِيمُ



***32** If the woman of Imran is meant as the wife of Imran, then this must be a different Imran from the one mentioned above in Ayat 33. In that case one comes to the conclusion that the father of Mary was named Imran after that ancestor. But if the woman of Imran is meant as a woman from the family of Imran, then it merely shows that Mary’s mother was a descendant of Imran. We possess no authentic knowledge of the basis on which one opinion may be preferred to the other. Though according to some Christian traditions the name of Mary’s father was Iaachim, history does not say who the father of Mary was and to which family her mother belonged to. But if the tradition that the mothers of Mary and Elisabeth, the mother of John, were cousins be taken, (Luke 1:36), then the woman of Imran will mean a woman from the family of Imran. The Gospel of Luke (1:5) says that Elisabeth, the wife of Zacharia was of the daughters of Aaron. That is, Imran’s daughter or woman of Imran; therefore it is clear that there is no anachronism of confounding Miriam, the sister of Aaron, with the virgin Mary. It is a common

practice to call children by the names of their ancestors; so both the explanations are equally acceptable. Moreover, it does not make any difference whatsoever, in the line of argument adopted here to explain the miraculous birth of Jesus (peace be upon him), whether Imran was really the name of Mary's father or has been called so in the ancestral sense.

***33** That is, You hear the prayers of Your servants and are aware of their intentions.

36. Then when she delivered her, she said: "My Lord, I have indeed delivered a female child." And Allah knew best of what she delivered. And the male is not like a female.^{*34} "And I have named her Mary, and I seek refuge for her with You, and for her offspring from Satan the outcast."

فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي
وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَىٰ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا
وَضَعْتُ وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ
وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي
أَعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ
الرَّجِيمِ

***34** By this she meant, had it been a male, it would have been better because the female is handicapped by many natural frailties and social restrictions and cannot become a priest. A male child would, therefore, have served the purpose better for which I have dedicated my child in Your way.

37. So her Lord accepted her with good acceptance,

فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ

and caused her to grow with a good growth, and put her under the care of Zechariah. Whenever Zechariah^{*35} went to her in the prayer sanctuary,^{*36} he found with her provision. He said: “O Mary, where is this from to you.” She said: “It is from Allah. Indeed, Allah provides to whom He wills without measure.

وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا وَكَفَّلَهَا
 زَكَرِيَّا كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا
 الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا
 قَالَ يَمْرُؤُا أَنَّى لَكَ هَذَا قَالَتْ
 هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ
 مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

***35** This happened when Mary had reached the age of discretion and had been admitted into the sanctuary of the Temple (Jerusalem), where she was busy, day and night, in the worship of Allah. Zacharias who had been made her guardian was probably the husband of her maternal aunt and was one of the keepers of the Temple. He was not the Prophet Zachariah, who was killed according to the Old Testament.

***36** The Arabic word *mihrab* usually reminds one of the arch (prayer niche) meant for the imam in the mosques. But here this word has been used for those cells which are built on comparatively raised ground adjoining the monasteries and churches. They are meant for the keepers and guardians of the places of worship, and for those who retire for worship in seclusion. In such a cell Mary had retired for worship in seclusion.

38. At that time Zechariah called upon his Lord, saying: “O my Lord, grant me from Yourself a good offspring. Indeed, You are the All Hearer of supplication.”^{*37}

هٰنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ
قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ
ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ



***37** Zacharia was childless until that time. Seeing this pious young girl, he longed for a good child. Seeing how she was growing under the special protection of Allah, Who supplied her in her seclusion, with provisions from His vast sources, he began to cherish the hope that Allah should bestow upon him a child even in his old age, if He so willed.

39. Then the angels called him, while he stood praying in the sanctuary: “Surely, Allah gives you good tidings of (a son) John,^{*38} (who will be) confirming the word from Allah,^{*39} and (he will be) noble, and chaste, and a prophet from among the righteous.”

فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ
يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ
يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيَحْيَىٰ مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا
مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ



***38** The Bible mentions him as John the Baptist. (Matthew: Chaps. 3,11,14; Mark: 1,6; Luke: 1,3).

***39** Word from Allah, here refers to Jesus (peace be upon him). The Quran calls him a word from Allah because the birth was brought about miraculously by an extraordinary command from Allah.

40. He said: “My Lord, how can I have a son while indeed I have reached old age, and my wife is barren.” He (the angel) said: “Thus (shall it be),^{*40} Allah does what He wills.”

قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَقَدْ
بَلَغَنِي الْكِبَرُ وَامْرَأَتِي عَاقِرٌ
قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا
يَشَاءُ



***40** That is, despite your old age and the sterility of your wife, Allah will bestow upon you a son.

41. He said: “My Lord, appoint for me a sign.”^{*41} He (the angel) said: “The sign to you is that you shall not (be able to) speak to people for three days, except by gesture. And remember your Lord much, and glorify (Him) in the evening and the morning.”^{*42}

قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً ۖ قَالَ
آيَتُكَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكَلَّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَةَ
أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمَزًا ۖ وَادْكُرْ رَبَّكَ
كَثِيرًا ۖ وَسَبِّحْ بِالْعَشِيِّ
وَإِلْبَكْرِ



***41** That is, give me a token to assure me beforehand of the birth of a son to an old man and a barren woman.

***42** The main object of this discourse is to make the Christians realize the error of their belief in taking Jesus (peace be upon him) for the son of God, and making him an object of worship. The extraordinary birth of John (peace be upon him) has been mentioned in the Quran to serve as an introduction to the subsequent argument against their wrong belief. The miraculous birth of Jesus (peace be upon

him) could no more entitle him to divinity than the extraordinary birth of John (peace be upon him), brought about in the same family in a different and unusual way.

42. And when the angels said: “O Mary, indeed, Allah has chosen you and has purified you, and has chosen you above the women of the worlds.”

وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ يٰمَرْيَمُ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ اصْطَفٰكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ
وَاصْطَفٰكِ عَلٰٓى
النِّسَاءِ
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

43. “O Mary, be obedient to your Lord, and prostrate, and bow down with those who bow down (in worship).”

يٰمَرْيَمُ اَقْنِيْ لِرَبِّكِ
وَاسْجُدِيْ
وَارْكَعِيْ مَعَ الرَّاكِعِيْنَ

44. That is from the news of the unseen, which We reveal to you (O Muhammad). And you were not with them when they cast their pens as to which of them should be the guardian of Mary,^{*43} and you were not with them when they disputed.

ذٰلِكَ مِنْ اَنْبَآءِ الْغَيْبِ
نُوْحِيْهِ اِلَيْكَ
وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ
اِذْ يُلْقُوْنَ
اَقْلَمَهُمْ اَيُّهُمْ
يَكْفُلُ
مَرْيَمَ
وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ
اِذْ
يَخْتَصِمُوْنَ

*43 As Mary was a girl who had been dedicated by her mother to the Temple in the Way of Allah, the question of her guardianship had become a problem for the keepers because of her sex. They were therefore casting lots to decide the delicate problem.

45. When the angels said: “O Mary, indeed, Allah gives you good tidings of a word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, honored in this world and the Hereafter, and of those brought near (to Allah).”

إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ يٰمَرْيَمُ اِنَّ
اللّٰهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ اَسْمُهُ
الْمَسِيْحُ عِيسٰى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ
وَجِيْهًا فِى الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ
الْمُقَرَّبِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾

46. “And he will speak to mankind in the cradle and in maturity, and will be of the righteous.”

وَيُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِى الْمَهْدِ
وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾

47. She said: “My Lord, how can I have a child when no man has touched me.” He (the angel) said: “Thus (so shall it be),^{*44} Allah creates what He wills.” When He decrees a matter, then He only says to it: “Be,” and it is.

قَالَتْ رَبِّ اَنۡىٰٓ يُكُوْنُ لِىْ وَلَدٌ وَلَمَّ
يَمَسَّنِىۡ بَشَرٌ ۗ قَالَ كَذٰلِكَ
اللّٰهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۗ اِذَا قَضٰى
اَمْرًا فَاِنَّمَا يَقُوْلُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ
﴿٤٧﴾

***44** That is, although no man has touched you, yet a son shall be born to you. It should be noted that the same word *kazalika* meaning “so shall it be,” had been used in response to Zacharia’s prayer. It, therefore, carries the same sense

here. Moreover, the whole context here corroborates the story that Mary was given the glad tidings of the birth of a son without any sexual intercourse. And the birth of Jesus (peace be upon him), in actual fact, took place in that unusual way. If a son was to be born to her in the normal known way, and if the event of the birth of Jesus (peace be upon him) had taken place in a natural way, then the whole discourse starting from verse 33 and ending with verse 63 would become absolutely pointless. Not only that but all other references to the unusual birth of Jesus (peace be upon him) in the Quran would lose their significance and meaning. The Christians had made Jesus (peace be upon him) the son of God and worthy of worship simply because of his unusual birth without a father and the Jews had accused Mary because they had witnessed that she had given birth to a child, though she was not married. Had it been otherwise, then the two groups could have been told plainly that the girl was married to such and such a man and that Jesus (peace be upon him) was from his seed. In that case, one fails to see the reason why such a long introduction and a series of arguments should have been necessary to remove all doubts about his miraculous birth. Then Jesus (peace be upon him) could have been called the son of a particular man, instead of being called the son of Mary. The position of those people who, on the one hand, profess to believe the Quran to be the word of Allah, and on the other hand try to prove that Jesus (peace be upon him) was born after the natural coming together of a husband and wife, really try to show that Allah is not able to express

Himself as clearly as these people. (May God protect us from blasphemy).

48. “And He will teach him the Scripture and wisdom, and the Torah, and the Gospel.”

وَيُعَلِّمُهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ

49. And (He will make him) a messenger to the Children of Israel, (saying): “That I have indeed come to you with a sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay like the shape of a bird, then I breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by permission of Allah. And I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I bring the dead to life by permission of Allah. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store up in your houses. Indeed, in this is a sign for you, if you are believers.”^{*45}

وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ
جِئْتُكُمْ بِبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ أَنِّي
أَخْلَقُ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الطِّينِ
كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ
طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُبْرِئُ
الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي
الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا
تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدَّخِرُونَ فِي
بُيُوتِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً
لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ

*45 That is, these signs are clear enough to convince you that I have been sent by that Allah who is the Creator and Absolute Ruler of this universe, provided that you are not

obdurate but are willing to accept the truth.

50. “And (I have come) confirming that which was before me of the Torah, and to make lawful for you some of that which was forbidden to you.^{*46} And I have come to you with a sign from your Lord,^{*47} so fear Allah and obey me.”

وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ
مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَلَا حِلَّ لَكُمْ
بَعْضَ الَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَجِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا

***46** That is, this is yet another proof of the fact that I have been sent by Allah. If I had been a false prophet I would have invented my own religion and by virtue of these miracles striven to divert you from your previous faith to the new creed. But I profess the same original religion to be true and confirm the same teachings which were brought by the prophets before me.

The fact that Jesus (peace be upon him) taught the same religion that had been presented by Moses (peace be upon him) and the other prophets is supported even by the existing Gospels. For example, according to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus (peace be upon him) declared in the sermon on the Mount: “Think not that I have come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill.”

One of the Pharisees, who was a lawyer, asked Jesus (peace be upon him), which is the great commandment in the law? He replied: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy

heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and the great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and prophets." (Matthew 22: 37-40).

On another occasion Jesus (peace be upon him) said to his disciples: The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses (peace be upon him) seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not." (Matthew 23: 2-3).

***47** That is, I have come to efface and abolish the superstitions of your ignorant people, the hairsplitting of your jurists, the religious austerities of your ascetics and the restrictive additions made in the law of Allah under the non-Muslim domination; I will make lawful or unlawful for you only those things which Allah has made lawful or unlawful.

51. "Indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is the straight path."^{*48}

إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ
فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ



***48** This shows that like all other prophets, Jesus (peace be upon him) also based his teachings on the following three fundamentals:

(1) The Supreme Authority to which mankind should submit and surrender exclusively belongs to Allah and all the social and moral systems should be built entirely on it.

(2) Being a representative of the same Paramount Power, a prophet must be obeyed unconditionally.

(3) Allah alone is entitled to prescribe laws and regulations for making things lawful or unlawful, pure and impure; consequently all laws imposed by others must be abolished.

Thus it is clear that Jesus, Moses, Muhammad and all other prophets (peace be upon them) had one and the same mission. Those people who aver that different prophets were sent with different missions and to fulfill different aims, are gravely mistaken. Anyone, who is delegated by the Absolute Master of the universe to His subjects, cannot have any other mission than to prevent the people, from becoming disobedient to and independent of Him, and to forbid them to set others to rank with Allah as partners in His authority in any way. For, they are sent to invite the people to surrender and submit and be loyal to the Almighty God and worship Him alone.

It is a pity that the existing Gospels do not present the mission of Jesus (peace be upon him) so precisely and clearly as it has been presented above in the Quran. Nevertheless all the three basic things mentioned above are found scattered over in these Books. For instance, the fact that Jesus (peace be upon him) believed exclusively in the worship of One God is clear from the following:

(1) Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. (Matthew 4: 10).

(2) Not only did he believe in this, but also made it the ultimate aim of all his activities and strove to make the people of the earth to submit to the revealed law of Allah

just as the whole universe submits to His physical law.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6 :10).

Then the fact that Jesus (peace be upon him) always presented himself as a prophet and as a representative of the Kingdom of Heaven, and always invited the people to follow him in that capacity alone, is supported by a number of his sayings. When he started his mission in his native place, Nazareth, the people of his own town and his own kinsfolk rose against him and according to an agreed tradition of Matthew, Mark and Luke, he said: No prophet is accepted in his own country. And when his enemies were conspiring at Jerusalem to kill him and the people advised him to go to somewhere else, he replied: It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. (Luke 13: 33).

When he was entering Jerusalem for the last time, his disciples began to utter in a loud voice: Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord. At this the Pharisees felt offended and asked him to silence his disciples. He replied:

I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. (Luke 19: 38-40).

On another occasion he said: Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart. My yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11: 28-30).

Moreover the fact that Jesus (peace be upon him) wanted the people to obey the divine law rather than man made

laws becomes clear from that tradition of Matthew and Mark which says that when the Pharisees asked, why his disciples transgressed the tradition of the elders and took food without washing their hands, he replied and said, well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written. This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandments of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups, and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, honor thy father and thy mother; and, whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, if a man shall say to his father or mother, it is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye. (Mark 7: 6-13).

52. Then when Jesus felt of their disbelief, he said: “Who are my helpers for (the cause of) Allah.” The disciples said: ^{*49} “We are the helpers of Allah. ^{*50} We have believed in Allah, and be (our) witness that we have

﴿ فَلَمَّا أَحَسَّ عَيْسَىٰ مِنْهُمْ
الْكُفْرَ قَالَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ
قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ
أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَأَشْهَدُ

submitted (to Allah).”

بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

*49 The Arabic word *havari* is almost the equivalent of helper. In the Bible, they have been called disciples and at some places apostles because Jesus (peace be upon him) used to send them to the people to deliver his message, and not because God had appointed them as His apostles.

*50 Those people who help establish Islam have been called Allah’s helpers. In order to understand its significance, it should be kept in view that Allah has taken upon Himself to persuade human beings to adopt Islam of their free will. For He does not force His will on man in those spheres of his life in which He has granted him freedom of action, but likes to convince him by reason and admonition. As it is the work of Allah to bring the people to the right way by admonition and advice, He calls those people who exert their utmost to establish Islam His helpers and companions. This is indeed the highest position that a servant of Allah can aspire to achieve. For man’s position is merely that of a servant when he is engaged in praying, fasting and other kinds of worship, but he is elevated to the high and unique position of God’s companion and assistant when he is exerting for the establishment of the Way of Allah. And this is indeed the loftiest position of spiritual attainment, to which a man can aspire in this world.

53. “Our Lord, we have believed in that which You sent down, and we have followed the messenger so

رَبَّنَا ءَامَنَّا بِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ وَاتَّبَعْنَا
الرَّسُولَ فَأَكْتُبْنَا مَعَ

write us among those who bear witness.”

الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

54. And they (disbelievers) planned, and Allah planned (against them). And Allah is the best of planners.

وَمَكْرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾

55. When Allah said: “O Jesus, indeed, I will take you ^{*51} and raise you to Myself, and purify (free) you of those who disbelieve, and I will make those who follow you above those who disbelieve ^{*52} until the Day of Resurrection. Then to Me you (all) will return, then I will judge between you in that in which you used to dispute.”

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَٰعِيسَىٰ إِنِّي مُتَوَفِّيكَ وَرَافِعُكَ إِلَيَّ وَمُطَهِّرُكَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَجَاعِلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوكَ فَوْقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

***51** The word *mutawaffi* in the Arabic text is from *tawaffa* which literally means to take and to receive, and to seize the soul is not its lexical but metaphorical meaning. Here it means to recall from mission. Allah recalled Jesus because the Israelites had rejected him in spite of the clear signs he had brought. They had been disobeying God for centuries and, in spite of many a warning and admonition served to

them, their national character was rapidly deteriorating. They had killed several prophets, one after the other, and had grown so audacious as to demand the blood of any good man who ventured to invite them to the right way. In order to give them the last chance for turning to the truth, God appointed among them two great Prophets, Jesus and John (peace be upon them), at one and the same time. These prophets came with such clear signs of their appointment from Allah that only such people dared reject them as were utterly perverted and prejudiced against the truth and were averse to following the right way. Nevertheless, the Israelites lost their last chance also as they not only rejected their invitation but also had the head of a great prophet like John (peace be upon him) cut off openly at the request of a dancing girl. And their pharisees and jurists conspired and sought to get Jesus (peace be upon him) punished with the death sentence by the Roman government. Thus they had proved themselves to be so obdurate that it was useless to give the Israelites any further chance. So Allah recalled His Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) and inflicted on them a life of disgrace up to the day of resurrection.

It will be useful here to bear in mind the fact that this whole discourse is meant to refute and correct the Christian belief in the Godhead of Jesus (peace be upon him). Three main things were responsible for the prevalence of this belief among the Christians:

- (1) The miraculous birth of Jesus (peace be upon him).
- (2) His concrete and tangible miracles.

(3) His ascension to heaven about which their Scriptures were explicit.

The Quran confirmed the first thing and made it plain that the birth of Jesus (peace be upon him) without a father was only a manifestation of the infinite powers of Allah. He can create anybody in whatever manner He wills. His miraculous birth, therefore, is no reason why he should be made a god or a partner in Godhead.

The Quran also confirms the second thing and even recounts the miracles performed by Jesus (peace be upon him), but makes it clear that all those miracles were performed by him, as a servant of Allah, by His leave and not as an independent authority. It is, therefore, wrong to infer that Jesus (peace be upon him) was a partner in Godhead.

Now let us consider the third thing. If the Christian belief in Ascension had been wholly baseless, it could have been refuted by pointing out that the object of their worship, the so called son of God, expired long ago and had become one with dust, and that they could see, for their full satisfaction, his grave at such and such a place. But the Quran does not declare this explicitly. On the other hand, it not only uses such words as give at least a vague suggestion of his Ascension, but also denies that Jesus was crucified at all. According to it the one who gave a loud cry at his last hour, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? and the one whose picture they carry on the cross, was not Messiah at all, because God had recalled to Himself the real Messiah before the crucifixion took place.

It is thus clear that those people who try to prove the death of Jesus from these verses, really try to show that God is not able to express Himself clearly and unambiguously. May God protect us from such a blasphemy.

*52 Those who disbelieved and rejected him were the Jews who were invited by Jesus (peace be upon him) to accept the truth. Those who follow him are really the Muslims only but if it may be taken to imply all those who believe in him, then the sincere Christians may also be included.

56. “Then as for those who disbelieve, I will punish them with a severe punishment in this world and the Hereafter, and they will not have any helpers.”

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَأُعَذِّبُهُمْ
عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ



57. And as for those who believe and do righteous deeds, He will give them in full their rewards. And Allah does not love the wrongdoers.

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ
وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ



58. This is what We recite to you (O Muhammad) of the verses and a wise reminder (the Quran).

ذَٰلِكَ نَتْلُوهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ
وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ



59. Certainly, the example of Jesus with Allah is like the

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

example of Adam. He created him from dust, then He said to him: "Be," and he was.^{*53}

كَمَثَلِ ءَادَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ
ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

***53** That is, if one's miraculous birth entitles one to become God or son of God, then Adam (peace be upon him) was better entitled to it because he was created without either a human father or a mother, while Jesus (peace be upon him) was born without a father only.

60. (This is) the truth from your Lord, so do not be of those who doubt.^{*54}

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ
الْمُمْتَرِينَ

***54** The main points in the discourse presented before the Christians up to here are: First, they have been admonished to realize that their belief in the Godhead of Jesus is gravely ill founded. He was only a man who was born in a miraculous way by the will of Allah and given the power to perform certain miracles as a clear proof of his prophethood. As regards his Ascension, Allah had arranged to recall him to Himself before the disbelievers could crucify him. In fact, the Master of the universe has full powers to treat any of His servants in any special way He pleases. It is, therefore, wrong to infer from the exceptional treatment accorded to Jesus (peace be upon him) that he himself was the Master or the Master's Son or a partner in the authority of the Master. Secondly, their attention has been drawn to the fact that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) invites them to

the same truth that had been preached by Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) in his own time and that the teachings of the two prophets were basically identical.

Thirdly, the disciples of Jesus (peace be upon him) believed in and followed the same religion of Islam that is being presented in the Quran. However the Christians of the later age discarded the message of Jesus (peace be upon him) and digressed from the faith of his disciples.

61. Then whoever disputes with you about it, after what has come to you of the knowledge, say (to him): “Come, let us call our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves, then we pray humbly, then invoke the curse of Allah upon those who lie.”^{*55}

فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا
نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا
وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ
نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَل لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى
الْكَاذِبِينَ



***55** This method of settling the dispute was proposed to show conclusively that the members of the deputation of Najran were behaving obdurately. As a matter of fact, they had no answer to the things pointed out in the above discourse and could not bring any authority even from their own Scriptures to justify and support their beliefs under discussion. They could not, therefore, assert with full conviction that their beliefs conformed to the fact and were not false. Besides this, when they observed closely the

character and the teachings and the works of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the majority of the members of the deputation were so impressed that they became convinced in their hearts of his prophethood; or at least, they could not reject it boldly. That is why they did not accept the challenge: If you really believe in the truth of your creed, you should pray with us to Allah and invoke His curse on those who say false things about Christ. The fact that they declined to accept the challenge showed plainly to the whole of Arabia that the religious leaders and priests of the Christians of Najran who were known far and wide for their piety, professed beliefs about which they themselves were not sure.

62. Certainly this, this is the true narration. And there is not any god except Allah. And indeed, Allah, He is the All Mighty, the All Wise.

إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْقَصَصُ الْحَقُّ
وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

63. Then if they turn away, then indeed, Allah is All Aware of those who do mischief.

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ
بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ

64. Say:^{*56} “O People of the Scripture, come to a word (of agreement) equitable between us and you,^{*57} that we shall not worship except Allah, nor shall we associate

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى
كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا
نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ

with Him anything, nor shall one of us take others for lords other than Allah.” So if they turn away, then say: “Bear witness that we are those who have submitted (to Allah).”

شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا
أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا
فَقُولُوا أَشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا
مُسْلِمُونَ

*56 From here begins the third discourse. Its subject-matter clearly shows that it was revealed in the period intervening the battles of Badr and Uhd. The contents of the three discourses are so closely interlinked that there is no incoherence anywhere between them. That is why some commentators have been misled to believe that this also formed part of the discourse addressed to the Najran deputation. But the tone of the discourse commencing from here clearly shows that it was addressed to the Jews.

*57 That is, join us in the creed which we have accepted and which you also cannot reject as false, for it is confirmed and supported by the teachings of your own Scriptures.

65. “O People of the Scripture, why do you argue about Abraham, while the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed until after him.*58 Have you then no sense.”

يٰٓأَهْلَ
الْكِتَابِ لِمَ
تُحَاجُّونَ فِي
إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَا
أُنزِلَتْ التَّوْرَةُ
وَالْإِنْجِيلُ إِلَّا
مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَفَلَا
تَعْقِلُونَ

*58 That is, your Judaism and Christianity came into

existence long after the revelation of the Torah and the Gospel, whereas Abraham (peace be upon him) had passed away long before those books were sent down. Now, even a man of ordinary common sense can easily understand that the religion of Abraham (peace be upon him) could in no sense be Judaism or Christianity. Thus, if Abraham (peace be upon him) was on the right way and had obtained salvation, as you also believe, then it becomes abundantly clear that one need not follow Judaism or Christianity to be on the right way and to obtain salvation

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

(1) Judaism and Christianity were born long after the death of Abraham (peace be upon him). Judaism, with its special rituals, peculiar regulations, etc. took its birth and name some four hundred years before Christ. As to Christianity, it took its name and adopted its special creed and form long after the recall of Jesus (peace be upon him). Thus it is clear that their claim that one must become a Jew or a Christian in order to obtain guidance was historically untenable. For in that case, Abraham, Jesus and all the other prophets (peace be upon them) and all the good people who had passed away long before the birth of Judaism and Christianity could not be counted among the rightly guided persons for the simple reason that these religions did not exist at the time they lived. Thus, it was obvious that the Jews and Christians could not say that these prophets were not rightly guided, nor could they claim that they followed Judaism or Christianity. As a

corollary to this, true guidance did not, even according to them, consist of the particular features which divided them into two distinct religions, but it was that eternal universal way which has been shown by all the messengers of Allah and which has always been followed by the good people of all ages.

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

66. Here you are, those who have argued about that of which you have (some) knowledge. Why then argue you about that of which you have no knowledge. And Allah knows, and you do not know.

هَاتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ حَاجِبْتُمْ فِيْمَا
لَكُمْ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ فَلِمَ تُحَاجُّوْنَ
فِيْمَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ وَّاللّٰهُ
يَعْلَمُ وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾

67. Abraham was not a Jew, nor a Christian, but he was true in faith,^{*59} who had submitted, and he was not of those who associate partners (with Allah).

مَا كَانَ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ يَهُودِيًّا وَّلَا
نَصْرَانِيًّا وَّلٰكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا
مُّسْلِمًا وَّمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ

*59 The Arabic word *hanif* stands for a person who chooses

to follow one particular way after rejecting all other ways.

68. Indeed, among mankind, the nearest to Abraham are those who followed him, and this prophet (Muhammad), and those who have believed. And Allah is the Protector of those who believe.

إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ
لَلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ
وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

69. A party of the People of the Scripture wish if they could mislead you. And they shall not mislead except themselves, and they do not perceive (it).

وَدَّتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ
لَوْ يُضِلُّوكُمْ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ

70. O People of the Scripture, why do you disbelieve in the verses of Allah, while you witness (to their truth).^{*60}

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ

***60** There may be another rendering of this sentence: You yourselves testify these. But in neither case is the sense of the passage affected. The fact is that the pious life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the marvelous effects which his precepts and example were producing on the lives of his companions, and the high and sublime teachings of the Quran, were all such clear signs of God that no one, who was familiar with the lives of the prophets and with the

nature of the heavenly Scriptures, could possibly doubt or deny his prophethood. Thus, in fact, many a people of the Book (especially the learned among them) had realized that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the same prophet whose coming had been foretold by the former prophets. So much so, that they were at times completely overpowered by the force of the plain truth, and would unwittingly admit and confirm that the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were true. That is why, the Quran accuses them time and again of obduracy and deliberate rejection of the truth after seeing clear signs of God and being fully convinced of it in their hearts.

71. O People of the Scripture, why do you mix the truth with falsehood, and conceal the truth while you know (it).

يٰٓأَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ لِمَ تَلْبِسُوْنَ
الْحَقَّ بِالْبٰطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوْنَ
الْحَقَّ وَانْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ



72. And a party of the People of the Scripture say: “Believe in that which has been revealed to those who believe at the beginning of the day, and reject it at the end of that, that perhaps they will return.”^{*61}

وَقَالَتْ طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنْ
أَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ ءَامِنُوْا
بِالَّذِىٓ أُنزِلَ عَلٰى
الَّذِىْنَ ءَامِنُوْا وَجَهَ النَّهَارِ
وَكَفَرُوْا ءَاخِرَهُ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَرْجِعُوْنَ



***61** This was one of those tricks which the leaders and the rabbis of the Jews, living in the suburbs of Al-Madinah

used to play in order to weaken the force of the Islamic movement. They feigned an interest in Islam only to detach some of the Muslims by some subtle arrangements. Their object was to dishearten the Muslims and create doubts among the masses about teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him). For this purpose they began to send people to Al-Madinah to profess Islam openly and then become apostates and proclaim everywhere that they had come out of Islam because they had witnessed such and such evils among the Muslims and their Prophet (peace be upon him). They were stirred to play this wicked game by their envy of Islam and bias in favor of the religion of their forefathers. They have been rebuked, as if to say, God is not bound by your prejudices, but He bestows His guidance on anyone He wills, and He has by His grace blessed the Muslims with the same guidance that was once bestowed upon you. You must understand it well that your wily tricks will not succeed in snatching away that guidance from them, nor in changing it into misguidance but only in providing a strong argument against you before your Lord. By this, Allah willed to see whether they would give up their prejudice and accept the guidance which had been given to Muhammad (peace be upon him), or whether they would persist in their envy and reject it and provide the Muslims with a strong argument against themselves before their Lord that they rejected the truth merely because of their prejudice and obduracy.

73. “And do not believe except the one who follows

وَلَا تُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا لِمَنْ تَبِعَ دِينَكُمْ

your religion.” Say “Indeed, the guidance is the guidance of Allah.” (Do you fear) lest anyone be given (revelation) the like of that which was given to you, or that they may argue with you before their Lord. Say “Indeed, the bounty is in the hand of Allah. He grants it to whom He wills. And Allah is All Encompassing,^{*62} Knowing.”^{*63}

قُلْ إِنَّ الْهُدَىٰ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ أَنْ
يُؤْتَىٰ أَحَدٌ مِّثْلَ مَا أُوتِيْتُمْ أَوْ
يُحَاجُّوْكُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ ۗ قُلْ إِنَّ
الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ



***62** The Arabic word *wase* (All-Encompassing) generally occurs on three occasions in the Quran:

- (1) When a community of people is warned of their narrow mindedness and told that Allah is not narrow minded like them;
- (2) When one is rebuked for miserliness and stinginess and is told that Allah is generous and not miserly like him;
- (3) When people believe Allah to be finite because of the limitations of their own imagination, they are told that Allah is Infinite and limitless.

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

***63 That is, Allah knows well who deserves honor and excellence.**

74. He selects for His mercy whom He wills. And Allah is the Owner of great bounty.

يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

75. And among the People of the Scripture is he who, if you entrust him with a great amount (of wealth), will return it to you. And among them is he who, if you entrust him with a single silver coin, will not return it to you, unless that you are standing over him constantly (demanding). That is because they say: "There is no blame upon us regarding illiterates. *64 And they speak a lie against Allah and they know (it).

وَمِنَ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بِقِنطَارٍ يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بِدِينَارٍ لَّا يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ إِلَّا مَا دُمْتَ عَلَيْهِ قَائِمًا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ سَبِيلٌ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ

وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

***64 That is, they were required to be fair only in their dealings with the Jews, and there was no harm in usurping the property of a non-Jew. This belief was not confined to the ignorant Jewish masses, but their whole religious system was so molded as to allow differentiation between Israelites and non-Israelites in their dealings. Their moral code disallowed a certain treatment towards the Israelites**

but allowed the same towards a non-Israelite; one and the same thing was right for an Israelite but the same thing was wrong for a non-Israelite. For instance, the Bible says: “At the end of every seven years, every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbor shall release it”, but “Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again.” (Deut. 15: 1-3). At another place the law about usury has been laid down like this: “Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury.” (Deut. 23: 20). “If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die.” (Deut. 24: 7).

76. Nay, but whoever fulfills his pledge and fears (Allah), then indeed, Allah loves those who fear (Him).

بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ وَاتَّقَىٰ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

77. Certainly, those who trade the covenant of Allah and their (own) oaths for a small price, they will have no portion in the Hereafter. And Allah will not speak to them, nor will He look upon them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them.^{*65} And they will have a painful punishment.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَأَيْمَانِهِمْ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَا خَلْقَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾

***65** Although they were guilty of the blackest sins, yet they had taken it for granted that they would rise as the

favorites of God on the Day of Resurrection and they alone would receive His blessings and favors, for they would be rescued from the consequences of the sins they committed in this world by the intercession of their saints in the next world, but the fact is that they will be dealt with on that day in quite a different manner.

78. And indeed, among them is a party who distort the Scripture with their tongues, so you may think that (what they say) is from the Scripture, and it is not from the Scripture. And they say:^{*66} “This is from Allah,” and it is not from Allah. And they speak a lie against Allah and they know (it).

وَإِنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقًا يَلُودْنَ
الْسِنْتَهُم بِالْكِتَابِ لِتَحْسَبُوهُ
مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ
الْكِتَابِ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ
عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ
يَعْلَمُونَ



***66** Taken figuratively the Arabic text may also imply that they turn away from the right meaning of the Book or twist the words out of context and pervert the meaning. But the real meaning of the text is this: while reading the Book, they twist with their tongues certain words or sentences that are against their self interest or self invented religious beliefs or theories. Thus they change the meanings so as to mislead people into mental errors or false judgments or wrong religious beliefs. It is an irony that some people

sometimes treat the Quran itself in the same way. For instance, those people who believe in the Prophet (peace be upon him) to be superhuman twist Ayat 110 of Surah Al-Kahaf,

قل **إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ** with their tongues and read it as **قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ**

The first and correct reading means, “Say, (O Prophet), I am only a man like yourselves,” while the second reading perverts the meaning thus: “Say, (O Prophet), indeed I am not a man like yourselves.”

79. It is not (possible) for a human that Allah should give him the Book and wisdom and prophethood, then afterwards he would say to the people: “Be my worshippers instead of Allah,” but (he would say): “Be you worshippers of the Lord,^{*67} because of your teaching of the Book, and because of your studying it.”

مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ اللَّهُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ ثُمَّ
يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا عِبَادًا لِي
مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ كُونُوا
رَبِّينَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ
الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ



***67** Rabbani (rabbi) was the title of a religious functionary who guided the religious affairs of the Jews, established worship and expounded law.

80. Nor would he command you that you should take the angels and the prophets

وَلَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ

for lords. Would he command you to disbelieve after when you have submitted (to Allah).^{*68}

وَالنَّبِيِّنَ أَرْبَابًا ۗ أَيَأْمُرُكُمْ
بِالْكُفْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ



***68** These two verses are a comprehensive refutation of all the wrong things that different people have ascribed to their prophets and entered into their books in order to make an angel or a prophet a god and an object of worship. Here a fundamental formula has been laid down: anything that teaches the worship of anyone other than Allah and raises a servant of God to the high pedestal of Godhead can never be the teaching of any messenger of God: therefore the very existence of such a thing in any book should be taken as a clear proof of its being a later insertion by some misguided people. Hence the claim to be the son of God and equal with God, could never have been made by Jesus (peace be upon him) himself, but by some misguided followers of his.

81. And when Allah took the covenant with the prophets, (saying): “Whatever I give you of the Scripture and wisdom, then afterwards there comes to you a messenger,^{*69} confirming what is with you, you shall believe in him and you

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا
ءَاتَيْتُكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ
وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ
مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ

shall help him.” He (Allah) said: “Do you acknowledge, and take (binding) upon you My covenant.” They said: “We have acknowledged.” He said: “Then bear you witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.”

وَلْتَنْصِرُنَّهُ^ج قَالَ^ط أَأَقْرَرْتُمْ
وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَيَّ ذَالِكُمْ^ط إِصْرِي
قَالُوا أَأَقْرَرْنَا^ج قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا وَأَنَا
مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

*69 It implies this: You people of the Book are bound by the covenant of your own prophets to believe in and help Muhammad (peace be upon him) for we entered into a compact with every prophet to the effect that they (and their followers by implication) must help every prophet sent by Us for the preaching and the establishment of the way of life for which they had been appointed. Therefore you should not have any prejudice against him, nor consider religion as your own monopoly; you should not oppose the truth but come under the banner of anyone who raises it for this purpose.

It is interesting to note that according to Palmer (The Koran), the Talmudic sources confirm that God assembled all past, present, and future prophets on mount Sinai and entered into the compact mentioned in the text.

In this connection it should also be clearly understood that this compact was taken from every prophet before the advent of Muhammad (peace be upon him); therefore every prophet informed his followers about the prophet coming after him and told them to follow him. But there is no mention in the Quran or in the traditions that any such

compact was taken from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): nor did he inform his followers about the coming of any prophet after him and believing in him. On the contrary, he categorically declared that he was the last in the line of prophets.

82. Then whoever turns away after this, then those, they are the transgressors.^{*70}

فَمَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَٰسِقُونَ



***70** This implies that the people of the Book were breaking their covenant with Allah by rejecting Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and opposing his mission; they were disregarding that covenant which their prophets had made with Allah. Hence they were perverted transgressors who had gone beyond the limits imposed by Allah.

83. So, do they seek other than the religion of Allah, and to Him has submitted whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly,^{*71} and to Him they will be returned.

أَفَغَيْرَ دِينِ اللَّهِ يَبْغُونَ وَلَهُ أَسْلَمَ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَكَرْهًا وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ



***71** That is, when the whole universe and everything in it follow Islam and submit to Allah, what other way of life than Islam do these rejectors, who live in the same universe, seek to follow?

84. Say: “We believe in Allah, and that which has been sent down to us, and that which was sent down to Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which was given to Moses, and Jesus, and the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them,^{*72} and to Him we have submitted.”

قُلْ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا
وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ
وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ
وَعِيسَىٰ وَالنَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ
لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ
لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ



***72** That is, we do not have different ways of treatment for different prophets: we accept each and every one of them and do not reject any one of them and we treat all of them as truthful prophets and none as a liar. We are free from prejudice and zeal for ignorance; we bear witness to the fact that each and every servant of Allah, who brought the truth from Him to any place whatever in the world, spoke the truth.

85. And whoever seeks other than Islam as religion, never will it be accepted from him. And he will be among the losers in the Hereafter.

وَمَن يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَن
يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ
الْخَاسِرِينَ



86. How shall Allah guide a people who disbelieved

كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ قَوْمًا كَفَرُوا

after their belief, and they had witnessed that the messenger is true and the clear signs (of Allah's Sovereignty) had come to them.^{*73} And Allah does not guide wrongdoing people.

بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَشَهِدُوا أَنَّ
الرَّسُولَ حَقٌّ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ



***73** It has been reiterated here that the Jewish scholars, who lived in Arabia at the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), had understood clearly and borne witness to it that he was a true prophet of God and that his teachings were the same as those of the former prophets. But in spite of this, they not only rejected but also opposed him because of their centuries old prejudices, obduracy and antagonism to the truth.

87. Those, their recompense will be that upon them is the curse of Allah, and of angels, and of all mankind.

أُولَئِكَ جَزَاءُهُمْ أَنْ
عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ



أَجْمَعِينَ

88. Abiding eternally therein. The punishment will not be lightened for them, nor will they be reprieved.

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ
الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ



89. Except those who repent after that, and correct (themselves). Indeed, then Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ
وَأَصْلَحُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Merciful.



90. Certainly, those who disbelieve after their belief, and then went on increasing in disbelief,^{*74} never will their repentance be accepted. And they are those who are astray.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ
ثُمَّ أزدَادُوا كُفْرًا لَنْ تُقْبَلَ
تَوْبَتُهُمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الضَّالُّونَ



***74** They persisted in their disbelief. They did not stop at the rejection of the faith but went on further and further in their opposition and antagonism to it: they did their very best to hinder people from the Way of Allah by creating doubts and suspicions in their minds and by devising secret plans and plots to make the mission a failure.

91. Certainly, those who disbelieve, and die while they are disbelievers, never would be accepted from anyone of them the (whole) earth full of gold even if they offer it as a ransom. They are those, for them will be a painful punishment, and they will not have any helpers.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ
كُفَّارٌ فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمْ
مِلَّةٌ الْأَرْضِ ذَهَبًا وَلَوْ
أَفْتَدَى بِهِنَّ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ
نَاصِرِينَ



92. Never shall you attain the righteousness until you spend from that which you

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا

love.*75 And whatever you spend of anything, then indeed Allah is All Aware of it.

تُحِبُّونَ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ



*75 It is meant to remove the misconception of the Jews about virtue. Their highest ideal of virtue was to put on that outward appearance which had been enjoined by the traditional and centuries old heritage of their ancestors. Besides this they measured virtue by the standard of that elaborate legal system which had been evolved by their hair splitting scholars. But in spite of their outward religiosity, even their pious people were narrow minded, greedy and parsimonious. Moreover they did not hesitate to conceal the truth or to sell it, and yet the common people took them for virtuous people. This is why they are being told here that they can attain to real virtue not by the mere outward observance of some rituals of their own invention but by loving God and by keeping His will above every worldly thing. As the door of virtue is shut against anyone who loves any worldly thing more than Allah. The one, who is not ready to sacrifice the beloved thing for the sake of God's love, cannot attain to real virtue. The observance of rituals without this spirit of love is like the paint on worm eaten wood. It is possible that a human being might be deceived by such outward paint, but it is impossible to deceive God by such devices.

93. All food was lawful to the Children of Israel,*76 except that which Israel

كُلُّ الطَّعَامِ كَانَ حَلَالًا لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

(Jacob)^{*77} had made unlawful to himself before that the Torah was revealed. Say: (O Muhammad): “So bring the Torah and read it (to us) if you are truthful.”

إِسْرَائِيلَ إِلَّا مَا حَرَّمَ إِسْرَائِيلُ
عَلَى نَفْسِهِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تُنزَلَ
التَّوْرَةُ ۗ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِالتَّوْرَةِ
فَاتْلُوهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

***76** This ayat answers an objection. When the Jews could not find fault with the basic teachings of the Quran and of the Prophet (peace be upon him), for there was absolutely no difference between these and the teachings of the previous prophets, they began to raise legal objections. One of their objections was that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had made lawful certain things which had been unlawful during the time of the previous prophets.

***77** If Israel refers to the children of Israel, then it would mean that before the revelation of the Torah, they themselves had made certain things unlawful because these had been unlawful by custom. But if it refers to Jacob (and that is more probable), then it means that he did not eat certain things because he did not like them or abstained from them on account of some illness, but his children began to believe these to be unlawful. The subsequent verse shows that the law in the Bible which declared the camel and the hare etc. to be unlawful was not in the Torah, but was later on inserted in it by the Jewish scholars. (For details refer to E.N. 122 of Al-Anaam).

94. Then whoever invents a lie against Allah after that, then they are those who are the wrong doers.

فَمَنْ أَفْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ
مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

95. Say: “Allah speaks the truth. So follow the religion of Abraham, firm in faith. And he was not of those who join partners (with Allah).”^{*78}

قُلْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ ۖ فَاتَّبِعُوا مِلَّةَ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا ۚ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

***78** It is meant to bring home to them this lesson: obedience to God alone is the root of the real faith, which was taught by Abraham (peace be upon him), but you have discarded that and associated other gods with Him. Besides this, you have, entangled yourselves in minor legal issues which had been raised by your scholars after you had deviated from the way of Abraham (peace be upon him) during the centuries of your degradation.

96. Certainly, the first House (of worship) appointed for mankind was that at Becca (Mecca), blessed, and a guidance for the worlds.^{*79}

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ
لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى
لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٦﴾

***79** Their objection was about the change of *qiblah* to the Kaabah (Makkah) from the Temple (Jerusalem), which had been the *qiblah* of the previous prophets. This objection had already been answered in Surah *Al-Baqarah*, but as the

Jews persisted in their criticism, it has again been answered here. It has been asserted that the Kaabah was built by Abraham (peace be upon him) long before the Temple and therefore it had priority of time for being the *qiblah*. The Bible itself bears testimony to the fact that the Temple was built by Solomon some 450 years after Moses (I Kings, 6: 1) and made *qiblah* during his reign. (I Kings, 8: 29-30.) On the other hand, all the traditions of Arabia unanimously agree that the Kaabah was built by Abraham (peace be upon him) some 900 years before the advent of Moses. The fact that the Kaabah has priority of time over the Temple is so obvious that none can deny it.

97. In it are manifest signs,^{*80} the station of Abraham. And whoever enters it shall be safe.^{*81} And (due) to Allah from mankind is the pilgrimage to (this) House, for whoever can afford the journey to there. And he who disbelieves, then indeed, Allah is free from needs of the worlds.

فِيهِ ءَايَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ ءَامِنًا ۗ وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى
النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ
إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا ۗ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ

*80 There are such clear signs in the House. This is to show that Allah has accepted it and approved it as His House. Though it has been built in a barren place, Allah has provided the people of the neighborhood with the best of provisions. Besides this, though there was chaos and disorder in the whole of Arabia for about 2500 years before

the advent of Islam, yet there reigned peace and security in the Kaabah and in its surroundings. Not only this: there was because of it, peace for four months every year in the whole of Arabia. Another sign was the miraculous destruction of Abrahah and his army, when he attacked Makkah in order to destroy the Kaabah. At the time of the revelation of the Quran, every Arab knew well even the details of this incident and there were even those who had actually beheld the occurrence.

***81** The inviolable sanctity of the Kaabah was so much respected even in the dark days of ignorance that blood thirsty enemies dared not touch each other in it. In Ayat 97, the word *kafara* does not mean that the one, who disobeys this commandment of Allah and does not perform Hajj even if one can afford it, becomes a disbeliever in the technical sense. It means that the person has adopted the attitude of a disbeliever even after his profession of belief in Allah and His prophet. This is obvious because the commandment to perform Hajj has not been addressed to the disbelievers but to those who profess to be Muslims. A Muslim judge, therefore, will not declare him to be a disbeliever and apostate for this reason, as if he had gone out of the pale of Islam.

Allah does not stand in need of any help from the people, whether they be believers or disbelievers. It is for their own good if they become sincere believers. On the other hand, those people, who reject the commandments of Allah by word or deed, will not be considered to be believers by Allah, even if they professed to be believers.

98. Say: “O People of the Scripture, why do you disbelieve in the revelations of Allah, and Allah (Himself) is witness over what you do.”

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَىٰ مَا
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾

99. Say: “O People of the Scripture, why do you hinder from the way of Allah those who believed, seeking to make it deviant, and you are witnesses (to Allah’s guidance). And Allah is not unaware of what you do.”

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ
تَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَن
ءَامَنَ تَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا وَأَنتُمْ
شُهَدَاءُ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

100. O those who believe, if you obey a party of those who were given the Scripture, they would turn you back to disbelievers after you have believed.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا
فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
يَرُدُّوكُم بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ كَافِرِينَ
﴿١٠٠﴾

101. And how can you disbelieve, while unto you are recited the verses of Allah, and among you is His messenger. And whoever holds firmly to

وَكَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ وَأَنتُمْ تُتْلَىٰ
عَلَيْكُمْ ءَايَاتُ اللَّهِ وَفِيكُمْ
رَسُولُهُ ۗ وَمَن يَعْصِمْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ

Allah, then he is indeed guided to a right path.

هُدًى إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١١﴾

102. O those who believe, fear Allah as rightfully He should be feared, and do not die except that you are in submission (to Allah).^{*82}

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ
مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

***82** That is, be loyal and obedient to Allah up to your last breath.

103. And hold firmly, to the rope of Allah (the Quran) all together,^{*83} and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you, when you were enemies, then He put love between your hearts so you became as brothers by His grace. And you were upon the edge of a pit of fire, then He saved you from it.^{*84} Thus Allah makes clear His revelations to you, that you may be guided.^{*85}

وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا
وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ۗ وَآذِكُرُوا اللَّهَ
عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ
قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ
إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ
مِّنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِّنْهَا ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُم ءَايَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

***83** Allah's rope, is the way of life prescribed by Him. It is a rope because it keeps intact the relations of the believers with Allah and also binds and unites them into a

community. Holding firmly the rope of Allah, implies that the Muslims should give the greatest importance to Allah's Way, and should make it the centre of all their interests, and exert their utmost to establish it and cooperate with one another for its service. When and if they let loose this rope and deviate from its basic principles, they would inevitably suffer from disunity and would be divided into sections and subsections, like the communities of the former prophets. As a consequence of this, they would meet with disgrace both in this world and in the next.

***84** This refers to that horrible state of the Arabs from which they were rescued by Islam. Before Islam, their clans were divided into hostile camps, who went to war for frivolous reasons. Human life had lost its sanctity and people were killed without any pangs of conscience. The fire of enmity would have burnt to ashes all the Arabs, if blessed Islam had not rescued them from it. This blessing had appeared in a tangible form at Al-Madinah at the time of the revelation of these verses. The two clans Aus and Khazraj who had been enemies for years and had been involved in bitter feuds and bloody battles, became brethren after they embraced Islam. Not only this: they also showed that spirit of sacrifice for the rehabilitation of the refugees from Makkah that has no parallel in history.

***85** That is to say, if you have eyes to see, you can yourselves judge whether your welfare lies in holding fast to Allah's Way or in discarding it and reverting to the old ways of ignorance, and whether your well wishers are Allah and His Messenger or the Jews and the hypocrites and the

polytheists who are trying to revert you to your former condition.

104. And let there be (arising) from you a nation inviting to good, and enjoining to right, and forbidding from wrong. And such are those who will be the successful.

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى
الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

105. And do not be like those who became divided, and differed after that which had come to them of the clear proofs.*⁸⁶ And those, for them is a great punishment.

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا
وَأَخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ
الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾

***86** This refers to those communities which received the guidance and clear teachings from the messengers of Allah but after some time discarded the basic principles of the guidance and divided themselves into different sects on the basis of irrelevant and minor issues and were involved in useless and meaningless squabbles. They became so engrossed in these things that they totally forgot the mission which Allah had entrusted to them and lost interest even in the basic principles on which, in fact, depends the real success of humanity.

106. On the Day (some) faces will be white, and (some)

يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ

faces will be black. Then as for those whose faces will become black, (it will be said): “Did you disbelieve after your belief. Then taste the punishment for what you used to disbelieve.”

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ أَسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ
أَكْفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا
الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

107. And as for those whose faces will become white, so (they will be) in the mercy of Allah. They shall abide forever therein.

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ أَبْيَضَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ
فَ فِي رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

108. These are the verses of Allah, We recite them to you (O Muhammad) in truth. And Allah wants no injustice to the worlds (His creatures).^{*87}

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ
بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا
لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

***87** As Allah, does not will to be unjust to the people of the world, He is showing them guidance and warning them before those things of which they shall have to ultimately render an account. Thus, those who follow the crooked ways even after this and do not return to the right way are doing injustice to themselves.

109. And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And to Allah will the

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ

matters be returned.



110. You are the best nation raised up for mankind.^{*88} You enjoin to right, and forbid from wrong, and you believe in Allah. And if the People of the Scripture^{*89} had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, and most of them are disobedient.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ
تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ
وَلَوْ ءَامَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ
لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِمَّنْ
أَلْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ
الْفَاسِقُونَ



***88** This is the same declaration that has been made in Al-Baqarah (Ayat 143). The followers of the Prophet (peace be upon him) are being reminded that they have been appointed to the leadership of the world from which the children of Israel had been deposed on account of their incompetence. The Muslims have been appointed to that office because they possess those moral qualities which are essential for just leadership. These are to establish virtue and to eradicate evil practically, and believe that there is no god other than Allah in order to put into practice the implication of this belief. They should, therefore, understand the responsibilities of the work which had been entrusted to them and avoid the errors into which their

predecessors had fallen. (See E.N. 123-144 of Al-Baqarah).

***89** Here the Jews are the people of the Book.

111. They will never harm you except a trifling hurt. And if they fight against you, they will turn on their backs. Then afterwards they will not be helped.

لَنْ يَضُرُّوكُمْ إِلَّا أَذًى وَإِنْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ يُؤَلُّوكُمُ الْأَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا يُنصَرُونَ

112. Humiliation has been laid over them (by Allah) wherever they are found, except for a rope (covenant) from Allah, and a rope (treaty) from the people.^{*90} And they have drawn on themselves the wrath of Allah, and the destitution is laid upon them. That is because they used to disbelieve in the revelations of Allah, and killed the prophets without right. That is because they disobeyed and used to transgress.

ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ أَيْنَ مَا تَقِفُوا إِلَّا بِحَبْلٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَحَبْلِ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَسْكَنَةُ^ج ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ^ج بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ^ج ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ

***90** That is, the little security that they enjoy anywhere in the world has not been won by themselves but has been the result of the help and kindness of others. They have been getting this either from some Muslim states in the name of Allah or from some non-Muslim states for other reasons.

And if sometimes they have succeeded in gaining even some political power, they have not accomplished this through their own efforts but have owed it to others.

113. They are not all alike. Among the People of the Scripture (there is) a community standing (right), they recite the verses of Allah during the hours of the night, and they prostrate.

لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً ۗ مِّنْ أَهْلِ
الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ
اللَّهِ ءَانَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ



114. They believe in Allah, and the Last Day, and they enjoin to right, and they forbid from wrong, and they hasten one another in good deeds. And those are among the righteous.

يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسْرِعُونَ فِي
الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَئِكَ مِنَ
الصَّالِحِينَ



115. And whatever of good they do, never will it be rejected of them. And Allah is All Aware of those who fear (Him).

وَمَا يَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَنْ
يُكْفَرُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
بِالْمُتَّقِينَ



116. Certainly, those who disbelieve, neither their wealth, nor their children

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ تُغْنِيَ

will avail them against Allah anything at all. And they are the dwellers of the Fire. They will abide therein.

عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ
اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ
هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾

117. The example of that which they spend in this life of the world is as the example of a wind with frost in it, which struck the harvest of a people who have wronged themselves, then destroyed it.^{*91} And Allah did not wrong them, but they do wrong to themselves.

مَثَلُ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ فِي هَذِهِ
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ رِيحٍ
فِيهَا صِرٌّ أَصَابَتْ حَرْثَ قَوْمٍ
ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَأَهْلَكَتُهُ وَمَا
ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ
يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾

***91** In this similitude, *harvest* stands for human life, for one sows in it deeds or misdeeds which one shall have to harvest in the next world. The *wind* refers to the superficial and hypocritical show of charity that impels the unbelievers to spend their wealth in charity and public works. And *frost* refers to the lack of faith and willingness to obey the divine law in its right spirit, which makes void the acts and deeds of one's life. By this similitude, Allah teaches this lesson; just as air is very useful for the growth of crops but it also destroys these if there is frost in it: in the same way charity helps nourish the harvest that is to be reaped in the next

world but it destroys the same, if it is poisoned with unbelief.

It is obvious that Allah is the Master of man as well as of the wealth that he possesses and of the kingdom in which he is acting. Now, if this slave of Allah does not acknowledge the sovereignty of his Master or unlawfully sets up other objects of worship and does not obey His law in his exploitation of His wealth and kingdom, he shall be guilty of a crime. Therefore, he will not be entitled to any reward for his charity, but shall be prosecuted for his unlawful exploitation. The charity of such a man maybe likened to the charity of a servant who steals a sum of money from the treasure of his master and spends it as he likes.

118. O those who believe, do not take as intimates other than (among) yourselves, they would not spare you (any) ruins.*92 They love that which distresses you. Indeed, the hatred appears by (the utterance of) their mouths, and that which their breasts hide is even greater. We have certainly made plain for you the revelations, if you will understand.

يَتَّيِبُهُمُ اللَّهُ لِيَأْتِيَهُمُ الرِّبَا بَعْدَ إِسْلَامِهِمْ وَأَنَّ كِبْرَهُمْ أَكْبَرُ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ إِن كُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

*92 Here Allah warns the Muslims to guard against the hypocritical attitude of the Jews who lived in the suburbs of Al-Madinah. The two clans, Aus and Khazraj, had been on

friendly terms with them from very ancient times and kept sincere relations with them even after embracing Islam. In contrast to this, the Jews, who had turned into the enemies of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his mission, could not be friendly with anyone who had joined the new movement. Accordingly, they kept up an outward show of friendship with the Ansar, but in their hearts they had become their bitter enemies. They, however, exploited this outward friendship and tried to sow seeds of dissension and create chaos in the Muslim community. They also tried to draw out secrets from the Muslims and pass them on to their enemies. That is why Allah has warned the Muslims that they should not take such people into their confidence.

119. Here you are those, you love them, and they do not love you, and you believe in all the Scripture.^{*93} And when they meet with you, they say: “We believe,” and when they are alone, they bite (their) fingertips at you in rage. Say: “Die in your rage.” Certainly, Allah is All Aware of what is in the breasts.

هَآأَنُتُمْ أَوْلَآءِ تُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَلَا تُحِبُّونَكُمْ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ كُلِّهِ وَإِذَا لَقُوكُمْ قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا عَضُوا عَلَيْكُمْ ۗ أَلَا نَأْمِلُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ قُلُوبَ مُوتُوا بِغَيْظِكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

***93** That is, it is strange that the Jews, who themselves are guilty of rejecting your Book, whereas you believe in their Book, the Torah, along with your Book, the Quran, should

have a grievance against you. There is no reason why they should complain against you. On the other hand, you have a cogent grievance against them for their disbelief in your Book.

120. If any good happens to you, it grieves them, and if any misfortune befalls you, they rejoice at it. And if you are patient and fear (Allah), their plot will not harm you anything at all. Surely, Allah is surrounding that which they do.

إِنْ تَمَسَّكُمْ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ
وَإِنْ تُصِيبْكُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَفْرَحُوا بِهَا
وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا لَا
يَضُرُّكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ
بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ

121. And when you (O Muhammad)^{*94} departed from your household at daybreak to assign to the believers the positions for the battle. And Allah is All Hearer, All Knower.

وَإِذْ غَدَوْتَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ تُبَوِّئُ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَقَاعِدَ لِلْقِتَالِ وَاللَّهُ
سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

***94** From here begins the fourth discourse, which was revealed after the battle of Uhd. It has been beautifully connected with the previous discourse which ended with the admonition that the machinations of their enemies could do them no harm, if they would show restraint, and fear Allah. This discourse is an apt continuation of the same theme, because the setback in the battle of Uhd was due to lack of restraint and lack of fear of Allah.

As a review has been made of all the important events of the battle in order to bring home the lessons, it will be very useful to keep in view their background, because in the discourse only passing references have been made to them without any details.

In the beginning of Shawwal (A.H. 3), the Quraish attacked Al-Madinah with an army of 3,000 men. They not only outnumbered the Muslims but were also much better equipped. Besides this, they were filled with passion to avenge their defeat at Badr. The Prophet (peace be upon him) and his experienced companions were of the opinion that they should defend Al-Madinah from within the walls. But some young men, who had not taken part in the battle of Badr, were so imbued with the spirit of martyrdom that they insisted on going out to meet the enemy. At last on their persistence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) decided to go out to fight. So he led out an army of 1,000 men but at Shaut, Abdullah bin Ubayy, the ring leader of the hypocrites, deserted him with his 300 men. Naturally this treacherous act produced much confusion in the Muslim army. So much so that two parties, Banu Salmah and Banu Harithah, were so disheartened that they began to waver in their minds and were about to turn back, but were dissuaded from this by those companions who had remained firm and constant.

Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) marched to Mount Uhd with the 700 men left with him after the desertion of Abdullah bin Ubayy. He arrayed his men at the foot of the Mount so that the army of the Quraish was in their front

and Mount Uhd at their back. Thus the only vulnerable point was a pass on one side, where he posted 50 archers under the command of Abdullah bin Jubair, saying, not to let any enemy come near to us, and not to leave their posts in any case whatsoever. Even if they see birds peck at our flesh, they should not abandon their posts at all.

In the initial stage of the battle, the Muslim army had the upper hand and succeeded in creating great confusion in the army of the enemy. But instead, of pursuing this initial success to the final victory, they were so lured by their greed for booty that they began to loot the spoils. When the archers, who were guarding the pass, saw their comrades plundering the fleeing enemy, they also deserted their posts in order to join the looters. In vain did Hadrat Abdullah bin Jubair remind them of the strict command of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to dissuade them from this, but only a few of them listened to him. Khalid bin Walid, who was commanding the cavalry of the enemy, made full use of this opportune moment. He rode round the Mount and attacked the Muslims from behind through the pass. Abdullah bin Jubair did his best to defend it with the few men left with him, but in vain, and Khalid fell upon the Muslims who were engaged in the plunder of spoils. They were so overwhelmed by this sudden attack from behind that they took to their heels in confusion. To add to their misery, the Quraish who were in flight before them also turned back to attack them from the front. This turned the scale of the battle against the Muslims who were put to rout by this unexpected situation. Still there were some brave

Muslims who stood firmly in the battlefield. But then a rumor started that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been martyred, and his companions were so stunned by this rumor that even those who were standing firm in the battlefield lost heart and only a dozen or so of the devoted ones were left with him. Thus it was about to turn into an utter rout, when his companions heard that, though he was wounded, he was alive. Then they again rallied round him and took him to a safe side of the Mount.

In this connection it is very important to note the strange thing that happened: the Quraish did not make full use of this opportunity but marched back to Makkah instead. This is an enigma, for, if they had pursued their success to complete victory, nothing would have checked them, because the Muslims had been so utterly routed that they could not have given them a battle.

122. When two parties among you were about to lose courage,^{*95} and Allah was their protecting friend. And upon Allah let the believers put their trust.

إِذْ هَمَّتْ طَّائِفَتَانِ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ تَفْشَلَا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيَهُمَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ



***95** The two groups were Banu Salmah and Banu Harithah who had wavered in their minds at the desertion of Abdullah bin Ubayy, the hypocrite, and his 300 followers.

123. And Allah had already given you the victory at Badr, while you were weak. So fear Allah

وَلَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِبَدْرِ وَأَنْتُمْ أَذِلَّةٌ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

that you may be grateful.



124. When you said to the believers: “Is it not sufficient for you that your Lord should support you with three thousand of the angels sent down.”*96

إِذْ تَقُولُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَلَنْ
يَكْفِيَكُمْ أَنْ يُمِدَّكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ
بِثَلَاثَةِ أَلْفٍ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ



***96** The Prophet (peace be upon him) heartened the Muslims with this promise when they were disheartened to confront an army of 3,000 men with a small army of 1,000 which was further reduced to 700 men by the desertion of 300 hypocrites.

125. “Nay but, if you are patient, and fear (Allah), and they (the enemy) come to you suddenly, your Lord will help you with five thousand of the angels having marks (of distinction).”

بَلَىٰ إِن تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُم
مِّن فَوْرِهِمْ هَذَا يُمِدِّدْكُمْ
رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ أَلْفٍ مِّنَ
الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ



126. And Allah did not make it but as a good tidings for you, and that your hearts might be reassured thereby. And there is no victory except from Allah,

وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ لَكُمْ
وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوبُكُمْ بِهِ ۗ وَمَا
النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ

the All Mighty, the All Wise.

الْحَكِيمِ ١٢٦

127. That He might cut off a section of those who disbelieve, or suppress them, so that they turn back, frustrated.

لَيَقْطَعَ طَرَفًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْ يَكْتَسِبُهُمْ فَيَنْقَلِبُوا خَائِبِينَ ١٢٧

128. Not for you at all (O Muhammad, but for Allah) is any decision, whether He should forgive them or punish them, then indeed they are wrongdoers.

لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْ يُعَذِّبُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ١٢٨

129. And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. He forgives whom He wills, and punishes whom He wills. And Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful. *97

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ١٢٩

***97** These verses were an answer to the curse which the Prophet (peace be upon him) called on his enemies: when he was wounded in the battle, he involuntarily invoked evil upon his enemies and said, How can that community prosper which wounds the prophet?

130. O those who believe, devour not usury, doubling, and multiplying (many

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا

folds).^{*98} And fear Allah, that you may be successful.

تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَا أَضْعَافًا
مُّضَاعَفَةً ط وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾

***98** The main cause of the setback at Uhd was the greed for wealth shown by the Muslims. They were so overpowered by the lust for booty, that, instead of pursuing their initial success to victory, they got engaged in looting the spoils. This is why the All-Wise Allah has struck at interest, the root cause of the evils and prohibited it. For it is a common experience that those who lend money on interest become so absorbed in it that day and night they think of nothing but increasing their unearned profits and this naturally increases their greed for money.

131. And fear the Fire, which is prepared for the disbelievers.

وَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي أُعِدَّتْ
لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾

132. And obey Allah and the messenger, that you may obtain mercy.

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

133. And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord, and a garden (Paradise) as wide as the heavens and the earth,

﴿١٣٣﴾ وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن
رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا
السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ

prepared for those who fear (Allah).

لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

134. Those who spend (in the cause of Allah) in ease and adversity, and those who restrain anger, and those who forgive mankind. And Allah loves those who do good.*99

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

***99** The devouring of interest had created greed, avarice, parsimony and selfishness in those who took interest; hatred, anger, enmity and jealousy in those who had to pay it, and these moral evils contributed to some extent to the setback in the Battle of Uhd. Therefore Allah has condemned and prohibited interest and prescribed charity as an antidote to it. It is obvious that Paradise has been reserved for those who practice charity and spend money generously, and not for those greedy persons who practice money lending on interest. (See E.N. 320, Al-Baqarah).

135. And those who, when they have committed an indecency or wronged themselves, remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins. And who can forgive the sins except Allah. And they do not persist in what they

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

have done while they know.

١٣٥

136. Those, their reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. And excellent is the reward for the (righteous) workers.

أُولَئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَجَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ

137. Many ways of life have passed away before you. So travel in the land, and see how was the end of those who denied.

قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ سُنَنٌ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ

138. This (the Quran) is a declaration for mankind, and a guidance, and an admonition to those who fear (Allah).

هَذَا بَيَانٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

139. And do not become weak, nor grieve, and you shall gain the upper hand if you are (true) believers.

وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

140. If a wound has touched you, then surely a similar

إِنْ يَمَسَّكُمْ قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ

wound has touched the (other) people.^{*100} And these are the days that We alternate among mankind. And that Allah may know those who believe, and may choose witnesses from among you.^{*101} And Allah does not love the wrongdoers.

الْقَوْمَ قَرَحُ مِثْلُهُ وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ
نُداوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنْكُمْ
شُهَدَاءَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ



***100** God is encouraging the Muslims by mentioning the victory in the battle of Badr, saying, when the disbelievers did not lose heart by the blow at Badr, why should you, the believers, lose heart by the blow at Uhd?

***101** The original Arabic text may imply either of the two things: Allah desired to give some of you the honor of martyrdom. Or it may mean: He willed to winnow the believers from the hypocrites so that the true witnesses of the truth, who may really be worthy of performing the mission that has been assigned to the Muslim community, may be distinguished from the false ones.

141. And that Allah may purify those who believe, and may destroy the disbelievers.

وَلِيُمَحِّصَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَيَمْحَقَ الْكٰفِرِينَ

142. Or do you think that you will enter Paradise, and Allah has not yet made evident those of you who

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ
وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا

strive (in His cause), and made evident the steadfast.

مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾

143. And you did indeed wish for martyrdom before that you encountered it (in the battle field). So surely (now) you have seen it (openly) while you were looking on. ^{*102}

وَلَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ تَمَنَّوْنَ الْمَوْتَ مِن قَبْلِ أَنْ تَلْقَوْهُ فَقَدْ رَأَيْتُمُوهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿١٤٣﴾

***102** This alludes to those who were so desirous of martyrdom that they had persuaded the Prophet (peace be upon him) against his wish to go out of Al-Madinah to fight with the enemy.

144. And Muhammad is not but a messenger. Indeed, (many) messengers have passed away before him. So if he dies or is killed, would you turn back on your heels (to disbelief). ^{*103} And he who turns back on his heels, will never harm Allah at all. And Allah will reward those who are grateful.

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِن مَّاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَن يَنقَلِبْ عَلَىٰ عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَن يَضُرَّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا ۗ وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

***103** This is the answer to the mischievous talk of those hypocrites who had accompanied the Muslims in the battle of Uhd. When the rumor spread that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been slain, naturally the Muslims lost heart,

but the hypocrites began to say, let us go to Abdullah bin Ubayy and request him to obtain amnesty for us from Abu Sufyan. Others who were more impudent, went even so far as to say, if Muhammad (peace be upon him) had been a true prophet of Allah, he could not have been slain. Let us now turn to our ancestral faith. Allah rebukes them as if to say, Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a prophet, and is mortal like other prophets who came before him: therefore, if your attachment to Islam is because of the person of Muhammad (peace be upon him), and if it stands on such flimsy ground that with his death you will again return to disbelief, then Allah's religion does not stand in need of you.

This verse was also meant to impress that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was mortal like all other prophets. According to a tradition, on the morning when the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) came into the mosque at Al-Madinah and found the people all distracted, and Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) telling them that it was a sin to say that he passed away. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) went and ascertained the truth, and coming back into the mosque, cried, surely as for him who worshipped Muhammad, Muhammad (peace be upon him) is dead, but as for him who worships Allah, Allah is alive and does not die. Then he recited this verse, and it was as if the people had not known till then that such a verse had been revealed.

145. And it is not (possible) for a person to die except by permission of Allah at a term appointed.*104 And whoever desires a reward in (this) world, We shall give him thereof. And whoever desires a reward in the Hereafter, We shall give him thereof.*105 And We shall reward those who are grateful.*106

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ
إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ كِتَابًا مُؤَجَّلًا
وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ
مِنْهَا وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الآخِرَةِ
نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا ۚ وَسَنَجْزِي
الشَّاكِرِينَ



***104** This is meant to teach the Muslims that fleeing from fear of death will be of no avail, because none shall die a moment before the time ordained for death by Allah, nor can one live a moment after it. Therefore, what one should care for is not how to escape from death but how best to spend the time that has been given in this world. The important question is this: Is it to be spent for the sake of this worldly life or for the life-after-death?

***105** As the consequences of all actions follow them inevitably, the most important question from the Islamic point of view is whether one's struggle in life is to be directed towards the transitory interests and enjoyments of this world or towards the everlasting joys of the next world. The answer to this will determine one's moral attitude in regard to good and evil.

***106** Grateful servants are those people who appreciate fully the blessings of Allah, which He has bestowed upon

them. He has informed them that there is a limitless life beyond the limited life of this world and that the consequences of the actions of this life are not confined to this life alone, but follow inevitably in the life-after-death. Hence he is really a grateful servant who trusts in God's promise of sure reward of good deeds in the next world, and then goes on performing those deeds, disregarding whether his deeds flourish in this life or produce the reverse results. On the other hand, those people are ungrateful who are not ready and willing to spend their time or money or energy on anything that is not expected to produce immediate good results in this world. They are ungrateful because they do not appreciate the correct knowledge which has been bestowed by God about the consequences which inevitably follow in the everlasting life in the next world.

146. And how many a prophet fought, (and) along with him (fought) many religious scholars. But they never lost heart to what afflicted them in Allah's Way, nor did they weaken, nor were they brought low.*107 And Allah loves the steadfast.

وَكَايِنٍ مِّن نَّبِيٍّ قَاتَلَ مَعَهُ رِضِيُونًا
 كَثِيرٌ فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي
 سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوا وَمَا
 اسْتَكَانُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ



*107 That is, they did not surrender to the worshippers of falsehood, even though they were less in number and worse off in equipment than their enemies.

147. And their saying was nothing except that they said: “Our Lord, forgive us our sins, and our transgressions in our affairs, and establish our feet firmly, and give us victory over the disbelieving people.”

وَمَا كَانَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا
رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَإِسْرَافَنَا
فِي أَمْرِنَا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا
عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

148. So Allah gave them the reward of this world, and the excellent reward of the Hereafter. And Allah loves those who do good.

فَعَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا
وَحُسْنَ ثَوَابِ الْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ
يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾

149. O those who believe, if you obey those who disbelieve, they will turn you back on your heels,^{*108} and you will then turn back as losers.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنْ
تَطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ
فَتَنقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

***108** That is, they will take you back to the state of unbelief from which you had come out. This warning was timely because after the reverse at Uhd, the hypocrites and the Jews tried to seduce the Muslims from their faith. Their fallacious reasoning was like this: Had Muhammad (peace be upon him) been a prophet, he would never have suffered a defeat. It is obvious from this that he is an ordinary man who gets victory one day and suffers defeat another day. It

is sheer propaganda that Allah had given him any promise of help and success.

150. But Allah is your protector, and He is the best of helpers.

بَلِ اللَّهِ مَوْلَانَكُمْ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ
النَّصِيرِينَ

151. We shall cast fear into the hearts of those who disbelieve because they ascribed partners with Allah that for which He has sent no authority. And their abode will be the Fire. And evil is the abode of the wrongdoers.

سَنُلْقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُوا
بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا
وَمَا أَوْلَهُمُ النَّارُ وَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى
الظَّالِمِينَ

152. And Allah has certainly fulfilled His promise to you when you were killing them (enemy) by His permission. Until when you lost courage, and you disputed about the order (of Muhammad) and you disobeyed, after what He had shown you that which you love. Among you are some who desired the world, and among you are some who desired the Hereafter.

وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ إِذْ
تَحْسُونَهُمْ بِإِذْنِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا
فَاشَيْتُمْ وَتَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ
وَعَصَيْتُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَرَاكُمْ مَا
تُحِبُّونَ مِّنْكُمْ مَّن يُرِيدُ
الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَّن يُرِيدُ
الْآخِرَةَ ثُمَّ صَرَفَكُم عَنْهُمْ

Then He made you turn back from them (defeated), that He might test you. And He has surely forgiven you.*109 And Allah is Most Gracious to the believers.

لَيَبْتَلِيَكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَفَا عَنْكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ



***109** This refers to the conduct of the archers. When they were commanded to abstain from taking spoils, they argued with and disobeyed their leader and deserted their positions with the result that the scales of victory were turned against the Muslims.

Your desertion was an act which would have resulted in your total destruction, if Allah had not pardoned you. It was God's grace and succor that saved you from its grave consequences, and the Quraish, in spite of their victory, retreated of their own accord without any apparent reason.

153. When you climbed (the hill) without looking back at anyone, while the messenger was calling you from your behind.*110 So He repaid you with distress upon distress,*111 that you would not grieve for that which had escaped you, nor that which had befallen you. And Allah is All informed of what you do.

إِذ تَصْعَدُونَ وَلَا تَلُودُونَ
عَلَى أَحَدٍ وَالرَّسُولُ
يَدْعُوكُمْ فِي أُخْرَانِكُمْ
فَأَثَبَكُمْ غَمًّا بِغَمِّ لِكَيْلَا
تَحْزَنُوا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا مَا
أَصَابَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ



***110** It was the courage and firmness of the Prophet (peace

be upon him) that saved the situation from utter ruin in the confusion caused by the sudden attack of the enemy who was charging from the front and from the rear. When some of the Muslims were fleeing towards Al-Madinah and the others were climbing up the Uhd, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stood firm and resolute at his post with a dozen or so of his companions who had stood the test. He was rallying those who were taking to flight, calling out, O servants of Allah, come to me.

*111 Sorrow was caused by the reverse and by the rumor that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been martyred and by the loss of their companions and by the misery of their wounded and by the insecurity of their homes and by the fear that the victorious Quraish army, that outnumbered the total population of Al-Madinah, would crush the routed army, enter into the town and reduce it to ruins.

154. Then after the distress, He sent down security upon you. Slumber overcoming a party of you,^{*112} while (another) party, being anxious about themselves, thinking of Allah, other than the truth, the thought of ignorance. They said: "Is there for us anything in this matter." Say: "Indeed, the matter completely belongs to Allah." They hide within

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ
أَمْنَةً نُّعَاسًا يَغْشَى طَآئِفَةً مِّنْكُمْ
وَطَآئِفَةٌ قَدْ أَهَمَّتْهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ
يَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنَّ
الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَقُولُونَ هَل لَّنَا
مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ قُلْ إِنَّ
الْأَمْرَ كُلَّهُ لِلَّهِ يُخْفُونَ فِي

themselves that which they will not reveal to you. Saying: “If there was for us (to do) in the matter anything, we would not have been killed here.” Say: “Even if you had been in your homes, those for whom killing was decreed would have gone forth to the places of their death.” And (it was) so that Allah might test what is in your breasts, and that He may purify what is in your hearts. And Allah is All Aware of what is within the breasts.

أَنْفُسِهِمْ مَا لَا يُبْدُونَ لَكَ
 يَقُولُونَ لَوْ كَانَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ
 شَيْءٌ مَّا قُتِلْنَا هَاهُنَا قُلْ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ
 فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ لَبَرَزَ الَّذِينَ كُتِبَ
 عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَتْلُ إِلَىٰ مَضَاجِعِهِمْ
 وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ
 وَلِيُمَحِّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ
 عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ



***112** This was a favor shown to those Muslims who had remained firm in the battle. They experienced such a strange sense of security that in spite of their sorrow, they began to feel drowsy. Abu Talhah (may Allah be pleased with him), who had taken part in the battle, says that they were so overpowered by drowsiness that even their swords began to fall from their hands.

155. Certainly, those who turned back among you on the day when the two armies met (at Uhad). It was only Satan who caused them to

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ
 الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ

backslide (from the battle), because of some of that which they had earned. And Allah has surely forgiven them. Indeed, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Forbearing.

الْشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوا
وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ ^ق إِنَّ اللَّهَ
غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

156. O those who believe, do not be like those who disbelieved, and said about their brothers when they traveled through the land, or they were out in fighting: “If they had been (here) with us, they would not have died, nor would have been killed.” So that Allah may make it ^{*113} a cause of regret in their hearts. And it is Allah who gives life and causes death. And Allah is All Seer of what you do.

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا
كَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ
إِذَا ضَرَبُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ كَانُوا
غُزًى لَوْ كَانُوا عِنْدَنَا مَا مَاتُوا
وَمَا قُتِلُوا لِيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ
حَسْرَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ ^ق وَاللَّهُ يَحْيِي
وَيُمِيتُ ^ق وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

***113** These were their vain regrets which were the result of their wrong thinking. The fact is that the decrees of God are inevitable. Such regrets produce only grief and anguish in the hearts of those who do not trust in Allah but trust in their own plans and designs. However, when their efforts also end in utter failure, they wring their hands, saying, Oh! had it been thus and thus, the result would have been

so and so.

157. And if you are killed in the Way of Allah or die, forgiveness from Allah and mercy are better than whatever they accumulate.

وَلَيْن قُتِلْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ مُتُّمْ
لَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَةٌ خَيْرٌ
مِّمَّا تَجْمَعُونَ

158. And whether you die, or are killed, verily, unto Allah you shall be gathered.

وَلَيْن مُتُّمْ أَوْ قُتِلْتُمْ لِيَّ إِلَى اللَّهِ
تُحْشَرُونَ

159. So by the mercy from Allah, you (O Muhammad) were lenient with them. And if you had been stern, harsh of heart, they would have dispersed from around you. So pardon them, and seek forgiveness for them, and consult them in the affairs. Then when you have decided, then put your trust in Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ
وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ
لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ
عَنَّهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي
الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى
اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

160. If Allah helps you, then no one can overcome you. And if He forsakes you, then who is there who can help you after Him.

إِن يَنْصُرْكُمُ اللَّهُ فَلَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ
وَإِن يَخْذُلْكُمْ فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِي

And in Allah let the believers put their trust.

يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ۗ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ
فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

161. And it is not to any prophet that he would embezzle.*¹¹⁴ And whoever embezzles will come with what he embezzled on the Day of Resurrection. Then every soul will be paid in full what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَغُلَّ ۗ وَمَنْ
يَغْلُلْ يَأْتِ بِمَا غَلَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا
كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾

***114** This is the answer to the suspicion of the archers about the honesty of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in regard to the division of the spoils. When they saw their companions plunder the enemy, the archers feared that the former would get the whole of the spoil and they would be deprived of it at the time of division; just because they had not taken part in the plunder. That is why they spontaneously deserted their posts. When later on, they put forward some lame excuses, these were not accepted. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, the real thing is that you had no trust in me. You suspected that I would deal dishonestly with you and would not give you your due share. In this verse Allah has taken them to task for cherishing such wrong ideas about the Prophet (peace be upon him), by putting searching questions as if to say: How is it that you suspected that your interests would not be safe

in the hands of the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah?
Can you ever expect that the Messenger of Allah would divide unjustly the wealth that is in his trusteeship.

162. Is then he who follows the pleasure of Allah like him who brings upon himself the anger from Allah, and his abode is Hell, and evil, is the destination.

أَفَمَنْ أَتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ كَمَنْ بَاءَ
بِسَخَطٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَهُ جَهَنَّمُ
وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٦٢﴾

163. They are in varying degrees with Allah. And Allah is All Seer of what they do.

هُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِندَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ
بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾

164. Certainly, Allah conferred a great favor upon the believers when He raised from among them a messenger of their own, reciting to them His verses, and purifying them, and teaching them the Book (the Quran), and wisdom. While before that they had been in manifest error.

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ
بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ
يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ
وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ
مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٦٤﴾

165. And why (was it so) when a disaster struck you (in Uhad), although you had struck (them with a disaster)

أَوْلَمَّا أَصَبَتْكُمْ مُّصِيبَةٌ قَدَّ
أَصَبْتُمْ مِّثْلَهَا قُلْتُمْ أَنِي هَذَا قُلْ

twice as (great in Badr),^{*115}
you said: “From where is
this.”^{*116} Say: “It is from
yourselves.”^{*117} Indeed, Allah
has power over all things.^{*118}

هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٦٥﴾

***115** This verse is meant to remove the confusion caused in the minds of the common Muslims by the reverse at Uhd. Though the intimate companions close to the Prophet (peace be upon him) were under no delusion that his mere presence among them was a sure guarantee of success, yet the common Muslims were suffering from this misunderstanding. They thought that the disbelievers could in no way win a victory over them because the Prophet (peace be upon him) was present among them and the help and succor of Allah was with them. Therefore, when contrary to their expectations, they met with a reverse at Uhd, they began to ask questions like this: Why has this misfortune befallen us. We were fighting for the cause of Allah, and that happened at the hands of the disbelievers, who had come to destroy Islam? Above all, they could not understand this because Allah had promised to help and succor to them and the Prophet (peace be upon him) was himself present in the battlefield. They have been told that they themselves were responsible for the disaster.

***116** In the battle of Uhd, 70 Muslims were martyred whereas in the battle of Badr, 70 disbelievers were killed and 70 taken as prisoners.

***117** That is, this is the result of your own weakness and wrong acts: you did not show patience; you did things

which were against piety; you disobeyed the order of your leader; you became victims of greed and you got engaged in disputes among yourselves: still you ask, where has this disaster come from?

*118 That is, Allah is able to give victory and is also able to bring about defeat.

166. And that which befell you, on the day (of Uhad) when the two armies met, was by permission of Allah, and that He might know the true believers.

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّقَى
الْجَمْعَانَ فَبِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

167. And that He might know those who are the hypocrites. And to whom it was said: “Come, fight in the Way of Allah, or defend.” They said: “If we had known (there would be) fighting, we would certainly have followed you.”*119 They were nearer to disbelief that day than to faith. Saying with their mouths that which was not in their hearts. And Allah is best aware of what they conceal.

وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ
تَعَالَوْا قَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ
ادْفَعُوا قَالُوا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ قِتَالًا
لَاتَّبَعْنَاكُمْ هُمْ لِلْكَفْرِ يَوْمِيذٍ
أَقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ
يَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ
فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا
يَكْتُمُونَ

*119 This was the pretext with which Abdullah bin Ubayy returned to Al-Madinah with his 300 men from his way to

the battlefield. When the Muslims perceived that he was about to desert the Muslim army, they tried to persuade him to accompany them but he replied, we are quite certain that there will be no battle today. That is why we are returning home; we would have most surely accompanied you, if we had expected any battle today.

168. Those who said about their brothers while sitting (at homes): “If they had obeyed us, they would not have been killed.” Say (O Muhammad): “Then avert death from yourselves if you are truthful.”

الَّذِينَ قَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَعَدُوا
لَوْ أَطَاعُونَا مَا قُتِلُوا قُلْ
فَادْرَأُوا عَنْ أَنْفُسِكُمُ الْمَوْتَ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

169. And do not think of those who are killed in the Way of Allah as dead. Nay but, they are alive^{*120} with their Lord, they are given provision.

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءُ عِنْدَ
رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ

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

170. Jubilant in that which Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty,^{*121} and rejoicing about those (to be martyred) who have not joined them, from those left behind, that there shall be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve.

فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ
فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ
يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُونَ

١٧٠

***121** It has been explained by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the tradition cited in Musnade Ahmad. “One, who enters the next world with good deeds, is blessed by Allah with such a cheerful and joyful life that he never wishes to return to this world, but the case of a martyr is different. He does wish that he should again be sent to this world so that he may again enjoy the pleasure, joy and exultation that he felt at the time of laying down his life in the Way of Allah.

171. They rejoice because of the favor from Allah and a bounty, and that Allah will not waste the reward of those who believe.

✽ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَفَضْلٍ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

١٧١

172. Those who responded to Allah and the messenger after what befell them of injury (in the fight).^{*122} For those who did good among

الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ

them, and feared (Allah), there is a great reward.

لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقُوا أَجْرٌ

عَظِيمٌ

***122** This verse alludes to those devoted servants of Islam who willingly accompanied the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his pursuit of the Quraish at that critical juncture. After the battle of Uhd, the Quraish marched back towards Makkah. When they had covered a good deal of distance from Al-Madinah, they realized that they had not utilized the golden opportunity of crushing the power of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and they began to regret: what a folly have we committed by losing that excellent chance. Accordingly, they halted and held a council of war. Though they were in favor of returning to Al-Madinah and making a sudden attack, yet they could not muster up courage and continued their march towards Makkah. At the same time, the Prophet (peace be upon him) surmised an attack from the enemy; so he assembled the Muslims on the next day after the battle of Uhd and said, let us go in pursuit of the Quraish. Although that was a very critical situation, yet the believers and the devoted servants of Allah responded to the call and willingly marched with the Prophet (peace be upon him) to Hamra-ul-Asad, a place at a distance of 8 miles from Al-Madinah.

173. Those^{*123} (believers) to whom men (hypocrites) said: "Surely, the people (an army of pagans) have

الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ
النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ

gathered against you, so fear them.” But it (only) increased them in faith, and they said: “Allah is sufficient for us, and excellent (is He) for trusting.”

فَأَخَشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا
وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ
الْوَكِيلُ



*123 Ayats 173-175 were revealed one year after the battle of Uhd, but have been included in this discourse because they deal with the events which are connected with the same.

174. So they returned with favor from Allah and bounty, no harm touched them. And they followed the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is the owner of great bounty.

فَانْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ
لَّمْ يَمَسَّسَهُمْ سُوءٌ وَاتَّبَعُوا
رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ
عَظِيمٍ



175. That is only the Satan who frightens (you) of his supporters. So do not fear them, and fear Me, if you are (true) believers. *124

إِنَّمَا ذَٰلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ
أَوْلِيَآءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُونَ
إِن كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ



*124 This refers to the terrifying rumors which were being spread in Al-Madinah. On the occasion of his return from Uhd, Abu Sufyan had challenged the Muslims to a fight the following year at Badr. But when the time approached, he could not find courage on account of the famine that was

raging in Makkah. So in order to save face, he tried to shift on to the Muslims the responsibility for the postponement. Accordingly, he sent a special spy to Al-Madinah to terrify them by spreading rumors that the Quraish were making great preparations for war and collecting such a large army as could defeat any army in Arabia. This device of Abu Sufyan succeeded in producing the desired panic. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) made an appeal to the Muslims to meet the Quraish in combat at Badr, it failed to produce any encouraging response. So much so that the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah had to declare before the gathered assembly, I will go to the combat all alone, if none else is willing to go. It was then that 1,500 devotees volunteered to accompany him, and he reached Badr with them. From the other side, Abu Sufyan left Makkah with an army of 2,000 men. But after two days journey, he told his men that it did not appear to suit them to have a fight that year, and that they would come next year for it. Accordingly, he returned to Makkah with his men. The Prophet (peace be upon him), however, waited for him at Badr for eight days. During these days, his companions did profitable business with a trading party. Then he came to know that the disbelievers had gone back to Makkah, and he returned to Al-Madinah.

176. And let not grieve you (O Muhammad) those who hasten into disbelief. Indeed, they will never harm Allah anything at all. Allah

وَلَا تَحْزُنَكَ الَّذِينَ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي
الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا

intends that He should give them no portion in the Hereafter. And for them is a great punishment.

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَلَّا يَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ حَظًّا
فِي الْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

١٧٦

177. Certainly, those who purchase disbelief for (the price of) faith, never will they harm Allah anything at all. And for them is a painful punishment.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْكُفْرَ
بِالْإِيمَانِ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

١٧٧

178. And let not those who disbelieve think that the respite We give them is good for them. We only give them respite that they may increase in sin. And for them is a humiliating punishment.

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ
نُؤْمِلُهُمْ خَيْرًا ۗ لِيُزِدُوا
عِثْمًا ۗ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ

١٧٨

179. Allah will not leave the believers in that (state) in which you are (now),^{*125} until He separates the evil from the good. Nor would Allah disclose to you of the unseen.^{*126} But Allah chooses of His messengers whom He

مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى
مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّى يَمِيزَ الْخَبِيثَ
مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ
لِيُطْلِعَكُمْ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ
يُجْتَبَىٰ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

wills. So believe in Allah and His messengers. And if you believe and fear (Allah), then for you there is a great reward.

فَعَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَإِن
تُؤْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَلَكُمْ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ



***125** That is, Allah does not like to see the believers remaining mixed up with the hypocrites in one and the same Muslim community.

***126** That is, Allah does not separate the believers from the hypocrites by informing the Muslims that, in their middle, such and such are hypocrites. He distinguishes true believers from hypocrites by creating such occasions as practically separate the two groups from each other.

180. And let not those who withhold that which Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty think that it is better for them. Nay, it is worse for them. It will be a twisted collar around their necks that which they withheld on the Day of Resurrection. And to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth. ^{*127}

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ بِمَا
ءَاتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا
لَهُمْ بَلْ هُوَ شَرٌّ لَهُمْ سَيُطَوَّقُونَ
مَا بَخَلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلِلَّهِ
مِيرَاثُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ



And Allah is well informed of what you do.

***127** Everything shall ultimately return to God as His

inheritance because it really belongs to God. Whatever is in the possession of any of His creatures is a temporary trust. Everyone in every case shall be dispossessed of the property and wealth that he calls his own during the short life here and that shall ultimately return to God, the real Owner. Therefore the wise one is he who generously spends Allah's property in Allah's Way and the foolish one is he who tries to hoard it.

181. Certainly, Allah has heard the statement of those who said: "Indeed, Allah is poor, and we are rich."^{*128} We shall record what they said, and their killing of the prophets without right, and We shall say: "Taste you the punishment of burning fire."

لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ
قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاءُ
سَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَالُوا وَقَتْلَهُمُ
الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَنَقُولُ ذُوقُوا
عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ

***128** The Jews uttered these words on the occasion of the revelation of Ayat 245 of Al-Baqarah, "who is there among you, who will lend to Allah a goodly loan." They ridiculed this appeal, saying, Oh yes, God has been reduced to poverty, and now He is begging His servants for a loan.

182. That is because of that which your own hands have sent before. And certainly, Allah is not unjust to (His) servants.

ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ
اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ

183. Those who said: “Indeed, Allah has taken our promise that we believe not in any messenger until he brings to us an offering which fire (from heaven) shall devour.” Say (O Muhammad): “There have indeed come to you messengers before me with clear signs, and with that which you describe. So why did you kill them,^{*129} if you are truthful.”

الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عٰهَدَ
 اِلَيْنَا اِلَّا نُوْمِنَ لِرَسُوْلٍ حَتّٰى
 يٰتِنَا بِقُرْبٰنٍ تَاْكُلُهٗ النَّارُ قُلْ
 قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْ قَبْلِى
 بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَبِالذِّى قُلْتُمْ فَلَمَّ
 قَتَلْتُمُوهُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ



***129** This was a lie invented and attributed to God by the Jews, for Allah never enjoined such a thing. Though burnt sacrifices have been mentioned in the Bible, these have not been held out as essential signs of true prophethood. They were merely symbols of the acceptance of sacrifices by God. It is obvious that this demand was merely a pretext for rejecting the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him). As a further proof of their insincerity, it may be recalled that these enemies of the truth did not hesitate to slay even some of their own prophets who showed to them this same sign of the burnt sacrifice.

The case of Elijah may be cited as an instance: “When Ahab did more to vex the Eternal than all the kings of Israel before him, Elijah went to him and remonstrated that He had ruined Israel by forsaking the Eternal. So

Ahab gathered all Israel. Then Elijah told the people to have a couple of bullocks for the test of the burnt sacrifice. Of course, the prophets of Baal failed in the test. Then God's lightning burnt the sacrifice and all Israel witnessed it but even after this they turned against Elijah who had to flee for his life."

184. Then if they deny you (O Muhammad), so indeed were denied messengers before you, who came with clear signs, and the Scripture, and the enlightening Book.

فَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ
رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ جَاءُوا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
وَالزُّبُرِ وَالكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ

185. Every soul will taste death. And you will only be paid in full your wages on the Day of Resurrection. Then whoever is removed from the Fire, and is admitted to Paradise, then indeed, he is successful. And the life of this world is not but an enjoyment of deception.*130

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا
تُؤَفَّفُونَ^ط عَنْ أَجُورِكُمْ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَنْ زُحِرَ عَنِ النَّارِ
وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا
الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ

*130 The life of this world (as it appears) is a thing that deceives because it helps create false impressions which deceive one about the ultimate results of deeds and misdeeds. One may thus be misled to take apparent prosperity or adversity as the criterion of truth or falsehood. If one is apparently prosperous in this life, it is

wrong to conclude that the one is on the right side and high in God's favor. On the other hand, if another is suffering from misfortunes and is a victim of adversity, it does not necessarily mean that the one is on the wrong side and incurs the disfavor of God. For often the results in this world are just the opposite of those which are to be met with in the next world. The latter are, however, real and therefore deserve one's greatest consideration.

186. You shall certainly be tested in your wealth, and your personal selves, and you shall certainly hear from those who were given the Scripture before you, and from those who ascribe partners (to Allah) many hurtful things. And if you persevere and fear (Allah),^{*131} then indeed that is of the matters of determination.

لَتُبْلَوْنَ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ
وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلَتَسْمَعَنَّ مِنَ
الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ
قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا
أَذَى كَثِيرًا وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا
وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ
الْأُمُورِ

***131** That is, you should prove the strength of your high character even in the face of provocation by keeping your temper under control. Endure with patience their taunts, derision, accusations and improper words and false propaganda. Do not get exasperated even in the most trying circumstances so as to say or do false, unjust, uncivilized and immoral things.

187. And when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the Scripture (saying): “You must make it clear to mankind and not conceal it.”^{*132} But they threw it away behind their backs, and purchased with it a small gain. So evil is that which they have purchased.

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا
تَكْتُمُونَهُ فَنَبَذُوهُ وَرَاءَ
ظُهُورِهِمْ وَأَشْتَرُوا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا
فَبِئْسَ مَا يَشْتُرُونَ



***132** That is, remind them of the covenant that God made with them and of the great mission that was entrusted to them because they had forgotten it, though they did remember the sign of the burnt sacrifices given to some of their prophets.

The covenant referred to in this verse has been mentioned many times in the Bible, especially it has been repeated over and over again in Deuteronomy. Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) exhorted them not to add unto the word, nor to diminish aught from it, and to keep the commandments of the Lord. And to teach them diligently unto thy children, and to talk of them when thou sittest in their house and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up, write them upon the posts of thy house, and on the gates. In his last will, he urged the elders of Israel to set up great stones in mount Ebal after crossing the boundary line of Palestine.

Here is an instance of their negligence of the Book. Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) entrusted one copy of the Torah

to the Levites and instructed them to recite it word by word every seventh year on the occasion of the Passover festival before a gathering of all Israeli men, women and children. But owing to their gross negligence of their duty, within seven hundred years of the death of Moses (peace be upon him), they had even forgotten that there was such a Book as Torah. so much so that even the high priest of the Temple and the Jewish king of Jerusalem were ignorant of its existence.

188. Do not think that those who rejoice in what they have brought about, and they love to be praised for what they have not done. So do not think them ^{*133} (to be) in safety from the punishment. And for them is a painful punishment.

لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا
 أَتَوْا وَيُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تُحْمَدُوا بِمَا لَمْ
 يَفْعَلُوا فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّهُمْ بِمَفَازَةٍ مِنَ
 الْعَذَابِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ



***133** For instance, such people wish to hear people praise them for being very pious, religious, God fearing servants of the faith and defenders of the law. while, in fact, they possess none of the characteristics. Or, they desire that propaganda should be made in their favor that such and such is an embodiment of self sacrifice, sincerity and honesty. And has rendered meritorious services with the community, when in fact, he is quite the opposite of it.

189. And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. And Allah has

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

power over all things.

وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٨٩﴾

190. Certainly, in^{*134} the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, are indeed signs for those of understanding.

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٠﴾

***134** From here begins the concluding part of the Surah and it has no direct connection with the preceding verses, but with the Surah as a whole. Therefore it is worth while to turn to the introduction to this Surah to understand this portion.

191. Those who remember Allah, standing, and sitting, and (lying) on their sides, and reflect in the creation of the heavens and the earth,^{*135} (saying): “Our Lord, You have not created this in vain. Glory be to You. So protect us from the punishment of the Fire.”^{*136}

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا
وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي
خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا
مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا
سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٩١﴾

***135** That is, these signs can help one understand the reality, provided that one is not unmindful of God and observes the phenomena of nature like a thinking person and not like an animal.

***136** A close observation of the system of the universe leads them to the right conclusion that most surely there is a life in the Hereafter with its rewards and punishments. The system itself speaks eloquently of the great wisdom that underlies it, so it follows that the All-Wise Creator must have a definite purpose in the creation of man. Moreover, the very fact, that He placed everything at man's disposal and has endowed him with a moral sense to discriminate between good and bad, clearly shows that he must be accountable to Him as to whether he had fulfilled that purpose. Consequently he should be rewarded for the good he does in this world and punished for the evil. This thinking leads one to the conclusion that there must be a life after death, where one will be accountable for his deeds. This realization fills man's heart with fear of punishment in the Hereafter, and he spontaneously prays to Him to save him from the Hellfire.

192. “Our Lord, indeed, whoever You admit to the Fire, then certainly, You have disgraced him. And for wrongdoers there will not be any helpers.”

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَنْ تَدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ
أَخْزَيْتَهُ^ط وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ
أَنْصَارٍ

193. “Our Lord, indeed We have heard a caller (Muhammad) calling to faith (saying) that: ‘Believe you in your Lord.’ So we believed.^{*137} Our Lord, so

رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي
لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ ءَامِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ
فَعَامَنَّا^ج رَبَّنَا فَاعْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا

forgive us our sins, and remove from us our evil deeds, and cause us to die with the righteous.”

وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ
الْأَبْرَارِ



***137** In the same way, this observation also convinces right thinking men that the point of view of the messengers about the beginning and the end of the universe and the purpose of its creation is the correct one; hence the way of life preached and prescribed by them is the only right way.

194. “Our Lord, and grant us that which You promised us through Your messengers, and do not humiliate us on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed, You do not break (Your) promise.”^{*138}

رَبَّنَا وَءَاتِنَا مَا وَعَدْتَنَا عَلَى
رُسُلِكَ وَلَا تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
إِنَّكَ لَا تَخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ



***138** It does not mean that they have any doubts about the promises of Allah, but this merely shows that they are anxious to know whether they themselves are entitled to the blessings that have been promised. That is why they pray to God, “Our Lord, forgive us, You do not break your promises,” for they fear lest they should be ridiculed in the Hereafter by the disbelievers as they were here in this world by such taunts at these; “Look at these people-even their faith in the messengers has not saved them from disgrace.”

195. So their Lord responded them (saying): “Indeed, never will I allow

فَأَسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا

to be lost the deed of (any) doer among you, of male or female. You are one from another.*139 So those who emigrated, and were driven out from their homes, and suffered harm in My cause, and who fought, and were killed. Surely, I will remove from them their evil deeds, and surely I will enter them into Gardens underneath which rivers flow. A reward from Allah. And Allah, with Him is the best of the rewards.”*140

أُضِيعُ عَمَلٍ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ مِنْ
ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُتِيَ بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ
فَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَأُخْرِجُوا مِنْ
دِيَارِهِمْ وَأُودُوا فِي سَبِيلِي وَقَتَلُوا
وَقُتِلُوا لَا كُفْرَانَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ
وَلَا دُخْلَنَّهُمْ جَنَّتِ تَجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ثَوَابًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ



*139 That is, in My sight all of you are alike as human beings and I have the same standards of justice and judgment for all, and men should not forget that women are of the same human status as they themselves have. I do not discriminate between man and woman, master and slave, the black and the white, the high and the low.

*140 There is a tradition that Ayats 190-195 were recited by the Prophet (peace be upon him) before some non Muslims who came to him and said, “All the prophets brought one sign or the other with them. For instance, Moses (peace be upon him) had the miraculous staff and his bright hand to show, and Jesus (peace be upon him) healed the blind and the lepers. Please tell us what sign have you

brought to us as a proof of your prophethood.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) recited these verses and said, “I have brought this.”

196. Let not deceive you the movement (with affluence), of those who disbelieve, through the land.

لَا يَغُرَّنَّكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي
الْبِلَادِ



197. A brief enjoyment. Then afterwards, their ultimate abode will be Hell. And an evil resting place.

مَتَّعُ قَلِيلٌ ثُمَّ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ
وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ



198. But those who fear their Lord, for them are Gardens underneath which rivers flow, they will abide forever therein. A gift of welcome from Allah. And that which is with Allah is better for the righteous.

لَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ
جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نُزُلًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ
اللَّهِ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِلْأَبْرَارِ



199. And indeed, among the People of the Scripture there are those who believe in Allah and that which is revealed to you, and that which was revealed to them, humbling themselves before Allah.

وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ
يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا
أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ خَاشِعِينَ لِلَّهِ لَا
يَشْتُرُونَ بِعَايَتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا

They do not sell the verses of Allah for a little price. Those, for them their reward is with their Lord. Indeed, Allah is swift in taking account.

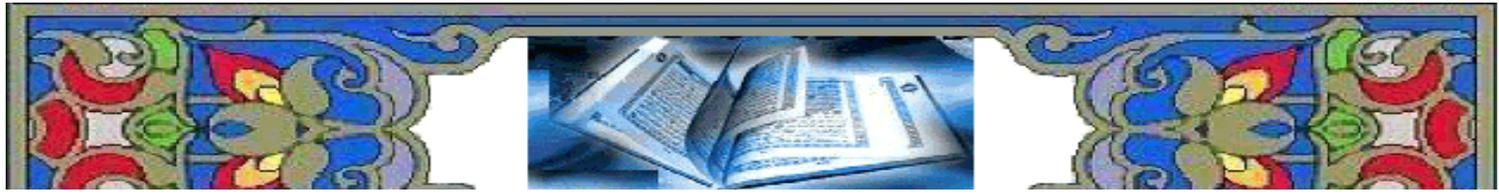
أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

200. O those who believe, persevere, and excel in endurance,^{*141} and strengthen each other, and fear Allah, that you may be successful.

يَتَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

***141** The word *sabiru* in the original Arabic text implies two things: Show more valor in fighting for the right cause than that which the disbelievers are showing for a wrong cause. And vie with one another in showing valor in your fight with the disbelievers.





النِّسَاء An-Nisa

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The name *An-Nisa* , the Women, appears in multiple Ayats of this Surah. The laws and regulations for the smooth running of family life have been laid down for the men and their women at several places. But this is not the only topic of this Surah. Several other important aspects of family, social, community and religious matters have also been stated as listed in several discourses.

The Period of Revelation

This Surah comprises several discourses which were revealed on different occasions during the period ranging probably between the end of A.H. 3 and the end of A.H. 4 or the beginning of A.H. 5. Although it is difficult to determine the exact dates of their revelations, yet it is possible to assign to them a fairly correct period with the help of the commandments and the events mentioned therein and the traditions concerning them. A few instances are given below by way of illustration.

1. We know that the instructions about the division of inheritance of the martyrs and for the safeguard of the

rights of the orphans were sent down after the battle of Uhd in which 70 Muslims were killed. Then naturally the question of the division of the inheritance of the martyrs and the safeguard of the rights of their orphans arose in many families at Al-Madinah. From this we conclude that Ayats 1-28 were revealed on that occasion.

2. We learn from the traditions that the commandment about Salat during war time was given on the occasion of Zat-ur-Riqaa, an expedition which took place in A.H. 4. From this we conclude that the discourse containing Ayat 102 was revealed on that occasion.

3. The last warning (Ayat 47) to the Jews was given before the Banu Nadir were exiled from Al-Madinah in Rabi-ulAwwal, A.H. 4. From this it may safely be concluded that the discourse containing Ayat 47 must have been revealed some time before that date.

4. The permission about tayammum (the performance of ablutions with pure dust, in case no water be available) was given during the Bani-al-Mustaliq expedition, which took place in A.H. 5. Therefore the probable period of the revelation of the discourse containing Ayat 43 was A.H. 5.

Topics and Their Background

Let us now consider the social and historical considerations of the period in order to understand the Surah. All the discourses in this Surah deal with three main problems which confronted the Prophet (peace be upon him) at the time. First of all, he was engaged in bringing about an all round development of the Islamic community that had been formed at the time of his migration to Al-Madinah. For this

purpose he was introducing new moral, cultural, social, economic and political ways in place of the old ones of the pre-Islamic period. The second thing that occupied his attention and efforts was the bitter struggle that was going on with the mushrik Arabs, the Jewish clans and the hypocrites who were opposing tooth and nail his mission of reform. Above all he had to propagate Islam in the face of the bitter opposition of these powers of evil with a view to capturing more and more minds and hearts.

Accordingly, detailed instructions have been given for the consolidation and strengthening of the Islamic community in continuation of those given in Surah Al-Baqarah. Principles for the smooth running of family life have been laid down and ways of settling family disputes have been taught. Rules have been prescribed for marriage and rights of wife and husband have been apportioned fairly and equitably. The status of women in the society has been determined and the declaration of the rights of orphans has been made laws and regulations have been laid down for the division of inheritance, and instructions have been given to reform economic affairs. The foundation of the penal code has been laid down, drinking has been prohibited, and instructions have been given for cleanliness and purity. The Muslims have been taught the kind of relations good men should have with their Allah and fellow men. Instructions have been given for the maintenance of discipline in the Muslim community.

The moral and religious condition of the people of the Book has been reviewed to teach lessons to the Muslims and to

forewarn them to refrain from following in their footsteps. The conduct of the hypocrites has been criticized and the distinctive features of hypocrisy and true faith have been clearly marked off to enable the Muslims to distinguish between the two.

In order to cope with the aftermath of the battle of Uhd, Inspiring discourses were sent down to urge the Muslims to face the enemy bravely, for the defeat in the battle had so emboldened the mushrik Arab clans and the neighboring Jews and the hypocrites at home that they were threatening the Muslims on all sides. At this critical juncture, Allah filled the Muslims with courage and gave them such instructions as were needed during that period of war clouds. In order to counteract the fearful rumors that were being spread by the hypocrites and the Muslims of weak faith, they were asked to make a thorough inquiry into them and to inform the responsible people about them. Then they were experiencing some difficulties in offering their Salat during the expeditions to some places where no water was available for performing their ablutions, etc. In such cases they were allowed to cleanse themselves with pure earth and to shorten the salat or to offer the "Salat of Fear" when they were faced with danger. Instructions were also given for the solution of the puzzling problem of those Muslims who were scattered among the unbelieving Arab clans and were often involved in war. They were asked to migrate to Al-Madinah, the abode of Islam.

This Surah also deals with the case of Bani Nadir who were showing a hostile and menacing attitude in spite of the

peace treaties they had made with the Muslims. They were openly siding with the enemies of Islam and hatching plots against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Muslim community even at Al-Madinah itself. They were taken to task for their inimical behavior and given a final warning to change their attitude, and were at last exiled from Al-Madinah on account of their misconduct.

The problem of the hypocrites, who had become very troublesome at that time, was involving the believers in difficulties. Therefore they were divided into different categories to enable the Muslims to deal with them appropriately.

Clear instructions were also given regarding the attitude they should adopt towards the non-belligerent clans. The most important thing needed at that time was to prepare the Muslims for the bitter struggle with the opponents of Islam. For this purpose greatest importance was attached to their character building, for it was obvious that the small Muslim community could only come out successful, nay, survive, if the Muslims possessed high moral character. They were, therefore, enjoined to adopt the highest moral qualities and were severely criticized whenever any moral weakness was detected in them.

Though this Surah mainly deals with the moral and social reforms, yet due attention has been paid to propagation of Islam. On the one hand, the superiority of the Islamic morality and culture has been established over that of the Jews, Christians and mushriks; on the other hand, their wrong religious conceptions, their wrong morality and their

evil acts have been criticized to prepare the ground for inviting them to the way of the truth.

Consolidation of the Islamic Community

The main object of this Surah is to teach the Muslims the ways that unite a people and make them firm and strong. Introduction for the stability of family, which is the nucleus of the community has been given. Then they have been urged to prepare themselves for defense. Side by side with these, they have been taught the importance of the propagation of Islam. Above all, the importance of the highest moral character in the scheme of consolidation of the community has been impressed.

Topics and their Interconnection

Ayats 1-35. Just, fair and equitable laws and regulations for the smooth running of family life have been laid down for the husband and wife. Detailed instructions have been given for the division of inheritance and due regard has been paid to the rights of orphans.

Ayats 36-42. In order to inculcate the right spirit for the observance of rules and regulations, the Muslims have been enjoined to show generosity to all around them and to be free from meanness, selfishness, stinginess of mind, because this is essential for the consolidation of the communities and helpful for the propagation of Islam.

Ayat 43. The ways of the purification of mind and body for the offering of Salat have been taught because it plays the most important part in every scheme of moral and social reform.

Ayats 44-57. After moral preparation, instructions for

defense have been given. First of all, the Muslims have been warned to be on their guard against the cunning machinations and vile practices of the local Jews who were hostile to the new movement. This caution was necessary for removing some possible misunderstanding that might have arisen on account of the pre-Islamic alliance between the people of Al-Madinah and the Jews.

Ayats 58-72. Then they have been enjoined to place their trusts and offices of trust in the custody of honest and qualified persons, and to do what is just and right, and to obey Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and those among themselves entrusted with the conduct of their affairs and to turn to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) for the settlement of their disputes. As such an attitude and behavior alone can ensure consolidation. They have been strongly warned that any deviation from this path will lead to their disintegration.

Ayats 73-100. After this pre-requisite, they have been exhorted to make preparation for defense and to fight bravely for the cause of Islam, without showing any kind of cowardice or weakness. They have also been warned to be on their guard against hypocrites. A line of demarcation has been drawn to distinguish the intentional shirkers from the helpless devotees.

Ayats 101-103. Here again instructions have been given for the offering of Salat during military campaigns and actual fighting. This is to impress the importance of Salat even at the time of fear and danger.

Ayat 104. Before proceeding on to the next topic, the

Muslims have been exhorted to persevere in their fight without showing any kind of weakness.

Ayats 105–135. In order to make the Islamic community firm and strong for defense, the Muslims have been enjoined to observe the highest standard of justice. The Muslims are required to deal out strict justice even in case of the enemy, with whom they might be involved in war. They should also settle disputes between husband and wife with justice. In order to ensure this, they should keep their beliefs and deeds absolutely free from every kind of impurity and should become the standard bearers of justice.

Ayats 136-175. Resuming the theme of defense, the Muslims have been warned to be on their guard against their enemies. They have been admonished to take necessary precautions against the machinations of the hypocrites and the unbelievers and the people of the Book. As belief in Allah, and Revelation and life-after-death is the only safeguard against every kind of enemy, they should sincerely believe in and follow His Messenger, Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Ayat 176. Though this verse also deals with the family laws contained in Ayats 1-35, it has been added as a supplement at the end of this Surah because it was revealed long after An-Nisa was being recited as a complete Surah.

1. O mankind, fear your Lord who created you from a single soul, and He created from it its

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي
خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَّاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ

mate, and He has spread from them both a multitude of men and women.*¹ And fear Allah, Him, through whom you ask your mutual (rights), and the wombs (kinship). Indeed, Allah is All Watcher over you.

مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا
كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي
تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

*¹ This introduction beautifully suits the subsequent laws and regulations about human rights, specially, about the smooth running of the family life. On the one hand, the people have been urged to fear Allah so as to escape His displeasure; and on the other hand, they have been reminded that all human beings have sprung from one and the same parents and are thus closely related to one another. “Created you of a single soul.” First one human being was created and then from him the human race spread over the earth. Therefore they should strictly observe the ties and obligations of kinship. We learn from another part of the Quran that Adam was that “single soul.” He was the first man from whom the entire mankind sprang up and spread over the earth. “And created from it his mate.” We have no definite detailed knowledge of how his mate was created of him. The commentators generally say that Eve was created from the rib of Adam and the Bible also contains the same story. The Talmud adds to it that she was created from the thirteenth rib of Adam. But the Quran is silent about it, and the tradition of the Prophet (peace be upo him) that is cited in support of this has a

different meaning from what has been understood. The best thing, therefore, is to leave it undefined as it has been left in the Quran, and not to spend time in determining its details.

2. And give to the orphans their property,^{*2} and do not exchange (your) bad things for (their) good ones,^{*3} nor devour their property into your own property. Indeed, that is a great sin.

وَأَتُوا الَّتِي مَيَّ أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلَا
تَبَدَّلُوا الْخَبِيثَ بِالطَّيِّبِ وَلَا
تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَىٰ أَمْوَالِكُمْ إِنَّهُ
كَانَ حُوبًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٢﴾

^{*2} That is, as long as the orphans are under age, spend their property only in their interest; and when they come of age, return their rightful property to them.

^{*3} This is a comprehensive sentence, which may mean, “Do not make your income unclean in any unlawful way.” It may also mean, “Do not exchange your worthless things for the valuable things of the orphans.”

3. And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry of the women, who please you,^{*4} two or three or four. But if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (to many), then (marry only) one,^{*5} or those your right hands possess.^{*6}

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي
الَّتِي مَيَّ فَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَكُمْ
مِنْ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَّةَ وَرُبَعَ
فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً
أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ذَٰلِكَ

That is nearer (more suitable) that you may not incline (to injustice).

أَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا ﴿٣﴾

*4 The commentators ascribe three meanings to this:

(a) Aiysha (may Allah be pleased with her) says that this was revealed to remedy an evil that was prevalent in the days of ignorance. The guardians of the orphan girls used to marry them for their wealth and beauty, with the intention of keeping them under their power because they had no one to defend their cause; then they treated them unjustly without any fear. Therefore when they became Muslims, they had misgivings about marrying orphan girls. Accordingly, the Quran advised them to marry women of their choice other than orphan girls in their charge, if they feared that they would not be able to do justice to them. Ayat 127 of this Surah also supports this comment.

(b) In commenting on this, Ibn-i-Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) and his disciple Ikrimah, assert that this commandment was given to eradicate an injustice that was prevalent at that time. In pre-Islamic days, there was no limit to the number of wives and some people would marry even a dozen of them but when they could not meet the increasing expenses, they were forced to grab the property of their orphan nephews and other helpless relatives. Therefore, Allah restricted the maximum number of wives to four, and enjoined that this too, was subject to the condition that one should do justice to all of them.

(c) Saeed bin Jubair, Qatadah and some other commentators declare that this command was given to

safeguard the interests of wives. They say that even before the advent of Islam, injustice to the orphans was looked upon with disfavor, but in regard to wives, it was different; men would marry as many as they liked and would treat them cruelly and unjustly without any fear of the society or pangs of conscience. Therefore Allah warned them that they should refrain from doing injustice to their wives as they did in the case of the orphans. Therefore they should not marry more than four wives and that too, only if they would do justice to them.

The words of the verse bear all the three meanings and probably all three are meant. Another meaning also can be: “If you cannot treat the orphans justly as they normally should be, you may marry the women who have orphan children.”

*5 The consensus of opinion of all the scholars of the Muslim law is that this verse limits the number of wives and prohibits the keeping of more than four at one and the same time. Traditions also support this. It is related that at the time when Ghailan, the chief of Taif, became a Muslim, he had nine wives. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him to keep only four of them and divorce all the others. There is another instance of Naufal bin Muaviyah, who was ordered by the Prophet (peace be upon him) to divorce one of his five wives.

It should also be noted that this verse restricts polygamy with the provision of justice to all the wives; therefore whoever abuses this permission without fulfilling the condition of justice and marries more wives than one tries

to deceive Allah. The courts of an Islamic State are, therefore, empowered to enforce justice in order to rectify the wrong done to a wife or wives. At the same time it is absolutely wrong to conclude from the proviso of justice, attached to this commandment that this verse was really meant to abolish polygamy. This is not the view of the Quran, but of those Muslims who have been overawed by the Christians of the West. They say that the Quran is also against polygamy but it did not abolish it directly because it did not consider it expedient at the time for the custom had become very common. Instead of this, it allows polygamy provided that justice is done to all the wives. As this condition is most difficult to fulfill, the recommendation is towards monogamy. Obviously, this way of thinking is the result of mental slavery, because polygamy in itself is not an evil for in some cases it becomes a real cultural and moral necessity. There are some people, who, even if they wished, cannot remain content with one wife. Polygamy comes to their rescue and saves them and the society in general from the harms of unlicensed sexual indulgences. That is why the Quran allows polygamy to such people with the explicit condition of doing justice to all the wives.

As regards those who consider polygamy to be an evil, they are free to oppose the Quran and condemn polygamy. But they have no right to ascribe their own perverted views to the Quran. For it makes this lawful, in very clear language without employing any words that might be stretched in any way, to imply that the Quran means to abolish it.

*6 “Those your right hands possess”: slave girls captured

in war and distributed among the people by the government. It may either mean: “If you cannot bear the expenses of a free woman, you may marry a slave girl as permitted in Ayat 25,” or it may mean: “If you need more wives than one but are afraid that you might not be able to do justice to your wives from among the free people, you may turn to slave girls because in that case you will be burdened with less responsibilities. (See E.N. 44 below).

4. And give the women (upon marriage) their bridal gifts with a good heart. But if they remit to you anything of it on their own, then enjoy it with pleasure (and) ease.*7

وَأَتُوا النِّسَاءَ صَدُقَاتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً
فَإِنْ طِبَّنَ لَكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ مِنْهُ
نَفْسًا فَكُلُوهُ هَنِيئًا مَرِيئًا

*7 Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) and Qadi Shuraih have ruled that if a wife remits the whole of her dowry or a part of it but later on demands it, the husband shall be compelled to pay it because the very fact that she demands it is a clear proof that she did not remit it of her own free will.

5. And do not give to the foolish your property, which Allah has made for you a means of support. And provide for them from it, and clothe them, and speak to them words of kindness.*8

وَلَا تُؤْتُوا السُّفَهَاءَ أَمْوَالَكُمُ
الَّتِي جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ قِيَامًا
وَأَرْزُقُوهُمْ فِيهَا وَاكْسُوهُمْ
وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا

*8 This verse is very comprehensive in meaning. It teaches

the Muslim community the lesson that in no case should wealth, which is so important for the maintenance of life, be entrusted to such people as are feeble-minded and incapable of using or managing it properly. For they might, by its wrong use, spoil its cultural and economic system and, in the long run, its moral system as well. It is true that the rights of private ownership must be honored, but at the same time they are not to be so unlimited as to allow one to use them in any way one likes and create social chaos. As far as one's necessities of life are concerned, they must be fulfilled but none should be allowed to use these rights to the extent that is harmful to the collective moral, cultural and economic good of the community. According to this verse, every owner of wealth should consider seriously before entrusting his wealth to anyone whether that person is capable of using it properly. On the larger scale, the Islamic State should take into its own custody the property of those who are found incapable of using it properly, or of those who may be using it in wrong ways but should arrange for the provision of their necessities of life.

6. And test the orphans until when they reach (the age) of marriage.^{*9} So if you find in them sound judgment, then hand over to them their property.^{*10} And do not devour it excessively and in haste, lest they grow up. And whoever (the guardians) is

وَابْتَلُوا الْيَتَامَىٰ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغُوا
النِّكَاحَ فَإِنْ ءَانَسْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ رُشْدًا
فَادْفَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلَا
تَأْكُلُوهَا إِسْرَافًا وَبِدَارًا أَن
يَكْبُرُوا ۚ وَمَن كَانَ غَنِيًّا

rich, he should refrain (from taking wages). And whoever is poor, let him take what is reasonable.^{*11} Then when you hand over to them their property, make witnesses on them. And Allah is sufficient in taking account.

فَلَيْسَتْ عَفِيفٌ وَمَنْ كَانَ فَقِيرًا
فَلْيَأْكُلْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِذَا دَفَعْتُمْ
إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فَأَشْهِدُوا عَلَيْهِمْ
وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا



***9** That is, when they are about to attain their puberty, keep an eye upon them and go on testing their intelligence in order to see how far they have become capable of looking after their own affairs.

***10** Two conditions of puberty and capability have been laid down for the return of their property to the orphans. As to the application of the first condition, there is consensus among the scholars of law, but in regard to the second condition there is some difference of opinion. Imam Abu Hanifah is of the opinion that if the orphan lacks capability when he reaches the age of puberty, his guardian may wait for a maximum period of seven years, and then he must return this property to him whether he shows signs of capability or not. But Imam Abu Yusuf, Imam Muhammad and Imam Shafi are of the opinion that capability is a pre-requisite for the return of his property to the orphan. Probably these latter scholars were inclined to the opinion that the case of such a person should be referred to a Muslim judge, who would himself arrange for the management of the property of the one who has not acquired capability of management.

***11** That is, he should charge for his services only that much as may be considered fair by every unbiased person and that he should charge openly and keep an account of it.

7. For men is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, and for women is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, of that, be it small or large,^{*12} a share ordained (by Allah).

لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ
الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ
نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ
الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ
كَثُرَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا

***12** This verse contains five legal regulations about inheritance. First, that not only men but the women also have a share in the inheritance. Second, that it must be divided among all heirs, however little or insignificant it is; so much so that even if the deceased has left one yard of cloth and there are ten heirs, it must also be cut into ten parts. However, an heir may buy the shares of others by mutual consent. Third, the verse also implies that this law applies to all sorts of property, transferable or non-transferable, agricultural or industrial, or of any other type. Fourth, that the right of inheritance becomes valid only when the deceased leaves some property behind him. Fifth, that when the nearest relatives are alive the distant relatives have no right in the inheritance.

8. And when the near of kin and the orphans and the

وَإِذَا حَضَرَ الْقِسْمَةَ أُولُو

needy are present at the division (of the inheritance), then provide for them from it, and speak to them words of kindness.*13

الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينُ
فَارْزُقُوهُمْ مِنْهُ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا

مَعْرُوفًا

*13 Here the heirs of the deceased have been enjoined to be generous towards distant and near relatives and the indigent members of the family and orphans who happen to be present on the occasion of the division of inheritance, though they might have no share in it. They should give them also something and speak gently to them and avoid using harsh and unkind words as the narrow minded people generally use on such occasions.

9. And let those (executors of inheritance) fear as if they had left behind them weak offspring, and would fear for them. So let them fear Allah, and speak words of kindness and justice.

وَلْيَخْشَ الَّذِينَ لَوْ تَرَكَوْا مِنْ
خَلْفِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّةً ضِعَفًا خَافُوا
عَلَيْهِمْ فَلْيَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْيَقُولُوا

قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا

10. Indeed, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly, they swallow only a fire into their bellies. And they will be burned in a blazing fire.*14

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ
الْيَتَامَىٰ ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي
بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَسَيَصْلُونَ

سَعِيرًا

***14** According to a tradition this verses were revealed in response to the request of the widow of Saad bin Rubai. She came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) with her two daughters and said, “O Messenger of Allah, here are the daughters of Saad who has been martyred in the battle of Uhd. Their uncle has taken possession of his entire property and has not left a single penny for them. Now who is going to marry them after this?”

11. Allah commands you concerning (the inheritance for) your children.

يُوصِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي أَوْلَادِكُمْ

For the male, the equivalent of the portion of two females.^{*15}

لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنثِيَيْنِ

***15** The first guiding principle about the division of inheritance is that the share of the male shall be double that of the female, and this is very sound and just. As the Muslim law lays the major burden of the economic responsibility of the family on the male and keeps the female almost free from it, justice demands that her share of inheritance should be less than that of the male.

But if there are daughters (only), two or more, then for them is two-thirds of the inheritance.^{*16}

فَإِنْ كُنَّ نِسَاءً فَوْقَ اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُنَّ ثُلُثَا مَا تَرَكَ

***16** The same applies to the case of two daughters as well. It means that if the deceased leaves no son but only daughters, whether they are two or more, they shall be entitled to two-thirds of the whole inheritance and the

remaining one-third shall be divided among the other heirs. As a corollary of this, if the deceased leaves only one son, there is a consensus of opinion that he shall be entitled to the whole of the inheritance in the absence of other heirs and if there are other heirs too, he shall receive the whole of the remaining inheritance after the allotment of their shares.

And if there is (only) one, then for her is the half.

وَإِنْ كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةً فَلَهَا النِّصْفُ

And for his parents, to each one of them, a sixth of the inheritance if he had children.*17

وَلِأَبَوَيْهِ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا
الْسُّدُسُ مِمَّا تَرَكَ إِنْ كَانَ لَهُ
وَلَدٌ

*17 Each of the parents of the deceased shall be entitled to one-sixth of the inheritance, if he leaves behind a child or children whether they are only daughters or only sons or both sons and daughters, or only one son or only one daughter. As regards the remaining two-thirds, it shall be divided among the other heirs.

But if he had no children and his parents are his heirs, then for his mother is one third.*18

فَإِنْ لَّمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَوَرِثَهُ
أَبَوَاهُ فَلِأُمِّهِ الثُّلُثُ

*18 The remaining two-thirds shall be given to the father, if there be no other heir; otherwise the father shall share two-thirds with the other heirs.

But if he had brothers (and/or sisters), then for his mother is one sixth,^{*19} after (the payment of) the bequest which he (may have) made, or debts.^{*20}

فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُ إِخْوَةٌ فَلِأُمِّهِ
الْسُّدُسُ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةِ يُوصِي
بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ

***19** If the deceased has brothers and sisters, the share of the mother has been reduced from one-third to one-sixth. This reduced one-sixth will be added to the father's share, for in that case the father's responsibilities are increased. It should be noted that the brothers and sisters of the deceased are not entitled to any share if the parents are alive.

***20** The mention of the fulfillment of the will precedes the payment of the debt, for every deceased person may not owe a debt, but he must make his will. As regards the enforcement of the law, the consensus of opinion of the whole Muslim community is that the payment of debt must have priority over the fulfillment of the will. That is, the debt, if any, must be paid first and then the terms of the will should be enforced and after this the inheritance should be divided. In E.N. 182 of Surah Al-Baqarah, it has been stated that a person has the right to bequeath by "will" one-third of the whole property. This has been permitted to enable a person to leave for a deserving relative or relatives, who are not entitled to inheritance, a part of the property. For instance, if there is an orphan grandson or a grand-daughter, or the widow of a son or an indigent brother or sister, or a brother's widow, or a

nephew, or some other relative, who needs help, he may leave a part of the inheritance for such a person by means of his will. He is even allowed to leave by “will” a share for any deserving person or for public service. In short, the law regulates the distribution of two-thirds (or a little more) of one’s inheritance and gives option for the disposal of the remaining (about one-third) by the special circumstances of his own family, (which obviously vary of each individual). At the same time provision has been made to redress any wrong done by a will to the heirs in any way. The members of the family may rectify that wrong by mutual consent or take the case to the Muslim judge for redress.

Your parents and your children, you do not know which of them is nearer to you in benefit. (This is) an injunction from Allah. Indeed, Allah is Ever All Knower, All Wise.*21

ءَابَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ لَا تَدْرُونَ
 أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفْعًا فَرِيضَةٌ
 مِّنَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا
 حَكِيمًا



*21 This is the answer to all those foolish people who do not understand the wisdom of the divine law of inheritance, and in their folly propose amendments to it in order to make up for the deficiency in the law.

12. And for you is half of that which your wives leave, if they have no child.

وَلَكُمْ نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ
 أَزْوَاجُكُمْ إِن لَّمْ يَكُن لَّهُنَّ
 وُلْدٌ

But if they have a child, then for you is one fourth of that which they leave, after (the payment of) the bequest which they (may have) made, or debts.

فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَلَكُمْ
الرُّبْعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَنَّ مِنْ بَعْدِ
وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِينَ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ

And for them (wives) is one fourth of that which you leave if you have no child.

وَلَهُنَّ الرُّبْعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَتُمْ إِنْ
لَمْ يَكُنْ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ

But if you have a child, then for them is one eighth*22 of that which you leave, after (the payment of) the bequest which you (may have) made, or debts.

فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَلَهُنَّ
الْثُمْنُ مِمَّا تَرَكَتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ
وَصِيَّةٍ تُوصُونَ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ

***22** In case the deceased leaves behind children, his wife or wives will be entitled to only one-eighth of the inheritance, and if he dies childless, she or they will be entitled to one-fourth of the whole and this one-fourth or one-eighth will be divided equally among all of them.

And if a man or a woman has left neither ascendants nor descendants, and has a brother or a sister, then for each one of them is one sixth.

وَإِنْ كَانَ رَجُلٌ يُورَثُ
كَتْلَةً أَوْ امْرَأَةٌ وَهِيَ
أُخْتُ فَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا
السُّدُسُ

But if they are more than that, then they shall be sharers in one third,^{*23} after (the payment of) the bequest which might have been made, or debts, (as long as the bequest is) causing no loss (to anyone).^{*24}

فَإِنْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ
فَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ فِي الثُّلُثِ مِنْ
بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصَىٰ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ
غَيْرِ مُضَارٍّ

***23** If there be any other heir, he shall get share out of the remaining 5/6 or 2/3, as the case may be; otherwise the deceased will have the right to make his will about the whole of the remaining 5/6 or 2/3. All the commentators have agreed that in this verse brothers and sisters refer to half-brothers and half-sisters from the side of the mother alone. The rule of inheritance about real brothers and real sisters and half-brothers and half-sisters from the side of the father is given at the end of the Surah.

***24** The will shall be considered as injurious if it affects adversely the rights of the lawful heirs and the debt will be injurious if the testator acknowledges a debt which he has not actually taken or plays some trick to deprive the rightful heirs of their due shares. Such a thing has been declared as one of the most heinous sins according to a tradition. Another tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) says, "There may be a person, who, throughout his whole life, does deeds that deserve Paradise, but who on the eve of his death makes an injurious will and thus in the end he does an act that deserves Hell." Though such an injury is a heinous sin in any case, the warning has specially been

given about it in connection with a person who has neither children nor parents to inherit his property. This is because such a person is more prone to squander his property in order to deprive comparatively distant relatives.

(This is) a commandment from Allah. And Allah is Ever All-Knowing, Most Forbearing.*25

وَصِيَّةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ ^ق وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ ^ج
حَلِيمٌ



*25 The attribute of Allah that He is All-Knowing, has been mentioned here for two reasons. First, it is to warn the people that none can escape the consequences of a breach of His law, for, He has knowledge of everything. Second, it is to convince people that the shares of inheritance appointed by Allah are absolutely right, for Allah knows better than they in what lies their good. The other attribute that He is Forbearing has been mentioned to show that the laws of Allah are not harsh but are so lenient that they do not put the people to hardship.

13. These are the limits (set by) Allah. And whoever obeys Allah and His messenger, He will admit him to Gardens underneath which rivers flow, abiding forever therein. And that is the great success.

تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ^ج وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ^ج يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ^ج وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيمُ



14. And whoever disobeys Allah and His messenger and transgresses His limits, He will make him enter the Fire, to abide forever therein, and for him is a humiliating punishment. *25a

وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ نَارًا خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَلَهُ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ



*25a This stern warning has been given to save people from the eternal torture of Hell, which they will suffer if they change the law of inheritance or break other legal limits prescribed by Allah in His Book. It is a pity that in spite of this stern warning the Muslims changed and broke the law of Allah with the same impudence as shown by the Jews. The transgressions against this law of inheritance are an open rebellion against Allah. They deprive women of their share of inheritance; they discard the law of Allah and adopt the law of primo-geniture or of joint family system instead. Whenever it suits their whims and interests they make the share of the male and the female equal in order to rectify the law of Allah. The latest rebellion against the law is that some Muslim States have followed the West and imposed "Death Duties" which implies that the State is also an heir whom Allah had forgotten to mention. As a matter of fact, the State is entitled to an inheritance only if the deceased leaves behind an unclaimed property, or himself allots a portion of it to the State by his will.

15. And those who commit lewdness (sexual

وَالَّذِينَ يَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مِنْ

misconduct) of your women, then bring four witnesses against them from amongst you. And if they bear witness, then confine them to the houses, until death takes them or Allah ordains for them (another) way.

نِسَائِكُمْ فَاسْتَشْهِدُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ
أَرْبَعَةً مِّنْكُمْ فَإِن شَهِدُوا
فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ فِي الْبُيُوتِ حَتَّى
يَتَوَفَّيَهُنَّ الْمَوْتُ أَوْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ
لَهُنَّ سَبِيلًا

16. And the two (men or women) of you who commit it (sexual misconduct), then punish them both. But if they repent and correct, then leave them alone. Surely, Allah is ever accepting repentance, Most Merciful.*26

وَالَّذَانِ يَأْتِيَنَّهَا مِنْكُمْ
فَعَاذُوهُمَا فَإِن تَابَا وَأَصْلَحَا
فَاعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ
كَانَ تَوَّابًا رَّحِيمًا

***26** In both these verses 15-16, punishment for fornication was prescribed for the first time in Islam. According to verse 15, the guilty women were to be kept in confinement till further order, and according to verse 16 both the male and the female guilty of fornication were to be punished, that is rebuked, disgraced, beaten, etc. Afterwards this punishment was altered by verse 2 of Surah An-Nur. Now both the male and the female are to be scourged with one hundred stripes each. This gradual enforcement of the criminal law was based on

sound practical wisdom. At that time the Arabs were not accustomed to live under a settled government with a regular system of law and judiciary. Therefore it might have been unwise and too much for them if the Islamic State had imposed on them its complete system of criminal laws all at once. That is why first the sort of punishment contained in these two verses was enforced and then gradually stricter punishments were prescribed for fornication, theft, slander, etc., and finally a complete system of law was evolved which was in force during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his rightly guided successors.

The seeming difference in these two verses has misled commentator Suddi to the conclusion that verse 15 prescribed the punishment for married women and verse 16 for unmarried men and women. Obviously, this flimsy commentary is not supported by any sound argument. Likewise, the commentary of Abu Muslim Isfahani that verse 15 is about the un-natural crime between two females and verse 16 about the un-natural crime between two males is also wrong. The Quran is concerned only with the fundamental principles of law and morality: therefore it only discusses those problems which are confronted in normal life and does not concern itself with the ones that are met with under abnormal circumstances. These latter problems, as they arise, are left for the people to decide according to their insight. That is why, when after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him) the case of unnatural crime between two males was brought before the

companions, none of them turned to these verses for its decision.

17. The repentance accepted by Allah is only for those who do evil in ignorance, then repent soon afterwards, so it is those to whom Allah will turn in forgiveness. And Allah is ever All Knower, All Wise.

إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ
يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهْلَةٍ ثُمَّ
يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ فَأُولَئِكَ
يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

18. And repentance is not (accepted) of those who (continue to) do evil deeds, up until when death approaches upon one of them, he says: “Indeed, I repent now,” nor of those who die while they are disbelievers. It is those, We have prepared for them a painful punishment.*27

وَلَيْستِ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ
يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّى إِذَا
حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ
إِنِّي تبتُّ أَلَّئِن وَلَا الَّذِينَ
يَمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ
أُولَئِكَ أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا
أَلِيمًا

*27 The word *taubah* means ‘to turn back’ and ‘to turn to’. When a person feels sorry for his sin and turns back from it, he may be likened to a runaway slave who comes back to his master. This is his *taubah*. When the master accepts his

repentance, he turns to him kindly and forgives him. In Arabic this is his *taubah* to his servant. In this verse Allah has stated these two aspects of *taubah*. He says, "I turn only to those servants of Mine, who, if they commit some unintentional sin through ignorance, turn to Me for forgiveness as soon as they realize their folly. For such repentance, the door of My forgiveness is ever open. It is, however, not so for those who persist in sin throughout their lives without the least fear of Allah and offer repentance only when death confronts them." The Prophet (peace be upon him) says that Allah accepts the repentance of a person only up to the time, when there appears no sign of death. It is obvious that after the time of test has expired, no chance is left for him to turn back from sin. Likewise, if a person is dying as a disbeliever and seeing with his own eyes the other world, contrary to his expectations, the question of his repentance does not arise at all.

19. O those who believe, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion (against their will).^{*28} And do not put constraint upon them that you may take away a part of that which you have given them, unless they commit open lewdness (sexual misconduct).^{*29} And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them, it

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَحِلُّ
لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرْهًا وَلَا
تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا
ءَاتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ
بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ

may be that you dislike
a thing and Allah has
placed therein much
good.*30

فَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ
اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا

*28 This means that the widow of the deceased should not be regarded as a part of his inheritance. After the death of the husband, his widow is quite free to live wherever she likes and to marry whomever she chooses after the expiry of her term.

*29 That is, “You may hurt them for immoral conduct but not for grabbing their wealth.”

*30 If the wife is not beautiful or has some other defect that might not be to the husband’s liking, it is not right that he should make up his mind to get rid of her at once without any further consideration. He should behave coolly and patiently. She may have some other redeeming qualities that may be more conducive to a happy married life than beautiful looks. It is just possible that the discovery of those qualities might change his repulsion at first sight into attraction. In the same way, sometimes it so happens that in the beginning of married life, the husband takes a dislike to something in the wife and feels a repulsion towards her but if he is patient with her and lets her show her better side fully, he himself realizes that her good qualities more than compensate for her shortcomings. Therefore it is not right for the husband to cut off his relations with his wife without a good deal of thinking. Divorce is the very last thing to which one may resort as a necessary social surgery and that, too, only when it becomes absolutely inevitable.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) says that of all the lawful things, divorce is the most reprehensible thing in the sight of Allah. In another tradition, he admonishes, “Enter into marriage and divorce not, for Allah does not approve of such men and women as divorce and marry for mere sexual enjoyment.”

20. And if you intend to take a wife in place of (another) wife, and you have given to one of them a great amount (heap of gold), so do not take (back) anything from it. Would you take it (back) by slander and a manifest sin.

وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَسْتَبْدَالَ زَوْجٍ
مَكَانَ زَوْجٍ وَءَاتَيْتُمْ
إِحْدَاهُنَّ قِنطَارًا فَلَا تَأْخُذُوا
مِنْهُ شَيْئًا ۚ أَتَأْخُذُونَهُ بِهَتِّنَا
وَإِنَّمَا مُبِينًا

21. And how could you take it (back) while indeed one of you has gone in unto the other, and they have taken from you a solemn pledge.^{*31}

وَكَيفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَى
بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ
وَأَخَذْتُمْ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا
غَلِيظًا

***31** “Solemn pledge” is the marriage bond on the guarantee of which a woman gives herself up to a man. Therefore, if the man breaks that pledge of his own accord, he has no right to get back what he gave her as dower at the time of making that pledge. (See E.N. 251, Surah Al-Baqarah).

22. And do not marry of those women whom your fathers married, except what has already passed.^{*32} Indeed, it was lewdness and hateful, and an evil way.^{*33}

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا مَا نَكَحَ
 آبَاؤُكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا
 قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَحِشَةً
 وَمَقْتًا وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا



***32** While forbidding the wrong ways of ignorance, the Quran usually ends the instruction with such words as: “except what has already passed.” It has two meanings in view. First, that no action will be taken in regard to those wrong things that one did in ignorance, provided that he mended his ways and gave them up after the receipt of a particular commandment. Second, those words meant to give reassurance that the new instructions had no retrospective effect. For instance, if a person had married his step-mother before it was declared to be unlawful, according to these words, the offspring of all such previous marriages did not automatically become illegitimate by this newly declared prohibition so as to deprive them of their share of inheritance. Likewise if some form of trade had been made unlawful, it did not mean that all the previous transactions in that form had become null and void, and that one would have to return all the wealth earned in that way or that it had become completely unlawful.

***33** According to the Islamic law, it is a criminal offense and is within the jurisdiction of the law enforcing authorities. Some traditions related in Abu Daud, Nasai

and Musnad Ahmad are to the effect that the Prophet (peace be upon him) confiscated their properties and sentenced to death those who married their step-mothers. According to another tradition, related by Ibn Majah from Ibn Abbas, the Prophet (peace be upon him) enunciated this fundamental law: Anyone who commits fornication with any of the forbidden relations should be put to death. The experts on Muslim law, however, differ in regard to this matter. While Imam Ahmad is of the opinion that such a criminal should be put to death and his property confiscated, Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik and Imam Shafai are of the opinion that if a person commits fornication with anyone of the prohibited relations, he should be punished for the offense of fornication and if he marries such a one, he should be given an exemplary punishment for this heinous sin.

23. Forbidden to you are your mothers,^{*34} and your daughters,^{*35} and your sisters,^{*36} and your father's sisters, and your mother's sisters, and your brother's daughters, and your sister's daughters,^{*37} and your (foster) mothers who nursed you, and your (foster) sisters through nursing,^{*38} and mothers of your wives,^{*39} and your step daughters who

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ
وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ
وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ وَخَالَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُ
الْأَخِ وَبَنَاتُ الْأَخْتِ
وَأُمَّهَاتُكُمُ اللَّاتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ
وَأَخَوَاتُكُم مِّنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ
وَأُمَّهَاتُ نِسَائِكُمْ وَرَبَائِبُكُمُ

are under your guardianship^{*40} (born) of your those women unto whom you have gone in. But if you have not gone in unto them, then it is no sin upon you (to marry their daughters). And (forbidden to you are) the wives of your sons who are from your own loins.^{*41}

And (forbidden to you is) that you take together two sisters (in marriage),^{*42} except what has already passed. Indeed, Allah is

Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.^{*43}

الَّتِي فِي حُجُورِكُمْ مِّنْ نِّسَائِكُمُ الَّتِي دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَكُونُوا دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَحَلَائِلُ أَبْنَائِكُمُ الَّذِينَ مِّنْ أَصْلَابِكُمْ وَأَنْ تَجْمَعُوا بَيْنَ الْأُخْتَيْنِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا



***34** This prohibition applies both to the real mother and to the step mother and both are unlawful. It also applies to the mother of the father and to the mother of the mother. Experts have differed as to whether the woman with whom the father has had illicit relations is also unlawful for the son or not. Some of the earlier jurists do not consider her unlawful, but some others not only consider her unlawful for the son but also the woman whom the father has touched lustfully with the hand. There has also been a difference of opinion as to whether the woman with whom the son has had an illicit relation is unlawful for the father

and whether the man with whom the mother or the daughter has had illicit relation becomes unlawful for both the mother and the daughter. There have been lengthy controversies concerning the legal niceties of this matter, but a little thinking will show that the existence of a wife who is also coveted by the husband's father or his son, or whose mother or daughter is also coveted by the husband himself, cannot bode well for a righteous society. Divine law in this matter does not tolerate the legal hair splitting on the basis of which fine distinctions are made between marriage and after marriage, touching with the hand and casting of looks, etc. The simple thing is that in family life existence of sexual relations of the father and the son with one and the same woman, or of the mother and the daughter with one and the same man, is bound to corrupt the family, and the divine law cannot tolerate it. This is supported by the following two traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him):

- (1) The mother and the daughter of the woman become unlawful for the man who cast a look at her sexual organs.
- (2) God does not like even to look at a man who casts a gaze at the sexual organs of the mother and of her daughter.

***35** The prohibition about daughter also applies to the daughter of the son and the daughter of the daughter. There is, however, a difference of opinion in regard to a girl born of an illicit relationship. Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal are of the opinion that she too is unlawful like the lawful daughter, but Imam

Shafai does not consider an illegitimate daughter unlawful. But the very idea is repugnant that one should marry a girl about whom one has the knowledge that she is of his own seed.

***36** This applies to the real sister as well as to the foster sisters from the father's and the mother's side.

***37** All these relations are prohibited, irrespective of whether they are real or step from the father's side or from the mother's side. The sister of the father or mother, whether real or step, is unlawful for the son. Similarly the daughters of the brothers and sisters whether they are real or step are unlawful for a person like his own real daughter.

***38** The consensus of opinion is that the woman who suckled a boy or a girl should be treated as the real mother and her husband as the real father with regard to this prohibition. All those relations that have been made unlawful in respect of the real mother and real father are also prohibited in respect of the foster mother who has suckled and in respect of her husband. This is based on a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which is to this effect: "Suckling makes unlawful what blood makes unlawful." There is, however, a difference of opinion as to the minimum quantity of milk that is suckled. According to Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Malik, if the child suckles milk equal to that minimum quantity that breaks the fast, the woman shall be treated as its real mother for marriage relations. But Imam Ahmad is of the opinion that the prohibition shall take place if the child suckles the woman

at least three times and according to Imam Shafai at least five times. There is also a difference of opinion as to the age of the child at the time of suckling that brings prohibition. Below are given the opinions of the jurists:

(1) Umm Salamah, Ibn Abbas, Zuhri, Hasan Basri, Qatadah, Ikrimah, and Auzai (may Allah be pleased with them) are of the opinion that if the child is suckled during the period when it has not yet been weaned and it lives only on suckling, the prohibition shall be effective; but if it is suckled after it has been weaned, it will not apply; for this is like drinking water. There is also a saying of Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) to the same effect.

(2) Umar, Ibn Masud, Abu Hurairah and Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) are of the opinion that the prohibition will be effective if the child is suckled at any time up to the age of two. Imam Shaafai, Imam Ahmad, Imam Abu Yusuf, Imam Muhammad and Sufyan Thauri from among the jurists also agree to this. There is also a saying of Imam Abu Hanifah to the same effect. Imam Malik also agrees to this, but he says that the prohibition shall apply even if a month or two exceeds the time limit of two years.

(3) According to a well-known saying of Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Zufar, the prohibition shall apply if the child is suckled during the suckling period, which extends up to the age of two years and a half.

(4) Aiysha (may Allah be pleased with her) is of the opinion that the prohibition shall apply, if one is suckled at any time whatsoever, irrespective of age. An authentic saying of

Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) also supports the same and Urwah bin Zubair, Ata, Laith bin Saad and Ibn Hazm from among the jurists have adopted the same opinion.

***39** There is a difference of opinion as to whether the mere event of nikah (marriage ceremony) with a woman makes her mother unlawful or not. Imam Abu Hanifah, Malik, Ahmad and Shafai are of the opinion that this alone makes her mother unlawful but Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) is of the opinion that unless one has had any conjugal relation with her, her mother shall not become unlawful for him.

***40** The wife's daughter is unlawful in any case, whether she has been brought up in the house of the step father or not. Allah has used these words only to show the great delicacy of the relation. There is almost a consensus of opinion among the jurists that the step daughter is unlawful in any case whether one has brought her up or not.

***41** The significance of "who are from your loins" is that the widows or the divorced wives of those whom one has adopted as sons are not unlawful. The prohibition applies only to the wives of the sons who are of one's own seed. Likewise, the wives of the grandsons are also unlawful.

***42** Likewise it is unlawful to keep the aunt and her real niece as wives at one and the same time. The principle is that no two women who would have been unlawful for each other if one of them had been a man should be kept as wives at one and the same time.

***43** That is, no action will be taken for the transgression

committed during the days of ignorance, by keeping two sisters as wives at one and the same time. (See E.N. 32 above). However, one shall have to divorce one of the two sisters thus married during the time of unbelief after he has become a Muslim.

24. And married women (are forbidden), except those whom your right hands possess.*⁴⁴ (This is) a decree of Allah upon you. And lawful to you are all (others) beyond those, that you seek (them in marriage) with your property (gifts), desiring chastity, not unlawful sexual activities. So whatever you enjoy with (in marriage) from them, then give them their bridal due as an obligation. And there is no sin on you in what you do by mutual agreement after the obligation. Indeed, Allah is ever All Knowing, All Wise.

﴿ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأُحِلَّ لَكُمْ مَا وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسْفِحِينَ فَمَا اسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْهُنَّ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا تَرَاضَيْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْفَرِيضَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴾



***44** That is, those women who become prisoners of war, while their unbelieving husbands are left behind in the war zone, are not unlawful because their marriage ties are broken by the fact that they have come from the war zone into the Islamic zone. It is lawful to marry such women,

and it is also lawful for those, in whose possession they are, to have sexual relations with them. There is, however, a difference of opinion as to whether such a woman is lawful, if her husband is also taken a prisoner along with her. Imam Abu Hanifah and those of his way of thinking are of the opinion that the marriage tie of such a pair would remain intact but Imam Malik and Shafai, are of the opinion that it would also break.

As there exist many misunderstandings in the minds of the people concerning the slave girls taken as prisoners of war, the following should be carefully studied:

(1) It is not lawful for a soldier to have conjugal relations with a prisoner of war as soon as she falls into his hands. The Islamic law requires that all such women should be handed over to the government, which has the right to set them free or to ransom them, or to exchange them with the Muslim prisoners in the hands of the enemy, or distribute them among the soldiers. A soldier can cohabit only with that woman who has been formally given to him by the government.

(2) Even then, he shall have to wait for one monthly course before he can cohabit with her in order to ensure whether she is pregnant or not; otherwise it shall be unlawful to cohabit with her before delivery.

(3) It does not matter whether the female prisoner of war belongs to the people of the Book or not. Whatever her religion, she becomes lawful for the man to whom she is formally given.

(4) None, but the one to own the slave girl is given, has the

right to touch her. The offspring of such a woman from his seed shall be his lawful children and shall have the same legal rights as are given by the divine law to the children from one's loins. After the birth of a child she cannot be sold as a slave girl and shall automatically become free after her master's death.

(5) If the master marries his slave girl with another man, he forfeits his conjugal rights over her, but retains other rights such as service from her.

(6) The maximum limit of four has not been prescribed for slave girls as in the case of wives for the simple reason that the number of female prisoners of war is unpredictable. The lack of limit does by no means provide a license for the well to do people to buy any number of slave girls for licentious purposes.

(7) The proprietary rights over a slave, male or female, as given to a person by the government are transferable like all other legal proprietary rights.

(8) The handing over of the proprietary rights over a slave girl to a man formally by the government makes her as much lawful for him as the giving of the hand of a free woman to a man by her parents or guardian through nikah (marriage ceremony). Therefore, there is no reason why a man who does not hold marriage in detestation should hold sexual intercourse with a slave girl in detestation.

(9) When once the government hands over the female prisoner of war to someone, it has no right whatever to take her back from him, just as the parent or guardian has no right to take back a woman after she is handed over to a

man through nikah.

(10) It should also be noted well that if a military commander temporarily distributes female prisoners of war among the soldiers for sexual purposes, or permits them to have sexual relations for the time being, such an act shall be unlawful and there is absolutely no difference between this and fornication, and fornication is a crime according to the Islamic code.

25. And whoever is not able among you to afford to marry believing free women, then (he may marry) from those whom your right hands possess of believing slave girls. And Allah knows best about your faith. You are of one another,^{*45} so marry them with the permission of their guardians, and give to them their bridal gifts in kindness, (them being) chaste, not committing unlawful sexual activities, nor taking secret lovers. But when they are sheltered in marriage, then if they commit lewdness (unlawful sexual act), then for them is half of the punishment

وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ مِنْكُمْ طَوْلًا أَنْ
يَنْكِحَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ
الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ فَمِنْ مَّا مَلَكَتْ
أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِنْ فَتْيَاتِكُمْ
الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِكُمْ
بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ
فَأَنْكِحُوهُنَّ بِإِذْنِ أَهْلِهِنَّ
وَأَتُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ مُحْصَنَاتٍ غَيْرَ
مُسْفِحَاتٍ وَلَا مُتَّخِذَاتِ
أَخْدَانٍ فَإِذَا أَحْصِنَّ فَإِنَّ

that which is for free women.^{*46} This (permission to marry a slave girl)^{*47} is for him who fears affliction (of committing sin) among you. And it is better for you that you have patience. And Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

أَتَيْنَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ فَعَلَيْنَّ نِصْفُ
مَا عَلَى الْمُحْصَنَاتِ مِنَ
الْعَذَابِ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ
الْعَنَتَ مِنْكُمْ وَأَنْ تَصْبِرُوا خَيْرٌ
لَّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ



***45** That is, the social differences among the people are merely relative; otherwise all Muslims are equal. As a matter of fact, the thing that distinguishes one Muslim from another is the quality of his faith, and that is not the monopoly of the higher ranks of society. It is just possible that a Muslim slave girl is higher in rank in regard to belief and morality than a free woman of a high family.

***46** It should be kept in view that in this section (Ayats 24-25) the Arabic word *muhsanat* has been used in two different senses: (1) “wedded wives”, enjoying the protection of their husbands; and (2) “free Muslim women” enjoying the protection of their families, even though they might not be married. This is important, because the lack of differentiation between these two meanings has given rise to a superficial complication. The Kharijites and those others who do not believe in the stoning of an adulterous woman have misconstrued this verse (25) to prove their own point of view. They argue that in this verse, the punishment prescribed for an adulterous married slave girl is half of the punishment prescribed for a free married

Muslim woman. If the punishment for an adulterous free married woman had been stoning to death, there could be no half of this punishment for a guilty slave girl. Hence, this verse is, according to them, a conclusive proof that the punishment of stoning does not exist in Islam.

The fallacy of the above argument becomes obvious, if one uses common sense in the application of the appropriate meaning of *muhsanat*. In the case of the guilty slave girl, it has been used in the sense of married woman, enjoying the protection of the husband, as is plain from the subsequent clause; “But when they are sheltered in marriage.” But in the case of the guilty Muslim woman, half of whose punishment is to be given, it means free Muslim woman enjoying the protection of her family, and does not mean a free married Muslim woman, as has been misconstrued by the opponents of the punishment of stoning.

As regards the lighter punishment for an adulterous slave girl than for a free Muslim woman, it is based on the fact that the latter enjoys double protection as compared with the former the protection of the family (even though she be unmarried) and the protection of the husband, which reinforces the protection of the family she already enjoys. In contrast to a free woman, a slave girl does not enjoy any protection at all, if she is unmarried, and even after marriage her position does not become equal to that of an unmarried free Muslim woman, for the latter enjoys the protection of her status, her family, her clan, etc. On the other hand, a slave girl still remains, to some extent, under the bondage of slavery and has no protection of the family,

clan, etc. Therefore, her punishment should be half of an unmarried free woman and not half of a free married woman.

Furthermore, this also shows that the punishment of one hundred stripes as prescribed in Surah An-Nur: Ayat 2, is for an unmarried free Muslim woman guilty of fornication, half of which has been prescribed here for a slave married girl. As for an adulterous married free woman she deserves capital punishment for this heinous crime because she enjoys the double protection of the family and of the husband, and that punishment is stoning her to death. Though the Quran does not explicitly mention the punishment of stoning to death, it does indicate it in a subtle manner, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) understood and enforced. And who else could understand the Quran better?

*47 The concession is to marry one of the slave girls with the consent of her master if one cannot afford to marry a free Muslim woman.

26. Allah intends to make clear to you, and to guide you to the ways of those who were before you, and accept your repentance. And Allah is All Knower, All Wise. *48

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ
سُنَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَيَتُوبَ
عَلَيْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

*48 The way refer to all those instructions that have been given from the beginning of the Surah to this point, and to those already given in Surah Al-Baqarah about cultural and social problems. Allah is telling the believers that it is

His bounty that He is taking them out of the ways of ignorance and guiding them to the moral ways of good people, that have always been followed by the Prophets of every age and their pious followers.

27. And Allah intends to accept your repentance, and those who follow vain desires intend that you deviate (into) a tremendous deviation.*49

وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَيُرِيدُ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ
الشَّهَوَاتِ أَنْ تَمِيلُوا مِيلًا عَظِيمًا



*49 Those who intended to turn the believers back from the right way to the ways of error were the hypocrites, the ignorant people of the old ways, and the Jews living in the suburbs of Al-Madinah. The first two groups strongly disliked the changes that were being made to reform their centuries old prejudices, rites and customs. They were opposed to (a) the share of the daughters in inheritance; (b) the freedom of the widow from the restrictions placed on her by her husband's people, and to marry the husband of her liking after the expiry of the term, (c) the prohibition of marriage with step mother, and with two real sisters simultaneously. They were averse to the reform of the institution of adoption which abolished the share of the adopted sons in inheritance and removed the restriction on the marriage of their divorced wives or their widows with their adopted fathers. These and such other reforms so upset the worshipers of the old traditions and customs that they cried themselves hoarse with protests against them.

The mischief mongers criticized bitterly the Prophet (peace be upon him) and incited the people against his person and his invitation. For instance, if there was a person who was born as a result of a marriage which had become unlawful by the application of the reformed laws, they would incite him by saying that he had been declared illegitimate by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Thus the foolish people were opposing the work of reform which was being carried out under divine guidance.

Then there were the Jews who were engaged in vicious propaganda against this reformative work which went against their self made laws. They demanded that the Quran should declare these laws to be the divine laws, even though they had changed their very character and substance, by making fine and unnecessary distinctions, by introducing into it their own superstitious customs as laws, by imposing their own restrictions and hard conditions and making many lawful things unlawful. They, therefore, could not appreciate the simple rules and regulations that were being presented by the Quran. That is why their rabbis, scribes and common people did not accept the Quran as the Book of Allah. They were so upset by its reformative laws that they made each and every commandment of the Quran the target of their criticism and opposed and rejected it.

For instance, the Jews considered the women utterly unclean during the menses. They would not take the meals cooked by them, nor drink water touched by their hands, nor even sit on the same carpet with them. In short, the

women were practically made untouchables in their homes. As the Ansar had also adopted the same customs when the Prophet (peace be upon him) migrated to Al-Madinah, they asked him about the monthly course. In answer to this question, Ayat 222 of Surah Al-Baqarah was revealed. Accordingly the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed that during the monthly course only cohabitation was prohibited and all other relations with the women would remain the same as before. At this, the Jews raised a great hue and cry, saying, this man is bent upon opposing us in everything and making lawful what is unlawful with us and unlawful what is lawful with us.

28. Allah intends to lighten (the burdens) from you, and man was created weak.

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ
وَخُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا

29. O those who believe, do not devour your possessions among yourselves wrongfully, except that it be a trade amongst you by mutual consent.^{*50} And do not kill yourselves^{*51} (one another). Indeed, Allah is Most Merciful to you.^{*52}

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا
تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ
بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً
عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِّنْكُمْ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا
أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ
رَحِيمًا

***50** “Wrongfully” include all the ways that are against the Islamic law and principles and are false and immoral.

“Trade” comprises all those transactions that are carried out for profit, benefit, etc. as in business, commerce, industry, etc., by which one satisfies the needs of another who pays for the service rendered.

“Mutual consent” implies that those transactions should be carried out by mutual agreement and not by coercion or fraud. For instance, although apparently there is a mutual agreement in interest and bribery, yet it is obvious that the needy party is compelled by circumstances to agree to such transactions. Also, in gambling each participant is deluded by the false hope of winning. Neither would agree to gamble if he knew that he would lose. The same is true of every case of transaction which involves fraud. The defrauded one agrees under the misunderstanding that there is no fraud in it. If he knew that he was being deceived, he would never agree to this.

*51 “Do not kill yourselves” may be complementary to the preceding sentence or may, in itself, be an independent sentence.

In the first case, it would mean that the one who devours unlawfully the property of others, does in fact lead himself to his own destruction. Such an evil deed ruins the social order to such an extent that ultimately he himself cannot escape its evil consequences, and in the Hereafter most surely he incurs severe punishment.

In the second case, it would mean, “Do not kill each other”, or “Do not commit suicide”.

Allah has used such comprehensive words that in the context they occur, they imply all the three senses, and all

these are correct.

***52** That is, Allah is your well wisher. It is only His compassion that He forbids you from such deeds as cause your ruin.

30. And whoever commits that in aggression and injustice, then We shall cast him into the Fire. And that is ever easy for Allah.

وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ عُدْوَانًا وَظُلْمًا
فَسَوْفَ نُصَلِّيهِ نَارًا ۖ وَكَانَ
ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿٣٠﴾

31. If you avoid the major sins, which you are forbidden from, We shall remove from you your trivial offense,^{*53} and We shall admit you to a noble entrance.

إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُهَوَّنَ
عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ
وَنُدْخِلْكُمْ مُدْخَلًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾

***53** That is, We are not narrow minded and prejudiced that We should take Our servants to task for each and every trivial offense. But if you commit wicked and heinous sins, then you shall have to render an account of the trivial offenses as well.

Here it will be worthwhile to understand the basic differences between the heinous (major) sins and the trivial offenses. As far as I have understood from a critical study of the Quran and the Sunnah (and the correct and right knowledge is only with Allah), I have come to the conclusion that the following three things make a sin

heinous:

(1) The violation of the rights of Allah, or of parents, or of other human beings, or one's own rights. The wickedness of the sin increases in proportion to the sanctity of the right that is violated. That is why the Quran calls a sin *zulm* (iniquity) and declares *shirk* to be a gross iniquity.

(2) A sin becomes heinous, if it is committed to defy the divine laws. This is because the offender deliberately, boldly and shamelessly discards the commandments and prohibitions of Allah and intentionally does that which He prohibits, merely for the sake of disobedience, and impudently does not do that which He has commanded. The gravity of this sin increases in proportion to the impudence that is shown towards Allah in disobeying and discarding His law. That is why the Quran calls a sin *fisq* (disobedience) and *masiyat* (arrogance).

(3) The violation of those relations and the cutting off of those connections on the unification and integrity of which depends the peace of human life, makes a sin heinous whether these relations are between man and Allah or between man and man. The gravity of the sin of violation or the cutting off of a connection increases in proportion to the importance of the relation, and to the security contained in it. For instance, fornication in its different forms is in itself a heinous sin, for it corrupts human society. But in some forms it becomes far more heinous than in others. The sin of adultery committed by a married man is far more heinous than that committed by an unmarried man. Likewise, adultery with a married woman is a far greater

sin than fornication with an unmarried woman. In the same way, sexual intercourse with the womenfolk of a neighbor is far more heinous than with others. Incest with mother, sister or daughter become the most heinous sin conceivable because of the security and sanctity the relation provides. For the same reason the sin committed in the mosque is far more wicked than elsewhere. In the above instances, the difference in the gravity of the same sin is due to the difference in the nature of the sanctity of the relations and the security contained in them. That is why, sin is also called *fujur* (violation of relations).

32. And do not desire for that in which Allah has bestowed more to some of you over others. For men is a share of what they have earned. And for women is a share of what they have earned. And ask Allah of His bounty. Indeed, Allah is ever All Knower of all things. *54

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ
بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ لِّلرِّجَالِ
نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبُوا
وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبْنَ
وَسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا

*54 In this verse Allah has given a very important moral instruction, which, if observed, would bring great peace in the troubled social life of today. Allah has taught people not to be covetous for and be envious of the possessions of

others, for He has not, in His wisdom, created all men alike. But for this disparity life would have become dull.

As Allah has perfect knowledge of everything, He has created one beautiful and another ugly. He has given to one a melodious voice and to another a harsh voice. He has made one of strong physique and another of weak constitution. He has endowed one with some good qualities of mind and body and another with other qualities. He has created one in straitened and another in opulent circumstances. He has provided one with ample resources and another with scanty ones. A little thinking will convince a person that the variety in human culture is due only to those very differences and distinctions which are based on wisdom and perfect knowledge. That is why chaos of one sort or the other results whenever people artificially try either to aggravate these differences and distinctions or to eliminate them totally. The human tendency to envy others because of their superiority in anything generates jealousy, cut-throat competition, enmity, class struggle and the like with the resulting consequences. One who suffers from such a mentality tries to grab unlawfully that which Allah has not given him through His bounty. In this verse Allah has advised the Muslims to avoid such a mentality and keep themselves free from envying others. One should, however, pray to Allah for His bounty, for He will bestow upon him whatever He considers proper for him, because He has perfect knowledge of everything.

As regards “For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned.” in my

opinion it means that women should not envy men and men should not envy women because of any superiority the one has over the other because of Allah's bounty. They should make full use of whatever Allah has given them and rest assured that each one will get his and her due share according to what good or evil one earns and of the same quality that one deserves.

33. And for everyone, We have appointed heirs of that (property) left by parents and near relatives. And to those with whom you have pledged your oath, so give them their due portion. Indeed, Allah is ever a witness over all things.*55

وَلِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مَوَالِيَ مِمَّا تَرَكَ
 الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ^ج وَالَّذِينَ
 عَقَدْتَ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَآتُوهُمْ
 نَصِيبَهُمْ^ج إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَى
 كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا

*55 The Arabs would enter into agreements of friendship and brotherhood with each other and on that score were entitled to the inheritance of each other. Thus, a godson became heir of his godfather. Here this custom of ignorance has been abolished, and it has been enjoined that the inheritance should be divided among the heirs according to the law prescribed by Allah. They are, however, allowed to give to such people, whatever they like during their lifetime.

34. The men are in charge*56 of the women, by what Allah has bestowed to one of them

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ
 بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى

over other,^{*57} and because they spend of their wealth. So the righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in (husband's) absence^{*58} that which Allah has (ordered to be) guarded. And those (women) from whom you fear rebellion, admonish them, and forsake them in beds, and strike them.^{*59} Then if they obey you, then do not seek against them means (of annoyance). Indeed, Allah is ever Most High, Most Great.

بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ
فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ
لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ وَالَّتِي
تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ
فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَأَهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي
الْمَضَاجِعِ وَأَضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنَّ
أَطْعَمَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ
سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا
كَبِيرًا



***56** The Arabic word *qavvam* or *qayyam* stands for a person who is responsible for the right conduct, safeguard and maintenance of the affairs of an individual, an institution or an organization. Thus, man is governor, director, protector and manager of the affairs of women.

***57** Men are superior to women in the sense that they have been endowed with certain natural qualities and powers that have not been given to women or have been given in a lesser degree, and not in the sense that they are above them in honor and excellence. Man has been made *qavvam* (governor) of the family because of his natural qualities and woman has been made his dependent for her own safety and protection because of her natural weakness.

***58** A tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is the best commentary on this, He said, “The best wife is the one who pleases you when you see her, who obeys your orders and who guards your property and her own honor when you are not at home.”

In this connection, it is necessary to give a warning. Obedience to Allah is of far greater importance than obedience to the husband and has precedence over it. Therefore, it is the duty of the wife to refuse to obey her husband, if and when he orders her to do a thing which amounts to Allah’s disobedience. In that case it shall be a sin to obey him. On the contrary, if the husband orders her not to observe a certain voluntary religious devotion, she must obey him, otherwise her devotion will not be accepted.

***59** If the wife is defiant and does not obey her husband or does not guard his rights, three measures have been mentioned, but it does not mean that all the three are to be taken at one and the same time. Though these have been permitted, they are to be administered with a sense of proportion according to the nature and extent of the offense. If a mere light admonition proves effective, there is no need to resort to a severer step. As to a beating, the Prophet (peace be upon him) allowed it very reluctantly and even then did not like it. But the fact is that there are certain women who do not mend their ways without a beating. In such a case, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has instructed that she would not be beaten on the face, or cruelly, or with anything which might leave a mark on the

body.

35. And if you fear a dissension between them twain, then appoint an arbitrator from his family and an arbitrator from her family. If they^{*60} (the two sides) desire reconciliation, Allah will make between them. Indeed Allah is ever All Knower, Well Acquainted.^{*61}

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوا
حَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِّنْ
أَهْلِهَا إِنْ يُرِيدَا إِصْلَاحًا يُوَفِّقِ
اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا
خَبِيرًا



***60** “The two sides” refers both to the arbitrators and to the spouses. Reconciliation can be effected in every quarrel, if the parties concerned desire it and if the arbitrators try to affect it sincerely and justly.

***61** In this verse, a plan has been put forward for settling disputes between husband and wife within the family. An effort should be made to effect reconciliation before resorting to a court of law or making the final breach. The plan is to appoint one arbitrator from the family of each spouse for this purpose. The two should probe into the real cause or causes of the dispute and then try to find a way out of it. Of course, the relatives are best qualified for it, as they know the true conditions of the spouses.

Allah has left it unanswered as to who should appoint the arbitrators. If they desire to patch up their differences, each spouse may appoint one arbitrator from his or her relatives, or the leaders of the two families may take the

initiative and entrust the work of reconciliation to two arbitrators, or if the case goes to the court, it may appoint two arbitrators before taking any action.

There is a difference of opinion regarding the powers of the arbitrators. According to the Hanafi and the Shafai schools of thought, the arbitrators are not authorized to pass any final decree but may recommend measures for reconciliation, which may be accepted or rejected by the spouses. Of course, if the spouses themselves authorize them to effect divorce or khula or take any other measure, then they shall be bound to accept their decision. Hasan Basri, Qatadah and some other jurists are of the opinion that the arbitrators are authorized to enforce reconciliation but not separation. Ibn Abbas, Saeed bin Jubair, Ibrahim Nakhai, Shabi, Muhammad bin Sirin and some other jurists are of the opinion that the arbitrators have full authority to enforce their decision about reconciliation or separation whichever they consider to be proper.

Uthman and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) used to authorize the arbitrators appointed by them with full powers to effect reconciliation or separation as required by the circumstances. For instance, when the case of Aqil, son of Abu Talib, and his wife Fatimah, daughter of Utbah bin Rabiah, was brought in the court of Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him), he appointed as arbitrator Ibn Abbas from the family of the husband and Muaviyah bin Abi Sufyan from the family of the wife and told them that they were authorized to cause separation between them, if required by circumstances. Likewise, Ali (may Allah be

pleased with him) appointed arbitrators in a similar case and authorized them to effect reconciliation between the spouses or separate them. This shows that the arbitrators as such do not possess judicial powers, but if at the time of their appointment, the authority concerned empowers them with judicial powers, their decision shall be binding and enforced like other judicial decisions.

36. And worship Allah and do not ascribe anything as partner to Him. And to parents do good, and to near relatives, and the orphans, and the needy, and the neighbor who is near of kin, and the neighbor who is a stranger, and the fellow traveler,^{*62} and the wayfarer, and (the slaves) whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not love those who are proud, boastful.

﴿وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا ۖ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَن كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا﴾

***62** “*Assahibi biljanb*” as used in the text may imply an intimate friend and also a person who accompanies one at any time. For instance, he may happen to accompany one in the street, or be a fellow customer at a shop, or be a fellow passenger on a bus or on a train, etc. Even such a temporary neighborhood requires a civilized and noble

person to treat the companion as far as possible kindly, and scrupulously avoid giving him any sort of trouble.

37. Those who are miserly, and enjoin miserliness on people, and conceal that which Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty.*63 And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment.

الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ
النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ
وَيَكْتُمُونَ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ
مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَأَعْتَدْنَا
لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُّهِينًا

*63 “To conceal the bounty of Allah” is to live in a way as if Allah has not bestowed His bounty upon him. For instance, a rich person conceals Allah’s bounty, if he lives below his standard: neither spends money on his own person nor on the members of his family nor on the needy nor for any other good work. In short, his appearance would show him to be in very straitened circumstances. Obviously that is gross ingratitude to Allah.

A tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) says, “When Allah bestows His bounty on anyone, He likes that he should show it”. That is, he should live the life of a well-to-do person who spends money on food, dress, house, furniture, etc., according to his means, and also in the way of Allah in order to show the blessing on him.

38. And those who spend their wealth to be seen by the people, and do not believe in Allah, nor in

وَالَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ رِئَاءَ
النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا

the Last Day. And he to whom Satan is a companion, then evil (is he) as a companion.

بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ^{٢٨} وَمَنْ يَكُنِ
الشَّيْطَانُ لَهُ قَرِينًا فَسَاءَ قَرِينًا

٢٨

39. And what have they (to lose) if they believed in Allah, and the Last Day, and spent of that which Allah has provided for them. And Allah is ever All Aware of them.

وَمَاذَا عَلَيْهِمْ لَوْ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا
رَزَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ^{٣٩} وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِهِمْ
عَلِيمًا

٣٩

40. Indeed, Allah does not wrong even of the weight of an atom. And if there is a good deed, He will double it, and will give from His presence a great reward.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ^{٤٠}
وَإِنْ تَكُ حَسَنَةً يُضْعِفْهَا
وَيُؤْتِ مِنْ لَدُنْهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

٤٠

41. So how (will it be) when We bring from every nation a witness, and We bring you (O Muhammad) against these people as a witness.^{*64}

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ
بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ
شَهِيدًا

٤١

***64 That is, the Prophet of every age will give evidence in**

the court of Allah, saying: “My Lord, I duly delivered Your message to my people and taught them the right way of life and the right mode of thought and practice which You taught me.” Last of all, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) will give this same evidence regarding the people of his time. His time, according to the Quran extends from the time of his appointment as a Prophet till resurrection. (E.N. 69, Surah Aal-Imran).

42. That day, those who disbelieved and disobeyed the messenger will wish if the earth were leveled with them. And they will not (be able to) hide from Allah a single fact.

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَعَصَوُا
الرَّسُولَ لَوْ تُسَوَّىٰ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضُ
وَلَا يَكْتُمُونَ اللَّهَ حَدِيثًا

43. O those who believe, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated,^{*65} until you know what you are saying,^{*66} nor when you are unclean^{*67} (sexual discharge) except, when traveling on the road, until you have washed (your whole body).^{*68} And if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes from the call of nature, or if you have touched women^{*69} (by sexual relations), and you

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقْرَبُوا
الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ
تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا
عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا
وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ
جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِّنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَايِبِ أَوْ
لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً

do not find water, then seek clean earth and rub your faces and your hands^{*70} (with it). Indeed, Allah is Oft Pardoning, Oft Forgiving.

فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا
فَأَمْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفْوًا غَفُورًا



***65** This is the second commandment about drinking. The first commandment (Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayat 219) was that drinking is an evil thing and Allah does not approve of it. Accordingly, some of the Muslims began to refrain from it from that time. The majority of them, however, did not give it up and often offered the Prayer in a state of intoxication and made blunders in their recitations. Probably, this second commandment came in the beginning of A.H. 4 and prohibited the offering of the Prayer while one was drunk. As a result they changed the timings of their drinking so as not to clash with the timings of the Prayers. Sometime after this, the commandment about total prohibition as contained in Surah Al-Maidah: Ayats 90-91 was revealed. Incidentally, the word *sukr* (state of intoxication) as used in the text also implies that this commandment prohibits not only drinking but every kind of intoxicant. Moreover, though every intoxicating thing is in itself unlawful, the offence of intoxication is doubled and becomes more heinous, when the Prayer is offered in such a state.

***66** For the same reason, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has instructed that when one feels sleepy, and doses again and again during the Prayer, one should give up his Prayer and go to sleep.

Some people from this verse argue that the Prayer of a person who does not know the meaning of its Arabic text, is no Prayer at all. But apart from the fact that it is an unnecessary hardship, the Arabic words of the Quran do not support this version. The Quran does not say, “unless you understand its meaning” or “unless you understand what you are saying” but it says “unless you know what you are saying”. That is, one should be in his senses to know what he is uttering with his tongue lest he should recite, say, a poem, instead of the text of the Prayer.

***67** The Arabic word *janabat* literally means being far off and being stranger. And the word *ajnabi* (stranger) is derived from the same root. In an Islamic term, it refers to that state of un-cleanliness and impurity that is caused by the emission of sperm during sexual intercourse or in sleep because this makes a person stranger to cleanliness.

***68** A section of the jurists and commentators, such as Abdullah bin Masud, Anas bin Malik, Hasan Basri and Ibrahim Nakhai (may Allah be pleased with them) and others deduce from the words, “when traveling on the road”, that one should not enter a mosque in a state of un-cleanliness except when he has to pass through it for some urgent reason. Another section of them, such as Ali, Ibn Abbas, Said bin Jubair (may Allah be pleased with them) and some others conclude from this that if one becomes unclean when on a journey, he may cleanse himself by wiping his face and hands with pure dust provided water is not available. As regards to entering a mosque in such a state of un-cleanliness, the latter section is of the opinion

that one may sit in the mosque after performing his ablutions (wudu). But there is almost a consensus of opinion that if he becomes unclean on a journey and water is not available for a bath, he may cleanse himself with pure dust and offer the Prayer. However, the former section derives this opinion from the traditions and the latter bases this concession on this part of verse 43.

***69** There is a difference of opinion as to implication of “If you have touched women.” Ali, Ibn Abbas, Abu Musa Ashari, Ubaiyy Ibn Kaab, Saeed bin Jubair, Hasan Basri (may Allah be pleased with them) and several other jurists are of the opinion that here “have touched” means “have had sexual intercourse”. Imam Abu Hanifah and those of his way of thinking and Imam Sufyan Thauri have adopted the same interpretation. On the contrary, Hadrat Abdullah bin Masud and Abdullah bin Umar and, according to some traditions, Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) also are of the opinion that the word “touched” actually means “touching with the hand” and Imam Shafai has adopted this version. Some jurists, such as Imam Malik, have adopted a middle course and expressed the opinion that if the touch between a man and a woman is of sexual nature, they shall have to make fresh ablutions for the Prayer but if their bodies touch each other without any feeling of sensuality, there is nothing wrong in this.

***70** If one has to perform ablutions or take a bath before offering his Salat and water is not available, he is allowed to resort to tayammum; or, if he is sick and there is a danger that the disease would worsen if he performs ablutions or

takes a bath, he is allowed to resort to tayammum even if water is available.

Literally tayammum means “to turn to”; that is, one should turn to pure dust when water is not available, or if its use is harmful. There is a difference of opinion concerning the method of performing tayammum. The majority of the jurists, such as Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Shafai and Imam Malik, prescribe that one should strike his hands on pure dust and wipe his face with them; then he should again strike his hands and wipe his hands up to the elbows with them. This method has been prescribed by some companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and their followers such as Ali, Abdullah bin Umar, Hasan Basri, Shabi and Salim bin Abdullah and others. But some jurists such as Ata, Mak-hul, Auzai and Ahmad bin Hanbal consider it enough to strike his hands only once on pure dust and wipe the face and the hands up to the wrists and not up to the elbows. The Ahl-i-Hadith in general follow this method.

For the performance of tayammum, it is not essential only to strike one’s hands on pure earth: any dusty thing or dry piece of earth suffices for this purpose. Some people object to this method of cleansing; they say, “How can one be cleansed by striking his hands on dust and wiping the face and hands up to the elbows with these? Let them look upon this method from the psychological point of view. Tayammum helps keep alive the feelings of cleansing and of the sanctity of the Prayer, even if one is not able to use water for a long time. Thus, a Muslim will always keep in

view the rules of purity and cleanliness prescribed by the Islamic code and will scrupulously be mindful of his state of cleanliness and purity for the observance of the Prayer.

44. Have you not seen at those who were given a portion of the book,^{*71} purchasing error, and they wish that you should go astray from the (right) path.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيبًا
مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يَشْتُرُونَ الضَّلَاةَ
وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَضِلُّوا السَّبِيلَ



***71** About the scholars of the people of the Book the Quran at many places has used words to the effect: They have been given a portion of the knowledge of the scripture. These words have been used because the scholars had actually lost a portion of their scriptures and had become strangers to the spirit and the real aim and object of the portion left with them. The only interest they took, in these was confined to polemical controversies, minor details of commandments and philosophical subtleties of creed. That is why they were ignorant of the true nature of religion and were void of its essence, though they were called divines and Rabbis and were the acknowledge leaders of their community.

45. And Allah knows best of your enemies. And Allah is sufficient as an ally, and Allah is sufficient as a helper.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِأَعْدَائِكُمْ^ج وَكَفَى
بِاللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ نَصِيرًا



46. Among those who became Jews^{*72} are they who change^{*73} words from their context and they say: “We hear^{*74} and we disobey. And hear what is not heard.”^{*75}

And Raina^{*76} (consider us, but by) distorting with their tongues and slandering in religion. And if they had said: “We hear (you O Muhammad) and we obey. And hear you (O Muhammad), and look at us,” it would have been better for them, and more upright. But Allah has cursed them for their disbelief, so they believe not, except a few.

مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ
عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَمِعْنَا
وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَسْمَعُ غَيْرَ مُسْمَعٍ
وَرَاعِنَا لِيَا بِالسِّنْتِهِمْ وَطَعْنَا فِي
الَّذِينَ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا
وَأَطَعْنَا وَأَسْمَعُ وَأَنْظُرْنَا لَكَانَ
خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَأَقْوَمَ وَلَكِنْ لَعَنَهُمُ
اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا

قَلِيلًا



***72** The words used are: “who become Jews” and not “who are Jews,” for originally they were “Muslims” just as the community of every Prophet is Muslim. Then afterwards they degenerated and became merely “Jews”.

***73** They were guilty of perversion in three ways:

- (1) They effected changes in the words of the Scriptures.
- (2) They distorted the meanings of the text with false interpretations.
- (3) They would sit in the assemblies of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions and then make false

reports of what they heard there to create mischief against them by distortion. They would thus spread misunderstandings about Islam and pervert people from joining the Islamic community.

***74** That is, when the commandments of Allah are recited to them, they say, *samiana* (we have heard) aloud and *asaina* (we have rejected) in a low voice, or they pronounce the word *atana* (we have obeyed) with such a twist of the tongue that it sounds as *asaina*.

***75** During their talk with the Prophet (peace be upon him), they would invite his attention, saying, *ismaa* (please listen to us), and would add *ghaira musma*, which has several meanings. This may mean: “You are such a respectable man that one cannot utter any word before you against your will.” It may also imply: “You are not worthy that one may speak to you.” Another meaning is: “May Allah make you deaf!”

***76** Refer to E.N. 105, Surah Al-Baqarah.

47. O those who have been given the Scripture, believe in what We have sent down (to Muhammad) confirming what is (already) with you,^{*77} before that We obliterate faces, then turn them on their backs, or curse them as We cursed people of (those who violated) the Sabbath.^{*78} And the commandment of

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
ءَامِنُوا بِمَا نَزَّلْنَا مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا
مَعَكُمْ مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ نَطْمِسَ
وُجُوهًا فَنَرُدَّهَا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهَا أَوْ
نَلْعَنَهُمْ كَمَا لَعَنَّا أَصْحَابَ السَّبْتِ

Allah must be carried out.

وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا

*77 Refer to E.N. 2, Surah Aal-Imran.

*78 Refer to E.Ns 82 and 83, Surah Al-Baqarah.

48. Indeed, Allah does not forgive that partners should be ascribed to Him.*79 And He forgives what is other than that, for whom He wills.*80 And whoever ascribes partners to Allah, he has indeed invented a tremendous sin.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ
وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ افْتَرَى
إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا

*79 The people of the Book have been admonished for being guilty of shirk, though they professed to believe in the Prophets and the revealed Books.

*80 This does not mean that if someone refrains from shirk, he may freely indulge in other sins. This is merely to bring home to them the gravity of this heinous sin, which they regarded as a trivial thing. That is why the warning has been given that shirk is the most heinous of all sins, so much so that this is the only sin for which forgiveness is not possible.

The Jewish Rabbis were very particular in the observance of minor laws; nay, they spent most of their time in measuring and weighing those regulations which were not explicitly mentioned in their Scriptures but were derived from them. On the contrary, they regarded shirk as a trivial matter. They were not only themselves involved in it

but they did not try to save their community from shirk and acts of shirk. Accordingly, they did not consider that there was anything wrong in entering into alliance with mushrik communities and helping them.

49. Have you not seen at those who claim themselves pure. Nay, but Allah purifies whom He wills, and they will not be wronged (as much as) the husk on a date-stone.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُزَكُّونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ
بَلِ اللَّهُ يُزَكِّي مَن يَشَاءُ وَلَا
يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا

50. See, how they invent a lie against Allah. And enough is that as a manifest sin.

أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ
الْكَذِبَ وَكَفَى بِهِ إِثْمًا مُّبِينًا

51. Have you not seen at those who were given a portion of the Scripture, they believe in superstitions^{*81} and false deities.^{*82} And they say about those (idolaters) who disbelieve that they are better guided than those who believe in the (right) way.^{*83}

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيبًا
مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْجِبْتِ
وَالطَّغُوتِ وَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا هَتُّوْلَاءِ أَهْدَى مِنَ الَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا سَبِيلًا

*81 Literally, *jibt* means an unreal, baseless and useless thing. In the Islamic terminology, sorcery, magic, divination, omen-taking and the like superstitious practices

are called *jibt*. A tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) says, "Taking omens from the sounds of the birds and the footmarks of the animals and all other methods of divination are *jibt*." Thus *jibt* is the equivalent of superstition.

*82 Refer to E.Ns 286 and 288, Surah Al-Baqarah.

*83 The Jewish Rabbis had gone so low in their opposition to Islam that they regarded the followers of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as more misguided than even the Arab Mushriks, and declared the latter to be more rightly guided though it was quite obvious to them that on one side there was the worship of One God without any tinge of shirk, and on the other, idolatry which had been thoroughly condemned in the Bible.

52. Those are the ones whom Allah has cursed. And he whom Allah curses, you will then never find for him any helper.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ يَلْعَنِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ نَصِيرًا



53. Or for them is a share in the dominion (of Allah). Then (had that been so), they would not even give mankind the speck on a date-stone. *84

أَمْ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُلْكِ فَإِذَا لَا يُؤْتُونَ النَّاسَ نَقِيرًا



*84 That is, do they possess any portion of divine authority that they are sitting in judgment on the case to decide who is rightly guided and who is not? Had they any part in it, they would never have given a farthing to anyone else

because they are so narrow minded that they are not even ready to acknowledge the truth.

It may also imply: Do they possess the kingdom of a country from which others are demanding a share, and they are finding it hard to part with it? What is being demanded of them is merely the acknowledgment of the truth, and this they are refusing on account of jealousy.

54. Or do they envy mankind for what Allah has given them of His bounty.*⁸⁵ Then indeed, We bestowed upon the family of Abraham the Book and wisdom, and We bestowed upon them a great kingdom.*⁸⁶

أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ النَّاسَ عَلَىٰ مَا
ءَاتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۖ فَقَدْ
ءَاتَيْنَا آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْحِكْمَةَ ۖ وَءَاتَيْنَاهُمْ
مُلْكًا عَظِيمًا



*⁸⁵ Here they are being rebuked for showing jealousy against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers because they were blessed with Allah's bounty (prophethood) for which they were themselves looking forward in spite of being unworthy of it. Instead of showing regret for their own unworthiness which caused the loss of the bounty, they were showing resentment against the Prophet (peace be upon him) who had by His bounty brought about the greatest spiritual, moral and intellectual revolution in Arabia with its resulting leadership and greatness. It was their jealousy that was urging them to side with the mushrik, and to criticize the Muslims.

***86** *Mulkan-azima* refers to the leadership and guidance of the world and to the superiority over other nations that is gained by putting into practice the knowledge and wisdom of the divine Book.

55. Then among them were some who believed in it, and among them were some who turned away from it.^{*87} And sufficient is Hell for (their) burning.

فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِهِۦ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ
صَدَّ عَنْهُ^ج وَكَفَىٰ نَجْهَمَ سَعِيرًا



***87** It must be kept in mind that this is the answer to the jealous talk of the children of Israel. It implies this: Why do you feel jealous of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his followers? You are the descendants of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and so are the children of Ishmael (peace be upon him) his descendants. We promised the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) that We would bestow leadership of the world upon those of his descendants who would follow the Book and the wisdom sent down by Us. First, We sent down the Book and the wisdom to you, one chain of his descendants, but you proved incapable of this. Now We have sent down the same to the children of Ishmael (peace be upon him), the other chain of Abraham's (peace be upon him) descendants. They have accepted it, believed in it and followed it practically. Now answer for yourselves whether you have any ground of jealousy and resentment against the children of Ishmael (peace be upon him).

56. Indeed, those who disbelieve in Our revelations, We shall drive them into the Fire. As often as their skins are burnt out, We shall change them with other skins, that they may taste the punishment. Indeed, Allah is ever All Mighty, All Wise.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَوْفَ نُصَلِّيهِمْ نَارًا كَلَّمَا نَضِجَتْ جُلُودُهُمْ بَدَّلْنَاهُمْ جُلُودًا غَيْرَهَا لِيَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾

57. And those who believe and do righteous deeds, We shall admit them to Gardens underneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever. For them therein are pure companions, and We shall admit them into plenteous shade.

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا لَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَنُدْخِلُهُمْ ظِلًّا ظَلِيلًا ﴿٥٧﴾

58. Indeed, Allah commands you that you render back the trusts to their owners, and when you judge between mankind, that you judge with justice.*⁸⁸ Indeed, excellent is that Allah admonishes you with. Truly, Allah is ever All Hearer,

﴿٥٨﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ﴿٥٨﴾

***88** Here the Muslims have been fore-warned that they should avoid those evils in which the children of Israel were involved. Their basic error was that during their degeneration they entrusted the positions of trust to incompetent people. They began to entrust positions of responsibility and religious and political leadership to inefficient, narrow minded, immoral, dishonest and wicked people. As a result, the whole community became corrupt. The Muslims are being cautioned against this evil and enjoined to entrust positions of responsibility to qualified and competent people of good moral character.

Another evil that was prevalent among the Jews was injustice. They had lost the very sense and spirit of justice and become utterly unjust, openly dishonest, and sinfully obdurate and would commit acts of gross injustice without any pangs of conscience. The Muslims were personally having a bitter experience of this. The Jews were siding with the idolatrous Quraish against the believers in one God though the lives of the two clearly showed who was more rightly guided. On the one side, they saw the pure lives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers; on the other, they witnessed the immoral lives of their enemies, who buried their daughters alive, married their step mothers and went round the Kabah in naked state. Still, these people of the Book preferred the idolatrous people over the believers and brazen-facedly declared that the former were more rightly guided than the latter. Allah

warns the believers against this sort of injustice and enjoins them always to say what is just and right and judge between the people with justice whether they be friends or foes.

59. O those who believe, obey Allah, and obey the messenger (Muhammad), and those who are in authority among you. Then if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the messenger*⁸⁹ if you are believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more commendable in the end.*⁹⁰

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ
وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِيَ الْأَمْرِ
مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ
فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ
تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا



***89** This verse is the basis of the entire religious, cultural and political system of Islam and is the first and foremost article of the constitution of an Islamic State. It lays down permanently the following fundamental principles:

(1) In the Islamic system, Allah is the real Authority who must be obeyed. A Muslim is first of all the servant of Allah; all his other capacities come after that. Therefore, a Muslim as an individual and the Muslims as a community owe their first loyalty to Allah and they must subordinate all other loyalties to this. Allegiance and obedience to anyone else shall be acknowledged only if these are not opposed to the allegiance and obedience to Allah but are

subordinate to it. All other allegiances that are opposed to this basic allegiance shall be broken asunder. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has explained the same thing in a tradition: “There is no obedience to any of His creatures in what involves disobedience to the Creator.”

(2) The second fundamental principle of the Islamic system is allegiance and obedience to the Prophet (peace be upon him). This obedience is not inherent in prophethood but is only practical shape of obedience to Allah. A Messenger is to be obeyed because he is the authentic means through which we can receive commandments and instructions from Allah. Hence, we can obey Allah only by obeying His Messenger, for no other way of obedience is genuine. As a corollary of this, the breach of allegiance to the Messenger shall be a rebellion against the Sovereign, whom he represents. A tradition explains the same thing thus: “Whoever obeys me, obeys Allah and whoever disobeys me, disobeys Allah.” The same thing has also been explicitly stated in Ayat 80 of this Surah.

(3) After the first and the second allegiance, and subordinate to these, the Muslims owe allegiance to those invested with authority from among their own selves. The Arabic word *ulil amr* is very comprehensive, which comprises all those persons who are in any way at the helm of the affairs of the Muslims religious scholars, thinkers, political leaders, administrators, judges of law courts, tribal chiefs and the like. In short, all those, who are in any way invested with authority from among the Muslims, are to be obeyed, and it is not right to disturb the peace of the

community life of the Muslims by entering into conflict with them, provided that:

(a) They are from among the Muslims.

(b) They are obedient to Allah and His Messenger.

These two conditions are a pre-requisite for obedience to them, and these have been explicitly laid down in the verse and have also been fully explained by the Prophet (peace be upon him). In support of this some traditions are cited below:

(a) It is obligatory on a Muslim to listen to and obey orders of those invested with authority, whether he likes it or dislikes it, provided that it is not sinful. However, if he is ordered to do a sinful thing, he should neither listen to the rulers nor obey their orders. (Bukhari, Muslim).

(b) Obedience to anyone in a sinful thing is forbidden. Obedience is obligatory only in what is right. (Bukhari, Muslim).

(c) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said; There will be rulers over you who will practice right things as well as wrong things: (In such a case) whoever protests against the wrong things, shall be absolved from the responsibility and whoever dislikes the wrong things, also shall escape (punishment). But whoever approves of and follows them, shall incur punishment. The companions asked; Should we then not fight against such rulers? The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered; No, as long as they offer the Salat. (Muslim). That is, if they discard the Salat, it will be a clear proof of their disobedience to Allah and His Messenger. Then it will be right to rise against them.

(d) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said; Your worst rulers are those whom you hate and who hate you, whom you curse and who curse you. The companions asked; O Messenger of God, should we not rise against such rulers? The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered; No, as long as they establish the Salat among you. (Muslim).

In this tradition, the condition about the Salat laid down in the preceding one, has been made more explicit. One might have inferred from (c) that if they offered the Salat in their individual capacities, no rising should be organized against them. But Tradition (d) explicitly lays down that the condition for obedience to those in authority is the establishment of the system of Salat by them in the Muslim community. The rulers should not only themselves offer the Salat regularly, but they should also establish the Salat in the system of government run by them. This is the minimum condition that makes a government Islamic in principle. If a government lacks this, it will mean that such a government has discarded Islam, and the Muslims will be justified in overthrowing it. This same thing has also been stated in another tradition thus: The Prophet (peace be upon him) took a covenant from us regarding certain things. One of these was that we would not engage in a dispute with those invested with authority unless we saw in them clear signs of disbelief, which may provide us with a cogent reason to present before Allah. (Bukhari, Muslim).

(4) The fourth thing that has been laid down as an absolute and permanent principle is that the commandments of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace be upon

him) are the fundamentals of law and final authority in the Islamic system. Hence, if a dispute arises about any matter between the Muslims or between the rulers and the ruled, they should turn to the Quran and the Sunnah for a decision and they should all submit to the decision. Thus, the essential element in the Islamic system that distinguishes it from un-Islamic systems is to acknowledge the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace be upon him) as the final authority and to turn to these and to submit to their decisions in all problems of life. Any system void of this is most surely an un-Islamic system.

Some people doubt the soundness of this principle. They say that it fails in practical life for the simple reason that there are many aspects of life (e.g., Tax department. Railroad department, Postal department, etc. etc.) for which there are no rules and regulations at all in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger. How can then they find the solution of the problems they meet with in such aspects of life as concerned to such departments? This doubt arises because they do not understand the fundamental principles of Islam. Islam allows freedom of action in all those things about which the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger are silent. What distinguishes a Muslim from a non-Muslim is that the latter claims absolute freedom, while the former considers to be the servant of Allah and uses only that amount of freedom which Islam allows him. The non-Muslim judges all matters in accordance with the rules and regulations made by himself and does not believe that he stands in need of

divine guidance. In contrast to him, the Muslim, first of all, turns to Allah and His Messenger for guidance about everything and abides by their decision. But if he does not find any commandment therein about a certain thing, only then he is free to act in a manner he considers to be right. The very fact that the law is silent about a certain thing, is a proof that it allows freedom of action in that particular matter.

***90** In the first part of this verse, the Quran enunciates the four fundamental principles of the Islamic constitution, and in the second part teaches the wisdom that underlies them. The Muslims have been enjoined to follow the four fundamental principles if they are true believers, otherwise their profession of Islam will become doubtful. Then they have been taught to build their system of life on these because therein also lies their well being. For, this alone can keep them on the right path in this world and lead them to a happy life in the Hereafter.

It should also be noted that this piece of advice follows the critical review of the moral and religious condition of the Jews and warns the Muslims in a subtle manner to learn a lesson from their deplorable condition. It says that whenever a community flings the Book of Allah and the guidance of His Messenger behind its back and follows such leaders as are disobedient to Allah and His Messenger, and blindly obeys its rulers and religious leaders without demanding from them the authority of the Book and the Sunnah, it can never escape those evils in which the children of Israel were involved.

60. Have you not seen at those (hypocrites) who claim that they believe in that which has been sent down to you, and that which was sent down before you. They wish that they go for judgment (in their disputes) to satanic authorities, while they have been ordered that they reject them.^{*91} And Satan wishes to lead them astray, a far away misleading.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْعُمُونَ
أَنَّهُمْ ءَامَنُوا بِمَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا
أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ
يَتَحَاكَمُوا إِلَى الطَّاغُوتِ وَقَدْ
أُمِرُوا أَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِهِ وَيُرِيدُ
الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُمْ ضَلَالًا
بَعِيدًا



***91** In this verse, *taghut* clearly stands for the authority that makes decisions in accordance with laws other than divine, and the system of judiciary which acknowledges neither Allah as the Supreme Sovereign nor His Book as the final authority. Hence, this verse explains that it is contrary to faith to take one's case for decision to a law court which by its nature is that of *taghut*. Belief in Allah and His Book makes it obligatory on the believer that he should refuse to acknowledge such a court as lawful. According to the Quran, belief in Allah and disbelief in *taghut* are correlatives; therefore to acknowledge both at one and the same time is nothing but hypocrisy itself.

61. And when it is said to them: "Come to what Allah has sent down and to the

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنْزَلَ

messenger (Muhammad),”
you see the hypocrites
turning away from you in
aversion.*92

اللَّهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ رَأَيْتَ
الْمُنَافِقِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنْكَ

صُدُّودًا ﴿٦١﴾

*92 This shows that the hypocrites used to bring only such cases before the Prophet (peace be upon him) as were likely to be decided in their favor, but would refrain from bringing such cases, which they feared, would be decided against them. The same is true of many hypocrites of today. They are ever ready to submit to the decisions of the Islamic law if and whenever it goes in their favor, otherwise they resort to any law, any custom, and any law court which, they expect, will ensure their interests.

62. So how (would it be)
when a catastrophe befalls
them because of what their
own hands have sent forth.
Then they would come to
you, swearing by Allah:*93
“We intended nothing except
goodwill and conciliation.”

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ بِمَا
قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ جَاءُوكَ
يَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا
إِحْسَانًا وَتَوْفِيقًا ﴿٦٢﴾

*93 Probably it means that when their hypocritical deeds are exposed and they fear that action will be taken against them; they take oaths to assure the believers of their innocence.

63. Those are the
ones whom Allah knows

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ مَا فِي

what is in their hearts. So turn aside from them, and admonish them, and speak to them a word to reach to their very souls.

قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَعِظْهُمْ
وَقُلْ لَهُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَوْلًا
بَلِيغًا



64. And We did not send any messenger except that he should be obeyed by Allah's permission.*94 And if indeed, when they had wronged themselves, they had come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah, and the messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah All Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا
لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ
إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ
فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ
الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا
رَحِيمًا



***94** It clearly defines the position of the Messenger. The Messenger does not come from Allah so that the people should simply acknowledge him as a Messenger and then continue to obey anyone they like. The Messenger is sent with the sole object that only the code of life brought by him should be followed instead of all other codes, and the commandments brought by him from Allah should only be obeyed instead of all other commandments. If anyone does not acknowledge the Messenger in this sense, his acknowledging him merely as a Messenger would be meaningless.

65. But nay, by your Lord, they will not (truly) believe until they make you (O Muhammad) judge of what is in dispute among themselves, then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged, and submit with full submission.*95

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ
يُحْكَمُونَكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ
لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا
قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا



***95** The commandment contained in verse 65 was not meant to be confined to the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him), but it was to hold good up to the Last Day. Whatever the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought from Allah and whatever way of life he followed and practiced under His guidance and inspiration, shall remain the final authority among Muslims forever and the acknowledgment of that authority alone determines whether one is a true Muslim or not. According to a tradition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “None of you can claim to be a believer unless he subordinates his desires and interests to the way that I have brought.”

66. And if We had decreed upon them that: “Kill yourselves or move out of your homes,”*96 they would not have done it, except a few of them. And if they had done what they were instructed with,

وَلَوْ أَنَّا كَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْ اقْتُلُوا
أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَوْ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ
مَا فَعَلُوهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ مِنْهُمْ وَلَوْ
أَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُوا مَا يُوعَظُونَ بِهِ

it would have been better for them, and a firmer strengthening (in their faith).^{*97}

لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَثْبِيثًا



***96** In verse 65, they have been admonished to submit gracefully and sincerely to the way of life brought by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and to subordinate their desires and interests to his decision. In this verse they have been warned that if they cannot sacrifice even their small interests in following the Islamic law, they can never be expected to make any bigger sacrifice. If they were asked to sacrifice their lives or leave their homes in the way of God, they would then discard totally the way of faith and obedience and follow the ways of disbelief and disobedience instead.

***97** That is, if they had given up doubt, hesitation and indecision and obeyed and followed the Messenger without any mental reservation, their position would have become firm and stable and their thoughts, their morals and their affairs would have secured a strong and permanent foundation. In short, they would have enjoyed all those blessings that are obtained by following steadfastly a straight royal road. On the contrary, the one who wavers in indecision and irresolution, and sometimes takes one road and then another, without faith in either, his whole life passes without any achievement and becomes an object lesson of failure.

67. And then We would certainly have bestowed

وَإِذَا لَأَتَيْنَهُمْ مِّن لَّدُنَّا أَجْرًا

upon them from Us a
great reward.

عَظِيمًا
٦٧

68. And We would have
certainly guided them to a
straight path.*98

وَلَهَدَيْنَهُمْ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا

٦٨

*98 That is, if they had resolved to obey the Messenger (peace be upon him) sincerely without harboring any doubts in their minds, the right way of life would have become very clear to them by the grace of Allah, and they would have clearly seen as to how they should employ their energy and effort so as to get further and further close to their real goal in life.

69. And whoever obeys
Allah and the messenger,
then they will be with
those upon whom Allah
has bestowed favor, of
the prophets, and those
steadfast in truthfulness,
and the martyrs, and the
righteous.*99 And how
excellent are these as
companions.*100

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصَّادِقِينَ
وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ
أُولَٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا
٦٩

*99 *Siddiq* is one who is upright and just: who is always actuated by truth and righteousness; who is fair and equitable in all his dealings; who always sides with truth and justice from the core of his heart; who opposes tooth and nail all that is unfair, without showing the least

weakness; who is so pure and so unselfish that both friends and foes expect nothing but impartiality from him.

The literal meaning of *shahid* is “a witness”. It implies the one who bears witness to the truth of his faith by following it in all aspects of his life. A martyr also is a *shahid* because he willingly suffers death by fighting in the cause of Allah. By sacrificing his life for the cause he believes to be true, he gives a practical demonstration of the sincerity of his faith. Those righteous people who are so trustworthy that their mere evidence for anything to be true is a sufficient proof of its genuineness are also *shahid*.

Salih is one who is upright in his beliefs, intentions, words and actions and adopts the right attitude in every aspect of life.

*100 That is, undoubtedly the person who enjoys the company of such people in this world and rises with them in the Hereafter is really very fortunate. Unless one’s feelings are totally deadened, he is bound to feel that the company of evil and immoral people is a painful torment, even in this world.

70. Such is the bounty from Allah, and sufficient is Allah as All Knower.

ذَلِكَ الْفَضْلُ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ عَلِيمًا

71. O those who believe, take your precautions,^{*101} then go forth (on an expedition) in parties, or go forth all together.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا خُذُوا
حِذْرَكُمْ فَانفِرُوا ثُبَاتٍ أَوْ
انْفِرُوا جَمِيعًا

***101** It should be noted that this verse was revealed at the time when the neighboring tribes had been emboldened by the defeat of the Muslims at the battle of Uhd. They were surrounded by danger on all sides and were hearing persistent rumors about the active hostilities of, and imminent attacks from, different quarters. There were cases of treachery also. The Muslim missionaries were invited cunningly to the outskirts of Al-Madinah. These circumstances urgently required that the Muslims should struggle hard to save the Islamic movement from failure and destruction in the face of such overwhelming threats.

72. And indeed, there is among you he who lingers behind, ^{*102} then if a disaster befalls you, he says: “Indeed, Allah has been gracious to me in that I was not present with them.”

وَإِنَّ مِنْكُمْ لَمَنْ لَّيَبْطِئَنَّ فَإِنْ
أَصَابَتْكُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا قَدْ أَنْعَمَ
اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ إِذْ لَمْ أَكُنْ مَعَهُمْ
شَهِيدًا



***102** The other meanings are that not only he himself shows lack of courage to face danger but also discourages and dissuades others from jihad.

73. And if a bounty comes to you from Allah, he would surely say, as if there had never been between you and him any affection: “Oh, I wish that I had been with

وَلَيْنَ أَصَابَكُمْ فَضْلٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ
لَيَقُولَنَّ كَأَنْ لَّمْ تَكُنْ بَيْنَكُمْ
وَبَيْنَهُ مَوَدَّةٌ يَلْبِئْتَنِي كُنْتُ مَعَهُمْ

them, then would I have achieved a great success.”

فَأَفُوزَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧٣﴾

74. So let them fight in the cause of Allah, those who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter.*103

And whoever fights in the cause of Allah, and is killed or gets victory, then We shall bestow upon him a great reward.

﴿٧٤﴾ فَلَیُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يَشْرُونَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ وَمَنْ يُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيُقْتَلْ أَوْ يَغْلِبْ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧٤﴾

***103** That is, let them clearly understand that those people, who hanker after worldly benefits only, are not fit to fight in the way of Allah. On the contrary, only those people are worthy of fighting in the way of Allah who have no other desire or object than to please Him and who have perfect belief in Allah and the Hereafter and are, therefore, ready to sacrifice all interests and all chances of prosperity and enjoyment in this world for the sake of pleasing their Lord. They sincerely believe that their sacrifices will not go in vain in the Hereafter, even if they might not have been successful in this life. Thus it is obvious that those who attach real importance only to their worldly interests cannot tread the path of Allah.

75. And what is (the matter) with you that you do not fight in the cause of Allah, and those weak among

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ

men, and the women, and the children who say: “Our Lord, take us out from this town, the people of which are oppressors. And appoint for us from Yourself a protecting friend. And appoint for us from Yourself a helper.”^{*104}

الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانَ الَّذِينَ
يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ
الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا وَاجْعَلْ
لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا
مِنْ لَدُنْكَ نَصِيرًا



***104** This was the cry of the poor and helpless children, men and women who had accepted Islam at Makkah and at other places but had no means of migrating to Al-Madinah, or defending themselves from persecution. They were being persecuted and oppressed in all sorts of manners and were invoking the help of Allah to deliver them from that horrible state.

76. Those who believe, they fight in the cause of Allah, and those who disbelieve, they fight in the cause of evil ones.^{*105} So fight against the friends of Satan. Indeed, the plot of Satan is ever weak.^{*106}

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي
سَبِيلِ الطَّاغُوتِ فَقَاتِلُوا أَوْلِيَاءَ
الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ
كَانَ ضَعِيفًا



***105** In the sight of Allah, there are two distinct parties of fighters. One party is that of the believers who fight for the

cause of Allah in order to establish his way on His earth, and every sincere believer is bound to perform this duty. The other party is that of unbelievers who fight in the way of *taghut* so as to establish the rule of the rebels against Allah on His earth and no believer would side with them in this evil work.

***106** The believers have been assured that they should not be cowed and terrified by the apparent grand preparations and evil designs of Satan and his companions because ultimately they are bound to fail.

77. Have you not seen at those to whom it was said: “Withhold your hands, and establish prayer, and pay the poor due,” Then when fighting was ordained for them, behold, a party of them feared men as they feared Allah, or even greater fear. ^{*107} And they say: “Our Lord, why have You ordained upon us fighting. Why did You not grant us respite for a short period.” Say: “The enjoyment of this world is little. And the Hereafter is better for him who fears (Allah). And you will not be wronged (even as

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ قِيلَ لَهُمْ كُفُّوا أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَخْشَوْنَ النَّاسَ كَخَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَشَدَّ خَشْيَةً ۚ وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا لِمَ كَتَبْتَ عَلَيْنَا الْقِتَالَ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنَا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ ۗ قُلْ مَتَّعْتُ الدُّنْيَا قَلِيلًا ۗ وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَلَا

much as) the husk on a
date-stone.”*108

تُظَلَمُونَ فِتْيَالاً

*107 This verse has three meanings, and all three are equally correct.

First, it means that those very people who were then showing cowardice were very impatient to fight before permission was given for this. They would repeat the tales of their persecution and oppression and say, “Give us permission to fight, for we have no more patience left to bear these wrongs.” At that time when they were advised to be patient for the time being and to purify themselves by means of Salat and Zakat, they would resent such pieces of advice. But when the command to fight was given, some of those very people began to show cowardice when they confronted the enemy armies and the dangers of war.

The second meaning is that those people were very religious as long as such harmless demands as the offering of Salat and the payment of Zakat were made; but no sooner the demand to fight in the way of Allah was made, they were filled with terror and fear for their lives, and they forgot all about their religiosity.

The third meaning is that during the pre-Islamic period, they were ready to fight for the sake of the spoils or for the gratification of their whims, and were engaged day and night in war. That is why, after embracing Islam, they were enjoined to desist a while from fighting and to reform their souls by means of the Salat and Zakat. But when they were enjoined to fight in the way of Allah, the same people who showed reckless bravery in fighting for the sake of false

pride were showing timidity.

The above mentioned three meanings apply to the three different categories of people and the words of the Arabic text are so comprehensive that they fit equally into all the three cases.

***108** That is, you need not worry about your reward from Allah for the service you render to His cause. If you exert your utmost in His way, Allah will not let your work go waste.

78. Wherever you may be, death will overtake you, even if you are in lofty towers. And if some good reaches them, they say: "This is from Allah." And if an evil befalls them, they say: "This is because of you (Muhammad)." ***109** Say: All (things) are from Allah." So what is (the matter) with these people that they do not seem to understand a word.

أَيْنَمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِكُكُمُ الْمَوْتُ
وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّشِيدَةٍ وَإِنْ
تُصِيبُهُمْ حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ
مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ تُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ
يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قُلْ
كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ فَمَالِ هَتُؤُلَاءِ
الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ
حَدِيثًا



***109** They have been admonished for their attitude towards the Prophet (peace be upon him). When there was success and victory, they would attribute it to Allah's grace and forgot that Allah had blessed them with grace through him. But when they suffered a defeat or had a setback because of

their own errors and weaknesses, they would lay the whole blame on the Prophet (peace be upon him), and would absolve themselves from all responsibility.

79. Whatever of good reaches you is from Allah, and whatever of evil befalls you is from yourself. And We have sent you (Muhammad) as a messenger to mankind. And sufficient is Allah as a witness.

مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ
وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنَ
نَفْسِكَ وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ
رَسُولًا وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا

80. He who obeys the messenger, has indeed obeyed Allah. And he who turns away, then We have not sent you (Muhammad) over them as a guard. ^{*110}

مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ
اللَّهَ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ
عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا

***110** That is, they themselves are responsible for their deeds and you will not be answerable for them. What you have been entrusted with, is to convey to them the commandments and instructions from God. And you have done that admirably well. Now it is not your obligation to force them to adopt the right way, and if they do not follow the guidance they are receiving through you, you shall not be held responsible for their disobedience.

81. And they say: “(we pledge) obedience,” then when they have gone forth from you, a party of them

وَيَقُولُونَ طَاعَةٌ فَإِذَا بَرَزُوا
مِنْ عِنْدِكَ بَيَّتَ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ

spends the night in planning other than what you say. And Allah records what they plan by night. So turn aside from them, and put your trust in Allah. And sufficient is Allah as a Trustee.

غَيْرِ الَّذِي تَقُولُ وَاللَّهُ يَكْتُبُ
مَا يُبَيِّنُونَ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ
وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ
وَكِيلًا

82. Do they not then reflect upon the Quran. And if it had been from other than Allah, they would have found therein much contradictions.*111

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ
مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ
أَخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

***111** The main cause of the wrong attitude of the hypocrites and the people of weak faith, who had been warned in the foregoing verses, was that they had doubts that the Quran was from Allah. They could not believe that it was being sent down by Allah to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and that the commandments contained in it were directly coming from Him. That is why they are being admonished to consider the Quran by giving close attention to it, and to verify whether their doubts are genuine and whether it is from Allah or not. The Quran itself bears witness to the truth that it is from none other than Allah. For no one else, however wise and intelligent he might be, could have gone on delivering addresses under different circumstances, about variant topics, so as to form a connected, balanced and coherent Book at the end of twenty three years. And

that too, without showing any contradiction whatever from the beginning to the end, and without arising any need to revise or make any change in it.

83. And when there comes to them some matter (news) of safety or fear, they spread it. And if they had referred it to the messenger, and to those of authority among them. So those who are competent to investigate it would have come to know about it (directly) from them.^{*112} And if it was not for the grace of Allah upon you, and His mercy, you would have followed Satan, except a few.

وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوْ
الْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا بِهِ وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ
إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَى أُولِي الْأَمْرِ
مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ
مِنْهُمْ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَاتَّبَعْتُمُ الشَّيْطَانَ إِلَّا
قَلِيلًا



***112** During the period of excitement, rumors were on the air from many quarters. Sometimes baseless and exaggerated reports were received that caused alarm in Al-Madinah and its outskirts. Then some cunning enemy would send news that all was quiet in the enemy camp, merely to conceal some impending danger and to keep the Muslims off their guard. Only those people who loved excitement, took keen interest in such rumors. They did not take the conflict between Islam and un-Islam to be a serious matter, and did not realize the grave consequences of indulging in such baseless rumors. Whenever they heard

any rumor, they would spread it from place to place, without considering the great harm their pastime was causing.

In this verse, such people have been warned of the gravity of their offense and strictly admonished to refrain from spreading rumors. They have been told to report any news they heard to the responsible people and then keep silent about it.

84. So fight (O Muhammad) in the cause of Allah. You are not held responsible except for yourself, and encourage the believers. It may be that Allah will restrain the might of those who disbelieve. And Allah is stronger in might and stronger in inflicting punishment.

فَقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا تُكَلَّفُ
إِلَّا نَفْسَكَ^ج وَحَرْضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ^ط
عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكْفِ بِأَسِ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا^ج وَاللَّهُ أَشَدُّ بِأَسًا وَأَشَدُّ
تَنْكِيلًا



85. Whoever intercedes an intercession for a good cause, for him is the share there from. And whoever intercedes an intercession for an evil cause, for him is the burden there from.^{*113} And Allah has power over all things.

مَنْ يَشْفَعْ شَفَعَةً حَسَنَةً يَكُنْ
لَهُ نَصِيبٌ مِّنْهَا^ط وَمَنْ يَشْفَعْ
شَفَعَةً سَيِّئَةً يَكُنْ لَهُ كِفْلٌ مِّنْهَا^ط
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقِيتًا



***113** Different people behave differently and with different

results. Some urge on others to exert themselves for the cause of Allah and to exalt His word and they get its reward. There are others who spread misunderstandings among the people about Allah's cause, discourage the Muslims and try to dissuade them from exalting the word of Allah and thus incur punishment.

86. And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet you with a better than it or return it.*114 Indeed, Allah is Account Taker of all things.

وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا
بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ
كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا



*114 The Muslims were specially exhorted to be very civil and polite to the non-Muslims because at that time their relations were strained on account of the conflict between them. In that state of tension, they were forewarned to be on their guard against incivility and impoliteness. They were, therefore, taught to be equally civil and polite to them when they greeted them respectfully. Nay, they should be even more civil and polite than their opponents.

Harsh behavior and harsh words do no good to anyone but they are specially unsuited to the work of those missionaries of Allah's Message (peace be upon him), who have dedicated themselves to one day invite the world to the truth and exerted themselves to reform the ways of the people. Such ill behavior may satisfy one's vanity, but it does great harm to one's mission.

87. Allah, there is no god except Him. He will

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لِيَجْمَعَنَّكُمْ

surely gather you all on the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt. And who is more truthful than Allah in statement.*115

إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ
وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حَدِيثًا



*115 That is, the misbehavior of the unbelievers, atheists, polytheists and the like can do no damage to the Godhead of Allah, for they cannot alter the fact that He is the One and All-Powerful Sovereign, and that, one day He will assemble together all human beings and deal with them in accordance with their deeds and none will be able to escape from His retribution. Therefore, Allah does not stand in need of anyone to defend Him against His rebels by showing incivility and impoliteness to them.

That is the bearing of this verse on the preceding verse. But this verse also serves as an appendix to the passage that began from verse 60. In that case it means: Let anybody follow any way he chooses and work in any way he likes in this world but he should not forget that one day everyone shall have to go in the presence of Allah Who is the sole Sovereign. Then everyone shall see the result of his actions and deeds.

88. Then what is (the matter) with you (that you are divided into) two parties regarding the hypocrites.*116
And Allah has reverted them (to disbelief) because of what

﴿ فَمَا لَكُمْ فِي الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِئَتَيْنِ
وَاللَّهُ أَرْكَسَهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا
أَتُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَهْدُوا مَنْ أَضَلَّ

they earned.^{*117} Do you want to guide him whom Allah has sent astray. And he whom Allah sends astray, you will then never find for him any way (of guidance).

اللَّهُ وَمَنْ يُضَلِّ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا



***116** This passage deals with the problem of those hypocritical Muslims who had accepted Islam in Makkah and other parts of Arabia but had not emigrated, to Al-Madinah. They lived as before with their people, and took more or less a practical part in all their hostile activities against Islam and the Muslims. They had become a very difficult problem for the Muslims who did not know how to deal with them. Some Muslims were of the opinion that they were after all Muslim because they recited the *kalimah* (the article of the Muslims' faith), offered the Salat, observed the Fast and recited the Quran. Then how could they be dealt with like the disbelievers? Allah in this passage has removed that difference of opinion from among the Muslims and told them how to deal with them.

At this place one should clearly understand why those Muslims who did not emigrate to Al-Madinah were declared to be hypocrites; otherwise one might not be able to interpret correctly this passage and the like passages of the Quran. The fact of the matter is that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) migrated to Al-Madinah and conditions were created there for the fulfillment of the requirements of Islam, a general order was given that all those Muslims who were oppressed in any place and in any

tribe or clan and could not freely carry out their Islamic obligations, should migrate to Al-Madinah, the abode of Islam. As a result, all those who could emigrate but did not do so because they loved their homes, their relatives and their interests more than Islam, were declared to be hypocrites. Only such of those as were really being prevented by impediments were declared to be helpless in verse 97 of this Surah.

It is obvious that the Muslims living in the abode of unbelief may be declared hypocrites for not migrating only if a general invitation is extended to them by the people living in the abode of Islam, or at least the doors of the abode of Islam are kept open for them. In such a case all those Muslims who may be doing nothing to change the abode of unbelief into the abode of Islam, nor emigrate to the abode of Islam, even if they could, would be declared hypocrites.

***117** Allah turned the hypocrites back to their former unbelief because they followed a double-faced policy and were time-servers. As they preferred the life of this world to that of the Hereafter, they had entered the fold of Islam with some mental reservations. They were not prepared to sacrifice those interests which came into conflict with the requirements of the faith and they did not have that firm belief in the Hereafter which makes one sacrifice with perfect peace of mind this world for the sake of the next world: It has thus become obvious that the line of demarcation was so clear that there ought not to have been two opinions about hypocrisy.

89. They wish if you should disbelieve, same as they have disbelieved, then you become equal (with them). So do not take from among them friends until they emigrate in the way of Allah. So if they turn back (to enmity), then seize them and kill*¹¹⁸ them wherever you find them. And do not take from among them friends nor helpers.

وَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ كَمَا كَفَرُوا
فَتَكُونُونَ سَوَاءً فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا
مِنْهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ حَتَّىٰ يَهَاجِرُوا فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَخُذُوهُمْ
وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ
وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ وُليًا وَلَا

نَصِيرًا

***118** Here the Muslims have been asked seize those hypocrites who belonged to the belligerent disbelievers and were actually engaged in hostile activities against the Islamic State.

90. Except those who seek refuge with a people, between you and whom there is a treaty (of peace).^{*119} Or (those who) come to you, their hearts restraining from fighting you or fighting their own people. And if Allah had willed, He could have given them power over you, so that they would have fought you. So, if they

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ
بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِّيثَاقٌ أَوْ جَاءُوكُمْ
حَصِرَتْ صُدُورُهُمْ أَن
يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ أَوْ يُقَاتِلُوا قَوْمَهُمْ وَلَوْ
شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَسَلَّطَهُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ
فَلَقَاتَلُوكُمْ فَإِنِ اعْتَزَلُوكُمْ فَلَمْ

withdraw from you, and they do not fight against you, and they offer you peace. Then Allah has not made for you a cause (that you fight) against them.

يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ وَأَلْقُوا إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ
فَمَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيلًا



***119** The exception is only concerning the first part of the command. Though the blood of such a hypocrite is lawful, he is not to be pursued and killed, if he has sought asylum in the territory of a non-Muslim State, which is an ally to the Islamic State. This is not because of the sanctity of the blood of the hypocrite but because of the sanctity of the treaty.

91. You will find others, who desire that they should have security from you, and security from their own people. Whenever they are returned (to opportunity) of (causing) mischief, they fall back into it. So, if they do not withdraw from you, nor offer to you peace, nor restrain their hands, then seize them, and kill them wherever you overtake them. And those, We have given to you against them a clear warrant.

سَتَجِدُونَ ءآخَرِينَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ
يَأْمَنُواكُمْ وَيَأْمَنُوا قَوْمَهُمْ كُلَّمَا
رُدُّوْا إِلَى الْفِتْنَةِ أُرْكَسُوا فِيهَا
فَإِنْ لَمْ يَعْتَزِلُوكُمْ وَيُلْقُوا إِلَيْكُمْ
السَّلَامَ وَيَكْفُوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ
فَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ
تَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأُولَئِكَ جَعَلْنَا
لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنًا مُّبِينًا



92. And it is not for a believer to kill a believer except by mistake. ^{*120}

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَنْ يَقْتُلَ
مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَأً

^{*120} This does not refer to the category of the above mentioned hypocrites whose blood has been made lawful, but to the sincere Muslims who lived either in the abode of Islam, or in the war zone or the abode of unbelief, against whom there was no proof that they had taken part in the hostile activities of the enemies of Islam: such a warning was necessary because there were many people who had accepted Islam sincerely but were still forced by circumstances to live among the foes of Islam; and there had been cases when some of them were accidentally killed by their Muslim brethren during an attack on an enemy clan. Therefore, Allah has enjoined what a Muslim who kills a Muslim by mistake must do to expiate such an accidental sin.

And whoever kills a believer by mistake, then the freeing of a believing slave, ^{*121} and payment of the blood money to his family, ^{*122} unless that they give (it up as) a charity.

وَمَنْ قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا خَطَأً فَتَحْرِيرُ
رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَى
أَهْلِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَصَدَّقُوا

^{*121} As the slain person was a believer, a believing slave is to be set free as expiation for his accidental murder.

^{*122} The Prophet (peace be upon him) prescribed one hundred camels or two hundred cows or two thousand

goats as blood money to be paid to the survivors of the slain man. If one desired to pay it in any other form, he would have to calculate it in terms of the market price of these animals. For instance, the blood money paid in cash during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was eight hundred gold dinars or eight thousand silver dirhams. During his caliphate, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) declared, “Now that the price of a camel has gone up, one thousand dinars or twelve thousand dirhams should be paid as blood money.” It should, however, be noted that the blood money prescribed here is not for a willful murder but for an accidental one.

But if he (the slain) was from a people hostile unto you, and he was a believer, then (only) the freeing of a believing slave (is required).

فَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَدُوِّكُمْ
وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ
مُؤْمِنَةٍ

And if he (the slain) was from a people between you and them there is a treaty, then a compensation must be paid to his family,^{*123} and the freeing of a believing slave.

وَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ
وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ فَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَى
أَهْلِهِ وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ

***123** In brief, the following are the commandments contained in Ayat 92:

If the slain person is an inhabitant of the abode of Islam, his murderer shall have to pay blood money as compensation and also to set free a slave to earn his forgiveness from God.

And if he is an inhabitant of a war zone, the murderer shall have only to set free a slave and not to pay any bloodmoney.

And if he belongs to an abode of unbelief which is an ally of the Islamic State, the murderer shall have to set free a slave and also have to pay blood money equal to the amount of the blood money of a non-Muslim victim as contained in the treaty.

Then whoever does not find (means), then fasting for two consecutive months,^{*124} (seeking) repentance^{*125} from Allah. And Allah is All Knower, All Wise.

فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ
مُتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَكَانَ
اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا



***124** These fasts must be consecutive without a single day's break; if there is a single break, except if it be in accordance with the law, one shall have to begin the prescribed fasting anew for two full months.

***125** That is, The freeing of a slave or the payment of blood money or the fasting for two consecutive months is not a penalty but is repentance and *kaffarah* (cover) for the offense. The difference between the two is that in the case of penalty, there is no feeling of self-reproach, compunction, contrition and self-reform, but there is a feeling of disgust and aversion, and it leaves disgust and bitterness behind it. That is why Allah enjoins *kaffarah* and repentance so that the offender may be able to purify his soul by means of good deeds, devotion and fulfillment of the rights, and turn to Allah through self-reproach and compunction. In this

way the sinner will not only atone for his present sin but will also refrain in future from such errors.

Kaffarah literally means a cover; a good deed that is performed as *kaffarah* for a sin, so to say, covers it just as a white-wash covers a blot on a wall.

93. And whoever kills a believer intentionally, then his recompense is Hell to abide therein forever. And Allah's wrath is upon him, and He has cursed him, and has prepared for him a great punishment.

وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا
فَجَزَاءُوهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا
وَعَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ
لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٣﴾

94. O those who believe, when you go forth (to fight) in the cause of Allah, investigate carefully, and do not say to him who greets you peace: "You are not a believer."^{*126} Seeking the profits of the life of this world. For with Allah are plenteous spoils. Even thus (as he now is) were you before, then Allah conferred His favors on you,^{*127} so investigate carefully. Indeed, Allah is ever informed of what

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا
ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا
وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْقَىٰ إِلَيْكُمُ
السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَبْتَغُونَ
عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ
اللَّهِ مَغَانِمٌ كَثِيرَةٌ كَذَلِكَ
كُنْتُمْ مِن قَبْلُ فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ
عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

you do.



***126** In the early days of Islam, Assalam-u-alaikum (peace be upon you) was a symbol of recognition for Muslims. When a Muslim met another Muslim, he greeted him with this salutation, as if to say, I belong to your own community. I am your friend and well-wisher. I have nothing but peace and security for you, so you should not show enmity towards me nor fear enmity and harm from me. It was like a password used in the army while passing through a line of guards at night so as to discern between friends and foes.

The importance of the salutation of peace as a symbol of recognition was specially great at that time because there was no apparent mark of distinction between a Muslim Arab and a non-Muslim Arab, as they wore the same kind of dress and spoke the same language. Still a difficulty arose when the Muslims attacked some clan and a local Muslim also became the target of attack. Then he would cry out, Asalam-u-alaikum or La llaha illallah (there is no god but Allah). But the attacking Muslims would suspect him to be a disbeliever who was using the password as a trick merely to save his life. They would, therefore, often kill him and take possession of his belongings as spoils. Although the Prophet (peace be upon him) would severely admonish the offenders on such occasions, yet there was a recurrence of such incidents. Then Allah solved the difficulty in this verse, which means, you have no right to judge cursorily that the man, who is declaring himself to be

a Muslim, is telling a lie merely to save his life. It is equally possible that he may be speaking the truth, or telling a lie, and one cannot know the reality without making a thorough investigation. Thus, while there is a chance of letting off a disbeliever by accepting his salutations of peace as genuine, there is also the more horrible chance of killing an innocent believer. In any case, it is far better to let off a disbeliever by mistake than to kill a believer by error.

*127 That is, there was a time when you yourselves were scattered as individuals among different clans of disbelievers. You were then hiding your Islam for fear of oppression and persecution and you could offer no other proof of your faith except by an oral expression. Now it is the bounty of Allah that you are enjoying community life and are able to raise the banner of Islam against the disbelievers. The right way of showing gratitude to Allah for this bounty is to show kindness and leniency to those Muslims who are still in the same state in which you were before this.

95. Not equal are those of the believers who sit (at home), except those who are disabled, and those who strive in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives. Allah has preferred those who strive with their wealth and their lives

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ
وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ
الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ

above those who sit, in ranks. And to each Allah has promised good. And Allah has bestowed on those who strive above those who sit a great reward.*128

عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً وَكُلًّا
وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحَسَنَىٰ وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ
الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ
أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا



*128 In this passage, the relative status of true Muslims has been assigned according to as they behave when they are asked to go to jihad on a voluntary basis, when the leader of the Islamic forces does not require the whole Muslim force. Those who offer themselves and their wealth and go to jihad have been assigned a higher rank than those who stay at home, even though the latter might have been engaged in other good works; moreover, there is, for the former a promise of a good reward. As regards to those who stay at home, when they are ordered to go to jihad, by making excuses or even those who shirk jihad, when a general order is given for jihad, and jihad becomes an obligatory duty, in these two cases those who are engaged in other works and do not go to jihad are hypocrites. And they are not entitled to the benefit of the promise of a good reward, except that they stay behind for any genuine excuse.

96. Degrees of rank from Him, and forgiveness, and mercy. And Allah is ever Forgiving, Most Merciful.

دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا



97. Indeed, those whom the angels take (in death) while doing wrong to themselves, ^{*129} they (the angels) will say: “In what (condition) were you.” They will say: “We were oppressed in the land.” They (the angels) will say: “Was not Allah’s earth spacious that you could have migrated therein. ^{*130} So for those, their habitation will be Hell, and an evil destination.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْتَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
ظَالِمِينَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ
قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ
اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةً فَتُهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا
فَأُولَئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ
مَصِيرًا



***129** “While doing wrong to themselves.” These were the people who had accepted Islam but were still living among their own clans, which had not yet embraced Islam, without any genuine excuse or compulsion. They were doing wrong to their own selves by living in a state of semi-Islam, although the Abode of Islam had come into existence where they could migrate and live the full life as a Muslim. They were quite content to live such a wretched life of semi-unbelief, according to their faith because they preferred their comforts, their families, their properties and their interests to their faith. That is why their excuse, “We were oppressed in the land”, has not been accepted. (See E.N.116).

***130** That is, why did you continue to live in a place which

was oppressed by the rebels against Allah and where it was not possible to live in accordance with the law of Allah? And why did you not migrate to a place where you could follow the divine law without any hindrance?

98. Except the weak among men, and the women, and the children, who are not able to devise a plan, nor are directed to a way.

إِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ
الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ لَا
يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ
سَبِيلًا

99. As for such, it may be that Allah will forgive them. And Allah is ever Clement, Oft Forgiving.*131

فَأُولَئِكَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَعْفُوَ
عَنَّهُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَفُوًّا غَفُورًا

*131 As regards to “migration in the way of Allah”, it is an obligation with two exceptions: one may remain there to struggle for the establishment of Islam and to change the system of life based on unbelief into the system of Islam; just as the Prophets and their immediate followers did in the initial stages of their mission; or one may remain there in a state of great disgust and repugnance as long as he is unable to find any way out of it. With the exception of the above two cases, it will be a life of continuous sin to live in an abode of unbelief. The excuse that “We could not find any abode of Islam for migration” shall not be accepted

and will be met with the rebuff: “If there was no abode of Islam, was there no forest or mountain where you could live on the leaves of trees and the milk of goats in order to escape from submission to the laws of unbelief?”

In this connection, a misunderstanding about the tradition, “No migration after the conquest of Makkah”, may also be removed. This was not a permanent command concerning migration but only a temporary instruction that suited the changed conditions of Arabia after the conquest of Makkah. As long as the major portion of Arabia was the abode of unbelief, the Muslims were enjoined to migrate to Al-Madinah, which was the only abode of Islam at the time. But when almost all the parts of Arabia came under Islam, the Prophet (peace be upon him) so to say, merely canceled the first command under which migration was compulsory, saying, “There is no more (compulsory) migration (to Al-Madinah) after the conquest of Makkah.” The tradition was never meant to be a prohibitory command for all the Muslims of the world for all times to come up to the Last Day.

100. And whoever emigrates in the cause of Allah, will find on the earth many dwellings and abundance, and whoever goes forth from his home, as an emigrant unto Allah and His messenger, then death overtakes him, his reward is

❖ وَمَنْ يَهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ
فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَافًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً
وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا
إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكُهُ
الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ

then surely incumbent upon Allah. And Allah is ever Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

101. And when you travel in the land, then it is no sin on you that you shorten from the prayers,^{*132} if you fear that those who disbelieve may attack you.^{*133} Indeed, the disbelievers are an open enemy to you.

وَإِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ كَانُوا لَكُمْ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا

***132** The shortening of the obligatory part of the Salat during a journey in peace time is, to reduce four rakats to two rakats, but there is no prescribed limit to the reduction during actual fighting. The Salat must be offered anyhow in any form as the circumstances on the occasion permit. If it is possible to offer the Salat in congregation, it should be offered in congregation; otherwise the soldiers should say it individually. If it is not possible to turn the face to the qiblah, it may be offered facing any other direction. If it is not possible to remain stationary for the Salat, it may be offered while riding or walking. If it is not possible to bend down or prostrate, one should do so symbolically. If, during the Salat, it becomes necessary to move from that place, one may continue the Prayer even during the movement. There is no harm in offering the Salat, even if one's clothes become stained with blood. And even if in spite of all these concessions, it is not possible to offer it at all, it may then be

reluctantly postponed, as was done during the course of the battle of the Trench.

There is a difference of opinion as to whether the obligatory Prayers (*faraid*) should only be offered in a journey, or other Prayers (*sunnats*) practiced by the Prophet (peace be upon him) should also be offered in addition to the former. When on a journey the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to offer without fail two rakats in addition to the obligatory rakats of Salat-ul-Fajr (Morning Prayers) and three rakats of witr with Salat-ul-Isha (Night Prayer). For the other three Prayers (Zuhr, Asr, Maghrib), he only offered the obligatory Prayers; there is no proof of his offering the *sunnats* Prayers. He, however, used to offer additional prayers (*nawafil*), whenever he got time for these even while he was riding. That is why Abdullah bin Umar prohibited the people from offering the *sunnats* during a journey except with the Morning Prayer. But the majority of the scholars leave it to the individual's option to offer or not to offer the *sunnats* on a journey. The Hanafis are of the opinion that it is better to leave them during the actual journey but one must offer them at a halting place, if one can get the necessary peace of mind.

As regards the nature of the journey in which the Salat may be shortened, some scholars (Ibn Umar, Ibn Masud and Ata) have imposed the condition that it should be in the way of Allah, e.g., for jihad, Hajj, Umrah, or in quest of knowledge, etc. Imam Shafai and Imam Ahmad are of the opinion that the journey should be for some lawful purpose; otherwise one has no right of enjoying the

concession of reduction in Salat. The Hanafis are of the opinion that the Salat may be shortened during any kind of journey, irrespective of the purpose for which it is undertaken. As regards the nature of the journey, it may merit reward or punishment by itself, but it does not affect the concession of reduction in Salat.

Some of the Imams have interpreted words “there is no sin” to mean that reduction in the Prayer is not obligatory but merely optional. One may make use of the permission and shorten his Salat or may not. Imam Shafai holds the same view, though he considers it better to shorten it. He is of the opinion that a person who does not make use of the reduction, gives up the higher thing and adopts a lower thing. Imam Ahmad is of the opinion that although reduction is not obligatory, yet it is improper not to make use of the concession. Imam Abu Hanifah considers reduction obligatory and there is also a tradition from Imam Malik to the same effect. All the traditions from the Prophet (peace be upon him) show that in his journeys he always shortened his Salat and there is no authentic tradition to show that he ever offered four rakats on a journey. Ibn Umar says, “During the journeys I accompanied the Prophet (peace be upon him), Abu Bakr, Umar or Uthman (may Allah be pleased with them), and I witnessed that they always shortened their Salat and never offered four rakats.” The same view is also supported by authentic traditions from Ibn Abbas and several other companions.

Once during Hajj, Uthman (may Allah be pleased with

him) performed four rakats while he was leading the Salat at Mina and the companions objected to it. He satisfied them, saying, I have taken a wife from Makkah and I have heard from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that whoever marries at a place becomes a citizen of that place. Therefore I have not shortened my prayer.

There are, however, two traditions against this from Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) which show that it is equally right to make a reduction in the Salat or to say it in full. But these traditions are weak in authenticity and contrary to her own practice, as she herself practiced reduction.

In this connection, it may also be noted that sometimes one feels himself to be on a journey as well as at home when he may shorten the Salat or offer it in full at one and the same halting place according to the circumstances. Most probably Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) referred to such a state, saying: When on a journey, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) sometimes shortened his Salat and sometimes offered it in full.

As regards the words, “it is no sin on you that you shorten from the prayers”, it is not correct to conclude that the command is optional. The same words have been used in connection with running between Safa and Marwa on the occasion of Hajj, in verse 158 of Surah Al-Baqarah, although this is an essential part of Hajj. As a matter of fact, these words have been used in both the places to allay the fear that shortening of the Prayer or running between Safa and Marwa might entail a sin or lessen one’s rewards.

As regards the length of the journey, the Zahirites are of the opinion that reduction may be made in any journey irrespective of the distance. According to Imam Malik, the minimum distance of the journey should be 48 miles, or its duration should be at least one day and one night. Ibn Abbas and Imam Ahmad are also of the same opinion and a saying of Imam Shafai also supports the same. But the minimum distance for reduction according to Anas is 15 miles, while Imam Auzai and Imam Zuhri follow the opinion of Umar that one day's journey suffices for reduction . According to Hasan Basri and Imam Abu Yusuf, the minimum journey of two days entitles one to shorten one's Salat. Imam Abu Hanifah is of the opinion that reduction may be made in a journey of a minimum distance of 54 miles. The same is the opinion of Ibn Umar, Ibn Masud and Uthman (may Allah be pleased with them all).

Opinions differ regarding the reduction in a break during the course of a journey. Imam Ahmad is of the opinion that if one intends to stop at a place for four days, he will have to offer the Prayer in full. According to Imam Malik and Imam Shafai, reduction is not lawful at a place where one intends to stop for more than four days. Imam Auzai extends it to 13 days and Imam Abu Hanifah to 15 days or more and enjoins offering of the full Prayer during such a stop. But there is no explicit command of the Prophet (peace be upon him) about this. However, there is a consensus of opinion that if one is forced by circumstances to stop at a place but intends to leave it for home at any

time, he may go on practicing reduction for an indefinite period of time. There are instances when some companions practiced reduction continuously even for two years for the same reason. Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal allows a prisoner to make reduction during the whole term of his imprisonment.

133 The Zahirites and the Kharijites interpret this sentence to mean that reduction in the Salat may be made only during state of war and that reduction in a journey during peace time is against the Quran. But we learn from an authentic tradition that once when Umar presented the same objection before the Prophet (peace be upon him), he answered, the concession of reduction is a bounty from Allah; therefore, enjoy it. This is a well known fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) availed of the concession in every journey both during war time and during peace time. Another tradition from Ibn Abbas makes the position clear, saying, the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to Makkah from Al-Madinah and there was no fear of anyone except of God but he reduced four rakats of the Salat to two rakats.

102. And when you (O Muhammad) are among them, and lead the prayer for them,^{*134} then let (only) a party of them stand with you (to pray),^{*135} and let them take their arms.

وَإِذَا كُنْتَ فِيهِمْ فَأَقَمْتَ لَهُمُ
الصَّلَاةَ فَلْتَقُمْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ
مَعَكَ وَلِيَأْخُذُوا أَسْلِحَتِهِمْ

***134** From the words, “And when you, (O Muhammad), are among them”, Imam Abu Yusuf and Hasan bin Ziyad

have concluded that the commandment about the Salat of Fear was meant to be in force only during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him). But there are many instances in the Quran that a commandment has been addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the same also holds good for his successors after him. Therefore, there is no reason why the commandment about the Salat of Fear be restricted to the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Then there are instances that many of the great companions offered the Salat of Fear after his death and no difference of opinion in this regard has been reported from any companion.

***135** This commandment about the Salat of Fear applies to that state when there is a threat of imminent attack from the enemy but no actual fighting is going on. As regards the state of actual fighting, according to the Hanfis the Salat will be postponed to a later time, and according to Imam Malik and Imam Thauri, if it is not possible to bow and to prostrate, it should be performed by symbolic gestures. According to Imam Shafai, one may even during the Salat of Fear remain engaged a little in the conflict, if need be. We learn from authentic traditions that the Prophet (peace be upon him) postponed four consecutive Salats during the Battle of the Trench, and afterwards when he got respite, he performed these in the respective order although the commandment about the Salat of Fear had been sent down before this.

Then when they have performed their prostrations,

فَإِذَا سَجَدُوا فَلْيَكُونُوا مِنْ

let them take their positions in your rear, and let another party come that has not prayed, so let them pray with you. And let them take their precaution and their arms.*136

وَرَأَيْكُمْ وَلَّتَاتِ طَآئِفَةٌ
أُخْرَى لَمْ يُصَلُّوا فَلْيُصَلُّوا
مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا حِذْرَهُمْ
وَأَسْلِحَتَهُمْ

*136 The form of the Salat of Fear mainly depends upon the conditions of war. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) led it in various ways, according to the different conditions, the Muslim leader of the time has the option of adopting any of those ways, according as it suits a certain occasion.

One method is that one section of the army should offer the Salat with the leader and the other should remain engaged in fighting against the enemy. After the performance of one rakat and after bringing the prayer to an end formally that section should fall back to the fighting line and the second section should perform the second rakat with the Imam. Thus, the leader will perform two rakats while the sections will perform one rakat each.

The second method is that one section should perform one rakat with the Imam and fall back, then the second section should offer one rakat with the Imam and fall back; then each section should come back, turn by turn, and complete the second (i.e. the missed) rakat individually. In this way each section will perform the first rakat behind the Imam and the second individually.

The third method is that one section of the army should

perform two rakats with the Imam and after salutation should fall back to the fighting line. Then the second section should join in the third rakat and complete the Prayer with the Imam. Thus, the Imam will perform four rakats and each section of the army two rakats each. The fourth meyhod is that one section should perform one rakat behind the Imam and when the Imam stands up for the second rakat the followers should complete the second rakat by themselves and then join the ranks. As regards the Imam, he should prolong his second rakat so that the other section may join him and perform their first rakat behind him and complete their second rakat by themselves.

The first meyhod has been related by Ibn Abbas, Jabir bin Abdullah and Mujahid, and the second by Abdullah bin Masud and the Hanafis give preference to this. The third method has been related by Hasan Basri from Abu Bakrah and the fourth by Sahl bin Abi Hathmah and accepted by Imam Shafai and Imam Malik with a little modification.

There are other meyhods of offering the Salat of Fear details of which may be found from any of the numerous books of the Islamic law and regulations.

Those who disbelieve wish, if you were negligent of your arms and your baggage, to attack you in a single rush.

وَدَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ تَغْفُلُونَ
عَنْ أَسْلِحَتِكُمْ وَأَمْتِعَتِكُمْ
فَيَمِيلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَيْلَةً وَاحِدَةً

And it is no sin for you, if you are

وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ كَانَ

inconvenienced of rain, or you are ill, that you lay aside your arms.

بِكُمْ أَذَىٰ مِّنْ مَّطَرٍ أَوْ كُنْتُمْ
مَرْضَىٰ أَنْ تَضَعُوا أَسْلِحَتَكُمْ

And take your precaution. Indeed, Allah has prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment. *137

وَخُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ
لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُّهِينًا

***137** The Muslims have been reassured that Allah Himself will deal severely with the disbelievers who are opposing the truth with their false machinations and will bring ignominy to them. The precautionary measures that are being enjoined are merely from the practical point of view to teach them that they should, in their turn, exert their utmost and leave the result to Allah, in Whose hands really lies victory or defeat.

103. Then when you have finished the prayer, then remember Allah, standing, and sitting down, and (lying down) on your sides. And when you are in safety, then establish prayer. Indeed, the prayer is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours.

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ
فَازْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا
وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ ۚ فَإِذَا
أَطْمَأْنَنْتُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ ۚ إِنَّ
الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
كِتَابًا مَّوْقُوتًا

104. And do not weaken in pursuit of the people

وَلَا تَهِنُوا فِي ابْتِغَاءِ الْقَوْمِ ۚ إِنَّ

(the enemy).^{*138} If you should be suffering then surely, they (too) are suffering (hardships), as you are suffering. And you hope from Allah that which they do not hope.^{*139} And Allah is ever All Knowing, All Wise.

تَكُونُوا تَأْمُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ
يَأْمُونَ كَمَا تَأْمُونَ
وَتَرْجُونَ مِنْ اللَّهِ مَا لَا
يَرْجُونَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا
حَكِيمًا

***138** “The people”: the disbelievers who were opposing the Islamic mission and doing their utmost to prevent the establishment of the Islamic system of life.

***139** That is, it is really strange that the believers should not bear bravely as many hardships for the sake of truth as the disbelievers were bearing for falsehood, though the latter have no other object than this world and its transitory benefits. Whereas the believers have the highest object of pleasing the Lord of the heavens and the earth and expect to get everlasting rewards from Him.

105. Indeed, We have sent down to you (O Muhammad)^{*140} the Book (the Quran) in truth that you might judge between mankind by that which Allah has shown you. And be not an advocate for those who betray their trust.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ
لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرْنَاكَ
اللَّهُ ۗ وَلَا تَكُنْ لِلْخَائِبِينَ
خَصِيمًا

***140** In Ayats 105-115, some very important issues

concerning an event that occurred at that time have been discussed.

There was in the Bani Zafar clan of the Ansar, a man known as Tamah or Bashir bin Ubairiq. He stole the armor of another Ansari and hid it in the house of a Jew. When an investigation started into the theft, the owner of the armor placed the matter before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and told him that he suspected Tamah of the theft. But the accused and his relatives and many other people of the Bani Zafar clan conspired and laid the guilt at the on the Jew, who asserted that he was innocent of the thing. But Tamah's people went on pleading his case vehemently. They argued: "The statement of the Jew who is an enemy of the truth and who disbelieves in Allah and His Messenger cannot be trusted; whereas we are Muslims, and, therefore, should be trusted." The Prophet (peace be upon him) was naturally influenced by the seeming correctness of the argument and was about to acquit Tamah and give a warning to the plaintiff for bringing a false charge against a Muslim, and decide the case against the Jew, when this revelation came and disclosed the reality of the matter.

It is true that even if the Prophet (peace be upon him) had, as a judge, decided the case in the light of the evidence produced before him, he would not have incurred any blame, for judges have to give their decision according to the evidence that is presented before them and sometimes people do succeed in getting wrong judgments in their favor by misrepresentation. But the matter had another

side: if the Prophet (peace be upon him) had decided the case against the Jew at that time, when a bitter convict was raging between Islam and kufr, the enemies of Islam would have gotten a strong moral weapon against him, nay, against the Islamic community and the Islamic mission. They would have carried on a bitter propaganda against Islam, saying, "There is no justice among the Muslims; they practice prejudices and partisanship in spite of the fact that they preach against them as has been shown by this decision against the Jew." That is why, Allah directly intervened in the case to save them from this danger.

In this passage (Ayats 105-115) on the one hand, those Muslims who tried to shield the guilty one of their own clan, have been strongly rebuked for their partisanship, and, on the other hand, the Muslims in general have been taught that they should not allow partisanship to stand in the way of justice. It is sheer dishonesty that one should plead the cause of his own party man, even though he may be in the wrong, and oppose the man of the opposite party, even though he may be right.

106. And seek the forgiveness of Allah. Indeed, Allah is ever Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَأَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ^ط إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ
غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٠٦﴾

107. And do not argue on behalf of those who deceive themselves.*141 Indeed, Allah does not love him who is a betrayer of his

وَلَا تُجَادِلْ عَنِ الَّذِينَ
يَتَحَتَّأُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا

trust, sinful.

يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ خَوَّانًا أَثِيمًا ﴿١٧﴾

***141** He who is dishonest to others is in reality dishonest to himself because he forces all his faculties of mind and heart, which have been given to him as a trust, to help him in his dishonesty. Moreover, he suppresses his conscience, which Allah has given him to safeguard his morality, so as to disable it from functioning rightly and preventing him from being dishonest. Thus a man is dishonest to others only when at first he becomes unjust to himself.

108. They seek to hide from men and do not seek to hide from Allah. And He is with them when they plot by night, in that which He does not approve of speech. And Allah is ever encompassing of what they do.

يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مَعَهُمْ إِذْ يُبَيِّتُونَ مَا لَا يَرْضَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ

مُحِيطًا ﴿١٨﴾

109. Here you are, you who have argued for them in the life of this world. But who will argue with Allah for them on the Day of Resurrection, or who will then be their defender.

هَآأَنْتُمْ هَآؤَآءِ جَدَلْتُمْ عَنْهُمْ فِي الْحَيَوةِ الدُّنْيَا فَمَنْ يُجَادِلُ اللَّهَ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَمْ مَنْ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيْلًا ﴿١٩﴾

110. And whoever does evil or wrongs himself, then seeks forgiveness of Allah, he will find Allah Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ
نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ
غُفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١١٠﴾

111. And whoever earns sin, he then earns it only against himself. And Allah is All Knowing, All Wise.

وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ إِثْمًا فَإِنَّمَا
يَكْسِبُهُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١١١﴾

112. And whoever earns a fault or a sin, then throws (blames) it upon the innocent, then indeed, he has burdened himself with a slander and a manifest sin.

وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ خَطِيئَةً أَوْ إِثْمًا ثُمَّ
يَرْمِ بِهِ بَرِيئًا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلَ
بُهْتَنَا وَإِثْمًا مُبِينًا ﴿١١٢﴾

113. And if it was not for the favor of Allah upon you (Muhammad), and His mercy, a party of them had resolved to mislead you. And they mislead none except themselves, and no harm can they do to you in anything.^{*142} And Allah has sent down to you the Book (the Quran) and wisdom, and

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَتُهُ
لَهَمَّت طَّائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ أَنْ
يُضِلُّوكَ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَضُرُّونَكَ مِنْ
شَيْءٍ وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا

has taught you that which you did not know. And the favor of Allah has ever been great upon you.

لَمْ تَكُن تَعْلَمُ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ
اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا

*142 That is, even if they had succeeded in deceiving you by making a false report in regard to the case, and in getting your decision in their own favor, they would not have done any harm to you but to themselves, for even in that case they themselves would have been guilty in the sight of Allah, and not you. This is obvious because the real offender is the one who deceives the judge and gets a wrong judgment in his own favor, and not the judge who has to decide the case on the basis of the evidence presented before him. Moreover, such a one might delude himself that he has gotten “the right” on his side by his cunning devices, but in reality the “real right” remains the right in the record of Allah. (See E.N. 192, Surah Al-Baqarah).

114. There is no good in most of their secret conversations except for those who enjoin charity, or kindness, or conciliation between mankind. And whoever does that, seeking the good pleasure of Allah, then We shall bestow on him a great reward.

لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ
نَّجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ
مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ
النَّاسِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ
أَبْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ
نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

115. And whoever opposes the messenger after what has become manifest to him of the guidance and follows other than the way of believers. We will let him go to what he has turned to,^{*143} and We will burn him in Hell, and evil is destination.

وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ
سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ
وَنُصَلِّهِ أَجْهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا



***143** That is, the dishonest Muslim turned on the way of anti-Islam: so Allah also turned him on that way. It happened like this: when the facts of the case of theft were revealed by Allah and the innocent Jew was acquitted and Taamah was found guilty, this hypocrite left Al-Madinah in anger and joined the enemies of the Prophet (peace be upon him) at Makkah and began to oppose him openly.

116. Indeed, Allah does not forgive that partners should be associated^{*144} with Him. And He forgives what is other than that to whom He wills. And he who associates partners with Allah, then he has certainly strayed to a far away misguidance.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ
وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ
يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ
ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا



***144** In continuation of the foregoing theme, it has been stated that the hypocrite, who had in his anger gone to the

side of the mushriks, did not fully realize the consequences of his foolish action. For this purpose, evils of the way he adopted and the nature of the fellows he accompanied have been pointed out.

117. They call upon instead of Him none but females (deities). And they call upon none but Satan,^{*145} a persistent rebel.

إِنْ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا
إِنثًا وَإِنْ يَدْعُونَ إِلَّا
شَيْطَانًا مَّرِيدًا

***145** Though none worships Satan by performing devotional ceremonies before him, the one who surrenders himself entirely to him and follows him wherever he misleads, does act like a devotee of Satan. This also makes it plain that one who obeys any other blindly, in fact, worships him.

118. Allah cursed him. And he said: “Surely I will take of Your slaves an appointed portion.”^{*146}

لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَقَالَ لَأَتَّخِذَنَّ مِنْ
عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا

***146** That is, “I will mark off for myself a portion of their time, their labor and their efforts, their energies and their abilities, their wealth and their offspring, and will entice them by deception so that they will devote the major portion of these in my way.

119. “And surely I will lead them astray, and surely I will arouse desires in them, and surely I will command them

وَلَأُضِلَّهُمْ
وَلَأَمْرُنَهُمْ فَلْيَبْتِكُنَّ إِذَانَ

so they will slit^{*147} the ears of the cattle, and surely I will command them so they will change creation of Allah.”^{*148} And whoever takes Satan for a friend other than Allah, has certainly sustained a manifest loss.

الْأَنْعَمِ وَالْأَمْرَهُمْ فَلْيَغْيِرَنَّ
خَلْقَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذِ
الشَّيْطَانَ وَلِيًّا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرَانًا مُّبِينًا



***147** This alludes to one of the superstitious customs of the pagan Arabs. After a she-camel had given birth to five or ten young ones, they would slit her ears and dedicate her to their god and consider it unlawful to get any work from her. Likewise, if a camel had been a partner in the birth of ten young ones, his ears were also slit to mark that he had been dedicated to a god.

***148** This does not condemn the alterations that man makes in the creation of God for their right and proper use, for in that case the whole of human civilization will stand condemned as a seduction of Satan. It is obvious that the civilization is nothing but the right and proper use of the things created by God. What the Quran describes as devilish alterations is to make wrong and improper use of things against human nature and against their natural functions. Hence, all those forms that are adopted as an escape from the designs of nature are the results of the enticement of Satan e.g. sodomy, birth control, asceticism, etc. It is equally devilish that females should be made to give up their proper functions and to perform those duties

which nature has assigned to males. Instances can be multiplied to show that the disciples of Satan consider the laws of the Creator of the Universe wrong and, therefore, are trying to reform them.

120. He makes promises to them, and he arouses in them false desires.*149 And Satan does not promise to them but deceptions.

يَعِدُهُمْ وَيُمَنِّيهِمْ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ
الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا

*149 The success of Satan depends entirely upon false promises and deceit. In order to mislead individuals and communities, he presents very rosy pictures of his wrong ways to reassure his victims. He tempts one by holding out the promise of pleasure and success. He allures some by giving the surety of national power and prosperity, while he deludes others by the prospect of the welfare of humanity, and deceives still others by telling them that his is the right way of arriving at the truth. He also entices some by assuring them that there is no God and Hereafter and that life ends with death and others by giving them a guarantee that they would escape the consequences in the Hereafter, if there is Hereafter, by the intercession of this or that saint.

121. For such, their habitation will be Hell, and they will not find from it an escape.

أُولَئِكَ مَا أَوْلَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَلَا
يَجِدُونَ عَنْهَا مَخِيصًا

122. And those who believe and do righteous deeds, We shall admit

وَالَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا

them into Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. A promise from Allah in truth. And who can be more truthful than Allah (in his) words.

الصَّلِحَتِ سُدَّ خَلْمُهُمْ جَنَّتِ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ
حَقًّا وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ قِيلًا



123. Neither your desires, nor the desires of the People of the Book (which matter). Whoever does evil will be recompensed for it, and he will not find for himself other than Allah any protecting friend, nor a helper.

لَيْسَ بِأَمَانِيكُمْ وَلَا أَمَانِي أَهْلِ
الْكِتَابِ مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ
بِهِ وَلَا يَجِدْ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا



124. And whoever does any righteous deeds, of male or female, and he is a believer, then such will enter paradise and they will not be wronged (even as much as) the speck on a date-stone.

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ
مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا
يُظَلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا



125. And who can be better in religion than one who surrenders his face (himself) to Allah, and he is doer

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ
وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَاتَّبَعَ

of good, and follows the tradition of Abraham, the true in faith. And Allah did take Abraham as a friend.

مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا ۖ وَاتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا ﴿١١٥﴾

126. And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. ^{*150} And Allah is ever encompassing all things. ^{*151}

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ
شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطًا ﴿١١٦﴾

***150** Since everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah, the best thing for man is to surrender his independence completely to Him, and to submit to Him unreservedly. He will come nearer to nature, if he willingly becomes His servant and obeys Him without showing any kind of rebellion against him.

***151** That is, if man does not submit and surrender to Allah, he cannot escape His punishment, for Allah encircles him on all sides.

127. And they ask you concerning women. ^{*152} Say: "Allah gives you a ruling about them, and that which has been recited to you in the Book concerning female orphans, ^{*153} to whom you do not give that which is decreed for them, ^{*154} and (yet) you desire that you

وَيَسْتَفْتُونَكَ فِي النِّسَاءِ ۚ قُلِ اللَّهُ
يُفْتِيكُمْ فِيهِنَّ وَمَا يُتْلَىٰ
عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ فِي يَتِمَّى
النِّسَاءِ الَّتِي لَا تُوْتُونَهُنَّ مَا
كُتِبَ لَهُنَّ وَتَرْغَبُونَ أَن

marry them,^{*155} and (concerning) the oppressed among children,^{*156} and that you stand firm for orphans in justice.” And whatever you do of good, then indeed, Allah is ever All Aware of it.”

تَنكِحُوهُنَّ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ
مِنَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَأَنْ تَقُومُوا
لِلْيَتَامَى بِالْقِسْطِ وَمَا تَفَعَّلُوا
مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِهِ عَلِيمًا

***152** It has not been stated here what the people were asking concerning women, but the answer given to it in verse 128 points out the nature of the question.

***153** This is not the answer to the question but a sort of reminder of the commandments that have already been enjoined in Ayats 1-14 of this Surah about orphan girls in particular and the orphans in general in order to stress the importance of this matter in any scheme of social reform. It is because of its importance in the solution of social problems that before giving a verdict concerning marriage problems which were raised, Allah has again laid emphasis on the rights of orphans.

***154** The allusion is to Ayat 3 of this Surah: “And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls”.

***155** The words of the text may also mean, “Whom you desire to marry.” We learn from a tradition of Aishah (may Allah be Pleased with her) that the text implies both the meanings. She says, “Those people who had the charge of the orphan girls who inherited wealth, employed different methods of doing injustice to them. If an orphan girl was

wealthy and also beautiful, they would desire to marry her so that they might exploit her wealth and enjoy her beauty without incurring any financial liability. If she was wealthy but ugly, they would neither themselves marry her nor let anyone else marry her, so that she might not get a protector who might claim to her right from the guardian.”

*156 The allusion is to the commandments concerning the rights of orphans, given in Ayats 1-14 of this Surah.

128. And if^{*157} a woman fears from her husband ill treatment, or desertion, then it is no sin upon them that they arrange between them an amicable settlement. And a settlement is better.^{*158} And present in (human) inner selves is greed.^{*159} And if you do good and fear (Allah), then indeed, Allah is ever informed of what you do.^{*160}

وَإِنْ أَمْرًا خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا
 نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلَا جُنَاحَ
 عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يُصَلِّحَا بَيْنَهُمَا
 صُلْحًا ۚ وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ ۗ
 وَأَحْضَرْتِ الْآنْفُسُ الشُّحَّ ۗ
 وَإِنْ تُحْسِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
 كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

*157 This verdict mentioned in Ayat 127 has been given in the Ayats 128-134. In order to understand it, one should grasp the nature of the problems to which this is the answer.

Several questions arose as a result of the restrictions placed

on marriage in Ayats 3-5 of this Surah. In pre-Islamic days, one was free to marry as many wives as one liked without conceding any rights to them. But these verses limited the maximum number of wives to four and conceded the rights of dower to them and laid down the conditions of justice and equitable treatment for marrying more than one wife. As it appeared impossible to fulfill these conditions in certain cases, e.g. if one's wife was barren or invalid or had lost attraction for him or was not fit for conjugal relationship, some problems arose when one married the second wife: was it a compulsory condition that one should show equal inclination towards both the wives or love them equally or show equality in the conjugal relations with them? Or, if this was not possible, did justice require that one should divorce the first wife before marrying the second? Or, if the first wife did not wish to part with her husband, would it be against the requirement of justice if she gave up some of her own rights to prevent her husband from divorcing her. This Ayat answers such questions.

***158** That is, it is better for a woman to make a settlement with him by yielding some of her rights and live with the husband with whom she had lived a part of her life than to get a divorce and separate from him.

***159** Narrow-mindedness on the part of the wife is that even when she knows that she has lost those qualities that make a wife attractive to her husband, she should expect and demand the same kind of treatment that is shown only to a beloved wife. On the other hand, the husband shall be narrow-minded if he suppresses too much the rights of the

wife who has lost attraction for him but who still wants to live with him, and reduces her rights to an unbearable point.

*160 Allah has again appealed to the husband, as He generally does in such matters, to show generosity to the wife. He has urged him to be generous to her, for she has been his companion for years even though she might have lost charm for him. He should fear God and imagine how he would fare if God withheld His favors from him on account of some defects in him.

129. And you will never be able to deal with justice between wives, even if it is your ardent desire. So do not incline (toward one) with full attention, and leave her (the other) as hanging.*161 And if you do good and fear (Allah), then indeed, Allah is ever Forgiving, Most Merciful.*162

وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ
النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا
كُلَّ الْمَيْلِ فَتَذَرُوهَا
كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ وَإِنْ تُصْلِحُوا وَتَتَّقُوا
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

*161 Allah has made it clear that the husband cannot literally keep equality between two or more wives because they themselves cannot be equal in all respects. It is too much to demand from a husband that he should mete out equal treatment to a beautiful wife and to an ugly wife, to a young wife and to an old wife, to a healthy wife and to an invalid wife and to a good natured wife and to an ill-

natured wife. These and like things naturally make a husband more inclined towards one wife than towards the other. In such cases, the Islamic law does not demand equal treatment between them in affection and love. What it does demand is that a wife should not be so neglected as to be practically reduced to the position of the woman who has no husband at all. If the husband does not divorce her for any reason or at her own request, she should at least be treated as a wife. It is true that under such circumstances the husband is naturally more inclined towards a favorite wife, but he should not, so to say, keep the other in such a state of suspense as if she were not his wife.

From this verse some people wrongly conclude that though the Quran allows more than one wife, it practically cancels this permission by asserting, "And you will never be able to deal with justice between wives" They forget that this is only a part of the whole instruction and the Quran does not stop at this but adds, "So do not incline (toward one) with full attention" As this commandment takes into consideration the existence of more than one wife allowed by the Quran, it leaves no loophole of escape for the followers of Christian Europe from the fact that Islam does allow polygamy under certain conditions.

***162** As Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate, He will forgive any of the shortcomings that are unavoidable because of natural factors, provided that one is not guilty of deliberate injustice, and tries his best to be just as far as it is humanly possible.

130. And if they separate (by divorce), Allah will enrich each (of them) from His abundance. And Allah is ever All Encompassing, All Wise.

وَإِنْ يَتَفَرَّقَا يُغْنِ اللَّهُ كُلًّا مِّنْ سَعَتِهِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ وَاسِعًا حَكِيمًا

131. And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And indeed, We instructed those who were given the Book before you, and (We instructed) you, that you fear Allah. And if you disbelieve, then indeed, to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And Allah is ever Rich, owner of Praise.

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَنِيًّا حَمِيدًا

132. And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And sufficient is Allah as a Defender.

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا

133. If He wills, He can take you away, O people, and bring others (in your place). And Allah is ever

إِنْ يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ وَيَأْتِ بِآخَرِينَ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ

All Potent over that.

عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ قَدِيرًا ﴿١٣٣﴾

134. Whoever does desire the reward of this world, then with Allah is the reward of this world and the Hereafter. And Allah is ever All Hearer, All Seer. *163

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا
فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ ثَوَابُ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ﴿١٣٤﴾

***163** In order to urge the Muslims to observe strictly the commandments concerning justice to women and orphans, Allah has, as usual, in the conclusion (Ayats 130-134) given a brief but effective address by way of admonition, and has impressed upon the believers the following things:

(1) You should never be under the delusion that you can make or mar the fate of any one, and that if you withdraw or withhold your help and support from anyone, that person will become utterly helpless. As a matter of fact, your own fate, and the fate of those whom you support, is entirely in the hands of Allah. And you alone are not the only means by which He supports His servants or maid servants. The resources of the Owner of the earth and the heavens are vast and limitless and He is also All-Wise and has full power to adopt means for helping anyone He wills.

(2) Allah has enjoined you, as He always enjoined the communities of the former Prophets, to conduct your affairs with fear of God in your hearts. In this lies your own good and not of God. If you do not carry out these instructions, you can do no harm to Allah but you yourselves will go the way of the former disobedient

communities. The Sovereign of the universe has never stood in need of the people. If you will not behave properly, He will remove you from leadership and appoint another community in your place. And your removal will not in the least diminish anything from the greatness of His Kingdom.

(3) Allah has in His possession all the benefits and rewards of this world and of the next world, benefits which are temporary and transitory or permanent and everlasting. It is for you to make your choice from among these according to your own capacity and courage. If you are enamored of the temporary good things of this world and are even prepared to sacrifice the permanent blessings of the Hereafter, Allah will bestow upon you the same here and now, but in that case, you will have no portion in the permanent blessings of the Hereafter. You should not forget that owing to your own lack of capability and lack of courage, you have chosen to acquire only a drop out of the ocean of the blessings of God. Therefore it is better for you to adopt that way of obedience and submission which may enable you to acquire the vast benefits of this world and of the Hereafter.

The concluding words of this piece of admonition, “And Allah is ever All-Hearer, All-Seer”, have a very deep significance. He makes a fine distinction between the good and the bad in the distribution of His blessings. He is fully aware of what is happening in the universe over which He is ruling and of the capabilities, efforts and intentions of everyone. Therefore, one who is disobedient to Him, should not expect those blessings which He has reserved for those

who are obedient to Him.

135. O those who believe, be firmly standing for justice, as witnesses for Allah,^{*164} even^{*165} if (it be) against yourselves, or (your) parents, or (your) kindred. Whether it be (against) a rich or a poor, for Allah is nearer to them both. So do not follow desire (of your heart), lest you keep away from justice. And if you distort (your witness) or refuse (to give it), then indeed, Allah is ever informed of what you do.

﴿ يَتَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ ۚ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَاقِرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَىٰٓ أَن تَعْدِلُوا ۗ وَإِن تَلْوُوا أَوْ تُعْرِضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴾

***164** The words “be firmly standing for justice” are very significant. They imply, you not only have to do justice but have also to bear the standard of justice in order to eradicate injustice and establish right and justice in its place. As believers, you have to gird up your loins to support justice, whenever your support is needed."

***165** That is, the sole aim of your testimony should be to please Allah, without any tinge of partiality, self-interest, fear or favor in it.

136. O those who believe, believe in Allah,^{*166} and His messenger and the Book (the Quran) which He has sent

﴿ يَتَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ءَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۖ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ

down to His messenger, and the Scripture which He sent down before. And whoever disbelieves in Allah, and His angels, and His scriptures, and His messengers, and the Last Day,^{*167} then he has certainly strayed to a far away misguidance.

عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي
أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّهِ
وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا

بَعِيدًا

***166** To ask believers to believe might at first seem strange. The fact is, however, that belief as used here has two meanings. First, belief denotes that a man has preferred to acknowledge the soundness of true guidance, to distance himself from the fold of those who disbelieve, and to join the camp of the believers. Second, belief denotes faith, a man's believing in the truth with all his heart, with full earnestness and sincerity. It denotes man's sincere determination to mold his way of thinking, his taste and temperament, his likes and dislikes, his conduct and character, his friendship and enmity, and the direction of his efforts and striving, in conformity with the creed which he has resolved to embrace. This verse is addressed to all those who are believers in the first sense of the term, and they are asked to change themselves into true believers, i.e. believers in the second sense.

***167** Here kufr implies two things:

(1) A person may reject Islam outright.

(2) A person may pay lip service to Islam but may not sincerely believe in it or may show his conduct that he does

not, in fact, believe in Islam, in spite of his profession. Here kufr implies both these things, and the verse warns that neither kind of kufr can go side by side with the fundamental articles of Islamic faith and will mislead the one who adopts it, away from the truth into the paths of deviation.

137. Certainly, those who believe, then disbelieve, then (again) believe, then (again) disbelieve, then go on increasing in disbelief,^{*168} Allah will never forgive them, nor will He guide them to the (right) way.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ
ءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ أَزْدَادُوا
كُفْرًا لَّمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَلَا
لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ سَبِيلًا



***168** These are the people who do not consider faith a serious matter but play with it like a toy to gratify their whims and lusts. They adopt Islam, if and when they are swayed to it by some fanciful notion, and become disbelievers if another notion moves them away to the opposite side. Or, they become Muslims when their interests demand it and become disbelievers, without the least hesitation, if their interests lie in disbelief. Obviously, for such people there is neither forgiveness nor guidance from Allah. They do not stop at their own disbelief but go much further in it. They strive to turn other Muslims also away from Islam, conspire against it and make open designs to harm it so as to raise the standard of kufr high up and to pull down the standard of Islam. As this is an addition to the sin of one's personal disbelief, it deserves

much severe punishment than the offense of the one who disbelieves in Islam but is not antagonistic to it.

138. Give the tidings to the hypocrites that there is for them a painful punishment.

بَشِّرِ الْمُنَافِقِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا



139. Those who take disbelievers for their friends instead of the believers. Do they seek honor with them.*169 But indeed, the honor belongs to Allah entirely.

الَّذِينَ يَتَّخِذُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِن دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَيْبَتُغُونَ عِنْدَهُمُ الْعِزَّةَ فَإِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا



*169 The Arabic word *izzat* is more comprehensive than the English word honor, the regard in which one is held by his followers. *Izzat* refers to such a high regard and secure position as is inviolable.

140. And it has already been revealed to you in the Book (this Quran) that, when you hear the verses of Allah being rejected of and mocked at, then do not sit with them (who disbelieve and mock) until they engage in some other conversation. Indeed, you would then be like them (should you stay with

وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا مِثْلُهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي

them).^{*170} Surely, Allah will gather hypocrites and disbelievers into Hell all together.

جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا

***170** The command to the believers to quit the company of the disbelievers, as soon as they get engaged in ridiculing Islam, is contained in Ayat 68 of Surah Al-Anaam which was revealed earlier than Surah An-Nisa. If a believer sits in the company of disbelievers and coolly listens to the ridicule of divine revelations, he becomes a partner in that blasphemy, and there remains little difference between him and the disbelievers.

141. Those who wait (and watch) about you. Then if there is a victory for you from Allah, they say: “Were we not with you.” And if there is a success for the disbelievers, they say (to them): “Did we not gain an advantage over you, and we protected you from the believers.”^{*171} So Allah will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection. And never will Allah grant to the disbelievers a way (of success) against the believers.

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَكُمْ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فَتْحٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ وَإِنْ كَانَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نَصِيبٌ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَسْتَحِذْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَنَمْنَعُكُم مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ وَلَن يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا

***171** The hypocrites of every age have always enjoyed all the benefits conferred by Islam, by professing it with their tongue, and nominally joining the Muslim community. At the same time they enjoy all the benefits they can derive from the disbelievers, by mixing with them and assuring them, “We are not bigoted Muslims though we are nominally connected with them. We are akin to you in culture, in thoughts and in the way of life and our interests and loyalties are the same as yours. Therefore, you should rest assured that we will side with you in the conflict between Islam and kufr.”

142. Certainly, the hypocrites seek to deceive Allah, but it is He who deceives them. And when they stand up for the prayer, they stand with laziness, (and) to be seen of people, and they do not remember Allah but little. ^{*172}

إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَدِعُونَ اللَّهَ
وَهُوَ خَدِيعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى
الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كُسَالَى يُرَاءُونَ
النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا
قَلِيلًا



***172** The offering of the Salat in congregation has been held out as a test of one's being a sincere believer or a hypocrite because during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him) one could not be considered a member of the Islamic community unless one offered the Salat regularly and punctually. Just as every association or organization considers the absence of a member without genuine excuse from its meetings a sign of his lack of interest, and expels

him from it for continuous absence, so if a Muslim absented himself from the Salat in congregation, it was considered a clear sign of his lack of interest in Islam. And if he continuously absented himself from it, this was taken as a proof of his desertion from Islam. That is why even the confirmed hypocrites of that time had to join the Salat in congregation five times a day; otherwise they could not be counted as members of the Islamic community. But what distinguished them from the true believers was that the true believers went to the mosques with great enthusiasm before time and stayed there even after the Prayer was over which was a clear proof of their genuine interest in it. On the other hand, the very call to the Prayer sounded like a death knell to a hypocrite. He would rise up reluctantly to join the congregation, but his whole demeanor clearly showed that he was offering his Salat unwillingly. Then after the Prayer he would leave the mosque in haste as if he had been released from prison. Thus, all his movements showed that he had no interest in the remembrance of Allah.

143. Swaying between this (and that), (belonging) neither to these (believers), nor to those (disbelievers). And he whom Allah sends astray, then you will never find for him a way. ^{*173}

مُذَبِّدِينَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ لَا إِلَىٰ
هَاتُوَلَاءِ وَلَا إِلَىٰ هَاتُوَلَاءِ ۚ وَمَنْ
يُضِلِّ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا

***173** It declares that no human being has the power to

guide to the right way the one who himself does not intend to get guidance from the Book of Allah and the excellent pattern of His Messenger (peace be upon him). Allah turns him to the wrong way to which he himself is inclined and shuts all the doors of guidance against him because of his own quest for deviation. And this happens in accordance with the divine law that man gets what he seeks and strives for. For instance, if one seeks to make one's provisions by lawful means and strives for the same, God provides lawful means for him and shuts unlawful doors against him, in proportion to the intensity of the sincerity of his intention. On the contrary, if one has the intention of making his provisions by unlawful means and strives for the same, Allah provides him with the same through unlawful means. Allah alone has the power to guide any individual on any way whatsoever, and no one can take any course, right or wrong, without His permission and without His help, but He allows and helps everyone to proceed on the way he chooses for himself. If one loves Allah and is a seeker after truth and sincerely strives to follow His way, He allows him and helps him to think and act on the right lanes leading to the right way and provides means for him to proceed on the same way. But if one chooses to follow wrong ways and strives to proceed on wrong ways, Allah shuts the way of guidance against him and opens before him evil ways which he chooses for himself. No one has the power to prevent such a one from evil thoughts and evil deeds and from spending his energies in evil ways. It is thus obvious that none can guide to the right way the wretched one who

deliberately loses it and whom Allah leads astray in consequence of his intentional deviation.

144. O those who believe, do not take the disbelievers for friends instead of the believers. Do you wish to give Allah against yourselves a manifest proof.

يَتَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا
الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ؕ أَتُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَجْعَلُوا
لِلَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطٰنًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٤٤﴾

145. Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire. And never will you find for them a helper.

إِنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِينَ فِي الدَّرَكِ الْأَسْفَلِ
مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا ﴿١٤٥﴾

146. Except those who repent and correct themselves, and hold fast to Allah, and make sincere their religion for Allah,^{*174} then they will be with the believers. And Allah will bestow on the believers a great reward.

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا
وَأَعْتَصَمُوا بِاللَّهِ وَأَخْلَصُوا
دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِي اللَّهُ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٤٦﴾

***174** That person, who dedicates his faith to Allah, devotes his whole life earnestly and faithfully for Him and reserves all his loyalties, interests, and affections for Him alone. In short, his attachment to Allah becomes so intense that he is

ready to sacrifice anything for Him.

147. What would Allah do (gain) with your punishment, if you give thanks^{*175} and believe (in Him). And Allah is ever All Appreciative (of good),^{*176} All Knowing.

مَا يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ إِنْ
شَكَرْتُمْ وَءَامَنْتُمْ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
شَاكِرًا عَلِيمًا



***175** That is, if you show your sincere gratitude to Allah and do not adopt an attitude of ingratitude and treachery towards Him in regard to the benefits and blessings you have received from Him, there is no reason why He should punish you.

The right attitude of gratitude is that one should sincerely appreciate the kindness of the benefactor, acknowledge it with his tongue and show his gratitude by his conduct. This implies three things: First, the grateful person should attribute the kindness to the real benefactor and should not associate anyone else with him in gratitude and acknowledgment. Second, he should be full of the feelings of love and loyalty for his benefactor and should not cherish any such feelings for the opponents of the benefactor. Third, he should be obedient to his benefactor, and should not in any way use or employ the benefits conferred on him against the will of the benefactor.

***176** The word *shakir*, when applied to Allah, means that He appreciates the worth of the services of His servant; and when applied to the servant, it means that he expresses his gratitude to his Lord for His blessings. Allah appreciates fully the quantity and the quality of the services that are

rendered by His servants for His cause and deprives none of them of the due rewards: nay, He rewards their services most generously and gives much more than they deserve. Of course, His treatment of His servants is quite different from their own treatment of their fellow-men. They underestimate the worth of the services rendered by a fellow man and take him to task severely for an omission. Allah in His bounty rewards much more generously than His servant deserves for any service rendered by him in His cause, but is very lenient and forgiving for any omission or neglect of duty shown by His servants.

148. Allah does not like any public utterance of evil except by one who has been wronged. And Allah is ever All Hearer, All Knower.

﴿ لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوِّءِ
مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظُلِمَ ۚ وَكَانَ
اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا ﴾

149. Whether you publish a good deed, or conceal it, or forgive an evil, then indeed, Allah is ever Oft Forgiving, All Powerful.^{*177}

﴿ إِن تَبَدُّوا خَيْرًا أَوْ تَخْفَوْهُ أَوْ
تَعْفُوا عَن سُوءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ
عَفُوًّا قَدِيرًا ﴾

***177** The moral instructions contained in this verse are of the highest standard. The Muslims have been taught to practice virtue or at least to show forbearance even in the face of provocation. At the time of its revelation, the hypocrites, the Jews and the idolaters were all engaged in opposing Islam by all possible means and were maltreating

its followers in every conceivable way. Therefore it was but natural that the Muslims should be filled with feelings of anger and hatred. When Allah noticed the storm of emotion rising in their hearts, he warned them that He did not like that they give vent to their feelings, though they were wronged and therefore justified, if in retaliation they gave expression to their bitter feelings. They were taught that they, as Muslims, were expected to go on doing good openly and secretly or at least refrain from doing evil for evil. They were instructed, “You should try to mold your character after that of your Allah, Who is so Forbearing that He does not withhold His provisions even from the most wicked culprits and shows forbearance to the most sinful offenders. You should, therefore, have a big heart and show forbearance even in the most critical and provocative situations.

150. Indeed, those who disbelieve in Allah and His messengers, and wish that they can create a distinction between Allah and His messengers, and they say: “We believe in some and disbelieve in others,” and they wish that they can adopt a way in between.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ
 وَرُسُلِهِ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا
 بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ
 نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ
 وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ
 سَبِيلًا

151. It is they, they are the disbelievers in truth,^{*178} and We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment.

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ حَقًّا
وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُّهِينًا



***178** That is, there is absolutely no doubt that all those people are equally disbelievers, who deny Allah all His Messengers, who acknowledge Allah but deny His Messengers, who accept some of the Messengers and reject others. Each and every one of such people is a confirmed disbeliever.

152. And those who believe in Allah and His messengers, and make no distinction between any of them. To such, He will give them their rewards.^{*179} And Allah is ever Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.^{*180}

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَمْ
يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ أُولَئِكَ
سَوْفَ يُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرَهُمُ^ق وَكَانَ
اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا



***179** Full assurance has been given to those who acknowledge Allah as their sole Sovereign and Deity, and submit to and follow all His Messengers, that they deserve to be rewarded according to the quality of their good deeds. In contrast to them, there is ignominious punishment for those who do not acknowledge Allah as the sole Sovereign and Sustainer, or for those who adopted the rebellious way by accepting some of His representatives and rejecting others. Allah does not accept any of the apparently good

deeds of such people because it has no legal status in His sight.

***180** As Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate, He will be very lenient in judging the deeds of those who believe in Him and His Messengers and will not be hard on them.

153. The people of the Scripture ask you to bring down upon them a book from the heaven.^{*181}

Then indeed, they had asked Moses even greater than that, when they said: "Show us Allah plainly." So the storm of lightning seized them for their wrongdoing.^{*182} Then they took the calf (for worship) even after what had come to them as clear evidences.^{*183}

Even then We forgave that. And We bestowed on Moses an evident authority.

يَسْأَلُكَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَنْ تَنْزِلَ
عَلَيْهِمْ كِتَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فَقَدْ
سَأَلُوا مُوسَىٰ أَكْبَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ
فَقَالُوا أَرِنَا اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً
فَأَخَذْتَهُمُ الصَّعِقَةَ يُظْلِمُهُمْ
ثُمَّ آخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَعَفَوْنَا عَنْ
ذَلِكَ وَعَاتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ سُلْطٰنًا

مُبِينًا ١٥٣

***181** This was one of the strange demands of the Jews of Al-Madinah. They said to the Prophet (peace be upon him), "We will not accept you as a Prophet unless you cause a written Book to come down to us from heaven before our very eyes or cause a written message to come down to each one of us to this effect: Muhammad (peace be upon him) is Our Messenger; so believe in him."

*182 A mere mention of this incident has been made in the short list of the crimes of the Israelites to which reference has been made here to show how impertinent they had become. This incident has already been mentioned in Ayat 55 of Surah Al-Baqarah (See E.N. 17, Surah Al-Baqarah).

*183 “Clear evidences”: the signs which the children of Israel had seen, one after the other, since the time of the Prophet Moses’ (peace be upon him) appointment as a Messenger. They had also witnessed the drowning of Pharaoh and his army and many other signs during their exodus from Egypt. Therefore, they knew well that it was Allah, Lord of the universe, and not a calf, Who had rescued them from the tyranny of a powerful ruler like Pharaoh. Yet they were so enamored of false gods that they forsook God, their real Benefactor, and made the calf of gold the object of their worship.

154. And We raised over them the Mount for (taking) their covenant.*184 And We said to them: “Enter the gate, prostrating.”*185 And We said to them: “Do not transgress in Sabbath.” And We took from them a firm covenant.*186

وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ الطُّورَ بِمِيثَاقِهِمْ
وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا
وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ لَا تَعْدُوا فِي السَّبْتِ
وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

*184 “Firm covenant”: the commandments inscribed on the tablets which were given to the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). The covenant was the pledge taken from the chiefs of Israel at the foot of Mount Tur. This has already

been mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 63 and is also referred to in Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 171.

*185 See Ayats 58-89 and E.N. 75 of Surah Al-Baqarah.

*186 See Ayat 65 and E.Ns 82-83 of Surah Al-Baqarah.

155. Then because of their breaking of their covenant, and their disbelieving in the revelations of Allah, and their killing of the prophets without right, and of their saying: “Our hearts are covered.”*187 Nay,*188 but Allah has set a seal upon them because of their disbelief, so they do not believe except a few.

فَبِمَا نَقَضْتُمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَكُفِّرْتُمْ
بِعَايَةِ اللَّهِ وَقَتْلِهِمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بَغَيْرِ
حَقٍّ وَقَوْلِهِمْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ بَلْ
طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا



*187 Reference has already been made to such a saying of the Jews in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 88. Just as all the worshipers of falsehood are proud of their obduracy against the truth, so were the Jews proud of their beliefs, prejudices, rituals and customs that they had inherited from their forefathers and could not be persuaded to give them up. That is why they always turned a deaf ear to the Message of the Prophets of Allah with the answer: “We are determined to reject your invitation, even though you bring strong arguments in support thereof. We will adhere strongly and faithfully to what we believe and practice.” (See E.N. 94 of Surah Al-Baqarah).

*188 This is a parenthetical statement.

156. And because^{*189} of their disbelief and of their uttering against Mary a great slander.^{*190}

وَيَكْفُرِهِمْ وَقَوْلِهِمْ عَلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ
بُهْتَانًا عَظِيمًا



***189** This is in continuation of the theme under discussion.

***190** The calumny against Mary concerning the birth of Jesus has been declared here as disbelief because it was not directed against the person of innocent Mary or her son but against Jesus Christ, the Messenger (peace be upon him) of God. The Jews had absolutely no ground for suspicion about his miraculous birth without father, because God had caused the whole community to stand as witness to the miracle. When virgin Mary, who belonged to the noble and well known religious family of the Israelites, came home with the new born child, a large crowd gathered there and demanded an explanation from her. But she simply pointed to the child. The crowd could not understand how a child in the cradle could speak, but to their utter astonishment, the child began to speak clearly and fluently and addressing the crowd, he declared, "I am Allah's servant: Allah has given me the Book and made me a Prophet." (Surah Maryam, Ayat 30). Thus Allah cut at the very root of the slander about his birth. That is why none ever accused Mary of fornication, nor taunted Jesus (peace be upon him) with being an illegitimate son until he stained his maturity. But when at the age of thirty, he started his mission to invite the people to the way of God and rebuked the Jews for their evil deeds and exposed the hypocrisies of their scholars and jurists and warned the whole community of

the consequences of moral degradation, they turned against him. Instead of accepting his message and making sacrifices for the cause of God, and reforming their evil ways, these impudent and unscrupulous criminals resorted to all sorts of dirty tricks and devilish designs to suppress the voice of truth. It was then that they made that monstrous calumny which they had never uttered before during the previous thirty years of his life, because they knew it for certain that Mary and her son were absolutely free from this taint. Thus their calumny, in fact, was not due to any real suspicion, which they might be harboring in their hearts, but it was a pure calumny, which they deliberately invented for opposing the truth. That is why Allah declared it to be disbelief instead of wickedness and falsehood, for their real aim by this accusation was to hinder the people from the way of God and not merely to slander an innocent lady.

157. And (because of) their saying: “We indeed killed Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, Allah’s messenger.”^{*191} And^{*192} they did not kill him, nor they crucified him, but it appeared so unto them.^{*193} And indeed, those who disagree over it are in doubt thereof. They do not have any knowledge of it, but pursuit of a conjecture.^{*194} And certainly they did not

وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى
ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ
وَمَا صَلَّبُوهُ وَلَكِنْ شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ
وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ لَفِي
شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ
إِلَّا اتِّبَاعَ الظَّنِّ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا

kill him.

***191** The fact that they bragged of slaying Jesus (peace be upon him), knowing him to be a Messenger of God, shows how bold they had become in their crimes. We have shown in the previous note that the miracle of his speech in the cradle had let no doubt whatsoever to remain in the minds of the Jews about his prophethood. Then the clear signs that they witnessed from him (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 49) were a conclusive proof that he was really a Prophet of God. Therefore their wicked behavior towards him was not the result of any misunderstanding about his prophethood, but was an intentional crime against the one who had been appointed by Allah as Messenger.

Though it appears very strange that a community should slay a person whom they know to be and acknowledge a Prophet of Allah, yet it is so, for the ways of wicked communities are strange. They cannot and do not tolerate a person who criticizes them for their evil ways and prohibits unlawful things. Such people, even though they be the Prophets of Allah, have always been persecuted, imprisoned and slain by their own wicked people.

As a proof thereof, the following is quoted from the Talmud: "When the city (Jerusalem) had been captured, Nebuchadnezzar marched with the princes and officers of the Temple.... On one of the walls he found the mark of an arrow's head as though somebody had been killed or hit nearby, and he asked who was killed there.

"Zachariah, the son of Yehoyadah, the high priest, answered the people. He rebuked us incessantly on account

of our transgressions and we were tired of his words and put him to death.”

Even according to the Bible, when the Prophet Jeremiah rebuked the Jews on account of their transgressions, they accused him of being in conspiracy with the Chaldeans and traitor against his people and sent him to prison. Likewise, the Jews had treated John the Baptist a couple of years before the crucifixion of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon them). They counted John as a Prophet and acknowledged him as one of the most righteous men of their community, but when he criticized Herod (the ruler of Judea) for his evil ways, he was not tolerated. He was first sent to prison, then beheaded on the demand of Herod’s beloved, the dancing girl.

It is, therefore, obvious from their record that when they presumed that they had crucified Jesus Christ (peace be upon him), they bragged: “We have slain a Messenger of Allah.”

*192 This is another parenthesis.

*193 This verse is explicit on the point that the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was rescued from crucifixion and that the Christians and the Jews are both wrong in believing that he died on the cross. A comparative study of the Quran and the Bible shows that most probably it was Jesus (peace be upon him) himself who stood his trial in the court of Pilate, who sentenced him to death, but they could not kill or crucify him, for Allah raised him to Himself.

This is what happened, Pilate knew well that Jesus (peace be upon him) was innocent and had been brought in his

court out of jealousy. So he asked the crowd whether Jesus (peace be upon him) should be released on the occasion of the Festival or Barabbas, a notorious robber. But the high priests and elders persuaded the crowd to ask for the release of Barabbas and for the crucifixion of Jesus (peace be upon him). After this, God, Who can do any and everything He wills, raised Jesus (peace be upon him) to Himself and rescued him from crucifixion and the one who was crucified afterwards was somehow or other taken for Christ. Nevertheless, his miraculous escape does not lessen the wicked crime of the Jews, because they knew it well that the one, whom they crowned with a crown of thorns, and on whose face they spat and whom they supposedly crucified with disgrace was Christ, the son of Mary. As regards the matter how “But it appeared so unto them” that they had crucified Jesus (peace be upon him), we have no means of ascertaining. Therefore it is not right to base on mere guess-work and rumors an answer to the question how the Jews were made to believe that they had crucified him, whereas in fact, Jesus (peace be upon him), the son of Mary, had escaped from them.

***194** “They do not have any knowledge of it, but pursuit of a conjecture.” They, the Christians. They do not agree in their versions of crucifixion. The very fact that they offer so many different accounts of the matter is by itself a proof that they possess no definite knowledge of it and are, therefore, in doubt about it. One version is that the person who was crucified was not Jesus (peace be upon him) but someone who bore his likeness, whom the Jews and the

Romans had disgracefully put on the cross, while Jesus (peace be upon him) was standing nearby and laughing at their folly. Another version is that the one who was nailed to the cross was Jesus (peace be upon him), but he did not die on the cross and was alive when he was taken down from it. Some others say that he died on the cross but came to life afterwards and met his disciples more than ten times and talked to them. Still others say that death due to crucifixion occurred on the physical body of Jesus (peace be upon him) and he was buried but the divine spirit within him was raised. There are still others who say that after his death Jesus (peace be upon him) came to life with his body and was raised with his body. Obviously, if the Christians had any knowledge of the truth, they would not have given so many different versions of it.

158. But Allah raised him up unto Himself.^{*195} And Allah is ever All-Powerful, All-Wise.

بَلْ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا

***195** Here Allah has told the fact of the matter. The Quran explicitly states that the Jews did not succeed in putting Jesus (peace be upon him) to death and that Allah raised him to Himself, but it is silent about the nature and details of the matter and does neither say explicitly whether Allah raised his body and soul together from the earth to some place in heaven, nor that he died like other mortals and only his soul was raised to heaven. Therefore, on the basis of the Quran neither aspect can be definitely denied or affirmed. But a study of the style clearly shows that

whatever be the nature of being raised in any case, Allah certainly treated the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) in an extraordinary way. The following considerations lead to the conclusion that the incident was extraordinary.

First, the belief in the ascension of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), body and soul together, was already prevalent among the Christians, and was one of the causes which misled a large section of them to believe in his divinity. But, in spite of it, the Quran not only has not clearly refuted it but has used the same word “ascension” for the incident that the Christians use for it. Had it not been an extraordinary incident factually the Quran would not have used such ambiguous words as help support a doctrine of the divinity of Jesus (peace be upon him).

Second, had Allah meant by the words used in Ayat 158 that “Allah caused his death”, or that “Allah raised him in rank”, more explicit words would have been used. In the first case, more appropriate words would be: “No doubt they did not slay him nor crucified him but Allah rescued him alive from them and then gave him natural death”, and in the second: “The Jews intended to dishonor him by crucifixion, but Allah raised him very high in rank”, as have been used in tire case of the Prophet Idris: “And We raised him to a high position”. (Surah Maryam, Ayat 57).

Third, if the incident related here meant merely the natural death of Christ, the words, “And Allah is All-Powerful and All-Wise”, after it would be meaningless. These words can be appropriately used only in connection with some extraordinary manifestation of the power and wisdom of

Allah.

The only argument that can be cited in support of the interpretation of verse Ayat 158 that Jesus died a natural death is the use of the word *mutawaffika* in Ayat 55 of Surah Aa1-Imran, in connection with the incident. But as we have explained in the corresponding E.N. 51, the word is not explicit in the meaning of natural death but can be applied both to take the soul and to take the body and soul together. As there is scope for both the interpretations in this word, its use cannot refute the above mentioned arguments against the meaning: “Allah caused his death”. Those who insist on this interpretation argue that there is no other instance in which *tawaffa* might have been used for the seizure of both body and soul together. This is meaningless, for this is the only incident of its kind in the whole human history. The only thing to be considered is whether this word may lexically be used in this sense or not. If it can be used, we have to face the question: Why does the Quran not use a direct word for death instead of a word which is liable to support the doctrine of ascension, which in turn, has given rise to the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus (peace be upon him)? The use of this word is a clear proof that there was something extraordinary about the incident. Above all, the doctrine of ascension is further strengthened by the traditions according to which the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), son of Mary, will come again to the earth before the Resurrection and fight the Dajjal. (These traditions have been cited in the Appendix to the commentary of Surah Al-Ahzab). These categorically

prove the second coming of Jesus (peace be upon him). Therefore, it would be more rational to believe that he is living somewhere in the universe before this second coming than that he lies dead and buried somewhere before his advent.

159. And there is none from the people of the Scripture but that he will surely believe in him before his death.^{*196} And on the Day of Resurrection he will be against them a witness.^{*197}

وَإِنْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا
لَيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهِ وَيَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا



***196** This has been interpreted in two ways and both are likely. Here by the people of the Scripture are meant the Jews and may also be the Christians. According to the first interpretation, it means: “All the people of the Scripture, alive at the time of the natural death of Christ, will have believed in him, that is, in his prophethood.” The second interpretation of “And there is none from the people of the Scripture but that he will surely believe in him before his death” is that all the people of the Book before their death do realize and believe that Christ is really a Messenger of God, though that belief will be of no avail at the time. Both these interpretations have been put forward by several companions and their followers and renowned commentators, but its real meaning is only known to Allah.

***197** That is, “In the court of God, Christ will give testimony against the Jews and the Christians that they

rejected, neglected and distorted the message brought by him.” Some details of this testimony are given in Ayats 116-117 of Surah Al Maidah.

160. Because^{*198} of the wrong doing of those who became Jews, We made unlawful for them (certain) good things that had been lawful to them (before), and because of their hindering many (people) from Allah’s way.^{*199}

فَبِظُلْمٍ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا
حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ طَيِّبَاتٍ أُحِلَّتْ لَهُمْ
وَبَصَدَّهِمْ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا



***198** The main theme that was broken by the parenthesis, which ends here, has been resumed.

***199** It is an irony that the Jews, who possessed a bivariate Book and the heritage of the prophets, should not only have themselves discarded the way of God but also frequently stood in the way of God. It is a fact that they have always been opposing and placing obstacles in the way of those movements that have ever been started for the promulgation of the truth and have been starting or helping start movements against the way of God. Their latest crime in this connection is communism which, for the first time in history, is based on a system of life and a system of government on the deliberate and explicit denial of God. Its declared aims, an open opposition to His law and eradication of the God-worship. The author of another perverted doctrine of the modern age, Freudianism, which has helped mislead the people from the way of Allah, is also a Jew.

161. And of their taking of usury while indeed they were forbidden from it,^{*200} and of their devouring people's wealth unjustly.^{*201} And We have prepared for the disbelievers among them a painful punishment.^{*202}

وَأَخَذِهِمُ الرِّبَا وَقَدْ نُهُوا عَنْهُ
وَأَكْلِهِمُ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ
وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا
أَلِيمًا



***200** Here is the Biblical law that clearly prohibits interest: "If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury."

"If thou at all take thy neighbor's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that time the sun goeth down. For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin wherein shall he sleep, and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear: for I am gracious." (Exodus 22 : 25-27).

Besides this, interest has also been prohibited at several other places in the Torah, but in spite of these prohibitive decrees, the Jews, who profess to believe in the same Torah, are the biggest usurers in the world and have become proverbially notorious for their narrow-mindedness and hard-heartedness.

***201** Probably this refers to the same thing that occurs in Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 146, that is, all animals with claws, and the fat of sheep and oxen were forbidden to the Jews. Besides this, possibly it may also refer to the restrictions and hardships which are contained in the law books

composed by their own Jurists. Indeed, it is a great punishment that the bounds of life should be narrowed for any community. (See E.N. 122, Surah Al-Anaam).

***202** History bears witness to the exemplary punishment that Allah has prepared for those Jews who have discarded the divine faith and given up obedience to Allah and adopted the attitude of disbelief and rebellion. For the last two thousand years, they have never possessed a place where they could live with honor. They have been scattered all over the world and are treated like foreigners and disgracefully, cruelly and oppressively in one country or the other, and there is no place in the world, where they are sincerely respected, in spite of their great wealth. Above all, this community has remained a living object lesson for the other nations, for it has been kept in existence in spite of its degradation, whereas other nations are exterminated when they become worthless. Thus Allah is causing them to taste in this very world a bit of the torment of Hell where the evil-doers will neither be in a state of death nor in a state of life. This is because they have been showing the audacity of rebelling against Allah while they were at the same time carrying the Book of Allah with them. As regards to the punishment in the Hereafter, it may safely be predicted that it shall be much more painful than this. In order to remove any misunderstanding that might arise regarding the existence of the State of Israel, it will be worthwhile to refer to Ayat 112 and E.N. 90 of Surah Aal-Imran.

162. But those who
are firm in knowledge

لَكِن الرّٰسِخُوْنَ فِي الْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ

among them, and the believers, they believe in that which has been sent down to you (Muhammad), and that which was sent down before you.*203 And those who establish prayer, and those who pay the poor due, and believe in Allah and the Last Day. It is they to whom We shall bestow immense reward.

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ
إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
وَالْمُقِيمِينَ الصَّلَاةَ
وَالْمُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
أُولَئِكَ سَنُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا



*203 The reference is to those learned Jews who are fully acquainted with the real nature of the divine Books, who are just, fair and free from every kind of prejudice, obduracy and self-worship, who do not blindly follow their forefathers but readily accept the truth that they learn from the revealed Books. Therefore they are able to recognize easily that the teachings of the Quran are the same as were taught by the former Prophets, and then sincerely believe in both.

163. Indeed, We have revealed to you (Muhammad), as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him.*204 And We revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and

إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا
إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ
وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ

Jacob, and the tribes, and
Jesus, and Job, and Jonah,
and Aaron, and Solomon,
and We gave to David the
Psalms.*205

وَعِيسَىٰ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُونُسَ وَهَارُونَ
وَسُلَيْمَانَ ۚ وَءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زَبُورًا



***204** This is to emphasize the fact that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon whom) has not come with a new thing and that he does not claim to present something for the first time, but he has, in fact, received guidance from the same source of knowledge from which all the prophets before him had received, and that he too is presenting the same truth and reality that has always been presented by the prophets, who were raised from different corners of the earth.

The literal meaning of *wahi* is: (1) to give hint of, (2) to communicate to the mind, (3) to convey by covert suggestion, and (4) to send a message.

***205** Only a part of the Book of Psalms in the existing Bible consists of the Psalms of the Prophet David, and they bear his name. Its remaining constituent parts are the psalms of other people, and have been attributed to their authors. It should also be noted that the study of the real Zabur, the Psalms of David, shows that it is a revelation of God. Likewise, additions have been made in the Book of the Proverbs of Solomon and the last two chapters were obviously added afterwards. But, in spite of this, the major portion of the Proverbs contains gems of truth and wisdom. The same is true of the Book of Job. A study of this reveals that, though it contains gems of wisdom, it is wrong to

attribute the whole of it to the Prophet Job. Whereas the Quran and the introductory chapters of this very Book bear witness to the great fortitude shown by the Prophet Job, its subsequent chapters show that he was an embodiment of grievance against God, and that, in vain, did his companions try their best to convince him that God was not unjust.

Besides these, the major portions of the seventeen Books of the Israelite Prophets in the Old Testament are evidently genuine revelations; especially the Books of Joshua, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos and some others contain many such passages that show the grandeur of divine revelation and move one to ecstasy. Their high moral teachings, their campaign against idolatry and their sound arguments prove the Oneness of God, and their strong criticism of the degeneration of Israel clearly shows that these and the sermons of Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) in the New Testament and the Quran came from one and the same source.

164. And (We sent) the messengers whom We have indeed mentioned to you before, and the messengers whom We have not mentioned to you. And Allah spoke to Moses, a (direct) conversation. ^{*206}

وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ
 مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ
 عَلَيْكَ ۗ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى
 تَكْلِيمًا



***206** The way revelation was communicated to the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was different from that of the

other Prophets. They heard either a voice or a message from an angel, but the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had this privilege that Allah Himself had a direct talk with him as in a dialogue, e.g., the dialogue cited in Surah Ta Ha, Ayats 11-48 in the Quran. This privilege has also been mentioned in the Bible: “.....And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.” (Exodus 33:11).

165. Messengers as bearers of glad tiding and as warners,^{*207} so that there might not be for mankind an argument against Allah after the messengers.^{*208} And Allah is ever All Mighty, All Wise.

رُسُلًا مُّبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا
يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ
بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا
حَكِيمًا



***207** That is, all the Prophets had one and the same mission. They gave good news to those who believed in the divine message and mended their ways in accordance with it and warning to those who adopted wrong ways of thought and action that they would meet with serious sequences in the end.

***208** The Prophets were sent with the sole object that they should set forth before mankind the right way, both theoretically and practically, so that on the Day of Judgment no evil-doer should be in a position to offer the excuse that he was ignorant of the truth. That is why Allah appointed messengers in different parts of the world and sent down Books. These messengers imparted the

knowledge of the truth to a large number of people and left behind them Books of which one or the other has always existed for the guidance of mankind. Now if one goes astray in spite of this arrangement, one cannot throw the blame on Allah and His messengers. He himself is responsible for this because he did not accept the truth when it came to him, or the responsibility is of those who had the knowledge of it but did not impart it to others who had gone astray.

166. But Allah (Himself) bears witness that what He has sent down to you, He has sent it down with His Knowledge, and the angels bear witness. And sufficient is Allah as a witness.

لَكِنِ اللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ
إِلَيْكَ أَنْزَلَهُ بِعِلْمِهِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَشْهَدُونَ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ
شَهِدًا

167. Indeed, those who disbelieve and hinder (others) from the way of Allah, they have certainly strayed to a far away misguidance.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنِ
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَدْ ضَلُّوا ضَلَالًا
بَعِيدًا

168. Indeed, those who disbelieve and do wrong, Allah will never forgive them, nor will He guide them to the (right) path.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَظَلَمُوا لَمْ يَكُنِ
اللَّهُ لِيَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ
طَرِيقًا

169. Except the path of Hell, wherein they will abide

إِلَّا طَرِيقَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا

forever. And that is ever easy for Allah.

أَبَدًا وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا



170. O mankind, there has indeed come to you the messenger (Muhammad) with the truth from your Lord. So believe, (that is) better for you. And if you disbelieve, then indeed, to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth.*209 And Allah is ever All Knower, All Wise.*210

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمُ
الرَّسُولُ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
فَعَامِنُوا خَيْرًا لَكُمْ وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا
فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا
حَكِيمًا



***209** That is, “You will harm none but yourselves by your disbelief and disobedience, for you can do no harm to the Master of the heavens and the earth.”

***210** That is, “Your Allah is fully aware of everything, you cannot do mischief with impunity in His Kingdom, He is also Wise. He knows how to deal with those who disobey His commands.”

171. O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess in your religion,*211 nor say about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was only

يَأْهَلُ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي
دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ
إِلَّا الْحَقَّ ۚ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى

a messenger of Allah, and His word,^{*212} which He conveyed to Mary, and a spirit from Him.^{*213} So believe in Allah, and His messengers,^{*214} and do not say: “Three.”^{*215} Desist, it is better for you. Allah is only One God. Exalted is He above that He should have a son.^{*216} To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.^{*217} And sufficient is Allah as a Defender.^{*218}

أَبْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
 وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ
 وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ
 وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةً
 أَنْتَهُوا خَيْرًا لَكُمْ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ
 إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ
 يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ لَهُ مَا فِي
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا



***211** Here “The people of the Scripture” refers to the Christians who went beyond the bounds in their religion and regarded Jesus (peace be upon him) God in their exaggerated reverence and love of him. This was a contrast to the Jews (the other people of the Scripture) who had gone to the other extreme in their denial of an enmity against Jesus (peace be upon him).

***212** The Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) has specially been called God’s “command” (*Kalimah*) because he was born without the usual agency of a father. God sent a command that Mary should become pregnant without the semen of a man and she conceived. Although in the very

beginning, the Christians were told that Christ had been born without a father by the command of God, yet they were so misled by the Alexandrian Philosophy of Philo that they first mistook *Kalimah* (command) for the “Divine Word”; then changed the “Divine Word” into the “Logos”; then they built on the Logos Doctrine which misguided them to the false belief in the divine nature of Jesus Christ. That is how they came to believe that God had revealed Himself or His eternal attribute of speech in the person of Jesus. (See John I : 1,14).

***213** Here Jesus (peace be upon him) has been called “A spirit from Him” and in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 253, it is stated that God supported him (Jesus) with the “Holy Spirit”. In both cases, it means that Allah had bestowed upon the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) a Holy Spirit that was imbued with high moral values and was a perfection of truth and righteousness without any tinge of evil. The Christians were taught this very thing, but they exaggerated the notion: they took “A spirit from God” for “the Spirit of God” and perverted the meaning of the Holy Ghost into “the Spirit of God Himself” which had entered into Jesus Christ. Thus, a third god, “the Holy Ghost”, was created along with God and Christ. This was their second transgression which led the Christians astray.

The perversion of “A spirit from God” into “the Spirit of God” (Holy Ghost) has been made in spite of the fact that according to the Gospel of Matthew, “The angel of the Lord appeared unto him (Joseph) in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary,

thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost,” and not the Holy Ghost (1 : 20).

***214** That is, “As Jesus is only a spirit from God and has no part of Godhead in him, do not go beyond the bounds but believe in Allah as One God and accept all His Messengers including the Messiah.” This was what the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) himself really taught and this is the truth which a true Christian should believe.

***215** The Christians have been rebuked for their wrong belief in the doctrine of the trinity and advised to refrain from transgression. Strange though it may appear, the fact is that the Christians believe both in the Oneness of God and in the trinity at one and the same time; for no Christian can deny that according to the clear sayings of Jesus (peace be upon him) in the Gospels, God is One Being and there is no other god than He. They cannot but admit that Unity of God is the real basis of religion. But the introduction of the doctrine of the Logos at an early stage of Christianity misled them into believing in the Godhead of Christ in union with God and the Holy Ghost. Since then it has always remained an enigma for them to reconcile these two contradictory doctrines and for the last eighteen hundred years or so the Christian scholars have been vainly engaged in solving this self-created baffling puzzle. Not only this, many Christian denominations have been founded upon different interpretations of this doctrine and it has given rise to many religious disputes in which one denomination accuses the other of blasphemy. In short, their scholars and interpreters have been spending all their

efforts and energies in solving this enigma which was neither created by God nor by Christ. It is also obvious that there is no solution to it, because no one can prove that three persons share Godhead and also that God is One Being and has no partners in His Godhead. As this enigma is the result of their own transgression beyond the divine limits, it can only be solved if they refrain from going beyond the limits and give up the belief of the Godhead of the Messiah and of the Holy Ghost, and acknowledge Allah as the sole object of worship, adoration and devotion and believe in the Messiah as a Messenger of God and not as a partner in the Godhead of Allah.

***216** This refutes the fourth transgression of the Christians who believed that Christ was the Son of God. In this belief they had gone beyond the limits of their own religion. According to the first three Books of The New Testament (even if the traditions therein be accepted as authentic), the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) merely likened the relationship between Man and Allah to the relationship between father and son, and used the word father for God metaphorically, just as it was in vogue among the Israelites. There are many instances of this in the Old Testament the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) also used the word “father” in the sense it was used by his people. He called God not only his father but the father of all human beings. But, the Christians again went beyond the limits and declared Jesus (peace be upon him) to be the only son of God. They based this strange belief on the assumption that Messiah was the manifestation of God and the incarnation

of His Word and His Holy Ghost. They also transgressed in believing that God had sent His only son to the earth so that he might take the burden of the sins of mankind on his own shoulders and go to his crucifixion and atone for the sins of Man with his own blood. Obviously, this belief is the creation of their own imagination, for there is no saying of Christ to support this.

Here, Allah has not refuted the doctrine of the "Atonement" because it is not a fundamental article of the Christian religion, but is a mere byproduct of (a) the belief that Christ is the son of God and (b) a philosophical and mystical explanation of the objection that if Christ was the son of God, why did he die a cursed death of crucifixion? It is thus obvious that this doctrine is refuted automatically, if it is shown that Christ was not the son of God and that he did not die on the cross.

***217** As all things in the heavens and the earth belong to Allah, none of them has any such relation with Him as of father and son, but only that of Master and slave.

***218** Allah suffices for the management of His Kingdom and does not stand in need of the help of a son for this purpose.

172. Never would the Messiah disdain to be a slave to Allah, nor the angels near (to Him). And whoever disdains from His worship, and is arrogant, so He shall

لَنْ يَسْتَنْكِفَ الْمَسِيحُ أَنْ
يَكُونَ عَبْدًا لِلَّهِ وَلَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ
الْمُقَرَّبُونَ وَمَنْ يَسْتَنْكِفْ عَنْ
عِبَادَتِهِ وَيَسْتَكْبِرْ

assemble them all to Him.

فَسَيَحْشُرُهُمْ إِلَيْهِ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٧٢﴾

173. Then as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, He will give them in full their wages, and He will grant them more out of His bounty. And as for those who were disdainful and arrogant, so He will punish them with a painful punishment. And they will not find for them, other than Allah, any protecting friend, nor helper.

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدُهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْتَنكَفُوا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فَيَعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا وَلَا يَجِدُونَ لَهُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿١٧٣﴾

174. O mankind, there has indeed come to you a convincing proof from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a manifest light.

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَانٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٧٤﴾

175. Then as for those who believe in Allah, and hold fast to Him, He will admit them into His mercy from Him, and bounty, and He will guide them to Himself by a straight path.

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِهِ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِي رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَيْهِ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ﴿١٧٥﴾

176. They^{*219} ask you a legal ruling. Say: “Allah gives you a ruling regarding a kindred who has neither descendants nor ascendants (as heirs).”^{*220}

يَسْتَفْتُونَكَ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ
فِي الْكَلَالَةِ

***219** Verse 176 was sent down long after the revelation of this Surah; so much so that according to some traditions this was the last verse of the Quran. Anyhow, according to most authentic traditions, it was revealed in A.H. 9 when Surah An-Nisa was already being recited as a complete Surah. That is why this verse was not included in the verses about inheritance contained in the first portion of the Surah, but was added to it as an appendix.

***220** There is a difference of opinion about the meaning of *kalalah*. According to some scholars, *kalalah* is the person who dies childless and whose father and grandfather also are dead. But according to others, *kalalah* is one who dies childless irrespective of whether his father and grandfather are alive or dead. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) also could not come to any definite decision about its meaning till the last. The majority of the jurists, however, have accepted the opinion of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) that *kalalah* is the person who dies childless and whose father and grandfather had died before his death. This opinion is also supported by the Quran which awards half of the inheritance of the *kalalah* to the sister who cannot be entitled to any share at all if the father is alive.

“If a man dies, (and) he had no child, but he has a sister,^{*221} then she shall have one half of what he has left behind.”

إِنْ أَمْرُؤًا هَلَكَ لَيْسَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ
وَلَهُدَا أُخْتٌ فَلَهَا نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ

***221** There is a consensus of opinion that this refers to the inheritance of sisters and brothers who have the relation of common parents or only common father with the deceased. Once Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) gave this explanation and none of the companions differed from it.

“And he (brother) would inherit from her if she (died and) did not have a child.”^{*222}

وَهُوَ يَرِثُهَا إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهَا وَلَدٌ

***222** The brother will inherit the whole inheritance in case there is no other heir to it. For instance, if the husband of the childless woman is alive her brother will be entitled to the whole of the remaining inheritance after the payment of the share of the husband.

“Then if there are two sisters, then theirs are two thirds of what he has left behind.”^{*223}

فَإِنْ كَانَتَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُمَا الثُّلُثَانِ
مِمَّا تَرَكَ

***223** The same also applies to the case of more than two sisters.

“And if there are brothers (and sisters), men, and women, then for the male, the equivalent of the portion

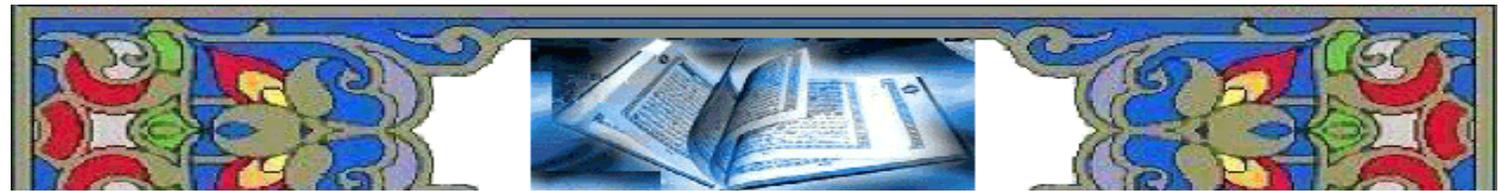
وَإِنْ كَانُوا إِخْوَةً رِجَالًا وَنِسَاءً
فَلِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنثِيَيْنِ

of two females.”

“Allah makes clear to you, lest you go astray. And Allah is All Knower of every thing.”

يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَضِلُّوا وَاللَّهُ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ





Al-Maidah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah takes its name from verse 112 in which the word *maidah* occurs. Like the names of many other Surahs, this name has no special relation to the subject of the Surah but has been used merely as a symbol to distinguish it from other Surahs.

Period of Revelation

The theme of this Surah indicates, and traditions support it, that it was revealed after the treaty of Hudaibiyah at the end of A.H. 6 or in the beginning of A.H. 7. That is why it deals with those problems that arose from this treaty.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) with 1400 Muslims went to Makkah in Zil-Qaadah 6 A.H. to perform Umrah, but the Quraish spurred by their enmity, prevented him from performing the Umrah, though it was utterly against all the ancient religious traditions of Arabia. After a good deal of hard and harsh negotiations, a treaty was concluded at Hudaibiyah according to which it was agreed that he could perform Umrah the following year. That was a very appropriate occasion for teaching the Muslims the right way of performing a pilgrimage to Makkah with the true

Islamic dignity, and enjoining that they should not prevent the disbelievers from performing pilgrimage to Makkah as a retaliation for their misbehavior. This was not difficult at all as many disbelievers had to pass through Muslim territory on their way to Makkah. That is why the introductory verses deal with those things connected with pilgrimage to Makkah and the same theme has been resumed in Ayats 101-104. The other topics of this Surah also appear to belong to the same period.

The continuity of the subject shows that most probably the whole of the Surah was revealed as a single discourse at one and the same time. It is also possible that some of its verses were revealed at a later period and inserted in this Surah at different places where they fitted in. But there appears to be not the least gap anywhere in the Surah to show that it might have comprised two or more discourses.

Occasion of Revelation

This Surah was revealed to suit the requirements of the changed conditions which were now different from those prevailing at the time of the revelation of Surah Aal-Imran and Surah An-Nisa. Then the shock of the setback at the battle of Uhd had made the very surroundings of Al-Madinah dangerous for the Muslims, but now Islam had become an invulnerable power and the Islamic State had extended to Najd on the east, to the Red Sea on the west, to Syria on the north and to Makkah on the south. The setback which the Muslims had suffered at battle of Uhd had not broken their determination. It had rather spurred them to action. As a result of their continuous struggle and

unparallel sacrifices, the power of the surrounding clans, within a radius of 200 miles or so, had been broken. The Jewish menace which was always threatening Al-Madinah had been totally removed and the Jews in the other parts of Hijaz had become tributaries of the State of Al-Madinah. The last effort of the Quraish to suppress Islam had been thwarted in the battle of the Trench. After this, it had become quite obvious to the Arabs that no power could suppress the Islamic movement. Now Islam was not merely a creed which ruled over the minds and hearts of the people but had also become a State which dominated over every aspect of the life of the people who lived within its boundaries. This had enabled the Muslims to live their lives without let or hindrance, in accordance with their beliefs.

Another development had also taken place during this period. The Muslim civilization had developed in accordance with the principles of Islam and the Islamic viewpoint. This civilization was quite distinct from all other civilizations in all its details, and distinguished the Muslims clearly from the non Muslims in their moral, social and cultural behavior. Mosques had been built in all territories, prayer had been established and Imams (leaders) for every habitation and clan had been appointed. The Islamic civil and criminal laws had been formulated in detail and were being enforced through the Islamic courts. New and reformed ways of trade and commerce had taken the place of the old ones. The Islamic laws of marriage and divorce, of the segregation of the sexes, of the punishment for adultery and calumny and the like had cast the social life of

the Muslims in a special mold. Their social behavior, their conversation, their dress, their very mode of living, their culture etc., had taken a definite shape of its own. As a result of all these changes, the non-Muslims could not expect that the Muslims would ever return to their former fold.

Before the treaty of Hudaibiyah, the Muslims were so engaged in their struggle with the non Muslim Quraish that they got no time to propagate their message. This hindrance was removed by what was apparently a defeat but in reality a victory at Hudaibiyah. This gave the Muslims not only peace in their own territory but also respite to spread their message in the surrounding territories. Accordingly the Prophet (peace be upon him) addressed letters to the rulers of Iran, Egypt and the Roman Empire and the chiefs of Arabia, inviting them to Islam. At the same time the missionaries of Islam spread among the clans and tribes and invited them to accept the divine way of Allah. These were the circumstances at the time when Al-Maidah was revealed.

Topics

It deals with the following three main topics:

1. Commandments and instructions about the religious, cultural and political life of the Muslims.

In this connection, a code of ceremonial rules concerning the journey for Hajj has been prescribed; the observance of strict respect for the emblems of Allah has been enjoined; and any kind of obstruction or interference with the pilgrims to the Kabah has been prohibited. Definite rules

and regulations have been laid down for what is lawful and unlawful in the matter of food, and self imposed foolish restrictions of the pre-Islamic age have been abolished. Permission has been given to take food with the people of the Book and to marry their women. Rules and regulations for the performance of wudu (ablutions) and bath and purification and tayammum (ablutions with dust) have been prescribed. Punishment for rebellion, disturbance of peace and theft have been specified. Drinking and gambling have absolutely been made unlawful. Expiation for the breaking of oath has been laid down and a few more things have been added to the law of evidence.

2. Admonition to the Muslims.

Now that the Muslims had become a ruling body, it was feared that power might corrupt them. At this period of great trial, Allah had admonished them over and over again to stick to justice and to guard against the wrong behavior of their predecessors, the people of the Book. They have been enjoined to remain steadfast to the covenant of obedience to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him), and to observe strictly their commands and prohibitions in order to save themselves from the evil consequences which befell the Jews and the Christians who had violated them. They have been instructed to observe the dictates of the Quran in the conduct of all their affairs and warned against the attitude of hypocrisy.

3. Admonition to the Jews and the Christians.

As the power of the Jews had been totally weakened and almost all their habitations in north Arabia had come

under the rule of the Muslims, they have been warned again about their wrong attitude and invited to follow the right way. At the same time a detailed invitation has also been extended to the Christians. The errors of their creeds have been clearly pointed out and they have been admonished to accept the guidance of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Incidentally, it may be noted that no direct invitation has been made to the Majusees and idolaters living in the adjoining countries, because there was no need for a separate address for them as their condition had already been covered by the addresses to the mushrik Arabs.

Consolidation of the Islamic Community

In continuation of the instructions about the consolidation of the Islamic community given in Surah An-Nisa, the Muslims have been directed to observe and fulfill all their obligations. Further regulations have been prescribed to train the Muslims for that purpose.

They have also been particularly warned as rulers to guard against the corruption of power and directed to observe the covenant of the Quran. They have also been exhorted to learn lessons from the failings of their predecessors, the Jews and the Christians, who in their turn have been admonished to give up their wrong attitudes towards the right way and accept the guidance taught by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Topics and their Interconnection

Ayats 1-10. The Believers have been exhorted to fulfill scrupulously all of their obligations and follow the

regulations prescribed by the divine law about food, sex, salat, justice, etc.

Ayats 11-26. The Muslims have been warned to guard against the errors of their predecessors; they should follow the right path and avoid the bad example of the Jews and the Christians, who broke their covenants and went astray into evil ways. They, in their turn, have been admonished to give up their wrong ways and accept Islam.

Ayats 27-32. The story of the two sons of Adam has been related to reproach the Jews for their plot to kill the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions. (Ayat 11 & E.N. 30). The story has also been used to emphasize the sanctity of human life.

Ayats 33-40. To achieve this object, punishments have been prescribed for those who create chaos in the Islamic State, and the believers have been urged to exert their utmost to establish the right way; the sanctity of property has also been emphasized.

Ayats 41-50. The Prophet (peace be upon him), and through him the Muslims, has been reassured that he should not mind the enmity, the evil designs and the machinations of the Jews, but continue exerting his utmost to establish the right way in accordance with the guidance of the Quran; for nothing better could be expected from those who had forsaken their own Torah. He should deal with the Christians likewise, for they, too, had forsaken their Gospel.

Ayats 51-69. In view of the degenerate moral condition of the Jews and the Christians, the believers have been

warned not to make them their friends and confidants. Likewise they should be on their guard against the evil designs of the hypocrites, the disbelievers and the like and should rely on the true believers alone. The people of the Book have, in their turn been exhorted to give up their enmity and adopt the right attitude, for they cannot get salvation without this.

Ayats 70-86. The theme of the corruptions of the Jews and Christians has been resumed. The Christians especially have been reproved for their errors in regard to the doctrine of *Tauhid*. At the same time they have been preferred to the hard hearted Jews, for there are among them some who are more inclined towards the truth.

Ayats 87-108. In this portion of the Surah, further regulations about the lawful and the unlawful, in addition to those contained in Ayats 1-10, have been given.

Ayats 109-119. At the end of the Surah, the mention of the conversation that will take place between Allah and His Prophets on the Day of Judgment, has been made for the benefit of the erring people to serve as a corrective to their creeds. The conversation with Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) has been cited as a specimen to warn, particularly the Christians, who profess to believe in him, and generally all those people who put false hopes in their prophets, etc.

Ayat 120. Conclusion: “O mankind! The Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah: therefore you should become His true servants and fear Him, for He has full power over everything.”

1. O those who believe, fulfill (your) obligations.*¹ Lawful for you are the animals of grazing livestock,*² except that which is recited to you (in the Quran), hunting not being allowed while you are in Ihram (pilgrimage).*³ Indeed, Allah ordains that which He intends.*⁴

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَوفُوا
بِالْعُقُودِ ۚ أُحِلَّتْ لَكُمْ بَهِيمَةُ
الْأَنْعَامِ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرَ
مُحَلِّي الصَّيْدِ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
يُحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ

*1 Fulfill (your) obligations. Another meaning is the prescribed limit; the limits which are being prescribed for you in this Surah and which in general have always been laid down in the divine law. After this brief introductory sentence begins the statement of those limits that are to be observed strictly.

*2 The Arabic word *anaam* applies to camel, cow (ox), sheep and goat and *bahimah* to all kinds of grazing quadrupeds. The combination of the two words has made the meaning more comprehensive by including all the grazing quadrupeds that resemble those four contained in the word *anaam*. It also implies that the carnivore that kill other animals for food are unlawful. The Prophet (peace be upon him) made this explicit in a tradition declaring the carnivore unlawful. Likewise he also declared unlawful those birds that have claws and kill other animals for food or eat dead bodies. According to Ibn Abbas, the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited the eating of the flesh of the

carnivore and of the birds with claws. Other traditions from several companions also support the same.

*3 *Ihram* is the pilgrim's robe which has to be put on at fixed boundaries at the known distances from the Kabah. It is not lawful for any pilgrim to proceed to the Kabah until he puts off his usual dress and puts on the pilgrim's garb. This consists of two pieces of cloth without seam or ornament, one of which is wrapped round the loins and the other thrown over the shoulders. The instep, heel and head must be bare. This is called the state of *Ihram* because it makes unlawful even some of the things that are ordinarily lawful. For instance, one should not have a shave or a haircut and should not wear other clothes or ornaments nor use perfumes nor indulge in sensual desires and the like. Another restriction is the prohibition against killing any animate object or against hunting or against directing anyone else to help hunt an animal. (Refer to E.N. 213, Surah Al-Baqarah).

*4 This means that Allah has absolute authority to issue any decree He wills, and that the servants have no right at all to question it. Though all His decrees and commands are based on wisdom and are full of excellence, yet a Muslim, His servant, does not obey these just because they are proper and conducive to his good, but obeys them because they are commandments from his Sovereign. If He declares anything to be unlawful, it becomes unlawful for no other reason than that it has been made unlawful by Him. Likewise, if He makes anything lawful, it becomes lawful for no other reason than that its Owner and the Owner of

everything permits His servants to use it. That is why the Quran establishes with full force the fundamental principle that the only basis which makes a thing lawful or unlawful is whether there is the permission of the Owner for its use or not. Likewise there is no other basis for the servant to consider a thing to be lawful or unlawful except that it is lawful if Allah makes it lawful and unlawful if He prohibits it.

2. O those who believe, do not violate the emblems^{*5} of Allah, nor (the sanctity of) the sacred month, nor the sacrificial offering, nor the garlanded animals, nor (the safety of) those coming to the sacred house (Mecca), seeking the bounty of their Lord and (His) pleasure.^{*6} And when you have come out of Ihram, then you may go hunting.^{*7} And let not lead you, the hatred of some people who stopped you from the Sacred Mosque, that you commit transgression.^{*8} And help one another in righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَحِلُّوا
شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا
أَهْدَىٰ وَلَا الْقَلْبَةَ وَلَا ءَامِينَ
الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّن
رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا ۚ وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ
فَأَصْطَادُوا ۚ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ
شِقَاقُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ
الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُوا ۚ
وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ
وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ
وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ

transgression, and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is severe in punishment.

شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

*5 *Shaair* is the plural of *shiar* (emblem). Every object or a representation of it, that symbolizes a way or a creed or a mode of thought or action or a system is called its *shiar* because it serves as an emblem of it. Official flags, police and army uniforms, coins, currency notes, stamps etc., are the shaair of governments which demand due respect for these from all under them, and, as far as possible, from others as well. For instance, Temple, Altar, Cross etc. are the shaair of Christianity. the Hammer and Sickle is the shaair of the communist party, and the swastika of the Nazi party. All of them demand reverence and respect for their emblems from their followers. If anyone shows disrespect for any of the emblems of any system, it is an indication that he has enmity with that system. And if the offender belongs to the same system, this act will be tantamount to apostasy and rebellion against it.

The Shaair-Allah (Emblems of Allah) are those signs and symbols that represent the pure way of God-worship as against the ways of idolatry, unbelief, paganism and atheism. The Muslims are required to show respect to the emblems of Allah wherever they find them in any way or system, provided that their psychological background is purely attributed to God-worship and has not in any way been polluted by any association with idolatry or unbelief. Therefore, if a Muslim comes across anything in the creed and deed of a non-Muslim which has an element of God-

worship in it, he will show due respect to that element and to the emblems connected with God-worship. There will be no dispute with the non Muslims on that account: a dispute arises only when he pollutes God-worship with the worship of others.

In this connection, it should be noted that the command to show due respect to the emblems of Allah was given at a time when the Muslims were at war with the pagan Arabs who were in possession of Makkah. This was necessitated because some of the pagan Arabs had to pass on their way to the Kabah through places where the Muslims could strike at them easily. Therefore the Muslims were enjoined not to molest them when they were proceeding to the House of Allah, even though they were idolaters and at war with them. Likewise, the Muslims should not attack them during the months of Hajj, nor snatch from them those animals which they were taking to the House of Allah as offering. This is to ensure that the element of God-worship, which had remained intact in their corrupt religion, should be respected and not violated.

*6 Immediately after this command, a few emblems of Allah have been specially mentioned because there was an imminent danger of their violation by the Muslims owing to the state of war. This does not, however, mean that these emblems alone are to be respected.

*7 Incidentally the command about *ihram* has been given here because this is also one of the emblems of Allah. Hunting during the state of *ihram* is prohibited, because it is the violation of one of the emblems of Allah. But when

the restrictions of *ihram* come to an end according to the law, one is permitted to hunt, if one desires to do so.

*8 This prohibition was laid down to check the Muslims from preventing the pagan Arabs from proceeding to Hajj and attacking them when they were passing through their territories. The Muslims had been so enraged when their enemies had prevented them from visiting the Kabah and from the performance of Hajj in contravention of their old custom that they were prone to retaliate, but Allah warned them not to transgress the bounds.

3. Forbidden to you are carrion,*⁹ and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that which has been slaughtered for other than Allah,*¹⁰ and (the animals) killed by strangling, and killed by a violent blow, and died of falling, and killed by (the goring of) horns, and that which has been eaten by a wild animal, except that which you slaughter (before its death),*¹¹ and that which has been sacrificed on stone altars,*¹² and that*¹³ you seek luck by the divining arrows.*¹⁴ That is abomination. This day*¹⁵

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ
وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلِيَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ
بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ
وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ
السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ
عَلَى النُّصُبِ وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا
بِالْأَزْلَمِ ذَٰلِكُمْ فَسْقُ طَّ الْيَوْمَ
يَيْسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ
فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنَ الْيَوْمَ
أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ

those who disbelieve are despaired of your religion, so do not fear them, and fear Me. This day I have perfected for you your religion, and completed upon you My favor, and I have approved for you Al-Islam as the way of life.*16 So he who is forced by severe hunger, with no inclination to sin, then indeed, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.*17

عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمْ
 الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا فَمَنْ أَضْطُرَّ فِي
 مَخْصَةٍ غَيْرِ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ
 فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ



*9 That is, the flesh of the animal that dies a natural death.

*10 That is, the flesh of the animal which has been slaughtered in the name of another than Allah or has been slaughtered with the intention of dedicating it to a saint or a god or a goddess etc. (See E.N.171 of Surah Al-Baqarah).

*11 That is, if an animal falls victim to any of these accidents but is still alive and is duly slaughtered, it is lawful to eat its flesh. This also implies that the flesh of a clean animal becomes lawful only when it is slaughtered in the prescribed way and that there is no other way of making it lawful. In the prescribed way only that much of the throat is cut that enables the blood to flow out freely. This cannot happen if the whole of the neck is cut off or if the animal is strangled or killed in any other way because in that case most of the blood remains in the body and congeals at different places and sticks to the flesh. But

when it is slaughtered in the prescribed way, the whole of the body remains connected with the brain for a sufficiently long time to allow the blood to flow totally out of the body and the flesh is cleansed of the blood which in itself is unlawful. Therefore it is essential that the flesh should be cleansed of blood in order to become lawful.

***12** The Arabic word *nusub* applies to all those places which have been specifically dedicated to any saint or god, etc. for making offerings to them or for any other kind of ungodly worship whether there is, or is not any sort of stone or wooden idol therein.

***13** In this connection, it should be understood well that the limits prescribed by the law for making eatables lawful or unlawful are not laid down from the point of view of physical health but from the moral and spiritual points of view. As regards the matters concerning physical health, these have been left to man's own judgment and discretion, It is his own business to find out what things are useful or harmful for his physical health and nourishment, and the law does not take any responsibility for his guidance in this respect. Had it done so, poison would have been the first thing to be made unlawful, but there is absolutely no mention of this or other deadly things in the Quran or the traditions. The law is only concerned about what is morally or spiritually harmful or beneficial and also about the right or wrong means for obtaining lawful things. It is obvious that man has no means of finding out these things by himself and is consequently liable to commit errors in this matter without the guidance of the law. For whatever has

been prohibited, has been prohibited because it is harmful from the point of view of cleanliness or morality or belief. On the contrary, whatever has been made lawful, it has been made so because it is free from all these evils.

One might ask why Allah has not explained the philosophy underlying the prohibition of certain things for the clear understanding of the people. This is because it is not possible for mankind to comprehend this. For instance, it is not possible for us to make a research into the nature of moral evils that are produced by eating carrion, blood or the flesh of swine, nor is it easy to find out how they are produced and to what extent, because we have no means of measuring or weighing morality, It is, therefore, obvious that, even if their evil effects had been explained, the position of the skeptic would have remained the same as before for the lack of means of testing their veracity.

This is why Allah has declared the observance of the limits prescribed for the lawful and the unlawful as a matter of belief. One, who believes in the Quran as the book of God and in the Prophet as His Messenger (peace be upon him) and in Allah as All-Knowing and All-Wise, will observe the prescribed limits whether one understands their philosophy or not. On the other hand, if one does not believe in this basic creed, one will avoid only those things which are harmful according to human knowledge and will go on suffering from the consequences of those which man has not learned to be harmful.

***14** This verse comprises three categories of prohibitions:

(1) It prohibits the pagan ways of taking omens from a god

or a goddess and the like, about one's fortune or getting indications as to the future or deciding disputes. For instance, the pagan Quraish of Makkah had specified the idol of Hubal at the Kabah for this purpose and kept near it seven divining arrows. They would, after presenting the offering to the priest and performing certain ceremonies, pull out an arrow and regard the words engraved on it as the verdict of Hubal.

(2) The second category consists of the superstitious ways and irrational methods of taking decisions about the daily problems of life for anything regarded as portending good or evil regardless of reason or knowledge, or of finding out future events blindly by the ominous significance of particular things, circumstances, occurrences or proceedings or the like. In short, it included all the so-called arts of prediction and prophetic significance.

(3) The third category includes all kinds of gambling in which the distribution of things etc. is based on mere chance and not on merit, right, service or other rational considerations. For instance, all the schemes of lottery which entitle a certain holder of a ticket to a prize merely on chance, and at the expense of a large number of other holders of such tickets, or the award of prizes for cross-word puzzles in which a certain answer out of a large number of correct ones corresponds, by mere chance, to the answer that has been ear-marked as correct for the purpose. All these things are unlawful.

However, one simple form of casting lots is lawful in Islam, when there are two equally lawful things or rights and

there is no rational method of deciding between them. Supposing two persons have equal rights, in every respect, to something and the judge finds no rational justification to give preference to either of the disputants, neither of whom is willing to forgo his rights. In such a case, if they mutually agree, the matter may be decided by casting lots, or if one has to choose one of the two lawful things and is in difficulty in regard to the choice, one is allowed to cast lots for it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) adopted this method on such occasions as required a choice to be made between two persons with equal rights, whenever he thought that if he himself decided in favor of one, the other might be grieved.

*15 “This day” does not mean a particular day or date but the time when this verse was revealed.

“Those who disbelieve are despaired of your religion” means: After a long systematic resistance and opposition, they have lost hope of defeating your religion. Now they do not expect that you will ever return to the former way of ignorance because your religion has become a permanent way of life and has been established on a firm footing. Therefore, “Do not fear them, and fear Me.” That is, there is no longer any danger of interference from the disbelievers that they will prevent you from the performance of your religious obligations. You should, therefore, fear God and observe His commands and instructions because no ground for fear has been left for you. Now your disobedience of the law will mean that you do not intend to obey Allah.

***16** “This day I have perfected for you your religion” means: “I have provided it with all the essential elements of a permanent way of life which comprises a complete system of thought and practice and civilization and have laid down principles and given detailed instructions for the solution of all human problems. Hence there is no need for you to seek guidance and instructions from any other source.”

The completion of “My favor” is the completion of the blessing of guidance.

“I have approved Islam as the way of life for you” because you have practically proved by your obedience and devotion to it that you sincerely believe in Islam which you have accepted. As I have practically set you free from every kind of subjection and servitude, there is no compulsion for you to submit to any other than Me in your practical life. It also implies, “As a gratitude for these blessings of Mine, you should show no negligence in the observance of the prescribed limits.”

Authentic traditions show that this declaration was revealed on the occasion of the last Hajj performed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in A.H. 10. I am however of the opinion that it was at first revealed in A.H. 6 close after the treaty of Hudaibiyah as a part of this discourse, but was again sent down to the Prophet (peace be upon him) for its declaration on that suitable occasion. This is because this verse is so well knit in this context that it would be incomplete without it. Therefore, it cannot be imagined that it was inserted here afterwards when it was revealed in A.H. 10. I believe (and the real knowledge is with Allah)

that at the time of its revelation in this context its real significance was not realized, therefore in A.H. 10, when the whole of Arabia was subdued and the power of Islam reached its zenith, Allah again sent down these sentences to His Prophet for their declaration on the occasion of his last Hajj.

*17 Refer to E.N. 172 of Surah Al-Baqarah.

4. They ask you (O Muhammad) what (food) has been made lawful for them. Say: "Lawful for you are (all) good things.*18 And that which you have trained of hunting animals as hounds (to catch), you teach them of what Allah has taught you. So eat of that which they catch for you,*19 and mention Allah's name upon it,*20 and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is swift in reckoning."

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا أُحِلَّ لَهُمْ قُلْ
 أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَمَا عَلَّمْتُم
 مِّنَ الْجَوَارِحِ مُكَلِّبِينَ تُعَلِّمُونَهُنَّ
 مِمَّا عَلَّمَكُمُ اللَّهُ فَكُلُوا مِمَّا
 أَمْسَكْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ
 عَلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ
 الْحِسَابِ



*18 A subtle point is hidden in this answer. It is meant to set right the doubting attitude of some religious persons, who regard everything as unlawful unless it is explicitly declared to be lawful. There was a need to remove this doubt because it makes people very fastidious. So much so that such people begin to demand a complete list of lawful things in every sphere of life and look at everything with a doubting attitude. Those who asked the question did so

with the intention of obtaining a detailed list of the lawful things so that they might consider all other things as unlawful. However, the Quran did the opposite of it and gave a detailed list of the forbidden things and made all other good things lawful. This was a great reform, for it set human life free from many bondages and opened wide the doors of the vast world for mankind. Before its revelation only a limited number of things were lawful and the remaining vast world was unlawful, but this verse declared a limited number of things unlawful and made the remaining vast world lawful.

“Lawful” has been qualified with “pure” so that impure things might not be made lawful just because they have not been included in the list of prohibition. As regards the criterion for judging whether a thing is pure or not, it should be noted that all those things are pure which are not unclean according to any principle of the Islamic law, or which are not offensive to good taste or have not universally been regarded as repugnant by cultured people.

***19** Hunting animals are dogs, leopards, falcons, hawks and other beasts and birds of prey which are trained to chase wild animals and catch them for their masters, without mangling them. The game of the trained hunting animals is lawful because they do not mangle it and that of the untrained beasts and birds of prey is unlawful because they mangle it.

There is, however, a difference of opinion among the jurists about this matter. Imam Shafai and those of his school of thought are of the opinion that if the hunting beast or bird

eats a part of what it catches, it becomes unlawful, for this means that the animal had caught the game for itself and not for its master. Imam Malik and those of his school of thought are of the opinion that if the hunting bird or beast eats less than one third of the game, the remaining two thirds or so is lawful for the master. Imam Abu Hanifah and those of his school of thought are of the opinion that if the hunting beast eats a part of what it catches, the remaining game will become unlawful, but if the hunting bird eats a part of it, the remaining game will not become unlawful because the hunting beast can be trained to catch and hold the game for its master without eating anything of it, but the hunting bird cannot be so trained. In contrast to these views, Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) is of the opinion that the game of the hunting bird is absolutely unlawful, because it cannot be trained to catch and hold the game for its master without eating something of it. But in case it is not found alive, it will be lawful if the name of Allah was mentioned at the time of letting loose the hunting animal. The same also applies to hunting with arrows.

***20** That is one should recite *bismillah* (In the name of Allah), when letting loose the hunting animal for game. According to a tradition, Adi-bin Hatim asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) whether he could hunt a game with a hunting dog, the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, "You may eat of the game if you recited the name of Allah at the time of letting loose the hunting dog, provided that he did not eat of it. In the other case, you should not eat it because that would mean that the dog had actually caught

it for himself.” Then Adi-bin-Hatim further asked, “If I let loose my own dog on the game, but afterwards find another dog there, what should I do in that case?” The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, “Do not eat it because you mentioned the name of Allah in relation to your own dog and not the other dog.”

The verse enjoins that the name of Allah must be mentioned at the time of letting loose the hunting animal in order to make the game lawful. If, however, the hunted animal is found alive, it should be duly slaughtered in the name of Allah. But in case it is not found alive, it will be lawful if the name of Allah was mentioned at the time of letting loose the hunting animal. The same also applies to hunting with arrows.

5. This day (all) good things have been made lawful for you. And the food of those who were given the Book is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them.^{*21} And the virtuous women from among the believers, and the virtuous women among those who were given the Book before you^{*22} (are lawful to you in marriage), when you give them their bridal gifts, desiring chastity, not illegal

الْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ
 وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حِلٌّ
 لَكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ حِلٌّ لَهُمْ
 وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
 وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
 الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا
 آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ
 غَيْرَ مُسْفِحِينَ وَلَا مُتَّخِذِي

sexual intercourse, nor taking as (secret) lovers. And whoever denies the faith, then indeed worthless is his work. And he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.*23

أَخْدَانٍ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالْإِيمَانِ
فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ وَهُوَ فِي
الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَسِرِينَ

***21** The food of the People of the Book, also includes what has been slaughtered by them.

“And the food of those who were given the Book is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them” means that there are no restrictions either on us or on them to take food together. The Muslims are permitted to take meals with the People of the Book and they are permitted with the Muslims. But the repetition of the sentence “good things have been made lawful for you” is very significant. It shows that the Muslims should not partake of their food, if the people of the Book do not observe those rules which are essential from the point of view of the Islamic law, or if they include unlawful things in their food and drink. For instance, if they do not mention the name of Allah over the animal they slaughter or mention any other name than that of Allah over it, the flesh would be forbidden for the Muslims. Likewise if liquor or pork or any other forbidden things is served, the Muslims are not permitted to sit at the same table with them.

The same rule also applies to the food and drink of other non-Muslims except that the Muslims are not permitted at all to eat the flesh of the animals slaughtered by non

Muslims. They are permitted to eat the flesh of the clean animals, slaughtered by the People of the Book only, if they duly pronounced the name of Allah over it.

*22 This refers to the Jews and the Christians. Permission to marry only their women has been given, and that, too, with the provision that they should be chaste (*muhsanat*). There is a difference of opinion in the details of the application of this permission. According to Ibn Abbas, a Muslim may marry from among the women of the People of the Book who are the subjects of the Islamic State, but is not permitted to marry from among the women of the People of the Book living in the regions which are at war with the Islamic State or are living in a territory of the unbelievers. The Hanafis differ a little from this and consider it undesirable, though not unlawful, to marry women from among the People of the Book living in a foreign territory. On the contrary, Said bin Musayyib and Hasan Basri are of the opinion that the command is of a general nature; therefore there is no need to make any kind of distinction between the People of the Book whether they are subjects of an Islamic State or living in a foreign territory.

Besides this, there is also a difference in the interpretations of the word *muhsanat*. According to Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), it refers to virtuous and chaste women. That is why he excludes characterless women of the People of the Book from this permission. Hasan, Shabi and Ibrahim Nakhai are of the same opinion and the Hanafis also approve of this. On the other side, Imam Shafai takes

it to mean free women of the people of the Book as opposed to the slave girls from among them.

***23** The warning that immediately follows the permission given to marry women from among the People of the Book is very significant. The Muslim who makes use of this permission has been warned to guard his faith and morality very cautiously against the influence of his unbelieving wife. There is a genuine danger that his deep love might tender him a prey to wrong creeds and acts of his unbelieving wife and he might lose both his faith and morality, or he might adopt a wrong moral and social attitude which might be against the spirit of his faith.

6. O those who believe, when you rise up for prayer, so wash you faces, and your hands up to the elbows, and rub your heads and (wash) your feet up to the ankles.^{*24} And if you are unclean, (sexual discharge), then purify yourselves.^{*25} And if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes from a call of nature, or you had (sexual) contact with women, then you do not find water, then seek

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ
إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ
وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا
بُرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى
الْكَعْبَيْنِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا
فَاطَهَّرُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَى أَوْ
عَلَى سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِّنْكُمْ
مِّنَ الْغَايِبِ أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ
فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا

clean earth, and rub
 your faces and your
 hands with it.^{*26} Allah
 does not want to place
 any burden on you,
 but He wants to purify
 you and to complete His
 favor upon you,^{*27} that
 you may be thankful.

طَيِّبًا فَاَمْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ
 وَاَيْدِيكُمْ مِنْهُ مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ
 لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ
 وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ
 نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ

تَشْكُرُونَ

***24** According to the practice and instructions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), washing of the face includes the inside washing and cleaning of the mouth, throat and nose. It is also essential to wipe the ears from outside and inside as they form part of the head. The hands should be cleansed first because the other parts are to be cleansed with them.

***25** A full bath is essential in case one becomes unclean by cohabitation or by a discharge of semen during sleep etc. It is forbidden to touch the Quran or to offer the Prayer while one is unclean. (Refer to E.Ns 67-69 of Surah An-Nisa).

***26** Refer to E.Ns 69-70 of Surah An-Nisa.

***27** Cleanliness of the body is a blessing like the purity of the soul. The blessing of Allah becomes complete only when one gets full guidance for the purity of both, the body and the soul.

7. And remember Allah's favor^{*28} upon you, and His

وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ

covenant that which He did bind you with, when you said: “We hear and we obey.” And fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is All Knower of what is in the breasts.

وَمِيثَقَهُ الَّذِي وَاثَقَكُمْ بِهِ إِذْ
قُلْتُمْ سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ



***28** The blessing is that Allah has made the right way of life clear for the Muslims and appointed them to the high position of the leadership of the world to guide it on the straight path.

8. O those who believe, be standing firmly for Allah, as witnesses in justice.^{*29} And let not lead you, the hatred of some people upon that you do not deal justly. Deal justly, that is nearer to piety. And fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is informed of what you do.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا
قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ
وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَا نُ قَوْمٍ
عَلَىٰ ءَلَا تَعْدِلُوا ءَاعْدِلُوا هُوَ
أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ



***29** Refer to E.Ns 164-165 of Surah An-Nisa.

9. Allah has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ

there is forgiveness and great reward.

عَظِيمٌ ﴿١﴾

10. And those who disbelieve and deny Our revelations, they are the companions of Hell fire.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١﴾

11. O those who believe, remember Allah's favor upon you, when a people intended to stretch out their hands against you, so He withheld their hands from you,^{*30} and fear Allah. And in Allah let believers put their trust.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ أَن يَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١﴾

***30** This refers to the incident that has been related by Abdullah bin Abbas. Some Jews plotted to kill the Prophet (peace be upon him) and some of his eminent companions in order to give a crushing blow to Islam. Accordingly, they invited him to a dinner. But right in time, the Prophet (peace be upon him) by the grace of God came to know of the plot and did not go to the dinner. This incident has been mentioned here by way of introduction, as the address onward is directed towards the Israelites. The address, which begins from here, has two objects.

First, it is meant to warn the Muslims to guard against the attitude which the Jews and the Christians had adopted towards the covenant they had made with God: they had broken the covenant and swerved into wrong and evil ways. Second, it warns the Jews and the Christians of their error and invites them to the right way.

12. And indeed, Allah has taken a covenant with the Children of Israel. And We appointed among them twelve chieftains.*³¹

And Allah said: "I am indeed with you. If you establish prayer and give the poor-due, and believe in My messengers and support them,*³² and lend unto Allah a kindly loan,*³³ surely I shall remove from you your evils,*³⁴ and surely I shall admit you into Gardens underneath which rivers flow. Then whoever disbelieved among you after this, he has indeed gone astray from the straight path."*³⁵

﴿ وَلَقَدْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَبَعَثْنَا مِنْهُمُ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ نَقِيبًا وَقَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ لَئِنْ أَقَمْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَيْتُمُ الزَّكَاةَ وَآمَنْتُمْ بِرُسُلِي وَعَزَّرْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَقْرَضْتُمُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴾



***31** The Arabic word *nageeb* means one who guards and

keeps a protecting and restraining watch. Allah commanded Moses to appoint twelve supervisors, one each from the twelve tribes of Israel to keep watch over their affairs in order to protect them from irreligious and immoral ways. The Bible mentions twelve princes of the tribes of their fathers (Numbers, 1:16) as heads of thousands in Israel but not as supervisors of religion and morality as is implied in the word *naqeeb*.

***32** That is, if you accept the invitation of the Messengers who come from Me and help them in their mission.....”

***33** “A kindly loan to Allah” is the money spent in His way. Such money has been called a good and kindly loan in the Quran at several places and Allah has very graciously promised to return every farthing of the loan after increasing it manifold, provided that it is a good loan which has been lawfully earned and spent in accordance with the divine law with good intentions.

***34** Allah wipes out evils in two ways: (1) When a person adopts the right way and follows the divine guidance in thought and action, his soul begins to purify itself and his life begins to be clean of many evils. (2) But if, in spite of this, he does not attain to the high rank of perfection as a whole, and still has some evils left in him, Allah, by the exercise of His grace, will not take him to task and will wipe out these from his account. This is because Allah is not hard and strict in taking account of minor evils, provided that the person sincerely accepts the fundamental guidance and begins to reform himself accordingly.

***35** The significance of “He has indeed gone astray from

the straight path,” is that at first he found the right way and then lost it and strayed into paths of ruin.

The right way or straight path does not fully express the meaning of *sawa-as-sabil*. It is that way of life which enables a man to develop harmoniously all his powers, faculties, and abilities: which satisfies all his cravings, urges and feelings and the demands of his body and soul in a congenial manner: which guides him rightly to keep balanced the multi fold complex relations with other human beings: which leads him individually and collectively to exploit and use equitably the natural resources for his own good and that of humanity. In short, it is that way of life which enables the individual and the society to solve spiritual, moral, social, physical, economic, political and international problems in a straight, smooth, even and just manner.

It is obvious that man with his limited powers and intellect cannot by himself solve these problems, as he is simply incapable of comprehending at one and the same time all the aspects of human problems so as to weigh and estimate their relative importance and judge between the different courses before him. That is why, whenever he has tried to plan a way of life for himself, he has utterly failed to do justice to his own self or to his society, and made a mess of all his affairs and problems, and created a state of chaos everywhere. This is because, with his narrow vision, he becomes so absorbed in one basic need out of many and one problem out of many that he loses sight of all others and neglects them intentionally or un-intentionally. As a result

of that, life loses its balance and begins to rush towards one extreme. When this state of affairs becomes unbearable, one of the neglected needs or problems takes hold of man and life begins to rush towards another extreme with the same destructive result. In this way, life goes on running from one extreme to the other and man never finds the balanced middle way which is the right way, because all the ways planned by him keep him running in wrong directions from one extreme to the other.

As has been pointed out, man cannot plan that right way which may lead him clear of the pitfalls of the myriad wrong and crooked ways; so Allah has very graciously made arrangements for showing the right way to mankind. He sent His Messengers with guidance to lead mankind to the right way to real success in this world and in the Hereafter; and the one who loses this way will go wrong here and act wrongly, and inevitably go to Hell in the next world, for all the wrong ways lead to Hell.

In this connection it will be pertinent to point out the blunder that has been committed by some so-called philosophers. When they noticed that human life was continually running between two extremes, they came to the wrong conclusion that the dialectical process was the natural way of the evolution of human progress. According to them, internal contradictions are inherent in all things and the struggle between these opposites and their synthesis constitutes the contents of the process of development. They apply the dialectical methods to the study of social life and come to the wrong conclusion that the same is the right way

of evolution. Accordingly, they start with a thesis of an extreme nature for the solution of a problem and go on rushing away from the right way towards one extreme till they discover, to their dismay, that in this process gross injustice has been done to some other equally important problems. Then they turn back with the antithesis of the first theory and presume that the synthesis of the two will help evolve its right solution. Though it is true that the struggle between the two opposite theories helps them approach the right way, yet they cross it rapidly towards the other extreme because they do not believe in divine guidance which alone can make one firmly adhere to it. Then they do gross justice to some other problems and the same process is repeated over and over again. If such short-sighted philosophers had not rejected God and religion and trade an impartial study of the Quran, they would have discovered to their joy that the right way is the straight path, leading to the human evolution, and not the myriad crooked and curved paths. Thus they would have saved mankind from continually rushing aimlessly between extremes.

13. Then because of their breaking of their covenant, We cursed them and caused their hearts to harden. They change the words from their context, and have forgotten a portion of that which they

فَبِمَا نَقَضْتُمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ لَعَنَّاهُمْ
 وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَاسِيَةً
 يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَن
 مَوَاضِعِهِ ۖ وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا

were reminded with. And you will not cease to discover of deceit in them, except a few of them, so forgive them and overlook (their misdeeds). Indeed, Allah loves those who do good.

ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ ۗ وَلَا تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَىٰ خَائِنَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَأَصْفَحْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ



14. And from those who say: “We are Christians,”*³⁶ We took their covenant, so they have forgotten a portion of that which they were reminded with. So We caused among them enmity and hatred till the Day of Resurrection. And Allah will inform them of what they used to do.

وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصْرَىٰ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَقَهُمْ فَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِّمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَأَغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ وَسَوْفَ يُنَبِّئُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ



***36** It is wrong to presume that the title Nasara pertains to Nazareth, the home of Jesus. In fact, its root is *nusrat* (help). The Christians have been called Nasara (helpers) for the reason that when Jesus (peace be upon him) asked, “Who will be my ansar (helpers) in the cause of Allah,” his disciples answered, “We are ansar in the cause of Allah.” (Surah As-Saff, Ayat 14). The Christian writers got the wrong impression that the Quran contemptuously calls the

Christians Nasara because of the apparent similarity between Nasara and Nazarenes, a sect of early Christians who were contemptuously called Nazarites. But the Quran makes it clear here that the Christians themselves said, "We are Nasara." It is obvious that the Christians never called themselves Nazarites.

In this connection, it may be noted that Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) never called his disciples "Christians" or "Messiahites" for he had not come to found a new religion after his own name but to revive the same religion that Moses (peace be upon him) and the other Prophets before and after him had brought. Therefore he did not form any new community other than that of the Israelites; nor they lived like a new one; nor adopted a distinctive name or symbol for themselves. They used to go to the Temple (Jerusalem) for prayer along with the other Jews and considered themselves to be bound by the Mosaic law. (Refer to the Acts, 3: 1, 10: 14, 15: 1 & 5, 21: 22).

Later on the process of separation began from two sides. On the one side, saint Paul, a follower of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), put an end to the observance of the law and declared that the only thing needed for salvation was belief in Messiah. On the other side, the Jewish rabbis cut off the followers of Christ by declaring them to be a misguided sect. But in spite of this separateness, at first the sect bore no distinctive name. The followers of Christ called themselves by different names, such as disciples, brethren, believers, saints, etc. (Refer to the Acts, 2: 44, 4: 32, 9: 26, 11: 29, 13: 52, 15: 1 & 23; Romans, 15: 45, and Corinthians,

1:12). But the Jews called them Galileans or the sect of the Nazarenes contemptuously and tauntingly (Luke, 13: 2, The Acts, 24: 5) because of the Roman Province of Galilee in which Nazareth, the birth place of Jesus (peace be upon him) was situated. These satirical names, however, did not become current as the permanent names of the followers of Christ.

As a matter of fact, the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch, when Barnabas and Paul went there in 43-44 A.D. to preach the Gospels. (The Acts, 11: 26). Though this name was also given to them contemptuously by their enemies, yet, by and by, their leaders accepted this, saying, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye,....if any man suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed." (I Peter, 4: 16). At long last, they lost the feelings that the name "Christian" was a bad title that had been given to them by their enemies.

Thus it is clear that the Quran has not called them Christians because of the contempt associated with it, but has called them Ansar (helpers) in order to remind them that they were the name-sake of those disciples of Jesus (peace be upon him) who had responded to his invitation and said, "We are helpers of Allah." Is it not an irony that instead of being grateful to the Quran for giving them their name, the Christian missionaries of today should bear a grievance against it for not calling them Christians?

15. O People of the Book, there has indeed come to you Our

يٰٓاَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ قَدْ جَاۤءَكُمْ
رَسُوْلُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيْرًا

Messenger (Muhammad), making clear to you much of what you used to hide of the Scripture, and forgiving of much.*³⁷ Indeed, there has come to you from Allah a light and a clear Book (the Quran).

مِمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَخْفُونَ مِن
الْكِتَابِ وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ
كَثِيرٍ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ
اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ

*37 That is, “He makes known many things which you were dishonestly keeping back from the scripture, for these are essential for the establishment of the true faith, but disregards many other such things for there is no real need to disclose them.”

16. By which Allah guides those who seek His good pleasure to the ways of peace,*³⁸ and He brings them out from the darkneses into light by His decree, and guides them to a straight path.

يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ
رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ
وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى
النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى
صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

*38 Allah guides to the paths of peace those who intend to walk in the light of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (peace be upon him). They remain safe from wrong notions, wrong thoughts and wrong acts and their consequences, because at every cross-road they come to know the safe way with the help of that light.

17. Indeed they have disbelieved, those who say: “Surely, Allah, He is the Messiah, son of Mary.”*39 Say: “Who then can have power against Allah at all, if He so willed to destroy the Messiah, son of Mary, and his mother, and whoever is on the earth together. And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. He creates what He wills.*40 And Allah has Power over all things.

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ
 اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۚ قُلْ
 فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا
 إِنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ الْمَسِيحَ
 ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ ۚ وَمَنْ فِي
 الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ۗ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا
 ۗ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
 شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ



*39 The Christians were guilty of blasphemy in regarding Jesus (peace be upon him) as God and worshiping him as such. This was the result of the error they committed in regarding Jesus (peace be upon him) as the union of man and God, for it made his personality an enigma, which their scholars have not been able to solve in spite of their verbosity and argumentations. The more they tried to solve it the more complicated it became. Those who were impressed by the human aspect of this complex personality made him the son of God and one of the Trinity, while others, who were impressed by the divine aspect of his personality, declared him to be the incarnation of God and

worshiped him as such. There were still others who tried to adopt the middle course between the two extremes and spent all their abilities to prove the impossibility that Jesus (peace be upon him) was both man and God at one and the same time and that God and the Messiah were two separate beings, but at the same time a single being. (Refer to E.Ns 212, 213, 215 of Surah An-Nisa).

*40 “He creates what He wills” implies that the miraculous birth of Jesus (peace be upon him) was merely one of God’s countless wonderful manifestations, and that this and his moral excellences and his perceptible miracles should not mislead the Christians to regard the Messiah as God. It was their shortsightedness that they did not consider the other creations of God which were even more wonderful than the creation of Jesus (peace be upon him) and foolishly made him God. They forgot that His power has no bounds and seeing the miracles performed by a wonderful creation of the Creator they began to regard him as a creator; whereas wise men see the All-Powerful Creator in the wonders of His Creation and get the light of faith from them.

18. And the Jews and the Christians say: “We are sons of Allah, and His loved ones.” Say: “Why then does He punish you for your sins.” Nay but, you are mortals, among those He has created. He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصْرَىٰ نَحْنُ
أَبْنَاؤُا اللَّهِ وَأَحِبُّوهُ^ج قُلْ فَلِمَ
يُعَذِّبُكُمْ بِذُنُوبِكُمْ^ط بَلْ أَنْتُمْ
بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ^ج
وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ^ج وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ

wills. And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them, and to Him is the return.

السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا
وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

19. O People of the Book, there indeed has come to you Our Messenger making clear to you (teachings), after an interval (of cessation) of the messengers, lest you should say: “There did not come to us any bringer of glad tidings, nor a warner.” So indeed there has come to you a bringer of glad tidings and a warner. And Allah has Power over all things.^{*41}

يٰٓأَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ
رَسُولُنَا يَبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ عَلَى فِتْرَةٍ مِّنَ
الرُّسُلِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا جَاءَنَا مِنْ
بَشِيرٍ وَلَا نَذِيرٍ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ
بَشِيرٌ وَنَذِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ

***41** In this context, this sentence is very comprehensive and significant and has double meanings. One meaning is that God who had the power of sending bearers of good news and warner before, has now appointed the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) for the same mission and He has the power to do so. The other meaning is that if they do not obey the bearer of good news and warner they should bear in mind that Allah is All-Powerful and is able to inflict on them any punishment He likes without any hindrance.

20. And (remember) when Moses said to his people: “O my people, remember Allah’s favor upon you, when He appointed among you prophets, and He made you kings, and gave you that which He had not given to anyone in the world.”*42

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يٰقَوْمِ
أَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ
جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ وَجَعَلَكُمْ
مُلُوكًا وَءَاتَاكُمْ مَا لَمْ يُؤْتِ
أَحَدًا مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

*42 This refers to the past glory of the Israelites that they enjoyed at a much earlier period before the advent of Moses (peace be upon him). On the one hand, Prophets of the high rank of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (peace be upon them) were raised among them; on the other, they won great political power in Egypt during the time of the Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) and after him. For a long time they remained the greatest rulers of their time in the then civilized world, and their currency was in circulation not only in Egypt but also in the countries around it.

In contrast to the general belief that the glory of the Israelites begins with the advent of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), the Quran makes it clear here that the period of their real glory and greatness had passed long before him and he himself was holding that period before his people as an instance of their glorious past.

21. “O my people, enter the holy land

يٰقَوْمِ ادْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ

which Allah has assigned to you.^{*43} And do not turn on your backs, for then you will return as losers.”^{*44}

الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ
وَلَا تَرْتَدُّوا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِكُمْ
فَتَنقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ

***43** By the holy land is meant Palestine, which had been the home of the Prophets Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (peace be upon them). When the Israelites left Egypt for good, God allotted this land to them and commanded them to conquer it.

***44** This speech was made by the Prophet Moses when two years after their exodus from Egypt, the Israelites were encamping in the desert of Paran which lies in the Sinai Peninsula contiguous to the northern boundary of Arabia and the southern boundary of Palestine.

22. They said: “O Moses indeed, in it are a people of tyrannical strength, and surely we will never enter it until they depart from it. So if they do depart from it, then we will surely enter.”

قَالُوا يَمُوسَىٰ إِنَّ فِيهَا قَوْمًا
جَبَّارِينَ وَإِنَّا لَنَندْخُلُهَا حَتَّىٰ
يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا فَإِن يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا
فإِنَّا دَاخِلُونَ

23. Two men^{*45} from those who feared (Allah and) upon whom Allah had bestowed His favor said: “Enter upon them through

قَالَ رَجُلَانِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ
يَخَافُونَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمَا

the gate, for when you have entered it, indeed you will then be victorious. And in Allah put your trust if you are believers.”

أَدْخُلُوا عَلَيْهِمُ الْبَابَ فَإِذَا
دَخَلْتُمُوهُ فَإِنَّكُمْ غَالِبُونَ وَعَلَى
اللَّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ



***45** It may mean that the two persons were from among those who were filled with the fear of the mighty people, or they were from among those who were God-fearing people.

24. They said: “O Moses, indeed, we shall never enter it, ever, as long as they are in it. So go you and your Lord and fight, indeed we are sitting right here.”

قَالُوا يَمُوسَىٰ إِنَّا لَنْ نَدْخُلَهَا
أَبَدًا مَا دَامُوا فِيهَا فَادْهَبْ
أَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَاتِلَا إِنَّا هَاهُنَا
قَاعِدُونَ



25. He said: “My Lord, certainly, I have power over none except myself and my brother, so separate us and the disobedient people.”

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ إِلَّا نَفْسِي
وَإِخِي فَافْرُقْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ
الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ



26. He (Allah) said: “Then surely, this (the land) will be forbidden to them for forty years.

قَالَ فَإِنَّهَا مُحَرَّمَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِينَ
سَنَةً يَتِيهُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

They will wander through the earth.*46 So do not grieve over the disobedient people.”*47

فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ
الْفَاسِقِينَ



*46 The details of their homeless wandering can be had from the books, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua, of the Bible. In brief, it is this: The Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) dispatched twelve chiefs of Israel from the desert of Paran to spy out the Holy Land. Accordingly, they spied it out and returned after forty days and made a report before all the congregation of Israel. They said, “Surely it floweth with milk and honey.....Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land: (and) We be not able to go up against (them)....and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers and so we were in their sight.” At this, all the community wailed aloud and said, “Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt: or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? But Joshua and Caleb, who had been among the twelve spies, rebuked the community for its cowardice. Caleb said, “Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.” Then both declared, “If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it us.....Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the

land....and the Lord is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation stoned them with stones.” At last God became wrathful at their continuous misbehavior and decreed, “Doubtless ye shall now wander in the wilderness forty years until all that were numbered of you....from twenty years old and upward shall fall as carcasses in this wilderness, (and) your little ones (grow young).....then will I bring in and they shall know the land...” According to this divine decree, they took 38 years to reach Jordan from the desert of Paran. During this period all those who were young at the time of the exodus from Egypt died and after the conquest of Jordan the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) also died. After this, during the time of Joshua, son of Nun, the Israelites were able to conquer Palestine.

*47 The incident contained in Ayats 20-26 has been cited here with the special object to warn the Israelites. They have been reminded that they disobeyed Moses (peace be upon him) and swerved from the right path and showed cowardice and were consequently condemned to wander homeless for forty years but if they persisted in their attitude of rebellion against the mission of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the chastisement would be much more severe than that.

27. And recite to them the story of Adam's two sons in truth, when they offered each a sacrifice, so it was accepted from one of them and was not accepted from the other.

﴿ وَآتَلُّ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ ابْنَيْ آدَمَ
بِالْحَقِّ إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا فَتُقْبِلَ مِنْ
أَحَدِهِمَا وَلَمْ يُتَقَبَّلْ مِنَ الْآخَرِ

He said: “I will surely kill you.” He (the other) said: “Allah accepts only from those who fear (Him).”^{*48}

قَالَ لِأَقْتُلَنَّكَ قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ
اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

***48** That is, it is no fault of mine if your sacrifice has not been accepted; it is because you lack piety. You should, therefore, try to foster piety in yourself instead of making an attempt at slaying me.

28. “Even if you stretch out your hand against me to kill me, I shall not stretch out my hand against you to kill you.^{*49} I indeed fear Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.”

لَئِنْ بَسَطْتَ إِلَيَّ يَدَكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا
أَنَا بِبَاسِطٍ يَدِيَ إِلَيْكَ لِأَقْتُلَكَ
إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ

***49** It does not mean: “If you attempt to kill me, I will sit with folded hands before you, ready to be killed without any resistance.” What it means is: “You may cherish evil intentions of murdering me, but I will not. You may make schemes for my murder but I will do nothing to forestall you, even after knowing that you are making preparation for my murder.” In this connection, it should be understood clearly that it is not virtue to offer oneself for murder, nor is it a virtue to refrain from resisting an aggressive attack. True virtue is that one should not plan the murder of an enemy though he might be in search of an opportunity to kill the one. A virtuous man would rather prefer, like the noble son of Adam, that the enemy might be

the aggressor and not he.

29. “Indeed, I intend that you be laden with my sin and your sin,^{*50} then become among the dwellers of the fire. And that is the recompense of the wrong doers.”

إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ تَبُوءَ بِإِثْمِي وَإِثْمِكَ
فَتَكُونَ مِنَ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ
وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ

*50 That is, I would rather prefer that you alone should be guilty of the sin of cherishing evil intentions of slaying me than that I should also be guilty of the same. Thus you shall bear the burden of your own sin of aggression as well as of the injury that I might inflict on you in self-defense.

30. So his (the other's) soul drove him to the murder of his brother, so he murdered him, then he became among the losers.

فَطَوَّعَتْ لَهُ نَفْسُهُ قَتْلَ أَخِيهِ
فَقَتَلَهُ فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ الْخٰسِرِينَ

31. Then Allah sent a crow, who scratched on the ground to show him how to hide the dead body of his brother. He said: “Woe unto me, am I not even able that I be like this crow, so I could hide the dead body of my brother.”^{*51} Then he became

فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ غُرَابًا يَبْحَثُ فِي
الْأَرْضِ لِيُرِيَهُ كَيْفَ يُورِي
سَوْءَةَ أَخِيهِ قَالَ يَا وَيْلَتَى
أَعَجَزْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِثْلَ هَذَا
الْغُرَابِ فَأُورِيَ سَوْءَةَ أَخِي

of those who regretted.^{*52}

فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ النَّادِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

***51** Thus Allah warned the erring son of Adam of his ignorance and folly through a raven. And when once he became aware of the fact that the raven was better equipped for hiding the dead body, he was not only filled with remorse on this account but also began to feel that he had done an evil deed by slaying his brother. This is implied in: “Then he became of those who regretted”.

***52** The story of the two sons of Adam has been related here to reproach the Jews in a subtle manner for their plot to kill the Prophet (peace be upon him) and some of his eminent companions. (Refer to E.N. 30 of this Surah).

The similarity between the two incidents is quite obvious. The Jews plotted against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions for the same reason for which the erring son of Adam had slain his pious brother. The Jews became jealous of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions because God withdrew His favor from them and bestowed it upon the un-lettered Arabs just because the former lacked piety and the latter were God-fearing. Instead of considering the matter coolly and considering why they had been condemned and making up for their error which had brought God's wrath on them, they plotted to kill those whom God had blessed with His favors. And they did so in spite of the fact that they knew it well that their evil reaction could not win the favor of Allah but would make them even more condemnable than before.

32. Because of that, We decreed upon the Children of Israel^{*53} that whoever kills a soul other than (retribution for murder of) a soul, or for spreading corruption in the earth, it would be as if he killed all mankind. And whoever saves one, it would be as if he saved all mankind.^{*54} And certainly, there came to them Our messengers with clear proofs. Then indeed, many of them, even after that, were those who committed excesses in the land.

مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَى
بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا
بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا
وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا
النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْهُمْ
رُسُلُنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ إِنَّ كَثِيرًا
مِّنْهُمْ بَعَدَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
لَمُسْرِفُونَ



***53** That is, “Allah enjoined the Israelites to refrain from murder because they were showing the same murderous symptoms as had been shown by the cruel son of Adam. That is why such strict checks on murder were applied.” But the pity is that these precious instructions are not found in the present Bible. The Talmud, however, says, “To him who kills a single individual of Israel, it shall be reckoned as if he had slain the whole race and he who preserves a single individual of Israel, according to the Book of Allah, he preserves the whole world.” It also says that a judge of the Israelites in a case of murder would warn the witness saying, “To him who kills a single

individual of Israel, it shall be reckoned as if he has slain the whole race.”

***54** This is to emphasize the sanctity of human life: it is essential for the preservation of human life that everyone should regard the life of the other as sacred and help to protect it. The one who takes the life of another without right, does not commit injustice to that one alone, but also proves that he has no feeling for the sanctity of human life and of mercy for others. Hence he is most surely the enemy of the whole human race, for if every individual suffered from the same kind of hard-heartedness, the whole human race would come to an end. On the contrary, if one helps to preserve a single human life, he is indeed a helper of all mankind for he possesses those qualities upon which depends the survival of the entire human race.

33. The only recompense for those who wage war against Allah and His messenger, and strive in the land (to spread) corruption^{*55} is that they be killed, or crucified, or their hands and their feet be cut off on the opposite sides, or be expelled from the land.^{*56} Such is for them a disgrace in the world, and for them in the Hereafter is a

إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقَتَّلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ
تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِّنْ
خَلْفٍ أَوْ يُنْفَوْا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ
ذَٰلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

great punishment.



***55** Here “the land” refers to that country or territory in which the maintenance of law and order is the responsibility of the Islamic State and “to wage war against Allah and His Messenger” is to wage war against the righteous system of government established by the Islamic State. As Allah likes that such a system of government should be established, He sent His Messenger (peace be upon him) to establish an equitable system of government, which should guarantee peace and justice to human beings, animals, trees, vegetation and everything on the earth, which may enable human beings to develop to the fullest of their natural capabilities; which should exploit natural resources of the earth for the true progress and improvement of humanity and not for its destruction. It is obvious that any attempt, big or small, to undermine or overthrow such an established system, is in reality a war against Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him). It does not make any difference whether that mischief is created by criminals and murderers who cause disorder in the settled and peaceful society or by armed forces who attempt to overthrow the Islamic State and establish some corrupt un-Islamic system instead. And every sovereign treats such a violation directed against his authority or against any of his officials as war against himself.

***56** An abstract of these alternative punishments has been given so that the judge or the ruler may exercise his discretion and award punishment according to the nature

and extent of the crime. The real object is to show that any attempt by any person, residing in the Islamic State, to overthrow its government is high treason and a most heinous crime, and that the offender is liable to be awarded any of these capital punishments according to the circumstance.

34. Except for those who repent before that you overpower them. And know that Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful. *57

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ
تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهِمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ
اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

*57 This implies that if they have refrained from creating mischief and from making any attempt at overthrowing the righteous system, and have shown by their conduct that they are peace loving and law abiding good citizens, none of the above mentioned punishments will be inflicted upon them, even if they might have committed any of the crimes before their repentance. They would, however, be liable to be called to account in a court of law for any offense against any individual, such as murder, theft, etc. but they will not be tried for any previous offense of treason or rebellion or war against Allah and His Messenger.

35. O those who believe, fear Allah, and seek the means (of approach) to Him, *58 and strive in His cause *59 that you may be successful.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ
الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ



***58** That is, you should seek all those means that help obtain Allah's nearness and His pleasure.

***59** "And strive in His cause" does not fully convey the meaning of *jahidu*. It implies that the believers should struggle against all the forces that stand in the way of Allah, as if to say, "You can please Allah and win His favor only if you exert your utmost in the way of Allah: struggle hard against all the persons, parties and forces which stand in Allah's way, which hinder you from Allah's way to turn you away from it, which do not let you follow Allah's way as His servants and force you to become their servants or servants of others. Such exertion and struggle will lead you to true success and become the means of obtaining your nearness to Allah."

Thus, this verse exhorts the believer to fight his enemies on all fronts. On one side, he confronts Satan and a host of his followers, and on the second, his own self and its alluring temptations. On the third side, he has to fight many people who have swerved from the way of God, and with whom he is bound by close social, cultural and economic relations. On the fourth side, he is required to oppose all those religious, cultural and political systems that are founded on rebellion against God and force people to submit to falsehood instead of the truth. Though these enemies employ different weapons, they all have one and the same object in view, that is, to subdue their victims and bring them under their own subjection. It is obvious that true

success can only be achieved if one becomes fully and solely a servant of God and obeys Him openly and also secretly, to the exclusion of obedience to all others. Thus there is bound to be a conflict with all the four enemies. Therefore the believer cannot achieve his object unless he engages himself with all these hostile and opposing forces at one and the same time and at all events, and removing all these hindrances marches onwards on the way of Allah.

36. Indeed, those who disbelieve, if that they should have all that is in the earth, and the like of that with it, by which to ransom them from the punishment on the Day of Resurrection, it would not be accepted from them. And for them is a painful punishment.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ أَنَّ
لَهُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ
مَعَهُ لِيَفْتَدُوا بِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ
يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَا تُقْبَلُ مِنْهُمْ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾

37. They will wish to get out of the Fire, and never will they get out there from, and for them will be a lasting punishment.

يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُخْرَجُوا مِنَ النَّارِ
وَمَا هُمْ بِخَارِجِينَ مِنْهَا وَلَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٣٧﴾

38. And the male thief and the female thief, cut off their hands.^{*60} A recompense for what they earned, an exemplary punishment from

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا
أَيْدِيَهُمَا جِزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٣٨﴾

**Allah. And Allah is All
Mighty, All Wise.**

***60 One hand of the thief (and not both hands) is to be cut off, and the consensus of opinion is that the right hand should be cut off for the first theft.**

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has excluded an act of breach of trust from theft and decreed that the hand of the one guilty of this is not to be cut off. An act of theft is committed only when a person wrongfully takes away goods from the custody of another and brings them into his own possession.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has also decreed that a hand is not to be cut off for the theft of a thing whose value is less than that of a shield. At that time the price of a shield according to (a) Abdullah bin Abbas was ten dirhams, (b) Ibn Umar, three dirhams, (c) Anas bin Malik, five dirhams, and (d) Aishah, one-fourth of a dinar. That is why there has been a difference of opinion among the jurists in regard to the minimum limit for theft for the cutting off of a hand. According to Imam Abu Hanifah, it is ten dirhams and according to Imams Malik, Shafai and Ahmad it is one-fourth of a dinar. (At that time a dirham was equal to the value of three mashas and one ands half rattis of silver, and one-fourth of a dinar was equal to three dirhams).

Moreover, there are many things for the theft of which the hand is not to be cut off. For instance, the Prophet (peace be upon him) directed that hand should not be cut off for the theft of fruits and vegetables, and that there should be no cutting off of hand for the theft of eatables. According to

a tradition from Aishah, "Hands were not cut off for the theft of paltry things during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him)." Uthman and Ali decreed, and no companion disagreed, that a hand is not to be cut off for the theft of a bird. Moreover, Umar and Ali did not cut off a hand for a theft from the public treasury and there is no mention of any kind of disagreement among the companions about this also. (May Allah be pleased with them all).

That is why the jurists have not included certain things in the list of those for the theft of which hands should be cut off. According to Imam Abu Hanifah, hands should not be cut off for the theft of vegetables, fruits, flesh, cooked food, grain which has not yet been gathered together, articles used for sports and music. Besides these, he is of the opinion that the hand should not be cut off for the theft of animals grazing in forests and for theft from the public treasury. Likewise the other Imams also have excluded the theft of certain things from this punishment, but this does not mean that there is no punishment at all for those thefts. These crimes should be punished in other ways than this.

39. So he who repents after his wrongdoing, and reforms, then indeed, Allah will turn to him in forgiveness.*61
Certainly, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

فَمَنْ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهِ
وَأَصْلَحَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَتُوبُ
عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

*61 This does not mean that if the thief repents, his hand should not be cut off. It only means that if a person repents

after his hand has been cut off and reforms himself and becomes a true servant of God, he will save himself from the wrath of Allah, Who will cleanse him of his sin. On the contrary, if a person does not repent and reform himself even after his hand has been cut off, but goes on nurturing evil thoughts, this clearly shows that he has not cleansed his heart even after this severe punishment. Therefore he shall deserve the wrath of Allah as he did before his hand was cut off. That is why the Quran exhorts such a person to beg for the forgiveness of Allah and reform himself. The hand is cut off for the preservation of society. The punishment does not necessarily purify the soul. This can only be achieved by repentance and turning to God. It is reported in the traditions that once the hand of a thief was cut off by the order of the Prophet (peace be upon him). After this he sent for him and asked him to say, "I beg for Allah's forgiveness and turn to Him." Accordingly, the thief uttered these words. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) invoked Allah's forgiveness for him.

40. Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He punishes whom He wills, and He forgives whom He wills. And Allah has Power over all things.

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُعَذِّبُ مَنْ
يَشَاءُ وَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

41. O Messenger, let not grieve you those who

﴿٤١﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ لَا تَحْزَنْكَ

hasten into disbelief^{*62} among those who say: “We believe,” with their mouths, and their hearts believe not. And from among those Jews, (they are) listeners to falsehood,^{*63} listening to another people who have not come to you.^{*64} They change the words beyond their context.^{*65} They say: “If you are given this, then take it, and if you are not given it, then beware.”^{*66} And he for whom Allah intends a trial, then you can not do a thing for him against Allah.^{*67} Those are the ones whose hearts Allah does not intend to purify.^{*68} For them in this world there is a disgrace, and for them in the Hereafter is a great punishment.

الَّذِينَ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ مِنَ
الَّذِينَ قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ
وَلَمْ تُؤْمِن قُلُوبُهُمْ وَمِنَ
الَّذِينَ هَادُوا سَمَّعُونَ
لِلْكَذِبِ سَمَّعُونَ لِقَوْمٍ
ءَاخِرِينَ لَمْ يَأْتُوكَ تَحْرِفُونَ
الْكَلِمَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوَاضِعِهِ
يَقُولُونَ إِنَّ أُوتِيتُمْ هَذَا
فَخُذُوهُ وَإِنْ لَمْ تُؤْتَوْهُ فَاحْذَرُوا
وَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ فِتْنَتَهُ فَلَنْ تَمْلِكَ
لَهُ مِنْ أَلَيْسَ شَيْئًا أُوتِيكَ
الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُطَهِّرَ
قُلُوبَهُمْ هُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ
وَلَهُمْ فِي الآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيمٌ



***62** This refers to the people who were using all their intellectual powers and energies to preserve the previous

state of ignorance against the reformatory efforts of Islam. They were planning all sorts of shameless schemes against the Prophet (peace be upon him). They were distorting the truth knowingly and doing their best to defeat his holy mission by lies, deceit, cunning and the like, though he was selflessly working for the good of humanity and their own good. Naturally, it grieved him to see that those mean and ignoble people were employing mean tactics to defeat his noble mission. Of course Allah does not mean to ask the Prophet (peace be upon him) to suppress that grief which is felt over such a state but consoles him not to be disheartened by their evil machinations and advises him to go on working patiently for the reform of the people who cannot be expected to behave otherwise.

***63** It implies two things: (1) These people are the slaves of their lusts and are not interested at all in the truth but in falsehood only. They eagerly listen to lies because that alone can gratify their lust for falsehood. (2) They attend the meetings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers so that they might spread false reports about them in order to malign them.

***64** This also implies two things: (1) They come as spies to the meetings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers in order to obtain some secret information for the benefit of the enemies of Islam. (2) They come with hostile intent to gather material for bringing false accusations and slander against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers so that they may cause misunderstandings among those who had no opportunity of making direct contacts

with him and the Muslims.

*65 Allah consoles the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he should not be disheartened by the behavior of those people who do not hesitate to twist the words of the Torah out of their context and change their meanings to suit their lusts.

*66 That is, “The Jewish scholars tell their illiterate people to accept any teaching of the Prophet (peace be upon him) only if it agrees with theirs. If it does not, they should reject it.”

*67 Allah puts to trial a man who cherishes evil inclinations by putting temptations before him to test whether he has any good left in him or not. If he has no goodness left in him, he takes each temptation as an opportunity, and the evil in him overcomes him and renders him an easy prey to further temptations. In a degenerate case like this, it is not in the power of any well wisher to save such a person from falling into temptation. Allah puts to trial not only individuals but communities as well.

*68 Allah did not will to purify such a person because he himself did not wish to purify himself. It is not the way of Allah to deprive a man of purification, if he desires it and tries for it. He does not will to purify only that person who does not intend to purify himself.

42. Listeners to falsehood,
devourers of unlawful.*69

So if they come to you
(O Muhammad), then judge
between them or turn
away from them. And if

سَمْعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ أَكَلُونَ
لِللُّسْحَةِ ۚ فَإِنْ جَاءُوكَ فَاحْكُم
بَيْنَهُمْ أَوْ أَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَإِنْ

you turn away from them, then they can not harm you at all. And if you judge, then judge between them with justice. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.*70

تُعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ فَلَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ شَيْئًا
وَإِنْ حَكَمْتَ فَأَحْكُم بَيْنَهُم
بِالْقِسْطِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ
الْمُقْسِطِينَ



*69 This particularly refers to their jurists and judges who accepted false evidence and unjustly decided cases in favor of those from whom they took bribes or from whom they expected unlawful gains.

*70 At that time the Jews had freedom in their internal affairs and their cases were decided by their own judges according to their own law, for they had not as yet become subjects of the Islamic State, but had only entered into treaties with it. Therefore they were not bound to bring their cases to the Prophet (peace be upon him) or to the judges appointed by him. Nevertheless, sometimes, when their own law did not suit them, they would take their cases to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the hope that they might obtain a more favorable decree from him than they could from their own law.

Here it refers to a case of illicit relationship between a man and a woman who belonged to respectable families of the Jews of Khaibar. According to the Torah (Deut. 22: 23-24), their punishment was that both of them should be stoned to death. As the Jews did not want to inflict this punishment, they decided that the case should be taken to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and that they would accept his

decision only if it was other than stoning to death. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) had heard the case he decreed that they should be stoned to death, but the Jews rejected it. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked them what the punishment was according to the Torah. They replied that it was to flog the culprits and to blacken their faces and to mount them on a donkey. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked their rabbis to declare on oath whether that was the punishment for adultery committed by a married couple. They all but one answered that it was so. The one who had kept quiet was Ibn surya, who was considered to be the greatest scholar of the Torah by the Jews themselves. The Prophet (peace be upon him) pointedly addressed him and asked, "I want you to swear, by that God Who saved your people from the Pharaoh and gave you the law on the Toor, and answer whether it is this same punishment for adultery in the Torah that these people tell." He said, "I would never have confessed that the punishment for adultery is stoning the culprits to death, if you had not laid upon me such a heavy oath. The fact is that when adultery became common among us, the judges would let the offenders go if they happened to be big people. But as this differentiation caused a great discontent among the common people, we made a change in the law that instead of stoning the culprits to death they should be flogged and mounted on a donkey with blackened faces." After this, no other course was left for the Jews and the culprits were stoned to death by the order of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

43. And how is it that they come to you for judgment, and they have the Torah, in which is the judgment of Allah, then they turn away even after that.^{*71} And they are not believers.

وَكَيْفَ يُحْكُمُونَكَ وَعِنْدَهُمُ
التَّوْرَةُ فِيهَا حُكْمُ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ
يَتَوَلَّوْنَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَمَا
أُولَئِكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ

***71** In this verse Allah has fully exposed the dishonesty of these religious people who had established their authority for piety and knowledge of the Book throughout Arabia. The very fact that they had discarded the Book they themselves believed to be the Book of Allah and brought their case to the Prophet (peace be upon him), whom they did not believe to be a Prophet, showed that their claim of belief in the Book was hollow. This also showed that they did not sincerely believe in anything but their lusts. They discarded the Book which they believed to be the Book of God, just because its decree was against their lusts and they went to the one whom they considered to be a false prophet in the hope that they might get a decree that might suit their lusts.

44. Indeed, We sent down the Torah, in which was guidance and light, the prophets who submitted (to Allah) judged by it for those who are Jews,^{*72} and the rabbis and the

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى
وَنُورٌ لِّمَنْ حَمَلَهَا النَّبِيُّونَ
الَّذِينَ اسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا
وَالرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا

priests^{*73} (also judged) by that which they were entrusted of Allah's Scripture, and they were witnesses thereto. So do not fear people, and fear Me. And do not sell My verses for a little price. And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, then it is those, they are the disbelievers.

أَسْتَحْفِظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ
وَكَانُوا عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ فَلَا
تَخْشَوُا النَّاسَ وَأَخْشَوْنَ وَلَا
تَشْتَرُوا بِعَايَتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا وَمَنْ
لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

***72** Here the fact that all the Prophets were Muslims and that the Jews had given up Islam and turned Jews, has also incidentally been stressed.

***73** The *Rabbanis* were the doctors and the *Ahbar* the jurists of the law.

45. And We ordained for them therein that, a life for a life, and an eye for an eye, and a nose for a nose, and an ear for an ear, and a tooth for a tooth, and for wounds is legal retribution.^{*74} Then whosoever forgoes it (in the way of charity), then it shall be expiation for him.^{*75} And whoever does not judge by

وَكَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا أَنَّ النَّفْسَ
بِالنَّفْسِ وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ
وَالْأَنْفَ بِالْأَنْفِ وَالْأُذُنَ
بِالْأُذُنِ وَالسِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ وَالْجُرُوحَ
قِصَاصٌ فَمَنْ تَصَدَّقَ بِهِ
فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَهُ وَمَنْ لَمْ

that which Allah has revealed, then it is those, they are the wrongdoers.

يَحْكُمُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

*74 Compare this with Exodus, 21: 23-27.

*75 It implies that if one forgoes retaliation with the intention of doing a good turn, this good act will atone for many of his sins. The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained this, saying, "If one receives a wound on his body and forgoes its retaliation, then his sins will be forgiven in proportion to the degree of forgiveness."

46. And We sent, following in their footsteps, Jesus, son of Mary, confirming that which was (revealed) before him in the Torah, and We bestowed on him the Gospel in which was guidance and light and confirming that which was (revealed) before it in the Torah,^{*76} and a guidance and an admonition to those who fear (Allah).

وَقَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِم بِعِيسَى ابْنِ
مَرْيَمَ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ
التَّوْرَةِ ۚ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنْجِيلَ فِيهِ
هُدًى وَنُورٌ وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ
يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَهُدًى
وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

*76 This means that Jesus (peace be upon him) did not bring any new religion but followed the same way that was followed by all the Prophets before him and invited the people to the same. He believed in what was intact in his time from among the original teachings of the Torah, and the Gospel also testified to the same. (Matthew, 5: 17-18).

The Quran reiterates the fact that each and every prophet, who was sent by Allah to any part of the world, confirmed the Message of all the Prophets who had gone before him and exerted his utmost to complete the work which they had left as a holy heritage, for he did not come to refute them or efface their religion and establish his own religion instead. Likewise Allah did not send down any of His Books to refute any of His own previous Books, but to support and confirm them.

47. And let the People of the Gospel judge by that which Allah has revealed therein. And whoever does not judge by that which Allah has revealed, then it is those, they are the evil liver.^{*77}

وَلِيَحْكُمَ أَهْلُ الْإِنجِيلِ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ
 اللَّهُ فِيهِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا
 أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
 الْفَاسِقُونَ



^{*77} In this passage (Ayats 44-47) Allah has shown that those who do not judge by the law sent down by Him are: (1) disbelievers, (2) unjust people and (3) transgressors. As a corollary to this, the person who discards the law of Allah and judges by the law formulated by himself or by others is guilty of three crimes. First, he practices disbelief by his rejection of the law of Allah. Secondly, he becomes guilty of injustice because he violates the law of Allah which is perfectly just and equitable. Thirdly, he became a transgressor (*Fasiq*) against Allah, because, in spite of being Allah's servant, he transgressed against his Master's law and adopted his own law or that of another. Thus

practically he broke away from the allegiance and subjection of his Master and denied His Authority: this is *fisq*.

This disbelief, injustice and transgression are inherently part and parcel of the violation of divine law. It is, therefore, not possible to avoid these three crimes where there is such a violation. They, however, vary in their relative guilt in accordance with the nature and extent of the rejection of the law. If one gives judgment against the divine law on the basis that he considers that law to be wrong and his own or someone else's law to be right, such a person shall be a disbeliever, an unjust person and transgressor, in the fullest sense of the words. However, if one holds the belief that the law of Allah is right, but in practice gives judgment against it, such a one shall not be outside the Muslim community, but shall be considered to be mixing his belief with disbelief, injustice and transgression. Likewise, if one rejects the law of Allah in all affairs of life, he shall be considered to be a disbeliever, unjust person and transgressor in every aspect of life, and if one accepts the law in certain matters and rejects it in others, One shall have a mixture of belief and Islam, disbelief, injustice and transgression all mixed together in one's life, exactly in the proportion one obeys the law or violates it.

Some commentators are of the opinion that the above mentioned verses apply only to the People of the Book, but the words of the Quran do not support this at all. Hudhaifah refuted this version very aptly. Someone said to

him that these verses applied to the children of Israel only, that is, if one of the Jews judged against the law sent down by Allah, he would be a disbeliever, transgressor and rebel but not a Muslim, Hudhaifah replied. "What good brethren the children of Israel are to you: all that is bitter is for them and all that is sweet is for you! By God, you will follow their way step by step (and shall be dealt with like them)."

48. And We have sent down to you (O Muhammad) the Book (the Quran) in truth, confirming that which was before it from the Book,^{*78} and a criterion over it.^{*79} So judge between them by that which Allah has revealed, and do not follow their desires (diverging away) from what has come to you of the truth. For each among you, We have appointed a divine law and a clear way.^{*80} And if Allah had willed, He would have made you one nation. But that He may try you in that which He has given you. So race one with another in good deeds. To Allah you will return all together, He

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ
 مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنْ
 الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ
 فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
 وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ
 مِنَ الْحَقِّ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ
 شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
 لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَٰكِن
 لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ
 فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ
 مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ

will then inform you about that in which you used to differ.*81

بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

*78 The use of the word *Alkitab* (the Book) here is very significant. Instead of saying, "The Quran confirms whatever has remained intact from the former Books," it says, "from the Book." This is to show that the Quran and all the Books that were sent down by Allah in different languages and in different ages are in reality one and the same Book which has one and the same Author and one and the same object and aim: they impart one and the same knowledge and teaching to mankind with the only difference that they are couched in different languages and employ different methods to suit the various addresses. Therefore the fact that these Books support and do not refute, confirm and do not contradict, one another, shows that they are all different versions of one and the same Book (*Alkitab*).

*79 The Arabic word *Muhaimin* is very comprehensive in meaning. It means criterion, one who safeguards, watches over, stands witness, preserves, and upholds. The Quran safeguards "the Book," for it has preserved within it the teachings of all the former Books. It watches over them in the sense that it will not let go waste their true teachings. It supports and upholds these Books in the sense that it corroborates the word of God which has remained intact in them. It stands a witness because it bears testimony to the word of God contained in those Books and helps to sort it out from the interpretations and commentaries of the

people which were mixed with it; what is confirmed by the Quran is the word of God and what is against it is that of the people.

***80** “We have appointed a divine law and a clear way” is a parenthesis, which answer a perplexing question that might arise from the preceding passage. The question is: Why are there differences in the details of their laws, if all the Prophets and all the Books taught the same way of life and all of them confirmed and supported one another? For instance, how is it that there are some differences in the details of the form of worship, in the limits of the lawful and the unlawful and in cultural and social regulations taught by different Prophets and Books?

***81** Here is the answer to the above mentioned question:

(1) It is wrong to infer from the above mentioned differences in the details of the different laws that they have been derived from different sources and have different origins. As a matter of fact, they all have come from Allah, Who prescribed different regulations to suit different communities and different ages.

(2) No doubt Allah could have prescribed one and the same law for all human beings from the very beginning and made them a single community, but He did not do so for many good reasons. One of these reasons is to test people whether they obey or not what is given to them by Allah. Those people, who understand the real nature and spirit of the divine way and the position of the regulations in it and are not prejudiced, will recognize and accept the truth in whatever form it comes. Such people will never hesitate to

submit to the new regulations sent by Allah to replace the former ones. On the contrary, those, who do not understand the true spirit of the way, but consider the regulations and their details alone to be the way and who have become static and prejudiced because of their own additions to it, will reject every new thing that comes from Allah to replace what they already possess. And such a test was essential to distinguish the two above mentioned kinds of people; therefore different laws and regulations were prescribed.

(3) As the real object of all the laws is the cultivation of virtues, Allah has commanded the people to excel one another in virtues, without paying heed to the apparent differences in different laws. This is why those people, who keep in view the real aim of the law, should advance towards it on the lines indicated by the divine laws and regulations.

(4) As regards the differences, which have been produced by the prejudice, obduracy and wrong mental attitude, these can neither be resolved in polemical symposiums nor on the battlefield, but will be decided by Allah Himself in His final judgment. Then the reality will be revealed and the people will come to know the amount of truth or falsehood that lay hidden in the arguments in which they were engaged throughout their lives.

49. And that,^{*82} judge (O Muhammad) between them by that which Allah has revealed, and do not follow

وَأَنِ احْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَأَحْذَرَهُمْ

their desires, and beware of them, lest they tempt you away from some of that which Allah has sent down to you. So if they turn away, then know that Allah only intends to afflict them for some sins of theirs. And indeed, many of the mankind are evil-livers.

أَنْ يَفْتِنُوكَ عَنْ بَعْضِ مَا
أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا
فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُصِيبَهُمْ
بِبَعْضِ ذُنُوبِهِمْ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ
النَّاسِ لَفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

***82** From here the same subject has been resumed that was interrupted by the parenthesis.

50. Is it the judgment of the time of (pagan) ignorance that they are seeking.^{*83} And who is better than Allah for judgment to a people who have firm faith.

أَفْحَكَمَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ^ج وَمَنْ
أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِّقَوْمٍ
يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

***83** The word *Jahiliyyat* (ignorance) is the antonym of Islam. The way of Islam is entirely based on the knowledge imparted by Allah Who possesses the knowledge of all realities. On the contrary, every way different from and opposed to the way of Islam is the way of ignorance. The pre-Islamic period of Arabia is called the period of ignorance in the sense that the people had invented their own ways of life that were based on mere guess work or desires. Therefore, whenever any of these ways will be adopted, that period will be called the period of ignorance. Likewise, the knowledge which is imparted in schools and

universities today is only a partial knowledge and cannot in any way suffice for the right guidance of mankind. That is why all the systems of life that are based on fancies and desires with the help of such partial knowledge, in utter disregard of true knowledge, shall likewise be the ways of ignorance, like the ways of the pre-Islamic period.

51. O those who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians for allies. They are allies of one another. And he who takes them for allies among you, then indeed he is of them. Indeed, Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصْرَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ ۚ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِّنكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنَّهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴾

52. So you see those in whose heart is a disease (of hypocrisy), hastening into them, saying: “We fear that a misfortune may befall us.”*84 Then it may be that Allah brings a victory or a commandment from Him. Then they will become, for what they have been concealing within themselves, regretful.*85

﴿ فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ يُسْرِعُونَ فِيهِمْ يَقُولُونَ نَخْشَىٰ أَن تُصِيبَنَا دَآئِرَةٌ ۚ فَعَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَن يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ ۖ فَيُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا أَسْرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ نَدِمِينَ ﴾

***84** This refers to the condition of the hypocrites during the period when the conflict between Islam and kufr had not yet come to any decisive conclusion. Although Islam had become a power by dint of the sacrifices of its followers, the opposing forces were also very powerful and there were equal chances of the victory of either side. The hypocrites, while living among the Muslims, wanted to keep good relations with the Jews and the Christians so that if the conflict ended in the defeat of the Muslims, they might safely take refuge with their enemies. Then, there was also the economic factor. At that time the Jews and the Christians were economically the most powerful people in Arabia. The money lending business was almost entirely in their hands and they had a strong economic hold upon the people. Moreover, the most fertile regions of Arabia were in their possession. This also led the hypocrites to preserve their old relations with them. In short, they considered it very dangerous to break relations with these people because of the conflict between Islam and kufr, for they feared that it might ruin them economically and politically.

***85** That is, something short of a decisive victory that might convince the people that it was Islam that was ultimately going to win in the conflict.

53. And those who believe will say: "Are these (hypocrites) they who swore by Allah their most binding oaths, that they were surely with you (Muslims)." Their

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ
الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ
أَيْمَانِهِمْ إِنَّهُمْ لَمَعَكُمْ حَبِطَتْ

deeds have become worthless, then they have become the losers.*86

أَعْمَلُهُمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا خَسِرِينَ



*86 All the good acts that they did as Muslims were lost because they lacked sincerity. The Prayers they offered, the fasting they observed, the Zakat dues they paid, and other things they did in obedience to the Islamic law became null and void because there was no sincerity in them. They did not dedicate themselves entirely to Allah but had divided their loyalties equally between Allah and His rebels for the sake of their worldly interests.

54. O those who believe, whoever among you turns back from his religion, then Allah will bring forth a people whom He will love and they will love Him, humble towards the believers, stern against the disbelievers,*87 striving in the way of Allah, and not fearing the blame of any critic.*88 Such is the grace of Allah which He gives to whom He wills. And Allah is All Sufficient, All Knowing.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ
مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي
اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ ۖ أَذِلَّةٌ
عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٌ عَلَى
الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ۗ
ذَٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ



*87 “Humble towards the believers” means that they will never use force against the believers and will never employ

their intelligence, ability, influence, wealth, power or anything else to suppress or oppress them or inflict loss on them. The Muslims will always find such persons to be mild, kindly, amiable and sympathetic.

“Stern against the disbelievers” means that a believer will be firm, strict, uncompromising and militant towards the opponents of Islam by virtue of his firm faith, sincere religious sense, strict principles, strong character and God given intelligence. Whenever the disbelievers will come in conflict with him, they will find that a believer can neither be bought nor coerced because he is so uncompromising in his Islamic principles that he would rather die than yield.

*88 That is, they will fearlessly follow the way of Allah and act upon His commandments, and declare to be right what is right, and wrong what is wrong, according to it. And will not mind in the least the opposition, the censure, the criticism, the objections, the derision and ridicules of their opponents. They will boldly follow the way of Islam which they sincerely believe to be right, even if the popular opinion is against Islam and they are exposed to the ridicule, derision and taunts of the world.

55. Your ally is only Allah, and His messenger, and those who have believed, those who establish prayer, and pay the poor-due, and they bow down in worship.

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ
وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ

56. And whoever takes as an ally Allah and His messenger and those who have believed, then indeed the party of Allah, they will be the victorious.

وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ
الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

57. O those who have believed, do not take those who have made your religion mockery and an amusement from among those who were given the Book before you, and the disbelievers, as allies. And fear Allah if you are true believers.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا
الَّذِينَ آخَذُوا دِينَكُمْ هُزُوءًا وَلَعِبًا
مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِن
قَبْلِكُمْ وَالْكَفَّارَ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَاتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

58. And when you proclaim the call to prayer, they take it as a mockery and an amusement.^{*89} That is because they are a people who do not understand.^{*90}

وَإِذَا نَادَيْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ
آخَذُوهَا هُزُوءًا وَلَعِبًا ذَٰلِكَ
بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

***89** They make the call to the Prayer an object of ridicule by mimicking and deriding it and by perverting its words.
***90** This very fact of their making the call to the Prayer an object of ridicule is a clear proof of their lack of understanding. Had they not been involved in folly and ignorance, they would never have indulged in such frivolous things in spite of their religious difference with

the Muslims, because no sensible person would ever think of ridiculing the call to the worship of Allah made by any people whatsoever.

59. Say: “O People of the Book, do you resent us except that we believed in Allah and that which is revealed to us and that which was revealed before, and that most of you are evil livers.”

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ هَلْ
تَنْقِمُونَ مِنَّا إِلَّا أَنْ
ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ
وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا
وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن
قَبْلُ وَأَنْ أَكْثَرُكُمْ
فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

60. Say: “Shall I inform you of (what is) worse than that for retribution with Allah. Those who incurred the curse of Allah, and on whom His wrath has fallen, and He made of them apes and swines, and the slaves of false deities. Such are in worse plight and further astray from the right path.”*91

قُلْ هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِشَرِّ
مِمَّنْ ذَٰلِكَ
مَثُوبَةٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
مَنْ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ
وَعَضَبَ عَلَيْهِ
وَجَعَلَ مِنْهُمْ
الْقِرَدَةَ وَالْخَنَازِيرَ
وَعَبْدَ
الطَّاغُوتِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ
شَرُّ مَكَانًا
وَأَضَلُّ عَن سَوَاءِ
السَّبِيلِ ﴿٦٠﴾

*91 This verse contains a subtle reference to the shame faced impudence of the Jews in opposing the Muslims in spite of the fact that they had often been under the curse and wrath of Allah for their evil deeds. According to their own history they broke the Sabbath and many of them were turned into apes and swine. They had become so

degraded that they began to worship *taghut*. Therefore they were warned to desist from their opposition to the Muslims who sincerely believed in Allah and followed the right way, whereas they themselves were involved in disobedience and indecency and other moral sins of the worst type.

61. And when they come to you, they say: “We believe,” and in fact, they entered with disbelief, and they certainly left with it. And Allah knows best what they were hiding.

وَإِذَا جَاءُوكُمْ قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا وَقَدْ
دَخَلُوا بِالْكَفْرِ وَهُمْ قَدْ خَرَجُوا
بِهِ ؕ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

62. And you see many of them hastening into sin and transgression and their devouring of unlawful. Evil indeed is what they have been doing.

وَتَرَى كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي
الْآثِمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَأَكْلِهِمُ
السُّحْتِ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

63. Why do not forbid them the rabbis and the priests, from saying sinful words and their devouring of unlawful. Evil indeed is what they have been practicing.

لَوْلَا يَنْهَاهُمُ الرَّبَّانِيُّونَ
وَالْأَحْبَارُ عَنْ قَوْلِهِمُ الْآثِمَ
وَأَكْلِهِمُ السُّحْتِ لَبِئْسَ مَا
كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

64. And the Jews say: “Allah’s hand is tied up.”^{*92} Tied up are their hands,^{*93} and cursed are they for what they say.^{*94} Nay, but both His hands are outspread. He spends however He wills. And that which has been revealed to you from your Lord will surely increase many of them in rebellion and disbelief.^{*95} And We have cast among them enmity and hatred till the Day of Resurrection. Every time they kindled the fire of war, Allah extinguished it. And they strive in the land to make corruption. And Allah does not love the corrupters.

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ
 غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلُعِنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا
 بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنفِقُ كَيْفَ
 يَشَاءُ وَلَيَزِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُم مَّا
 أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا
 وَكُفْرًا ۗ وَأَلْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ
 وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ
 كُلَّمَا أَوْقَدُوا نَارًا لِلْحَرْبِ
 أَطْفَأَهَا اللَّهُ ۗ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي
 الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
 الْمُفْسِدِينَ



***92** According to the Arabic idiom, one whose hands are tied is an excessively parsimonious person. What the Jews meant by this was that Allah had ceased to be bounteous. When they had fallen into the lowest state of degradation for centuries and lost all hope of their national recovery, they used to lament their lost glory and blame Allah for showing niggardliness towards them. The foolish people

from among them went so far as to say, "God has become so stingy that He has shut the doors of His treasures against us. He has now nothing left with Him for us except calamities and misfortunes."

This attitude is not peculiar to the Jews alone. The foolish people of other communities, instead of turning to Allah, utter insolent words like these when a calamity befalls them.

***93** That is, they themselves have become so niggardly as to become a proverb for parsimony and narrow mindedness.

***94** If they meant to provoke Allah to bounty by their taunts, they miserably failed in their object. On the contrary, they became subject to the curse of Allah in consequence of their insolent and impudent words and were deprived of His blessing and clemency.

***95** Instead of producing the desired effect on the Jews, the word of God fell on deaf ears. So they did not learn any lesson from it but in their obduracy began to oppose the truth. Instead of redressing their wrong doings and evil deeds and mending their ways, they strove hard to suppress that voice so that no one else might listen to it. Thus the word of God that was sent down to Muhammad (peace be upon him) for their own good and the good of humanity produced no good effect upon them but increased the rebellion and disbelief of many of them.

65. And if only the People of the Book had believed and feared, We would have surely removed from them their

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ ءَامَنُوا
وَاتَّقَوْا لَكَفَّرْنَا عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ

evil deeds, and admitted them into Gardens of Delight.

وَلَا دَخَلَتْهُمْ جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٦٥﴾

66. And if only they had stood by the Torah, and the Gospel, and what has been sent down to them from their Lord, they would have been nourished (with provisions) from above them and from beneath their feet.*96 Among them are a moderate community, and many of them, evil is what they do.

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا التَّوْرَةَ
وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ
رَبِّهِمْ لَأَكَلُوا مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ
تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أُمَّةٌ
مُقْتَصِدَةٌ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ سَاءَ مَا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

***96** This concise sentence refers to a speech of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) contained in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. In this he warned the Israelites in detail: “If you will carefully carry out all His commands....., then your God will lift you high above all the nations of the earth and all His blessings shall come upon you”, but “If you do not listen to the voice of God and are not mindful of all His commands and rules,.....then shall all sorts of curses, calamities and plagues come upon you.....The Eternal will have you routed in front of your foes.”

67. O Messenger, proclaim (the message) that which has been sent down to you from your Lord. And if you do not, then you have

﴿٦٧﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ
إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ
فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ

not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.

يَعَصْمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

68. Say: “O People of the Book, you are not on anything (as to guidance) until you observe the Torah and the Gospel and that which has been sent down (the Quran) to you from your Lord.”^{*97} And that which has been revealed to you from your Lord will surely increase many of them in rebellion and disbelief.^{*98} So do not grieve for the disbelieving people.

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَسْتُمْ عَلَى
شَيْءٍ حَتَّى تُقِيمُوا التَّوْرَةَ
وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ
رَبِّكُمْ وَلَيَزِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ
مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا
وَكُفْرًا فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ
الْكَافِرِينَ

***97** “To observe the Torah and the Gospel” means to follow their teachings sincerely and to follow the code of life laid down in them.

In this connection, one must keep in mind that the Bible contains two kinds of writings. Some portions in it have been interpolated by the Jewish and the Christian scholars. It is obvious that the Quran does not demand the observance of these parts. But there are other portions that have been put down as the commandments of God or as the

sayings of Moses, Jesus and other Prophets (peace be upon them all). The Quran demands the observance of the latter parts only, for there is no marked difference between the teachings contained in them and those of the Quran. Even though these parts of the Bible have not remained wholly intact and have been tampered with by the translators, the commentators etc. nevertheless, one does feel that they teach the same fundamental principle of *Tauhid* that the Quran teaches, present the same creed which the Quran presents, and guides man to the same way of life that has been laid down in the Quran. Thus it is clear that if the Jews and the Christians had been following those teachings which have been attributed to God and their Prophets in the Bible, they surely would have been a community of righteous people at the time when Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent as a Messenger, and would have readily recognized that the Quran contained the same Message that was contained in the former Books. In that case they would have felt no difficulty in following the Prophet (peace be upon him), for, then, there would have been no question of changing their religion. This would have been a continuation of the same way that they were following before.

***98** The foregoing decree enjoined by Allah will increase their rebellion and disbelief because they will not consider it with a cool mind but in their obduracy oppose it more vigorously.

69. Indeed, those who have believed (in the Quran and

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ

Muhammad), and those (before) who were Jews, and Sabaeans, and Christians, (among them) who believed in Allah and the Last Day, and did righteous deeds, there shall be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve.*99

هَادُوا وَالصَّابِعُونَ وَالنَّصَرَى
مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خَوْفٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

*99 Refer to Ayat 62 and E.N. 80 of Surah Al-Baqarah.

70. Indeed, We took a covenant from the Children of Israel, and We sent to them messengers. Whenever there came to them a messenger with that which their souls did not desire, a group (of messengers) they denied, and (another) group they killed.

لَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ
وَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ رُسُلًا كَمَا
جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَى
أَنْفُسُهُمْ فَرِيقًا كَذَّبُوا وَفَرِيقًا
يَقْتُلُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

71. And they thought that there will be no trial (or punishment), so they became blind and deaf. Then Allah turned (in forgiveness) to them. Yet again, many of them became blind and deaf. And Allah is All Seer of what they do.

وَحَسِبُوا أَلَّا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً
فَعَمُوا وَصَمُوا ثُمَّ تَابَ اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ عَمُوا وَصَمُوا كَثِيرٌ
مِّنْهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

72. They have surely disbelieved, those who say: “Indeed Allah, He is the Messiah, son of Mary.” And the Messiah (himself) said: “O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.”*99a Indeed, whoever associates partners with Allah, then Allah has certainly forbidden for him paradise. And his abode is the Fire. And for the wrongdoers there are not any helpers.

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ
 مَرْيَمَ وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ يَبْنَى
 إِسْرَائِيلَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي
 وَرَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ مَن يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ
 فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ
 وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ
 مِن أَنْصَارٍ



***99a** Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. (Matthew 4: 10).

73. They have surely disbelieved, those who say: “Indeed, Allah is the third of the three.” And there is not any god except One God. And if they do not desist from what they say, there will surely afflict those who disbelieve among them a painful punishment.

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ
 اللَّهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلَاثَةٍ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا
 إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ وَإِن لَّمْ يَنْتَهُوا عَمَّا
 يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ



74. So will they not repent to Allah and seek forgiveness of Him. And Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

أَفَلَا يَتُوبُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ
وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونََهُ^ج وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ
رَّحِيمٌ

75. The Messiah, son of Mary, was not but a messenger. The messengers (the like of whom) have passed away before him. And his mother was a woman of truth. They both used to eat (earthly) food. See how We make clear for them the revelations, then see how they are deluded away.*100

مَا الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا
رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ
الرُّسُلُ وَأُمُّهُ صِدِّيقَةٌ كَانَا
يَأْكُلَانِ الطَّعَامَ أَنْظُرْ
كَيْفَ نُبَيِّنُ لَهُمُ الْآيَاتِ
ثُمَّ أَنْظُرْ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

*100 This verse repudiates very clearly the Christian doctrine of the divinity of Jesus (peace be upon him). If one sincerely wishes to know what he really was, one can judge very easily with the help of the signs given herein that he was no more than a man. The Gospel itself bears witness that he was a human being, and subject to the usual wants and necessities of ordinary persons: he was born of a woman (Mary): he had a genealogical tree like all other human beings: he had a human body which had all the characteristics and limitations of other human bodies: he slept, he ate food and he felt heat and cold: he was even

tempted by the devil. These things clearly show that he could not be God nor could he have been a partner with God in His Godhead.

But it is a strange feat of mental perversion that the Christians insist on ascribing Godhead to Jesus (peace be upon him) in spite of the fact that their own Gospels depict him purely as a human being. This is a clear proof of the fact that they do not believe in the Gospels but in an imaginary Christ whom they themselves have invented and raised to Godhead.

76. Say (O Muhammad):
“Do you worship other than Allah that which has no power over you to harm, nor to benefit. And Allah, He is the All Hearer, the All Knower.”

قُلْ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا
نَفْعًا ۗ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ



77. Say: “O people of the Book, do not go beyond bounds in your religion other than the truth, and do not follow the desires of people who have gone astray before, and led many astray, and strayed (themselves) from the right path.”*101

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا
فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا
تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ
قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَنْ

سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ



*101 This refers to the misguided nations from whom the

Christians picked up wrong creeds and false ways. The reference is especially to the Greek philosophers whose fancies misled the Christians from the right way which had been shown to them at the start. The beliefs of the first followers of the Messiah conformed to a great extent to the reality they themselves had witnessed and to what had been taught to them by their Prophet. But later on the Christians went so much beyond the limits in showing reverence and veneration to the Messiah and were so influenced by the fancies and philosophical interpretations of their beliefs that they invented a new religion that had nothing in common with the real teachings of the Messiah. In this connection, the following extracts from Jesus Christ, by the Rev. Charles Anderson Scott (Encyclopedia Britannica, Fourteenth Edition) are worth reading.

“Apart from the birth stories at the opening of Matthew, Mark and Luke (the exact significance of which in this respect is ambiguous) there is nothing in these three Gospels to suggest that their writers thought of Jesus as other than human, a human being specially endowed with the spirit of God and standing in an unbroken relation to God which justified His being spoken of as the “son of God”. Even Matthew refers to him as a carpenter’s son and records that after Peter had acknowledged Him as Messiah he “took him and began to rebuke Him” (Matt. XVI. 22). And in Luke the two disciples on the way to Emmaus can still speak of Him as “a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people” (Luke, XXIV. 19). It is very singular that in spite of the fact that before Mark was

composed, “the Lord” had become the description of Jesus common among Christians; he is never so described in the second Gospel (nor yet in the first, though the word is freely used to refer to God). All three relate the Passion of Jesus with a fullness and emphasis of its great significance, but except the “ransom” passage (Mark, X. 45) and certain words at the Last Supper, there is no indication of the meaning which was afterwards attached to it. It is not even suggested that the death of Jesus had any relation to sin or forgiveness. Had the “ransom” saying been suggested by Paul, it would not stand as it does in its isolated vagueness.” The same author says, “That He ranked Himself as a Prophet appears from a few passages such as I have to go on my way today, tomorrow or day after tomorrow, because it cannot be that a Prophet perish out of Jerusalem.” (Luke, 13 : 33). He frequently referred to himself as “the son of Man.”.....”Jesus never refers to Himself as the “son of God”, and the title when bestowed upon Him by others probably involves no more than the acknowledgment that He was the Messiah. But He does describe himself “as the son” absolutely....Moreover, he uses the word “Father” in the same absolute way to define His relationship to God. It is conceivable that He did not always realize the uniqueness of this relationship, that in early life He thought of the privilege as one which He shared with other men, but that experience of life and deeper knowledge of human nature forced upon Him the discovery that in this He stood alone.

Certain words of Peter spoken at the time of Pentecost, “a

man approved of God” describe Jesus as He was known and regarded by His contemporaries..... The Gospels leave no room for doubt as to the completeness with which these statements are to be accepted. From them we learn that Jesus (peace be upon him) passed through the natural stages of development, physical and mental, that He hungered, thirsted, was weary and slept, that He could be surprised and required information, that He suffered pain. He not only made no claim to omniscience, He distinctly waived it. Indeed any claim to omniscience would be not only inconsistent with the whole impression created by the Gospels, it could not be reconciled with the cardinal experiences of the Temptation, of Gethsemane and of Calvary. Unless such experiences were to be utterly unreal, Jesus (peace be upon him) must have entered into them and passed through them under the ordinary limitations of human knowledge, subject only to such modifications of human knowledge as might be due to prophetic insight or the sure vision of God. There is still less reason to predicate omnipotence of Jesus (peace be upon him). There is no indication that He ever acted independently of God, or as an independent God. Rather does He acknowledge dependence upon God, by His habit of prayer and in such words as “this kind goeth not forth save by prayer”. He even repudiates the ascription to Himself of goodness in the absolute sense in which it belongs to God alone. It is a remarkable testimony to the truly historical character of these Gospels that though they were not finally set down until the Christian Church had begun to look up to the

risen Christ as to a divine being, the records on the one hand preserve all the evidence of His true humanity and on the other nowhere suggest that He thought of Himself as God.”

“It may not be possible to decide whether it was the primitive community or Paul himself who first put fully religious content into the title “Lord” as used of Christ. Probably it was the former. But the Apostle undoubtedly adopted the title in its full meaning and did much to make that meaning clear by transferring to “the Lord Jesus Christ” many of the ideas and phrases which in the Old Testament had been specifically assigned to the Lord Jehovah. He gave unto him that name that is above every name, the name of “Lord”. At the same time by equating Christ with the wisdom of God and with glory of God, as well as ascribing to Him sonship in an absolute sense, Paul claimed for Jesus Christ a relation to God which was inherent and unique, ethical and personal, eternal. While, however, Paul in many ways and in many aspects, equated Christ with God, he definitely stopped short of speaking of him as God.... (Pages 22-25, Enc. Britt., Vol. 13, 1946).

The molds of thought (of Trinity) are those of Greek philosophy and into these were run the Jewish teachings. We have thus a peculiar combination the religious doctrines of the Bible, as culminating in the person of Jesus, run through the forms of alien philosophy....

For the Doctrine of Trinity, “The Jewish source furnished the terms Father, Son and Spirit. Jesus seldom employed the last term and Paul’s use of it is not altogether clear.

Already in Jewish literature it has been all but personified. Thus the material is Jewish, though already doubtless modified by Greek influence: but the problem is Greek; it is not primarily ethical, nor even religious but it is metaphysical. What is the ontological relationship between these three factors? The answer of the Church is given in the Nicene formula, which is characteristically Greek....”

(Enc. Britannica, Vol. 5, page 633 last line, Article “Christianity”).

In the same connection, the following passage from “Church History” (Enc. Britannica, Vol. 5, Copy Right 1946) is also worth reading:

“The recognition of Christ as the incarnation of the “logos” was practically universal before the close of the 3rd century, but His deity was still widely denied and the Arian controversy which distracted the Church of the 4th century concerned the latter question. At the council of Nicaea in 325 the deity of Christ received official sanction and was given formulation in the original Nicene creed. Controversy continued for some time, but finally the Nicene decision was recognized both in East and West as the only orthodox faith. The deity of the Son was believed to carry with it that of the Spirit, who was associated with Father and Son in the baptismal formula and in the current symbols and so the victory of the Nicene Christology meant the recognition of the doctrine of the Trinity as a part of orthodox faith.

The assertion of the deity of the Son incarnate in Christ raised another problem which constituted the subject of dispute in the Christological controversies of the 4th and

following centuries. What is the relation of the divine and human natures in Christ? At the council of Chalcedon in 451 it was declared that in the person of Christ are united two complete natures, divine and human, which retain after the union all their properties unchanged. This was supplemented at the third council of Constantinople in 680 by the statement that each of the natures contains a will, so that Christ possesses two wills. The Western Church accepted the decisions of Nicaea, Chalcedon and Constantinople and so the doctrines of the Trinity and of the two natures in Christ were handed down as orthodox dogma in West as well as East.....

Meanwhile in the Western Church the subject of sin and grace and the relation of divine and human activity in salvation, received special attention and finally, at the 2nd Council of Orange in 529, after both Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism had been repudiated, a moderate form of Augustinianism was adopted, involving the theory that every man as a result of the Fall is in such a condition that he can take no steps in the direction of salvation until he has been renewed by the divine grace given in baptism, and that he cannot continue in the good thus begun except by the constant assistance of that grace which is mediated only by the Catholic Church. (Page 677-678).

It has become very clear from the above quotations from Christian Scholars that the first thing which misled the Christians was their exaggerated credulity. Accordingly, they went beyond the limits in their reverence and love of Christ. That is why they began to apply epithets like

“Lord” and “Son of God” to Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) and to ascribe divine attributes to him and to invent the doctrine of atonement, when, in fact, there was absolutely no room, for such things in his teachings. Afterwards, when they came under the influence of philosophy, they began to put forward interpretations to justify the errors of their former religious leaders and went on inventing new creeds, one after the other, in utter disregard of the real teachings of Jesus Christ (peace be upon him), merely on the strength of philosophy and logic, whereas the right thing for them would have been to turn to the real teachings of Christ. It is against such wrong beliefs that the Quran warns in Ayats 72-77.

78. Cursed were those who disbelieved among the Children of Israel by the tongue of David, and Jesus, son of Mary. That was because they disobeyed and used to transgress.

لُعِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ
بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى لِسَانِ
دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ذَلِكَ
بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا
يَعْتَدُونَ

79. They used not to forbid one another from the abominable deeds that they committed. Indeed, evil was that which they were doing. *102

كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ
مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ مَا
كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ

***102** The corruption of the children of Israel took place according to the universal process. At first some individuals of a community become corrupt, and if the collective conscience of the community is alive, the public opinion keeps them suppressed, and the community, as a whole, is saved from corruption. But, on the other hand, if the community connives at their evil ways, and leaves them free to do as they like, by and by, that corruption which was at first confined only to some individuals, spreads in the whole community. The same thing happened in the case of the children of Israel.

As to the curse by the tongue of the Prophets David (peace be upon him) and Jesus (peace be upon him), refer to Psalms 10 and 50 and Matthew 23.

80. You see many among them making allies with those who disbelieved. Evil indeed is that which their selves have sent forward for them. (For) that Allah is angry with them, and in the punishment they will abide eternally.

تَرَى كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِبِئْسَ مَا
قَدَّمَتْ لَهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ أَنْ سَخِطَ
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ فِي الْعَذَابِ هُمْ
خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

81. And if they had believed in Allah and the Prophet, and that which has been revealed to him, they would not have taken

وَلَوْ كَانُوا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ
وَالنَّبِيِّ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مَا

them as allies.*¹⁰³ But many of them are evil livers.

أَتَّخَذُوهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَكِنَّ كَثِيرًا
مِّنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

*103 If the Jews had been sincere believers in God, prophethood and revelation, they would naturally have taken the side of the Muslims, who were believers in these teachings. But the Jews were a strange sort of believers in the Book: they sided with the mushriks against the believers in the battle between the unity of God and shirk. Moreover, they professed to believe in prophethood, but took the side of those who did not believe in it. Still they shame-facedly declared that they were believers in God, prophets and the Books.

82. You will certainly find the most intense of people in hostility to those who believe, the Jews and those who associate others. And you will certainly find the nearest of them in affection to those who believe, those who say: "We are Christians." That is because among them are priests and monks, and because they are not arrogant.

﴿٨٢﴾ لَتَجِدَنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَدَاوَةً
لِّلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالَّذِينَ
أَشْرَكُوا ۗ وَلَتَجِدَنَّ أَقْرَبَهُم
مَّوَدَّةً لِّلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا الَّذِينَ
قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصْرِي ۚ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ
مِنْهُمْ قِيسِيْنَ وَرُهَبَانَا
وَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

83. And when they hear what has been sent down to

وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰ

the messenger (Muhammad), you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they have recognized of the truth. They say: "Our Lord, we believe, so write us among the witnesses."

الرَّسُولِ تَرَىٰ أُعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ
مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ
الْحَقِّ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا ءَاْمَنَّا
فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

84. "And why should we not believe in Allah and that which has come to us of the truth. And we desire that our Lord will admit us (in Paradise) along with the righteous people."

وَمَا لَنَا لَا نُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا جَاءَنَا
مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَنَطْمَعُ أَنْ
يُدْخِلَنَا رَبُّنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

85. So Allah has rewarded them, for what they said, gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. And that is the reward of those who do good.

فَأَثَبَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا قَالُوا جَنَّاتٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ جَزَاءُ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

86. And those who disbelieved and denied Our revelations, they are the dwellers of the Hell fire.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٨٦﴾

87. O those who believe, do not forbid the good things which Allah has made lawful for you,^{*104} and do not transgress.^{*105} Indeed, Allah does not love the transgressors.

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُحَرِّمُوا
طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا
تَعْتَدُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْمُعْتَدِينَ



***104** This divine commandment implies two things. First, you have no authority to make certain things lawful and others unlawful. Lawful is only that which Allah has made lawful and unlawful is that which Allah has made unlawful. Therefore if you make a lawful thing unlawful, and vice versa, you will be following your own law and not the divine law. Secondly, you should not adopt the way of asceticism like the Christian monks or the Hindu friars or the Buddhist mendicants and the like. This was meant to warn the Muslims against the general tendency, which has always existed among the religious-minded people, to consider even the normal satiation of the desires of the body and mind to be against spiritual progress. They imagine that self-torture, self-denial and abstinence are virtues in themselves and that one could not approach God without these austerities. As a matter of fact, there were some companions, who had developed such tendencies. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to know that some of his companions had taken vows that they would always observe fast during the day and would not go to bed for sleep but keep awake and worship God the whole night,

and would abstain from flesh, fat and women, he forbade them from such practices. He said, I have not ordained such things; your own self has rights on you; therefore observe fast and also eat easefully. Stand in worship at night and also go to sleep. I myself sometimes observe fast and at others I do not. I eat flesh and butter. This is my way, and the one who does not like my way, is not of me.

According to another tradition, he emphasized the same and said, now is it that some people have made unlawful for themselves women, good food, scents and perfumes, sleep and other good things of the world? As for me, I have not taught you to become monks and hermits. The way of life taught by me does neither allow abstention from women nor from eating flesh nor retirement and seclusion from the world. The law has prescribed fasting for self-discipline, and jihad for the same benefits that might be obtained from asceticism. Worship Allah and associate none with Him as partner, perform Hajj and Umrah, establish the Salat and pay Zakat and observe the fasting during the month of Ramadan. The people who were doomed before you, were doomed because they practiced austerity of their own accord, and when they did so, Allah also prescribed the same for them. Those are of them whom you now see in the monasteries.

In the same connection, we learn from some traditions that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to know that a certain companion had been abstaining from having conjugal relations with his wife for a long time and had been devoting himself to worship, he immediately sent for

him and ordered, "Go to your wife instantly." The companion replied, "I am with fast." The Prophet (peace be upon him) again said, "Break the fast and go to your wife." There is another instance of the same kind. A woman came to caliph Umar and complained, "My husband observes fast during the day and passes the night in worship and does not have conjugal relations with me." Umar ordered Kaab bin Saur al-Azdi to hear the case. He decreed that the husband was permitted to pass three nights in worship but he must go to his wife on the fourth night.

***105** "To transgress" has very extensive meanings. One goes beyond the limits, if one makes lawful things unlawful or abstains from things which Allah has declared to be pure as if they were impure or if one is extravagant in the use of pure things, or if one makes use of unlawful things as if they were lawful. Allah does not like such acts of transgression.

88. And eat of that which Allah has provided for you, lawful, good things. And fear Allah, Him in whom you are believers.

وَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَلًا
طَيِّبًا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ
بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ

89. Allah does not hold against you for what is meaningless in your oaths, but He does hold against you for the oaths which you have sworn in earnest. So its

لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي
أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ
بِمَا عَقَدْتُمُ الْأَيْمَانَ فَكَفَرْتُمْ

expiation is the feeding of ten needy persons with the average of that which you feed your own families, or the clothing of them, or the freeing of a slave. So whoever can not find (the means to do so), then (he shall) fast three days. That is the expiation of your oaths when you have sworn.*106 And protect your oaths.*107 Thus Allah makes clear to you His revelations, that you may be grateful.

إِطْعَامُ عَشْرَةِ مَسْكِينٍ مِنْ
 أَوْسَطِ مَا تَطْعَمُونَ أَهْلِيكُمْ أَوْ
 كِسْوَتُهُمْ أَوْ تَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ فَمَنْ
 لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ
 ذَلِكَ كَفْرَةٌ أَيْمَانِكُمْ إِذَا
 حَلَفْتُمْ^ج وَأَحْفَظُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ^ج
 كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ



*106 The commandment about oaths has been laid down here in connection with instructions about food, because some people had taken oaths of making some lawful things unlawful for themselves. The commandment is that if one uttered a word of oath without any intention behind it, he shall not be bound to observe it, for there is no punishment or expiation for this. But if one has deliberately taken such an oath, he must break it and expiate the violation because he must abrogate such a sinful oath. (Refer to E.Ns 243 and 244 of Surah Al-Baqarah and E.N. 125 of Surah An-Nisa).

*107 “Protect your oath” implies three things. First, one should make the right use of an oath and should not take it for useless and sinful things. Secondly, when one takes an oath for anything, he should remember it lest he should

forget it and violate it. Thirdly, if one takes a deliberate oath to do a right thing, he must fulfill it, and if one violates it, he should expiate the sin.

90. O those who believe, intoxicants, and gambling, and idolatrous sacrifices at altars, and divining arrows are only an abomination of Satan's handiwork.*108 So avoid it that you may be successful.*109

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ
وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَمُ
رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ
فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

***108** Refer to E.Ns 12 and 14 of this Surah for the meaning of *ansab* (ungodly shrines), *azlam* (methods of divination) and *maisar* (gambling). Though *azlam*, divination, is in its very nature a form of gambling, there is a slight difference between it and *maisar*. *Azlam* applies to those forms of divination and casting of lots, which are tinged with shirk and superstition and *maisar* applies to all those forms by which wealth is acquired or divided by devices of chance.

***109** In this verse four things have been made absolutely unlawful. They are wine, gambling, ungodly shrines (which are dedicated to the worship of others than Allah and in which sacrifices are made and offerings given in the name of others than Allah) and divining devices. The nature of the last three has already been explained. Here are the details of the commandment about wine.

Before making wine absolutely unlawful in this verse, two other commandments concerning its prohibition had already been given in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 219 and

Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 43. Before this last commandment was given, the Prophet (peace be upon him) addressed the people in order to prepare them for its absolute prohibition. He warned and said, Allah does not like at all that people should drink wine. Probably absolute prohibition will soon be prescribed: therefore those who possess wine are advised to sell it. Sometime after this, when Ayat 90 was revealed, he declared, "Now those who possess wine, can neither drink it nor sell it; they should, therefore, throw it away." Accordingly, it was spilled in the streets of Al-Madinah to run wastefully. Some people, however, asked the Prophet (peace be upon him), "May we give it as a present to the Jews?" He replied, "The One Who has made it unlawful has also forbidden to give it as a present." Others asked, "May we convert it into vinegar?" He replied, "No, you must spill it." Another asked again and again, "Is one permitted to use wine as medicine?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) emphatically rejected this also and said, "No, it is not a medicine but a disease." Yet another asked, we live in a place, which is very cold, and we have to do tiresome labor. So we drink wine to refresh ourselves from fatigue and to keep warm in the cold. He asked, "Is what you drink intoxicant?" The man replied, "Yes." The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, "Then refrain from it." At this the man said, "The people of our part of the country will not submit to this." He replied, "If they do not submit to this, then go to war with them."

According to a tradition related by Ibn Umar, the Prophet (peace be upon him) declared, Allah has cursed wine and

the one who drinks it, and the one who serves it, and the one who sells it, and the one who buys it, and the one who extracts it, and the one who has it extracted, and the one who carried it, and the one for whom it is carried.

According to another tradition the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited the Muslims from eating the food which is served along with wine. In the initial stage of the prohibition, he forbade even the use of those utensils which were employed for extracting wine or for drinking it. Afterwards when the prohibition had become thoroughly effective, the use of such utensils was permitted.

Though originally the Arabic word *khamr* meant only wine made from grapes, and it was also applied to the liquors made from wheat, barley, dried grapes, dates and honey, the Prophet (peace be upon him) applied the prohibition to all the intoxicants, and there are traditions that clearly support this. For instance, “Every intoxicant is *khamr* and is unlawful.” “Every drink that intoxicates is unlawful.” “I prohibit every intoxicant.” In one of his Friday sermons, the Caliph Umar defined *khamr* as everything that dulls the faculty of thinking.

In this connection, the Prophet (peace be upon him) laid down the general principle: if a large dose of something is intoxicant, then its smallest dose also is unlawful, and if a cup of anything is intoxicant, then a drop of it also is unlawful.

During the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), there was no fixed punishment for a drunkard. The culprit, who was arrested and brought for trial was beaten with shoes,

kicked, given blows and thrashed with sticks and ropes. Forty stripes were the maximum punishment given for this crime. The same was the punishment during the time of Abu Bakr and the early days of Umar. But when the latter saw that the crime was on the increase, he in consultation with the other companions laid down eighty stripes for this. Imam Malik and Imam Abu Hanifah and, according to a tradition, Imam Shafai also, were of the same opinion. But Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, and according to another Tradition, Imam Shafai also, were of the opinion that forty stripes should be inflicted for the crime of drinking. Ali also considered forty stripes to be the punishment for it. (may Allah be pleased with them all).

According to the Sharia, it is the duty of the Islamic State to enforce prohibition. That is why during the time of Umar the shop of a man, named Ruvaishid, who belonged to the clan of Bani-Thaqif, was burnt by his order because wine was secretly sold there. On another occasion a whole village was burnt down by the orders of Umar for the crime that wine was secretly extracted and sold there.

91. Satan only wants to cause between you enmity and hatred with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and from the prayer. So, will you refrain.

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ
بَيْنَكُمْ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي
الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ
ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ
مُنْتَهُونَ



92. And obey Allah and obey the messenger and beware. Then if you turn away, then know that upon Our messenger is only the clear conveyance (of the message).

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ
وَاحْذَرُوا فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا
أَنَّمَا عَلَى رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَّغُ الْمُبِينُ



93. On those who believe and do righteous deeds, there is no sin for what they have eaten (in the past), as long as they fear (Allah), and believe and do righteous deeds, then fear (Allah) and believe, then again fear (Allah) and do good. And Allah loves those who do good.

لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا
طَعَمُوا إِذَا مَا اتَّقَوْا وَءَامَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا
وَءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَأَحْسَنُوا
وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ



94. O those who believe, Allah will surely test you by something of the game that is well within reach of your hands and your spears, that Allah may know him who fears Him in unseen. Then whoever transgresses after that, for him there is a painful punishment.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَيَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ
اللَّهُ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الصَّيْدِ تَنَالَهُ
أَيْدِيكُمْ وَرِمَاحُكُمْ لِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ
مَنْ يَتَخَفُهُ بِالْغَيْبِ فَمَنْ
أَعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ
أَلِيمٌ



95. O those who believe, do not kill wild game while you are in Ihram for the pilgrimage.^{*110} And whoever of you kills it intentionally, so the penalty is an equivalent to what he killed, of domestic animals, as judged by two just men among you, an offering delivered to the Kabah. Or as expiation, the feeding of needy persons, or the equivalent of that in fasting,^{*111} that he may taste the evil consequences of his deed. Allah has forgiven whatever happened in the past. And whoever commits it again, then Allah will take retribution from him. And Allah is All Mighty, Able of Retribution.

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقْتُلُوا
 الصَّيْدَ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ وَمَنْ قَتَلَهُ
 مِنْكُمْ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاءٌ مِثْلُ مَا
 قَتَلَ مِنَ النَّعْمِ تَحْكُمُ بِهِ ذَوَا
 عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ هَدِيًّا بَلِغَ الْكَعْبَةِ
 أَوْ كَفَّرَةٌ طَعَامُ مَسْكِينٍ أَوْ
 عَدْلٌ ذَلِكَ صِيَامًا لِيَذُوقَ
 وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِ ۗ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَمَّا
 سَلَفَ ۚ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَيَنْتَقِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ
 وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ ۝

***110** It is forbidden to hunt game or to help another to hunt it, in any way whatsoever, while one is in the pilgrim's garments or in the sacred precincts. It is also unlawful for one in this state to eat of the game that has been specifically killed for him. If, however, someone else, not in this state, kills a game for himself and then gives a part of it to a pilgrim as a present, there is no harm for the latter to eat it.

Of course, the harmful animals are an exception to this prohibition. One is permitted to kill a snake, scorpion, mad dog or any other harmful animal, even when one is under the restrictions imposed on a pilgrim.

*111 Those two just men will also decide how many indigent persons are to be fed, or how many fasts are to be observed, for killing a certain animal.

96. Lawful to you is the sea game and its food,^{*112} a provision for you and those on a journey. And forbidden to you is the land game as long as you are in Ihram for the pilgrimage. And fear Allah, He, to whom you will be gathered.

أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَحْرِ
وَطَعَامُهُ مَتَعًا لَكُمْ وَلِلسَّيَّارَةِ
وَحُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَرِّ مَا
دُمْتُمْ حُرْمًا^ط وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي
إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

*112 Game from the sea has been made lawful because sometimes when provisions run short on a sea journey, there is nothing else close at hand to eat.

97. Allah has appointed the Kabah, the Sacred House, an asylum of security for mankind, and the sacred month (of Hajj), and the animals of sacrificial offerings, and (animals with) the garlands.^{*113} That is so you may know that Allah

جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الْكَعْبَةَ الْبَيْتِ
الْحَرَامِ قِيَمًا لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّهْرَ
الْحَرَامَ وَأَهْدَى^ج وَالْقَلْبَةَ
ذَلِكَ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا
فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

knows what is in the heavens and what is in the earth, and that Allah is Knower of all things.*114

وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ



*113 For Arabia, the Kabah was not merely a sacred place of worship, but it occupied a central position in the country and because of this and of its sanctity, it was the means of stabilizing its economy and culture. The people from all over the country came there to perform Hajj and Umrah and the huge gathering helped to create the feeling of unity among the Arabs who were otherwise torn by clannish strife. The pilgrims who came from different clans and places met together and established cultural relations. Poetic contests helped to make their language and literature rich. Trade and commerce which were transacted on the occasion helped to satisfy the economic needs of the people. The sacred months provided peace to the Arabs for four months and this was the only period during which their caravans could travel in security from one part of the country to the other. The animals dedicated to sacrifice and the collars round their necks proved very helpful to the movements of the caravans, for the Arabs showed so much reverence for them that none dared touch them with the intention of robbery.

*114 That is, if you just think deeply about the wisdom contained in the sanctity of the Kabah and the restrictions laid down for the pilgrimage to it and the benefits accruing from it, you yourselves would be convinced that Allah, Who has prescribed these, has deep and perfect knowledge of the

welfare and needs of His creatures. You will realize that each one of His commandments is very beneficial for different aspects of human life. Even during the centuries of chaos before the advent of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Allah had made the Kabah a means of security and stability for your national life though you yourselves were senselessly bent upon destroying it. In the same way, commandments of Allah guaranteed your own security and welfare; therefore you should, for your own good observe these, for there are hidden benefits in them that you can neither foresee nor obtain by your own devices.

98. Know that Allah is severe in punishment, and that Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

أَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ
الْعِقَابِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ



99. Not (a duty) upon the messenger except to convey. And Allah knows whatever you reveal and whatever you conceal.

مَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا أَلْبَعُغُ^ق وَاللَّهُ
يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا تَكْتُمُونَ



100. Say (O Muhammad): “Not equal are the evil and the good, even though the abundance of the evil may please you.^{*115} So fear Allah, O men of

قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ
وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ الْخَبِيثِ
فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

understanding, that you
may be successful.”

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلِحُونَ

***115** This verse sets up a new standard of values, which is quite different from the standard of those who look only at the outward aspect of things. Such people usually judge things by their quantity and not by their quality. For instance, one hundred rupees are always considered greater in value than five rupees by one who does not attach any value to the means by which these might have been obtained. But contrary to this evaluation, this verse declares that if these one hundred rupees have been obtained by unfair means and those five rupees earned by fair means, then the former are less in worth because of their impurity than the latter because of their purity. According to this standard, it is not the number or the quantity of a thing that increases or decreases its true worth but the question whether it has been obtained by fair means or foul. Obviously, a drop of rose scent has greater value than a heap of filth and a cup of pure water is far greater in worth than a cistern full of impure urine. Therefore one who is really wise will always remain content with the lawful, though it may appear to be very insignificant and worthless, and will never try to grab the unlawful, though it might appear to be very alluring and grand.

101. O those who believe, do not ask about things which, if they were made known to you, may cause you

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَسْأَلُوا
عَنْ أَشْيَاءَ إِن تُبَدَّ لَكُمْ تَسْؤُكُمْ

trouble.*¹¹⁶ And if you ask of them while the Quran is being revealed, they will be made known to you. Allah has forgiven that. And Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Forbearing.

وَإِنْ تَسْأَلُوا عَنْهَا حِينَ يُنَزَّلُ
الْقُرْآنُ تُبَدَّ لَكُمْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهَا
وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ



*116 This verse forbids people to ask useless and unnecessary questions because some people used to put such questions to the Prophet (peace be upon him) as were of no practical good for mundane affairs nor for spiritual uplift. For example, once a certain person while sitting in a gathering asked him, “Who is my real father?” Likewise, sometimes, some people put unnecessary questions concerning legal matters so as to get these defined, whereas they had been purposely kept undefined for the good of the people. For example, when Hajj was made obligatory by a commandment in the Quran, a certain person heard it, and instantly asked; “Has it been made obligatory to perform Hajj every year.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not reply. The man repeated the question, but he again kept quiet. When the man put the question for the third time, he replied, "Woe to you! If I had said: ‘Yes’, the performance of Hajj every year would have become obligatory and people like you would have been unable to perform it and been guilty of disobedience.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself forbade people to ask questions for the sake of it and to probe into things aimlessly. In a tradition he warned, “The worst offender

against the Muslims is the person who asked a question about something that had not been made unlawful but was made so because of his question.” In another tradition he said, “Allah has prescribed some obligatory duties for you; let not these go unfulfilled, and He has made certain things unlawful, so do not go near them. He has prescribed certain limits, do not transgress them. He has been silent concerning certain things, but not because He has forgotten them; so do not try to probe into such things.”

In these two traditions a warning has been served against a very serious matter. There are certain things and commandments which have been left vague and without details. This is not because the law-giver had forgotten to give details or to make them specific but because He did not intend to limit these in order to leave a wide scope for the people. Therefore if a person goes on creating one issue after the other, by putting unnecessary and useless questions and thus creates limitations and specifications, he puts the people to unnecessary trouble. Likewise if he tries to deduce the details by the force of his reasoning, and does not rest content till he has made the vague things specific and the indefinite as definite, he in reality puts the Muslims in a very awkward position. This is because the more details we offer for the unseen and the next world, the more will be the chances for creating doubts about them, and likewise, the more limitations are imposed concerning the commandments, the greater will be the chance for their violation.

102. Indeed, a people asked such (questions) before you, then they became on that account disbelievers. ^{*117}

قَدْ سَأَلَهَا قَوْمٌ مِّن قَبْلِكُمْ ثُمَّ
أَصْبَحُوا بِهَا كَافِرِينَ

***117** The people, who were involved in disbelief because they asked useless and unnecessary questions, were the Jews. At first they were involved in hairsplitting, which led them to put unnecessary questions about the details of the faith and the commandments. Consequently, they helped to impose upon themselves such restrictions as they could not observe and so became guilty of disobedience and disbelief, What a pity that the Muslims are following the Jews, step by step, in spite of these warnings by the Quran and the Prophet (peace be upon him)!

103. Allah has not instituted any (things as innovations like) Bahirah, nor Saibah, nor Wasilah, nor Hami. ^{*118} But those (pagans) who disbelieve invent lies against Allah. And most of them have no understanding.

مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بُحَيْرَةٍ وَلَا
سَائِبَةٍ وَلَا وَصِيلَةٍ وَلَا حَامٍ
وَلَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى
اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا
يَعْقِلُونَ

***118** In this verse the superstitious practice of dedicating animals to idols, graves, gods or saints, and leaving them to roam about and graze at liberty has been condemned. In the pre-Islamic Arabia, they gave different names to such animals and marked them off, and considered it unlawful

to take any service from them or slaughter them for food or derive any benefit from them in any way. *Bahirah* was the name given to a she-camel which had five young ones, the last of which was a he-camel. Her ear was then split and she was turned loose to roam at liberty. After this, none would ride her nor drink her milk nor slaughter her nor shear her hair. She was allowed to graze in any field and pasture and drink from any watering place.

Saibah was the name given to that he-camel or she-camel which was let loose as a mark of gratitude in fulfillment of a vow taken for recovery from some illness or safety from some danger. *Saibah* was also the name given to the she-camel which had ten young ones, each of which was a she-camel. *Wasilah* was the name given to a special he-goat which was one of the first born twins, the other of which was a she-goat. The practice about the first born young ones was that they used to sacrifice, in the haute of their deities, the first horn young one if it happened to be a he-goat. But if they happened to be twins they would not sacrifice the he-goat and would call it *Wasilah* and set it at liberty in the name of deities. *Ham* was the name given to a he-camel as soon as his grandson became grown up and fit for riding: it was then set at liberty. The same name also was given to a he-camel which begot ten young ones and was set at liberty.

104. And when it is said to them: “Come to that which Allah has revealed and to the messenger (Muhammad),”

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا
أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَىٰ الرَّسُولِ قَالُوا

they say: “Enough for us is that upon which we found our fathers.” Even though their fathers had no knowledge whatsoever, nor were they guided.

حَسْبُنَا مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ ءَابَاءَنَا
أُولَٰئِكَ كَانُوا ءَابَآؤَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ
شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

105. O those who believe, upon you is (responsibility of) your own selves. Those who have gone astray cannot harm you when you are rightly guided. ^{*119} To Allah is your return all together, then He will inform you of what you used to do.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ
أَنْفُسَكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مِّنْ ضَلَّ
إِذَا أَهْتَدَيْتُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ
جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

***119** This is a warning against a common human weakness. Some people are always on the lookout to find out and criticize errors in others. Here such people have been admonished against this evil and asked to concentrate their attention on their own acts, deeds, morals and beliefs instead of probing into and criticizing the conduct and beliefs of others. If a man himself is obedient to Allah and fulfills his obligations to Him and man, and treads the path of truth and righteousness, which also includes the establishment of virtue and the eradication of vice, then most surely the crookedness and deviation of any other can do him no harm.

This verse however, does not mean that a person should think only of his own salvation and leave alone the reform

of others. Abu Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) refuted this misconception in an address, saying, “O people, you recite this verse and put on it a wrong interpretation. I myself heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say, when the people become so indifferent that they see evil and do not try to eradicate it and see an unjust person doing an injustice and do not prevent him from it, Allah may punish all of them. I swear by Allah that it is obligatory on you to enjoin virtue and forbid evil. If you neglect this, Allah will place you under the worst people who will inflict hardships on you. Then your good people will offer prayers but He will not accept these.

106. O those who believe, testimony (should be taken) between you when death approaches one of you, at the time of bequest, two just men^{*120} from among you, or two others from outside of you, if you are traveling through the land, and the calamity of death befalls you.^{*121} Detain them both after the prayer, then let them both swear by Allah, if you doubt (their truthfulness), (saying): “We will not exchange it (oath) for a price, even if he should

يَتَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا شَهَدَةٌ
بَيْنَكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمْ
الْمَوْتُ حِينَ الْوَصِيَّةِ اثْنَانِ ذَوَا
عَدْلٍ مِّنْكُمْ أَوْ ءَاخِرَانِ مِّنْ
غَيْرِكُمْ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَبْتُمْ مُصِيبَةً
الْمَوْتِ تَحْبِسُونَهُمَا مِنْ بَعْدِ
الصَّلَاةِ فَيُقْسِمَانِ بِاللَّهِ إِنْ
أَرْتَبْتُمْ لَا نَشْتَرِي بِهِ ثَمَنًا وَلَوْ

be near relative, nor shall we hide the testimony of Allah, indeed we would then be of the sinful.”

كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ وَلَا نَكْتُمُ شَهَادَةَ
اللَّهِ إِنَّا إِذَا لَّمِنَ الْأَثِمِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

*120 That is, pious, righteous and trustworthy Muslims.

*121 This shows that the Muslims are permitted to make the non-Muslims their witnesses only in case the Muslim witnesses are not available.

107. Then if it is found about that those two were guilty of sin, then two others shall stand in their place, from among those who claim right, those nearest (the deceased). So let them swear by Allah, (saying): “Our testimony is truer than the testimony of both of them, and we have not transgressed. Indeed, we would then be of the wrong doers.”

فَإِنْ عَثَرَ عَلَىٰ أَنَّهُمَا اسْتَحَقَّا
إِثْمًا فَأَخْرَانِ يَقُومَانِ
مَقَامَهُمَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَحَقَّ
عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَوْلَىٰنِ فَيُقْسِمَانِ بِاللَّهِ
لَشَهَادَتُنَا أَحَقُّ مِنْ
شَهَادَتَيْهِمَا وَمَا أَعْتَدَيْنَا إِنَّا إِذَا
لَّمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

108. That is closer (to the fact) that they will give testimony in its true nature, or they would fear that (other) oaths would be admitted after their oaths. And fear Allah and listen.

ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِالشَّهَادَةِ
عَلَىٰ وَجْهَهَا أَوْ يَخَافُوا أَنْ تُرَدَّ
أَيْمَانُهُمْ بَعْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَأَسْمِعُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ

And Allah does not guide the disobedient people.

الْفٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾

109. On the Day^{*122} when Allah will gather the messengers, then will say: What was the response you received (from mankind).^{*123} They will say: We have no knowledge.^{*124} Indeed You, only You are the Knower of the unseen.

﴿١٨﴾ يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُ اللهُ الرُّسُلَ فَيَقُولُ
مَاذَا أُجِبْتُمْ قَالُوا لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا
إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّمُ الْغُيُوبِ ﴿١٩﴾

***122** The Day of Resurrection.

***123** That is, what was the response of the world to the invitation that you gave towards Islam?

***124** That is, we know only of that outward response which was made to our invitation during our lifetime. As regards the real practical response, we have no correct knowledge of it for that is known to You alone.

110. When Allah will say:^{*125} “O Jesus, son of Mary, remember My favor upon you and upon your mother, when I supported you with the holy spirit. You spoke to mankind in the cradle and maturity. And when I taught you the Book and wisdom, and the Torah, and the Gospel. And

إِذْ قَالَ اللهُ يٰعِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ
اذْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى
وَالِدَتِكَ إِذْ أَيَّدْتُكَ بِرُوحِ
الْقُدُسِ تُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ
وَكَهْلًا وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ

when you made of clay as it were the figure of a bird by My permission, then you breathed into it, and it became a bird by My permission. And you healed those born blind, and the lepers by My permission. And when you brought forth the dead by My permission.^{*126} And when I restrained the Children of Israel from (harming) you when you came to them with clear proofs, then those who disbelieved among them said: “This is nothing but a clear magic.”

وَالْإِنجِيلَ وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ الطِّينِ
كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنْفُخُ فِيهَا
فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي وَتُبْرِئُ
الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي
وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَى بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ
كَفَفْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَنْكَ
إِذْ جِئْتَهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالَ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا
سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ



***125** At first this question will be put collectively to all the Messengers. Then each of the Messengers will stand as a witness individually. Here that question, which will be put to Jesus Christ (peace be upon him), has been specially mentioned because it fits into the context.

***126** That is, “You brought them back to life after death.”

111. And when I inspired to the disciples, (saying) that: “Believe in Me and in My messenger.” They said: “We believe. And bear witness

وَإِذْ أَوْحَيْتُ إِلَى الْحَوَارِيِّينَ أَنْ
ءَامِنُوا بِي وَبِرَسُولِي قَالُوا

that indeed we are those who surrendered (to Allah).”^{*127}

ءَامِنًا وَأَشْهَدُ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ

***127** That is, it was a favor upon you that the disciples believed in you, by Our Grace; otherwise you had no power by yourself to convert even a single person out of the disbelievers.

Incidentally, the use of the word Muslims for the disciples is meant to show that their religion was Islam and not Christianity.

112. When ^{*128} the disciples said: “O Jesus, son of Mary, is your Lord able to send down for us a table spread with food from heaven.” He said: “Fear Allah, if you are believers.”

إِذْ قَالَ الْخَوَارِثُونَ يَٰعِيسَىٰ
ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ هَلْ يَسْتَطِيعُ رَبُّكَ
أَنْ يُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِّنَ
السَّمَاءِ ۖ قَالَ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِن
كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ

***128** This incident has been inserted here as a parenthesis to show that even his disciples, who had received his teachings from him directly, considered Jesus (peace be upon him) a man and servant of God. Therefore, they could never conceive to make their master a god or a partner of God or son of God. This also shows that Jesus (peace be upon him) also presented himself as a servant without having any authority of his own.

It may be asked, what was the occasion of inserting this parenthesis here to interrupt the conversation that was

being cited? The answer is that the conversation that would take place on the Day of Resurrection has been quoted here for the benefit of the Christians so that they may learn the lesson and adopt the right way. It is, therefore, quite pertinent to insert the incident mentioned in the parenthesis to impress the same lesson.

113. They said: “We wish that we eat from it, and that we may satisfy our hearts, and know that you have indeed spoken truth to us, and that we may be among its witnesses.”

قَالُوا نُرِيدُ أَنْ نَأْكُلَ مِنْهَا
وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُنَا وَنَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ
صَدَقْتَنَا وَنَكُونَ عَلَيْهَا مِنَ
الشَّاهِدِينَ

114. Jesus, son of Mary, said: “O Allah, our Lord, send down for us a table spread with food from heaven, that it may be for us a feast, for the first of us, and the last of us, and a sign from You. And provide us sustenance, and You are the Best of Sustainers.”

قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا
أَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
تَكُونُ لَنَا عِيدًا لِأَوَّلِنَا وَآخِرِنَا
وَءَايَةً مِنْكَ وَارْزُقْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ
الرَّازِقِينَ

115. Allah said: “Indeed, I will send it down for you. ^{*129} So whoever disbelieves afterwards from among you, then surely will I punish him with a

قَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مُنزِلُهَا عَلَيْكُمْ فَمَنْ
يَكْفُرْ بَعْدُ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنِّي أُعَذِّبُهُ
عَذَابًا لَّا أُعَذِّبُهُ أَحَدًا مِّن

punishment such as I have not punished anyone among all the peoples.”

الْعَلَمِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾

***129** The Quran is silent as to whether the “table spread with food” was sent down or not and there is no other authentic source of information. Possibly it was sent down, but it is equally possible that the disciples themselves might have taken back their request after the warning in verse 115.

116. And when Allah will say: “O Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to the people: Take me and my mother for two gods other than Allah.”^{*130} He will say: “Glory be to You, it was not for me that I say that I had no right of. If I had said it, then You would surely have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed You, You are the Knower of the unseen.”

وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يٰعِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ
ءَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي
وَأُمِّي إِلَهَيْنِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالَ
سُبْحٰنَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ
مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقِّ إِنْ كُنْتُ قُلْتُهُ
فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ تَعَلَّمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي
وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ إِنَّكَ
أَنْتَ عَلَّمُ الْغُيُوبِ ﴿١١٦﴾

***130** This refers to another error of the Christians. They had made Mary an object of worship along with Christ and the Holy Ghost, though there is not a word or hint in the Bible about this doctrine. During the first three centuries

after Christ, the Christian world was totally unaware of this creed. Towards the end of the 3rd century, the words “Mother of God” were used for the first time by some theologians of Alexandria. Though the response which these words found in the popular heart was great, yet the Church was not at first inclined to accept the doctrine and declared that the worship of Mary was a wrong creed. Then at the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., the words Mother of God were officially used by the Church. As a result Mariolatry began to spread by leaps and bounds both inside and outside the Church. So much so that by the time the Quran was revealed, the exaltation of the Mother of God had eclipsed the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Her statues were set up in Churches and she was worshiped, implored and invoked in prayers. In short, the greatest source of reliance of a Christian was that he should obtain the help and protection of the Mother of God. Emperor Justinian in the preamble to one of his laws bespeaks her advocacy for the empire and his general, Narses, looks to her directions on the battlefield. Emperor Heraclius, a contemporary of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), bore her image on his banner and believed that because of its auspicious nature it will never be lowered. Though the Protestants after the Reformation did their best to fight against Mariolatry, yet the Roman Catholic Church still adheres to it passionately.

117. “Never did I say to them except what You commanded me to (say),

مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ

that worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them while I was among them. Then when You took me, You were the Watcher over them. And You are Witness over all things.”

أَنْ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ
وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَّا دُمْتُ
فِيهِمْ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتَ أَنْتَ
الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنْتَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ



118. “If You punish them, then indeed they are Your slaves. And if You forgive them. Then indeed You, only You are the All Mighty, the All Wise.”

إِنْ تُعَذِّبِهِمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ وَإِن
تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ



119. Allah will say: “This is the day in which the truthful will profit from their truth.” For them are Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. That is the great success.

قَالَ اللَّهُ هَذَا يَوْمٌ يَنْفَعُ
الصَّادِقِينَ صِدْقُهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ
عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيمُ



120. To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and

لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

the earth and all that is
within them, and He has
Power over all things.

وَمَا فِيهِنَّ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

قَدِيرٌ

١٢٠



Al-Anaam

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah takes its name from Ayats 136, 138 and 139 in which some superstitious beliefs of the idolatrous Arabs concerning the lawfulness of some cattle *Al-Anaam* and the unlawfulness of some others have been refuted.

Period of Revelation

According to a tradition of Ibn Abbas, the entire Surah was revealed at one sitting in Makkah. Asma, a daughter of Yazid and a first cousin of Muaaz-bin Jabl, says, "During the revelation of this Surah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was riding on a she-camel and I was holding her nose-string. The she-camel began to feel the weight so heavily that it seemed as if her bones would break under it." We also learn from other traditions that the Prophet (peace be upon him) dictated the entire Surah the same night that it was revealed.

Its subject matter clearly shows that it must have been revealed during the last year of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life at Makkah. The tradition of Asma, daughter of Yazid, also confirms this. As she belonged to the *Ansar*

and embraced Islam after the migration of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to Yathrib, her visit to the Prophet (peace be upon him) at Makkah must have taken place during the last year of his life there. For before this, his relations with those people were not so intimate that a woman from there might have come to visit him at Makkah.

Occasion of Revelation

After determining the period of its revelation, it is easier to visualize the background of the Surah. Twelve years had passed since the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been inviting the people to Islam. The antagonism and persecution by the Quraish had become most savage and brutal, and the majority of the Muslims had to leave their homes and migrate to Habash (Abyssinia). Above all, the two great supporters of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Abu Talib and Khadijah, were no more to help and give strength to him. Thus he was deprived of all the worldly support. But in spite of this, he carried on his mission in the teeth of opposition. As a result of this, on the one hand, all the good people of Makkah and the surrounding clans gradually began to accept Islam; and on the other hand, the community as a whole, was bent upon obduracy and rejection. Therefore, if anyone showed any inclination towards Islam, he was subjected to taunts and derision, physical violence and social boycott. It was in these dark circumstances that a ray of hope gleamed from Yathrib, where Islam began to spread freely by the efforts of some influential people of Aus and Khazraj, who had embraced

Islam at Makkah. This was a humble beginning in the march of Islam towards success and none could foresee at that time the great potentialities that lay hidden in it. For, to a casual observer, it appeared at that time as if Islam was merely a weak movement it had no material backing except the meager support of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) own family and of the few poor adherents of the movement. Obviously the latter could not give much help because they themselves had been cast out by their own people who had become their enemies and were persecuting them.

Topics

These were the conditions, when this discourse was revealed. The main topics dealt with in this discourse may be divided under seven headings:

1. Refutation of *shirk* and invitation to the creed of *Tauhid*.
2. Enunciation of the doctrine of the life-after-death. And refutation of the wrong notion that there was nothing beyond this worldly life.
3. Refutation of the prevalent superstitions.
4. Enunciation of the fundamental moral principles for the building up of the Islamic society.
5. Answers to the objections raised against the person of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his mission.
6. Comfort and encouragement to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers who were at, that time in a state of anxiety and despondency because of the apparent failure of the mission.

7. Admonition, warning and threats to the disbelievers and opponents to give up their apathy and haughtiness. It must, however, be noted that the above topics have not been dealt with one by one under separate headings, but the discourse goes on as a continuous whole and these topics come under discussion over and over again in new and different ways.

The Background of Makki Surahs

As this is the first long Makki Surah in the order of the compilation of the Quran, it will be useful to explain the historical background of Makki Surahs in general, so that the reader may easily understand the Makki Surahs and the references to its different stages in connection with the commentary on them.

First of all, it should be noted that comparatively very little material is available in regard to the background of the revelation of Makki Surahs, whereas the period of the revelation of all the Madani Surahs is known or can be determined with a little effort. There are authentic traditions even in regard to the occasions of the revelation of the majority of the verses. On the other hand, we do not have such detailed information regarding the Makki Surahs. There are only a few Surahs and verses which have authentic traditions concerning the time and occasion of their revelation. This is because the history of the Makki period had not been compiled in such detail as that of the Madani period. Therefore we have to depend on the internal evidence of these Surahs for determining the period of their revelation: for example, the topics they

discuss, their subject matter, their style and the direct or indirect references to the events and the occasions of their revelation. Thus it is obvious that with the help of such evidence as this, we cannot say with precision that such and such Surah or verse was revealed on such and such an occasion. The most we can do is to compare the internal evidence of a Surah with the events of the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) at Makkah, and then come to a more or less correct conclusion as to what particular stage a certain Surah belongs.

If we keep the above things in view, the history of the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him) at Makkah can be divided into four stages.

The first stage began with his appointment as a Messenger and ended with the proclamation of prophethood three years later. During this period the Message was given secretly to some selected persons only, but the common people of Makkah were not aware of it.

The second stage lasted for two years after the proclamation of his prophethood. It began with opposition by individuals: then by and by, it took the shape of antagonism, ridicule, derision, accusation, abuse, and false propaganda. Then gangs were formed to persecute those Muslims who were comparatively poor, weak and helpless.

The third stage lasted for about six years from the beginning of the persecution to the death of Abu Talib and Khadijah in the tenth year of prophethood. During this period, the persecution of the Muslims became so savage and brutal that many of them were forced to migrate to

Habash. Social and economic boycott was applied against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the members of his family, and those Muslims who continued to stay in Makkah were forced to take refuge in Shib-i-Abi Talib which was besieged.

The fourth stage lasted for about three years from the tenth to the thirteenth year of prophethood. This was a period of hard trials and grievous sufferings for the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers. Life had become unendurable at Makkah and there appeared to be no place of refuge even outside of it. So much so that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to Taaif, it offered no shelter or protection. Besides this, on the occasion of Hajj, he would appeal to each and every Arab clan to accept his invitation to Islam but met with blank refusal from every quarter. At the same time, the people of Makkah were holding counsels to get rid of him by killing or imprisoning or banishing him from their city. It was at that most critical time that Allah opened for Islam the hearts of the *Ansar* of Yathrib where he migrated at their invitation.

Now that we have divided the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) at Makkah into four stages, it has become easier for us to tell, as far as possible, the particular stage in which a certain Makki Sarah was revealed. This is because the Surahs belonging to a particular stage can be distinguished from those of the other stages with the help of their subject matter and style. Besides this, they also contain such references as throw light on the circumstances and events that form the background of their revelation. In

the succeeding Makki Surahs, we will determine on the basis of the distinctive features of each stage, and point out in the preface, the particular stage in which a certain Makki Surah was revealed.

Islamic Creed

This Surah mainly discusses the different aspects of the major articles of the Islamic creed: *Tauhid*, life-after-death, prophethood and their practical application to human life. Side by side with this, it refutes the erroneous beliefs of the opponents and answers their objections, warns and admonishes them and comforts the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers, who were then suffering from persecution.

Of course, these themes have not been dealt with under separate headers but have been blended in an excellent manner.

Topics and their Interconnection

Ayats 1-12. These verses are of introductory and admonitory nature. The disbelievers have been warned that if they do not accept the Islamic creed and follow the light shown by the revelation from the All-Knowing and All-Powerful Allah, they would go to the same doom as the former disbelievers did. Their arguments for rejecting the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the revelation sent down to him have been refuted and a warning has been given to them that they should not be deluded by the respite that is being granted to them.

Ayats 13-24. These verses inculcate *Tauhid*, and refute *shirk* which is the greatest obstacle in the way of its acceptance.

Ayats 25-32. In these verses, a graphic scene of the life in the Hereafter has been depicted in order to warn the disbelievers of the consequences of the rejection of the articles of faith.

Ayats 33-73. Prophethood is the main theme which has been discussed from the point of view of the Prophet (peace be upon him), his mission, the limitations of his powers, the attitude towards his followers and also from the point of view of the disbelievers.

Ayats 74-90. In continuation of the same theme, the story of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) has been related to bring home to the pagan Arabs that the mission of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which they were opposing, was the same as that of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). This line of argument was adopted because they considered themselves to be his followers, especially the Quraish who were proud of being his descendants as well.

Ayats 91-108. Another proof of his prophethood is the Book, which has been sent down to him by Allah, for its teachings show the right guidance in regard to creed and practice.

Ayats 109-154. Divine restrictions have been contrasted with the superstitious restrictions of the pagan Arabs in order to show the striking differences between the two and thus prove the Quran to be a revealed Book.

Ayats 155-160. The Jews, who were criticized in Ayats 144-147 along with the pagan Arabs, have been urged to compare the teachings of the Quran with those of the Torah

so that they might recognize their similarity and give up their lame excuses against it, and adopt its guidance to escape the retribution on the Day of Resurrection.

Ayats 161-165. This is the conclusion of the discourse: the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been instructed in a beautiful and forceful manner to proclaim fearlessly the articles of the Islamic creed and their implications.

1. All praises be to Allah, who created the heavens and the earth, and made the darkness and the light. Then those who disbelieve, to their Lord, they ascribe (others) to be equals.*¹

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ
الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا بِهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ

*¹ It should be noted that the addressees were the mushrik Arabs, who acknowledged that the Creator of the earth and heavens and of the sun and the moon is Allah, who brought about the day and night. None of them believed that these were the works of Lat or Hubal or Uzza or of any other god or goddess. Therefore Allah admonished them, saying (so to speak), “O foolish people, when you yourselves admit that the Creator of the heavens and earth and of the night and day is Allah, why do you, then, make others your gods, and prostrate before them, make offerings to them, present your needs before them and invoke them for help.” (Refer to E.N. 2 of Surah Al-Fatihah and E.N. 163, Surah Al-Baqarah).

It may be noted that *zulumat* (plural of *zulmat*) has been

used in contrast to *noor* (light, singular form). It is because darkness is merely the absence of light and may be of many kinds.

2. He it is who has created you from clay,^{*2} then He has decreed a term (of life). And a term determined is with Him,^{*3} then you are in doubt.

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ ثُمَّ
قَضَىٰ أَجَلًا وَأَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى
عِنْدَهُ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ تَمْتَرُونَ

*2 Allah says that He has created man from clay because each and every particle of the human body comes from the earth and from nowhere else.

*3 “A term determined” is the “Day of Resurrection”, when all human beings will be brought back to life and presented before Allah for rendering the account of their life on the earth.

3. And He is Allah in the heavens and in the earth. He knows what you conceal and what you reveal, and He knows what you earn.

وَهُوَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَفِي
الْأَرْضِ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّكُمْ وَجَهْرَكُمْ
وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُونَ

4. And never came to them a sign of the signs of their Lord except they turned away from it.

وَمَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ مِنْ آيَاتِ
رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ

5. Indeed, they denied the truth when it came to them. So there will soon come to them the news*4 of that which they used to mock at.

فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ
فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِيهِمْ أَنْبَاءُ مَا كَانُوا
بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٥﴾

*4 The reference is to the *news* of the successes that were to follow the emigration of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to Al-Madinah. At the time of this revelation, neither the disbelievers nor the believers could ever imagine the nature of the news they were going to receive. So much so that even the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself was unaware of the kind of successes the Muslims were going to achieve in the near future.

6. Have they not seen how many a generation We have destroyed before them, whom We had established on the earth, such as We have not established you. And We showered abundant rains on them from the sky, and We made the rivers flow beneath them, then We destroyed them for their sins, and brought forth after them a generation of others.

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
مِنْ قَرْنٍ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
مَا لَمْ نُمَكِّنْ لَكُمْ وَأَرْسَلْنَا
السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِدْرَارًا وَجَعَلْنَا
الْأَنْهَارَ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ
فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَنْشَأْنَا
مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا آخَرِينَ ﴿٦﴾

7. And even if We had sent down to you (Muhammad) a

وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا فِي

written book on parchment, so that they could touch it with their hands, those who disbelieve would have said: “This is nothing but obvious magic.”

قِرطَاسٍ فَلَمَسُوهُ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ لَقَالَ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ
مُبِينٌ

8. And they say: “Why has not an angel been sent down to him.”*5 And if We had sent down an angel, the matter would surely have been judged, then no respite would be granted to them.*6

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ
وَلَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكًا لَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ
ثُمَّ لَا يُنظَرُونَ

*5 The ignorant objectors argued that if Muhammad (peace be upon him) was really a Messenger from Allah, an angel ought to have come down from heaven to declare to the people: “This is the Messenger of Allah, so obey him; otherwise you shall be punished.”

The ignorant objectors did not understand how the Creator of the heavens and earth could leave His Messenger (peace be upon him) in such a plight as to be maligned and stoned by his enemies. They argued that the Messenger of such a Supreme Sovereign ought to have come with a large retinue or at least with an angel, in attendance on him, to protect him from his enemies and to fill the people with awe and to convince them of his prophethood and to carry out his orders in some supernatural ways.

*6 The first answer to their objection is that in case Allah had sent down an angel, no respite would have been given

to them for reforming themselves and mending their ways. They have been given a chance because no angel has been sent to make the reality so clear as to leave no alternative for them but to believe. It is obvious that this would have defeated the very purpose of their life in the world to undergo their test. That is why no angel has been sent. Man should undergo his test and discover the unseen reality without actually seeing it, merely by the right use of his reasoning and thinking powers, and then bring under control his own self and its desires in accordance with the dictates of that reality. It is thus obvious that the unseen must remain unseen for the sake of that test.

The worldly life, the period of that test, will remain so only as long as the unseen remains unseen. No sooner will the unseen become evident than that period will automatically come to an end, and instead of test, it will be the time of the result of the test. Therefore, Allah is not granting your demand for an angel to appear before you because Allah does not like to end the term of your test before the expiry of the period of the test. (Refer to E.N. 228, Surah Al-Baqarah).

9. And if We had made him an angel, We would have made him (appear as) a man, and We would have covered them with (confusion), that in which they cover themselves.^{*7}

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ مَلَكًا لَّجَعَلْنَاهُ رَجُلًا وَلَلَبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِم مَّا يَلْبَسُونَ



*7 The only other alternative was to send an angel in

human form. Allah says that if He had sent an angel in human form, they would have felt the same difficulty in recognizing him as they were feeling in recognizing Muhammad (peace be upon him). This, too, would have involved them in doubts. Therefore it was for their own good that Allah had not sent an angel in attendance on His Messenger.

10. And indeed, messengers were ridiculed before you, then those who mocked at them were surrounded by that which they used to ridicule.

وَلَقَدْ اسْتَهْزِئُ بِرُسُلٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ
فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُمْ
مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. Say (O Muhammad): “Travel in the land, then see how was the end of those who denied.”*8

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ أَنْظِرُوا
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١١﴾

*8 That is, those, who ridicule the Message, should travel through the land and see the remains, and study the history of the former peoples. These will bear witness to the horrible end of those who behaved in the way they are behaving towards Muhammad (peace be upon him).

12. Say: (O Muhammad): “To whom belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth.” Say: “To Allah.”*9 He has decreed

قُلْ لِمَنْ مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ قُلْ لِلَّهِ كَتَبَ عَلَى
نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ لِيَجْمَعَنَّكُمْ إِلَىٰ

upon Himself mercy. He will surely assemble you on the Day of Resurrection, there is no doubt about which. Those who have lost their souls are the ones who do not believe.

يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ
الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

*9 It is a nice way of cornering the mushrikin. At first Allah tells His Messenger (peace be upon him) to ask them, “Whose is all that is in the heavens and the earth?” The questioner put the question and waited for an answer. But they kept silent because their answer could neither be in the negative nor in the affirmative. They could not deny this because they themselves believed that all belongs to Allah. But they could not affirm this because, in that case, they themselves would have supplied the adversary with an argument against their own creed of shirk. After putting them in this critical position, Allah enjoined His Messenger (peace be upon him) to say, “All belongs to Allah.”

13. And to Him belongs whatsoever dwells in the night and the day, and He is the All Hearing, the All Knowing.

وَلَهُ مَا سَكَنَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

14. Say (O Muhammad): “Shall I take as a protector other than Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. And He it is who

قُلْ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أُتَّخَذُ وَلِيًّا فَاطِرِ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ يُطْعَمُ

feeds and is not fed.”*10
 Say: “Indeed, I have been commanded that I should be the first of those who submit themselves, and not be of those who associate others (with Allah).”

وَلَا يُطْعَمُ قُلٌّ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ
 أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَلَا
 تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

*10 This contains a subtle argument: all those, whom the mushrikin have made their gods besides Allah, stand in need of nourishment from their devotees, not to speak of giving nourishment to them. No Pharaoh can set up his grandeur unless his subjects pay taxes and make offerings to him; no saint becomes worthy of worship, unless his worshipers build a grand mausoleum for him; no god becomes a god unless his devotees make his idol and set it up in a grand temple and decorate it with ornamentation. Thus, all the artificial gods stand in need of their servants. It is the Lord of the universe alone, Who does not stand in need of anyone’s help but all others stand in need of Him, and it is His Godhead alone that does not stand in need of any prop from anyone whatsoever, but supports itself.

15. Say: “Indeed I fear, if I should disobey my Lord, the punishment of a tremendous Day.”

قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي
 عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

16. He from whom it (punishment) is averted that day, (Allah) has surely been Merciful to him. And that is

مَنْ يُصْرِفْ عَنْهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ
 رَحِمَهُ وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْمُبِينُ

the manifest success.



17. And if Allah should touch you with affliction, then none can relieve from it except Him. And if He touches you with good, then He has power over all things.

وَإِنْ يَمَسَّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا
كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ
يَمَسَّكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ



18. And He is the Omnipotent over His slaves, and He is the All Wise, the All Knower.

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ
الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ



19. Say (O Muhammad): “What thing is greatest in testimony. Say: “Allah is witness^{*11} between me and you. And this Quran has been revealed to me, that I may warn you thereby, and whomsoever it may reach. Do you indeed testify that there are other gods with Allah.”^{*12} Say: “I bear no (such) witness.”^{*13} Say: “He is the only One God. And truly I am free of that which you associate (with Him).”

قُلْ أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَكْبَرُ شَهَادَةً قُلْ
اللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَأُوحِيَ
إِلَيَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ لِأُنذِرَكُمْ بِهِ
وَمَنْ بَلَغَ أَتَيْنَكُمْ لَتَشْهَدُونَ
أَنَّ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا أُخْرَىٰ قُلْ
لَا أَشْهَدُ قُلْ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهُهُ
وَاحِدٌ وَإِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ



*11 That is, Allah is a witness that I have been appointed a Messenger by Him and whatever I say is from Him.

*12 Mere guess-work or speculation does not suffice for testifying to anything: none can testify to a thing with certainty without the necessary knowledge about it. The question implies: Do you really have the knowledge that there is any other Sovereign with authority than Allah, Who is worthy of service and worship?

*13 That is, you may, if you so like, give false testimony without any knowledge, but, as for me, I cannot give such a testimony.

20. Those to whom We have given the Book, they recognize this (Quran) as they recognize their sons.*14

Those who have lost their own selves are then those who do not believe.

الَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ
يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ
أَبْنَاءَهُمُ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ
فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

*14 It means that those who possess the knowledge of revealed Books, know it for certain that there is only One God, Who has no partner in His Godhead. Therefore they can discern the right creed about Allah from among many different kinds of other creeds' and theories about Godhead, just as any person can identify his own child from among many thousands of other children.

21. And who does more wrong than he who invents against Allah*15 a lie,

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ
كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِعَايَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ لَا

or denies His signs.*16
Indeed, the wrongdoers will
not succeed.

يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ

*15 “Who invents against Allah a lie” is the claim that there are many other partners with Allah in His Godhead who have divine attributes and powers and are thus worthy of worship. It is also false to allege that Allah Himself has made such and such His special courtiers and has enjoined (or at least approved) that divine attributes should be ascribed to them and that they should be treated with reverence, like Allah.

*16 “His signs” are all those signs that point to the fact that there is only One God in the universe and that all others are His servants. These signs are spread all over the universe. They are found in the person of man himself and in the character and the great achievements of the prophets and in the revealed Books. That is why the one, who, in the presence of all these “signs” ascribes divine attributes to others and considers them worthy of divine rights, is in fact guilty of gross iniquity. It is indeed a great injustice that one should ascribe such divine attributes to others without any evidence, knowledge, observation and experience merely on the basis of guess work or the traditions of the forefathers. As a result of this false creed, he does injustice to truth, to reality, to his own self and to everything and everyone he deals with in this universe.

22. And on the day when
We shall gather them all
together, then We shall say

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ

to those who associated others (with Allah): “Where are your partners, whom you used to claim.”

لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَيْنَ شُرَكَائِكُمْ
الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

23. Then there will be no excuses for them except that they will say: “By Allah, our Lord, we were not those who associated (with You).”

ثُمَّ لَمْ تَكُنْ فِتْنَتُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا
وَاللَّهِ رَبِّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. See how they will lie against themselves, and lost from them will be what they used to invent.

أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ كَذَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. And among them are those who listen to you, and We have laid over their hearts coverings, lest they should understand it, and in their ears a deafness.*¹⁷ And if they were to see every sign, they will not believe in it, to the point that, when they come to you, they dispute with you, those who disbelieve say: “This is nothing but tales of the ancients.”*¹⁸

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ
وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ
يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِنْ
يَرَوْا كُلَّ آيَةٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوكَ يُجَادِلُونَكَ
يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا
أَسْطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

***17** Here Allah has ascribed to Himself the cause of the defects produced in their faculties of understanding, hearing and seeing, for everything that takes place in the world under the natural law does, in fact, take place by the command of Allah because He is the author of that law. Therefore the resulting effects of the working of that law, in fact, take place by the will and order of Allah. The obdurate disbelievers do not understand, do not hear and do not see the truth, even though they seem to listen to the Message of the Messenger, because their obduracy, their prejudice and their unwillingness have, according to the law of nature, dulled their faculties. The law is that if one is bent upon obduracy and does not adopt the attitude of a righteous person, all the doors of his heart automatically get locked against every kind of truth that goes against his desires. When this natural process is described in the human language, it will be said, "The doors of the heart of such and such a person are locked." But God, without Whose command and leave nothing whatsoever can happen, will describe the same like this, "We have locked the doors of the heart of such and such a person." This is because a human being will describe the thing as it seems to happen, whereas Allah states the true nature of the happening.

***18** This is the excuse that the foolish people put forward for rejecting the message. They say, "There is nothing new in the message towards which the Messenger is inviting us. This is the same old message that we have been hearing before." According to these foolish people, in order to be

true, a message must also be new because according to them that which is old cannot be true. Whereas the fact is that the message has always been one and the same and will ever remain so. The Messengers of Allah, who had been coming from the earliest times for the guidance of mankind, have always been communicating the same message; likewise, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was also presenting the same old message. Of course, only those, who being devoid of divine light, cannot see the aforesaid eternal reality, might invent something new and by forging some theories present them as truth, saying, “We have a new message, which has never been given by anyone before us.”

26. And they prevent (others) from it, and they (themselves) keep away from it. And they do not destroy except themselves, and they perceive (it) not.

وَهُمْ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَيَنْعَوْنَ
عَنْهُ وَإِنْ يُهْلِكُونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ
وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

27. And if you could see when they shall be made to stand by the Fire, they will say: “Would that we could be sent back, and we would not deny the revelations of our Lord, and we would be among the believers.”

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ وَقَفُوا عَلَى النَّارِ
فَقَالُوا يَلَيْتَنَا نُرَدُّ وَلَا نَكْذِبُ
بِعَايَةِ رَبِّنَا وَنَكُونُ مِنَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

28. Nay but, it has become manifest to them that which

بَلْ بَدَا لَهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يُخْفُونَ مِنْ

they had been concealing before.^{*19} And if they were sent back, they would certainly revert to that which they were forbidden from, and indeed they are liars.

قَبْلُ وَلَوْ رُدُّوا لَعَادُوا لِمَا نُهُوا
عَنْهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

***19** Their desire, that, if they could return to this world again, they would believe in the message, will not be the outcome of any right thinking and reasoning or any real change of their hearts and minds, but will be the result of witnessing the reality after which even the most obdurate disbeliever dare not deny it.

29. And they say: “There is none but our life of the world, and we shall not be raised (again).”

وَقَالُوا إِن هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا
الدُّنْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

30. And if you could see when they will be made to stand before their Lord. He will say: “Is not this the truth.” They will say: “Yes, by our Lord.” He will say: “So taste the punishment because you used to disbelieve.”

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ وَقَفُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
قَالَ أَلَيْسَ هَذَا بِالْحَقِّ قَالُوا
بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّنَا قَالَ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. They indeed are losers who deny the meeting with Allah, until when the Hour comes

قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِلِقَاءِ اللَّهِ
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً

upon them suddenly, they will say: "Alas for us, over what we neglected about it." And they will bear their burdens on their backs. Is not evil what they bear.

قَالُوا يَحْسَرْتَنَا عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَّطْنَا
فِيهَا وَهُمْ يَحْمِلُونَ أَوْزَارَهُمْ عَلَىٰ
ظُهُورِهِمْ ۗ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَزِرُونَ



32. And the life of this world is nothing but play and amusement.^{*20} And the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who fear (Allah). Will you not then understand.

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ
وَلَهُمْ ۗ وَلِلْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ
لِّلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ ۗ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ



***20** This does not mean that the life in this world is not real and earnest and has been created merely for sport and pastime without any serious purpose. What it means is that compared with the everlasting life in the Hereafter, the short transitory life in this world is like sport and pastime, which are diversions from serious work, to which one has to return after recreation. Moreover, this worldly life has been likened to sport and pastime, because here are many things of deceptive appearances that are liable to involve in misunderstanding those people, who lack common sense and vision, and help them assume false positions so as to make life mere sport and pastime. For instance, the role of a ruler in this worldly life is, in fact, not any different from that of an actor who plays the role of a king on the stage,

wears a crown and gives commands which are obeyed like those of a real king; whereas, in fact, he has no powers of a real king and is deposed, imprisoned and killed by the order of the director. Likewise, many other such dramas are being performed on the stage of this world day and night all around us. There is the court of a saint or a goddess, where the needs are being fulfilled, whereas, in fact, that court has no such power. Then there is another actor who performs the feats of divining the unseen and the future, whereas, in fact, none possesses such knowledge. Still another poses to be the nourisher of others, when in fact, he himself stands in need of obtaining provisions from others. There is still another who poses as if he has the power of bestowing honor and benefit or of inflicting disgrace and loss and behaves arrogantly as if he were the absolute master of all around him. In fact, he himself is utterly powerless and helpless, for a little turn of fortune can dethrone him from the high pedestal of greatness to the lowest depths of disgrace. So much so that he might even be at the feet of those very people, over whom he was ruling as a despot. All these dramas that are being played on the stage of life are abruptly brought to an end by death. Then everyone will cross over to the other world and see for himself everything in its true color. Then, all the misunderstandings of the life of this world shall be removed and everyone will be shown the real worth of what he had earned for the life-after-death.

33. Indeed, We know that it grieves you what they say.

قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُ لَيَحْزُنُكَ الَّذِي

Though indeed, they do not deny you, but the wrong doers repudiate the revelations of Allah.*21

يَقُولُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُونَكَ
وَلَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ

تَجْحَدُونَ

*21 The fact is that all the people of his tribe regarded the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) truthful and honest up to the time he had not begun to recite the revelations of Allah before them. They falsified him only when he began to deliver to them the message of Allah. Even then, there was none who dared charge Muhammad (peace be upon him), the man, with falsehood; nay, even his bitterest enemies never accused him of having ever told a lie concerning any worldly matter. It was Muhammad, the Prophet (peace be upon him), whom they charged with falsehood. So much so that even Abu Jahl, who was the bitterest of all his enemies, never accused him of falsehood. According to a tradition related by Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), Abu Jahl himself declared during a conversation with the Prophet (peace be upon him), "We do not call you a liar, but regard as false what you are presenting." On the occasion of the battle of Badr, Akhnas bin Shariq asked Abu Jahl in private, "There is no third person here besides the two of us, tell me the truth whether you regard Muhammad as a truthful man or as a liar." He answered, "By God, Muhammad is a truthful person and has never told a lie in his life, but if Bani Qusayy, who have already the privilege of being the bearers of the national

flag and the providers of water to the pilgrims and the keepers of the keys of the Kabah, should also be acknowledged as the recipients of prophethood, what would then be left for the rest of the Quraish?" For this very reason Allah is comforting His Prophet (peace be upon him), saying, "It is not you whom they are rejecting as an impostor but it is Our message which they are rejecting; when We are forbearing everything and giving them respite after respite, why should you show any kind of anxiety."

34. And indeed, messengers have been denied before you, so they were patient over that which they were denied, and they were harmed until Our help reached them. And none can alter the words (decrees) of Allah.*22 And surely there has reached you some news about the messengers (before you).

وَلَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ
فَصَبَرُوا عَلَىٰ مَا كُذِّبُوا وَأُوذُوا
حَتَّىٰ أَتَاهُمْ نَصْرُنَا وَلَا مُبَدِّلَ
لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكَ مِنْ
نَّبِيِّ الْأُمْرُسَلِينَ



*22 The "words" referred to here is the law of Allah concerning the conflict between the right and the wrong. According to this law, it is essential that the righteous should be tried for a long period to stand their test in order to prove their fortitude, their righteousness, their spirit of sacrifice and their fidelity, their firm belief in their faith and their complete trust in Allah. For this they must pass through afflictions and hardships in order to develop those high moral qualities which can be learned only by going

through this hard and tough course, for with these weapons alone, they are required to win the battle against falsehood. When, according to this law, they prove their competence, then will Allah's help come at the right moment to support them and this help cannot be brought about before its time by anyone.

35. And if their aversion is hard on you, then if you can, so seek a tunnel into the earth, or a ladder into the sky, so that you may bring them a sign.*²³ And if Allah had so willed, He could have gathered them all to the guidance. So be not you among those who are ignorant.*²⁴

وَإِنْ كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكَ إِعْرَاضُهُمْ
فَإِنْ أَسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ تَبْتَغِيَ نَفَقًا
فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ سُلَّمًا فِي السَّمَاءِ
فَتَأْتِيَهُمْ بِآيَةٍ ۚ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
لَجَمَعَهُمْ عَلَى الْهُدَىٰ ۚ فَلَا
تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ



***23** Whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) felt that his people did not accept the message in spite of his continuous preaching, he cherished the desire that Allah might send such a clear sign that they should have no alternative left but to accept his message. In this verse Allah has admonished His Messenger (peace be upon him) against cherishing any such desire, so as to say, “Do not show impatience at their obduracy, but go on performing your mission persistently in the way and order We are laying down for it. If this mission had to be performed by means of miracles, could We not Ourselves have done so? But We

know that this method is not suitable for bringing about that intellectual and moral revolution and for the establishment of that righteous society for which you have been appointed a Messenger. If, however, you cannot endure the heart burning caused by their indifference and rejection and if you imagine that a tangible sign, that might appeal to them, is required to break this inert state of their minds, then you should yourself try to bring about such a sign. You may, if you can, go deep down into the bowels of the earth or ascend up to the heavens for this purpose, but you should not expect from Us that We would fulfill this desire of yours, for there is no room for it in Our scheme.”

***24** This is to impress that it is not the purpose of Allah that all human beings should be forced to accept the guidance somehow or other. Had it been so, He would have created them in such a way that they would have been righteous by birth like angels. Then there would not have been a need of sending the Prophets and the Books. And of making the believers enter into a conflict with the disbelievers for the gradual establishment of the way of Allah. But Allah does not desire this. On the contrary, He intends that the truth should be presented to the people in a rational way so that those, who are convinced of it, may adopt it without any coercion, and then mold their characters in accordance with it to prove their moral superiority over the disbelievers. In this way they would go on attracting the best among the people towards it till they succeeded in establishing the way by virtue of their high ideals, best principles of life, pure characters and strong

arguments and with resolute struggle with the disbelievers. Then Allah assures them of the guidance and help they need and deserve at any stage. But if one wishes that, instead of this natural process, Allah should adopt some supernatural method and eradicate false ideas from the minds of the people and bring in pure ones instead and establish the righteous civilization in place of the evil ones, he should know that Allah will not do this, for this will be against the wisdom of the scheme of His creation of man. He has created man as a responsible being, granted him powers to exploit the things of the world and given him the freedom of action, both good and evil, and granted him a definite term for the preparation of the test and fixed the time for the declaration of the result of the test to punish or reward him according to his efforts.

36. Only they will respond who listen. And the dead^{*25} whom Allah will raise, then to Him they will be returned.

﴿ إِنَّمَا يَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ وَالْمَوْتَىٰ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ ﴾

***25** “They will respond who listen” are the people whose conscience is alive, who try to judge rationally between right and wrong, and who do not deliberately and obdurately lock the doors of their hearts. “And the dead” are the people who blindly follow a way and are not ready to leave it and follow any other way even though that may manifestly be the right way.

37. And they say: “Why

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِّن

is not a sign sent down to him from his Lord.” Say: “Indeed, Allah is Able upon sending down a sign, but most of them do not know.”*26

رَبِّهِ قُلْ إِنْ أَلَّهَ قَادِرٌ عَلَىٰ
أَنْ يُنَزِّلَ آيَةً وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

*26 “Sign” means a tangible miracle. Allah says that the reason why he is not showing a sign is not that He is unable to do so but for another reason whose wisdom they do not understand. (See E.N. 6).

38. And there is not a creature on the earth, nor a bird flying on its two wings, but they are communities like you. We have not neglected in the Book (of decrees) a thing. Then unto their Lord they shall be gathered.

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا
طَيْرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَّمٌ
أَمْثَالُكُمْ مَا فَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ
مِنْ شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
يُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. And those who deny Our revelations are deaf and dumb in darkness.*27 Whomsoever Allah wills, He sends him astray. And whomsoever He wills, He sets him on the straight path.*28

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا صُمُّوا
وَبُكْمٌ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ مَنْ يَشَأِ اللَّهُ
يُضِلَّهُ وَمَنْ يَشَأِ يُجْعَلُهُ عَلَىٰ
صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٣٩﴾

*27 That is, if you are really serious in your demand of

seeing a sign in order to judge whether the message of this Prophet (peace be upon him) is true or false, you should see and ponder over the innumerable signs that are found in abundance all around you. For instance, if you consider animal life, you will see that the structure of the bodies of each species of birds and beasts suits its functions immensely well; the qualities and characteristics that have been ingrained in its nature help to fulfill all its needs. The provision of its nourishment has been arranged in a wonderful way. And the course of its life has been so predetermined that it cannot transgress its limits in any way whatsoever. Allah also sees that each and every animal, nay, even the smallest insect, is being looked after, protected and guided, wherever it be, for the performance of the functions predestined for it. In short, you will find that its structure suits it well; it has been given inherent powers that help provide its needs: excellent provisions have been made for its food. The process of its birth, procreation and death has been going on according to a regulated fixed scheme. If you give a careful consideration to this sign alone, you will realize that the teachings of this Prophet (peace be upon him) about the Oneness of God and His attributes and the way of life based on these to which he invites you are absolutely true. Yet you neither try to see with open eyes these signs nor listen to the message this Prophet (peace be upon him) is conveying to you. As a result, you have been involved in ignorance and, therefore, desire to see some wonderful miracle for mere pastime.

***28** This is how Allah lets them go astray: (1) He holds back

the opportunity for observing His signs from the one who chooses to remain in ignorance; (2) He keeps hidden the pointers to the reality from the one who is a victim of prejudices, even though he should see His signs, and lets him remain involved in misunderstandings and move farther and farther away from the reality. On the contrary, He guides the seeker after truth to the right way by affording him the opportunity to make use of his knowledge for the purpose of discovering the reality, and showing him the signs guiding towards it. We daily notice instances of these types. There are millions of people before whose eyes countless signs are spread in their own persons and in the universe, but they see them like animals and do not learn any lessons from them. Then there are the physicists, chemists, zoologists, botanists, biologists, geologists, astronomers, physiologist, anatomists, historians, archaeologists, social scientists, etc. who observe such signs as may enlighten the minds and the hearts with faith, but they seem to see no sign to lead them to the reality, just because they begin their study with prejudiced minds, merely for the sake of material gains. Not only this, but every sign leads them to atheism, disbelief, materialism and nature worship. In contrast to them, there are those, who observe the wonders of the universe and the phenomena of nature with open eyes and open hearts, and find the signs of God all round them: So much so that they can see His sign in each and every green leaf.

40. Say: "Have you considered, if there came

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتَكُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابٌ

upon you the punishment of Allah, or there came upon you the Hour, would you call upon other than Allah, if you are truthful.

اللَّهُ أَوْ أَتَّكُمُ السَّاعَةَ أُغَيِّرَ اللَّهُ
تَدْعُونَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

41. Nay but, it is Him you call, so He would remove that for which you called unto Him, if He wills, and you forget what you have associated (with Him).^{*29}

بَلْ إِيَّاهُ تَدْعُونَ فَيَكْشِفُ مَا
تَدْعُونَ إِلَيْهِ إِنْ شَاءَ وَتَنْسَوْنَ
مَا تَشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

***29** In answer to the demand of the disbelievers for a sign, they were told that there was not one sign, but innumerable signs scattered all around them and their attention has been drawn in Ayat 38 to study the mystery of the life of any bird or beast and they would find sign of God. Now in Ayats 40-42, they have been directed to another sign that they can find in their own selves. When some affliction befalls a man or death confronts him with all its dreads, then he sees no refuge in any other than Allah. On such occasions even the most confirmed polytheists forget their gods and invoke God's help. Likewise, the most obdurate atheists, in their utter helplessness, involuntary pray to God for rescue, this sign-man's own state of mind is being presented here as a pointer to the reality, for this is a clear proof of the existence of One God. And of the urge of God worship that has been embedded deep in the heart of every human being. Though it might have been kept suppressed by negligence and ignorance, sometimes it comes to the

surface under the stimulus of some misfortune. Ikrimah, son of Abu Jahl, who was an arch enemy of Islam, was led towards Islam by witnessing such a sign. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) conquered Makkah, Ikrimah fled to Jaddah and sailed for Abyssinia. During the voyage, there came a furious storm which threatened to sink the boat. At first the passengers began to invoke their gods and goddesses for help. But when the storm became so violent that they feared that the boat was going to sink, they all cried out, “This is not the time to call anyone except Allah, because He alone can save us.” This opened the eyes of Ikrimah and the locked doors of his heart: “If there is none here except Allah to help us, how can there be any to help us in any other place? This is what Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been teaching us for the last twenty years any we have been fighting it out with him.” That was the most decisive moment in the life of Ikrimah. He made a solemn pledge with Allah to this effect: “If I escape from this storm, I will directly go to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to become a follower of his.” Allah rescued him from that storm and he fulfilled his pledge. He not only became a Muslim, but spent the rest of his life in the service of Islam by performing jihad.

42. And We did indeed send (messengers) to nations before you, then We seized them with tribulation and adversity, that they might humble themselves.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ
فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ

43. Then why did they not humble themselves when Our torment reached them. But their hearts became hardened, and the devil made fair seeming to them that which they used to do.

فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا
وَلَكِنْ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ
الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

44. So when they forgot what they had been reminded of, We opened to them the gates of all things. Until, when they rejoiced in that what they were given, We seized them suddenly, then they were plunged in despair.

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ
فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ حَتَّى إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا
أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ
مُبْلِسُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

45. So the roots of the people who did wrong were cut off. And all the praises be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

فَقَطَّعَ دَابِرُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

46. Say: "Have you considered, if Allah should take away your hearing and your sight and set a seal upon your hearts, ^{*30} who is a god other than Allah who could bring them (back) to you." Behold, how We put forth

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ سَمْعَكُمْ
وَأَبْصَارَكُمْ وَخَتَمَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ
مَنْ إِلَهُ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ
أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ

in diverse forms the revelations, yet still they turn away.

ثُمَّ هُمْ يَصْدِفُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

***30** “And set a seal upon your hearts” means, deprive you of the powers of thinking and understanding.

47. Say: “Have you considered, if the punishment of Allah should come upon you suddenly or openly, will any be destroyed except wrongdoing people.”

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتَكُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ بَغْتَةً أَوْ جَهْرَةً هَلْ يُهْلِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

48. And We do not send the messengers except as bearers of glad tidings, and warners. So whoever believes and reforms, there shall be no fear upon them, neither shall they grieve.

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ فَمَنْ ءَامَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

49. And those who deny Our revelations, the punishment will touch them for that they used to disobey.

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَمَسُّهُمُ الْعَذَابُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

50. Say (O Muhammad): “I do not say to you that with me are the treasures of Allah, nor that

قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ

I know the Unseen, nor that I say to you that I am an angel. I do not follow except that which is revealed to me.”^{*31} Say: “Are equal the blind and the seer.”^{*32} Do you not then reflect.”

لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ إِنِ اتَّبَعُ إِلَّا مَا
يُوحَىٰ إِلَىٰ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي
الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ أَفَلَا
تَتَفَكَّرُونَ



***31** This verse removes the silly notions about prophethood and answers the absurd objections raised against the claim of prophethood by Muhammad (peace be upon him). The foolish people have always had the silly notion that a Prophet of Allah must be supernatural and capable of performing wonderful miracles. For instance, they expected that a whole mountain should turn into a mass of gold at his bidding; that the earth should throw out treasures by his orders; that he should be able to tell the people all about their past and future; that he should be able to locate a lost thing and foretell whether a sick person will get well or die and whether a pregnant woman will give birth to a male or a female. They also believed that such a person should be above the common human limitations. They could not conceive anyone to be a prophet, if he suffered from hunger or thirst and needed sleep, or, if he had wife and children and went to the bazaar to buy and sell the necessities of life, or, if he was sometimes forced to borrow money or was involved in poverty and indigence.

When Muhammad (peace be upon him) put forward the claim that he was a Messenger of Allah, his contemporaries

wanted to test his claim with the touch-stone of such silly notions. They would ask him questions about the unseen things and demand supernatural miracles from him. They would also raise the objection that he was merely a common man, who needed food and drank water like them; who had wife and children and who moved about in the bazaars. In answer to these things, Allah told His Prophet (peace be upon him) to inform them that he never claimed to be supernatural; his only claim was that he was following the revelations he received from Allah and that he should be judged by that standard only.

***32** The question is meant to bring home to them this fact: “I have seen with my own eyes and experienced directly the realities I am presenting to you, and I have gained their accurate knowledge through revelation; therefore my evidence is that of an eye witness. On the contrary, you are blind with regard to those realities: all your notions concerning them are based on guess-work and speculation or on the blind following of others. Therefore, the difference between you and me is the same as of the man who is able to see and the one who is blind. That is what gives me superiority over you and not that I possess the treasures of God or have the knowledge of the unseen or that I am free from the common human limitations.

51. And warn by this (Quran) those who fear that they will be gathered before their Lord. For them, besides Him, there is no protector,

وَأَنْذِرْ بِهِ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يُحْشَرُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ وَاٰلِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ لَّهُمْ

nor an intercessor, that they may fear (Allah).^{*33}

يَتَّقُونَ
٥١

***33** That is, you should pay special attention only to those who believe that one Day they shall have to go before Allah to render an account of their deeds and who do not cherish any such false hopes that somebody's intercession and help will save them. It is because this admonition can produce good effect only on such people and not on those who are so absorbed in the enjoyment of the pleasures of this world that they never think of their death or of going before Allah. Likewise, this admonition will fall flat on those who are making merry in this world, deluding themselves into believing that no harm will come to them in the Hereafter because of their spiritual relation with such and such a saint or because such and such a holy person will intercede with Allah in their behalf or because such a one has already made atonement for them. Obviously, no admonition can be beneficial to such people.

52. And do not send away those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His pleasure.^{*34} Not upon you is of their account in anything, nor is of your account upon them in anything. So were you to send them away, you would then become of the wrongdoers.^{*35}

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ
بِالْغَدْوَةِ وَالْعِشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ
وَجْهَهُ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ
مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ
مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ
الظَّالِمِينَ
٥٢

***34** In this passage Allah has answered one of the objections that the big chiefs of the Quraish used to raise in regard to the followers of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They would say that none but the lowest stratum of society, consisting of slaves, menials and the like, had accepted Islam. They would taunt him of having such companions as Bilal, Ammar, Suhaib, Khabbab, etc. and ask in a jeering way, “Are these the only (honorable) people from amongst us, upon whom Allah has showered His blessings?” They did not rest content with making fun of their poor condition, but also passed stinging remarks about their past shortcomings, saying: “Just have a look at the past history of such and such people, who are today forming the pious group of the believers.” Allah has advised Prophet (peace be upon him) not to be disheartened by their unkind remarks.

***35** That is, if they had done something wrong in the past, they themselves shall be accountable for it and not you, for everyone shall get the reward of the good or evil one has done. Therefore, no good deed of yours will be put to their credit, nor will you be burdened with any evil deed of theirs. They come to you merely as seekers after truth and it will be injustice to look down upon them and drive them away.

53. And thus have We tried some of them with others, ^{*36} that they might say: “Are these the ones upon whom Allah has

وَكَذَلِكَ فَتَنَّا بَعْضَهُمْ
بِبَعْضٍ لِيَقُولُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ مِنْ
اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ

bestowed favor among us.”
Is Allah not best Aware of
those who are grateful.

بِأَعْلَمَ بِالشَّكِرِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

***36** That is, by bestowing the blessing of Islam at the outset on the poor and indigent and those who held a low position in society, We have involved the upper rich and proud class in trial.

54. And when those who believe in Our revelations come to you, say: “Peace be on you. Your Lord has decreed upon Himself mercy, that any of you who does evil in ignorance then repents thereafter, and corrects himself, then surely, He is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.”^{*37}

وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ
رَبُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ أَنَّهُ
مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوءًا بِجَهْلَةٍ ثُمَّ
تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُ
غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

***37** Allah has told his Messenger (peace be upon him) to console those of his followers who had committed heinous sins during the days of ignorance by inspiring them with the assurance that He forgives and treats leniently those who repent and mend their ways and, therefore, the taunts of the enemies of Islam need not worry them about what they had done in the past.

55. And thus do We explain
in detail the revelations,
and (thus) the way of the

وَكَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ

criminals may become
manifest.*38

وَلِتَسْتَبِينَ سَبِيلُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

*38 In order to understand the significance of Ayat 55, we should keep in view Ayat 37 in which the disbelievers asked, “Why has no sign been sent down to this Prophet (peace be upon him) from his Lord.” In the subsequent passage (Ayats 38-54), several manifest signs have been cited to show that there is no lack of signs but the disbelievers do not want to see them. Then in Ayat 55 such people have been warned, as if to say, “In this way, We make Our signs clear, plain and manifest so that those, who persist in their disbelief in spite of those signs, should prove themselves to be guilty ones. For they choose the way of deviation deliberately, not because there is a lack of signs to show the right way but because they do not want to see the signs.”

56. Say (O Muhammad):
“Indeed, I have been forbidden that I worship those whom you call upon besides Allah.” Say: “I will not follow your vain desires, for indeed I would go astray then, and I would not be of those rightly guided.”

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهَيْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ
تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قُلْ لَأَتَّبِعُ
أَهْوَاءَكُمْ قَدْ ضَلَلْتُ إِذَا وَمَا
أَنَا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ

57. Say (O Muhammad):
“Indeed, I am on clear evidence from my Lord, and you have denied it. I do

قُلْ إِنِّي عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي
وَكَذَّبْتُمْ بِهِ مَا عِنْدِي مَا

not have that for which you are trying to hasten.*39 The judgment is none but for Allah. He declares the truth, and He is the best of the judges.”

تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ
إِلَّا لِلَّهِ يَقْضُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ
الْفَصِيلِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

*39 This alludes to the demand of the opponents for the scourge of Allah with which they were being threatened. They said, “Why does a scourge not come down upon us, when we are openly denying and defying you? If you have been really sent by Allah, then anyone, who denied and insulted you, would have been swallowed by the earth or stricken dead by lightning. How is it that the Messenger of Allah and his followers are undergoing untold afflictions and sufferings, while their tormentors are enjoying their lives merrily?”

58. Say “If that I had what you are trying to hasten for, the matter would have been decided between me and you. And Allah is best aware of the wrong doers.”

قُلْ لَوْ أَنَّ عِنْدِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ
بِهِ لَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. And with Him are the keys of the unseen, none knows them except him. And He knows what is on the land and the sea. And not a leaf falls but He knows it. And there is not a grain

﴿٥٩﴾ وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا
يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي
الْبُرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ
إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلْمَتٍ

amid the darkness of the earth, nor anything wet nor dry, but it is in a clear Book.

الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَظٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا
فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٥١﴾

60. And it is He who takes your souls by night (in sleep), and He knows what you do by day. Then He raises (wakes) you up therein (by day), that may be fulfilled the term appointed. Then unto Him will be your return. Then He will inform you of what you used to do.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُم بِاللَّيْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُم بِالنَّهَارِ ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُكُمْ فِيهِ لِيُقْضَىٰ أَجَلٌ مُّسَىٰ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

61. And He is the Omnipotent over His slaves. And He sends over you guardians (angels),^{*40} until when approaches to one of you death, Our messengers (angels) take him (his soul), and they do not neglect (their duty).

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْرِطُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

***40** Angels who keep strict watch over each and everything a man does or thinks of and maintain a complete record of all this.

62. Then they are returned to Allah, their Lord in truth. Unquestionably, His is the

ثُمَّ رُدُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمْ الْحَقِّ ﴿٦٢﴾

judgement. And He is the swiftest of those who take account.

أَلَا لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَهُوَ أَسْرَعُ الْحَاسِبِينَ



63. Say (O Muhammad): “Who rescues you from the darkness of the land and the sea, you call upon Him humbly and in secret, (saying) if we are saved from this, we certainly will be among the thankful.”

قُلْ مَنْ يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِنْ ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ تَدْعُونَهُ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً لَئِنْ أَنْجَيْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ



64. Say: “Allah rescues you from this and from all (other) distresses, then you associate others (with Him).”^{*41}

قُلِ اللَّهُ يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِنْهَا وَمِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ تُشْرِكُونَ



***41** That is, you yourselves are a witness that Allah alone is All-Powerful: He alone has the sole authority and your prosperity and adversity entirely lie in His power and He alone is the maker of your destinies. That is why you turn to Him in your affliction, when you find that no other means of rescue has been left for you. In the face of this clear sign, you have set up, without any reason or rhyme, others as partners in His Godhead. You live on His provisions but treat others as your providers; you get help from Him in your need, but set up others as your helpers and protectors; He rescues you from your distress, yet you regard others (besides Him) as your rescuers; it is He

Whom you humbly invoke in your affliction, yet you take your offerings to others when he removes it. In short, you witness the proofs of His Godhead, day and night, yet you serve and bow down before others.

65. Say (O Muhammad):
“He has the power over that He can send upon you punishment from above you, or from beneath your feet, or to bewilder you with factions, and make you taste the violence of one another.” Behold, how We set forth in diverse forms the signs so that they might understand.*42

قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ
عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ أَوْ مِّن
تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ يَلْبِسَكُمْ شِيْعًا
وَيُذِيقَ بَعْضَكُمْ بَأْسَ بَعْضٍ ۗ أَنْظُرْ
كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَفْقَهُونَ



*42 It is a warning to those who had become very bold in their enmity with the truth because no scourge from Allah was in sight. They are being warned that the scourge of Allah does not take long to come. A gust of wind can destroy them all at once. A sudden shake of an under ground earthquake can sink their habitations. A spark can set on fire the magazines of enmity and involve clans, nations and countries in endless blood feuds. Therefore, if no scourge is coming on you, this should not make you so bold and neglectful as to go on treading blindly the way you are following without discerning whether it is right or wrong. Instead you should take advantage of the respite that is being given and of the signs that are being presented

to you and recognize the reality and follow the right way.

66. And your people (O Muhammad) have denied it, and it is the truth. Say: "I am not a guardian over you."^{*43}

وَكَذَّبَ بِهِ قَوْمُكَ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ
قُل لَّسْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ

*43 That is, it is no part of my duty to make you see what you would not see and to make you understand what you would not understand; nor am I responsible for bringing down a scourge on you, if you would not see or understand it. The only duty that has been assigned to me is to make plain to you the distinction between truth and falsehood. Now that I have done my duty and you have rejected the truth, the evil consequences of which I have been warning you will appear in due course.

67. For every news there is a term appointed, and soon you will know.

لِكُلِّ نَبَأٍ مُّسْتَقَرٌّ وَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

68. And when you (O Muhammad) see those who engage in vain discourse about Our revelations, withdraw from them until they enter into another topic. And if the devil causes you to forget,^{*44} then do not sit, after the remembrance, with the wrongdoing people.

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَخُوضُونَ فِي
آيَاتِنَا فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّى
يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ وَإِمَّا
يُنْسِيَنَّكَ الشَّيْطَانُ فَلَا تَقْعُدْ
بَعْدَ الذِّكْرِى مَعَ الْقَوْمِ
الظَّالِمِينَ

***44** That is, if you ever forget this instruction and keep sitting in the company of such people.

69. And it is not upon those who fear (Allah) any accountability for them (the disbelievers) of anything, but (only for) a reminder that perhaps they may fear (Him).^{*45}

وَمَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ مِنْ
حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَلَكِنْ
ذِكْرٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

***45** Here very important practical instructions have been given to the pious people. Their first and foremost duty is to save themselves from any disobedience of Allah; they should not worry unnecessarily about the disobedient people, for they are not responsible for their disobedience. They should not, therefore, impose it upon themselves as an obligation that they have to convince them anyhow by argument and to refute their absurd objections. Their only duty is to present the truth before them. Then, if they do not accept it, the pious people should not waste their time and energy by entering into useless polemical disputes, discussions and argumentations with the disbelievers. Instead, they should spend their time and energy in educating and training and reforming those who are sincere seekers after the truth.

70. And leave alone those who take their religion for a play and amusement, and whom the life of the world has deluded. And

وَذَرِ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَعِبًا
وَلَهْوًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا

remind with it (Quran) lest a soul be destroyed by what it has earned. It has besides Allah no protector, nor intercessor. And if he offers every ransom, it will not be accepted from him. Such are those who deliver themselves to ruin because of what they have earned. For them will be a drink of boiling water, and a painful punishment because they used to disbelieve.

وَذَكِّرْ بِهِ أَنْ تُبْسَلَ نَفْسٌ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ وَإِنْ تَعَدَلَ كُلَّ عَدَلٍ لَّا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أُبْسِلُوا بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

71. Say (O Muhammad): “Shall we call on others besides Allah, that which neither benefits us nor harms us, and turn on our heels after when Allah has guided us, (we would then be) like one whom the devils have enticed away (to wander) in the earth bewildered, (while) he has companions calling him to guidance (saying): Come to us.” Say: “Indeed, Allah’s guidance is the guidance, and we have been

قُلْ أُنَدِّعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُنَا وَلَا يَضُرُّنَا وَنُرَدُّ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْنَا اللَّهُ كَالَّذِي اسْتَهْوَتْهُ الشَّيَاطِينُ فِي الْأَرْضِ حَيْرَانَ لَهُ أَصْحَابٌ يَدْعُونَهُ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ أُمَّتِنَا قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَى اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ وَأْمُرْنَا لِنُسَلِّمَ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

commanded to submit to the Lord of the Worlds.”



72. “And that to establish prayers, and to fear Him, and it is He to whom you shall be gathered.”

وَأَنْ أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَهُوَ
الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ



73. And it is He who has created the heavens and the earth in truth.*46 And on the Day He will say: “Be”, so it shall be. His word is the truth. And on the Day when the trumpet*47 will be blown, His will be the dominion.*48 All Knower of the unseen and the seen.*49

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ
كُنْ فَيَكُونُ قَوْلُهُ الْحَقُّ وَلَهُ
الْمَلَكُ يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ
عَلِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ وَهُوَ
الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ



*46 It occurs at several places in the Quran that Allah has created the heavens and the earth in all truth. It has very comprehensive meanings.

(1) It means that the heavens and the earth have not been created for fun. It is not the creation of the fancy of some god, or the toy of a child to be played with for amusement and broken after satiety. In fact, this world is a very serious affair and its creation has great wisdom and a grand purpose behind it. It must, therefore, come to an end at the appointed time and then be resurrected so that the Creator may take account of all that has been done in it and

ultimately build the next world on the results of that reckoning.

That this world has been created for a purpose has also been mentioned at other places in the Quran in various ways:

(a) Lord, You have not created all this in vain. (Surah Al-Imran, Ayat 91).

(b) We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them for mere fun. (Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 16).

(c) Do you think that We have created you without any purpose and that you will never be brought back to Us? (Surah Al-Muminun, Ayat 115).

(2) The whole universe has been built on the solid foundations of the truth. Everything in it is based on just, wise and right laws and there is no room for injustice and folly and falsehood to take root and bear fruit in it. One should not, however, be misled by the partial and temporary successes of falsehood. At times, Allah may allow the worshipers of falsehood opportunity to try their best for the success of falsehood and injustice and wrong ways. This is in order to show that all their efforts shall ultimately fail and every worshiper of falsehood will see at the last reckoning that all the efforts made for the success of this unholy cause had gone utterly waste.

(3) Allah has created the universe in truth and is ruling over it by His own personal right. He wields authority here because of His personal right as its Creator. One should not, therefore, be misled by seeing others holding authority

over the affairs of the world. In fact, no one has, nor can have, any right to rule here, for no one has any right whatsoever over anything in the universe.

***47** It is beyond our comprehension to understand the real nature of the blowing of the Trumpet. What we learn from the Quran is that on the Day of Resurrection when the first Trumpet shall be blown by the command of Allah, everyone and everything shall perish. Then after this (Allah alone knows how long after this) the second Trumpet shall be blown; then everyone from the beginning of the creation to its end, shall be brought back to life and mustered in the Plain of Resurrection. In short, on the first blowing of the Trumpet, the present system of the universe shall be destroyed and on its second blowing the new system, different in form and with different laws, shall be created.

***48** It does not mean that today sovereignty is not His. What it means is this: “On that Day the curtain, that is covering the reality today, will be lifted and it will become apparent that all those who seemed to wield authority or were supposed to wield it, had absolutely no authority, and that sovereignty entirely belongs to Allah alone, Who is the Creator of the universe.”

***49** *Ghaib* is all that is hidden from the naked eye and cannot be seen and *Shahadat* is all that is visible to it.

74. And when Abraham said to his father Azar: “Do you take idols for gods.^{*50} Indeed, I see you and your people in manifest

﴿ وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ عَازَرَ
أَتَتَّخِذُ أَصْنَامًا ءَالِهَةً إِنِّي أَرَأَيْتَكَ

error.”

وَقَوْمَكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٧٤﴾

***50** The incident relating to Abraham (peace be upon him) is adduced in order to confirm and reinforce the view that just as Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions, thanks to the guidance vouchsafed by God, had denounced polytheism and had turned away from all false gods, bowing their heads in obedience to the One True Lord of the universe, so had been done by Abraham in his time. In the same way as ignorant people were then opposing the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and those who believed in him, Abraham, too, had been opposed in his day by the people among whom he lived. Furthermore, the answer Abraham gave to his people in the past can also be given by Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his followers, for he was on the same path as Noah, Abraham and the other Prophets who had descended from Abraham (peace be upon them all). Those who had refused to follow the Prophet (peace be upon him) should therefore take note that they had deviated from the way of the Prophets and were lost in error.

At this point it should also be noted that Abraham (peace be upon him) was generally acknowledged by the Arabs to be their patriarch and their original religious leader. The Quraish, in particular, were proud of their devotion to Abraham (peace be upon him), of being his progeny and of being servants to the shrine built by him. Hence, the mention of Abraham's (peace be upon him) doctrine of monotheism, of his denunciation of polytheism and his

remonstration with his polytheistic people, amounted to demolishing the very basis on which the Quraish had prided themselves. It also amounted to destroying the confidence of the people of Arabia in their polytheistic religion. This also proved to them that the Muslims stood in the shoes of Abraham himself, whereas their own position was that of an ignorant nation which had remonstrated with Abraham (peace be upon him) out of ignorance and folly.

75. And thus did We show^{*51} Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and that he might be of those who have certainty.^{*52}

وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ
الْمُوقِنِينَ



***51** That is, just as the phenomena of nature are before your eyes and the signs of God are being shown to you daily, so were they before Abraham (peace be upon him). But you, like blind men, do not see anything in spite of looking at them. The same stars, the same moon and the same sun rise and set before your eyes, but they leave you, as far away from the reality at the time they set as you were at the time they rose. But when Abraham saw with his heart's eyes, these very phenomena of nature, he reflected upon them and came to know of the reality.

***52** In order to understand the true nature of the dispute between the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and his people mentioned in this passage and others in the Quran, one should keep in view the religious and social conditions

of his time. Now that Ur, the birth place of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), has been unearthed by modern archaeologists, it has helped reveal the real conditions prevailing in that land during that age. Sir Leonard Woolley has published the results of this research in this regard in his book, "Abraham", London, 1935. A resume of the same, which has been translated into English from the Tafhim-ul-Quran, is given below.

It has been estimated that round about the year 2100 B.C. which is now generally regarded by scholars as the period of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), the population of Ur was nearly 250,000; it might even have been 500,000. It was a flourishing industrial and business center. On the one side, it attracted trade goods from as far off places as Pamir and Nilgiri, and on the other, it had trade relations with Anatolia. The State, whose capital it was, extended a little less to the north and a little more to the west of modern Iraq. The people were mostly craftsmen and merchants by profession. The inscriptions of the age that have been deciphered from the archaeological remains show that they had a materialist outlook on life. Their main object of life was to amass wealth and make merry. They practiced usury and were wholly absorbed in business. They regarded one another with suspicion and resorted to litigation on minor grounds. Their prayers to their gods generally consisted of supplications for long life, prosperity and flourishing business. The population was divided into three classes.

(1) The Amelu: This was the highest class which consisted

of the priests, state officials and military officers, etc.

(2) The Mushkenu: These were the merchants, craftsmen, and farmers.

(3) The Ardu: The slaves.

The Amelu class enjoyed special distinctions and privileges. They had greater rights both in the criminal and in the civil law than those of other people and their life and property were held sacred and precious.

Such was the city and the society in which the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) opened his eyes. According to the Talmud, he was a member of the Amelu class, and his father was the chief official of the state (See Surah Al-Baqarah: E.N. 290).

The tablets excavated at Ur mention the names of about 5,000 gods. Each city had its own god and also a special deity, who was regarded as the chief god or the city god and was entitled to greater reverence than the others. The city god of Ur was “Nannar” (the moon god) and scholars of the later ages have also called this city “Qamrinah” after that god. The other big city was “Larsah” which afterwards became the seat of government instead of Ur; its chief god was “Shamash” (the sun god). Under these chief gods there were many minor gods also, most of whom had been adopted from among the stars and planets and a few from among the earthly objects. People thought that their prayers for less important things were granted by these minor gods. The symbols of all these heavenly and earthly gods and goddesses had been formed in the shape of idols and all rites of worship were performed before them.

The idol of Nannar had been kept in a grand shrine built on the highest peak at Ur and near it the sanctuary of his wife Ningil had been built. The shrine of Nannar was just like a royal palace where every night a different female worshiper would go and become his bride. Thus there lived a large number of women in the shrine who had been dedicated to the god and their position was no better than religious prostitutes. The woman who would sacrifice her virginity in the name of the god was regarded very respectable. The common belief was that a woman must surrender herself at least once in her lifetime to another man in the way of god in order to attain salvation. It is obvious that the people to benefit most from this religious prostitution were the male priests themselves.

Nannar was not merely a god; he was the biggest landlord of the country, the biggest merchant, the biggest craftsman and the chief executive of the country's political life, for a very large number of gardens, houses and fields had been dedicated to his shrine. Besides the income from these sources, farmers, landlords and merchants also brought their offerings of corn, milk, gold, cloth, etc., to the shrine. Naturally there was a big staff to look after these offerings. Many factories were run and business on a large scale was done on behalf of the Temple. The highest court of justice had been established in the shrine and the priests acted as judges and their judgments were regarded as from God. The royal dynasty also derived its sovereignty from Nannar, who was the real sovereign. The king ruled over the country on his behalf and was, therefore, himself raised

to the rank of a deity and worshiped like the other gods.

The dynasty which was ruling over Ur in the time of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had been founded by Ur-Nammu who in 2300 B.C. had established a vast empire, which extended to Susa in the east and to Lebanon in the west. It was from him that the dynasty received the title of Nammu which became Namrud in Arabic. After the emigration of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) this dynasty and this nation were visited by continuous disasters. Their downfall was hastened by the destruction of Ur and the capture of Namrud along with the idol of Nannar by the people of Elam. Then the Elamis established their rule at Larsah which dominated over the land of Ur also. The last blow was dealt by Babylon, which had grown powerful under an Arab dynasty and brought both Larsah and Ur under its control. As a result of this downfall, the people of Ur lost their faith in Nannar who had failed to protect them from humiliation, shame and ruin.

Nothing can be said with certainty about the response the people of this land made to the teachings of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) after his emigration, but the law promulgated in 1910 B.C. by Hamurabi (Amraphel of Gen. xiv), king of Babylon, bears evidence that it had been influenced directly or indirectly by the guidance of Prophethood. A pillar inscribed with this complete code was discovered by a French archaeologist in 1902 A.D. and its English version was published in 1903 A.D. by C. H. W. John under the title, "The Oldest Code of Law." Most of the principles and details of this law and the law of the

Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) are in general, alike. If the results of the archaeological research, which has been carried out so far, are correct, one thing that clearly stands out is that shirk was not merely a religious belief and basis of polytheistic rituals with the people of Abraham but it was indeed the very basis of their economic, cultural, political and social system of life. In contrast to this, the Message of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) not only clearly struck at the root of idol worship, but also hit hard upon the sovereignty and worship of the royal dynasty and the social, economic and political status of the priests and nobles and the collective life of the whole country. Therefore, the acceptance of his invitation had far reaching implications. It called for a complete metamorphosis of the prevailing social pattern and demanded its re-construction on the basis of *Tauhid*. That is why, as soon as the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) began to deliver the Message, the common people and the nobles, the priest class and Nimrod, all stood up together to suppress his voice which gave rise to the bitter dispute, mentioned in the Quran.

76. So when the night covered him over (with darkness), he saw a star. He said: "This is my Lord." But when it set, he said: "I do not love those that set."

فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَى كَوْكَبًا
 قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَا
 أُحِبُّ الْآفِلِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

77. Then when he saw the moon rising up, he said:

فَلَمَّا رَأَى الْقَمَرَ بَازِعًا قَالَ هَذَا

“This is my Lord.” But when it set, he said: “If my Lord does not guide me, I shall surely be among the people who go astray.”

رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَئِن لَّمْ يَهْدِنِي
رَبِّي لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ
الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

78. Then when he saw the sun rising up, he said: “This is my Lord. This is greater.” But when it set, he said: “O my people, I am indeed free from what you associate others (with Allah).”

فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسَ بَازِغَةً قَالَ
هَذَا رَبِّي هَذَا أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا
أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا
تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

79. Indeed, I have turned my face towards Him who created the heavens and the earth, firmly upright, and I am not of those who associate others (with Allah).”^{*53}

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا
وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾

***53** In Ayats 76-78, the way of thinking which led the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) to the reality before his appointment as a Messenger of Allah has been stated. It teaches that if a person uses his brain and eyes rightly, he can reach to the reality, even if he is born and bred, like Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), in surroundings charged with shirk in which one might have had no chance of learning anything about the Oneness of God. The only condition is that one makes the right sort of observation of

the phenomena of nature and reflects upon them carefully and exercises his reasoning to reach to the truth by a connected, logical train of thoughts. It appears from the preceding verse that the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), from the beginning of his conscious life, was surrounded by the people who worshiped the stars, the moon and the sun. It was, therefore, natural that the starting point of his search for the truth should be the question: Can any of these objects really be the Lord and Sustainer? That is why his thinking centered round this question and when he discovered that all the gods of his people were bound tightly by an un-alterable law and were revolving in accordance with it, he came to the inevitable conclusion that none of these gods possessed, in the least, any quality that might entitle it to be the Lord. The Lord and Sustainer is only that One, Who has created them and bound them to His own obedience.

The wording in which the event has been couched, has generally given rise to an objection. "So when the night covered him over, he saw a star and said... And I am not of those who associate others (with Allah)." The question arises in the mind of the common reader: Did the night not cover over Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) every day of his life ever since he was a child and did he not see the stars, the moon and the sun rise and set before this particular occasion? Though he saw them every night, it is obvious that he began to deliberate like this only when he had attained his maturity. Why has then the event been described in such a way (.....When the night covered over

him) as to give rise to the doubt as if he had never seen the stars and the moon and the sun ever before this? As such an assumption cannot hold good in ordinary circumstances, some people have had to invent an extraordinary story to remove this seeming anachronism. They say that the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) was born and brought up in a cave, where it was arranged that he should not see the stars, the moon and the sun before he attained his maturity. The matter, however, is so simple that it does not need the invention of a fantastic story to explain it. It can be easily understood by a well-known incident in the life of Newton. One day when he saw an apple fall down from the tree to the ground, his mind suddenly turned to the problem: Why do things fall down to the ground? At last his deliberation led him to formulate and prove the law of gravity. Here, too, the question might arise: Had not Newton ever seen anything falling to the ground before this incident? It is obvious that he must have seen many things fall to the ground many times before this. How is it, then, that the fall of that particular apple on that particular day stirred up that particular mental activity which the daily fall of hundreds of things to the ground had not roused before this? The simple answer is that the minds are not always excited in the same way by the same kind of observations. Many a time, it so happens that one sees a thing over and over again but that does not stir up his mind to any mental activity; then there comes a moment when the sight of that very thing diverts the mental activity towards a particular problem. Or, if one's mind is engaged

in the solution of a problem and one suddenly catches sight of a particular thing which had always been before his eyes, it excites the mind to a mental activity that helps solve the problem. The same thing happened in the case of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). Nights came and passed away, the stars, the moon and the sun rose and set for years, but on one particular night the observation of one particular star excited that mental activity which led him to the central reality of the Oneness of God. It may be that ever since he attained maturity, he might have been thinking over the problem of the worship of the stars, the moon and the sun, because this was the religion of his people and on this was based the whole system of the life of that community. Then one night the observation of the star suddenly excited the mental activity that helped him solve the problem. It is also possible that the observation of the star was the starting point of that mental activity.

In this connection, there is another possible doubt that must also be removed. Was the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) guilty of shirk (even though temporarily), when seeing the star and the moon and the sun, he said, "This is my Lord." A little thinking will convince one that he was not at all guilty of shirk for in his search for reality, a seeker-after-truth has, inevitably, to pass through several stages of deliberations about shirk. Therefore, what determines his creed is not the temporary deliberation but the direction of one's research and the ultimate destination where he stops. These intervening stages of deliberation have to be made by every seeker-after-truth in his search

for reality. These are made for the sake of research and should not be taken as the final decision. The deliberation about any form of shirk is in a questioning manner and is not its practice. When a seeker-after-truth stops to deliberate about anything and says, “it is so,” it is not his final judgment. What he means to say is, “is it so?” That is why he proceeds further in his research as soon as he gets a negative answer at any of these stages.

80. And His people disputed with him. He said: “Do you dispute with me concerning Allah while He has guided me. And I do not fear what you associate with Him, except that my Lord wills something. My Lord encompasses all things in knowledge. Will you then not remember.”*54

وَحَاجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ^ج قَالَ أَتُحْجُونِي
فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانِ^ج وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا
تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ رَبِّي
شَيْئًا^ظ وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا
أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ



*54 The Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) asked the mushrikin to remember the fact that his Lord, whom they also acknowledged as their Lord, had the knowledge of everything and was fully aware of what they were doing. Then he posed the question in order to rouse them from their heedlessness towards the message and use their common-sense to consider the reality. The Arabic word *tadhakkur* contains this sense.

81. And how should I fear that which you associate

وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ

(others with Allah), and you do not fear that you have associated (others) with Allah, that for which He has not sent down to you any authority. So which of the two factions has more right to security, if you have knowledge.

وَلَا تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُمْ
بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
سُلْطَانًا ۚ فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ
بِالْأَمْنِ ۖ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

82. Those who believe and do not mix their belief with wrongdoing,^{*55} those are for whom there is security, and they are rightly guided.

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا
إِيمَانَهُم بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ
الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

***55** Some commentators are of the opinion that the people of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) did not believe in Allah or were ignorant of His existence and regarded their gods as the sole masters of the universe. Accordingly, they have based their comments of this passage and others about Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) on this assumption. Obviously, they are wrong because the whole passage clearly shows that those people did not deny Allah as the Creator of the earth and heavens, but were guilty of associating others with Allah in His Godhead and Sovereignty. This is clear from these and other words of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him):

“There is no reason why I should fear those whom you have made partners with Allah.” Moreover, the manner, in

which he mentions Allah, while addressing his people, shows that they also believed in Allah but associated other partners with Him as well.

The word *zulm* that occurs in this verse stands for shirk. When some companions mistook it for sinfulness, the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself removed their misunderstanding saying, "Here it means shirk."

In this connection, it will also be interesting to note that this most important event of the life of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) which has been described in this here and which was the starting point of his great mission, has not been mentioned at all in the Bible. The Talmud, however, mentions it, but it differs from the Quran in two things:

(1) In it the order is "from the sun to the stars and to God" but it is the other way round in the Quran.

(2) It states that, when he said about the sun, "This is my Lord," he worshiped it also at the same time and did the same with the moon.

83. And that was Our argument which We gave to Abraham against his people. We raise by degrees whom We will. Certainly, your Lord is All Wise, All Knowing.

وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ
عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْ
نَّشَاءُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ



84. And We bestowed upon him (Abraham) Isaac

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ

and Jacob, all (of them) We guided. And Noah did We guide before, and among his progeny, David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron. And thus do We reward those who do good.

كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَى وَهَارُونَ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

85. And Zachariah and John and Jesus and Elias. all (of them) were of the righteous.

وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَى وَعِيسَى وَإِيلِيَّاسَ كُلٌّ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

86. And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot. And all (of them) We preferred above the nations.

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَيُونُسَ وَلُوطًا وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

87. And (some) among their fathers, and their offsprings, and their brethren. And We chose them, and We guided them to a straight path.

وَمِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَاجْتَبَيْنَاهُمْ وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٨٧﴾

88. Such is the guidance of Allah with which He guides whom He wills of His slaves. And if they had

ذَلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَلَوْ أَشْرَكُوا

associated others (with Allah), worthless would be to them all that they used to do. *56

لَحِبَطَ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



*56 That is, even if the above mentioned people had been guilty of shirk like you, they would never have been exalted to such high ranks. This is because shirk is such a heinous sin that it destroys good works. It is just possible that any such person might have won fame as a great conqueror by ruthless destruction, or might have amassed fabulous wealth by foul means and become a notorious wealthy man like Korah or done some infamous thing and won name for himself but he could never have won the exalted position of being the leader of the pious and the rightly guided. They won the unique distinction of being the source of virtue and guidance for the whole world because they scrupulously avoided shirk and steadfastly followed the way of God worship.

89. Those were the ones whom We gave the Book, and the authority, and the prophethood. *57 But if these disbelieve in it, then indeed We shall entrust it to a people who are not therein disbelievers. *58

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ

وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ فَإِنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهَا

هَؤُلَاءِ فَقَدْ وَكَلْنَا بِهَا قَوْمًا لَيْسُوا

بِهَا بِكَافِرِينَ

*57 Here it has been stated that three things had been bestowed on the Prophet:
(1) The Book, divine guidance.

(2) The Judgment, the good sense to understand that guidance and the capability to apply its principles to the affairs of life and the God given ability to form correct opinions about the problems of life.

(3) The Prophethood, the office of guiding the people in accordance with the divine guidance.

*58 That is, it does not matter at all, if these disbelievers and mushrikin have rejected the guidance of Allah. We have raised a community of the believers, who appreciate fully the worth of this blessing.

90. Those were the ones whom Allah guided, so emulate from their guidance. Say: "I ask of you no reward for it. It is not but a reminder for the nations."

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ
فَبِهَدْيِهِمْ أَقْتَدِهِ^ط قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ
عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ
لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

91. And they did not appraise Allah with a true estimation due to Him, when they said: *59 "Allah has not sent down to a human being any thing." Say: "Who sent down the Book which Moses came with, a light and guidance for mankind, which you have put on parchments, disclosing (some of) it and concealing much.

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِذْ
قَالُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ بَشِيرٍ مِّنْ
شَيْءٍ قُلْ مَنْ أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ الَّذِي
جَاءَ بِهِ^ط مُوسَىٰ نُورًا وَهُدًى
لِّلنَّاسِ تَجْعَلُونَهُ^ط قَرَاطِيسَ
تُبَدُونَهَا وَتُخْفُونَ كَثِيرًا وَعُلِّمْتُمْ

And (by which) you were taught that which you did not know, (neither) you, nor your fathers.”*60 Say: “Allah (sent it down).” Then leave them to play in their vain discussions.

مَا لَمْ تَعَلَمُوا أَنْتُمْ وَلَا آبَاؤُكُمْ
قُلِ اللَّهُ ط ثُمَّ ذَرَهُمْ فِي خَوْضِهِمْ
يَلْعَبُونَ

*59 The context in which the words, “Allah has not sent down to human being anything” occur and their refutation clearly show that these were the words of the Jews. They uttered these words when the disbelievers and the mushrikin of Arabia asked them, “Tell us whether the word of Allah has really been sent down to this man, Muhammad (peace be upon him).” This question had arisen because the Prophet claimed (peace be upon him), “I am a Prophet and the Book is being sent down to me.” The Quraish and the mushrik Arabs turned to the Jews because they possessed the Book and believed in the Prophets and could speak with authority. Therefore, their answer provided the opponents with a strong weapon against Islam and they repeated the answer as an argument to dissuade the people from it. That is why their answer has been cited here and refuted.

Here a possible doubt should also be removed: How can a Jew, who believes that the Torah had been sent down by God, say, “Allah has not sent down to human being anything?” A little thinking will show that a person in his obduracy often utters such things as are against his fundamental principles merely to refute his opponent. As

the Jews were bent upon refuting his claim to prophethood, they had been so blinded by their opposition to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), that in denying his prophethood they even denied the very office of prophethood.

“And they did not appraise Allah with a true estimation due to Him” means that they committed a grave error in evaluating His powers and wisdom. For the person who says: “Allah has not sent down the knowledge of the truth and guidance for life,” makes either of the two wrong estimates:

(1) He believes that Allah has no power to send down revelation to any man, and this is a wrong estimate of the powers of Allah.

(2) He thinks that though Allah has given man intelligence and authority to exploit the resources of nature, He has made no arrangement for his right guidance, but has left him to act indiscriminately in the world, and this is a wrong estimate of the wisdom of Allah.

***60** This answer is meant for the Jews, who had furnished the disbelievers and the mushrikin with the arguments that “Allah has not sent down to human being anything.” To refute their objection it has particularly been pointed out that the Torah was sent down to Moses (peace be upon him) by Allah, for they themselves believed and could not deny that the Torah had been sent down to Moses (peace be upon him) by Allah. Thus, it was by itself a refutation of their assertion that Allah has not sent down anything to any man. It also proved at least that the word of God can be

sent down to a man, as it had been sent down to Moses (peace be upon him).

92. And this is a Book (Quran) which We have sent down, blessed, confirming that (revealed) before it, and so that you may warn the mother of towns (Mecca) and all those around it. And those who believe in the Hereafter believe in it, and they are constant in guarding their prayers. *61

وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ
مُصَدِّقُ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَلِتُنذِرَ
أُمَّ الْقُرَىٰ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَالَّذِينَ
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ
وَهُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ مُحَافِظُونَ

*61 After showing in the preceding verse that the word of God can be sent down to a man and that it had actually been sent down to Moses (peace be upon him), a man, the Quran in this verse proceeds to prove that the word, which has been sent down to Muhammad (peace be upon him), is actually the word of God. Four things have been put forward as a proof thereof:

(1) It is a blessed Book: it presents the best principles for the welfare and true success of man. It teaches the right creeds and inculcates all kinds of virtues and exhorts the people of follow a high standard of morality for leading a pure life. At the same time, it does not teach in any way whatsoever any vice selfishness, narrow-mindedness, cruelty, obscenity and the like, which you have interpolated in abundance in your sacred Books.

(2) It does not present anything different form the guidance

contained in the former scriptures: nay, it testifies to the same teaching that had been presented in them.

(3) This Book aims to fulfill the very object for which the former Books had been sent, that is, to shake up and arouse those people who had become forgetful of the noble object for which they had been created, and to warn them of the evil consequences of their wicked ways.

(4) The message of this Book has not attracted those from among mankind who are the worshipers of this world and slaves of their desires, but only such people as are able to see the higher things of life beyond the narrow bounds of their worldly life. Then the most obvious characteristic of the revolution that this Book has brought about in their lives is that they stand out conspicuously among the people around them for their piety and God-worship. Is it possible for any book invented by an impostor, who has the audacity to say that it is from Allah, to produce such excellent results?

93. And who can be more unjust than he who invents against Allah a lie, or says: "It has been inspired to me," while not a thing has been inspired to him, and who says: "I will reveal the like of that which Allah has revealed." And if you could see, when the wrong doers are in the agonies of death

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ
كَذِبًا أَوْ قَالَ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ وَلَمْ يُوحَ
إِلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ وَمَنْ قَالَ سَأُنزِلُ مِثْلَ
مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ
الظَّالِمُونَ فِي غَمَرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَاسِطُو أَيْدِيهِمْ

and the angels extend their hands (saying): “Discharge your souls. This day you shall be recompensed with the punishment of humiliation because of what you used to say against Allah other than the truth. And you were, towards His verses, being arrogant.”

أَخْرَجُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ
تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا
كُنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ
وَكُنْتُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهِ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ



94. And certainly you have come to Us alone as We created you the first time, and you have left all that We had bestowed on you behind you. And We do not see with you your intercessors, whom you claimed that they were among you partners (with Allah). Indeed, it has all been cut off between you, and lost from you is all that you used to claim.

وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا فُرَادَى كَمَا
خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَتَرَكْتُمْ مَا
خَوَّلْنَاكُمْ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ وَمَا
نَرَى مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَاءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ
زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَاءُ لَقَدْ
تَقَطَّعَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْكُمْ مَا
كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ



95. Truly (it is) Allah who splits the seed grain and the fruit kernel (for sprouting).^{*62} He brings forth the living from the dead,

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَالِقُ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَى ﴾
يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَمُخْرِجُ

and it is He who brings forth the dead from the living.*63
Such is Allah, then how are you deluded away.

الْمَيِّتِ مِنَ الْحَيِّ ذَالِكُمْ اللَّهُ
فَأَنْ تُوَفَّكُونَ

*62 That is, it is Allah Who splits open the seed and the fruit kernel underground and causes those to grow into plants or trees.

*63 It means that Allah creates living creatures out of lifeless matter and discharges lifeless matter out of living creatures.

96. The Cleaver of the daybreak, and He has appointed the night for resting, and the sun and the moon for reckoning. Such is the measuring of the All Mighty, the All Knowing.

فَالِقُ الْإِصْبَاحِ وَجَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ
سَكَنًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ
حُسْبَانًا ذَالِكْ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ
الْعَلِيمِ

97. And it is He who has placed for you the stars that you may be guided by them through the darkness of the land and the sea. Indeed, We have explained in detail the signs for a people who have knowledge.*64

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ النُّجُومَ
لِتَهْتَدُوا بِهَا فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ
وَالْبَحْرِ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ
يَعْلَمُونَ

*64 That is, We have made clear the signs which show conclusively that there is only One Allah and that none else has the divine attributes or powers and none else is entitled

to any of the divine rights. However, those who lack knowledge cannot reach the reality by means of these signs; only those who observe the phenomena of nature in a rational way can attain this precious wealth.

98. And it is He who has created you from a single soul,^{*65} and (gave you) a place of residing and a repository. Indeed, We have explained in detail the signs for a people with understanding.^{*66}

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ
وَاحِدَةٍ فَمُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمُسْتَوْدَعٌ قَدْ
فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَفْقَهُونَ



***65** That is, Allah has created the entire human race from one single being, Adam, who was the first man.

***66** That is, only men of understanding can find clear signs of the reality in the creation of human race and in the different functions allotted to man and woman for its reproduction at the different stages of human life from birth to death. But those, who live like animals and hanker after the fulfillment of the desire of the worldly life, can see nothing worthwhile even in these signs.

99. And it is He who sends down water from the sky, then We produce with it vegetation of all kinds, then We bring forth from it the green (crops), We bring forth, out of which, the thick clustered grain. And

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُخْرَجُ مِنْهُ
حَبًّا مُتَرَاكِبًا وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِنَ

out of the palm tree from the sheath of it, (We bring out) thick clustered dates hanging low, and gardens of grapes, and the olive and the pomegranate, resembling and yet different (in taste). Look at their fruit, when they begin to bear fruit, and its ripening. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who believe.

طَلَعَهَا قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّتِ مِّنْ
أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ
مُشْتَبِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَبِهٍ أَنْظُرُوا إِلَى
ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ إِنَّ فِي
ذَٰلِكُمْ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

100. And they associate with Allah jinns as partners,^{*67} though He has created them, and they impute to Him sons and daughters without knowledge.^{*68} Glorified be He and High Exalted above what they attribute (to Him).

وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِنَّ وَخَلَقَهُمْ
وَخَرَقُوا لَهُ بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ
سُبْحٰنَهُ وَتَعَالٰى عَمَّا
يَصِفُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

***67** That is, in spite of these clear signs, some people have set up as His partners some hidden beings that are merely the creations of their own imagination and whims. They have gone so far in their ignorance as to allot different powers and duties to them in the management of the universe and in determining the destiny of man. For instance, one has been made the god of rain and another of vegetation; one is the goddess of wealth and another of disease, etc. Such absurd beliefs have been prevalent among all polytheistic peoples about spirits, devils, monks, gods

and goddesses.

***68** The pagan Arabs called the angels as the daughters of God. Likewise some mushrik communities have invented even a genealogical tree of gods and goddesses descending from God.

101. (He is) the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How can He have a son, and (when) there is for Him no companion. And He created all things, and He is, of all things, the All Knower.

بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنِي
يَكُونُ لَهُ وُلْدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ
صَاحِبَةٌ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

102. Such is Allah, your Lord. There is no god except Him, the Creator of all things, so worship Him. And He is the guardian over all things.

ذَٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
خَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَاعْبُدُوهُ
وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ

103. Vision can not comprehend Him, and He comprehends (all) vision. And He is the Most Subtle, the All Aware.

لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ
الْأَبْصَرَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

104. Indeed, there has come to you insights from your Lord. So whoever sees, it is for (the good of) his own

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِصَآئِرٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
فَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ عَمِيَ

self. And whoever is blind, it is to his own (harm). And I (Muhammad) am not a watcher over you.*69

فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ



*69 In the sentence, “I am not a watcher over you,” Allah is speaking in the first person on His Prophet’s behalf. Just as the second person in the Quran denotes different people at different places, so the first person also denotes different beings at different places. As is well known, in some places, the second person is the Prophet or the believers or the people of the Book, and at other places it is the disbelievers or the mushrikin or the Quraish or the Arabs or the human beings in general, though the Quran is meant to be the guidance for all mankind, likewise at some places, the first person is Allah Himself and at others it is the angel, the bearer of the revelation, or a group of angels, or the prophets or the believers, though, in every case, the words are of Allah. However, one can determine the real person with the help of the context.

The meaning of the sentence. “I am not a watcher over you,” is: “My only duty is to present the guidance before you. Then, it is for you to open your eyes to see it or to keep your eyes shut like a blind man. It is not my duty to force open the eyes of those who deliberately keep them shut and to make them see what they do not see.”

105. And thus do We diversify the verses, and that they might say (O Muhammad): “You have

وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْصِرُ الْآيَاتِ
وَلِيَقُولُوا دَرَسْتَ وَلِنُبَيِّنَهُ لِقَوْمٍ

studied” and that We may make it clear for the people who have knowledge.*70

يَعْلَمُونَ

*70 The different ways of expression, in which the revelation has been couched, are a test for the people, because they help to discriminate the counterfeit from the genuine. The same thing has already been stated in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 26, in connection with the mention of insignificant things like flies, gnats, etc. in the parables of the Quran. Just as the mention of these insignificant things helps the seekers in finding the truth, in the same way the different ways of expression help those, who have knowledge and make use of it, to think deeply about their aims and objects and learn lessons for their own good. On the contrary, those people, who are bigoted, pay no attention to the subject matter, but begin to think on other lines. For instance, they begin to conjecture how this illiterate man can compose such excellent discourses. Thus, instead of judging the Quran from its excellent themes to be the revelation from Allah, they turn to every other possible source and say, “You have learned this from such and such person.” Then in the light of this so called successful research into the source of the Quran, they conclude that it could not be the Book of God.

106. Follow that which has been inspired to you from your Lord. There is no god except Him. And turn away from those who associate

اتَّبِعْ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ

others (with Allah).

المُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

107. And if Allah had willed, they would not have associated others (with Him). And We have not made you over them a watcher, nor are you a guardian over them.*71

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكُوا^ط وَمَا
جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا^ط وَمَا
أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾

***71** It means, you have been appointed to invite the people to the message and not to keep watch over them like a police inspector. Therefore your only duty is to present the message to the people and try, your best to convince them of the truth. After that, if someone does not accept the truth, leave him alone. You have not been appointed to force the people to accept it so as to leave no worshiper of falsehood within the range of your prophethood. Therefore you should not worry and try to make them open their eyes which they have deliberately shut. If Allah had, in His wisdom, willed that there should remain no worshiper of falsehood, He would not have entrusted you with this task. He could have made each and every human being a follower of the truth, merely by a single word of His command. But this is not the object of the creation of man. The real object is that man be given the freedom of choice between the truth and falsehood: And then by presenting the light of the truth before him, he be tested which one of the two he chooses. Now the right course for you is to follow the right way for yourself and to invite others to follow it.

Then you should make those, who accept it, your friends and not to forsake them in any case, even though they are very insignificant in the eyes of the worldly people. On the other hand, you should leave those alone who do not accept it and let them go to the evil end to which they themselves want to go and persist in doing so.

108. And do not insult those whom they (disbelievers) call upon besides Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge.*72 Thus We have made fair seeming to each people their deed.*73 Then to their Lord is their return, then He will inform them of what they used to do.

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ
عِلْمٍ ۗ كَذَلِكَ زَيْنًا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ
عَمَلُهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ
فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

*72 The followers of the Prophet (peace be upon him) have been advised not to lose their balance in zeal for preaching but to remain within proper limits when engaged in discussions and polemics with the non-Muslims and to refrain from offending against their creeds and from vilifying their leaders and objects of worship, for this will repel and alienate them all the more from the truth.

*73 Allah has ascribed their deeds to Himself, for everything that takes place in accordance with the laws of nature does, in fact, happens by the command of Allah. (Refer to E.N. 17 above). As Allah is the Author of all the laws of nature, everything happens by His command: therefore, Allah says, “Thus We have made fair seeming to

each people their deed.” The human beings would, however, express the same thing, saying, “This has happened according to the law of nature.”

109. And they swear by Allah their strongest oaths that if there came to them a sign,^{*74} they would surely believe in it. Say: “The signs are only with Allah,^{*75} and what will make you perceive that (even) if it (the sign) came, they would not believe.”^{*76}

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لِيَنْ
جَاءَهُمْ آيَةٌ لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا
الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ
أَنَّهَا إِذَا جَاءَتْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

***74** Here “sign” stands for such a tangible miracle seeing which they should have no alternative left but to acknowledge that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a true Prophet appointed by Allah.

***75** That is, I have no power to bring about and present signs, for these are entirely in the power of Allah and He may or may not show them.

***76** These words are addressed to those Muslims, who ardently wished (and sometimes even expressed their wish) that their misguided brethren should be shown such a sign as might bring them to the right way. To this Allah has answered: you should realize that they would not believe even if a sign were shown to them, for this demand is merely a pretext for their disbelief.

110. And We shall turn away their hearts and their eyes (from guidance), as they

وَنُقَلِّبُ أَفْعَادَهُمْ وَأَبْصَرَهُمْ كَمَا

did not believe therein the first time,^{*77} and We shall leave them in their trespass wandering blindly.

لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ أَوْلَ مَرَّةٍ وَنَذَرَهُمْ
فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

***77** That is, there has been no change in their mentality since the first time they heard and rejected the message of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). They are still following the same crooked and perverted way of looking at the message and, therefore, are unable to see and understand it rightly.

111. And even if We had sent down to them the angels, and the dead had spoken to them, and We had gathered all things before them, they would not have believed except that Allah so willed,^{*78} but most of them are ignorant.

﴿ وَلَوْ أَنَّا نَزَّلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ
وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَى وَحَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ
كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قُبُلًا مَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا
إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ
يَجْهَلُونَ ﴾

***78** That is, as they are not going to reject falsehood and accept the truth by making a free and deliberate choice, the only alternative left for making them follow it is that Allah should force it upon them. He should change their nature so as to deprive them of the freedom of thought and action like other species which have not been made responsible for what they do. But this is against the wisdom of the object for which Allah has created man. You should not, therefore, expect that Allah would make them believers by

His supernatural intervention.

112. And thus We have appointed for every prophet an enemy, devils from mankind and jinn, inspiring some of them to others with adorned speech as a delusion.^{*79} And if your Lord had so willed, they would not have done it,^{*80} so leave them alone, and that which they invent.

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا
شَيْطِينَ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي
بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ زُخْرَفَ الْقَوْلِ
عُرُورًا ۚ وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوهُ
فَذَرَّهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ



***79** Allah is consoling His Messenger (peace be upon him), so as to say, “You should not worry at all about the united and active antagonism of the satans from among men and jinn against your mission. This is not a new thing only happening to you for it has always been happening like this to the messengers. Whenever a messenger came to show the right way, all the satanic powers girded up their loins to make his mission a failure.”

“Adorned speech” are all those devices, schemes, suspicions, objections, etc., that are employed by the satans to excite and incite the common people against the message and the messenger who invites them to the truth. Then all these things have been called the means of deceit and delusion as a whole, for all the weapons that the opponent use against the truth are, in fact, deceptions not only for others but also for the deceivers themselves, though they appear to be very useful and effective weapons.

*80 We have already explained in E.N. 73 above the fact of this matter, but the fine distinction between Allah's *will* (*mashiyat*) and His *approval* (*rada*) should also be kept in mind; otherwise there might arise very serious misunderstandings. It must be clearly understood that nothing whatsoever can happen without the *will* and permission of Allah, for no incident can happen, unless Allah makes room for it in His vast scheme and provides means for its happening. But it does not necessarily mean that Allah also approves of and is pleased with that incident. For instance, no thief can commit theft, no murderer can kill, no tyrant can be tyrannical, no breaker of peace can cause disorder, no unbeliever can disbelieve and no mushrik can commit shirk, etc. without the *will* of Allah. Likewise, no believer can have faith and no pious person can be pious unless it be the *will* of Allah. Yet, He is not pleased with the first kind of bad deeds, whereas He is pleased with and approves of and likes the second kind of good deeds. It is true that the *will* of Allah is working for an ultimate great good, but that can only come about by means of a conflict between light and darkness, good and bad, peace and disorder. Therefore, He allows, for the sake of His great good designs, the necessary freedom both to the powers of obedience and to those of disobedience, of piety and sin, of prophethood and the forces of evil, so that both might be allowed to perform the deeds of their own choice and to those of His creatures (men and jinn) who have been delegated with a limited authority and the consequent responsibility. Everyone is free to make a

choice of good deeds or of bad deeds for himself in this world. Both the good and the bad people are allowed to have the necessary means, as far as it suits and fits into the divine design, but only those who make a choice of good works merit His pleasure and approval. For, Allah likes that His servants should make the right use of their freedom of choice and adopt good instead of evil.

In this connection, it will be worthwhile to understand why Allah mentions over and over again that it is by His *will* that the enemies of truth have been allowed to carry on their nefarious activities. This is to impress upon the Prophet (peace be upon him), and through him on his followers, that the nature of their work is different from that of the angels, who carry out the commands of Allah without meeting with any resistance. Their mission, requires that in their conflict with the wicked and rebellious people, they should exert their utmost to make the way of Allah dominant over their ways. That is why it is the *will* of Allah to allow such people as have deliberately chosen the way of rebellion against Allah to exert their worst in pursuance of their choice. Likewise, He also allows the believers a full opportunity to exert their utmost in the service and obedience of Allah that they have deliberately chosen. Though He is pleased with and gives His help and succor to the believers and guides them to the right way because they do the deeds He likes them to do, yet they should not expect that Allah will force, by His supernatural intervention, the unbelievers to believe, if they do not want to believe by their free choice. Or that He will remove by

force from their way those satans amongst men and jinn who have deliberately chosen to use all the powers of their hearts and minds and bodies against the truth in order to block its way. They should note it well that, if they sincerely intend to work for the cause of truth, virtue and righteousness, they will have to prove this by putting up hard struggle and exerting their utmost in their conflict with the worshipers of falsehood. If Allah had willed to demolish falsehood and make the truth dominate by miracles, there was no need to entrust this work to the believers for in that case He Himself could have arranged the things so as to leave no satan in the world and no room for shirk and disbelief to make their appearance.

113. And that may incline to it (deceptive speech), the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter, and that they may be well pleased with it, and that they acquire whatever they may be acquiring.

وَلِتَصْغَىٰ إِلَيْهِ أَفْعَدَةُ الَّذِينَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَلِيَرْضَوْهُ
وَلِيَقْتَرِفُوا مَا هُمْ مُّقْتَرِفُونَ



114. (Say O Muhammad) “Then is it other than Allah I shall seek as judge, and it is He who has sent down to you the Book (Quran), explained in detail.”^{*81} And those to whom We gave the Book (aforetime) know that it is

أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْتَغِي حَكْمًا وَهُوَ
الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكِتَابَ
مُفَصَّلًا وَالَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ مُنَزَّلٌ مِّن

revealed from your Lord in truth. So be not you of those who doubt.*82

رَبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ
الْمُمْتَرِينَ

*81 The speaker in this sentence is the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the addressees are his followers, who desired that a sign should be shown for the conversion of the disbelievers. They have been told that no sign will be shown, for Allah had made all the realities plain in the Quran. As regards to their conflict with falsehood, He has decreed that the followers of the truth will have to exert for its domination in the natural way without expecting any supernatural intervention from Him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has, therefore, been asked to declare, “Should I, then, seek some authority higher than Allah to revise His decree and to send down such a miracle as should force them to believe?” (Refer to E.N. 76).

*82 That is, these principles, that have been laid down for the domination of the truth, are not new ones which might have been invented today to explain away the difficulties and obstacles of the way. All those people, who possess the knowledge of the divine Books and are acquainted with the mission of the prophets, will bear testimony that whatever is being stated in the Quran is the very truth, which is eternal and has never changed.

115. And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and justice. None can change His Words. And He

وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا
وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدَّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَهُوَ

is the All Hearer, the All Knower.

السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١١٥﴾

116. And if you obey most of those on the earth, they will mislead you from Allah's way. They do not follow except conjectures, and they do not but falsify.*83

وَإِنْ تَطَعْتَ أَكْثَرَ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾

***83** The right thing for a seeker-after-truth is not to consider what way the majority of the people are following because that is based on guess work instead of knowledge. Their beliefs, theories, philosophies, principles of life and laws are the result of guess work and are, therefore, sure to mislead. In contrast to that, the way of life with which Allah is pleased, can only be the way which Allah Himself has taught. Therefore, the seeker-after-truth should adopt that way and steadfastly follow it, even though he is left alone on it.

117. Indeed, your Lord, it is He who knows best who strays from His way, and it is He who knows best those who are guided.

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَنْ يَضِلُّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١١٧﴾

118. So eat of that on which Allah's name has been mentioned, if you are believers in His revelations.*84

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ بِعَايَاتِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾

***84** Among the many wrong things which the people have adopted as religious laws without any divine sanction are also the restrictions they have imposed on the articles of food. That is why some people have made certain things lawful whereas they are unlawful in the sight of God, and certain other things unlawful, though Allah has declared them to be lawful. In this connection, the most absurd thing on which some of the former people insisted and on which some of the modern people also insist, is that if Allah's name is pronounced at the slaughter of an animal, it is unlawful and if it is slaughtered without mentioning Allah's name over it, it is quite lawful. In this verse Allah has refuted such ideas and commanded the Muslims to discard all such whims and superstitions which have been invented by the unbelievers and the mushrikin and break all such restrictions which the people have imposed on themselves against the guidance of Allah, if they sincerely believe in it. They should, therefore, make unlawful only that which Allah has made unlawful and vice versa.

119. And what is it with you that you do not eat of that on which Allah's name has been mentioned, and indeed He has explained in detail to you what is forbidden to you, except that to which you are compelled.^{*85} And indeed, many do lead (others) astray by their own desires without

وَمَا لَكُمْ إِلَّا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ
 اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَقَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُمْ مَا
 حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا مَا اضْطُرَّرْتُمْ
 إِلَيْهِ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا لَيُضِلُّونَ
 بِأَهْوَاءِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ

knowledge. Certainly, your Lord, He knows best of the transgressors.

هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾

***85** See Ayats 114-116 of Surah An-Nahl. Incidentally, this reference also shows that Surah An-Nahl was revealed before Surah Al-Anam.

120. And leave the apparent of sin and the concealed thereof. Indeed, those who earn sin will be recompensed for that which they used to commit.

وَذَرُوا ظَهْرَ الْاِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ ۗ اِنَّ
الَّذِينَ يَكْسِبُونَ الْاِثْمَ
سَيَجْزَوْنَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَکْتَرِفُونَ

﴿١٢٠﴾

121. And do not eat of that on which Allah's name has not been mentioned, and for sure it is abomination. And indeed, the devils do inspire to their friends to dispute with you.^{*86} And if you obey them, you would indeed be those who associate others (with Allah).^{*87}

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرْ اسْمُ
اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ وَاِنَّهٗ لَفِسْقٌ ۗ وَاِنَّ
الشَّيَاطِیْنَ لَیُوحُونَ اِلَى
اَوْلِيَآئِهِمْ لِيُجَدِلُوْكُمْ وَاِنَّ
اَطَعْتُمُوْهُمْ اِنَّكُمْ لَشُرٰكُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾

***86** This is with reference to the different kinds of doubts and objections with which the Jewish scholars used to poison the minds of ignorant Arabs against Islam. According to a tradition of Abdullah bin Abbas, one of the objections taught by the Jews against the Prophet

Muhammad (peace be upon him) was: “How is it that the one killed by Allah (by natural death) should be unlawful, while the other which is killed by us (by mentioning the name of Allah) should be lawful?” This is an instance of the crooked attitude of those so called people of the Book. They would invent and pose questions like this before the common people so as to poison their minds with doubts and to arm them with weapons to fight with the truth.

*87 It is also shirk to acknowledge the Godhead of Allah and at the same time follow the decrees and ways of those who have turned away from Allah. The acknowledgment of the Oneness of Allah demands that one should obey Allah in all aspects of his life. So much so that if a person believes that someone else also should be obeyed along with Allah, he would be guilty of committing shirk in his creed. And if a person obeys such people as arrogate to themselves the authority of making things lawful and unlawful, in utter disregard of the guidance of Allah, he would be guilty of practical shirk.

122. And is he who was dead, then We gave him life,^{*88} and We made for him a light by which he can walk among the people, like him whose similitude is in darkness,^{*89} from which he can never come out. Thus it is made fair seeming^{*90} to the disbelievers that which they

أَوْ مَن كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا
لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ
كَمَن مَّثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ
بِخَارِجٍ مِّنْهَا كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ
لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

used to do.



***88** Here, “He who was dead” means who was first in a state of ignorance and lacked understanding. Likewise, “Then We gave him life” means then he was given knowledge and understanding and was restored to that mental state which can recognize the truth. And the fact is that one who cannot distinguish between right and wrong and does not know the right way, might be regarded as alive from the physical point of view, but he does not enjoy that life which makes him a real human being. He is no doubt a living animal, but he is not a living man. A living man is only he who can distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, righteous and unrighteous.

***89** That is, how can you expect that a man, who has gotten real understanding of life and recognizes clearly, by the light of knowledge, the straight way from among the countless crooked ways, would live a life like those who lack understanding and blunder blindly into the darkness of ignorance and folly?

***90** It is the law of Allah that He makes their deeds seem fair to those who refuse to be guided by the light which is offered to them and who prefer to tread the crooked paths, even though they are invited to the right way. Then they begin to love darkness and like groping their way through it like the blind and to be knocked about throughout their lives. Accordingly, every vice appears to them worth enjoying and every piece of folly a gem of wisdom. After the failure of such an experiment that produces mischief, they

get ready for another in the hope that the first failure was due to some accidental mistake that will be avoided in future experiments.

123. And thus We have placed in every town the greatest of its criminals to conspire therein. And they do not conspire except against their own selves, and they do not perceive.

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ
أَكْبَرَ مُجْرِمِيهَا لِيَمْكُرُوا
فِيهَا وَمَا يَمْكُرُونَ إِلَّا
بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

124. And when there comes to them a sign, they say: “We shall never believe until we are given the like of that which was given to Allah’s messengers.”*91 Allah knows best with whom to place His message. There will afflict those who committed crimes, humiliation from Allah and severe punishment, for that which they used to conspire.

وَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ
حَتَّى نُؤْتَى مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ رُسُلُ اللَّهِ
اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ
سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا صَغَارٌ
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ بِمَا
كَانُوا يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

***91** What they meant was: “We are not going to believe in the claim of the Messengers that an angel came to them with a message from Allah, unless the angel comes directly to us to deliver the message of Allah.

125. So whoever Allah wills to guide, He

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ

expands his breast to Islam.*92 And whoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast tight, constricted, as though he were climbing up into the sky. Thus, Allah places ignominy upon those who do not believe.

صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ
يُضِلَّهُ، تَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا
حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصْعَدُ فِي
السَّمَاءِ كَذَلِكَ تَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ
الرَّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ



*92 “He expands his breast to Islam” means: “Allah makes him fully convinced of the truth of Islam by removing from his mind and heart every kind of doubt, suspicion, hesitation and indecision about Islam.”

126. And this is the path of your Lord, (leading) straight. We have indeed detailed the revelations for a people who heed to admonition.

وَهَذَا صِرَاطُ رَبِّكَ مُسْتَقِيمًا
قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ



127. For them will be the abode of peace*93 with their Lord. And He will be their protecting friend because of what they used to do.

هُم دَارُ السَّلَامِ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُوَ
وَلِيُّهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



*93 “Abode of peace”: The heaven, place of perfect peace and happiness, where the dwellers will be immune from

every kind of calamity and misery.

128. And the day when He will gather them together (and say): “O company of the jinns,^{*94} you have indeed (mislead) many of mankind.” And their friends among mankind will say: “Our Lord, we did benefit, some of us from the others,^{*95} and we have reached our appointed term which You did appoint for us.” He will say: “The Fire is your residence, you will dwell therein, except for what Allah wills. Indeed, your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing.”^{*96}

وَيَوْمَ تَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا يَمْعَشِرُ
الْجِنِّ قَدْ اسْتَكْرَثْتُمْ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ
وَقَالَ أَوْلِيَائُهُمْ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ رَبَّنَا
اسْتَمْتَعَ بَعْضُنَا بِبَعْضٍ وَبَلَّغْنَا
أَجَلَنَا الَّذِي أَجَّلْتَ لَنَا قَالَ
النَّارُ مَثْوَاكُمْ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا إِلَّا
مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ



***94** Here by the *jinn* are meant the satans of *jinn*.

***95** That is, every one of us made an unfair use of the other and cheated him for selfish ends.

***96** As Allah is All-Wise and All-Knowing, both punishment and forgiveness will be based on wisdom and knowledge and, therefore, will be reasonable and just. He will forgive only that wrongdoer, whom He knows not to be personally responsible for his crime and liable to punishment.

129. And thus We shall make the wrong doers

وَكَذَلِكَ نُؤَلِّي بَعْضَ الظَّالِمِينَ

friends of one another,
because of that which they
used to earn.*97

بَعْضًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾

***97** That is, just as they were accomplices in their sins and crimes in the world, so they shall also share the punishment in the Hereafter.

130. “O you assembly of the jinns and the mankind, did not there come to you messengers from amongst you, reciting to you My verses, and warning you of the meeting of this Day of yours.” They will say: “We bear witness against ourselves.”*98 And the life of the world deceived them. And they will bear witness against themselves that they were disbelievers.*99

يَمَعَشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ أَلَمْ
يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ
عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ
لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا قَالُوا شَهِدْنَا
عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِنَا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَوةُ
الدُّنْيَا وَشَهِدُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ
أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَافِرِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾

***98** That is, we confess that one messenger after the other came from You and informed us of the truth but it was our own fault that we did not believe in what they said.

***99** They themselves would confess that they were not ignorant of the truth: it did reach them but they deliberately rejected it.

131. This is because your Lord destroys not the townships unjustly while

ذَٰلِكَ أَن لَّمْ يَكُن رَّبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ

their people were unaware,
(so the messengers were
sent).^{*100}

الْقُرَىٰ بِظُلْمٍ وَأَهْلُهَا غَافِلُونَ



***100** It means that Allah does not desire to allow the guilty ones the opportunity to protest and say, You did not inform us of the truth, nor did You send anyone to show us the right way. But now when, in our ignorance we have adopted the wrong way, You are going to punish us for it. In order to refute this argument, Allah sent His Messengers and Books to fore-warn mankind and jinn, prior to the execution of His judgments. If, in spite of this, the people choose wrong ways and are punished for this, they themselves are to be blamed and not Allah.

132. And for all, there will be ranks according to what they did. And your Lord is not unaware of what they do.

وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوا
وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا
يَعْمَلُونَ



133. And your Lord is self sufficient, the possessor of mercy (Compassionate).^{*101} If He wills, He could take you away and cause to succeed after you whom He wills, even as He raised you up from the posterity of other people.

وَرَبُّكَ الْغَنِيُّ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ إِن
يَشَاءُ يُدْهِبْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفْ مِنْ
بَعْدِكُمْ مَّا يَشَاءُ كَمَا
أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ قَوْمٍ
ءَاخِرِينَ



***101 “Your Lord is Self-Sufficient”:** He does not stand in need of any kind of help from you, nor does He need anyone to look after His interests. Therefore, you can do him no harm by your disobedience, nor can you do Him any good by your obedience. Even if all of you rebel against Him, you cannot detract an iota from His kingdom; nor can you add an iota to it, if all of you decide to obey and worship Him. He needs neither your obedience nor your offering. As a matter of fact, he is showering His countless blessings on you without desiring anything in return from you.

In the context in which “Compassionate” occurs, it implies two things. First, it is only out of compassion for you that Allah is showing you the right way and not for His own interest. It will not serve any interest of His if you follow the right way and keep away from the wrong ways: nor will it do Him any harm if you swerve from it. As a matter of fact, you will be serving your own interest and avoiding harm to yourselves by following it. Therefore, it is His kindness that He teaches you the right conduct to enable you to attain higher ranks and restrains you from wrong behavior that will throw you to the lowest depths of degeneration. Second, your Lord is not ruthless: He does not enjoy punishing you for trifling offenses and errors. As a matter of fact; He is very kind and sympathetic to all His creatures and rules over them with great compassion. That is why He forgives and forbears your shortcomings over and over again and shows compassion and leniency to you even though you become guilty of disobedience, sins and

crimes. You impudently discard His commandments, knowing well that He is your Providence; yet He forgives and forbears and gives you respite after respite, so that you may understand the reality and mend your ways. Had He been ruthless, He could have destroyed you instantly and raised another people to replace you, or destroyed the whole human race and created another species.

134. Indeed, that which you are promised will surely come to pass,^{*102} and you cannot escape.

إِنَّ مَا تُوْعَدُونَ لَأْتِي وَمَا
أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ

***102** That is, Resurrection, when all human beings, from the first to the last, shall be brought back to life and presented before their Lord for final judgment.

135. Say (O Muhammad): “O my people, work according to your way.^{*103} Surely, I am working too. Then soon you will know who it is whose end will be (best) in the Hereafter. Certainly, the wrong doers will not prosper.”

قُلْ يَاقَوْمِ أَعْمَلُوا عَلَيَّ
مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ فَسَوْفَ
تَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ تَكُونُ لَهُ
عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ
الظَّالِمُونَ

***103** That is, if you do not take the warning from Me and do not give up your wrong ways, then you may go on following the ways of your choice, and let me follow my way. Ultimately, both you and I will see the consequences.

136. And they^{*104} assign to Allah, from that which He created, of the crops and the cattle, a portion. Then they say: “This is for Allah,” by their claim, “And this is for our (Allah’s so called) partners.”^{*105} Then that which was to their partners, so does not reach to Allah. And that which was to Allah, so that goes to their (Allah’s so called) partners.^{*106} Evil is what they decide.

وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ مِنَ
الْحَرثِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ نَصِيبًا فَقَالُوا
هَذَا لِلَّهِ بِزَعْمِهِمْ وَهَذَا
لشُرَكَائِنَا ۗ فَمَا كَانَ
لشُرَكَائِهِمْ فَلَا يَصِلُ إِلَى
اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ فَهُوَ يَصِلُ
إِلَىٰ شُرَكَائِهِمْ ۗ سَاءَ مَا
يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

***104** The preceding discourse (Ayat 135) ended with these words: If these people are not willing to accept your admonition and insist on their ignorance, tell them to act in their own way and that you will act according to your own way. The Day of Judgment will surely come one day when they will know the consequences of their conduct. Anyhow, this is certain that the workers of iniquity will not be successful there. Now from here (Ayats 136-146), instances of their ignorance are being cited to tell them what their iniquity was in which they persisted and from which they could not expect any success.

***105** They assigned a portion of the agricultural produce to Allah as a mark of their gratitude because they believed that all land belonged to Allah Who caused the crops to

grow; likewise they set apart for Allah a portion of the animals which were of great use to them because He was their Creator as well. But at the same time, they also assigned a portion as offerings to the patron gods of their family or clan, for they believed that Allah showed His kindness to them, because their gods, goddesses, angels, jinn, stars and the souls of their dead ancestors interceded with Him in their behalf. They also expected that in this way they would continue their kindness to them. That is why Allah is first of all taking them to task for the iniquity they were committing, so as to say: It is sheer ingratitude that you are making offerings to others of the things that I have created and given you with My own mercy and grace. How is it, then, that you are making others partners in the offerings of your gratitude to Me? Do you think that I give these things to you because of the intercession of others? Then, by implication, Allah has rebuked them for dividing the shares between Him and the partners set up by them with Him in accordance with their own presumptions. This is because they have become their own law makers and assign to Allah and to others whatever share they deem proper. When in fact, Allah is the real giver of everything. Therefore, the portion to be assigned to Him in gratitude should be determined by His law, which should also decide the shares of the other rightful claimants to it. It is thus clear that even that share, which they arbitrarily set apart for Allah and distribute in the poor and indigent, does not merit any worth and there is no reason why it should be accepted by Allah.

***106** This implies a fine sarcasm. They have been rebuked for the evil practices to which they resorted in order to reduce even that portion which they themselves ear-marked for Allah, so as to increase the portion set apart for their gods. This showed that they were far more interested in their self-made gods than God. For instance, they would not mind if any fruit or grain out of the share assigned to Allah happened to go to the other side, but would return it, if anything happened to go to the share of Allah from the share of their gods. In case of drought, if they were forced to make use of the consecrated grain, they would use the share ear-marked for Allah but would not touch the share of their gods for fear lest any misfortune should befall them on account of its desecration. If there happened to be a deficiency in the share of their gods, they would make it up from that of Allah's share, but in the reverse case, they would not take even the smallest thing from the share of their gods to make up for the deficiency in Allah's share. Obviously they would invent very plausible excuses for this. For instance, they would say, God is rich and can afford to forgo any decrease in His share, but the case of gods is different because they are not rich like Allah: therefore they inflict punishment even at the slightest decrease in their share.

The root cause of these superstitious practices was the different uses to which the two consecrated shares were put. Allah's share was given to the beggars, the indigent, the wayfarers, the orphans, etc., but the share consecrated to the gods went to the priests directly or indirectly when it

was offered to the gods in their temples. That is why their selfish religious leaders had been, for centuries, impressing on their ignorant followers that there was no harm, if any decrease occurred in the share of Allah, but on no account should there be any decrease in the share of their gods, “the beloved of God.” On the contrary, it was rather commendable that their share should continue to swell.

137. And thus to many of the idolaters, their (Allah’s so called) partners have made fair seeming the killing of their children,^{*107} that they may ruin them,^{*108} and make their faith obscure for them.^{*109} And if Allah had willed, they would not have done so. So leave them alone and what they fabricate.^{*110}

وَكَذَلِكَ زَيْنَ لِكَثِيرٍ
مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَتَلَ
أَوْلَادِهِمْ شُرَكَائِهِمْ لِيُرْدُوهُمْ
وَلِيَلْبِسُوا عَلَيْهِمْ دِينَهُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ
اللَّهُ مَا فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرَهُمْ وَمَا
يَفْتَرُونَ



***107** Here the word *shuraka* (associates) has been used in a different sense from the one employed in verse 136. There the associates meant the deities whose intercession they regarded as a means of attaining to the blessings and made them partners with Allah in offerings. But, on the contrary, in this verse associates implies the men and devils, who had made the killing of their own children lawful and praiseworthy for them. In the preceding verse they were guilty of shirk because they associated others with Allah in His worship and devotion. Here they were guilty of shirk

because they accepted others besides Allah as law givers and made them judges for deciding the lawful and the unlawful. According to Islam, a person who accepts any law made by other than Allah as authoritative and follows it and considers himself subject to the limits prescribed by it, is guilty of making that being partner with Allah. Both of these are acts of shirk. One is guilty of shirk whether or not one gives the title of lord or god to those to whom one consecrates offerings or accepts and obeys the laws made by them.

As regards the killing of their children, the Arabs committed this sin with three objects in view and the Quran has condemned all the three:

(1) They killed their daughters in order to avoid the disgrace of having a son-in-law, or lest they should fall into the hands of the enemy during the clannish wars, or they should become a cause of disgrace for them in any other way.

(2) They killed their children for economic reasons. They feared lest the burden of their nourishment should become unbearable for them.

(3) They sacrificed their children at the altar of their gods to please them.

***108** The word “ruin” here is very meaningful. On the one hand, it implies moral ruin, for the man who becomes so hard-hearted and cruel as starts killing his own children, loses not only the tender qualities of humanity but also those of animality; on the other, it also implies destruction of the human race and one’s own nation, for the inevitable

result of the killing of children is reduction of the population of one's own nation and consequently of the world as a whole. Obviously, the nation which prevents the birth of its future supporters and builders of its civilization and heirs of its heritage, or kills them as soon as they are born, most surely falls into the abyss of destruction. Above all, this inhuman cruelty to innocent children destroys all the chances of success in the life-after-death because such a one who kills his own humanity, nay, even his own animal instinct of love for offspring, and shows such enmity with the human race and with one's own nation, most surely incurs the most painful torture from Allah.

***109** Their religious leaders, their chiefs and the elders of the clans and others who exercised any influence on them and who claimed to be the followers of the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them), had been adding different creeds, rites and practices to the pure religion taught by the Prophets and causing confusion in the minds of the people about it. Yet the common Arabs of the pre-Islamic period believed that they were following the religion of their Prophets, which was the chosen religion of Allah, though it had been utterly polluted. This was because no record of the real religion of the Prophets had been preserved in their traditions or history or in any other book and none could sift it from the additions and changes that had been made in it afterwards.

***110** That is, O Messenger, you do not need to worry about them, if, in spite, of your admonitions, they insist on following the false ways they have invented. All this has

come to pass because it is the will of God that they should be allowed to follow the way of their choice; otherwise they would not have been able to do what they are doing.

138. And they say: “These cattle and crops are forbidden. No one can eat of them except whom we will,” by their claim,^{*111} and (certain) cattle whose backs are forbidden (for burden), and the cattle on which (at slaughtering) they do not mention the name of Allah.^{*112} (All that is) lying against Him.^{*113} He will recompense them for what they used to fabricate.

وَقَالُوا هَذِهِ أَنْعَمٌ وَحَرَّتْ
حِجْرٌ لَا يَطْعَمُهَا إِلَّا مَنْ نَشَاءُ
بِزَعْمِهِمْ وَأَنْعَمٌ حُرِّمَتْ
ظُهُورُهَا وَأَنْعَمٌ لَا يَذْكُرُونَ اسْمَ
اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا أَفْتِرَاءً عَلَيْهِ
سَيَجْزِيهِمْ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَفْتَرُونَ



***111** Here another self-made religious regulation of the *mushrik* Arabs has been refuted. They used to make vows to reserve certain cattle or the products of certain fields for some particular temple or saint or deity and had made set rules for their use. Accordingly, the right of the use of different kinds of offerings was reserved for a particular kind of people. Allah has declared these to be acts of shirk and warned them against these self-made laws, as if to say, “We will punish you for making vows concerning offerings to others from provisions provided by Us, because We have neither commanded you to make such vows nor prescribed restrictions for their use. All these things have been

invented by the rebellious and arrogant people who shall be dealt with severely.”

*112 We learn from traditions that in certain forms of vows and offerings, it was not considered right to pronounce the name of Allah over cattle. It was also forbidden to ride on them during the Hajj journey, because one has to pronounce: *Labbaik, Allahumma labbaik*: I am present, O my Allah, I am present, during it. Likewise, they insisted that Allah’s name should not be mentioned while milking them or riding them or slaughtering them or eating them.

*113 That is, these regulations were not prescribed by Allah, but they were following these with the conviction that they had been prescribed by Allah, though they had no authority from Allah for this thing. The only authority, they had, was that it had been the practice of their forefathers.

139. And they say: “That which is in the bellies of these cattle is exclusively for our males and is forbidden to our females. And if it is (born) dead, then they all may share in it.”*114 He will soon recompense them for their (false) attribution. Verily, He is All Wise, All Knower.

وَقَالُوا مَا فِي بُطُونِ هَذِهِ
الْأَنْعَامِ خَالِصَةٌ لِّذُكُورِنَا
وَمُحَرَّمٌ عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَإِنْ يَكُنْ
مَيْتَةً فَهُمْ فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ
سَيَجْزِيهِمْ وَصْفَهُمْ إِنَّهُ
حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ



*114 According to another article of the self-made law of

the Arabs about the cattle, consecrated by vows and offerings, the males alone were allowed to eat of the flesh of the young ones born from their wombs and the females were forbidden to eat of it. However, if the young one was born dead or it died immediately after its birth, both the males and the females could partake of it.

140. Indeed, lost are those who have killed their children in foolishness without knowledge, and have forbidden that which Allah bestowed upon them, inventing a lie against Allah. They indeed have gone astray and are not guided.*115

قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ قَتَلُوا أَوْلَادَهُمْ
سَفَهًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَحَرَّمُوا مَا
رَزَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ افْتِرَاءً عَلَى اللَّهِ قَدْ
ضَلُّوا وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ



*115 That is, although those people, who invented these rituals and customs, were your forefathers, your religious leaders and your chiefs, yet the fact is that they were wrong and had gone astray. Also it is a fact that those ways were wrong and they cannot become right and sacred simply because these were invented by your forefathers and your religious leaders, who permitted the inhuman slaughter of one's own children, who made unlawful, without rhyme or reason, the pure provisions given by Allah and who introduced innovations in religion and ascribed them to Allah. They cannot be regarded as rightly guided by any stretch of imagination even though they be your forefathers and leaders; they were certainly misguided and shall bear

the consequences of their evil ways.

141. And it is He who produces gardens trellised and non trellised,^{*116} and the date palms, and crops of divers flavor, and the olive, and the pomegranate, resembling and yet different (in variety and taste). Eat of their fruit when they bear fruits, and pay its due on the day of its harvest, and waste not by excess. Indeed, He does not love those who are extravagant.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَ جَنَّاتٍ مَّعْرُوشَاتٍ وَغَيْرَ مَعْرُوشَاتٍ وَالنَّخْلَ وَالزَّرْعَ مُخْتَلِفًا أَكْلُهُ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَانَ مُتَشَابِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ كُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَءَاتُوا حَقَّهُ يَوْمَ حَصَادِهِ وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ



***116** The original Arabic words *jannat-im-marushat-in* literally mean gardens of creepers, trellised, and has been translated into vineyards; *wa-ghaira-marushat-in* literally mean gardens of plants that are non-trellised and has been translated into gardens of upright trees.

142. And of the cattle are carriers (for burdens), and for slaughter.^{*117} Eat of that which Allah has bestowed upon you, and do not follow the footsteps of the devil. Surely, he is an open enemy to you.^{*118}

وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ حَمُولَةٌ وَفَرَشَاتٌ كُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوتَ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ



*117 The original Arabic word *farsh* refers to animals (like sheep etc.) in the sense that they are of small size and almost touch the ground while they are moving about, or in the sense that they are laid on the ground at the time of slaughter, or in the sense that beds are made of their skins and hair.

*118 From the context in which this verse (142) occurs, it is obvious that Allah wills to impress three things:

(1) The gardens, the fields and the animals you possess, have all been bestowed by Allah, and none else has any share in this favor and, therefore, none else is entitled to any gratitude for this.

(2) As none else has any share in this favor, these should be used in accordance with the law of Allah, and none else has any right to prescribe limits for their use; therefore the one who observes the rituals prescribed by anyone other than Allah, transgresses the limits prescribed by Allah and follows the ways of Satan.

(3) All these things have been created by Allah for food and other uses for mankind and none has any right to make these unlawful without knowledge. Therefore Allah does not approve of the restrictions that have been imposed on these things, as a result of superstitions and presumptions.

143. Eight pairs. Of the sheep twain (male and female), and of the goats twain (male and female). Say: "Is it the two males He has forbidden or the

ثَمَنِيةَ أَزْوَاجٍ ط مِنْ الضَّانِ
اثنَيْنِ وَمِنْ الْمَعْرِ اثنَيْنِ قُلْ
ءَالذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمَا

two females, or that which the wombs of the two females contain. Inform me with knowledge if you are truthful.”*119

أَشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُ الْأُنثِيِّنِ
نَبِّئُونِي بِعِلْمٍ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ

صَادِقِينَ ١٤٣

*119 That is, your answer should be based on knowledge and not on mere presumptions, superstitions or the traditions of your forefathers.

144. And of the camels twain (male and female), and of the oxen twain (male and female). Say: “Is it the two males He has forbidden or the two females, or that which the wombs of the two females contain.*120 Or were you present to witness when Allah commanded you this.” Then who does greater wrong than he who invents a lie against Allah, that he may lead mankind astray without knowledge. Certainly, Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.

وَمِنَ الْإِبِلِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ
اثْنَيْنِ ۚ قُلْ ءَآلِ الذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ
الْأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمْآ أَشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ
أَرْحَامُ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ ۚ أَمْ كُنْتُمْ
شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ وَصَّيَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا
فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ
كَذِبًا لِيُضِلَّ النَّاسَ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۚ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الظَّالِمِينَ ١٤٤

*120 The question whether some animals of the same family are lawful and others unlawful, has been posed with

such a detail so that the absurdity of their superstitions may become obvious even to them. It is absurd on the face of it that the male of the same family should be lawful and the female unlawful, or conversely, the female should be lawful and the male unlawful, or the animal should be lawful, but the young one of the same be unlawful. This is such a nonsensical thing that no right thinking person, nay, no man in his senses, can imagine that Allah could ever impose such unreasonable restrictions. It should be noted that the method applied by the Quran to show the absurdity of the superstitious practices of the Arabs can also be applied with equal force to expose the folly of the superstitious practices of the other nations of the world, which have imposed unreasonable restrictions on food and adopted inhuman indiscrimination against other human beings.

145. Say: "I do not find in that which is revealed to me anything forbidden to an eater that he eats it, except that it be carrion, or blood poured forth, or swine flesh, for that indeed is unclean, or the abomination which was immolated to other than Allah.^{*121} Then whosoever is forced by necessity, without disobedience nor exceeding,

قُلْ لَّا أَجِدُ فِي مَا أُوْحِيَ إِلَيَّ مُحْرَمًا
عَلَى طَاعِمٍ يَطْعَمُهُ إِلَّا أَنْ
يَكُونَ مَيْتَةً أَوْ دَمًا مَّسْفُوحًا أَوْ
لَحْمَ خِنزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رِجْسٌ أَوْ
فِسْقًا أَهْلًا لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ فَمَنْ
أَضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَإِنَّ

then certainly your Lord is
Oft Forgiving, Most
Merciful.”

رَبِّكَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ
١٤٥

*121 This subject has already been dealt with in Ayat 173, Surah Al-Baqarah; Ayat 3, Surah Al-Maidah; and Ayat 115, Surah An-Nahl.

There appears to be a little difference in the wording of this verse and that of Ayat 173 of Surah Al-Baqarah. In the latter verse it is simply blood that is forbidden, but in this verse it is the blood that has been shed, when an animal is wounded or slaughtered. The addition of the word *masfuh* (that has been shed) merely explains the nature of the blood and does not make any difference in the commandment itself. Likewise in Ayat 3 of Surah Al-Maidah, some other things besides these four have also been mentioned. The animals that have been strangled or beaten to death, or killed by a fall, or mangled by a beast of prey. This, too, does not make any difference in the commandment in the two verses, because this is an explanation which shows that the animals which are killed in that way should also be considered as carrion.

Now let us consider the various opinions of the Jurists. Abdullah bin Abbas and Aishah (may Allah be pleased with them) were of the opinion that, out of the animal food, only these four were unlawful and all others were lawful. But there are several traditions to the effect that the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited other animals besides these four or held them in detestation, e.g., domestic donkeys and fanged beasts of prey and birds with claws.

Therefore most jurists do not consider the prohibition to be confined to these four things only, but extend it to others; then there is also a difference of opinion among the jurists about the prohibition or otherwise of certain animals. For instance, Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik and Imam Shafai declare the domestic donkey to be unlawful, but there are others who assert that the domestic donkey is not unlawful and say that it was prohibited by the Prophet (peace be upon him) on one occasion only for some special reason. The Hanafi s consider the carnivorous beasts and birds of prey and the animals that live on dead flesh to be absolutely unlawful, but according to Imam Malik and Auzai, the birds of prey are lawful and Laith considers the cat to be lawful. According to Imam Shafai, only those carnivorous beasts are unlawful that (like the lion, wolf, tiger) attack man. According to Ikrimah, the crow and the badger are both lawful. Then according to the Hanafis, all crawling creatures are unlawful, whereas Ibn Abi Laila, Imam Malik and Auzai consider the snake to be lawful.

A careful and critical study of the above makes it quite clear that, in reality, only these four things mentioned in the Quran are unlawful and that there are certain other animal foods that are detestable in various degrees. Therefore those things, which according to authentic traditions were held in detestation by the Prophet (peace be upon him), are almost unlawful, but those things about which there is a difference of opinion among the jurists, their detestation is doubtful. As far as personal detestation of certain things by some people is concerned, the Islamic

law does not compel anyone to eat what one dislikes. The same applies to the detestation of certain things by some groups or nations. Conversely, the law does not allow any person or community or nation to force others to consider as unlawful anything that they detest, or to prohibit its use to those who consider them unlawful.

146. And unto those who are Jews, We forbade all (animals) with claws. And of the oxen and the sheep, We forbade to them their fat, except what adheres to their backs, or the entrails, or that which is mixed with the bone. Thus We recompensed them for their rebellion.*¹²² And indeed, We verily are truthful.

وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا
 كُلَّ ذِي ظُفْرٍ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ
 وَالْغَنَمِ حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ
 شُحُومَهُمَا إِلَّا مَا حَمَلَتْ
 ظُهُورُهُمَا أَوْ الْحَوَايَا أَوْ مَا
 اخْتَلَطَ بِعَظْمٍ ذَلِكَ جَزَيْنَاهُمْ
 بِبَغْيِهِمْ وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ



*¹²² That certain things were made unlawful for them as punishment for their rebellion has been mentioned in the Quran at three places:

(1) All the articles of food, which are lawful in the Muhammadan law, were also lawful for the children of Israel, except those which Israel had forbidden for himself before the Torah was given. Say to them, bring the Torah and read out any passage from it (in support of your objection), if you are right. (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 111).

(2) It is because of the criminal attitude of those who became Jews..... that We had made unlawful many pure things which were formerly lawful for them. (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 160).

(3) Here in this Surah, in Ayat 146.

From the above three verses, we conclude that the difference between the Muhammadan and the Jewish laws in regard to the legality or otherwise of animal food is based on two things. First, centuries before the revelation of the Torah, the Prophet Jacob (Israel) had given up the use of several things, and after him, his offspring also did the same. This went on for such a long time that the jurists of the Jewish law began to believe that those things were unlawful in their religion. Accordingly, they inserted in the Torah, the prohibition of those things, the three of which were the camel, the hare and the coney. That is why the Torah, as contained in the existing Bible prohibits their eating. (Levit. 11: 4-6 and Deut. 14:7). But, the open challenge of the Quran to them to bring the Torah in proof thereof shows that the commandments referred to above did not exist in the Torah at that time and were inserted afterwards; otherwise the Jews would have at once accepted the challenge of the Quran and presented the commandments thereof.

The second difference between the two laws was caused by the rebellious attitude of the Jews against the divine law. They became their own law-makers and made many things unlawful by their hair-splitting and Allah let them remain involved in that misunderstanding as a punishment. These

things comprise two categories:

(1) Animals with claws such as the ostrich, the cuckoo, the swan, etc. and

(2) The fat of the cow and the goat, etc. Afterwards, both kinds of prohibitions were incorporated in the existing Torah. (Levit. 11: 16-18, Deut. 14: 14-17, Levit. 3: 17, 7: 22-23). But it is obvious from Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 160 that at first these things were not unlawful in the Torah, but were made so after the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). History also bears evidence that the existing Jewish law was formulated by Rabbi Judas at the end of the second century of the Christian Era.

Now let us consider the objection that might arise regarding the above explanation. If these things were made unlawful in the manner explained above, why has, then, Allah used the word *harramna* (We prohibited) here in verse 130 and in verse 160 of Surah An-Nisa. In considering the objection, we should keep in mind the two ways in which things are made unlawful by Allah.

(1) He prohibits a thing through a Messenger and a Book, and this is the blessing from Him:

(2) He sets false religious law givers and counterfeit law makers over His rebellious servants and they declare pure things as unlawful. As such a prohibition is the curse of God and a punishment from Him, it has been attributed to Him.

147. So if they deny you
(O Muhammad), then say:
“Your Lord is the Owner of

فَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ رَبُّكُمْ

vast mercy, and never will His wrath be turned back from the people who are criminals.”*123

ذُو رَحْمَةٍ وَاسِعَةٍ وَلَا يُرَدُّ بَأْسُهُ
عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ



*123 That is, your Lord has limitless Mercy and if even now you repent of your disobedience and adopt the right way of obedience, He will forgive you. But if you persist in your criminal and rebellious attitude, you should note it well that none will be able to ward off His wrath and punishment from you.

148. Those who associate others (with Allah) will say: “If Allah had willed, we would not have associated others (with Allah), nor our fathers, and we would not have forbidden anything (against His will).”*124 Thus did deny those who were before them, until they tasted Our wrath. Say: “Do you have any knowledge that you can produce before us. You follow not except conjecture, and you do nothing except guessing.”

سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ
اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا ءَابَاؤُنَا
وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ
كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ حَتَّى ذَاقُوا بَأْسَنَا قُلْ
هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ
فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ
إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنَّ أَنْتُمْ
إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ



*124 That is, The *mushrikin* will put forward the same old

excuses to justify their crime and wrong conduct which have always been put forward by the criminals and wrong doers of every age. They will say, it is the will of Allah that we should commit shirk and make some lawful things unlawful; for, if Allah had not so willed, it would not have been possible for us to commit such acts. As we are doing these things in accordance with the will of Allah, we are doing the right thing. And if what we are doing is not right, Allah is to blame for it and not us. We are bound by the will of Allah to do what we are doing because anything other than this is beyond our power.

149. Say: “Then for Allah is the conclusive argument. So if He had so willed, He would indeed have guided you all.”*125

قُلْ فَلِلَّهِ الْحُجَّةُ الْبَلِيغَةُ فَلَوْ شَاءَ
لَهَدَانَكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ



*125 In order to understand the significance of this decisive answer to their lame excuse, let us analyze it:

(1) It warns: The will of God has always been made an excuse by the criminals of all ages to justify their wicked acts and erroneous conduct. This misled them so much that they rejected the truth and consequently met with ruin that overtakes those who fight against the truth.

(2) The excuse which you are putting forward is not based on knowledge but on conjecture and guess work. The whole of your argument is based on hearsay about the will of Allah. You do not understand the meaning of the will of Allah in regard to man. Therefore you wrongfully believe that if a thief commits theft he is not to be regarded as a

thief, because he had done this under the will of Allah. Its real meaning is that Allah will open for a man whatever way he would choose for himself, the way of gratitude or ingratitude, guidance or deviation, obedience or disobedience. Then Allah will let the man do anything, good or bad, he chooses, and will provide for its fulfillment the means that fit in His vast universal designs. Therefore if you and your forefathers were allowed to commit shirk and declare lawful things unlawful under the will of Allah, they had to bear its consequences, for it does not mean that Allah approved of these things. Likewise you shall be responsible and accountable for your wrong choice and for your evil intentions and wicked deeds.

The last sentence, “Had Allah so willed, He would indeed have guided you all,” settles the issue decisively. It implies: Your argument, had Allah willed, we would not have committed shirk, is incomplete. The complete thing will be this: Had Allah willed, He would have shown guidance to all of us. In other words, You yourselves do not intend to choose the right way, but you desire that Allah should make you inherently righteous like angels. You should, however, note it well, that Allah could have done so if He had so willed. But this is not His will. Therefore He will let you go astray on the wrong way that you yourselves have chosen to follow.

150. Say (O Muhammad):
 “Bring forward your
 witnesses, who can bear
 witness that Allah has

قُلْ هَلُمَّ شُهَدَاءَكُمْ الَّذِينَ
 يَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ هَذَا

forbidden this. Then if they bear witness, so you do not bear witness with them.*126

And do not follow the desires of those who deny Our revelations, and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, and they deem (others) as equal with their Lord.

فَإِنْ شَهِدُوا فَلَا تَشْهَدْ مَعَهُمْ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا
بِعَايَتِنَا وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِالْآخِرَةِ وَهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ
يَعْدُلُونَ



*126 That is, if they understand the grave responsibility of bearing witness and realize that one should bear witness only to that thing of which one has knowledge, they will never testify that all their self imposed restrictions on food, that are current among them and according to which such and such a one should not eat such and such a thing, have been prescribed by Allah. But if these people do not realize the responsibility of bearing witness and impudently give false evidence in the name of Allah, you should not associate yourself with their falsehood. As a matter of fact, the real object of challenging them to bear witness is to sort out the righteous people, if any, from among them, and not that you should accept their false testimony. It is expected that in response to the challenge to bear witness, those, who have any righteousness left in them, will consider very seriously whether the rituals they were following were really prescribed by Allah and if they find no proof that these were sent down by Allah, they will give them up.

151. Say (O Muhammad):
Come, I will recite that

قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ

which your Lord has forbidden to you.^{*127} That you associate not anything with Him,^{*128} and be good to parents,^{*129} and do not kill your children because of poverty. We provide sustenance for you and for them. And you come not near to lewd things,^{*130} what is apparent of them and what is concealed. And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except in the course of justice.^{*131} This He has commanded you with, that you may understand.”

رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا تَشْرِكُوا
 بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا
 وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ
 إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ
 وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ
 مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا
 النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا
 بِالْحَقِّ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّوْنُكُمْ بِهِ
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ



***127** That is, the limits set by your Lord are not those which you have imposed on yourselves, but they are the following which Allah has set for the regulation of human life and which have always been the fundamental basis of all divine laws. (Please compare these precepts with those contained in Exodus chapter 20).

***128** One is guilty of shirk if:

- (a) One sets up another besides Allah as god, or
- (b) One attributes to another any of those attributes that naturally and exclusively belong to Allah, or
- (c) One sets up a partner with Allah in His powers, or
- (d) In His rights.

According to (a), all those creeds which set up partners with Allah in the essence of His Godhead shall be shirk, e.g. the creed of Trinity of the Christians, the creed of musrhik Arabs to believe in the angels to be daughters of God and to attribute Godhead to their gods and goddesses and the members of the royal families.

According to (b), all those, who believe that someone other than Allah also possesses one or some or all of the attributes which exclusively belong to Allah, shall be guilty of shirk. For instance, it will be shirk if one believes that someone knows all about everything including the unseen or hears everything or is completely free from each and every defect and weakness, and is infallible like Allah.

According to (c), one shall be guilty of shirk, if one believes that someone else besides Allah is able to wield any one or all of those powers that exclusively belong to Him. For instance, one shall be committing shirk, if one believes that someone else besides Allah can, in a supernatural way, benefit or harm or fulfill needs or help or protect or defend, or hear prayers, or make or mar destinies, or set the limits of lawful or unlawful, proper or improper, or prescribe laws (*sharia*) for human life. These shall be shirk, for all these things are the exclusive characteristics of Godhead.

It shall be shirk under (d) if one surrenders to another any or all of those rights to which Allah alone is entitled. For instance, Allah alone has the right that man should stand with bound hands, bow and prostrate before Him, or he should make vows and give offerings in His name alone or make sacrifices as a mark of gratitude in acknowledgment

of His greatness; He alone has the right that He should be invoked to ward off troubles etc. Likewise, Allah alone is entitled to all forms of worship, devotion and glory and He alone has the right to be loved more than anyone or anything else and all other affections should be sacrificed for His love. He alone should be feared so that one would not dare displease or disobey Him openly and secretly. He alone has the right to be obeyed unconditionally and unreservedly, and His guidance alone should be made the sole standard of judging right from wrong and none else should be obeyed except in accordance with the obedience to Allah. If ever, one of these rights is surrendered to someone other than Allah, it will be setting that one as a partner with Him, whether that one is given the title of god or not.

***129** “Good to parents” includes respect and honor, obedience and desire to please and serve parents etc. This right of the parents has been stated in the Quran at several places immediately after the rights of Allah. This is a clear proof that this right of the parents is only next to the right of Allah and has priority over all human rights.

***130** The Arabic word *fawahish* applies to all kinds of impure acts, whose obscenity is absolutely obvious. The Quran declares adultery, sodomy, nudism, calumny, marriage with father’s wife as indecencies. Besides these, theft, drinking and beggary have also been included in the list of indecencies in the traditions. Likewise, all other obscene acts are also indecencies and the divine commandment demands that such acts should neither be

committed openly nor secretly.

***131** This is the declaration of the sanctity of human life by Allah Who has made it inviolable as a basic principle. As regards to its destruction by right, the Quran allows this in three cases and the Prophet (peace be upon him) added two more to these. The Quran makes it lawful to take the life of the one:

(1) Who is proved guilty of the intentional murder of another person.

(2) Who opposes Islam and obstructs its establishment so as to leave no other alternative than to fight with him.

(3) Who spreads disorder within the Islamic territory or exerts to overthrow the established Islamic government.

Besides these, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has made it lawful to take the life of the one:

(4) Who, in spite of being married, is proven guilty of adultery.

(5) Who becomes an apostate and deserts the Islamic community.

These five are the only cases in which it becomes lawful to take human life and there is no other case in which it becomes lawful to take human life and there is no other case besides these in which human life may be taken, be it that of a Muslim, or of a dhimmi, or of an unbeliever.

152. “And come not near to the wealth of the orphan except with that which is better,^{*132} until he reaches (the age of) his full

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا
بِأْتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ
أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ

strength. And give full measure and weight with justice. We burden not any soul beyond its capacity.*133

And when you speak, do justice, even if it be (against) a near relative. And fulfill the covenant of Allah.*134 This He has commanded you with, that you may remember.”

وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ لَا نُكَلِّفُ
نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ
فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ
وَبِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا ذَٰلِكُمْ
وَصَنَّكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ



*132 “That which is better” will be the one which is based on selflessness, good intentions and the welfare of the concerned orphan, and which is not objectionable in the sight of God or man.

*133 “And give full measure and weight with justice,” is a fundamental principle of the divine law: Allah has added, “We burden not any soul beyond its capacity,” to assure people that whoever tries his very best to be just and right in measuring, weighing and carrying out other trade transactions, will be absolved from his responsibility and will not be taken to account, if in spite of his best efforts, there happens to be an unintentional error.

*134 “Covenant of Allah” is:

- (a) The solemn agreement which man makes with Allah,
- (b) the solemn pledge which he makes with another man in the name of Allah, and
- (c) the natural compact that comes into force as soon as one is born in the human society on Allah’s earth.

The first two kinds of covenants are intentional and optional, but the third one is a moral and natural obligation. Though man has no option in the choice of the third compact, yet it is as binding as the first two and should be honored as much. This is because Allah has given him life with extraordinary physical and mental faculties and furnished the earth for his habitation and provided nourishment, and limitless resources etc. for him. Naturally all this entails some rights of Allah on him. Likewise, it entails some rights of the mother who gives birth to and nourishes him and of the father who brings him up and of the society that affords him many kinds of facilities and opportunities. All these rights become, by their very nature, obligatory on him in varying degrees. It is true that this covenant of man with God and society has not been written in any statute book, nevertheless it has been ingrained by nature in each and every particle of his body, which itself owes its very existence to this covenant. A reference to this has been made in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 27: “Who break Allah’s covenant after ratifying it: who cut asunder what Allah has ordered to be joined and who produce chaos on the earth.” It has again been mentioned in Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 172 to this effect: “At the time of the creation of Adam, Allah brought forth all his would be descendants up to the Last Day, from the loins of mankind, and made them stand witnesses to the covenant that He is their Lord.

153. And verily, this is My path, leading straight, so follow it. And follow

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا
فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ

not (other) ways, that would separate you from His way.^{*135} This He has commanded you with, that you may fear (Allah).

فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ
وَصَّانِعُكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ



***135** “This is My path, leading straight, so follow it.” This natural covenant demands that man should follow the path shown by Allah, because any deviation from it into the paths of rebellion or independence or in the worship of another than Allah will be the first violation against that covenant, and will mislead one into other violations one after the other. Besides, no man can fulfill the obligations of this most delicate, vast and intricate covenant unless one accepts divine guidance and follows it in every aspect of life.

“And follow not (other) ways” because they will turn you away from His right way which is the only way which leads to His nearness, pleasure and approval. Moreover, when the people deviate from His right way, each man has to make his own choice out of the hundreds of other ways. Thus the people are scattered in all directions and there is bewilderment, confusion and disorder among all mankind and this becomes a hindrance in the way of its real progress and development (See E.N. 35, Surah Al-Maidah).

154. Then We gave Moses the Book, making complete (Our favor) upon him who would do good, and an

ثُمَّ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ تَمَامًا
عَلَى الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ وَتَفْصِيلًا

explanation of all things, and a guidance and a mercy, that they might believe in the meeting with their Lord. *136

لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهَدَىٰ وَرَحْمَةً
لَّعَلَّهُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ

*136 “Believe in the meeting with their Lord” means that one should believe that he shall have to render an account of his deeds to his Lord; therefore he should live a life of responsibility. Here it may imply that the Torah was sent: (1) To produce a sense of responsibility among the Israelites themselves and, (2) To induce the other people to make a study of its high moral system of life, and to observe the noble effects of its guidance and blessing on those who adopted its teachings so that they may be convinced that a life of responsibility based on the belief in the life of the Hereafter is far better than an irresponsible life based on its rejection and this observation may convince them to believe in the Hereafter.

155. And this (Quran) is a Book which We have revealed as a blessing, so follow it and fear (Allah), that you may receive mercy.

وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ
فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

156. Lest you should say: “The Book was only sent down to two groups before us, *137 and that we were indeed unaware of what they studied.”

أَنْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أُنزِلَ الْكِتَابُ
عَلَىٰ طَائِفَتَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا وَإِنْ كُنَّا
عَنْ دِرَاسَتِهِمْ لَغَافِلِينَ

***137 That is, to the Jews and the Christians.**

157. Or lest you should say: “If only the Book had been sent down to us, we would surely have been better guided than they. So indeed, (now) there has come to you a clear evidence from your Lord, and a guidance and a mercy. So who does greater wrong than he who denies the revelations of Allah, and turns away from them.^{*138} We shall soon recompense those who turn away from Our revelations with an evil torment, because of their having turned away.

أَوْ تَقُولُوا لَوْ أَنَّا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا
الْكِتَابُ لَكُنَّا أَهْدَىٰ مِنْهُمْ
فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن
رَّبِّكُمْ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ فَمَنْ
أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن كَذَبَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَصَدَفَ عَنْهَا سَنَجْزِي الَّذِينَ
يَصْدِفُونَ عَن آيَاتِنَا سُوءَ
الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْدِفُونَ

***138** Here *Ayaat* are Allah’s revelations presented in the Quran as well as His Messenger’s (peace be upon him) noble character and the pure lives of the believers which clearly distinguished them from the unbelievers, and also those wonderful phenomena of nature which the Quran was putting forward as proofs of the truth of its Message.

158. Do they (then) wait (for anything) except that the angels should come to them, or your Lord should come,

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ
الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ رَبُّكَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ

or there should come some of the signs of your Lord. The day when some of the signs^{*139} from your Lord will come, no benefit will it do (then) to a soul to believe in them, if he had not believed before, or earned through his faith any good.^{*140} Say: "Wait you, we too indeed are waiting."

بَعْضُ ءَايَاتِ رَبِّكَ يَأْتِي
بَعْضُ ءَايَاتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنْفَعُ
نَفْسًا إِيمَانُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ ءَامِنْتَ
مِن قَبْلُ أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِي إِيمَانِهَا
خَيْرًا قُلْ أَنْتَظِرُونَ إِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُونَ



***139** Signs are the signs of the Day of Resurrection or some imminent scourge or some other sign that may unveil the reality in such a way as to leave no doubt about it and after which no more chance for test and trial might be left.

***140** That is, if after seeing these signs a disbeliever repents of his disbelief and professes faith, such a conversion shall be meaningless; likewise the one who professes to believe but adopts the way of disobedience, shall be deemed to have no faith at all, because faith and obedience can have any value only up to the time that the reality remains hidden behind the curtain, and the prospect of a long life is ahead and the world with all its allurements is deluding one into believing that there is no Allah and no Hereafter; therefore, one should eat, drink and be merry.

159. Indeed, those who have divided their religion, and become sects,^{*141} you are not with them in

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا
شِيَعًا لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ إِنَّمَا

anything. Their affair is only with Allah, then He will inform them of what they used to do.

أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا
كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

***141** Though the address is directed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) , yet all the followers of the true religion are, through him, included in it. It means that the righteous people should not follow the ways of those who became sects by causing divisions in the true religion, which has always been the same and is the same today. Its basic principles are that Allah alone is the Deity and Lord of the whole universe. That none should be set up as His equal or partner in His attributes, powers or rights. That there shall be the next world, in which all human beings shall have to render the account of what they do in this world, and that they should mold their lives in accordance with those broad fundamental principles that have been taught by Allah through His Messengers and Books. This is the true religion that had been given to mankind from the very first day of its creation. As regards to the different religions and sects that came into existence afterwards, they were the result of the changes that were made in the true religion by different people at different times. Some of them introduced new things into it, others made changes in it to suit their desires, still others mixed things in it because of their exaggerated reverence. Then they tampered with its creed by mixing with it their whims, their speculations and their philosophies. They also changed it by adding to its commandments their innovations and their self made laws

and by corrupting its regulations by hair-splitting and exaggerating the differences in its details and by rendering important things unimportant and vice versa. They went to two extremes: they adored some Prophets too much and opposed and rejected others. In this way numerous new religions and sects came into existence and divided humanity into fighting groups. Therefore it is essential for a follower of the true religion to have nothing to do with any of these sects and to keep his own path clear of them.

160. Whoever comes with a good deed, for him is ten times the like thereof (to his credit). And whoever comes with an evil deed, will not be recompensed except the like thereof, and they will not be wronged.

مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرٌ
أَمْثَالِهَا وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا
يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَهُمْ لَا
يُظْلَمُونَ



161. Say (O Muhammad): “Indeed, my Lord has guided me to a straight path, a right religion, the way of Abraham,^{*142} the true in faith. And he was not among those who associated others (with Allah).”

قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَيْتَنِي رَبِّيَ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ
مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيمًا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ



***142** “Way of Abraham”: This is another distinctive characteristic of the ever-true-faith. This has been given preference to “way of Moses” or “way of Jesus” because the followers of Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them) had

applied the misnomers of “Judaism” and “Christianity” to that “way.” Moreover, the term “way of Abraham” has been used because both the Jews and the Christians acknowledged Abraham (peace be upon him) as a true Prophet. They also knew it well that he died long before the births of Judaism and Christianity. The Arab mushrikin also could not deny that his “way” was the right way, for they believed that he was a righteous man and in spite of their ignorance, they had to acknowledge that the founder of the Kabah was a pious worshiper of Allah and not an idolater.

162. Say: “Indeed, my prayer, and my sacrifice, and my living, and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the worlds.”

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ
وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

*143 The Arabic word *nusuk* (rites of worship) may mean animal sacrifice as well as all other forms of prayer and worship.

163. “He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of those who surrender (to Him).”

لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ^ص وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ
وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

164. Say: “Is it other than Allah shall I seek as a Lord, and He is the Lord of all things.*144 And each

قُلْ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْغِي رَبًّا وَهُوَ رَبُّ
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ^ج وَلَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ

soul earns not except against itself. And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of others.*145 Then to your Lord is your return, then He will indeed inform you of that wherein you used to differ.

نَفْسٌ إِلَّا عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ
وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ
مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ
تَخْتَلِفُونَ



*144 That is, when, in fact, Allah is the Lord of everything in the universe, how can any other be my Lord? When I see that the whole of the universe submits to His law and I, too, being a part of the universe, have to submit to Him in my physical life, how can then it be rational that I should seek another Lord for the guidance of that part of my life for the conduct of which I have been given common sense and option?

*145 It means that everyone is responsible and accountable for his own deeds and this responsibility can, on no account, be shifted from one to the other.

165. And it is He who has appointed you vicegerent of the earth, and has exalted some of you above others in ranks, that He may try you through that which He has given you.*146 Indeed, your Lord is swift in retribution, and indeed, He is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ
الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ
بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَبْلُوكُمْ فِي مَا
ءَاتَاكُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ
وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ



***146** In this verse three realities have been stated;

(1) That each and every thing in the universe belongs to Allah and all human beings are His vicegerents on the earth in the sense that He has entrusted many of His things to them and delegated powers to exploit them.

(2) That Allah has ascribed different ranks to His vicegerents in regard to the trusts. He has entrusted some with a large number of His things, while others with a small number and endowed some with a greater capacity for work than others. Likewise there is a difference in the powers He has delegated to them: nay, he has even given powers to some human beings over other human beings.

(3) That this worldly life is merely a test and all the things and powers that have been given as trusts are the means of the test. An accurate record is being kept of how each man is making use of his trust and how far he is exploiting these things in accordance with the terms of the trust and how he is using or abusing his abilities, capabilities, etc. in this regard. The result of his test will determine man's rank in the next world.



الأعراف Al-Aaraf

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah takes its name from Ayats 46-47 in which mention of *Al-Aaraf* occurs.

Period of Revelation

A study of its contents clearly shows that the period of its revelation is about the same as that of Surah Al-Anaam, i.e. the last year of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life at Makkah, but it cannot be asserted with certainty which of these two was sent down earlier. Anyhow, the manner of its admonition clearly indicates that it belongs to the same period. As both have the same historical background, the reader should keep in view the preface to Surah Al-Anaam.

Topics of Discussion

The principal subject of this Surah is invitation to the divine message sent down to Muhammad (peace be upon him), which is couched in a warning. This is because the Messenger (peace be upon him) had spent a long time in admonishing the people of Makkah without any tangible effect on them. Nay, they had turned a deaf ear to his message and become so obdurate and antagonistic that, in

accordance with the divine design, the Messenger (peace be upon him) was going to be commanded to leave them and turn to other people,. That is why they are being admonished to accept the message but, at the same time, they are being warned in strong terms of the consequences that followed the wrong attitude of the former people towards their messengers. Now that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was going to migrate from Makkah, the concluding portion of the address has been directed towards the people of the Book with whom he was going to come into contact. This meant that the time of migration was coming near and the invitation was going to be extended to mankind in general, and was not to be confined to his own people in particular as before.

During the course of the address to the Jews, the consequences of their hypocritical conduct towards prophethood have also been pointed out clearly, for they professed to believe in Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) but in practice opposed his teachings, disobeyed him and worshiped falsehood and consequently were afflicted with ignominy and disgrace.

At the end of the Surah, some instructions have been given to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers for carrying out the work of the propagation of Islam with wisdom. The most important of these is that they should show patience and exercise restraint in answer to the provocations of their opponents. Above all, they have been advised that, under stress, they should not take any wrong step that might harm their cause.

Topics and their Interconnection

Ayats 1-10. In this passage, the people have been invited to follow the Message sent down to them through Muhammad (peace be upon him) and warned of the consequences of its rejection.

Ayats 11-25. The story of Adam has been related with a view to warning his descendants against the evil devices of Satan who is ever ready to mislead them as he did in the case of Adam and Eve.

Ayats 26-53. This passage contains some divine instructions, and contrasts them with Satan's instructions, and depicts a graphic picture of the results and the consequences of the two.

Ayats 54-58. As the Message has been sent down by Allah Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and everything in them, it should be followed, for it is like the rain He sends down to give life to the dead earth.

Ayats 59-171. Events from the lives of some well-known Prophets, Noah, Hud, Salih, Lot, Shuaib, Moses (peace be upon them all), have been related to show the consequences of the rejection of the Message, and the addressees of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) have been admonished to accept and follow the Message in order to escape perdition.

Ayats 172-174. As the covenant with the Israelites was mentioned at the end of the preceding passage, the whole mankind has been reminded very appropriately of the covenant that was made at the time of the appointment of Adam as the vicegerent of Allah so that all of his

descendants should remember it and accept and follow the Message that was delivered by the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Ayats 175-179. The example of the one who had the knowledge of the Message but discarded it, has been cited as a warning to those who were treating the Message as false; they have been exhorted to use their faculties to recognize the Message; otherwise Hell would be there abode.

Ayats 180-198. In this concluding portion of the Surah, some deviations of those who do not use their faculties properly to understand the Message have been dealt with and they have been admonished, reproved and warned of the serious consequences of their antagonistic attitude towards the Message of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Ayats 199-206. In conclusion, instructions have been given to the Prophet (peace be upon him), and through him to his followers, about the attitude they should adopt towards those who reject the Message and deviate from it.

1. Alif. Lam. Mim. Sad.

الْمَصَّ

2. (This is) a Book sent down unto you (O Muhammad).^{*1} So let there not be in your breast impediment therefrom,^{*2} that you may warn thereby, and a reminder for the believers.^{*3}

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ فَلَا يَكُنْ فِي
صَدْرِكَ حَرَجٌ مِّنْهُ لِتُنذِرَ بِهِ
وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*1 Here book is meant this Surah Al-Aaraf.

*2 That is, convey this to the people without any fear and hesitation and without minding in the least how the opponents react to it. Let them be offended, let them ridicule, let them talk derisively and let them show more and more enmity, if they like, but you should deliver the Message and propagate it without any fear and hesitation. Literally, the Arabic word *harajun* (translated into impediment) means a thick bush, through which it is hard to pass. Figuratively the text will mean: There should be no indecision, doubt or unwillingness in your mind in the face of opposition and obstacles about proceeding further on the way of your mission. The same thing has been expressed in Surah Al-Hijr, Ayat 97, “O Muhammad (peace be upon him), We know that you feel depressed in your heart by what they say (against your mission)”, and in Surah Hud, Ayat 12, “... lest you should leave out a part of what is being revealed to you and be depressed in your heart by the fear that they should say, in answer to your invitation: Why has no treasure been sent down to him and why has no angel come along with him?”

*3 It means that the main object of this Surah is to warn people of the consequences of the rejection of the Message of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Incidentally, it also reminds the believers of the implications of the Message while administering a warning to the disbelievers.

3. Follow (O mankind) that which has been sent down to you from your Lord, and do not follow besides Him any

اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُم مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِن دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ

patrons (protecting friends).^{*4}
Little it is you remember.

قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣﴾

***4** This is the main theme of this Surah. It invites the people to accept the Guidance that has been sent down by Allah through His Messengers (peace be upon him). For this alone can impart the true knowledge to man about himself and the universe, and tell him the aim and object of his life and teach him the principles on which to build his morality, social life, culture and civilization. Man should acknowledge Allah alone as his Guide and follow only His guidance that has been sent down through His Messengers. The discourse warns that it is basically wrong to turn to anyone other than Allah for guidance, for this has always resulted in utter ruin and will inevitably lead to ruin. Here the word “patrons” has been used for all those beings whom a man follows instead of Allah, whether he praises them as saints or curses them as satans. (See E.N. 6 of Surah AsShura).

4. And how many a township have We destroyed. So Our torment came on them by night, or while they slept at noon.

وَكَم مِّن قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا فَجَاءَهَا
بِأَسْنَاءٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ أَوْ هُمْ قَائِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾

5. So no cry did they utter, when Our torment came upon them, but that they said: “Indeed, we were transgressors.”^{*5}

فَمَا كَانَ دَعْوَاهُمْ إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ
بِأَسْنَاءٍ إِلَّا أَن قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا
ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٥﴾

***5** That is, you can learn a lesson from those communities that discarded the guidance of Allah and followed the guidance of others, and consequently became so degenerate as to be a curse for the earth, which was cleansed of their filth by a scourge of Allah.

The words “Indeed we were transgressors” have been cited here to serve as a warning about two things. First, it is absolutely useless to be sorry for and to confess one’s error after the expiry of the term of respite given for its recompense. It is obvious that the individual and the community show utter lack of sense, if they waste the period of respite in negligence and turn a deaf ear to the warning and admonition of those who invite them to the truth, and realize the horror of their conduct only when the scourge of Allah overtakes them. Secondly, you yourselves have seen so many instances of individuals and communities who were suddenly overtaken by the scourge of Allah when they transgressed the bounds and reached to the end of the term of their respite. You have also seen that after the scourge came upon them, there was no way of escape from it. When this has been the repeated verdict of history, why should a man repeat the same error over and over again, and wait for the ultimate end to offer repentance, when it cannot benefit in the least and can produce only grief and regret.

6. Then surely, We shall question^{*6} those to whom (Our message) had been sent, and surely, We shall question

فَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الَّذِينَ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ
وَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

the messengers.*7

***6** The repeated occurrence of scourge in Ayat 3 is a conclusive proof of the fact that people will be called to account in the Hereafter, because in this life full punishment is not possible for the crimes committed by wicked individuals and communities. Here it comes merely to put a stop to their further crimes, just as a criminal at large is arrested and deprived of the opportunity for committing further iniquities. The real punishment will be in the Hereafter. The numerous instances of scourge in human history are a clear proof of the fact that man has not been left free to do what he likes. There is the Sovereign above him Who allows him to transgress only up to a certain limit and before he reaches that limit, administers warnings one after the other so that he may give up his wicked ways. But if he does not pay heed, then he is all of a sudden overpowered by a scourge that puts an end to his nefarious activities. If we consider the matter seriously in the light of these inevitable occurrences, we will come to the conclusion that the Sovereign of the universe has most surely appointed a time for calling to account those criminals and doing full justice to them. As the warning in this verse is based on the preceding Ayats 4-5. It begins with "Then" to show that this is a sequel to Ayats 4-5.

***7** This shows that Prophethood will be the sole criterion of judgment in the Hereafter. On the one hand, the Messengers will be asked about what they did in conveying the Message to mankind; on the other, those to whom the Message was sent, shall be questioned regarding their

response to it. As regards to the individuals or communities to whom the Message did not reach, the Quran is silent as to the criterion by which they will be judged and there is no need for us to probe into this because Allah Himself has not deemed it necessary. But in regard to those individuals and communities who have received the Message, the Quran is quite explicit that they shall be unable to put forward any excuse whatsoever for their disbelief and rejection, their evil deeds and disobedience, and they will be wringing their hands when they shall be driven to Hell with ignominy.

7. Then surely, We shall narrate unto them (the whole account) with knowledge, and indeed We were not absent.

فَلَنَقُصَّنَّ عَلَيْهِم بِعِلْمٍ وَمَا كُنَّا
غَائِبِينَ ﴿٧﴾

8. And the weighing on that Day will be the true (weighing).^{*8} Then those whose scale will be heavy, so they are those who will be the successful.

وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ
ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٨﴾

***8** On that Day *weight* will be identical with the *truth*. On the Day of Judgment in the just scales of Allah, nothing but truth will have any weight and vice versa. All that which will have weight will be nothing but truth. The weight of one will increase or decrease in proportion to the truth one will have with oneself and that one will be judged solely by the measure of that weight and by nothing else. The life of falsehood, irrespective of its longevity and apparent grand deeds, will have absolutely no weight in those scales of

justice. When the deeds of the worshipers of falsehood will be weighed in these scales, they will see with their own eyes that the grand deeds of their lives have no weight at all. This thing has also been stated in Ayats 103-105 in Surah Al-Kahaf. Those who spent all their endeavors in wrong ways during their life in the world with the presumption that what they were doing was all right, are the losers. These are the people who disbelieved in the revelations of their Lord and their meeting with Him. Therefore all their deeds have been lost; so We will cause these to lose weight on the Day of Resurrection.

9. And those whose scale will be light, so they are those who will lose their own selves,^{*9} for what injustice they used to do with Our revelations.

وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ بِمَا
كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَظْلِمُونَ

*9 In other words, all human deeds will be divided into two categories, the positive and the negative. To know the truth, to acknowledge it, to follow it and to exert in its cause, will be on the positive side; for in the Hereafter these alone will have any weight and value. On the contrary, to neglect the truth or to reject it or to tallow one's desires or other human beings or satans or to exert in the way of falsehood, will be on the negative side. The deeds on this side will not only be valueless by themselves but will also decrease the weight of the positive deeds.

From the above it is quite obvious that success in the Hereafter will depend entirely on this that a man's good

deeds should outweigh his evil deeds. The case of the one whose evil deeds far outweigh the good deeds, will be like that of a bankrupt who gives away all his possessions to pay off his debts but still has some outstanding liabilities.

10. And surely, We gave you authority on the earth, and We appointed for you therein livelihoods. Little are the thanks that you give.

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعِيشَةً قَلِيلًا
مَا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. And surely, We created you, then We fashioned you, then We said to the angels: “Fall prostrate before Adam.”*¹⁰ So they fell prostrate except Iblis. He was not of those who prostrated.

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ
صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ
اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا
إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُن مِّنَ
السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿١١﴾

***10** See also Ayats 30-36, Surah Al-Baqarah, for comparison.

The wording of Ayat 34 of Surah Al-Baqarah, might have given rise to the doubt that the command given to the angels to bow before Adam was meant for the person of Adam, but the wording of this verse clears that doubt. Here the words preceding the command show that the angels were to bow before Adam as representative of the whole of mankind.

As regards the creation of mankind, first of all, Allah made a plan for it; then He made ready the necessary material for this purpose; then He gave it the human shape, and when Adam came into being in the shape of a living man, then the angels were commanded to bow before him, who was the representative of the whole human race.

The above explanation of the verse is based on some other passages of the Quran. For instance, let us examine Ayats 71-72 of Surah Suad:

“Just recall the time when your Lord said to the angels: I am going to create a man of clay, when I perfect it in every way, and blow into it of My Spirit, all of you should bow down before him.”

Here, too, the same three stages, the creation, the perfection and bringing to life, have been mentioned in a different way. First of all, a man of clay was created, then he was given a shape and proportionate limbs and faculties and then he was brought to life as Adam by the blowing of His Spirit into it.

Let us also examine Ayats 28-29 of Surah Al-Hijra:

“Just recall the time when your Lord said to the angels: I am going to create a man out of clay of molded mud, When I perfect it in every way and blow into it of My Spirit, then all of you should bow down before him.”

It is very difficult for us to understand the exact nature of the creation of the first man, for we cannot comprehend fully how man was made from the material of the earth, how he was shaped and perfected and how the Spirit was blown into him. However, it is quite clear that the story of

man's creation as stated in the Quran is quite different from Darwinism. According to this doctrine, the evolution of man has taken place from a non-human and semi-human state by a continuous process of elimination, selection and adaptation, and in this there is no line of demarcation to denote the end of the non-human state and the beginning of the species of man as such. On the contrary, the Quran says that man started his life as man; that in the entire history he has absolutely no connection whatsoever with any non-human state. Allah created him as man from the very first day of his life on the earth and endowed him with wisdom and enlightenment from the very start of his life.

The above two points of view of the story of man lead to two opposite conceptions in regard to man. The adoption of the Darwinian conception reduces man to one of the species of animals: therefore all the principles of human life, including the moral principles, will be based on the principles governing animal life and any animal-like behavior of his will be regarded as natural. Then the only difference between human beings and animals will be the ability of the former to make use of instruments for the provision of their necessities and luxuries. On the contrary, the adoption of the divine conception raises him from the low position of animal to the high position of man, His noblest creation. Then he is no longer a mere talking animal or a social animal but the vicegerent of Allah on this earth. Then what will distinguish him from all other creatures will not be his faculty of speech and his social life, but his moral responsibilities and the trust of the power

delegated to him by Allah and his accountability for these to Him. This will change man's entire outlook about his life on this earth and will demand a different philosophy of life and system of morality, law and civilization. Then man will, of his own accord, look upwards in search of the principles of life and not downwards.

Now let us consider an objection to the divine conception of man howsoever high sounding this may be from the moral and psychological points of view. How can we reject the scientific Darwinian conception merely on this account? In answer to this, we put a counter question: has the Darwinian theory of the origin of species been scientifically proved? Only those people who have a cursory knowledge of science may be suffering from this misunderstanding that the theory of evolution has been scientifically proved to be true, but the majority of the scientists know that it is merely a theory in spite of its high-sounding technical terms, and that the arguments in favor of this are not conclusive, but merely hypothetical. The most that can be said in this connection is that both the theories of the creation of the species may be equally possible. Their creation might have taken place according to the Darwinian theory of evolution, or each of the species might have been brought into existence individually.

12. He (Allah) said: "What prevented you that you did not prostrate when I commanded you." He (Iblis) said: "I am better than him.

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ إِلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ
أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ
خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ

You created me from fire and him You created from clay.”

طِينِ ﴿١٢﴾

13. He (Allah) said: “Then get you down from here. It is not for you to be arrogant herein, so get out. Indeed, you are of those humiliated.”*11

قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

*11 That is, it is obvious that you invite your own disgrace because you have formed too high an opinion of yourself, though you are merely a creation and a servant of your Lord. You have arrogantly disobeyed the command of your Creator, thinking it to be below your dignity. The mere fact that you have shown pride, conceit and haughtiness without any personal claim or title to any excellence of your own, cannot make you great and respectable. It will make you mean, low and disgraceful and you yourself will be responsible for this ignominy.

14. He (Iblis) said: “Reprieve me till the day when they are raised (from the dead).”

قَالَ أَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

15. He (Allah) said: “You are indeed of those reprieved.”

قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

16. He (Iblis) said: “Because you have sent me astray, I shall surely sit in ambush for them on Your straight path.”

قَالَ فِيمَا أُغْوَيْتَنِي لِأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١٦﴾

17. “Then I shall come upon them, from before them, and from behind them, and from their right, and from their left. And You will not find most of them thankful (unto You).”^{*12}

ثُمَّ لَا تَنبَهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ
وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ
شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ
شَاكِرِينَ



***12** This (Ayats 16-17) is the challenge that was given by Satan to Allah. It means, during the respite You have granted me till the Day of Resurrection, I will exert my utmost to show that man does not deserve the superiority You have bestowed upon him over me. I will show how ungrateful, thankless and disloyal he is.

The respite that was asked by Satan and granted by Allah was not merely for time but also for opportunity to do what he intended to do. What he meant was that he should be given the opportunity for exploiting man's weaknesses to prove that he was unfit for the viceregency. Allah granted his request and this has been elaborated in Surah Al-Isra, Ayats 61-65. According to this Allah granted leave to Satan to do whatever he liked to mislead Adam and his offspring from the right way. He was allowed to practice whatever devices he thought to misguide man. In short, all the ways would remain open for him to mislead man with this proviso. “Indeed you shall have no power over My servants.” (Surah Al-Isra, Ayat 65). This means, you will be allowed to make attempts to involve them in misunderstandings and allure them by false hopes, and by

making evil look fair to them, and to invite them to evil ways by the allurements of lusts and vain hopes. But you shall have neither any power to force them to your ways nor to prevent them from following the right way if they intend to follow it. The same thing has also been stated in Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 22, “When on the Day of Resurrection, Allah will pass His judgment on His followers, Satan will say to them, I had no power to force you to follow me. The only thing I did was to invite you to my way; therefore do not blame me now, but blame yourselves.”

Now let us consider the charge of Satan against Allah: “Because you have sent me astray.” What he meant was this: You are responsible for my deviation for You commanded me to bow down before Adam, who is inferior to me in position. As this has injured my self-respect, I have disobeyed You. It is obvious that Satan desired that Allah ought not to have exposed the feelings of pride and rebellion he was nurturing in his heart but ought to have let him go unchecked on the way he was going. As his charge was absurd, Allah did not take any notice of it.

18. He (Allah) said: “Get out from here, disgraced, rejected. As for whoever of them will follow you, surely I will fill hell with you, all together.”

قَالَ أَخْرِجْ مِنْهَا مَذْءُومًا
مَذْحُورًا لِّمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ
لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

19. “And O Adam, dwell you and your wife in the Garden and eat thereof as you both wish, and approach not this tree, or you both will become of the wrong doers.”

وَيَعَادَمُ أَسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ
الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا
وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ
فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

20. Then Satan whispered to them both that he might uncover unto them that which was hidden from them of their shame (private parts), and he said: “Your Lord did not forbid you (eating) from this tree, except that you should become angels or become of the immortals.”

فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ
لَهُمَا مَا وَرَىٰ عَنْهُمَا مِنَ
سَوَاءِٰتِهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا
رَبُّكُمَا عَنِ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا
أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ
الْخَالِدِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

21. And he swore to them both (saying): “Indeed, I am, to you both, among the sincere well wishers.”

وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ
النَّصِيحِينَ ﴿٢١﴾

22. So he misled them both with deception. Then when they tasted of the tree, their shame (private parts) became manifest to them, and they

فَدَلَّلَهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ ۖ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا
الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءَاتُهُمَا
وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ

both began to cover themselves with leaves from the Garden. And their Lord called out to them both: “Did I not forbid you both from that tree, and tell you both that Satan is an open enemy to you both.”

وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّمَا أَلَمْ
أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَمَا الشَّجَرَةِ
وَأَقُلَّ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ
عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

23. They both said: “Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves. And if You forgive us not, and bestow (not) upon us Your mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers.”^{*13}

قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ
تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ
الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

***13** In this story the Quran has brought to light the following important facts:

(1) The feelings of shyness and modesty are natural and instinctive. Their first expression is the natural shyness one feels in exposing one’s shameful parts before anyone else. The Quran tells us that this shyness has not been artificially created in man by the evolution of civilization nor has it been acquired by him as has been asserted by some disciples of Satan. This is an instinct that has been inherent in man from the first day of his creation.

(2) The sex instinct is the greatest weakness of the human race. That is why Satan selected this weak spot for his attack on the adversary and devised the scheme to strike at their modesty. Therefore, the first step he took in this direction was to expose their nakedness to them so as to

open the door of indecency before them and beguile them into sexuality. Even to this day, Satan and his disciples are adopting the same scheme of depriving the woman of the feelings of modesty and shyness, and they cannot think of any scheme of progress unless they expose and exhibit the woman to all and sundry.

(3) It is human nature not to accept easily an open invitation to wickedness. That is why every Satan has to pose as a sincere well-wisher of man in order to entangle him in his snare.

(4) Man has a great natural yearning for a higher position than the existing one, or for obtaining immortality. That is why Satan succeeded in beguiling them by offering to make them angels or immortals. Even now he first tempts man by the allurements of a higher position and a better condition, and then leads him to follow the way that throws him into the abyss of degeneration.

(5) The Quran refutes the commonly known version that Satan first beguiled Eve and then used her to mislead Adam. It says that Satan beguiled both of them and both of them were deceived. Though the difference between the two versions appears to be trivial, yet a careful appraisal of the two will show that they have far-reaching implications. The first version played a great part in degrading woman morally, legally and socially, whereas the Quranic version has helped raise the status of woman to a high level.

(6) This story makes it, quite clear that whenever man disobeys Allah, he is exposed sooner or later. The nakedness of Adam and Eve became visible because they

disobeyed the command of Allah, and not because of any inherent quality of the forbidden tree. At first Allah had made His own special arrangement to cover their nakedness, but when they disobeyed Him by eating the forbidden fruit, He undid that arrangement and they were left to themselves to cover themselves in their own way, if they so desired. And if they had no intention of covering themselves, or if they did not do anything in this connection, Allah did not care at all about the condition in which they moved about. This meant to show that Allah would help them only if they remained obedient to Him. As soon as they would transgress the bounds of His obedience, He would withdraw His protection and leave them to do whatever they liked. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also stated the same thing in several traditions. He used to pray, O my Allah. I expect mercy from Thee: so do not leave me to myself even for a moment.

(7) In his conflict with man, Satan wanted to prove that man was not superior to him in any way. So he beguiled him to eat the forbidden fruit. Though Satan was successful in beguiling him into disobeying his Lord, yet on the whole man proved his moral superiority over Satan. (a) Satan exhibited pride by claiming to be superior to man, but man did not put up such a claim. (b) Satan disobeyed Allah solely because of his pride without any external temptation. On the contrary, man did not commit disobedience because he intended it, but he was beguiled into it by Satan, who approached in the guise of a well-wisher. Even then, he was misled because he imagined that he was going towards a

higher position. (c) When Satan was warned of his sin, he did not confess it, nor return to the way of obedience, but became all the more obdurate. On the contrary, when man was warned of his sin, he did not show obduracy, nor arrogance; but felt ashamed and sorry; he confessed it, turned to the way of obedience to his Lord and begged His forgiveness in order to seek His blessing.

(8) This story has been related here mainly to teach the lesson that the right course for the offspring of Adam is to follow His way and not that of Satan. The Satan's way has been clearly made distinct from Adam's way. It is to turn away from Allah's obedience and to adopt the way of rebellion against Him and to persist in it with pride in spite of warning, and to beguile into disobedience those who are treading the path of obedience. Therefore the right way for man is to fight against satanic deceptions and to understand and counteract his cunning devices and to be ever on the guard to protect himself from his evil designs, and to repent, if, in spite of all his precautions; he sometimes falls a victim to Satan and disobeys his Allah. He should, then, confess it, feel sorry for it and be ashamed of it and turn to Allah and make amends for it.

It also meant to warn the people who were opposing the Prophet (peace be upon him), as if to say, the way you are following is the way of Satan, who has made you swerve from the right way. The very fact that you have made the satans from among the jinns and mankind your patrons and that you are persisting in your error, in spite of repeated warnings, shows that you have fallen a victim to

your open and permanent enemy. As you are going to be utterly ruined by him and meeting with the same consequences that are in store for Satan, if you are not your own enemies, and if you have any common-sense left in you, you should take a warning and turn to the way of your first parents, Adam and Eve, and repent.

24. He (Allah) said: “Go down (from here),^{*14} one of you an enemy to the other. And for you, on earth there will be a dwelling and provision, for a while.”

قَالَ أَهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ
عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ
وَمَتَعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

***14** The words “Go down” should not give rise to the misunderstanding that they were exiled from Paradise as a punishment for their disobedience. The Quran has at several places declared clearly that Allah accepted their repentance and forgave them their sin. And there is nothing in this command that might be regarded as punishment. They were sent to the earth as His vicegerents and this was the very purpose of the creation of man. (Refer to E.Ns 48 and 53 of Surah Al-Baqarah).

25. He (Allah) said: “Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it you shall be brought out.”

قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ
وَمِنْهَا تُخْرَجُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. O Children of Adam,^{*15} indeed We have sent down to you garment to cover your shame (yourselves and

يَبْنِي ۗ آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ
لِبَاسًا يُورِي سَوَاءَ تِكُمْ وَرِيشًا

private parts), and as an adornment. And the garment of righteousness, that is better. Such are among the signs of Allah, that they may remember.

وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ
ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَذَكَّرُونَ



*15 In this passage, the Quran has used the story of Adam and Eve for the eradication of the evil of nakedness. Satan had seduced the Arabs of the pre-Islamic period into believing that clothing was meant merely for the purpose of decorating and protecting the body from the hardships of weather. Accordingly they totally disregarded its real purpose and paid no heed to cover their shameful parts and did not hesitate to uncover them before others in the open. Above all, they would go around the Kabah in perfect nudity during the Hajj season; and their women were even more shameless than their men. That was because they considered it a religious act and did this as if it were a virtuous deed.

The whole human race has been addressed because this evil was not confined to the Arabs alone but many people of the world had been, and even today are, guilty of this. Therefore the entire human race has been warned, as if to say, “O children of Adam! Nudity is a clear manifestation of the fact that you have been seduced by Satan. As you have discarded the guidance of your Lord, and rejected the Message of His Prophets, you have given yourselves up to Satan who has misled you from the way of natural modesty into that shameful state, in which he intended to mislead

your first parents. If you consider it seriously, you will come to the inevitable conclusion that you can neither understand rightly the demands of your nature nor fulfill them without the guidance of the Messengers.”

27. O Children of Adam, let not Satan deceive you, as he caused your parents to get out from the Garden, stripping them of their garments, to show them their shame (private parts). Surely, he sees you, he and his tribe, from where you see them not. Indeed, We have made the devils protecting friends for those who do not believe. ^{*16}

يَبْنِيٰٓ ءَادَمَ لَا يَفْتِنٰكُمْ
الشَّيْطٰنُ كَمَا اَخْرَجَ اٰبَوَيْكُمْ
مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ يَنْزِعُ عَنْهُمَا لِبَاسَهُمَا
لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوْءَ اٰتِهِمَا ۗ اِنَّهٗ يَرٰكُمْ
هُوَ وَقَبِيْلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ
ۗ اِنَّا جَعَلْنَا الشَّيْطٰنَ اَوْلِيَآءَ
لِلَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ



***16** This passage brings out clearly the following facts about clothing:

(1) The need of clothing has not been artificially created in man, but it is an important urge of human nature. That is why Allah has not created a natural covering for the human body, as He has done in the case of all other animals. Instead, He has instilled inherently the feelings of modesty and shyness in human nature. Besides this, He has not made his sex organs as merely sex organs, but has also made them shameful organs, which, by his very nature, he does not like to expose before others. Moreover, He has not

given man any ready-made covering for hiding the shameful parts, but has ingrained in the human nature that man should hide them with clothing. This is what Ayat 26 implies, Allah has inspired man with the urge to hide the shameful parts of the body. Therefore man should understand the nature of this inspired urge and make clothing for himself from the material provided by Him.

(2) The fact that in Ayat 26 the covering of the shameful parts precedes the protecting and decorating of the body, is a clear proof that more importance has been attached to the moral than the physical function of clothing. Thus it is obvious that the human nature is quite different from the animal nature. That is why nature has made provision for the protection and decoration of the body of the animals, but has ingrained no urge in them for the covering of their shameful parts. But when the human beings discarded the guidance of Allah and began to follow the guidance of Satan, they reversed the above order as if to say, “Your clothing is merely to protect and decorate your bodies just as the skins cover the bodies of the animals. As regards to the covering of the shameful parts, garments have absolutely no importance, for these are merely sex organs and not shameful organs.”

(3) The garments should not only be the means of covering the shameful parts and of protection and decoration but should also enable man to attain piety. The dress should, therefore, be such as to conceal those parts of the body that should be hidden from others; it should neither be too expensive nor too poor with regard to the position of the

wearers; it should not smack of haughtiness nor arrogance nor hypocrisy. Moreover, the garment of piety demands that the male should not wear the female dress and vice versa, and that the Muslims should not imitate blindly the non-Muslims in dress. It is obvious that only those who believe in the guidance of Allah and follow it, can attain the desired standard of the garment of piety. But those who discard the guidance of God and make satans their guides, are misled by them into one error or the other in regard to clothing.

(4) Clothing is one of Allah's many Signs which are spread all over the world and which lead men to the recognition of the reality, provided that one sincerely seeks it. If one seriously considers the above-mentioned three facts about clothing, one can easily understand how clothing is an important sign of Allah.

28. And when they commit an indecent act, they say: "We found our fathers upon it, and Allah has commanded us of it."^{*17} Say: "Indeed, Allah does not command any indecency."^{*18} Do you say about Allah that which you do not know."

وَإِذَا فَعَلُوا فَحِشَةً قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا
عَلَيْهَا ءَابَاءَنَا وَاللَّهُ أَمَرَنَا بِهَا قُلْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ
أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ



^{*17} This refers to the custom of the Arabs of going around the Kabah in perfect nudity (E.N. 15), considering it to be a religious act, enjoined by Allah.

***18** This brief sentence (Allah does not command any indecency) contains a very forceful argument against their beliefs and customs of ignorance. In order to understand the force of the argument, it is necessary to understand two basic things:

(1) Though the Arabs practiced nudism in the performance of certain religious rituals, they considered nakedness itself a shameful thing. That is why, in spite of this custom, no respectable Arab ever chose to practice nudism in a civilized gathering, in the bazaar or before one's kith and kin.

(2) Even though they considered nudism to be a shameful thing, they said that they practiced it because this custom had been enjoined by Allah. This claim was based on the wrong notion that their religion was from Allah. But the Quran refutes their claim by arguing like this: "You yourselves consider nudism to be an indecent thing. Therefore your claim that Allah has enjoined the practice of nudism is absolutely false. As a corollary to this, if this indecent custom is approved by your religion, it is a clear proof of the fact that your religion is not from Allah.

29. Say (O Muhammad): "My Lord has commanded justice. And that you set upright your faces (towards Him) at every place of worship, and call upon Him, making religion sincere for Him. Such as He brought

قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَقِيمُوا
وُجُوهَكُمْ عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ
وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ
كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ تَعُودُونَ



you into being, so shall you return (unto Him).”*19

*19 In Ayat 29, Allah showed, by contrast, that the religion prescribed by Him had no connection whatsoever with their senseless customs, which were contradictory to the following fundamental principles of His religion:

(1) A man should conduct his life in accordance with justice and righteousness;

(2) He should keep his direction right during worship. That is, it should be exclusively directed towards Allah and there should be absolutely nothing of shirk in it and he should not show any sort of obedience or obeisance or servility to any other than Allah.

(3) He should invoke Allah and none else, for guidance, succor, help and protection. He should, however, dedicate his entire life exclusively to Allah before invoking His help, for it is absurd to lead a life of shirk, disbelief, disobedience, and slavery of others, and then invoke Allah, as if to say, “O God, help us in carrying out successfully our rebellion against Thyself.”

(4) Above all, he should sincerely and firmly believe that he shall be resurrected in the next world, just as he has been given birth in this world, and then shall be called upon to render an account of all his deeds in this world.

30. A group He has guided, and (another) group deserved straying upon them. Surely, they are those who took the devils

فَرِيقًا هَدَىٰ وَفَرِيقًا حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ
الضَّلَالَةُ إِنَّهُمْ اتَّخَذُوا
الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ

for protecting supporters, instead of Allah, and they think that they are guided.

وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ



31. O Children of Adam, take your adornment at every place of worship,^{*20} and eat, and drink, and waste not by extravagance. Certainly, He (Allah) does not love the extravagant.^{*21}

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ
عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا
وَأَشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا
يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ



***20** Here the word *zeenat* means full and proper dress. The verse exhorts the people to be fully clothed, when they are engaged in worship. For this purpose, it does not suffice to cover merely those parts of the body which the law requires to be hidden in public in addition to the shameful parts. Therefore one should dress properly and decently so as to serve both the purposes, in accordance with his means.

This command is meant to refute the wrong attitude which the ignorant people at that time had adopted, and have been adopting since then. They thought that one should worship Allah in perfect or semi-nudity and should put on a disheveled appearance before Him. In utter contrast to this, Allah not only prohibits nudity but also commands that one should be dressed fully, properly and decently at the time of worship and should put on an appearance that might not have even a tinge of untidiness and indecency.

***21** That is, Allah does not like those people who transgress the limits imposed by Him by making the lawful as

unlawful. That is why He does not approve of those who put on a disheveled appearance or starve themselves or deprive themselves of the lawful and pure things under the foolish belief that they are pleasing their Allah thereby. He does not demand this as essential for His worship; nay, He is pleased if one wears a decent dress and makes use of the pure things provided by Him. According to His law, the only thing that is sinful is to transgress His limits by making the lawful as unlawful or the unlawful as lawful.

32. Say: (O Muhammad): “Who has forbidden^{*22} the adornment of Allah which He has brought forth for His slaves and the good things of provision.” Say: “They are for those who believe, in the life of this world, (and) exclusively on the Day of Resurrection.”^{*23} Thus, do We explain in detail the revelations for a people who have knowledge.

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي
 أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ
 الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فِي
 الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ
 الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ
 الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ



***22** It should be noted that this question is a typical way which the Quran employs to refute false ways and religions. The argument implied in the question is this: As Allah Himself has created all the pure, good and nice things for His servants, it cannot be His will to make these as unlawful for His servants. Therefore, if a religious, moral or social system makes these things unlawful or detestable or

considers these as impediments in the spiritual evolution and progress, this very thing is a clear proof of the fact that it is not from Allah.

*23 That is, as a matter of fact all the good things of life are meant for the believers because they are the faithful servants of their real Owner and deserve the reward of faithfulness. But in this world, these are given to the unfaithful also because this world is for the trial of mankind. That is why, sometimes, the unfaithful receive even a greater share than the faithful. But in the Hereafter, where these good things will be distributed on the basis of merit alone, all the good and pure things shall be reserved for the faithful only. On the other hand, the unfaithful, who adopted the attitude of rebellion against Allah, in spite of the fact that they lived on His provisions in this world, shall not get any share in the Hereafter.

33. Say (O Muhammad):
“My Lord has only forbidden indecencies, what is apparent of them, and what is secret,^{*24} and sin,^{*25} and oppression without right,^{*26} and that you associate with Allah that for which He has not sent down authority, and that you say about Allah that which you do not know.”

قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ
مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْإِثْمَ
وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا
بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا
وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا
تَعْمُونَ



*24 Refer to E.Ns 128 and 131 of Surah Al-Anaam.

***25** The literal meaning of *ithm* is negligence. The sense of sin has entered into this word from *athimah* which means a she camel that can run fast but willfully does not do so. Likewise, that man who neglects to obey the commandments of his Lord, in spite of his ability to do so, shall be sinful for he has no intention of pleasing Him.

***26** It will be rebellion against the truth, if one transgresses the prescribed limits and enters into the bounds where he has no right. Likewise all such people as transgress the bounds prescribed for the servants of Allah and follow their own will, behave as masters in His kingdom and encroach on the rights that belong to Allah alone, are really rebels against Allah.

34. And to every nation is a term appointed, then when their term is reached, neither can they delay (it) an hour, nor can they advance (it).^{*27}

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ



***27** “And to every nation is a term appointed”, it does not mean a fixed period of time in terms of years, months and days, after the expiry of which that community is exterminated without fail. This means that a moral limit has been set to the opportunity that is allowed to every community for showing its performance as a respectable community. This is determined by the ratio between its good works and its evil works. Allah tolerates a community as long as the ratio of its good works to its evil works does

not fall below the normal limits. When it transgresses those limits that wicked community is given no more respite. In order to grasp this see Ayat 4, 10 and 12 of Surah Nooh.

35. O Children of Adam, whenever there come to you messengers from amongst you, narrating to you My revelations, then whosoever fears (Allah), and becomes righteous, so there shall be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve.

يَبْنِي ۡءَادَمَ ۡإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ رُسُلٌ
مِّنْكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ ۡءَايَاتِي
فَمَنْ أَتَّقَىٰ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

36. And those who deny Our revelations and turn away in arrogance from them, those are the dwellers of the Fire. They shall abide therein.*28

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۗ هُمْ فِيهَا
خَالِدُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

*28 The Quran has stated the thing contained in Ayat 36 in every place where the mention of the sending down of Adam and Eve from Paradise has been made. (See Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 38-39 and Surah Taha, Ayats 123-124). Same thing is mentioned here. (See E.N. 69 of Surah Aal-Imran).

37. So who does greater wrong than he who invents against Allah a lie, or denies

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَىٰ

His revelations. For such, will reach them their appointed portion of the Decrees.*29 Until, when Our messengers (the angels of death) come to them to take their souls, they (the angels) will say: "Where (now) are those whom you used to call besides Allah." They will say: "They have departed from us." And they will testify against themselves that they were disbelievers.

اللَّهُ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِعَايَاتِهِ
 أُولَئِكَ يَنَاهُمْ نَصِيحُهُمْ مِّنَ
 الْكِتَابِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُمْ
 رُسُلُنَا يَتَوَفَّوهُمْ قَالُوا أَإِنَّا مَا
 كُنْتُمْ تَدْعُونَنَا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ
 قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا وَشَهِدُوا عَلَيَّ
 أَنفُسِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَافِرِينَ

*29 That is, they shall live here in this world for the term that has been set for them and get their destined share, good or bad, to live this life.

38. He (Allah) will say: "Enter you in the (company of) nations who had passed away before you, of the jinn and mankind, into the Fire." Every time a nation enters, it curses its sister (nation), until when they have all been made to follow one another therein, the last of them will say to the first of them:

قَالَ ادْخُلُوا فِي أُمَّةٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ
 مِن قَبْلِكُمْ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ
 فِي النَّارِ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَتْ أُمَّةٌ
 لَعَنَتْ أُخْتَهَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا
 آدَارَكُوا فِيهَا جَمِيعًا قَالَتْ
 أَخْرَبَهُمْ لِأَوْلَانِهِمْ رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ

“Our Lord, these led us astray, so give them double punishment of the Fire.” He will say: “For each one there is double (torment), but you do not know.”*30

أَضَلُّونَا فَعَاتِبِهِمْ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا
مِّنَ النَّارِ قَالَ لِكُلِّ ضِعْفٍ
وَلَكِن لَّا تَعْلَمُونَ

*30 There is a double chastisement for every generation for the sins it committed as successor, and for the sins it left for others as predecessor, because it followed the heritage of evil left by its predecessors and then left the heritage of evil for its successors. Therefore if its predecessor shares a part of the burden of responsibility for its sins, it also shares a part of the burden of the responsibility for the legacy of the sins left by it for its successors.

There is a tradition to this effect: The one who initiates an innovation, that is disapproved of by Allah and His Messenger, shall be held responsible for the sins of all those people, who followed his innovation, without lessening in the least the burden of the responsibility for the sin committed by the inventor. Here is another tradition: Whenever a man is killed unjustly anywhere in the world, a part of the guilt of this murder is debited against the account of that son of Adam who was the first to murder his own brother, because he was the first to open the way of murder.

It is clear from the above that the person or the group or the community that starts the wrong idea or a wrong attitude, is not only responsible for his or its own error, but is also partly responsible for the sins of all those who are

influenced by the error, and as long as the effects of that error continue to influence others, they are credited to his or its account. This also shows that an individual is not only personally accountable for his own good or bad actions but also for its effects on the lives of others.

As an illustration, let us take the case of an adulterer. All those whose bad example, or bad company or evil inducement misled him to adultery, share the responsibility for him becoming an adulterer and this responsibility extends above to all other persons, from whom those persons received this evil heritage. Thus it will go further and further upwards till it reaches the first person who initiated this evil way of sexuality.

Then the adulterer himself shall have to bear the responsibility of his guilt, because he committed this in utter disregard of many deterrents. He did not discriminate between good and bad: he did not pay attention to the voice of his conscience: he did not resort to the power of self-control within him: he did not make use of the knowledge of good and bad he had received from virtuous people and of their noble examples, and he did not take warning from the evil consequences of sexual immorality. In the face of all the above factors, that could have restrained him from adultery, he gave himself up to the blind sex urge that wanted its satisfaction in any available way.

Now let us consider the case of the adulterer from the point of view of its evil influences and heritage in relation to his contemporaries and successors. The responsibility of his guilt does not remain confined to his own acts of adultery

but extends to all those evil acts that were prompted and influenced by these. At first he himself catches the infection of a venereal disease and then communicates it to his own generation and to countless successive generations: he causes illegitimate births and then throws the burden of nourishment on others and makes them unlawful inheritors at the expense of the lawful inheritors, and the evil results of this injustice may continue to influence countless generations. Moreover, he seduces some innocent girl and induces her to surrender herself to sexual immorality, and then she, in her turn, spreads the evil to others and causes the ruin of countless families. Then he sets a bad example for his own children, his relatives and his friends and for the other people of his society and becomes a cause of the moral ruin of many persons, who, in their turn, leave the evil heritage, with all its evil influences on the countless succeeding generations. Therefore justice demands that a part of the responsibility for all these evil results should be laid on him as long as the effects last.

The case of the heritage of virtue may also be considered in the same way. All those persons, up to the first man, who left the heritage of virtue for us are entitled to a share of its reward. Then we shall also be entitled to a share of its reward, if we exert to preserve and increase it. Then we shall also be entitled to a share of its reward, if we leave behind us the legacy of virtue for others to follow, as long as its good effect goes on influencing mankind and they benefit from it.

Every sensible man will admit that the manner of

retribution presented by the Quran is the only right and perfect way of doing full justice. The right understanding of this fact will help remove the misunderstandings of those who regard this worldly life to be quite sufficient for retribution, and also of those who believe that this purpose is achieved by the process of the transmigration of souls. As a matter of fact, neither of the groups has fully grasped the extent, the effects and the consequences of human acts, nor the full requirements of just retribution. Obviously it is not possible today to punish here the countless generations, which contributed to the good or bad acts of a person during his life in this world. Moreover the effects of his good or bad acts do not cease with his death, but will continue through the countless centuries and will go on influencing the lives of countless people after him. Justice requires that these should be credited to his account as long as the effects last. Therefore the requital of justice is impossible in this worldly life, when even the smallest part of the effects of his acts has not yet appeared. Then there are not enough means for awarding fully the rewards or the punishments for the acts of a man in the limited life of this world and its limited means. Just imagine the extent of the guilt of a man who kindles the fire of a world war and destroys and ruins the lives of millions of people and leaves a legacy of evil that will continue to influence the lives of billions of people for centuries. Can any punishment in this world, physical or moral, or spiritual, however severe that may be, fully meet the requirements of justice? Or can any reward in this world, however great, fully recompense a

man for his lifelong work for the good of humanity, which goes on benefiting millions of people for thousands of years?

Anyone, who will consider the problem of retribution from this point of view, will come to the inevitable conclusion that for the requital of full justice, there should be another world, where all the generations should be mustered together with their accounts: then there should be an all-knowing and all-aware judge to administer justice and there should also be human beings with eternal lives to receive the reward or punishment, as the case may be, and all kinds of means for the dispensation of justice as well.

This way of thinking also helps expose the basic error of the doctrine of transmigration, which has led its advocates to believe in the passage of souls after death into other bodies according to their merits or demerits. This is because they have not been able to grasp the fact that for the retribution of the acts of this short worldly life, a thousand times longer life is required. It is thus obvious that another re-born life of the same length in this world will not help solve the problem of retribution because it is quite insufficient for the purpose. On the contrary, this will make it all the more complex, for the circle of transmigration will go on multiplying such acts good or bad and increasing their effects more and more in an endless chain. Thus, according to the doctrine of transmigration, the account of person will remain unsettled forever.

39. And the first of them will say to the

وَقَالَتْ أُولَئِهِمْ لِأُخْرَانِهِمْ فَمَا

last of them: “Then you had no favor over us, so taste the punishment for what you used to earn.”*31

كَانَ لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍ
فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ

تَكْسِبُونَ

*31 The Quran has described, at several places, this sort of altercation between the dwellers of Hell. For instance, in Surah Saba, Ayats 31-33, it says: “And if you could see when the wrongdoers will be made to stand before their Lord, returning the word (blame), some of them to others. Those who were oppressed (in the world) will say to those who were arrogant: “If (it was) not for you, we would have been believers. Those who were arrogant will say to those who were oppressed: “Did we drive you away from the guidance after when it had come to you. But you were criminals.” In simple words, it means, you yourselves are to blame for discarding the guidance. You fell an easy prey to the greed with which we tempted you, to become our slaves, because you yourselves were greedy for wealth. When we wanted to buy your conscience, you sold it because you yourselves were eager to sell it: when we invited you to the worship of materialism, worldliness, nationalism and the like, you accepted our invitation, because you had an aversion of God worship and a liking for this worldliness. That is why you rejected the invitation of the worshipers of Allah, and accepted ours. When we deluded you with false religious things, you at once accepted these, because you yourselves were cherishing the same in yow hearts. For

instance, you were in search of such gods as might fulfill your desires without demanding any moral obligations from you, and we supplied such ones, and you accepted them. You were in search of such intercessors as might take the responsibility for your entry into Paradise, allowing you to do whatever pleased you in the world, without minding the guidance of Allah. So we invented such ones and you followed us: you were in search of such religions as might guarantee short-cuts to salvation, freeing you from the hardships, restrictions and sacrifices for the cause of Allah, and permitting you to enjoy all sorts of indulgences, and we invented such easy and pleasant religions for you, and you followed them. In short, we alone are not responsible for your misguidance but you, too, share it equally with us: if we supplied misguidance, you bought it of your own accord.

40. Surely, those who deny Our revelations and turn away in arrogance from them, the gates of heaven will not be opened for them, and they will not enter the Garden until the camel goes through the eye of the needle. And thus do We recompense the criminals.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
وَأَسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا لَا تُفَتَّحُ لَهُمْ
أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ
الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّىٰ يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ
الْحَيَاطِ ۗ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي
الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

41. Theirs will be the bed

هُم مِّنْ جَهَنَّمَ مِهَادٌ وَمِنْ

of Hell, and over them coverings (of Hell). And thus do We recompense the wrong doers.

42. And those who believed and did righteous deeds, no burden do We place on a soul beyond its capacity. Such are companions of the Garden. They will abide eternally therein.

43. And We shall remove whatever rancor may be in their breasts.*³² Rivers will flow beneath them. And they will say: "All praise be to Allah, who has guided us to this. And we could not truly have been led aright, were it not that Allah had guided us. Indeed, the messengers of our Lord did come with the truth." And it will be called out to them that: "This is the Garden. You are made to inherit it for what you used to do."*³³

فَوْقِهِمْ غَوَاشٍ ۖ وَكَذَٰلِكَ
نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا
وُسْعَهَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ
هُم فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِّنْ
غِلٍّ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ
وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا
لِهَٰذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنَّ
هُدَانَا اللَّهُ ۗ لَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُ
رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَنُودُوا أَن تِلْكَ
الْجَنَّةُ أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنتُمْ
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

***32** It means that if there had been any hostile or unfriendly feelings or misunderstandings between good people in this world, they would all be removed in the Hereafter. Their hearts will be quite free from enmity, and they will enter Paradise like sincere friends. So much so that they will not be displeased to see their opponents, rivals, critics, etc., sharing the joys of Paradise along with themselves. Once when Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) recited this verse, he exclaimed, I do expect that Allah will remove the misunderstandings between me and Uthman and Talhah and Zubair (may Allah be pleased with them all).

If we consider this verse in its wider meaning, we come to the conclusion that Allah will not like to take His good people to Paradise with any blot on their characters but He will cleanse them by His grace before their entrance into Paradise. Thus they will enter it in a perfectly pure condition.

***33** This refers to a fine happening that will take place on the occasion of the entry of the faithful into Paradise. On the one hand, they will not be boastful that they have gained Paradise by their good works, but will be grateful and thankful and will praise Allah, saying, “All this is due to Allah’s grace, for we did not deserve this.” On the other, Allah will not even hint that it was due to His favor, but will say, “You have gained this by your services and in return for yow own earnings. This is not a piece of charity but a reward of your own efforts, a fruit of yow own labor; it is a respectable living that you have earned.” To add to His

grace, Allah does not say, “We will reply” but “And it will be called out to them.”

In fact the servants of Allah behave like this in this world also. Unlike the workers of iniquity, they do not become proud of any worldly success and say, “This is the result of our own ability, work and effort,” and then grow even more rebellious, and spread disorder in the world. In contrast to these rebels, the true servants of Allah consider every worldly success as His favor and are thankful and grateful to Him. The more they are favored by Him, the more humble, generous and merciful they become. They do not rely on their good works and say, “We are quite sure that we shall get salvation.” Instead of this, they beg Allah’s pardon for their shortcomings and rely on His grace and mercy, and they are always filled with the fear lest their accounts should turn out to be unfavorable against them.

A tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) related by Bukhari and Muslim, confirms the above mentioned thing. Once he warned his companions, saying, “You should know that you will not get entry into Paradise merely by virtue of your works”. They asked, “Is it true of you also?” He replied, “Yes, I, too, shall enter Paradise merely by Allah’s grace and mercy.”

44. And the dwellers of the Garden will call out to the dwellers of the Fire (saying): “We have indeed found that which our Lord promised us (to be) the truth. So have

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابَ
النَّارِ أَنْ قَدْ وَجَدْنَا مَا وَعَدَنَا
رَبُّنَا حَقًّا فَهَلْ وَجَدْتُمْ مَا

you (too) found that which your Lord promised the truth.” They shall say: “Yes.” Then an announcer among them will call out that: “The curse of Allah shall be upon the wrongdoers.”

وَعَدَ رَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا قَالُوا نَعَمْ
فَأَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ لَعْنَةُ
اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

45. Those who hinder (people) from the path of Allah and would seek to make it deviant, and they are disbelievers concerning the Hereafter.

الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ
كَافِرُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

46. And between them will be a barrier. And on AlAaraf (the Heights) will be men who would recognize all by their marks. And they will call out to the companions of the Garden that: “Peace be on you.” (And at that time) they (men on AlAaraf) will not yet have entered it, although they will hope (to enter it).^{*34}

وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ وَعَلَى الْأَعْرَافِ
رِجَالٌ يَعْرفُونَ كُلًّا بِسِيمَتِهِمْ
وَنَادُوا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ سَلِّمُوا
عَلَيْكُمْ لَمْ يَدْخُلُوهَا وَهُمْ
يَطْمَعُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

***34** The people on “the Heights” will be those with pending cases. While their positive sides will not be strong enough as to merit admission into Paradise, their negative sides will not be so weak as to condemn them to Hell. Therefore they will wait for the decisions of their cases on “the Height”

between Paradise and Hell.

47. And when their (people on AlAaraf) eyes are turned towards the companions of the Fire, they will say: “Our Lord, do not place us with the wrongdoing people.”

﴿ وَإِذَا صُرِفَتْ أَبْصَارُهُمْ تِلْقَاءَ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴾
٤٧

48. And the companions on AlAaraf will call unto men whom they would recognize by their marks, saying: “Of what benefit to you were your gathering (of wealth), and that in which you were arrogant.”

﴿ وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْرَافِ رِجَالًا يَعْرِفُونَهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ قَالُوا مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْكُمْ جَمْعُكُمْ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴾
٤٨

49. Are they those, of whom you swore that Allah would not show them mercy. (Unto them it has been said): “Enter you the Garden. No fear shall be upon you nor shall you grieve.”

﴿ أَهْتُولَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمْتُمْ لَا يَنَالُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ ۚ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ ﴾
٤٩

50. And the companions of the Fire will call to the companions of the Garden (saying) that: “Pour on us some water or something of what Allah has provided

﴿ وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ أَفِضُوا عَلَيْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ أَوْ مِمَّا

you.” They (the dwellers of the Garden) will say: “Indeed, Allah has forbidden both to the disbelievers.”

رَزَقَكُمْ اللَّهُ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ
حَرَّمَهُمَا عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

51. Those who took their religion as an amusement and play, and the life of the world deceived them. So this day, We shall forget them, just as they forgot meeting of this Day of theirs. And as they used to repudiate Our signs. ^{*35}

الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَهْوًا
وَلَعِبًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا
فَالْيَوْمَ نَنْسَهُمْ كَمَا نَسُوا
لِقَاءَ يَوْمِهِمْ هَذَا وَمَا كَانُوا
بِعَايَتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ

***35** From this dialogue between the inmates of Paradise and the inmates of Hell and the people on the Heights, we can form some idea of how strong the faculties of men will become in the next world. The faculty of sight will become so strong that the people of Paradise and those of Hell and on the Heights will be able to see one another whenever they will desire to do so. Likewise their faculties of speech and hearing will grow so strong that the people of the three different worlds will be able to carry on their dialogues without any hindrance. From this and the like descriptions of the next world in the Quran; we learn that the laws of life in the Hereafter will be quite different from the physical laws of this world, though there will be no change in our personalities. It is a pity that such descriptions in the Quran and Hadith have made certain people skeptical

because they cannot imagine that there can be another world with greater potentialities than the limited physical world they live in. As they judge everything by the standards of this world, they make fun of such things they come across in the Quran and Hadith. But the fact is that the potentialities of life are not limited as their narrow minds are.

52. And certainly, We have brought to them a Book which We have explained in detail with knowledge,^{*36} a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe.^{*37}

وَلَقَدْ جِئْنَاهُمْ بِكِتَابٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ
عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ
يُؤْمِنُونَ



***36** That is, the Quran gives details of the reality and of the correct attitude man should adopt in the life of this world and of the basic principles of the right way of life. Then it may also be noted that these details are not based on guesswork or conjecture or whim but on pure and accurate knowledge.

***37** The Quran is guidance because its teachings are so clear that they show the right way to anyone who ponders over them. Moreover, the practical effects of that guidance can be seen in the lives of those who believe in it and follow its teachings. And it is really a great blessing because it brings a blessed change in the mental attitude, the moral outlook and the character of the one who accepts it. The truth of this was being proved by the wonderful changes that were taking place in the lives of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

53. Are they waiting except for its fulfillment.*³⁸ On the day when comes the fulfillment thereof, those who were forgetful thereof before will say: “Indeed, the messengers of our Lord did come with the truth. So are there any intercessors for us, so they might intercede for us. Or could we be sent back, so that we might do other than what we used to do.”*³⁹ Indeed, they have lost their own selves, and has gone away from them that which they used to fabricate.

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا تَأْوِيلَهُ ۗ يَوْمَ
يَأْتِي تَأْوِيلَهُ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ
نَسُوهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُ
رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ فَهَلْ لَنَا مِنْ
شُفَعَاءَ فَيَشْفَعُوا لَنَا أَوْ نُرَدُّ
فَنَعْمَلْ غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ ۗ
قَدْ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ
مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

***38** In other words, it means: The distinction between right and wrong has been made clear in the most rational manner, but there are people who do not see it; they have the examples of those who have been totally changed for the better by following the right way, though they were just like them before this, yet they do not learn any lesson from this. Such people will admit their error only when they will suffer the consequences of their wrong ways. Their case is similar to the case of a patient, who does not follow the advice of the physician, nor does he learn a lesson from the other patients, who regained their health by following the instructions of the physician, when they were

suffering from the same disease. Such a patient will admit that the ways of life he was following were fatal but only on his death bed.

***39** When they will see, with their own eyes, the consequences of the rejection of the message of the Prophets, they will say, "Now that we have witnessed that reality, which we denied at the time, when the Messengers informed us about it, we will behave in a different way if we are sent back to the same world. For response to such a request, see Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 27, 28; Surah Ibrahim, Ayats 44, 45; Surah As-Sajadah, Ayats 12, 13; Surah Fatir, Ayat 37; Surah Az-Zumur, Ayats 56-59; Surah AlMomin, Ayats 11, 12.

54. Indeed, your Lord is Allah, He who created the heavens and the earth in six days,^{*40} then He firmly established on the Throne.^{*41} He covers the night with the day, which is to follow it in haste. And the sun, and the moon, and the stars, He has made subservient by His command. Surely, His is the creation and the command.^{*42} Blessed be Allah, the Lord of the worlds.^{*43}

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ
أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ
يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ
حَثِيثًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ
وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ أَلَا
لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ ۗ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ
الْعَالَمِينَ



*40 Here the word “day” has been used in the sense of period. This word has been used in the same sense in Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 47: “The fact is that with your Lord a day is equal to one thousand years as you reckon”, and also in Al-Maarij, Ayat 4: “Angels and Gabriel ascend to Him in a day which is equal to fifty thousand years”. Allah alone Knows the real significance of it. (See E.Ns 11-15 of Surah Az-Zumur).

*41 It is very difficult for us to comprehend the nature of “He firmly established on the Throne.” It is just possible that after the creation He firmly established on the Throne of the universe, He fixed some place as the center of His limitless Kingdom, which may have been called “The Throne”, from where He is showering His blessings on the whole universe and it is also possible that the Arabic word *AlArsh* may have been used figuratively to express His Sovereignty and “Seating Himself on the Throne” may mean “Taking the reins of His Kingdom in His hands”. Whatever be the details of the text, the Quran mentions this to impress the fact that Allah is not only the Creator of the universe but also its Sovereign as well as Ruler, that after its creation He has not cut off all connections with it and has not become disinterested in its affairs, but is practically governing each and every minute part of it; all the powers of Sovereignty are, in fact, in His hands; that everything is under His command and is obedient to Him, and the destinies of everyone and everything are permanently in His hands. In this way the Quran cuts across the basic misunderstanding that gives rise to the errors like shirk

and rebellion against Him. The creed that God has nothing to do with the affairs of the universe, inevitably leads to the belief that someone else is the maker or destroyer of one's destiny, and, therefore, one should bow down before that one or one should consider one's own self to be its maker and become independent of Him.

In this connection, it is worthwhile to consider the use of words akin to "kingdom" and "kingship", which the Quran usually employs to express the relation between Allah and man. Though it is quite obvious that the Quran has employed such words, technical terms, figures of speech and a style as may be within the comprehension of human beings, yet some critics with perverted minds have inferred from this use the strange conclusion that this Book is the invention of Muhammad (peace be upon him). The line of their argument is this: "The frequent use of the words like "king" shows that the author of the Quran was irresistibly influenced by the system of kingship that was prevalent all around him during the period when this Book was composed; therefore its author cannot be Allah, Who knows that there can be no comparison between Him and a king, etc. etc." Obviously, this argument is very flimsy. The conception of the Sovereign of the earth and the heavens put forward in the Quran clearly shows that in contrast to the mortal weak kings of this world, having only a limited authority for a limited period, the King, Allah, is Eternal, All-Powerful, having the supreme Authority, above all others and for all times. This conception of the Sovereignty of King Allah falsifies the very basis of the theory of the

critics, for no human king can fit in the conception of the King laid down in the Quran. For in this conception there is no scope for anyone to claim or assume powers of sovereignty like the King, because it requires that man should acknowledge Allah alone as the sole object of worship in the religious sense and the sole sovereign in the civil and political sense.

***42** This is a further explanation of the meanings of “He firmly established on the Throne.” Allah is not only the Creator but is also the Sovereign and Ruler of the universe. After its creation, He has neither relinquished its rule in favor of others nor has He made the whole of His creation or any part of it independent, but He has kept in His own hands the functioning of the entire universe. Day and night are not following each other by themselves but by the command of Allah, Who has the power, to stop or change the present system totally. Likewise, the sun, the moon and the stars possess no inherent power of their own but are entirely under His command, and are functioning perforce like slaves under His orders.

***43** The original meaning of *barkat* (blessing) is growth, increase and development along with greatness, exaltation, permanence and stability. Besides all these meanings, the word carries with it the idea of goodness and welfare. Thus the text means, His good qualities and excellences are boundless; His beneficence spreads everywhere; He is the possessor of the highest position that has no limits. Above all, all His excellences are absolutely permanent and stable, without decay or decline." For further explanation see E.Ns

1-19 of Surah Al-Furqan.

55. Call upon your Lord humbly and in secret. Surely, He does not love those who trespass beyond bounds.

أَدْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً
إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

56. And do not cause corruption in the earth after its reformation.*⁴⁴ And call on Him with fear and hope.*⁴⁵ Surely, Allah's mercy is near to those who do good.

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ
إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا
إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ

***44** According to the Quran, the root cause of disorder in the world is that man breaks away from the service of God and, giving himself up to the service of his own self or of others and discarding His guidance, adopts the guidance of others instead for the building up of his morality, society and culture. As this creates disorder and gives birth to many other kinds of disorder, the Quran aims at its eradication. At the same time it warns that disorder is not inherent in the system of the world so that it may be replaced by order. But it so happens that disorder overwhelms the order that was set in it, as a result of man's ignorance and rebellion. In other words, man did not start his life on the earth in ignorance, barbarism, shirk, rebellion and moral disorder, and then reforms were introduced afterwards to remove them by degrees. The fact is that he started life in peace and order, which was

corrupted afterwards by the follies and mischief of the evil doers. Then Allah sent His Messengers to eradicate that disorder and to set right the system of life to bring it back to the original state. That is why they always invited the people to adopt the same old system of peace and order, and to refrain from spreading disorder.

It should also be noted that the point of view of the Quran in this matter is quite different from that of the evolutionists who assert that man has gradually come out of darkness into light and his life is being reformed by degrees. In contrast to this, the Quran declares that Allah settled man on the earth in full light and started his life with a system based on peace and order. Then afterwards man himself repeatedly followed the guidance of Satan and went into darkness and corrupted the original right and orderly system. Then Allah sent His Messengers over and over again to invite the people to come out of darkness into light and to refrain from disorder. (Refer to E.N. 230, Surah Al-Baqarah).

*45 It has become clear from this sentence that the chaos referred to above is that man should adopt someone else as his guardian, protector and helper and invoke that one for help. The order can, therefore, be restored by acknowledging Allah as the sole Guardian and Protector and Helper and by invoking Him alone.

57. And it is He who sends forth the winds as good tidings in advance of His mercy. Until when they

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا
بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا

carried a cloud heavy (with rain), We drive it to a land that is dead. Then We cause water to descend thereon. Then We bring forth therewith fruits of every kind. Thus shall We bring forth the dead, that you may take heed.

أَقَلَّتْ سَحَابًا ثِقَالًا سُقْنَهُ لِبَلَدٍ
مَيِّتٍ فَأَنْزَلْنَا بِهِ الْمَاءَ
فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ
كَذَلِكَ نُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَى لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَذَكَّرُونَ

58. And the good land, comes forth its vegetation by the permission of its Lord. And that which is sterile, come forth nothing except sparsely.^{*46} Thus do We explain the signs for a people who give thanks.

وَالْبَلَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرِجُ نَبَاتُهُ
بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَالَّذِي خَبثَ لَا
يَخْرِجُ إِلَّا نَكِدًا كَذَلِكَ
نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَشْكُرُونَ

***46** It should be noted here that the allegorical use of rain and its blessings etc. does not only aim to describe the powers of Allah and to give a proof of the life-after-death (though that has been mentioned incidentally). Its main object is to present Prophethood and its blessings, as also how it helps to distinguish good from bad, pure from impure. The coming of the Messenger and the sending down of the guidance and the teachings have been likened to the winds laden with clouds and the life giving rainfall. Just as the rainfall brings back to life the dead soil, which

begins to bring forth the treasures of life, so the teachings of the Prophet and his guidance bring back to life the dead humanity, which begins to pour out the treasures of goodness. Further on, the allegory points out that all these blessings profit only that soil which is intrinsically rich and fertile, and is waiting only for rainfall to bring forth its treasures. In the same way, only those people can benefit from the blessings of the guidance and teachings of the Messengers, who had the required capability but could not develop their latent qualities for lack of right guidance. As regards the mischievous and impure people, they are incapable of benefiting from the blessings of Prophethood for they are just like the bad soil, which brings forth only useless thorny bushes, if rain falls on it. That is why all their hidden mischief come into full play at the coming of the Messenger. The lesson derived from this allegory has been illustrated by citing a series of historical events in the succeeding passages, and it has been shown that on the coming of every Messenger in every age, mankind divided itself into two groups. One group consisted of pure and capable people, who benefited from the guidance of the Messengers, developed their capabilities to the fullest and brought forth the fruit of goodness. The second group that consisted of impure people, displayed all their impurities in their encounter with the Messengers, and was sorted out, just as alloy is separated from gold, as a useless and worthless metal.

59. Indeed, We sent Noah to his people,^{*47} so he said:

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ

“O my people, worship Allah. You do not have any god other than Him.^{*48} Certainly, I fear for you the punishment of a great day.”

فَقَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا
لَكُمْ مِنْ اِلٰهِ غَيْرُهُ رَ اِنِّيْ اَخَافُ
عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٥١﴾

***47** The first of the historical events referred to in E.N. 46, is being related here. According to the Quran, Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) was sent to his people, who were the first to corrupt the right way of life followed by Adam (peace be upon him) and taught by him to his descendants. We learn from the brief hints in the Quran and the details in the Bible that the people of Noah lived in the country which is now called Iraq. The same is confirmed by the tablets found in the archaeological remains of Babel which are older than the Bible. They tell a story similar to the one related in the Bible and the Quran, and fix the place of its occurrence near Mosul. Moreover, the traditions that have come down from the most ancient times from Kurdistan and Armenia say that the ark of Noah anchored at some place in the same region. They also point out to some relics connected with the story of Noah near Mt. Ararat and the inhabitants of Nakhchiwan claim even today that the town was founded by Prophet Noah (peace be upon him).

Traditions, similar to the story of Noah, are found in the ancient literatures of Greece, Egypt, India and China. Besides these, the traditions that have come down from the most ancient times from Burma, Malaya, East Indies, Australia, New Guinea and from different parts of Europe

and America are also similar to it. All this shows that this story is connected with the period when all the descendants of Adam lived in the same region from where they dispersed all over the earth. That is why references to the “Flood” are found in the ancient history of every nation, though they forgot its real facts and mixed it with the fictions of their own imagination.

***48** This verse and others, in which the story of Noah (peace be upon him) has been related, show that his people did neither deny the existence of Allah nor were they ignorant of it, nor did they deny His worship. But the root cause of their deviation was that they were involved in shirk and had set up other partners with Allah in His Godhead and regarded them worthy of worship along with Him. This basic deviation led them to numerous other evils. For instance, this gave birth to a special class to represent the false gods they had set up. By and by, this class took possession of all the religious, political and economic powers of the community and created artificial barriers of high and low among people. Consequently, chaos, tyranny and immorality were rampant everywhere and humanity sank to the lowest depths of degradation, Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) was sent to reform this state of affairs. Accordingly, he exerted his utmost with great wisdom and fortitude for a very long time to bring about the desired reform, but that corrupt class had cunningly deluded the common people so much that all his efforts proved fruitless. When no more hope of their reform was left, Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) prayed to Allah and said, “My Lord,

do not leave upon the earth even one of these disbelievers for, if Thou leave anyone of them alive, he will lead astray Thy servants and will give birth only to wicked and ungrateful descendants.” (For details please refer to Surah Hud: Ayats 25-48, Surah Ash-Shuara: Ayats 105-119 and the entire of Surah Nooh).

60. The chieftains of his people said: “Indeed, we see you in plain error.”

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ إِنَّا لَنَرُكَ
فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٦٠﴾

61. He said: “O my people, there is no error in me, but I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds.”

قَالَ يَقَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي ضَلَالَةٌ
وَلَكِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦١﴾

62. “I convey unto you the messages of my Lord and give sincere advice to you. And I know from Allah that which you do not know.”

أُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَأُنصَحُ
لَكُمْ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

63. “Or do you wonder that there has come to you a reminder from your Lord through a man from amongst you, that he may warn you, and that you may fear (Allah), and that you may receive mercy.”*49

أَوْعَجِبْتُمْ أَن جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّن
رَّبِّكُمْ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ
لِيُنذِرَكُمْ وَلِتَتَّقُوا وَلَعَلَّكُمْ
تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

***49** The incident has been related here because what had happened between Noah (peace be upon him) and his people was exactly taking place at that time between Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his people. His Message was the same as that of Noah and the response of the chiefs to it was also the same. The chiefs of the Quraish were raising the same doubts against his Message that were raised by the chiefs of the people of Noah (peace be upon him) thousands of years before the Prophet (peace be upon him), and the same things were said in reply as were said by Noah (peace be upon him). Further on, it has been shown in the stories of the Messengers that the attitude of their people towards their Message was the same that was being shown by the chiefs of Makkah. Thus, the Quran impresses on its addressees the fact that in every age, the basic deviation of each people had always been the same, and that the invitation of the Messenger of Allah had also been the same in every age, and the ultimate end of all those who denied and rejected that invitation, has always been the same and will always be the same.

64. Then they denied him, so We saved him and those with him in the ship, and We drowned those who denied Our revelations.^{*50} Indeed, they were a blind people.

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ
 فِي الْفُلِّ وَأَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِينَ
 كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا
 قَوْمًا عَمِينَ



***50** The brief descriptions of certain events from the mission of Prophets at certain places in the Quran have

given rise to the conjecture that the whole thing was finished in a couple of meetings. They think that a prophet presented his claim before his people and they raised some objections against it. Then the Prophet answered them, but they rejected him, and declared the Message to be false. This was repeated a couple of times; then God sent down His scourge. This is a wrong conjecture made by those who are ignorant of the style of the Quran. These things are only parts of the long struggle, for the Quran does not give all the details of a story at one and the same place. In relating some historical event, it confines itself only to that part of the story which is directly connected with the theme under discussion and leaves out all other details. As an illustration, let us cite instances of this from the story of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him). Here the aim is to warn the people of the consequences of the denial and rejection of the Message of the Prophet. So it was not necessary to mention the long period during which the Prophet continued preaching the Message to his people. But at places where the story is related to teach fortitude to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions, a special mention has been made of the long period during which Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) went on preaching the Message. This is to encourage them that they should not lose heart by seeing no great and immediate result of their efforts of a few years but should learn a lesson from the story of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him), who went on performing his mission with fortitude for centuries in very adverse circumstances,

without losing heart. (See Surah Al-Ankaboot: Ayat 14). Likewise, some people become skeptical when they read, over and over again, such a thing as this: “We drowned (destroyed) those who denied the Message and treated it as false”: they ask, “Why do such things not happen now a days?” They admit that though the rise and fall of nations is always taking place in the world, this change is of a different nature from the one described in the Quran, e.g. instant destruction of a nation by an earthquake or flood or storm or lightning after due notice by a Prophet. In order to remove this doubt, one should understand the difference between the case of that community in which a Prophet is born and raised from among themselves, and the one where a Prophet is not present in person. He conveys Allah’s message directly to them in their own language and presents a perfect and excellent model of it in his own person in such a convincing way as to leave no excuse whatsoever for them to reject it. Therefore such a community deserves the severest punishment on the spot for rejecting the Messenger of Allah after such clear signs. Obviously the case of such a community is basically different from the case of that community which does not receive the Message directly from the Prophet but received it through indirect means. So there is no wonder if such chastisements are not inflicted on the spot now, as they were during the times of the Prophets. This is because after the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him), the last in the line of prophets, no prophet has been sent, nor shall any be sent up to the Last Day.

This does not, however, mean that Allah has now totally given up the infliction of chastisements. The fact is that even now He sends disasters by way of warning or punishment on those communities which rebel against Him and deviate into error. But it is a pity that people do not turn their attention towards the real cause. Instead of looking at these as the consequences of their own evil ways, their scientists, their historians and their philosophers, who cannot go beyond physical causes, mislead them by ascribing these to some physical and historical laws. These so called scholars do not let them turn their attention to the fact that there is Allah above them, Who first warns them of their evil ways by inflicting minor disasters, and then, if they persist in the wrong ways, He throws them into the abyss of destruction.

65. And unto Aad^{*51} (We sent) their brother, Houd. He said: "O my people, worship Allah. You do not have any god other than Him. Will you then not fear (Allah)."

وَإِلَىٰ عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا ۖ قَالَ
يَقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِن
إِلَهِ غَيْرِهِ ۚ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ

*51 Aad was one of the most ancient tribes of Arabia. Their stories were well known and were related all over the country. The stories of their power and wealth had become proverbial and their utter annihilation also was cited as an example. Their notoriety helped to produce some new words akin to their name. Every ancient thing is called *aadi* and archaeological remains are called *aadiyyat*. The land, which has no owner left and thus becomes fallow, is called

adi-ul-ard.

This tribe is often mentioned in the ancient Arabic poetry. The experts in the art of genealogy of the Arab tribes mention Aad as the first of the extinct tribes of Arabia. There is a tradition that once a man of Bani Zahl-bin-Shaiban, who was a resident of the territory where the Aad tribe lived, came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and related stories about Aad, that had come down from ancient times.

According to the Quran, the tribe of Aad lived in Ahqaf, surrounded by Hijaz, Yaman and Yamamah. From here they had established their authority over a vast territory that extended from the western coast of Yaman and Umman and Hadar Maut to Iraq. Though their remains have become quite extinct from the historical point of view, yet there are some remnants in Southern Arabia that are ascribed to Aad. At one place in Hadar Maut, there is a tomb which is said to be of Prophet Hud (peace be upon him). In 1837, James R. Wellested, an officer in the British Navy, discovered near Hisn-i-Ghurab a tablet which contained a mention of Prophet Hud (peace be upon him). Moreover, the writing on the tablet showed that they were the followers of the law of Prophet Hud (peace be upon him). (See E.N. 25 of Surah Al-Ahqaf).

66. The chieftains of those who disbelieved among his people said: "Indeed, we see you in foolishness, and indeed, we think you of the

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ
قَوْمِهِ إِنَّا لَنَرُّكَ فِي سَفَاهَةٍ
وَإِنَّا لَنَظُنُّكَ

liars.”

الْكَذِبِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

67. He said: “O my people, there is no foolishness in me, but I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds.”

قَالَ يَقَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي سَفَاهَةٌ
وَلِكِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

68. “I convey unto you the messages of my Lord, and I am for you a trustworthy adviser.”

أُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي
وَأَنَا لَكُمْ نَاصِحٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿٦٨﴾

69. “Or do you wonder that there has come to you a reminder from your Lord through a man from amongst you, that he may warn you. And remember when He made you successors after the people of Noah, and increased you in stature among the creation. So remember the bounties of Allah,^{*52} that you may be successful.”

أَوْعَجِبْتُمْ أَن جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ
مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ
لِيُنذِرَكُمْ ۚ وَأَذْكُرُوا إِذْ
جَعَلْنَا خُلَفَاءَ مِن بَعْدِ قَوْمِ
نُوحٍ وَزَادَكُمْ فِي الْخَلْقِ بَصْطَةً
فَاذْكُرُوا ءَالَآءَ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

***52** The Arabic word *alaa* means:

- (1) Blessings.
- (2) Demonstrations of nature and,

(3) Praiseworthy qualities.

Thus the verse can be elaborated to mean: Remember the blessings and favors of Allah and do not forget that He also has the power to take away these from you.

70. They said: “Have you come to us that we should worship Allah alone and forsake that which our fathers used to worship.^{*53} Then bring upon us that wherewith you have threatened us if you are of the truthful.”

قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا لِنَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَحْدَهُ
وَنَذَرَ مَا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا
فَأْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ
الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾

***53** This verse also shows that the people of Prophet Hud (peace be upon him) were neither ignorant of the existence of Allah nor did they deny Him nor did they refuse to worship Him. What they refused to accept was the invitation of Prophet Hud (peace be upon him) to worship Allah alone, without associating anyone else with Him.

71. He said: “Surely defilement and wrath from your Lord have befallen upon you. Do you dispute with me about names which you have named, you and your fathers,^{*54} Allah has not sent down for which any authority.^{*55} Then await, I am indeed

قَالَ قَدْ وَقَعَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ
رَبِّكُمْ رِجْسٌ وَغَضَبٌ
أَتُجَدِلُونِي فِي أَسْمَاءِ
سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَءَابَاؤُكُمْ مَا
نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ ﴿٧١﴾

with you among those
who wait.”

فَأَنْتَظِرُونَ إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِّنَ
الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ

*54 That is, you call one *the lord of rain*, the other *the lord of air* or *lord of wealth* or *lord of disease*, when, in fact, none of these is lord of anything. These are mere names that you have invented. In our own times they call one the remover of difficulties (*mushkil kusha*) and the other the bestower of treasures (*gunje buksh*), whereas they have no power to remover difficulties or have no treasure to bestow on anyone. In fact, such titles are empty words without any corresponding possessor of such qualities, entitling anyone to these titles. Therefore, if one argues to justify these titles, he, in fact, raises disputes over mere names that have no reality behind them.

*55 That is, Allah, Whom you yourselves acknowledge to be the Lord, has not delegated to any of these gods the powers of a lord or god. He has never said that He has delegated a part of His Godhead to such and such a one, nor has He sent command authorizing anyone with the powers of giver or remover of difficulties. You yourselves have, of your own accord, bestowed such titles on the ones you pleased.

72. So We saved him and
those with him by a mercy
from Us, and We cut the
roots of those who denied
Our revelations, and they

فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ
مِّنَّا وَقَطَّعْنَا دَابِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا
بِعَايَاتِنَا وَمَا كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

were not believers.*56



***56** “We cut off the roots of those who denied” means, We destroyed them so completely that no sign of theirs was left in the world. This is a fact that has been established by the traditions of Arabia. The archaeological remains also bear testimony that the people of the First Aad were so completely annihilated that even their monuments were effaced from the world. The Arab historians count the Aad tribe among the extinct tribes. They, however, assert it as a fact that the followers of Prophet Hud (peace be upon him) were saved and were known as the Second Aad and the tablet of Hisn-i-Ghurab mentioned in E.N. 51, is one of their monuments. Here are some extracts of the inscriptions which were inscribed on it some 1800 years before Christ:

“We have lived for a long period in this fort in great prosperity. Our canals were always full of water.....and our rulers were noble kings who were free from evil. They were, however, hard on those who disturbed the peace. They ruled over us in accordance with the Law of Hud and used to enter all important decisions in a book. We believe in miracles and life-after-death.”

The above extracts bear witness to the fact stated in the Quran that the followers of Prophet Hud (peace be upon him) became the inheritors of the ancient glory and prosperity of the Aad tribe.

73. And to (the tribe of) Thamud*57 (We sent) their

وَإِلَىٰ ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ

brother Salih. He said: “O my people, worship Allah. You do not have any god other than Him. Indeed there has come to you a clear sign from your Lord. This is the she camel of Allah unto you as a sign.^{*58} So leave her to graze in Allah’s earth, and do not touch her with harm lest there seize you a painful punishment.”

يَقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ
 مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۗ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ
 بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ ۗ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ
 لَكُمْ آيَةٌ ۗ فَذَرُوهَا تَأْكُلْ
 فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَمَسُّوهَا
 بِسُوءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ



***57** After Aad, Thamud is the second most widely known ancient tribe of Arabia. Before the revelation of the Quran, their stories were very common among the Arabs. Their mention occurs in the poetry and the addresses of pre-Islamic Arabia, and on the tablets found in Assyria. The ancient historians and geographers of Greece, Alexandria and Rome also mention this tribe. Some of their remains existed till some years before the birth of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). According to the Roman historians, the people of this tribe joined the Roman army and fought against the Nabataeans, their enemies.

The tribe of Thamud inherited the territory in the north-western part of Arabia and is even today known by the name of Al-Hijr. Its capital was Madaini-Salih, which is now a days a railroad station on the Hijaz Railway between Al-Madinah and Tabuk. Its old name is Hijr. There are

even now spread over thousands of acres of land, those stony buildings that they had carved out of hills. Even a cursory glance at this dead city leads one to the conclusion that its population must have been about five hundred thousand people.

At the time of the revelation of the Quran, the trading caravans from Hijaz used to pass through the archaeological remains of Thamud. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) was leading his followers towards Tabuk, he passed by and pointed out towards the remains and asked them to bear in mind the lesson which such things hold out for every close observer. He pointed to a well from which the she-camel of Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) drank water, and told them to drink water only from that well. Then he showed them a pass over a hill and said that the she-camel used to come through it to the well for drinking water. That pass is still called Fajj-un-Naqah (the pass of the she-camel.) Then he assembled together those Muslims who were enjoying a walk through the remains and said: “This is the territory of the tribe on which Allah inflicted His scourge. Therefore pass through this with as much haste as you can, because this is not a place of enjoyment but a place of lamentation.”

***58** The wording of the text clearly shows that Allah’s she camel was the clear proof, which has been called a sign in the next sentence. We learn from Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 154-158 that the people of his tribe had themselves demanded from Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) to bring a clear sign of his appointment as a Messenger of Allah. In

response to this, the Prophet presented the she camel as a sign. This is a positive proof of the fact that the birth of the she camel had taken place in some miraculous manner and her appearance was a miracle of the same kind as presented by other Prophets to the disbelievers at their demand of a proof of their Prophethood. Another proof of her miraculous birth is the fact that Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) presented the she camel to the disbelievers with a warning to this effect: “Your lives are directly connected with the life of this she camel. She shall graze freely in your fields and she shall be privileged to drink water at the well one day all alone by herself, and all your cattle shall drink water the following day, turn by turn; and if you touch her with an evil intention, Allah’s scourge will overtake you all of a sudden.” It is obvious from this that the she-camel could have been presented in such a forcible manner only if the people had seen with their own eyes that she was an extraordinary animal. That is why they let her graze freely in their fields and let her drink water throughout the day all by herself, though in their hearts they were not willing to accede to this. They were so much afraid of her that in order to kill her they had to hold long consultations and hatch secret plots, though Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) had no worldly power to prevent them from this. This shows that they knew there was some hidden power behind her that made her so bold as to roam about wherever she liked.

The Quran does not say anything about its physique as to how it came into being. Moreover, there is no mention of its

miraculous existence in any authentic tradition. Therefore, one is not bound to accept the stories the commentators have related concerning her birth, etc. However, it is quite evident from the Quran that she was a miracle in one way or the other.

74. “And remember when He made you successors after Aad and gave you habitations in the earth. You take for yourselves palaces from its plains, and carve out homes in the mountains.^{*59} So remember the bounties of Allah, and do not go about in the land making corruption.”^{*60}

وَأَذْكُرُوا إِذْ جَعَلْنَا خُلَفَاءَ
مِنْ بَعْدِ عَادٍ وَبَوَّأْنَاكُمْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْ
سُهُولِهَا قُصُورًا وَتَنْحِتُونَ
الْجِبَالَ بُيُوتًا فَادْكُرُوا آيَاتِ
اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْتَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ
مُفْسِدِينَ



***59** The people of Thamud used to carve out grand houses in the hills as has already been mentioned in E.N. 57. Some of them are still intact at Madain-i-Salih and bear witness to the wonderful skill they had achieved in engineering.

***60** That is, you should take a warning from the woeful end of Aad. The same Allah, Who destroyed that mischievous tribe and made you its successor has the power to destroy you, if you become mischievous like Aad, and make someone else your successor.

75. The chieftains of those who were arrogant among

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا

his people said to those who had been oppressed, those who believed among them: “Do you know that Salih is sent forth from his Lord.” They said: “Surely we, in that which he has been sent with, believe.”

مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لِّلَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُوا
لِمَنْ ءَامَنَ مِنْهُمْ اَتَعْلَمُونَ
اَنَّ صَالِحًا مَّرْسَلٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ
قَالُوا اِنَّا بِمَا اُرْسِلَ بِهِ
مُؤْمِنُونَ



76. Those who were arrogant said: “Indeed we, in that which you have believed, are disbelievers.”

قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا اِنَّا
بِالَّذِي ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ كٰفِرُونَ



77. So they hamstrung the she camel,^{*61} and they were insolent toward the command of their Lord. And they said: “O Salih, bring upon us that which you threaten us, if you are of those sent (from Allah).”

فَعَقَرُوا النَّاقَةَ وَعَتَوْا عَنْ اَمْرِ
رَبِّهِمْ وَقَالُوا يَصْلِحْ اٰتِنَا بِمَا
تَعِدُنَا اِن كُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ



***61** Though only one man had killed the she camel, the whole tribe has been declared to be guilty of the crime because it was backing him as a whole, and he was, in fact, merely its tool, for every crime which represents the will of a nation or is approved by it, is a national crime, even

though it is committed by one individual. According to the Quran, even that crime, which is committed openly by an individual, and is tolerated by the community, is a national crime.

78. Then the earthquake^{*62} seized them, so they lay prostrate (dead) in their dwelling places.

فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا
فِي دَارِهِمْ جَثِيمِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾

*62 The catastrophe that overtook Thamud has been called the earthquake, but in other places it has been called a cry, a thunderbolt, a roaring noise.

79. Then he (Salih) turned from them and said: “O my people, I have indeed conveyed to you the message of my Lord, and I have given you good advice, but you do not like good advisers.”

فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَاقَوْمِ لَقَدْ
أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رَسُولَ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ
لَكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُحِبُّونَ
النَّاصِحِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾

80. And Lot, when he said to his people:^{*63} “Do you commit an indecency, such as not any one ever did before you among the worlds (people).”

وَلُوطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ
الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ
أَحَدٍ مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

*63 Those people lived in the territory now called Trans-Jordan and is situated between Iraq and Palestine. According to the Bible its headquarters was Sodom which was situated somewhere near the Dead Sea or has been

submerged in it. The Talmud says that they had four more big cities besides Sodom, and the land between these cities looked like one big garden for miles, and charmed the onlookers. But now those cities cannot be located with accuracy because the whole land is covered with the Dead Sea, which is also called Lot's Sea.

Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) was the nephew of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). He left Iraq along with his uncle and traveled with him over to Syria, Palestine and Egypt in order to gain experience for the propagation of the Message. Then he was appointed as a Messenger by Allah and sent to reform the wicked tribe, which has been called his people because he might have had some blood relation with it.

It is a pity that in the existing Bible, which has been tampered with by the Jews, the character of Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) has been blemished. Besides other things, even his mission to the plains of Jordan has been described as a migration to a fertile land after a strife between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle. (Genesis 5: 12,13). But the Quran refutes this allegation and says that Lot was appointed a Messenger and was sent there to reform those people.

81. "Indeed, you come unto men with lust instead of women.^{*64} Nay but, you are a people who exceed all bounds."

إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً
مِّنْ دُونِ النِّسَاءِ ۚ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ
قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ



***64** At other places, the Quran mentions some other crimes of these people, but here it mentions only their most heinous crime that brought about the scourge of Allah on them.

Although wicked people have always been committing this most heinous sin that has given the people of Sodom an everlasting notoriety, yet it has always been considered a filthy and detestable act. But the only people who have ever tried to raise it to a moral excellence, were the Greek philosophers in the ancient world, and the Europeans in the modern world. The latter are doing their utmost to make up the deficiency by making an open propaganda for it, and have succeeded in giving this filthy act a legal sanction. So much so that the legislatures of some countries have legalized it. It does not require elaborate argument to show that homo-sexuality is a horrible social crime and a heinous sin. For, the Creator has made the male and the female of each and every living species different. The difference in the human species has been created to serve another purpose. This is to urge the two to live together in order to form a family along with their offspring. For, this is the foundation of a civilized life for which man has been created. That is why their bodies have been made complementary to attract each other for the satisfaction of sex urges and for the service of the natural function of reproduction of the species. Therefore the one who satisfies this sex urge in an un-natural way becomes guilty of many crimes at one and the same time.

(1) Such a one, so to speak, wages a war against the natural

and physical functioning of his own organs and those of the victims of his lust. This inevitably produces very harmful effects on their physiques, their minds and their morality.

(2) He becomes guilty of treachery and dishonesty against nature for he enjoys sexual pleasure, without performing the necessary service of his species and civilization and without fulfilling the rights and obligations attached to it.

(3) He commits a breach of trust against the society in general for he enjoys all the benefits of the civilized society, but in his turn does not take on himself the responsibilities of the married life and wastes all his powers in the un-natural gratification of his sexual desires. This selfish and unworthy attitude is not only useless but also positively harmful to the collective morality. Thus he makes himself unfit for the service of the family and of the human race and produces un-natural feminine characteristics in, at least, one other male, and opens the way to adultery and moral degradation for at least two women.

82. And his people had no answer except that they said: “Drive them out of your town. They are indeed a people who keep (pretend) to be pure.”*65

وَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ
إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنْ
قَرِيَّتِكُمْ إِنَّهُمْ
أُنَاسٌ
يَتَطَهَّرُونَ



*65 The very fact that they could not tolerate even the presence of pious people among them, shows that they had gone to the lowest depths of moral degradation. They were

not only shameless, wicked and immoral but also had lost every feeling of goodness and virtue. That is why they wanted to turn out Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) and his followers so that none should be left among them to invite them to virtue. When they, as a community, reached this extreme limit of wickedness and no vestige of goodness was left in them, Allah decreed that they should be totally exterminated because there was then no justification for their existence on the earth. Their case may be likened to a basket of apples, most of which are rotten, and only a few are good. When the good apples are taken out of it, then the remaining fruit becomes utterly useless and should, therefore, be thrown away into a heap of garbage.

83. So We saved him and his household, except his wife, she was of those who remained behind.*66

فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ
كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ

*66 In other places it has been made clear that Lot's wife, who probably was one of their daughters, supported her disbelieving relatives in their conflict with the Prophet, and did not leave them up to the end. That is why Allah ordained that Lot should not take her away with his followers.

84. And We rained down on them a rain (of stones).*67 Then see how was the consequence of the criminals.*68

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا ط فَأَنْظَرُوا
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الْمُجْرِمِينَ

***67** The rain was not a rain of water but a rain of stones as has been explicitly stated at some other places in the Quran. Their habitations were turned upside down and sunk into the earth.

***68** Here and at other places the Quran merely declares that sodomy is such a heinous sin that it brought the wrath of Allah on a people. Then we learn from the guidance of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that it is the duty of the Islamic State to eradicate this crime and should punish those who are guilty of it. In regard to this there are traditions with wording to this effect:

(a) Kill the sodomite and the object of sodomy.

(b) Whether they are married or unmarried.

(c) Stone to death the upper one and the lower one. But no definite and specific punishment was prescribed for the criminals because during his time, no case of sodomy was ever brought before the Prophet (peace be upon him).

There are, however, some traditions from his successors regarding this. Ali is of the opinion that the criminals should be killed with sword and the dead bodies should not be buried but burnt to ashes. Abu Bakr also agrees with it. Umar and Uthman are of the opinion that they should be taken under the roof of a dilapidated building, which should be pulled down on them, (May Allah be pleased with them all). Ibn Abbas has decreed that they should be thrown down headlong from the top of the highest building of the habitation and then stoned to death. Imam Shafai says that both the criminals involved in sodomy should be killed, whether married or unmarried. According to Shaibi,

Zuhri, Malik and Ahmad they should be stoned to death. Saeed bin Musayyib, Ata, Hasan Basri, Ibrahim Nakhi, Sufyan Thauri and Auzai are of the opinion that the punishment is the same as for adultery, that is, one hundred stripes and exile for the unmarried, and stoning to death for the married. Imam Abu Hanifah is of the opinion that the culprit should be punished in accordance with the circumstances of the crime with an exemplary punishment. There is also a saying of Imam Shafai to this effect.

It should also be noted that it is unlawful for the husband to commit sodomy with his own wife. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has declared, "The man who commits such an act with a woman is accursed" and "Allah will not even look at a person who commits this offense with a woman". In another tradition, he has warned, "The one who cohabits with a woman in her menses or commits sodomy with her or goes to a soothsayer and believes him to be true, is a disbeliever in what has been sent down to Muhammad."

85. And to Midian^{*69} (We sent) their brother Shuaib. He said: "O my people, worship Allah. You do not have any god other than Him. Indeed, there has come to you a clear sign from your Lord. So give full measure and weight, and do not deprive people in their goods."^{*70}

وَالِى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا
 قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا
 لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلَهِ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ
 جَاءَتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
 فَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ
 وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ

And do not cause corruption in the earth after its reformation.^{*71} That will be better for you, if you are believers.”^{*72}

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ
إِصْلَاحِهَا ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ



***69** The territory of Midian lay to the northwest of Hijaz and to the south of Palestine in the eastern side of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqabah and extended to a part of the Sinai Peninsula. The Midianites were great traders. Their habitations lay at the crossroads of the trade routes from Yemen to Makkah to Syria along the side of the Red Sea and from Iraq to Egypt. Therefore they were well known among the Arabs and were remembered even after their extermination for their trade caravans to Syria and Egypt had to pass through their archaeological remains.

In order to grasp the significance of their story in the Quran, it should be noted that the Midianites claimed to be the descendants of Midian, a son of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) from his third wife, Qaturah. Though all of them had not directly descended from him, they claimed to be so. For, according to an ancient custom, all those people who became attached to some great man, began, by and by, to be counted among his descendants. That is why all Arabs were called Bani Ismail, though the majority of them were not his descendants. The same was the case with Bani Israil. Likewise all the inhabitants of the territory, who came under the influence of Midian, a son of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) came to be known as Bani Madyan and the territory itself was called Madyan

(Midian).

In the light of the above historical fact, there is no reason to suppose that they heard for the first time the voice of the truth from Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him). In fact, they were originally Muslims like the Israelites, but had become corrupt at the time when Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) was sent to them, just as the Israelites were at the time when Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was sent to them. Though they had become involved in shirk and immoralities by mixing with the mushrik and immoral people during the six centuries or so after Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), yet they professed to be believers and were proud of that.

***70** This shows that Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) was sent to reform them of their two main evils, shirk and dishonesty in trade.

***71** For a detailed commentary on this, refer to E.Ns 44 and 45 of this Surah. Here Prophet Shuaib wanted to draw their attention particularly to this: “You should not corrupt by your wrong beliefs and immoral ways the right way of life that had been established by the former Prophets.”

***72** The fact that the Prophet appeals to their faith shows that they themselves professed to be believers, as has been pointed out in E.N. 69. They were corrupt Muslims, who, though involved in wrong beliefs and misconduct, not only professed to be believers, but also were proud of this. That is why the Prophet appealed to them, “If you are true believers, you should judge good and evil by the standard of the righteous and honest people, and not by the

standards of those worldly people who do not believe in Allah and the Hereafter.”

86. “And do not sit on every path, threatening, and hindering from the way of Allah those who believe in Him. And seeking to make it deviant. And remember when you were few, then He multiplied you. And see how was the consequence of those who did corruption.”

وَلَا تَقْعُدُوا بِكُلِّ صِرَاطٍ
تُوعِدُونَ وَتَصُدُّونَ عَنْ
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِهِ
وَتَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا ۗ
وَأَذْكُرُوا إِذْ
كُنْتُمْ قَلِيلًا فَكَثَّرَكُمْ
وَأَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ
عَاقِبَةُ
الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

87. “And if there is a party of you who has believed in that I have been sent with, and a party that has not believed, so be patient until Allah judges between us. And He is the best of judges.”

وَإِنْ كَانَ طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ
ءَامَنُوا بِأَلَّذِي أُرْسِلْتُ
بِهِ ۖ وَطَآئِفَةٌ لَّمْ
يُؤْمِنُوا فَاصْبِرُوا حَتَّىٰ
يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ
بَيْنَنَا ۗ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ
الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

88. The chieftains of those who were arrogant among his people said: “We shall certainly drive you out, O

﴿٨٨﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ
أَسْتَكْبَرُوا
مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لَنُخْرِجَنَّكَ
يَشْعَبُ

Shuaib, and those who believe with you from our township, or else you shall return to our religion.” He said: “Even if we were unwilling.”

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَكَ مِنْ قَرْيَتِنَا
أَوْ لَتَعُودَنَّ فِي مِلَّتِنَا قَالَ أَوْلَوْ
كُنَّا كَرِهِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾

89. “Indeed, we should have invented against Allah a lie if we returned to your religion after when Allah has rescued us from it. And it is not for us that we return to it, except that Allah, our Lord, should so will.^{*73} Our Lord comprehends all things in knowledge. Upon Allah do we put our trust. Our Lord, judge between us and our people in truth. And You are the best of those who give judgment.”

قَدْ أَفْتَرَيْنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا إِنْ
عُدْنَا فِي مِلَّتِكُمْ بَعْدَ إِذْ
نَجَّيْنَا اللَّهَ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَكُونُ لَنَا
أَنْ نَعُودَ فِيهَا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ
رَبُّنَا وَسِعَ رَبُّنَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا
عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا افْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا
وَبَيْنَ قَوْمِنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ
الْفَاتِحِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

***73** Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) hastened to add these words to show that he could not claim with certainty even this much that they would not return to the creed of the disbelievers. A believer who rightly and fully comprehends the significance of the power of Allah, knows that it is His will that prevails over everything. Therefore he cannot claim with certainty, “I will do this or I will not do this, for the fulfillment of this or that depends entirely

on the will of my Lord. If He will, I shall become successful, otherwise I shall fail in it.”

Allah has taught the same thing in Surah Al-Kahaf, Ayats 23-24: “Never say about anything, I will do this tomorrow, for you cannot do anything, but say, If it be Allah’s Will.”

90. And the chieftains of those who disbelieved among his people said: “If you follow Shuaib, indeed you shall then be the losers.”^{*74}

وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لِيِنِ اتَّبَعْتُمْ شُعَيْبًا إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا لَخَسِرُونَ

^{*74} We should not pass cursorily over this sentence, but should think deeply about its implications. The chiefs and the leaders of Midian meant and wanted to convince the people of this thing: “We shall be utterly ruined if we accept and practice the fundamental principles of honesty, righteousness, uprightness and morality. It is obvious that our trade and commerce can never flourish if we apply the principle of truth to it and carry out our bargains with honesty. Besides this, if we do not exploit our geographical position on the crossroads of the most important trade routes, and let the caravans pass on without molestation and become peaceful citizens, all its political and commercial advantages will come to an end. This will also bring to an end the awe and influence we wield over our neighboring countries.” This fear of ruin was not peculiar to the people of Shuaib (peace be upon him) alone. In every age the corrupt people have felt the same fear concerning the way of truth, righteousness and honesty. This has

always been the considered opinion of all the corrupt people that it is not possible to carry out commercial, political and other worldly activities without resort to lies, dishonesty and immorality. That is why the greatest argument against the Message of truth has always been that the community would be ruined, if it gave up the known worldly wrong ways and adopted the right way.

91. Then the earthquake seized them, so they lay prostrate (dead) in their dwelling places.

فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي
دَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

92. Those who denied Shuaib became as if they had never dwelt therein. Those who denied Shuaib, it was they who were the losers.^{*75}

الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا شُعَيْبًا كَأَن لَّمْ
يَغْنَوْا فِيهَا ۗ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا
شُعَيْبًا كَانُوا هُمُ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾

***75** This total destruction of Midian had become a byword among the neighboring nations. In Psalms (83: 5-9) Prophet David (peace be upon him) invokes the help of Allah against those oppressors who have taken crafty counsel against thy people, saying, “Do unto them as unto the Midianites.” And Prophet Isaiah (peace be upon him) consoles the Israel, saying, “.....be not afraid of Assyrian...he shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt...the Lord of the hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian....”

(Isaiah: 10: 21-26.).

93. Then he (Shuaib) turned away from them and said: “O my people, indeed I have conveyed to you the message of my Lord, and I have given you good advice. Then how could I grieve for a people who disbelieved.”*76

فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَاقَوْمِ لَقَدْ
أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رَسُولًا مِّن رَّبِّي
وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ فَكَيْفَ آسَأُ
عَلَى قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ



*76 A deep significance underlies all the stories which have been related here. Every story applied appropriately and exactly to the case of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his people, the Quraish. In every story there are two parties - the Prophet and his people. In every story the Message of the Prophet, his teachings, his admonition and all other things were exactly the same as those of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). On the other side, in every case his people, who were sunk deep in wrong creeds, immoralities and obduracy, and the chiefs who were puffed up with pride, rejected the Message contemptuously. The Quraish were behaving exactly in the same way towards Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his Message. They have been warned indirectly that their doom would be similar to those people if they did not accept his Message, and did not avail of the opportunity that Allah had afforded them. If they persisted blindly in their obduracy they would meet with the same destruction which had always been the doom of those peoples who persisted in

their deviation.

94. And We did not send unto a township any prophet, except that We seized its people with tribulation and adversity, that they may humble themselves.

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّن نَّبِيٍّ إِلَّا
أَخَذْنَا أَهْلَهَا بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضَّرَّعُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

95. Then We changed in place of the evil plight, the good, until they grew affluent and they said: "Indeed, our fathers were touched by suffering and affluence." Then We seized them suddenly while they did not perceive.^{*77}

ثُمَّ بَدَّلْنَا مَكَانَ السَّيِّئَةِ الْحَسَنَةَ
حَتَّىٰ عَفَوْا وَقَالُوا قَدْ مَسَّ
ءَابَاءَنَا الضَّرَّاءُ وَالسَّرَّاءُ
فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا
يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

***77** After citing the individual case of every Prophet and his people, now the general and comprehensive procedure has been enunciated that Allah adopted at the appointment of each one of His Messengers. Whenever a Messenger was sent, Allah afflicted his people with adversities and calamities so that they should become meek and humble, and be conditioned for the acceptance of the Message. Accordingly, He sent famines and epidemics to them and made them suffer economic losses, defeats in wars, and the like, in order to humble their pride and haughtiness and to frustrate their over confidence in their powers, riches, resources, capabilities etc. This was to make them realize

that there is a higher Power above them that controls their destinies so that their hearts should be inclined to admonition and they should bow down humbly before their Lord. But, if this failed to incline their hearts to the acceptance of the truth, they were tempted with prosperity. And this was the beginning of their end. As a rule, when such people, as are afflicted with adversity and calamities, begin to flourish and are enriched with blessings, they do not show any gratitude to their Master, and even forget the days of adversity. Then their intellectuals delude them by arguing like this: There is nothing unusual in this. History tells us that the vicissitudes of fortune have always been taking place independent of moral values and these are not taking place under the control of Allah or in accordance with moral laws but blind nature is always working and bringing about adversity or prosperity. That is why our forefathers also had had their adversities and prosperities. It is, therefore, a sign of mental weakness to draw any moral lesson from these and to bow down and humble oneself before Allah.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) had described the same thing in a tradition: Affliction goes on helping a believer to reform himself till he comes out of this furnace cleansed of all impurities. But the case of a hypocrite in affliction is that of a donkey, who does not realize why his master tied him and why he untied him. This implies that if a community does not turn to Allah, even when adversities and calamities are inflicted on it or does not remember Allah in gratitude, when He showers His blessings upon it,

and it is not inclined at all to reform itself in any way whatsoever, it is doomed and its destruction is imminent. In this connection it should also be noted that the divine procedure mentioned in Ayats 94-95 was at work at Makkah at the time when this Surah was revealed. The Quraish were showing the same antagonistic attitude and were consequently suffering from a severe famine. We learn from a tradition, related by Ibn Masud and Ibn Abbas, that when the Quraish began to oppose the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him), he prayed, "O Lord, help me against these people by a seven-year famine, like the one that visited Egypt during the time of Joseph." Accordingly, Allah sent a very severe famine to Makkah and things came to such a pass that they began to eat dead animals, skins, bones and even wool. Then the people of Makkah, under the leadership of Abu Sufyan, went to the Prophet (peace be upon him), and beseeched him to pray to Allah to remove the famine. But when Allah removed the famine and they began to flourish, they became all the more arrogant and their evil geniuses began to hinder even those from it whose hearts were somewhat inclined towards the faith, saying, "the famine was due to the vicissitudes of time, and was not different from the ones that visited us even before the advent of Muhammad (peace be upon him). Therefore you should not fall into his trap by its visitation." Such things, as Our forefathers also had their adversity and prosperity, were being repeated at the time when this Surah was sent down. As these verses applied very appropriately to the condition of the Quraish at the time,

this background should be kept in view in order to understand their full significance.

96. And if only the people of the townships had believed and feared (Allah). Certainly, We would have opened for them blessings from the heaven and the earth. But they denied (the messengers). So We seized them for what they used to earn.

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ ءَامَنُوا
وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ
مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَٰكِن
كَذَّبُوا فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِمَا كَانُوا
يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

97. Then, did the people of the townships feel secure from coming to them of Our punishment by night while they were asleep.

أَفَأَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ
بَأْسُنَا بَيِّنًا وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

98. Or, did the people of the townships feel secure from coming to them of Our punishment in the daytime while they were at play.

أَوْ أَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ
بَأْسُنَا ضُحًى وَهُمْ يُلْعَبُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

99. Then, did they feel secure against the plan of Allah.*⁷⁸ So none feels secure from the plan of Allah, except the people who are the losers.

أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللَّهِ ۗ فَلَا يَأْمَنُ
مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

*78 The Arabic word *makr* implies such a secret plan as

remains hidden from the person against whom it is directed, and keeps him deluded that all is well, till it suddenly strikes him a decisive blow.

100. Is it not a guiding (lesson) to those who inherit the earth after its (previous) possessors, that if We so willed, We could have afflicted them for their sins.^{*79} And We seal over their hearts so they do not hear.^{*80}

أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لِلَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ
الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَهْلِهَا أَنْ لَوْ
نَشَاءُ أَصَبْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ
وَنَطْبَعُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا
يَسْمَعُونَ



***79** It is a pity that the succeeding nation does not learn any lesson from the mistakes of the fallen nation it replaces. There would be a great guidance for the people if they considered seriously the question why those people, who were ruling over the land before them and were prosperous and flourishing, were utterly ruined and totally destroyed. The answer would show them the erroneous thoughts and deeds which resulted in their ruin. Then they can also realize that the Sovereign Ruler Who seized them for their mistakes and deposed them is All-Powerful even now, is still ruling over the universe and is able to punish them and depose them, if they commit the same kind of errors that their predecessors committed.

***80** According to the divine law, the fall of a nation takes place when it neglects to take a lesson from the history of the former people and from the ruins of their monuments,

but tries to delude itself. Then Allah does not let them think rightly or accept the admonition of any well wisher. As regards to the individuals, the divine law is that if a person himself closes his eyes deliberately, the light of the sun does not help him; likewise if he does not want to hear, none else can make him hear.

101. Such were the townships, We relate unto you (O Muhammad) some stories of them. And indeed, there came to them their messengers with clear proofs, but they were not such as to believe in that which they had rejected before. Thus does Allah seal over the hearts of the disbelievers.*81

تِلْكَ الْقُرَى نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ
 أَنْبَاءِهَا ۗ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ
 بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا
 بِمَا كَذَّبُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ
 كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ
 الْكَافِرِينَ



*81 Here Allah Himself has explained the meanings of the previous verse, “And We seal over their hearts so they do not hear.” From this it is clear that by the sealing of the hearts is meant that state of mind which is caused as a result of the working of the divine law. When one deliberately refuses to accept the truth because of his ignorance, prejudice, selfishness, desires etc. then such a person becomes so obdurate that he persists in error without paying any attention to his own observations or to the arguments of his true well wishers.

102. And We did not find most of them (true) to (their) covenant. And indeed, We found most of them transgressors.*82

وَمَا وَجَدْنَا لِأَكْثَرِهِمْ مِّنْ عَهْدٍ وَإِن وَجَدْنَا أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

***82** The disbelievers showed no respect for any of the three covenants that should be binding on every man. They respected neither the natural covenant that makes man by his very birth the servant of Allah, his Sustainer, nor that collective covenant that binds every individual to the observance of the known social code of the community of which he is a member, nor that personal covenant which every man undertakes with his Allah at the time of distress and helplessness.

103. Then after them, We sent Moses with our signs to Pharaoh and his chiefs,*83 but they dealt unjustly with them (Our signs).*84 So see how was the consequence of those who did corruption.

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِم مُّوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِۦ فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

***83** The preceding stories were related to bring home to the people of Makkah the fact that the community which receives the Message of Allah and then rejects it, is inevitably doomed to destruction. After these, the story of Moses (peace be upon him), Pharaoh and the Israelites is being related with the same object, though there are also

other important lessons for the disbelievers of the Quraish, the believers and the Jews.

In this story the disbelievers of the Quraish have been admonished that they should not be deluded by their apparent favorable balance of power in the initial stages of the conflict between the truth and falsehood. The entire history of the conflict bears evidence to the fact that a single man starts the movement to establish the truth in his nation, nay, in the whole world, and wages war, without the help of any material provisions, against falsehood which had the backing of great nations and powerful kingdoms. But in spite of this, ultimately it comes out triumphant in the conflict. The Quraish have also been warned to note how all the devices of the disbelievers directed against the messenger of the truth in order to suppress his message turn against themselves: that Allah gives a long respite to the disbelievers so that they might mend their ways before He makes the final decision to destroy them: that He gives exemplary punishment to those who do not take any lesson from a warning or a clear sign or an event that serves for a lesson.

There were two lessons for the believers who had become the target of the persecution by the enemies. First, they should not be discouraged because they were smaller in number and weaker in power than their opponents, and they should not lose heart because Allah's succor was late in coming. Secondly, they were warned to guard against the attitude that was adopted by the Jews after they had professed to believe in the truth: otherwise they would

become accursed like the Jews.

The past history of the Israelites was related for their own benefit also. They were warned to consider the consequences of the worship of falsehood, and admonished to follow the Prophet (peace be upon him) who was representing the true religion of the former Prophets after cleansing it of all the impurities that had been mixed up with it.

***84** “But they dealt unjustly with them (Our signs)” by rejecting them and treating them as pieces of sorcery. It was injustice in the sense that they were not behaving fairly towards the signs and were treating them as pieces of sorcery and scoffing at them. There could be no greater injustice than to reject such signs as were clear proofs of their being from Allah and about which no reasonable man could say that they could be produced by sorcery. Besides this, when the sorcerers themselves bore witness to the fact that it was beyond the power of sorcery to produce such signs, it was nothing but injustice to reject these as pieces of sorcery. Thus they really showed that they were void of wisdom and truth as well.

104. And Moses said: “O Pharaoh,^{*85} indeed I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds.”

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يَافِرْعَوْنَ إِنِّي
رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

***85** The word *Firaun* (Pharaoh) literally means “the offspring of the sun god.” The ancient Egyptians called the sun Raa, which they worshiped as their supreme lord, and *Firaun* was named after it. According to the creed of the

ancient Egyptians, every ruler based his authority on his relation to Raa and claimed to be its incarnation and representative on the earth. Therefore every royal dynasty that came into power in Egypt presented itself to be the descendant of the sun-god and every ruler adopted the title of *Firaun* in order to show to the people that he was the supreme lord.

In this connection, it should also be noted that two different Pharaohs have been mentioned in the story of Moses (peace be upon him) as related in the Quran. The one was that Pharaoh who was ruling over Egypt when Moses (peace be upon him) was born, and who brought him up in his own house, and the second was the one whom Moses (peace be upon him) invited to accept the divine message of God and deliver the children of Israel, and who was drowned .

The research scholars of today are inclined to believe that the first of the two Pharaohs who oppressed the Israelites was Rameses II, who ruled from 1292 to 1225 B.C. And the second Pharaoh who has been mentioned in these verses was Mineptah, who assisted his father Rameses II in the affairs of the government, and succeeded as ruler after his death. But these dates appear to be doubtful because, according to the calendar of the Israelites, the year of the death of Moses (peace be upon him) was 1272 B.C. These are, however, mere historical guesses for it is difficult to reconcile the days of the Israelite, the Egyptian and the Christian calendars.

105. “It is (only) right for (me) that I do not speak

حَقِيقٌ عَلَيَّ أَنْ لَا أَقُولَ عَلَى اللَّهِ

about Allah except the truth. Indeed, I have come to you with a clear proof from your Lord. So let the Children of Israel go with me.”*86

إِلَّا الْحَقَّ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِبَيِّنَةٍ
مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعِيَ بَنِي
إِسْرَائِيلَ

*86 Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was sent to Pharaoh with two missions. First, he should invite Pharaoh to surrender to Allah by accepting Islam. Second, he should demand from him to set the Israelites free from his slavery and tyranny. The Quran mentions both the missions at one and the same place or separately, as required by the occasion.

106. He (Pharaoh) said: “If you have come with a sign, then bring it forth, if you should be of the truthful.”

قَالَ إِنْ كُنْتَ جِئْتَ بِعَايَةٍ فَآتِ
بِهَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

107. So he (Moses) flung down his staff, then behold, it was a serpent manifest.

فَأَلْقَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ
مُّبِينٌ

108. And he drew forth his hand (from his bosom), then behold, it was white for the beholders.*87

وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ
لِّلنَّظِيرِينَ

*87 These two signs were given to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) as a proof that he was a representative of Allah, the Creator and Sovereign of the whole universe. We have already stated that whenever the Messengers presented

themselves before the people as the representatives of Allah, the people always demanded: If you are really a representative of Allah, let such and such an event take place through you as may not be capable of being explained by the ordinary laws of nature, and which may clearly show that it has happened by the direct intervention of Allah to prove that you are really a representative of Allah. In answer to this demand, the Prophets showed those signs that are called *ayaat* by the Quran and miracles by the common people.

It is a pity that sane learned Muslims try to explain away these signs or miracles as ordinary events that took place according to the known physical laws of nature. They do not realize that in this way they are adopting a skeptical attitude towards the Book of Allah, for, in the context, the Quran cites a supernatural event, and it presents the same as a sign of Allah as a proof of his Prophethood. Therefore to explain it away as an ordinary event is, in fact, to disbelieve the Book. Thus such people make their own position ridiculous. On the one hand, they do not sincerely believe in the Quran as a Book of Allah just because it upholds miracles. And on the other hand, they do not have the courage to declare openly their disbelief in the Book which upholds supernatural events, because it would deprive them of the benefit of the religion they profess, as it would adversely affect their worldly interests.

The decisive question about miracles is whether Allah suspended His activities after starting the system of the universe according to certain laws, and now cannot

interfere in any way whatever with the working of that system, Or, whether He keeps the reins of His kingdom in His own hands and enforces His commands every moment in this kingdom and He has full powers to make any change, partial or complete, in shaping things and the course of events, as and when He wills. Those who believe in the first alternative cannot believe in the miracles for it goes against their conception of Allah and His universe, but the most proper course for such people is to deny the divine revelation of the Quran instead of writing any commentary on it so as to refute the Quranic conception of Allah and prove their own. On the other hand, if one is convinced by the arguments of the Quran and accepts the second alternative he would readily understand and believe in the miracles. It is quite obvious that if one believes that a serpent can come into being only through a biological process and it is not possible for Allah to create it in any other way, then such a one should consider it false that a staff was changed into a serpent and again into the staff. On the contrary, if one believes that lifeless matter can come to life by the command of Allah, Who has the power to give any kind of life to anything He wills, he will readily believe that the staff was changed into a serpent just as he believes that a live chicken comes out of a lifeless egg. To such a person, there will be nothing extraordinary, just because the staff was changed into a serpent only thrice and a chicken comes out of an egg over and over again.

109. The chiefs of Pharaoh's people said: "Indeed, this is a

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ

sorcerer well versed.”

إِنَّ هَذَا لَسِحْرٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾

110. “He intends that he drives you out from your land.*88 So what do you instruct.”

يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنْ أَرْضِكُمْ
فَمَاذَا تَأْمُرُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾

***88** Naturally some questions arise here: How was Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) a danger to Pharaoh and his kingdom? How could a destitute person of a slave community like him be a menace to a powerful and rich king like Pharaoh, who was the object of worship of his subjects as well? How was the turning of the staff into a serpent menace to his great kingdom which extended from Syria to Libya and from the Mediterranean Sea to Abyssinia? Why did they then raise the alarm that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) intended to deprive the great Pharaoh and the members of the royal dynasty and the big chiefs of their kingdom, and drive them out of Egypt? Above all, why was there a danger at all of a revolution, when he had put forward no other claim than that he was a Prophet of Allah; and demanded the freedom of the Israelites? These questions are specially important because so far no political talk had taken place between them.

The answer is that the claim to Prophethood in itself implied that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) meant to bring about a complete revolution in the existing system of life, including the political system as well. The very fact that a person claims to be a delegate of the Lord of the universe, contains in itself the demand for total submission of human

beings to himself. This is because the delegate of the Lord of the universe does not come to live as a subject of and subordinate to anyone else but as the ruler and the guardian. For, it is the negation of his claim to Prophethood to acknowledge the sovereignty of an unbeliever. That is why Pharaoh and his courtiers felt the menace of a political, social and cultural revolution when Moses (peace be upon him) made a claim to Prophethood.

Let us consider the question: Why did the court of the great Pharaoh of Egypt attach so much importance to the claim of Moses (peace be upon him), who had no other helper than his own brother, and no other emblem of his appointment from Allah than his miraculous staff and his shining hand? In my opinion there were two main reasons: First, Pharaoh and his courtiers were fully acquainted with the great personality of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). They knew that he possessed a pure and strong character and an extraordinary ability, and was a born leader and commander. Besides this, if we rely on the stories of the Talmud and Josephus, Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had acquired education in all the sciences of the age, and was fully trained in the art of war and administration, because these things were considered essential for the members of the royal family in which he was brought up, and had proved himself to be an excellent general in the campaign against Abyssinia. Above all, the hard desert life of eight years or so in Midian had helped to remove the effects of a life of ease in the royal palace. Therefore, when this grand, serene and pious man stood in

the court of Pharaoh with the claim of Prophethood, they could not brush aside his claim as hollow. Secondly, when they saw the miracles of the staff and the shining hand, they were all filled with awe and were inclined to admit that there was, indeed, some supernatural force at his back. Thus there was an apparent contradiction in their calling him a magician and, at the same time, expressing a fear that he would drive them out of the country. This also showed that they had been nonplussed by the very first appearance of the signs of Prophethood: If they had really considered Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) to be a magician, they would have never felt and expressed the danger of a revolution from him, for magic has never brought about any revolution in the world.

111. They said (to Pharaoh):
 “Put him off (a while),
 and his brother, and send
 into the cities gatherers.”

قَالُوا أَرْجِهْ وَأَخَاهُ وَأَرْسِلْ فِي
 الْمَدَائِنِ حَاشِرِينَ

112. “Who will bring you
 all well versed sorcerers.”*89

يَأْتُوكَ بِكُلِّ سَاحِرٍ عَلِيمٍ

*89 These words of the courtiers of Pharaoh show that they had a clear conception of the distinction between the change produced by a divine miracle and the effect of magic. They knew that the change brought about by a divine miracle was real, whereas the effect produced by magic was merely an illusion. That is why they tried to refute the claim of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), saying: This man is an expert magician. They meant to say that the staff had not actually turned into a serpent but had

only appeared so to them to be a serpent because of his magic and they would not acknowledge it as a divine miracle. Therefore they counseled Pharaoh to gather together all the expert magicians so that they may show that they could also turn ropes and sticks into serpents and remove to some extent from the hearts of the people the awful effect that had been produced in their minds by the miracle of the staff of Moses (peace be upon him).

113. And the sorcerers came to Pharaoh. They said: “Indeed for us is a reward if we are the victors.”

وَجَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ قَالُوا
إِنَّ لَنَا لَأَجْرًا إِن كُنَّا نَحْنُ
الْغَالِبِينَ

114. He (Pharaoh) said: “Yes, and surely you shall be among those nearest (to me).”

قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ لَمِنَ الْمُقْرَبِينَ

115. They said: “O Moses, either that you throw (first) or that shall we be the (first) throwers.”

قَالُوا يَمُوسَىٰ إِمَّا أَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَإِمَّا
أَنْ نَّكُونَ نَحْنُ الْمُلْقِينَ

116. He (Moses) said: “Throw.” So when they threw, they bewitched the eyes of the people, and struck terror into them, and they produced a great magic.

قَالَ أَلْقُوا ط فَلَمَّا أَلْقَوْا سَحَرُوا
أَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ وَأَسْثَرَهُبُهُمْ
وَجَاءُوا بِسِحْرِ عَظِيمٍ

117. And We inspired to Moses (saying) that: “Throw your staff.” So behold, it swallowed up what they were falsifying.*90

﴿ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ ﴾

***90** There is no ground to believe that the staff of Moses (peace be upon him) swallowed up the sticks and ropes that had been cast by the magicians and had appeared to be serpents. What the Quran says is that the staff swallowed up the false magic produced by them as soon as it turned into a real serpent. In plain words it means that wherever the serpent of the staff went, it nullified the effects of the magic which had made their ropes and sticks appear as moving serpents and as a result of one round made by the staff they began to look like their real selves as ropes and sticks. (See E.N. 42 of Surah Taha).

118. So the truth was established, and was made vain that which they were doing.

﴿ فَوَقَعَ الْحَقُّ وَبَطَلَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾

119. So they were defeated there and then, and they were returned disgraced.

﴿ فَغَلِبُوا هُنَالِكَ وَانْقَلَبُوا صَاغِرِينَ ﴾

120. And the sorcerers fell down prostrate.

﴿ وَأَلْقَى السَّحَرَةُ سَاجِدِينَ ﴾

121. They said: “We believe in the Lord of the worlds.”

﴿ قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾

122. “The Lord of Moses
and Aaron.”*91

رَبِّ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ

*91 This defeat and acknowledgment turned the tables on the people of Pharaoh. They had mustered all the expert magicians of the land to demonstrate publicly that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was a magician or, at least, to create doubts in the minds of the public about his Prophethood. But after the defeat, their own experts in the art admitted unanimously that what Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was presenting was not magic at all, but most surely it was the work of the power of the Lord of the worlds, and that every kind of magic was powerless against it.

Obviously their considered opinion could not be brushed aside in an offhand way, for none could judge magic better than the magicians. That is why when the magicians testified, after practical demonstration and trial, that it was not magic, it became impossible for Pharaoh and his courtiers to assert that Moses (peace be upon him) was a magician.

123. Pharaoh said: “You have believed in Him before that I give you permission. Surely, this is the plot that you have contrived in the city, that you may drive out therefrom its people. But soon you shall know.”

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ءَاٰمَنْتُمْ بِهٖ قَبْلَ اَنْ
ءَاذَنَ لَكُمْ ۗ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَمَكْرٌ
مَّكْرَتُمُوهُ فِى الْمَدِيْنَةِ لِتُخْرِجُوْا
مِنْهَا اَهْلَهَا فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ

124. “Surely, I shall have your hands and your feet cut off on opposite sides. Then I shall crucify you all.”

لَأُقَطِّعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِنْ خَلْفٍ ثُمَّ لَأُصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

125. They said: “We shall surely return to our Lord.”

قَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ

126. “And you do not take vengeance on us except that we have believed in the signs of our Lord when they came to us. Our Lord, shower upon us perseverance and cause us to die as those who have submitted (to You).”^{*92}

وَمَا تَنْقِمُ مِنَّا إِلَّا أَنْ ءَامَنَّا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا لَمَّا جَاءَتْنَا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَتَوَفَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ

***92** When Pharaoh saw the table turning on him, he thought out another device. He declared that the whole show was the outcome of the plot that Moses (peace be upon him) and the magicians had devised. Then he threatened the magicians with a severe chastisement and death so that they should confess that his accusation was true. But this move also turned against him. As the magicians remained firm in their new faith, and were prepared to undergo any torture for its sake, it became evident that their belief in the truth presented by Moses (peace be upon him) was a genuine confession of faith and not the pretense of any plot. That is why he had to give up the pretense of truth and justice and resort to open

tyranny.

In this connection it should also be noted that in a few moments, their faith had brought about a wonderful change in the character of the magicians. The same people who had left their homes for the sake of helping the religion of their forefathers and had, a few minutes before, very humbly requested Pharaoh to give them rewards if they came out successful in the conflict with Moses (peace be upon him), were now filled with the courage of conviction of the true faith. They had become so bold and brave that they were now defying the same king, before whom they were meekly bowing, and begging a reward for their encounter. But now they had become so convinced of the truth of their faith that they were not ready to give it up for the fear of the worst torture with which they were being threatened.

127. And the chiefs of Pharaoh's people said: "Will you leave Moses and his people to cause corruption in the land, and to abandon you and your gods." He said: "We will kill their sons, and let live their women."^{*93} And indeed we are in power over them."

وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ
أَتَذَرُ مُوسَى وَقَوْمَهُ لِيُفْسِدُوا
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَيَذَرَكَ وَآلِهَتَكَ
قَالَ سَنَقْتِلُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ
وَنَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّا فَوْقَهُمْ
قَاهِرُونَ



***93** It should be noted that there were two periods of oppression. At first the Israelites were oppressed during

the reign of Rameses II, before the birth of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). The second period of oppression mentioned in this verse started during the reign of Mineptah, after the appointment of Moses (peace be upon him) as a Messenger of Allah. However, there was one thing common. The sons of Israelites were killed and the lives of their daughters were spared so that their race should gradually come to an end and the survivors get merged into other races. A tablet that was dug up during the archaeological excavations in 1896; probably refers to this period, when it mentions the exploits and victories of Mineptah, saying, “The Israelites have been exterminated and no seed has been left for their reproduction.” (For further explanation see Ayat 25 of Surah Al-Momin).

128. Moses said to his people: “Seek help in Allah and be patient. Indeed, the earth is Allah’s, He gives it as a heritage to whom He wills of His slaves. And the (blessed) end is for those who fear (Allah).”

قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعينُوا
بِاللَّهِ وَأَصْبِرُوا إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ
يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ
وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

129. They (Children of Israel) said: “We suffered harm before that you came to us, and after when you have come to us.” He said: “It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and

قَالُوا أُوذِينَا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَأْتِيَنَا
وَمِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جِئْتَنَا قَالَ عَسَىٰ
رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ عَدُوَّكُمْ

make you successors on the earth, so He may see how you act.”

وَيَسْتَخْلِفُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَيَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾

130. And indeed, We seized Pharaoh's people with years (of droughts) and shortness of fruits, that they might receive admonition.

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ
بِالسِّنِينَ وَنَقْصٍ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾

131. So whenever prosperity came to them, they said: “This is ours.” and if a calamity afflicted them, they attributed it to evil omens of Moses and those with him. Behold, their evil omens are only with Allah, but most of them do not know.

فَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْحَسَنَةُ قَالُوا لَنَا
هَذِهِ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ
يَطَّيَّرُوا بِمُوسَىٰ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ ۗ أَلَا
إِنَّمَا طَّيَّرَهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣١﴾

132. And they said: “whatever of a sign you may bring to us, to work your sorcery on us therewith, we shall not believe in you.”*94

وَقَالُوا مَهْمَا تَأْتِنَا بِهِ مِنْ آيَةٍ
لِتَسْحَرَنَا بِهَا فَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ
بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

***94** This was the height of bigotry and obduracy that the courtiers of Pharaoh were dubbing as magic that thing which they knew could never be magic. Even a fool would

not believe that magic can bring about famine and scarcity in the whole country. In connection with the same story the Quran says in Surah An-Namal, Ayats 13-14, “When Our signs came openly before their eyes, they said: This is an obvious magic. Though their hearts were convinced (of their truth), they denied these unjustly and rebelliously.”

133. Then We sent on them the flood,^{*95} and the locusts, and the lice,^{*96} and the frogs, and the blood, as manifest signs. Yet they remained arrogant, and they were a criminal people.

فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطُّوفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ
وَالْقُمَّلَ وَالضَّفَادِعَ وَالدمَّ
آيَاتٍ مُفَصَّلَاتٍ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا
وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُجْرِمِينَ

***95** Probably it was a rain-storm that was accompanied by hailstones, though it could have been any other kind of storm. As the Bible does not mention a rain-storm but only a heavy fall of hailstones, the common word storm has been preferred.

***96** The Arabic word *qummal* in the original stands for any of the small insects like louse, small fly, mosquito, small locusts, weevil and the like. Probably this comprehensive word has been used for the reason that lice and mosquitoes had inflicted human beings and seed-weevils had attacked granaries at one and the same time. (For comparison, see Chapters 7-12 of Exodus).

134. And when the punishment fell on them, they said: “O Moses, pray for us

وَلَمَّا وَقَعَ عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّجْزُ قَالُوا
يَمُوسَى ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا

unto your Lord, because He has a covenant with you. If you will remove from us the punishment, we shall indeed believe in you, and we will let the Children of Israel go with you.”

عَهْدَ عِنْدَكَ لِيْنَ كَشَفْتَ
عَنَّا الرَّجْزَ لِنُؤْمِنَنَّ لَكَ وَلِنُرْسِلَنَّ
مَعَكَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

135. Then when We removed from them the punishment for a fixed term which they had to reach, behold, they broke their covenant.

فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ الرَّجْزَ إِلَى
أَجَلٍ هُمْ بَلَغُوهُ إِذَا هُمْ
يَنْكُثُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

136. Then We took retribution from them. So We drowned them in the sea, because they denied Our revelations and were heedless of them.

فَأَنْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ فِي
الْيَمِّ بِآيَاتِنَا كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

137. And We made to inherit the people who were oppressed, the eastern parts of the land and the western parts thereof, that (land) whereon We put our blessing.*97 And the good word of your Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel, for they had endured

وَأَوْرَثْنَا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا
يُسْتَضْعَفُونَ مَشْرِقًا
الْأَرْضِ وَمَغْرِبَهَا الَّتِي بَدَرْنَا
فِيهَا وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ
الْحُسْنَىٰ عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ بِمَا
صَبَرُوا وَدَمَرْنَا مَا كَانِ

with patience. And We destroyed all that Pharaoh and his people had built, and that which they had erected.

يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ وَقَوْمُهُ وَمَا
كَانُوا يَعْرِشُونَ



*97 That is, the Israelites were made the inheritors of Palestine. Some commentators infer from this that the Israelites were made the masters of Egypt. But we hesitate to accept this version for there is neither any direct reference to it in the Quran nor is there any historical evidence to support it. (Sec E.N. 57 of Surah Al-Kahaf and E.N. 45 of Surah Ash-Shuara).

138. And We brought the Children of Israel across the sea, then they came upon a people devoted to idols of theirs (in worship). They said: “O Moses, make for us a god same as they have gods.”*98 He said: “You are indeed an ignorant people.”

وَجَوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ
فَاتَوَّأ عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَىٰ
أَصْنَامِهِمْ ۚ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَىٰ
اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ
قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ



*98 “The people” were the Egyptians, who lived at Mafqah, a cantonment in the Sinai Peninsula. The Israelites crossed the Red Sea probably at a place somewhere between the present Suez and Ismailiyah, and started on their journey along the coast towards the southern part of the Peninsula, which was at that time under Egypt. In its lower part, there were copper and emerald mines, and for their protection

the Egyptians had built cantonments at some places. One of these was at Mafqah, where the Egyptians had set up a big idol temple whose remnants are found even today in the south-western part of the Peninsula. At another place near it, there was another idol temple, which was dedicated to the Moon-god. Probably the Israelites were passing by one of these idol temples, when they made their demand for an artificial god. This shows that slavery under the Egyptians had left a deep mark of their culture on the Israelites.

It can be easily judged from the following remarks made by Joshua, son of Nun, Moses (peace be upon him) first successor, in his last address to the Israelites, seventy years after their exodus from Egypt:

“Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

(Joshua, 24: 14-15).

This shows that even after forty years of training and guidance under Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), and 28 years under Prophet Joshua (peace be upon him), the Israelites could not cleanse themselves of the evil effects that had been stamped upon their lives during their long slavery under the Pharaohs of Egypt. That is why these corrupted Muslims were so eager to bow down before those

gods, whom their Egyptian masters served, no sooner did they see an idol temple after their exodus.

139. “Indeed, these people will be destroyed for that which they are engaged in. And vain is that which (idols worship) they are doing.”

إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ مُتَّبِعُونَ مَا هُمْ فِيهِ
وَبَطِلٌ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



140. He said: “Is it other than Allah I should seek for you as a god. And He has favored you above the nations.”

قَالَ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْغِيكُمْ إِلَهًا
وَهُوَ فَضَّلَكُمْ عَلَى
الْعَالَمِينَ



141. And (remember) when We saved you from Pharaoh’s people, who were afflicting you with dreadful torment, slaughtering your sons, and letting your women live. And in that was a tremendous trial from your Lord.

وَإِذْ أَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ آلِ
فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ
الْعَذَابِ يُقْتُلُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ
وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي
ذَلِكَ بَلَاءٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
عَظِيمٌ



142. And We appointed for Moses thirty nights, and added to them ten. So he completed the term appointed

✽ وَوَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ ثَلَاثِينَ
لَيْلَةً وَأَتَمَمْنَا بِعَشْرِ فِتْمَ

by his Lord of forty nights.^{*99} And Moses said to his brother Aaron: "Take my place among my people, and act righteously, and do not follow the path of those who create corruption."^{*100}

مِيقَاتُ رَبِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً
وَقَالَ مُوسَى لِأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ
أَخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا
تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

***99** After their departure from Egypt, when the Israelites became free from the shackles of slavery, and won the position of an independent nation, Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was summoned to Mount Sinai by the divine command so that the law should be given to him for them. This was the first summons of the series that is being mentioned here. Forty days were appointed so that he should prepare himself by fast, devotion, worship, prayer, deep thought, meditation and reflection for the heavy task that was about to be entrusted to him. On this occasion prophet Moses (peace be upon him) left the Israelites at a place now called Wadiy-u-Shaikh, between Nabi Salih and Mt. Sinai. That part of the valley where the Israelites then encamped is now called Maidan-ur-Rahat. At one end of the valley is situated the hillock, where, according to the local tradition Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) migrated from the territory of Thamud. The mosque, which was built in his memory, stands there even today. On the other side, there is another hillock, called Jabl-i-Harun, where, it is said, Prophet Aaron (peace be upon him) had gone in protest against the cow-worship of the Israelites. On its

third side is Mt. Sinai, which is 7359 feet above the sea level and is usually covered with clouds. On the top of this is the cave in which Moses (peace be upon him) spent forty days and nights and which has become a holy place of pilgrimage. There is a mosque of the Muslims and a church of the Christians near the cave and at the foot, a monastery built during the reign of Justinian, Byzantine Emperor. (For details, see E.Ns 9, 10 of Surah Al-Qasas).

***100** Though Prophet Aaron (peace be upon him) was the elder of the two by three years, he was under Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) in the mission of Prophethood. In fact, Prophet Aaron (peace be upon him) was appointed as a Prophet to work as an assistant to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) in response to his prayer. The fact that he was appointed by Allah as assistant to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) has been stated in Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 35.

143. And when Moses came to the place appointed by Us, and his Lord spoke to him, he said: "My Lord, show me, that I may look at You." He said: "Never can you see Me, but look at the mountain, so if it remains firm in its place, then you shall see Me." Then when his Lord manifested His glory to the mountain, He sent it crashing down, and

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَىٰ لِمِيقَاتِنَا
وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنْظُرْ
إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَنْ نَرِيكَ وَلَٰكِنِ
أَنْظُرْ إِلَىٰ الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ
مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ نَرِيكَ فَلَمَّا
تَجَلَّىٰ رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا

Moses fell down unconscious. Then when he recovered his senses, he said: “Glory be to You, I turn to You in repentance, and I am the first of those who believe.”

وَخَرَّ مُوسَىٰ صَعِقًا فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ
قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ
وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾

144. He said: “O Moses, indeed I have chosen you above mankind by My messages and by My speaking (to you). So hold that which I have given you, and be among those who give thanks.”

قَالَ يَمْوَسَىٰ إِنَّي اصْطَفَيْتُكَ
عَلَى النَّاسِ بِرِسَالَتِي وَبِكَلِمِي
فَخُذْ مَا آتَيْتُكَ وَكُن مِّنَ
الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

145. And We wrote for him, on the tablets, ^{*101} the lesson to be drawn from all things, and the explanation of all things. (We said): “Hold unto these with firmness, and command your people to hold on to the best in it. ^{*102} I shall show you the abode of the disobedient.” ^{*103}

وَكَتَبْنَا لَهُ فِي الْأَلْوَابِ مِن
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَّوْعِظَةً وَتَفْصِيلًا
لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَخُذْهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَأْمُرْ
قَوْمَكَ يَا خُذُوا بِأَحْسَنِهَا
سَأُورِيكُمْ دَارَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

***101** The Bible says that these two tablets were slabs of stone. Both the Quran and the Bible ascribe the writing upon them to Allah. We have, however, no specific source to say how that was done. Therefore we cannot say with certainty whether the writing was inscribed on the tablets

directly by Allah or through the agency of an angel or by Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). Please compare this with Exodus 31: 18, 32: 15-16, Deut. 5: 6-22.

*102 That is, the divine precepts and instructions should be followed in their direct and plain meanings, that can be grasped by a man of average intelligence, who has a pure heart and pure intentions. This condition has been attached lest one should confuse them with the hair-splitting of those who, by their legal quibbling, are able to devise ways of crookedness, deceit and mischief out of the plain words of the divine commandments.

*103 That is, in your onward march, you will pass through the ruins of the homes of those who disobeyed the divine law and discarded the way of Allah's worship and obedience and persisted in the paths of error. When you see these things you will know the end of the people who adopt such ways.

146. I shall turn away from My signs those who behave arrogantly in the earth,^{*104} without any right. And if they see each and every sign, they shall not believe therein. And if they see the way of righteousness, they will not adopt that way. And if they see the way of error, they will adopt that way. That is because they

سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ آيَاتِيَ الَّذِينَ
يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ
الْحَقِّ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كُلَّ آيَةٍ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَهَا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ
الرُّشْدِ لَا يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا وَإِنْ
يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الْغَيِّ يَتَّخِذُوهُ

have denied Our revelations
and were heedless from
them.

سَبِيلًا ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا
بِعَايَتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ

١٤٦

***104** That is, this is My law: such people as behave haughtily cannot take any warning from any exemplary sign and cannot learn any lesson from anything that may teach a lesson.

According to the Quran, a person behaves haughtily who considers himself above submission to Allah and becomes heedless of His commandments and behaves in a way as if he was not a servant of Allah and Allah was not his Lord. Obviously such an arrogance is not based on any rightful claim, for no servant has any right to behave as if he were not His servant, when he lives on Allah's earth. That is why Allah says, who without any right behave arrogantly.

147. And those who denied Our revelations and the meeting of the Hereafter, vain are their deeds. ^{*105} Shall they be recompensed except what they used to do.

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِعَايَتِنَا وَلِقَاءِ
الْآخِرَةِ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ هَلْ
يُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ

١٤٧

***105** "Vain are their deeds" produced no good result and were useless and worthless, because these did not satisfy the two elementary conditions that make human deeds

worthwhile. First, these should be performed in accordance with the divine law. Secondly, the object of these acts and deeds should be success in the Hereafter and not mere success in this world. If these two conditions are not fulfilled in the performance of any deed, it shall become vain. Obviously anything done without giving heed to or in defiance of the divine guidance does not deserve any reward from Him, for his case is the same as that of a usurper of land, who exploits it against the owner's will. He does not deserve anything but severe punishment for this wrongful possession. Though he may benefit from it as long as the real owner connives at his audacity, he knows that he will be deprived of it when he is dispossessed of it. And there is no reason why (and he himself does not expect that) any portion of its produce should go to him, after the real owner takes possession of his land from the usurper.

148. And the people of Moses made, after him (his absence),^{*106} from their ornaments, a calf (for worship), an image having a lowing sound. Did they not see that it could neither speak to them nor guide them to the way. They took it (for worship) and they were wrong doers.^{*107}

وَأَتَّخَذَ قَوْمُ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
 مِنْ حُلِيِّهِمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَهُ
 خُورٌ أَلْمَ يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمْ
 وَلَا يَهْدِيهِمْ سَبِيلًا ۖ اتَّخَذُوهُ
 وَكَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ



***106** They made the image in his absence of forty days, when Moses (peace be upon him) went to Mt. Sinai on the

summons of Allah, while his people were encamping in the plain of Ar-Rahah.

*107 Their calf worship was the second manifestation of the change that had taken place in the Israelites during their stay in Egypt. They were so charmed by the cow worship of the Egyptians that the Quran says, "They were so prone to disbelief that they cherished the calf in their hearts." It is really strange that hardly three months after their miraculous escape from Egypt, they began to make demands on their Prophet to make an artificial god for them, and, as soon as he left them for the Sinai, they themselves devised a false god. It appears as if they had forgotten their recent deliverance from slavery, and their safe passage through the sea and the drowning of Pharaoh and his army in it. Though they knew that all those wonderful events had happened wholly and solely through the supernatural power of the Eternal, yet they shamefacedly forgot their Allah. It was this faithless conduct of the Israelites that prompted some of their Prophets to liken the community to that wicked woman who shows love to all men other than her husband and does not hesitate to be faithless even in the very first night of her marriage.

149. And when they regretted the consequences thereof, and saw that they had indeed gone astray, they said: "If our Lord does not have mercy on us, and (does not) pardon us, we shall indeed be among the

وَمَا سَقَطَ فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ وَرَأَوْا
أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ ضَلُّوا قَالُوا لَئِن لَّمْ
يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا
لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

losers.”

150. And when Moses returned to his people, angry (and) grieved, he said: “Evil is that which you have done in my place after me (my absence). Did you make haste to (bring on) the judgment of your Lord.” And he put down the tablets, and he seized his brother by the head, dragging him towards him. He (Aaron) said: “O son of my mother, indeed the people judged me weak and were about to kill me. So make not the enemies rejoice over me, nor put me amongst the people who are wrong doers.”*108

وَلَمَّا رَجَعَ مُوسَىٰ إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ
غَضِبْنَ أَسْفًا قَالَ بِئْسَمَا
خَلَفْتُمُونِي مِنْ بَعْدِي ۗ أَعَجِلْتُمْ
أَمْرَ رَبِّكُمْ ۗ وَأَلْقَى الْأَلْوَاحَ وَأَخَذَ
بِرَأْسِ أَخِيهِ يَجْرهُ ۖ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ ابْنَ
أُمَّم إِنَّ الْقَوْمَ اسْتَضَعُّونِي
وَكَادُوا يَقْتُلُونِي ۖ فَلَا تُشْمِتْ
بِيَ الْأَعْدَاءَ وَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي مَعَ
الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

***108** By citing his words “nor put me amongst the people who are wrong doers”, the Quran has absolved Prophet Aaron (peace be upon him) from the wicked blemish that the Jews had stamped upon him. According to the Bible, Prophet Aaron (peace be upon him) was guilty of making the golden calf as god for them:

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

which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wont not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings, which were in their ears and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a Braving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. (Exodus, 32: 1-6). The Quran has refuted this allegation and related the fact about the matter that the man responsible for this heinous sin was not Allah's Prophet Aaron but his rebel Samiri. (For details, see Surah Taha, Ayats 90-94).

Though it may appear very strange that the Jews should accuse their own Prophets of the most heinous sins, yet a deep and critical study of their history will show that this was done to justify their own moral degradation. When the whole community in general, and the religious scholars and priests in particular, became involved in deviations and immoralities, their guilty consciences impelled them to invent excuses for justifying their own bad conduct. As they committed heinous sins like shirk, sorcery, adultery,

treachery, falsehood and the like, they blemished the pure character of their own Prophets by ascribing such sins to them as were most shameful even for an ordinary good man, not to speak of a prophet so that they could justify their own wicked deeds. They argued like this: When even the Prophets could not save themselves from such sins, how could ordinary people like us be immune from weaknesses? The Hindus also did the same during their moral degeneration and the literature of that period depicts gods, rishis and the like, in the blackest colors so that they could say: When such highly placed beings were involved in immoralities, how could the common people escape from them? And why should such things be shameful for them, when they were not shameful for their gods and rishis?

151. He (Moses) said: “O my Lord, forgive me and my brother, and make us enter into Your mercy. And you are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.”

قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِإِخِي
وَادْخِلْنَا فِي رَحْمَتِكَ وَأَنْتَ
أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

152. Certainly, those who took the calf (for worship), wrath will come upon them from their Lord, and humiliation in the life of the world. And thus do We recompense those who fabricate lies.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ
سَيَنَالُهُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَذِلَّةٌ
فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَكَذَلِكَ
نَجْزِي الْمُفْتَرِينَ

153. And those who committed evil deeds, then repented after that and believed, verily, your Lord, after that, is indeed Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَالَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ ثُمَّ تَابُوا
مِنْ بَعْدِهَا وَءَامَنُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْ
بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

154. And when the anger of Moses subsided, he took up the tablets, and in their inscription was guidance and mercy for those who are fearful of their Lord.

وَلَمَّا سَكَتَ عَنْ مُوسَى
الْغَضَبُ أَخَذَ الْأَلْوَابَ فِي
نُسْخَتِهَا هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّلَّذِينَ هُمْ
لِرَبِّهِمْ يَرْهَبُونَ

155. And Moses chose from his people seventy men for an appointment with Us.^{*109} So when they were seized with a violent earthquake, he said: "O My Lord, if it had been Your will, You could have destroyed them before, and me. Would You destroy us for the deeds of the foolish ones among us. It is nothing but Your trial. You lead astray by which, whom You will, and guide whom You will."^{*110}

وَاخْتَارَ مُوسَى قَوْمَهُ سَبْعِينَ
رَجُلًا لِّمِيقَاتِنَا فَلَمَّا أَخَذَتْهُمُ
الرَّجْفَةُ قَالَ رَبِّ لَوْ شِئْتَ
أَهْلَكْتَهُمْ مِّن قَبْلُ وَإِنِّي
أَتْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَّا
إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا فِتْنَتُكَ تُضِلُّ بِهَا مَن
تَشَاءُ وَتَهْدِي مَن تَشَاءُ أَنْتَ

You are our protector, so forgive us and have mercy on us. And You are the best of those who forgive.”

وَلِيْنَا فَآغْفِرْ لَنَا وَآرْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ

خَيْرُ الْغَافِرِينَ



***109** The seventy delegates were summoned to Mt. Sinai so that they should present themselves before their Lord and on behalf of the community beg forgiveness for the sin of calf-worship that was committed by the Israelites, and to renew the covenant of obedience to Him. The Bible and the Talmud do not mention this, though the Bible says that Moses was summoned to Mt. Sinai so that he should be given new tablets for those that were broken, when he had thrown them down. (Exodus chapter 34).

***110** That is, every occasion of trial is very decisive for the people: it separates like a winnow useful from the useless out of a mixed mass. On such decisive occasions, the one who comes out successful in the trial does so only by divine guidance and help, and the one who fails in the test becomes unsuccessful because he is deprived of divine guidance and help. Though one gets Allah’s guidance and help in accordance with certain divine laws, which are based on absolute wisdom and justice, anyway the fact is that one’s success or failure in the trial depends entirely on divine guidance and help.

156. And ordain for us good in this world, and in the Hereafter. Certainly, we have turned unto You. He said: “My punishment, I

وَأَكْتُبْ لَنَا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا
حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ إِنَّا هُدْنَا
إِلَيْكَ قَالَ عَذَابِي أُصِيبُ بِهِ

afflict therewith whom I will, and My mercy embraces all things.^{*111} So I shall ordain it for those who fear (Me), and give the poor due, and those, they who believe in Our revelations.”

مَنْ أَشَاءُ وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَسَأَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِعَائِيَّتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ



***111** That is, the way whereby Allah is ruling His Kingdom is based on mercy and not on wrath. He always shows mercy to His creatures and manifests His wrath only when the rebellion and arrogance of His servants transgress the limits

157. Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet (Muhammad),^{*112} he whom they find written with them in the Torah and the Gospel.^{*113} He commands them that which is right, and forbids them from what is wrong.^{*114} And he makes lawful for them the good things, and he prohibits for them the evil things, and he relieves from them their burden, and the shackles that are upon them.^{*115} So those who believe

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا

in him, and honor him,
and help him, and follow the
light which is sent down
with him, it is they who are
the successful.

بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا
النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ



*112 After replying to the prayer of Moses (peace be upon him) in the previous verse, the Quran utilizes the opportunity to invite the Israelites to follow Muhammad (peace be upon him). It means: The conditions that were laid down for Allah's mercy upon you during the time of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), still stand, and require you to believe in this Messenger. It was said to you that Allah's mercy is sent to those people who refrain from disobedience. Now, there is no greater disobedience than to reject the guidance of the Messengers appointed by Allah. If you, therefore, do not refrain from this disobedience, you will have no other basis of virtue left in spite of your show of piety in the observance of minor and trifling religious rituals. You were enjoined to pay the Zakat so that you may be blessed with mercy, but today the only right way of spending of the Zakat is to make contributions towards the success of the campaign that is being carried on for the establishment of the divine way under the leadership of this Messenger, for the basic requirements of Zakat can only be fulfilled in this way. You were told that Allah has prescribed His Mercy for those who believe in His revelations: therefore if you reject the revelations that Allah is sending down to His Messenger, you will have

failed to fulfill this last condition, even though you might go on asserting that you believe in the revelations of the Torah.

Here the use of the word *ummi* for the Prophet (peace be upon him) is very significant. This title was used to break the national pride and arrogance of the Jews, who called the non-Jews *ummis* (gentiles). In this respect, they were so arrogant that, as a nation, not to speak of acknowledging an *ummi* as their leader, they were not ready even to concede basic human rights to the gentiles. They asserted, “We are not to be called to account for our behavior towards the gentiles” (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 75). That is why Allah has used the word *ummi* before Prophet, as if to say. “Now your salvation solely depends on following this *Ummi* Prophet. If you follow him, you will receive a portion of My mercy, otherwise you are doomed to the same wrath to which you have been subjected during the centuries of your deviation.

***113** There are clear references in the Bible to the coming of Muhammad (peace be upon him). For instance, see Deut. 18: 15-19, Matthew 21: 33 45. John I: 19-21, 14: 15-17, 25-30, 15: 25-26, 16: 7-15.

***114** That is, He makes lawful those pure things which they have made unlawful, and stakes unlawful those impure things which they have made lawful.

***115** That is, He relieves them of the burdens that had been laid on them by the legal hair-splitting of their jurists and by the exaggerated piety of their spiritual leaders, and by the superstitious restrictions and regulations imposed by

their common people. Likewise this Messenger makes their lives free from the fetters with which they themselves had bound their lives

158. Say (O Muhammad):
“O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, Him to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. There is no god but Him. He gives life and causes death. So believe in Allah, and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him so that you may be guided.

قُلْ يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ
اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِي لَهُ
مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا
إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ
فَاعْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ
بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ
وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَهْتَدُونَ



159. And among^{*116} the people of Moses, is a community, who guide with truth and by it they establish justice.^{*117}

وَمِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَى أُمَّةٌ يَهْتَدُونَ
بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ



***116** The theme of the address that was interrupted by the parenthesis, Ayats 157-158, is again being resumed.

***117** The majority of the translators render Ayat 159 like this: Among the people of Moses there is a group that guides and decides in accordance with the Truth. They

mean to say that there existed such a group among the Jews at the time of the revelation of the Quran. But from the context in which this occurs, we conclude that there was such a group of good people among the Israelites during the time of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). This has been mentioned here to show that there were some good people even at that time, when the Israelites had gone to the lowest level of moral and spiritual degradation and adopted the worship of the golden calf, and were punished by Allah.

160. And We divided them into twelve tribes (as distinct) nations.^{*118} And We inspired to Moses, when his people asked him for water, (saying) that: “Strike with your stick the stone.” So there gushed forth out of it twelve springs. Each (group of) people did indeed know their drinking place. And We shaded over them with the clouds, and We sent down for them the manna and the quails^{*119} (saying): “Eat of the good things with which We have provided you. And they wronged Us not, but they used to wrong

وَقَطَعْنَاهُمْ أَثْنَى عَشْرَةَ أَسْبَاطًا
 أُمَّامًا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ إِذِ
 اسْتَسْقَاهُ قَوْمُهُ رَأْبَ أَضْرِبْ
 بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانْبَجَسَتْ
 مِنْهُ اثْنَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ
 كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرَبَهُمْ وَظَلَّلْنَا
 عَلَيْهِمُ الْغَمَمَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ
 الْمَنَّاءَ وَالسَّلْوَىٰ كُلُوا مِنْ
 طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا
 ظَلَمُونَا وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ

themselves.

***118** This refers to the organization of the Israelites that has been stated in Ayat 12 of Surah Al-Maidah and given in detail in Numbers, the fourth Book of the Bible. According to this, Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was bidden in the desert of Sinai by the Eternal to count up the total members of the community of Israel. Accordingly they were numbered and divided into twelve clans, comprising the descendants of the ten sons of Prophet Jacob (peace be upon him) and two sons of Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him). The twelve men, who were at the head of each clan, were made the leaders of their ancestral clans so that they should look after the moral, religious, social, cultural and military condition of each clan and enforce the commandments. However, the ancestral clan of Prophets Moses and Aaron (peace be upon them), the clan of the Levites, the twelfth son of Prophet Jacob (peace be upon him) was left out. It was not counted among the other twelve clans of Israel, but was organized as a separate community and was entrusted with the duty of looking after the religious and spiritual welfare of all the clans of general Israel.

***119** The above mentioned organization was one of the great favors that had been conferred by Allah on the Israelites. In continuation of the same, three more favors have been mentioned here:

(1) The miraculous supply of water during their stay in the Sinai Peninsula.

(2) The sky was covered with clouds to protect them from the scorching heat of the desert.

(3) Manna and salva were sent down in a supernatural manner to feed them there. It is obvious that if adequate arrangements had not been made for the supply of these three most important necessities of life, this big community that consisted of about two million people would have perished with heat, hunger and thirst.

A visit to the Peninsula makes one realize that it is not possible even today to arrange for the supply of water and food and for shelter from the sun, if such a large number of people should happen to visit that place without previous arrangements. It is so thinly populated that its total population is not more than a few thousands. It would be a headache even for a modern government, if it wanted to send an army of say, only 500,000 soldiers there in this twentieth century of inventions. That is why many research scholars who believe neither in revealed Books nor in miracles have rejected the historical fact that the Israelites ever passed through and stayed in that part of the Peninsula for years, as mentioned in the Quran and the Bible. They opine that they might have passed through a region somewhere to the south of Palestine and to the north of Arabia. They consider that it is inconceivable for such a large number of people to encamp so long, under the hard geographical and economical conditions of the Peninsula, when in addition to these the means of supplies from Egypt were also cut off, and there was a constant threat of attack from the Amelikites who lived in the eastern and northern

parts of the Peninsula.

If we keep in view these things, we can appreciate the true value of the favors that have been mentioned here. At the same time, it also becomes obvious that this community showed ingratitude by committing acts of disobedience and infidelity, which abound in its history. (Compare this with E.Ns 72, 73 and 76 of Surah Al-Baqarah).

161. And^{*120} when it was said to them: “Dwell in this township and eat therefrom wherever you wish, and say repentance, and enter the gate prostrate. We shall forgive you your sins, We shall increase (reward) for those who do good.”

وَإِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ اسْكُنُوا هَذِهِ
الْقَرْيَةَ وَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ
شِئْتُمْ وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ وَادْخُلُوا
الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا نَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ
خَطِيئَتِكُمْ ۚ سَنَزِيدُ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ



***120** Now some incidents from the history of the Israelites are being related to show that their response to the above mentioned favors of Allah was very wicked and rebellious, which gradually threw them into the lowest abyss of destruction.

162. Then those who did wrong among them, changed the word to other (word), that which had been said to them. So We sent down

فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ
قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ
فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِجْزًا مِنْ

upon them wrath^{*121} from heaven for the wrong that they were doing.

السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَظْلِمُونَ

***121** Please refer to E.Ns 74 and 75 of Surah Al-Baqarah.

163. And ask them (O Muhammad) about the township that was by the sea,^{*122} when they transgressed in (the matter of) the sabbath. When their fish came to them on their sabbath day openly,^{*123} and the day they had no sabbath, they did not come to them. Thus, did We try them because they were disobedient.^{*124}

وَسَأَلَهُمْ عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي
كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةَ الْبَحْرِ إِذْ
يَعْدُونَ فِي السَّبْتِ إِذْ تَأْتِيهِمْ
حِيَتَانُهُمْ يَوْمَ سَبْتِهِمْ شُرَعًا
وَيَوْمَ لَا يَسْبِتُونَ لَا تَأْتِيهِمْ
كَذَلِكَ نَبْلُوهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَفْسُقُونَ

***122** The research scholars are of the opinion that the place refers to Ailah or Elat or Elote where the modern Jewish state of Israel has constructed a seaport of the same name and near which is situated Jordan's famous seaport of Aqabah. It is at the end of that long inlet of the Red Sea which is between the eastern pan of the Sinai Peninsula and the western side of Arabia. It was a very important trade center in the heyday of the Israelites. Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) had made this city the chief port of his fleet in the Red Sea.

The incident referred to here has neither been mentioned in

the religious books of the Jews nor in their history books but the way in which the Quran has related it here and in Surah Al-Baqarah clearly shows that at the time of its revelation, it was well known among the Israelites. That is why the Jews of Al-Madinah did not challenge its validity; although they never missed a chance of raising an objection against the Prophet (peace be upon him).

***123** Sabbath (Saturday) is the holy day of the week. The Lord made Saturday the Sabbath day for the Jews, saying, “Verily my Sabbaths ye will keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations....every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people...wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.” (Exodus 31: 12-16). But, in spite of this commandment that held out the punishment of death for any worldly work, from burning fire in the houses to taking any service from animals or slaves, the Israelites had begun to practice open violation of this law. So much so that during the time of Prophet Jeremiah (peace be upon him) 628-586 B.C, they used to carry in loads through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. Therefore the Prophet had to hold out the threat that he would light a fire in the city gates that would burn up the buildings of Jerusalem and never be put out. (Jeremiah 17: 21-27). Likewise, Prophet Ezekiel (peace be upon him) 595-536 B.C, also complains bitterly of the desecration of Lord’s Sabbath by the Jews on a national

scale (Ezekiel 20: 12-24). From these quotations it appears that the desecration of Sabbath mentioned here in the Quran probably took place during this period.

*124 Allah puts His servants to trial in many ways. When He sees that some of them are turning away from obedience to His law, and are growing more and more prone to disobedience, He opens the doors of disobedience before them by holding out such temptations as are very alluring to those people. Thus their evil intentions openly come to the surface and they commit such crimes from which they had refrained only for the lack of necessary opportunities for them.

164. And when a community among them said: “Why do you preach to a people whom Allah is about to destroy or punish them with a severe punishment.” They said: “To offer an excuse before your Lord, and perhaps they may fear (Allah).”

وَإِذْ قَالَتْ أُمَّةٌ مِّنْهُمْ لِمَ تَعِظُونَ قَوْمًا لَّا اللَّهُ مُهْلِكُهُمْ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا قَالُوا مَعذِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

165. Then, when they forgot what they had been reminded with, We rescued those who forbade from evil, and We seized those who did wrong with a severe punishment because they were disobedient.*125

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ عَنَّا جُنُودَنَا الَّتِي نَهَوْنَا عَنْ السُّوْءِ وَأَخَذْنَا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا بِعَذَابِنَا بَعِيضٍ بِمَا كَانُوا

***125** This shows that there were three kinds of people in that town. First, there were those who were openly and boldly violating the divine rules and regulations. Then there were some who did not violate the laws themselves but silently saw others violating them: they told admonishers that it was no good to give any piece of advice to those hardened lawbreakers. Lastly, there were others who were so much imbued with the sense of honor and courage that they could not tolerate such open violations of the divine law. They enjoined the lawbreakers to practice virtue and refrain from evil in the hope that they would return to the right way, or at least, they themselves would be in a position to present the proof before their Lord that they, on their part, did their duty to admonish those lawbreakers. Accordingly, when the scourge of Allah befell that township, the only people who were delivered from it were those who belonged to the third group. According to the Quran, they were delivered because they had shown their concern for the eradication of evil. The other two groups were counted among the workers of iniquity and punished in proportion to the nature and extent of their crime.

Some commentators are of the view that it cannot be said with certainty whether the second group was among those who were delivered or among those who were punished, for the Quran is not explicit about this. According to a tradition from Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him),

he was at first of the opinion that the second group was among those who were punished, but afterwards his disciple Ikrimah convinced him that it was among those who were delivered. But when we consider deeply the words of the Quran, we feel that his first opinion was correct for it is obvious that on the occasion of a scourge, the concerned township was divided into two groups only. One group consisted of those who were visited by the scourge, and the other of those who were delivered from it. Now when the Quran is explicit that the group that was delivered consisted of those who were forbidding evil, the other two groups must have been among those who were not delivered. This conclusion is supported by “To offer an excuse before your Lord”, and also by the succeeding verse. It is quite clear from this that the whole township, wherein the law of Allah is openly violated, is seized by His wrath, with the only exception of those who forbid evil. One will not be delivered simply because one did not violate the law but shall have to show practically that one did exert his utmost to establish virtue and eradicate vice. This view is further supported by other passages from the Quran and Hadith that this is the law of Allah concerning collective crimes. The Quran says, “Fear that trial which will not involve in scourge only those who will be guilty of transgression from among you” (Surah Al-Anfaal, Ayat 25). Explaining this verse, the Prophet (peace be upon him) says, Allah does not punish the common people for the sins of sinful people unless the common people connive at those glaring sins that are committed before their very eyes and

show no displeasure at them, in spite of the fact that they are in a position to do so. When they degenerate to such a degree, then Allah seizes the criminals as well as the connivers.

Besides this, it appears from the verses under discussion that the scourge of Allah was sent to that township in two installments. The first has been called a severe scourge. The second was "Be apes". We are of the opinion that the scourge in the first case was inflicted on both the first and the second groups, but in the second case it was inflicted on the first group only. (And Allah knows best. If I am right, this is from Allah and if I am wrong, it is from me. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful).

166. So when they were insolent about that which they had been forbidden from, We said to them: "Be you apes, despised."^{*126}

فَلَمَّا عَتَوْا عَن مَّا نُهِوا عَنْهُ قُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ



***126** Please refer to E.N. 83 of Surah Al-Baqarah.

167. And when your Lord proclaimed^{*127} that He would certainly raise against them, till the Day of Resurrection, those who would afflict them with humiliating punishment.^{*128} Surely, your Lord is indeed swift in retribution, and indeed He

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكَ لَيَبْعَثَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ يَسُومُهُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَسَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ

is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

لَغُفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ
١٢٧

*127 The Arabic word *ta-azzana* means “to give notice” or “to make known”.

*128 Such a warning had been administered over and over again to the Israelites ever since the eighth century before the Christian era and is contained in the Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and of the Prophets after them. Then Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) also administered the same in several of his addresses in the Gospels. Last of all, the Quran also gave the same warning. The fact that since then the Jewish people have always been abased and degraded at one place or the other is a clear proof that the Quran and those Books are really the Books of Allah.

168. And We have divided them in the earth as nations. Among them some are righteous, and some among them are other than that. And We have tested them with good things and evil things that perhaps they might return (to Our obedience).”

وَقَطَعْنَاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُمَّمًا
مِّنْهُمْ الْأَصْلِحُونَ وَمِنْهُمْ
دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَبَلَوْنَاهُمْ
بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَرْجِعُونَ
١٦٨

169. Then succeeded after them a generation, which inherited the book. They took the vanities of this lower life, and saying: “It will be

فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ وَرِثُوا
الْكِتَابَ يَأْخُذُونَ عَرَضَ هَذَا

forgiven for us.” And if there came to them an offer like it, they would (again) take it.^{*129} Has not the covenant of the book been taken from them, that they would not speak about Allah but the truth. And they have studied that which is therein.^{*130} And the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who fear (Allah).^{*131} Do not you then understand.

الْأَدْنَىٰ وَيَقُولُونَ سَيُغْفَرُ لَنَا وَإِن يَأْتِهِمْ عَرْضٌ مِّثْلَهُ يَأْخُذُوهُ
 أَلَمْ يُؤْخَذْ عَلَيْهِم مِّيثَاقُ الْكِتَابِ
 أَن لَّا يَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ
 وَدَرَسُوا مَا فِيهِ وَالْءَادَارُ ٱلْءَاخِرَةُ
 خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ ۗ أَفَلَا
 تَعْقِلُونَ



***129** In other words, they commit a sin, like illegal possession, knowing well that it is a sin, in the expectation of forgiveness. They rely on the presumption that they are the favorites of Allah; therefore, they will be pardoned somehow or other, in spite of what they did. That is why they neither feel ashamed of a sin nor repent of it. Moreover, they would again commit a similar sin as soon as there is another opportunity for it. What a wretched people they are! They inherited the Book that was to make them the leaders of the world; yet they aspired to nothing higher than to grab the transitory things of this world. Thus they became the wretched worshipers of this world, instead of being the bearers of the banner of justice and righteousness and the leaders of virtue and reform.

***130** They themselves have studied the Book, and know that there is absolutely no mention in the Torah of an

unconditional salvation of the Israelites. When neither Allah guaranteed to them nor did their Prophets ever give them the assurance that they would obtain salvation anyhow, what right do they have to ascribe to Allah what He never told them? Besides this, their guilt becomes more heinous because they were breaking the covenant they had made with Allah that they would say nothing but the truth in the name of Allah.

*131 This verse may be translated in two ways. The one that has been adopted in the text means this: “The abode of the Hereafter is worthy of good people and will be given only to those who are God fearing for it is not the monopoly of any person or family as such. How can it be possible that one should commit such deeds as deserve punishment yet get a good place in the Hereafter, just because one is a Jew or an Israelite? The second rendering will be this: The abode of the Hereafter is better for God fearing people who prefer the good life in the Hereafter to a life of pleasure in this world, for only those people who have no fear of Allah can prefer the pleasures of this life to the joys and peace of the next world.

170. And those who hold fast to the Book, and establish worship, certainly, We shall not waste the reward of those who do righteous deeds.

وَالَّذِينَ يُمَسِّكُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ
وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّا لَا نَضِيعُ
أَجْرَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ ﴿١٧٠﴾

171. And when We raised the mountain above them, as if it

﴿ وَإِذْ نَتَقْنَا الْجَبَلَ فَوْقَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُ

had been a canopy, and they thought that it was about to fall on them (and We said): “Hold that which We have given you firmly, and remember that which is therein, so that you may fear (Allah).”^{*132}

ظُلَّةٌ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُ وَاقِعٌ بِهِمْ خُذُوا
مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا مَا
فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ



***132** This is a reference to the event that occurred at the foot of Mt. Sinai on the occasion when the stone tablets containing the covenant were given to Moses (peace be upon him). The Bible says, “And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nearer part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. (Exodus 19: 17-18).

Allah caused such conditions before taking a covenant from the Children of Israel in the above environment so that they might realize the greatness, the exaltation and the glory of Allah with Whom they were making the covenant, and the importance of the covenant itself. It does not, however, mean that they were not willing to enter into the compact with Allah and were coerced to do so in this terrifying way. The fact is that they all were sincere believers and had gone to the foot of the mountain for the very object of making a covenant with Allah. But, instead of making the covenant in an ordinary way, these awe inspiring conditions were

created in order to impress on them its great importance so that they should keep in mind the power of the Almighty God, with Whom they were making it and the fear of grave consequences of breaking it.

Here the address to the Israelites comes to an end. In the succeeding passages, it is directed to mankind in general, and to the people of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in particular.

172. And^{*133} when your Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants, and made them testify as to themselves, (saying): “Am I not your Lord.” They said: “Yes, we do testify.”^{*134} lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: “Indeed, we were unaware of this.”

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ
ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ
عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ
قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا أَن
تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا
عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾

***133** The previous theme ended with this that God took a covenant from the Children of Israel to the effect that they should surrender to and obey their Lord. From here the address is being directed to the whole of mankind, which is being reminded that all the people, and not the Israelites alone, are bound by a covenant. Therefore they shall be called upon to render individually an account as to how far they had observed it.

***134** We learn from several traditions that this thing happened on the occasion of the creation of Adam. At that time the angels were gathered together and commanded to bow down before him and man's appointment as Allah's vicegerent was proclaimed; likewise the whole of mankind that was to be born up to the Day of Resurrection was brought into existence at one and the same time and imbued with common sense and brought forth in His presence and asked to testify that Allah is their Lord.

A tradition of Ubayy-bin-Kaab which is most probably based on the knowledge he received from the Prophet (peace be upon him), is the best commentary on this verse. He says:

Allah gathered the whole of mankind and arranged it into separate groups according to their kinds or periods and gave them human shape and power of speech. Then He took a covenant from them and made them witnesses concerning themselves and asked, "Am I not your Lord." They answered, "Most certainly, You alone are our Lord." Then Allah said, "I ask the earth and the heavens and your father Adam to bear witness to this effect lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection that you had no knowledge of this. So note it well that none other than I is worthy of worship and that there is no other Lord than I. You should not set up any partner with Me. I will send to you My Messengers, who will remind you of this covenant that you are making with Me; I will also send My Books to you. At this the whole of mankind replied, "We bear witness to this: You alone are our Lord and our Deity: We have no

lord or deity other than You.”

Some people take Ayats 172-173 as a symbolic narration. They are of the opinion that in this way the Quran intends merely to impress the fact that Allahs Divinity is implanted in the human nature and relates it in a way as if it had happened as a tangible event. But we do not consider this interpretation as correct because the Quran and the Hadith describe it as an event which actually took place. More than that it has been asserted that on the Day of Judgment the event of the covenant will be brought forward as an authentic proof against mankind. Therefore there is no reason why we should regard this event as a symbolic narration. We believe that this event actually took place in the physical world. The All-Powerful Allah did actually bring into existence and gave understanding and power of speech to each and every individual in the posterity of Adam whom He intended to create up to the Day of Resurrection and assembled before Himself at one and the same time and took the covenant from all of them to the effect that they had no lord or god other than Himself and that they had no right way of life other than Islam (surrender and submission to Allah).

Those who consider such an assembly as impossible are in fact skeptical of the limitless powers of Allah: otherwise they would not have entertained any doubts about it because this is as easy for Allah as the gradual birth of mankind. The All-Powerful Allah, Who is bringing human beings into existence in the way he is doing now, has also the power to assemble all mankind before its birth and

after its death. It appeals to reason that Allah let all mankind know that He was going to make His vicegerents after giving them wisdom and understanding and authority and the right to exploit the resources of the earth, and that He also took the oath of allegiance from them. Thus it is obvious and clear that there is nothing impossible or strange in this assemblage of the whole of mankind on the occasion of Adam's creation.

173. Or lest you should say: "It was only our fathers who ascribed partners (to Allah) before, and we were descendants after them. Would You then destroy us because of that which the unrighteous did."*135

أَوْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِنْ
قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ
أَفْتَلِكُنَّا بِمَا فَعَلَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ



*135 In this verse the object, for which the covenant was taken from the whole of mankind has been stated: it was to make each and every individual fully and consciously responsible for his deeds so that those who would rebel against their Lord should be held accountable for their guilt. It has been made plain that after this covenant they could not justify any sin on the ground that they had committed it in ignorance nor could they shift the responsibility for deviation on to their predecessors. Allah warns that by taking this covenant He has imbued in the heart of every individual that He alone is his Allah and Lord. Therefore none can absolve himself from the responsibility for a deviation, saying, "I was quite unaware

of this”, or “I was led astray by my wrong environment.” In this connection, let us now consider a few questions that might arise. Supposing that this covenant did take place, do we have any remembrance of this? Is anyone of us conscious that he was brought before his Allah on the occasion of the creation and that the said dialogue did actually take place? If the answer is in the negative, then how can it be justified to bring such a covenant as evidence against us, when we do not remember it nor are conscious of this covenant?

The answer is that this will be brought against us as an evidence because, though its remembrance and consciousness has been removed from the memory and the conscious mind, it has been retained in the subconscious mind.

As to why it has been removed from the memory and the conscious mind, the answer is obvious. If the impression of the covenant had remained fresh in the memory and the conscious mind, then everyone would have automatically observed it, and the trial and test would have become meaningless. Thus the very object for which man has been created would have been tendered meaningless. It has, however, been retained in the subconscious mind as a potentiality, and can be brought into consciousness by intuition and internal factors as in the case of all other branches of subconscious knowledge. The fact is that whatever man has achieved in culture, civilization, morality, sciences and all other aspects of human activities, they lie hidden as potentialities and are brought out by

external factors and intuition. But it is also a fact that no education, no training, no environment, no external factor, no intuition is capable of creating any other thing than the one that already lies potentially in the subconscious mind. Likewise none of these factors is in any way capable of totally effacing the things that lie hidden potentially in the subconscious mind. The most that these factors can do is to pervert its nature, but in spite of all efforts to pervert it, it will still remain latent in the subconscious mind and will try to come to the surface in response to external factors. The following is true of all the branches of potential knowledge: All these exist as potentialities in our subconscious minds and prove their existence when they appear as actual actions.

All potentialities require external stimuli, teaching and training to take practical shapes which, in fact, are a response of our potentialities to the external stimuli.

All these things can be suppressed and made dormant by wrong desires and environment and perversions but can never be effaced totally from the subconscious mind. Therefore these can be reformed and converted by the help of inner feelings and external efforts.

Exactly the same is true of the intuitional knowledge we have regarding our own position in the universe and our relationship to the Creator of the universe.

That this knowledge does really exist is proved by the fact that it has been appearing every now and then in every period of human life in every pan of the earth, in every habitation, in every posterity and in every generation and

that no earthly power has been successful in effacing it.

That this conforms to the reality is shown by the fact that whenever this knowledge has actually been applied to practical life, it has always produced good and useful results.

There has always been need of some external appeal to cause them to appear and take practical shapes. Accordingly the Prophets, the Books, and inviters to the truth from among the followers of the Prophets have been performing this service. That is why the Quran calls them reminders. For, the Prophets, the Books and the inviters to the truth do not create anything new in the minds of the people but refresh and bring to the surface by reminding what was already latent in them.

Another proof of the existence of this hidden knowledge in the human mind is that in every age, it has made a positive response to the call of the inviter and has come out as soon as it recognized his voice.

Above all, the greatest proof of the existence of this knowledge is that it has survived in the human heap in spite of the strenuous and continuous efforts to suppress, conceal and pervert it. Though the powers of ignorance and folly, lusts and prejudices, misguidance and temptations, have succeeded in producing shirk, atheism, irreligiousness, deviation, they have failed to efface the impress of this inherent knowledge from the human heart. That is why it comes to the surface whenever efforts are made to revive it.

As regards the evidence of this inherent knowledge on the Day of Judgment, Allah will refresh and revive the memory

of this covenant, whereby they all acknowledged Allah alone as their Lord and Deity. Then He will show that this remained embedded in their hearts, in spite of its persistent denial in this world and will provide from their own selves the proof of the fact that the impress of this covenant was always present in their minds and will show from the records of their lives how and when they suppressed the voice of this inherent knowledge: how and when their intuitional knowledge rebelled against their deviations, and how often it urged them to respond to the invitation of the inviters to the truth and how they silenced their inner voice by means of different pretexts. At that time, when all the secrets will be exposed, none will be able to put forward any excuses. Everyone shall have to confess his guilt in plain and clear words. That is why the Quran says that they shall not say, “We had no knowledge of this covenant,” but will have to confess, “We were disbelievers and knowingly denied the truth.” They will stand witness against themselves to the effect that they were disbelievers.

174. And thus do We explain in details the signs.^{*136} And perhaps they may return.^{*137}

وَكَذَلِكَ نَفْصَلُ الْآيَاتِ
وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

***136** “The signs” are the impresses of the knowledge of the truth that have been embedded in the human heart and point clearly to Allah’s existence.

***137** That is, so that these people should turn away from the paths of deviation and rebellion and come back to the paths of obedience and service.

175. And recite (O Muhammad) to them the story of him to whom We gave Our signs,^{*138} then he turned away from them, so Satan followed him up, then he became of those who went astray.

وَأْتَلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي ءَاتَيْنَاهُ
ءَايَاتِنَا فَأَنْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاتَّبَعَهُ
الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ



***138** The wording of the text shows that he was not an imaginary person invented for the sake of a parable but did really exist. Allah and His Messenger did not mention him by name because the purpose for which the event had been narrated was served without this. Therefore his name was kept secret so as to avoid giving him unnecessary notoriety; and this generous way has generally been followed both in the Quran and the traditions. That is why they have not mentioned the name of the person who has been cited as a bad example. Some commentators have, however, mentioned some specific names belonging to the ancient history or to the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). For instance, some mention the name of Baalam, the son of Baura, others that of Umayyah-bin-Abi-Assalt and Saifi-ibn Ar-Rahib. But the fact is that the identity of that person has not been established by the Quran or the Hadith. Therefore it is still a secret, but the parable applies to everyone who bears such a conduct.

176. And if We had so willed, We would surely have raised him by those (signs),

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ

but he clung to the earth and followed his own vain desire. So his likeness is as the likeness of a dog. If you drive him away, he hangs out with his tongue, or you leave him, he hangs out his tongue. ^{*139} Such is the likeness of the people who deny Our revelations. So narrate the stories, that they may reflect.

أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ
 هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ
 إِنْ تَحْمِلَ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثُ أَوْ
 تَرَكَهُ يَلْهَثُ ذَٰلِكَ مَثَلُ
 الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
 فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ
 يَتَفَكَّرُونَ



***139** As this passage deals with a very important subject, it requires detailed continents.

The person, who has been held out as a bad type, possessed the knowledge of the revelations of Allah and was acquainted with the reality.

Therefore it was reasonably expected that his knowledge ought to have guarded him against the way he knew to be wrong, and guided him to the way he knew to be right. Then Allah would have exalted him to the high rank of humanity because of his practice in accordance with the knowledge of the revelation. But he became inclined towards the benefits, lusts and comforts of the world and succumbed to temptations. He was so overpowered by avarice of these lower desires that he discarded all the higher things and let go waste all the rational and moral potentialities of progress. Thus he transgressed all the

limits that he ought to have observed in accordance with the demand of his knowledge. When Satan, who was lying in ambush nearby, saw him turning away deliberately and willfully from the truth because of his moral weaknesses, he chased him down and down froth one abyss to the other, till he fell into the company of those who had utterly lost their reason under his misguidance.

Allah has likened such a person to a dog because of his similarity to it in avarice and lust. The dog is proverbial for these characteristics: its ever hanging tongue and watering mouth point to its insatiable greed: it goes on smelling the earth even when it is hit with a piece of stone; it picks it up in its teeth, hoping that it might be a piece of bone. Its intense greed for exclusive ownership becomes manifest when it comes across a big carcass, sufficient to feed a number of dogs; but it does not let any other dog share it. The second characteristic of the dog is its being very lustful. It is because of these things that the worldly man, who transgresses all bounds imposed by faith and knowledge, has been likened to a dog. Then he, like the dog, looks for nothing but the means of filling up his belly and gratifying his lust.

177. Evil as an example are the people who denied Our revelations, and used to wrong their own selves.

سَاءَ مَثَلًا الْقَوْمُ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا
بِعَايَتِنَا وَأَنفُسَهُمْ كَانُوا يَظْلِمُونَ



178. He whom Allah guides, then he is the

مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِي

rightly guided, and he whom He sends astray, so such are they who are the losers.

وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْخٰسِرُونَ ﴿١٧٨﴾

179. And certainly, We have created for Hell many of the jinn and mankind.^{*140} They have hearts with which they do not understand, and they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear. They are like the cattle. Rather, they are even more astray. Such are they who are the heedless.

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا
مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ
لَّا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَّا
يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَهُمْ ءَاذَانٌ لَّا
يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ
بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْغٰفِلُونَ ﴿١٧٩﴾

***140** It does not mean that, there are many jinns and human beings whom We have created for the sole purpose of sending them to Hell and with the intention of making them fuel for it. But what it means is this: We created them and gave them hearts, brains, eyes and ears but these wicked jinns and people did not make use of these faculties to discern the truth from falsehood and made themselves fuel for Hell by their evil deeds.

The way that has been adopted to express the above thing is that of showing intense regret in human language. For example, when the young sons of a mother are killed in the battle she says to the people: I brought them up to become

fodder for the cannon. But she does not mean that she really brought them up for this purpose. She wants to show her intense regret and sorrow and blame towards those who were responsible for the battle.

180. And to Allah belong the most beautiful names.*¹⁴¹ So call on Him by them. And leave alone those who blaspheme concerning His names. They will soon be requited for what they used to do.*¹⁴²

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا
وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي
أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ



*¹⁴¹ Now that the discourse is coming to an end, the people are being admonished and reproved to guard against some well known deviations. At the same time they have been warned of the serious consequences of the attitude of ridicule and denial they were adopting towards the Message of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

*¹⁴² This admonition about giving names to Allah is of great importance, for different names reflect different concepts which people form of Him in their minds. It is obvious that people give such names to things as express their conception of them. The defects in the conceptions of things are reflected by the defects in the names and defects in the names show the defects in the conceptions. Besides this, man's relationships and his dealings depend on that particular conception which he forms about someone or something. The defect in the conception of things shows itself in the defect of one's relationship to it. On the other

hand, if his conception of a thing is correct and right, his relationship to it will also be of the correct and right sort. The same is true in the case of his relationship with Allah. The error one commits in giving wrong names to Allah (whether for distinction with reference to His attributes) is the result of his error in the creed and in the conception of Allah and His attributes. A man commits the same kind of error and to the same extent in the formation of his moral attitude towards life that he commits in his creed and his conception of Allah. In fact a man's moral attitude towards life is wholly governed by his conception of Allah and his relationship to Him and the universe. That is why Allah has commanded the people to give most excellent names to Him and to refrain from giving wrong names to Him, for He is worthy of excellent names only. Therefore, the best thing is to give Him excellent names because the results of the perversion of His names are most serious "Excellent names" are those names that point to the greatness, the supremacy, the sanctity, the purity and the perfection of His attributes. It shall be deemed perversion of His names to give Him such names as are below His dignity; which are against the reverence due to Him; which ascribe defects and shortcomings to Him or mislead one to form wrong creeds about Him. Again it shall also be a perversion to give such names to any of His creation as are worthy of Allah alone.

As regards the command "And leave alone those who blaspheme concerning His names" means, you need not to involve yourself in useless discussions with them, if they do

not listen to your admonition and do not try to understand what you say, but use crooked arguments to confuse the issue. They themselves shall see the consequences of their deviation.

181. And among those whom We created, is a nation who guides with the truth, and thereby they establish justice.

وَمِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا أُمَّةٌ يَهْدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ
وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٨١﴾

182. And those who deny Our revelations, We shall gradually seize them with punishment from where they do not know.

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُم مِّنْ حَيْثُ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٢﴾

183. And I respite them, certainly My scheme is strong.

وَأْمَلِي لَهُمْ إِن كِيدِي مَتِينٌ
﴿١٨٣﴾

184. Do they not reflect that there is no madness in their companion (Muhammad). He is not but a plain warner.

أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا مَا بِصَاحِبِهِمْ مِّنْ
جِنَّةٍ إِن هُوَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ
﴿١٨٤﴾

185. Do they not look in the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and that which Allah has created of all things, ^{*143} and that it may be that their own term has

أَوَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا فِي مَلَكُوتِ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا خَلَقَ
اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَأَنْ عَسَى أَنْ

drawn near.*¹⁴⁴ Then in what message after this will they believe.

يَكُونُ قَدْ أَقْتَرَبَ أَجْلُهُمْ فَبِأَيِّ



حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ

*143 These questions have been posed to refute the charge that their comrade, Muhammad (peace be upon him), was suffering from a disorder of the mind, for otherwise he would not have given the Message he was conveying. They have been asked to reflect upon the fact that he was born and bred among them and had been their comrade before he claimed that he was appointed a Messenger by Allah. During all those years they had known him to be of a sound mind and of a good nature. Thus it is obvious that they charged him of having a distracted mind not because of what he said before his Prophethood but because of what he proclaimed as a Prophet. That is why they have been asked to reflect upon and point out anything from his Message which they regarded as meaningless, unreal and irrational. If they had ever reflected upon the wisdom of the wonderful administration of the heavens and the earth or observed closely any creation of Allah, they would have come to the inevitable conclusion that the whole system of the universe, nay, each and every particle of His creation is a clear evidence of the truth of His Message. For all these things refute shirk and prove the Oneness of Allah and invite people to His worship and arouse in them the sense of responsibility and accountability. And that was what their brother was preaching.

*144 That is to say, they do not realize even this much that

none knows the exact time of his death, and that they should, therefore, make the best use of the respite that has been given to them and repent and reform themselves; otherwise they will meet with serious consequences.

186. Whoever Allah sends astray, then there is no guide for him. And He leaves them in their transgression to wander blindly.

مَنْ يُضِلِّ اللَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ
وَيَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ



187. They ask you about the Hour (Day of Resurrection): “When will be its appointed time.” Say: “The knowledge thereof is with my Lord only. None will manifest it at its proper time but He. Heavy it will be in the heavens and the earth. It shall not come upon you except all of a sudden.” They ask you as if you could be well informed thereof. Say: “The knowledge thereof is with Allah only, but most of mankind do not know.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ
مُرْسَلَتُهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ
رَبِّي لَا يُجَلِّيها لِيُوقِتَها إِلَّا هُوَ
ثَقُلَتْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
لَا تَأْتِيكُمْ إِلَّا بَغْتَةً يَسْأَلُونَكَ
كَأَنَّكَ حَفِيٌّ عَنْهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا
عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ



188. Say (O Muhammad): “I possess no power for myself to benefit, nor to hurt,

قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلَا

except that which Allah wills. And if I had knowledge of the unseen, I should have secured abundance of good, and adversity would not have touched me.*145 I am not except a warner, and a bringer of good tidings unto a people who believe.”

ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُ
أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ لَأَسْتَكْرَثُ مِنْ
الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوءُ إِنْ أَنَا
إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ وَنَشِيرٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ



*145 That is, I cannot tell you the exact time of Resurrection because I myself do not know anything about the unseen. Had I possessed any knowledge of the future, I would not have suffered any harm because I would have avoided it and achieved many benefits because of my fore-knowledge. Therefore it is very foolish on your part to ask me about it merely to test my Prophethood.

189. He it is who has created you from a single soul, and He has created from him his mate, that he might take rest in her. Then when he covered her, she carried a light burden, so she went about with it. Then when it became heavy, they both prayed unto Allah, their Lord: “If you give us a good child,

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ
وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا
لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا فَلَمَّا تَغَشَّاهَا
حَمَلَتْ حَمْلًا خَفِيفًا فَمَرَّتْ
بِهِ فَلَمَّا أَثْقَلَتْ دَعَوَا اللَّهَ
رَبَّهُمَا لِيَنْزِلَ لَنَا صَالِحًا

we shall indeed be among the grateful.”

لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٨٩﴾

190. Then when He gave them a good child, they ascribed to Him partners in that which He had given to them. Exalted is Allah above all that they join (with Him).^{*146}

فَلَمَّا ءَاتَتْهُمَا صَالِحًا جَعَلَا لَهُ شُرَكَاءَ فِيمَا ءَاتَتْهُمَا
فَتَعَلَىٰ اللَّهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٩٠﴾

***146** In order to understand this passage, it should be kept in mind that it criticizes the pagan Arabs for associating partners with Allah in the matter of the birth of children. They have been told to remember that the first man and his mate were brought into being by Allah: and they could not deny this. Then they also knew that it is He Who has arranged the birth of human beings after the first pair: that it is He by Whose will a woman becomes pregnant and who nourishes the child in her womb in a wonderful manner, and that it is He Who imbues it with a sound body and sound mind with various powers and capabilities and lets it come out as a healthy human being. They could not deny that all this is in the power of Allah alone. If Allah willed, He could have created a monkey, a serpent or any other animal in her womb or made the child deformed or physically or mentally defective. They knew that no one had the power to make any change in Allah's creation. That is why all their hopes were focused in Allah during the period of pregnancy and prayers were invoked for the birth of a perfect child. But it is an irony that the pagans as well

as the believers change their whole attitude after the birth of a child, and, instead of being grateful to Allah, they make their grateful offerings to some god or goddess or saint or the like and give such names as smack of shirk, pir-bakhsh, “favor of the faint,” or abdur-rasul, “servant of the prophet” etc.

Though the passage is quite clear, yet a misunderstanding has arisen about it, which has been supported by weak traditions. The mention of the first man and woman (Adam and Eve) in the beginning, and immediately after it of a man and a woman, has led to the confusion that both the pairs were one and the same. Therefore some commentators were of the opinion that the man was Adam and the woman who became pregnant was Eve and that they prayed to Allah for their child in the womb, but when it was born, they associated others with Allah in this favor. Then, with the help of weak traditions they concocted a complete story about it: When several children of Eve died soon after their birth, Satan came to her at the birth of one, and seduced her saying, “If you give him the name of Abdul Harith, means, the servant of Satan, he will survive.” It is all the more regrettable that some of these traditions have been linked up to the Prophet (peace be upon him). But the fact is that all these traditions are unauthentic and are not supported by the wording of the Quran and by the context in which they occur. The Quran criticizes the pagans for associating others with Allah in the matter of birth, when they themselves acknowledge that it is He Who is the Creator of the children which are born as a result of the

cohabitation of a man and a woman. That is why they also invoke Allah for the safe delivery of the child; when they are not sure of the perfection of the child. But after the safe delivery of a sound child, they turn to others with gratitude and offerings. It is thus clear that it is not any particular man and woman who have been admonished for their behavior, but every man and every woman, (including pagan men and women) who behave like that.

In this connection it should also be noted that the condition of the present day Muslims is even worse than that of the pagan Arabs whom the Quran has condemned in this passage. They committed shirk after the delivery of the child, though before this they prayed to Allah for the child. But the Muslims of today, who claim to be the bearers of the creed of *Tauhid*, go far beyond this. These wretched people pray to others even for the birth of a child and make vows to others during the period of pregnancy, and after the delivery of the child make offerings to the associates they set up with Allah. Yet they consider those Arabs as pagans who deserved Hell, and themselves as believers in One Allah, for whom Paradise has been guaranteed!

191. Do they associate as partners (to Allah) those who do not create a thing, and they are (themselves) created.

أَيُّشْرِكُونَ مَا لَا يَخْلُقُ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ

١٩١

192. And they are not able to help them, nor can they help themselves.

وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ لَهُمْ نَصْرًا وَلَا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَنْصُرُونَ

١٩٢

193. And if you call them to guidance, they will not follow you. It is the same for you whether you call them or you keep silent.*147

وَإِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ الْهُدَىٰ لَا
يَتَّبِعُوكُمْ سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ
أَدَعَوْتُمُوهُمْ أَمْ أَنْتُمْ
صَامِتُونَ



***147** This is to show the helplessness of the deities of the pagans. Not to speak of guiding their worshipers to the right way, they themselves are unable to follow the guidance of others. So much so that they cannot give any answer to the call of any one.

194. Indeed, those you call upon besides Allah are slaves like you. So call upon them then let them answer you, if you are truthful.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ
اللَّهِ عِبَادٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ فَادْعُوهُمْ
فَلَيْسَتْ جِيبُوا لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
صَادِقِينَ



195. Do they have feet by which they walk, or do they have hands by which they hold, or do they have eyes by which they see, or do they have ears by which they hear.*148 Say: "Call upon your (so called) partners (of Allah), then

أَلَهُمْ أَرْجُلٌ يَمْشُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ
أَيْدٍ يَبْطِشُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ
يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ
ءِذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا قُلِ
ادْعُوا شُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ كِيدُوا فَلَآ

plot against me, and give me no respite.”

تَنْظُرُونَ
195

***148** It is obvious that here they are being criticized for one of the three kinds of shirk they practiced. First, they worshiped idols, images or some other symbols of the objects of their worship. The second kind of shirk was the worship of some persons or spirits which were represented by idols, pictures, etc. The third kind of shirk consisted of the wrong creeds that were the basis of these practices of shirk. All the three kinds of practices have been criticized severely in the Quran at different places. Here it condemns the idols before which the pagan Arabs performed their religious rituals and presented their supplications and made their offerings.

196. “Indeed, my protecting friend is Allah, who has sent down the book. ^{*149} And He is an ally to the righteous.”

إِنَّ وِلِّيَّ اللَّهِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ
الْكِتَابَ وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّى الصَّالِحِينَ

196

***149** This is the answer to the threats which the pagan Arabs held out to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to this effect, If you do not refrain from opposing our deities and from preaching against them they will inflict their wrath on you and destroy you.

197. “And those whom you call upon besides Him, they are not able to help you, nor can they help

وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا
يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَكُمْ وَلَا

themselves.”

أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَنْصُرُونَ ﴿١٩٧﴾

198. And if you call them to guidance, they do not hear. And you will see them looking towards you, yet they do not see.

وَإِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ آهْدَىٰ لَا يَسْمَعُوا وَتَرَاهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٩٨﴾

199. Show forgiveness, and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant.

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿١٩٩﴾

200. And if an evil whisper comes to you from the Satan, then seek refuge with Allah. Indeed, He is All Hearer, All Knower.

وَإِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

201. Indeed, those who fear (Allah), when an evil thought touches them from Satan, they do remember (Allah), then they become seers.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَافٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٠١﴾

202. And their brothers, they (the devils)^{*150} plunge them further into error, then they do not stop short.^{*151}

وَإِخْوَانُهُمْ يَمُدُّونَهُمْ فِي الْغَيِّ ثُمَّ لَا يُقْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٠٢﴾

***150** That is, those who are under the influence of Satans.

***151** In this passage Allah has taught His Messenger (peace be upon him) some very important things about the methods of inviting people to promulgating the Message of Islam, and of guiding and reforming people. The object is to instruct the Prophet (peace be upon him) and, through him, his successors to enable them to carry on his mission after him. Some salient points are given below and should be considered in the order they are given:

(1) The most important thing is that the inviter to the truth should have a large and tender heart, and should be forgiving and forbearing. He should be friendly to his companions, kind to the common people, and should show forbearance to his opponents. He should tolerate the weaknesses of his comrades and endure patiently the persecution of his enemies. He should keep cool even under the greatest provocation and connive at the most unpleasant things. He should bear patiently the bitterest words, the most wicked slanders and the most cruel persecutions. Harsh treatment, hard-heartedness, bitter talk, and vindictive retaliations are as harmful as poison for this work: this spoils the work and does not mend it.

There is a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the same effect: My Lord has enjoined me to utter what is just whether I am in a state of anger or happiness: to try my best to have cordial relations even with those who are inimical to me: to render their rights even to those who deprive me of my rights: to forgive even those who are cruel to me. He advised those whom he sent on this Mission: Wherever you go, your visit should be a harbinger

of happiness and not of hatred: you should become the source of comfort to the people and not of bringing hardships on them. Allah has also praised this characteristic of the Prophet (peace be upon him): “O Messenger, it is a great blessing of Allah that you are very lenient towards and gentle with them. If you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have scattered away from you. (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 159).

(2) The second formula for the success of this Mission is to avoid philosophizing and to enjoin those simple and well-known virtues that are universally accepted to be virtues, and are easily recognized by common sense which an ordinary person possesses. Thus the appeal of the inviter to the truth convinces every one. Its greatest advantage is that it helps win over the common people to the side of promulgators of the truth, against its antagonists. When the common people, in spite of their prejudices, see on one side a gentle and kind person inviting them towards simple virtues, which they themselves understand well, and on the other, his antagonists opposing his noble mission with unmoral and inhuman devices, they turn away by and by from those degraded opponents and come to the inviter of the truth. As a result of this, in the end, only those remain in the field to oppose the truth, whose own interests are closely linked with falsehood or those who are slaves of the traditions of their forefathers and of the customs of ignorance. The Prophet (peace be upon him) owed his great success in Arabia to this wise policy. Then his successors achieved the same in the adjoining countries, where Islam

spread by leaps and bounds and was accepted by the overwhelming majority of the people.

(3) The other important instruction that has been given for the promulgation of Islam is to avoid useless discussions with the ignorant people. The inviter to the truth should always be strictly on the guard against involvement in useless talk and discussion with mischievous and quarrelsome people. He should take the utmost care to approach and converse with those people only who adopt a reasonable and rational attitude towards his Message. As soon as he feels that his addressees are adopting the attitude of ignorance and are resorting to argumentations, wrangling and taunts, he should make an honorable retreat from them. This is because it is not only useless to be involved in such things but it is harmful to the mission, as valuable time and energy, that could have been usefully employed for the promulgation of the Message, go to waste.

(4) In case the inviter to the truth feels that the provocations from the mischievous people are becoming too much for him to bear and he cannot withstand their tyrannies, mischief, foolish objections and accusations, he should at once realize that it is Satan who is tempting him to retaliate. Then the best thing is to seek refuge in Allah, and invoke His help to protect His servant from doing in anger anything that might be harmful to his Mission. This is possible only if one remains cool-headed even under the greatest provocations, for one can never think or act wisely if he is easily excited by anger, insult, injustice or cruelty etc. But Satan who does not like this Mission to succeed and

is always devising schemes to defeat it, first incites own disciples to attack the inviter to the truth and then incites him to make counter-attacks on them. As Satan's appeal is couched in very alluring words and pious terms, it is not an easy thing to withstand it. That is why pious people have been fore-warned, in Ayats 201-202, of this serious danger and instructed that if they intend to refrain from evil, they should immediately get alarmed as soon as they feel the evil effects of the temptation of Satan and its incitement in their hearts and stand on their guard. Then they will clearly see the right course that they should adopt on such occasions and under such circumstances for the sake of their Mission. As for "the brethren of Satan", they become self-seekers under their influence, and cannot withstand their temptation. So they follow satans, who tempt them to retaliate, and resort to every kind of abuse and dishonesty like their enemies.

Besides the above mentioned particular implications of this passage, it bears a general meaning as well. It helps differentiate the way of the pious from that of the impious. Those who really fear Allah and sincerely desire to refrain from evil, are so sensitive that even if an evil thought so much as touches their hearts, it pricks their consciences and rankles in their hearts and they seek Allah's refuge from Satan. This is because they are not used to evil thoughts, evil desires and evil intentions, for these are foreign to their nature. As soon as they become conscious of their presence in their minds, their eyes are opened and their consciences recognize them. Then they seek Allah's

refuge from Satan in order to cleanse their hearts of those dirty things. In contrast to them, those, who do not fear Allah nor desire to refrain from evil and those who have satans as their brethren, go on cherishing evil thoughts, evil intentions and evil designs in their hearts without feeling anything strange in them. So much so that no sense of cleanliness is left in their minds: and in due course, these dirty things take practical shapes and expose them before the world.

203. And when you do not bring them a sign, they say: “Why have you not brought it.”*152 Say: “I follow only that which is revealed to me from my Lord. This (Quran) is insight from your Lord, and a guidance, and a mercy for a people who believe.”*153

وَإِذَا لَمْ تَأْتِهِمْ بِآيَةٍ قَالُوا لَوْلَا
 آجَبْتَهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَتَّبِعُ مَا
 يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ مِنْ رَبِّي هَذَا بَصَائِرُ
 مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَهَدَىٰ وَرَحْمَةٌ
 لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ



*152 This question of the disbelievers implied a taunt. They meant to say: Well, as you are posing to be a Prophet, you ought to have faked up a miracle in proof thereof. The grandeur that is contained in the answer that follows is worthy of the Book of Allah.

*153 This is the answer to the question: I am not in a position to invent miracles or compose or patch up verses on your demand or when I feel their need. I am only a Messenger and my duty is to follow the guidance of the One Who has sent me. Therefore instead of demanding miracles

from me, you should consider seriously the contents of the Quran that has been sent down to me, as it contains spiritual lights. Those who accept it, will see the straight path of life, and their good moral qualities will begin to show the signs of divine mercy.

204. And when the Quran is recited, so listen to it, and be silent, that you may receive mercy. ^{*154}

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ



***154** It means, in your bigotry and obduracy you turn a deaf ear to the Quran when it is being recited, and make a loud noise so that no one should be able to listen to it. Leave this wrong attitude towards it and listen to it with attention and consider the teachings contained in it. It is just possible that your acquaintance with it may enlighten your hearts and make you co-sharers with the believers in the mercy of your Lord.

Incidentally, it should be noted that the above answer to the taunts of the opponents is so nice and sweet and appealing to the hearts that words cannot describe its excellence. There is also a lesson of wisdom for those who are engaged in the missionary work.

Though the real object of this verse is the same that has been stated above, incidentally it also enjoins the hearers to remain silent and listen to it as a mark of respect which is due to the Book of Allah. It is also deduced from this that when the Imam recites the Quran during the Salat, the

followers in the congregation should listen to it in silence, and they should not recite anything. There is, however, difference of opinion among the Imams in regard to its interpretation. According to Imam Abu Hanifah and his companions, the followers in the congregation should not recite anything whether the Imam is reciting the Quran aloud or silently in his mind. However, Imam Malik and Imam Ahmad are of the opinion that only in that case when the Imam is reciting the Quran aloud, the followers should not recite anything, but in the other case they should recite Surah Al-Fatihah. But according to Imam Shafai, the followers must recite Surah Al-Fatihah, whether the Imam is reciting loudly or silently in his mind. He bases his opinion on the traditions according to which one's Salat is not complete without the recital of Surah Al-Fatihah.

205. And remember your Lord within yourself, with humility and fear, and without loudness in words, in the mornings and the evenings. And do not be of those who are neglectful. ^{*155}

وَأذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ
تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ
الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ وَلَا
تَكُنْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

***155** “Remember your Lord” means “offer Salat” as well as keep Allah in mind whether by utterance or without it. And “morning and evening” means both the times as well as “always”. Therefore “Remember your Lord morning and evening” means “Offer Salat in the morning and in the evening”, and also “always keep Allah in mind.”

The Surah concludes with the above admonition, which is meant to warn the Muslims against their negligence in the remembrance of Allah, for this alone is responsible for all the chaos and the evils in the world. Whenever man forgets that Allah is his Lord, and that he is the servant of Allah Who has sent him to this world for a trial and that he shall have to render his account to Him immediately after his death, he deviates from the right way and commits acts of wickedness and immorality. Therefore a man who intends to follow the right way and guides others to the same way, should strictly guard against such a negligence. That is why the Quran has emphasized, over and over again, the importance of the observance of Salat and of the remembrance of Allah and of turning to Him on each and every occasion.

206. Indeed, those (angels) who are with your Lord, do not turn away out of arrogance, from His worship,^{*156} and they glorify His praise,^{*157} and to Him they prostrate themselves.^{*158}

AsSajda

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لَا
يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ
وَيُسَبِّحُونَهُ وَلَهُ يَسْجُدُونَ



***156** In contrast to the ways of pride and vanity of Satans that mislead into disobedience to Allah, and consequently to the depths of degradation, the example of the angels has been cited to teach the lesson of humility. They bow down before Allah and are always engaged in His service. Therefore if one desires to achieve high ranks in the sight of

Allah, one should follow the angels and refrain from the paths of Satans.

***157** The Arabic word *yusabb-i-huna-hu* means, they acknowledge and declare that Allah is flawless, and is absolutely free from every sort of defect, error or weakness, and has neither any partners nor compeers nor the like of Him, and that they are always engaged in this

***158** Everyone, who recites this verse or hears its recital, is required to perform a *sajdah*, prostration, so that his physical state may be in agreement with the angels near to Allah to give a practical proof of his humility, servitude and obedience to Allah simultaneously with His angels.

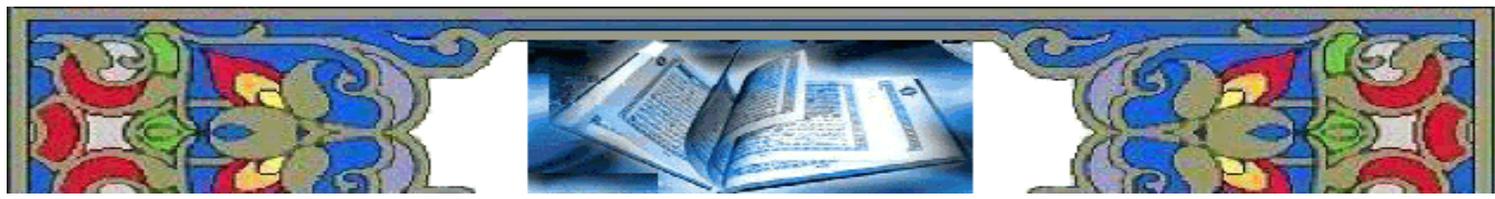
This is the first of the fourteen verses of the Quran, the recital of which requires the performance of a *sajdah*, prostration. Though all the Jurists agree that a prostration should be performed at these places, there is a difference in regard to its obligatory status. According to Imam Abu Hanifah, it is *wajib*, compulsory, but the other scholars are of the opinion that it is *sunna*, optional. It may also be noted that a thing which is *sunna* is not as binding as *wajib* but its intentional omission, though not sinful, is considered bad for a true Muslim and its permanent omission is sinful. As regards the manner of the performance of *sajdah*, we learn from traditions that it was different in form on different occasions. Sometimes while the Prophet (peace be upon him) was reciting a verse that required the performance of *sajdah*, he himself would prostrate then and there, and everyone in the gathering did the same so much so that if one did not find room for it on the ground, he

would perform it by laying his head on the back of the man in front of him. We also learn from traditions that on the occasion of the conquest of Makkah, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was reciting the Quran, a verse requiring the performance of *sajdah* occurred. Then those who were standing on the ground performed it on the ground, while those who were riding their horses or camels performed it on the backs of animals they were riding. Sometimes when he recited a verse requiring *sajdah* during his address, he came down from the pulpit, and performed it on the ground and then climbed the pulpit and resumed his address.

The majority of the Muslims are of the opinion that the conditions for the performance of *sajdah* are the same as for the performance of Salat. But there is no proof for these conditions in the traditions concerning *sajdah*. We find from them that when a person hears a verse requiring *sajdah*, he should bend down his head wherever and in whatever position he may be irrespective of these conditions. He should not mind whether he is in a state of ablutions or not; whether he can turn his face towards the *qiblah* or not; whether it is possible for him to prostrate his head on the ground or not. We find examples of the learned and pious people in the past following the same practice. According to Imam Bukhari, Abdullah bin Umar would perform *sajdah* whether he was in a state of ablutions or not. It is cited in Fatehulbari that Abu Abdur-Rehman Sulami would recite the Quran while he was walking and would merely bend down his head when he read a verse

requiring *sajdah*, whether he was in a state of ablutions or not and whether he was facing *qiblah* or not. From these we have come to the conclusion that, though the method followed by the majority is more prudent, if a person follows a practice different from that of the majority, he should not be reproved for this because there is no proof in Sunnah for the method followed by the majority, while there are examples of learned personages for this practice.





Al-Anfaal الأَنْفَال

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name *Al-Anfaal* (The Bounties) from the first verse.

The Period of Revelation

It was revealed in 2 A. H. after the battle of Badr, the first battle between Islam and kufr. As it contains a detailed and comprehensive review of the battle, it appears that most probably it was revealed at one and the same time. But it is also possible that some of the verses concerning the problems arising as a result of this battle might have been revealed later and incorporated at the proper places to make it a continuous whole. At any rate, in the entire Surah there is nothing that might show that it is a collection of a couple of discourses, that have been combined together.

Historical Background

Before reviewing the Surah, it is worthwhile to consider the events that led to the battle of Badr.

During the first decade or so of the Prophethood at Makkah, the message had proved its firmness, and

stability. This was the result of two things. First, the Messenger (peace be upon him), who possessed the highest qualities of character, was performing his mission with wisdom, foresight and magnanimity. He had shown by his conduct that he had made up his mind to carry on the movement to a successful end, and therefore, was ready to face all sorts of dangers and obstacles in the way. Secondly, the message was so charming that it attracted the minds and hearts of the people irresistibly towards it. So much so, that all obstacles of ignorance, superstition and petty prejudices failed to check its advance. That is why the Arab upholders of the ways of ignorance, who looked down upon it in its initial stages, had begun to reckon it as a serious menace during the last period of the stay of the Prophet (peace be upon him) at Makkah, and were bent on crushing it with all the forces at their command. But in spite of the above mentioned strength, the movement still lacked certain things to lead it to victory:

First, it had not yet been fully proved that it had gathered around it a sufficient number of such followers who not only believed in its truth, but also had such an intense devotion to its principles that they were ready to spend all their energies and all that they possessed in the struggle for its success and establishment. So much so, that they were ready to sacrifice their lives in the fight against the entire world even though they should be their own nearest relative. It is true that the followers of Islam had endured the severest persecutions at the hands of the Quraish of Makkah and had given a good proof of the firmness of

their faith and their strong relation with Islam, yet further trials were required to show that Islam had succeeded in acquiring such a band of followers which considered nothing dearer than its ideal and was ready to sacrifice life for it.

Secondly, though the voice of Islam had reached every part of the country, its effects were yet scattered and its acquired strength was spread here and there. It had not yet gathered sufficient force essential for a decisive conflict with the old established order of ignorance.

Thirdly, Islam had yet no home of its own and had not established itself firmly anywhere in the land where it could consolidate its power and make it a base for further action. For the Muslims were scattered all over the country and were living among the unbelievers as aliens whom their bloodthirsty enemies wanted to uproot from their own homes.

Fourthly, the Muslims had not yet had an opportunity to demonstrate practically the blessings of the system of life based on Islam. There was neither any Islamic culture, nor any social, economic or political system; nor were there any established principles of war and peace for their guidance. Therefore the Muslims had no opportunity for demonstrating those moral principles on which they intended to build their entire system of life; nor had it been proved on the touchstone of trial that the Muslims as a community were sincere in their proclamation of the message.

Allah created opportunities for making up these

deficiencies.

During the last four years or so of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) stay at Makkah, the voice of Islam had been proving effective at Yathrab and the people for various reasons had been accepting the message more readily than other clans of Arabia. So much so that in the twelfth year of Prophethood on the occasion of Hajj a deputation of 75 people met the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the darkness of night. These people not only accepted Islam, but also offered to give him and his followers a home. As this was a most epoch making opportunity provided by Allah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) took advantage of it.

The significance of this offer was quite clear to the people of Yathrab, and they fully realized that this was not an invitation to a mere fugitive, but to the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah so that he should become their leader and ruler. Likewise they knew that they were not inviting the Muslim refugees to give them shelter from persecution but to assemble them from all over the country for their integration with themselves to form an organized community. Thus the offer of the people of Yathrab was to make Yathrab the city of Islam. Accordingly the Prophet (peace be upon him) accepted their invitation and made it the first city of Islam in Arabia.

And the people of Yathrab were fully aware of the implications of this offer. It was indeed a declaration of war against the whole of Arabia, and an invitation to their own social and economic boycott as well. And when the Ansar

from Yathrab declared their allegiance to the Prophet (peace be upon him) at Aqabah, they knew well its consequences. During the course of the formal declaration of allegiance, Asad bin Zurarah, the youngest of all the delegates from Yathrab, stood up and said, "O people of Yathrab! Just listen to me and consider the matter carefully in all its aspects. Though we have come to him, regarding him only as a Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, we should know that we shall be inviting the enmity of the whole of Arabia. For when we take him away to Yathrab, we shall be attacked and our children may be put to the sword. Therefore if you have the courage in your hearts to face it, then and then only, you should declare your allegiance to him and Allah will give you its reward. But if you love your lives more than him and his message, then leave this matter and frankly excuse yourselves, for at this time Allah may accept your excuses."

Abbas bin Ubadah bin Naalah, another member of the delegation, reiterated the same thing, saying, Do you understand the implication of the declaration of your allegiance to this person? People responded, yes we know it. He said, you are challenging the whole world to war by your declaration of allegiance to him. There is every likelihood of a serious menace to your lives and properties, therefore consider it well. If you have any idea lurking in your minds that you will then hand him over to his enemies, it is much better to leave him alone now, because that conduct shall bring shame and disgrace to you in this world and the next. On the other hand, if you have

sincerely resolved that you will endure all kinds of consequences that will follow as a result of this invitation, then it would be the best thing to take the oath of allegiance to him because, by God, this will surely bring good to you in this world as well as in the next world.

At this all the members of the delegation cried with one voice, we are ready and prepared to risk all our wealth and our noble kith and kin for his sake.

It was then that the famous oath of allegiance, which is known as the “Second Oath of Allegiance at Aqabah” was taken.

On the other side, the people of Makkah also understood well the implications of this matter from their own point of view. They realized that Muhammad (peace be upon him), whom, they knew well, had a great personality and possessed extraordinary abilities, was going to gain a strong footing, by this allegiance. For this would help integrate his followers, whose constancy, determination, and unwavering fidelity to the Messenger (peace be upon him) had been tried, into a disciplined community under his wise leadership and guidance. And they knew that this would spell death for their old ways of life. They also realized the strategic importance of Al-Madinah to their trade, which was their chief means of livelihood.

Its geographical position was such that the Muslims could strike with advantage at the caravans traveling on the trade route between Yemen and Syria, and thus strike at the root of their economy and that of other pagan clans very effectively. The value of the trade done by the people

of Makkah alone on this route, not to count that of Taif and other places, amounted to about two hundred thousand dinars annually.

As the Quraish were fully aware of the implications of the oath of allegiance at Aqabah, they were greatly perturbed when they got wind of it the same night. At first they tried to win over the people of Al-Madinah to their side. But when they saw that the Muslims were migrating to Al-Madinah in small groups, they realized that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was also going to emigrate soon from there. Then they decided to adopt an extreme measure to prevent this danger.

A few days before his migration, the Quraish held a council to consider the matter. After a good deal of argument; they decided that one person should be taken from each of the families of Quraish other than that of Banu Hashim to put an end to the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This was to make it difficult for the family of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to fight alone with all the other families of the Quraish and thus to force them to accept blood money for his murder instead of taking revenge from them, but by the grace of Allah their plot against the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) failed because of his admirable foresight and full trust in Allah, and he reached Al-Madinah safe and sound. When they could not prevent his emigration, it occurred to them to exploit Abdullah bin Ubai who had begun to cherish a grievance against the Prophet (peace be upon him) since his arrival at Al-Madinah. He was an influential chief of Al-Madinah and

the people had agreed to make him their king. But when the majority of Aus and Khazraj clans became Muslims and acknowledged the Prophet (peace be upon him) as their leader, guide and ruler, all his hopes of becoming a king came to an end. Therefore the Quraish wrote to him, as you have given shelter to our enemy, we tell you plainly that you should either fight with him yourself or exile him from your city otherwise we swear by God that we will invade your city, kill your males and make your females our slave girls. This letter added fuel to the flames of his jealousy and he was inclined to do some mischief, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) took timely precautions and defeated his evil designs.

The Quraish got another opportunity to hold out a threat. When Saad bin Muaz, another chief of Al-Madinah, went to Makkah to perform Umrah. Abu Jahl interrupted him at the very door of the Kabah, saying, "Do you think we will let you perform Umrah in peace while you give shelter and help to renegades from us? Had you not been a guest of Ummayyah bin Khalf, you would not have gone back alive from here." Saad replied, "By Allah, if you prevent me from this, I will retaliate in a worse manner and block your route near Al-Madinah." This incident virtually led to a declaration from the people of Makkah that they would prevent the Muslims from a pilgrimage to the Kabah, and from the people of Al-Madinah that as a retaliation they would block their trade route to Syria against the opponents of Islam. As a matter of fact there was no other alternative for the Muslims than to keep a strong hold on

this route so as to force the Quraish, and the other clans, whose interests were vitally bound with this route, to reconsider their inimical and antagonistic attitude towards them. That is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) attached a great importance to this problem. As soon as he was free from making the preliminary arrangements for organizing the newly formed Muslim community and settling peace terms with the neighboring Jewish habitations, he adopted two measures in this connection.

First, he entered into negotiations with those clans who lived between the Red Sea and this route so as to make alliances with them or at least to persuade them to make treaties of neutrality with the Muslims. He was successful in doing this, and he entered into a treaty of non-alignment with Juhainah, which was a very important clan of the hilly tract near the sea coast. Then, at the end of the first year of Hijrah, he made a treaty of defensive alliance with Bani Damrah, who lived near Yanbu and Zawal Ushairah. In 2 A. H. Bani Mudlij also joined the alliance, as they were the neighbors and allies of Bani Damrah. Then it so happened that quite a large number of these people were converted to Islam as a result of the missionary work done by the Muslims.

Secondly, he successively sent small bands of his men on this route to serve as a warning to the Quraish, and himself accompanied some of them. In the first year of Hijrah, four expeditions were sent there, that is, the expedition under Hamzah, the expedition under Ubaidah bin Harith, the expedition under Saad bin Abi Waqqas and the Al-Abwa

expedition under the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. In the first month of the second year two more incursions were made on the same route. These are known as Buwat expedition and Zawal Ushairah expedition. Two things about all these expeditions are noteworthy. First, no blood was shed and no caravans were plundered in any of these expeditions. This proves that the real object of these expeditions was to show to the Quraish which way the wind was blowing. Secondly, not a single man from the people of Al-Madinah was sent by the Prophet (peace be upon him) on any of these incursions. All the bands consisted purely of the immigrants from Makkah so that the conflict should remain between the people of the Quraish themselves and should not further spread by the involvement of other clans. On the other side, the Quraish of Makkah tried to involve others also in the conflict. When they sent bands towards Al-Madinah, they did not hesitate to plunder the people. For instance, an expedition under the leadership of Kurz bin Jabir al-Fihrl plundered the cattle of the people of Al-Madinah from the very vicinity of the city to show what their real intentions were.

This was the state of affairs when, in Shaaban, 2 A.H. (February or March, 623 A. D.) a big trade caravan of the Quraish, carrying a large merchandise with only a guard of thirty to forty men, on its way back from Syria to Makkah, reached the territory from where it could be easily attacked from Al-Madinah. Naturally Abu Sufyan, who was in charge of it, from his past experience feared an attack from the Muslims. Accordingly, as soon as he entered the

dangerous territory, he dispatched a camel rider to Makkah with a frantic appeal for help. When the rider reached Makkah, he, following an old custom of Arabia, tore open the ears of his camel, cut open his nose and overturned the saddle. Then rending his shirt from front and behind, he began to cry aloud at the top of his voice, "O people of Quraish dispatch help to protect your caravan from Syria under the charge of Abu Sufyan, for Muhammad with his followers is in pursuit of it, otherwise I don't think you will ever get your goods. Run, run for help." This caused great excitement and anger in Makkah and all the big chiefs of the Quraish got ready for war. An army, consisting of 600 armored soldiers and cavalry of 100 riders with great pomp and show marched out for a fight. They intended not only to rescue the caravan but also to put to an end, once for all, the new menace from the Muslims who had consolidated themselves at Al-Madinah. They wanted to crush that rising power and overawe the clans surrounding the route so as to make it absolutely secure for future trade.

Now the Prophet (peace be upon him), who always kept himself well informed of the state of affairs, felt that the decisive hour has come and that was the right time when he must take a bold step; otherwise the Islamic movement would become lifeless forever and no chance would be left for it to rise again. For if the Quraish invaded Al-Madinah, the odds would be against the Muslims. The condition of the Muslim community was still very shaky because the immigrants (Muhajirin) had not been able to stabilize their

economy during the short period (less than two years) of their stay at Al-Madinah; their helpers, (the Ansar) had not yet been tried; and the neighboring Jewish clans were antagonistic. Then there was a strong group of hypocrites and mushriks in Al-Madinah itself; above all, the surrounding clans lived in awe of the Quraish and had all their religious sympathies with them. The Prophet (peace be upon him), therefore, felt that the consequences of this possible invasion would not be favorable to the Muslims.

The second possibility was that they would not invade Al-Madinah but try only to escort their caravan safely and securely by a mere show of force. In that case, too, if the Muslim remained inactive, it would affect their reputation adversely. Obviously, this weak stand in the conflict would embolden the other Arabs also and make the position of the Muslims very insecure in the country and the surrounding clans would, at the instance of the Quraish, start hostilities against them, and the Jews, the hypocrites and the mushriks of Al-Madinah would openly rise against them and not only endanger their security of life, property and honor but make it difficult for them even to live there.

The Muslims would not be able to inspire the enemy with awe so as to keep safe from them their life, property and honor. A careful study of the situation led the Prophet (peace be upon him) to make up his mind to take a decisive step and go into the battle with whatever little strength he could muster, for thus and thus only could he show whether the Muslim community had the right to survive or was doomed to perish.

When he arrived at this momentous decision, he called the Muhajirin and the Ansar together and placed the whole position before them, without any reservation. He said, Allah has promised that you will confront one of the two, the trade caravan coming from the north or the army of the Quraish marching from the south. Now tell me which of the two you want to attack. A large majority of the people replied that they wanted to attack the caravan. But the Prophet (peace be upon him) who had something else before him, repeated the same question. At this Miqdad bin Amr, a Muhajir, stood up and said, "O Messenger of Allah, please march to the side to which your Lord commands you, we will accompany you wherever you go. We will not say like the Israelites said, go and let you and your Lord fight and we will wait. In contrast to them we say, let you and your Lord fight; we will fight by your side to our last breath. Even then he did not announce any decision but waited for a reply from the Ansar who had not yet taken any part in any battle of Islam. As this was the first opportunity for them to prove that they were ready to fulfill their promise of fighting for the cause of Islam, he repeated the question without directly addressing them. At this, Saad bin Muaz, an Ansar, stood up and said, it appears that you are putting the question to us. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, yes, the Ansar replied, we have believed in you and confirmed that what you have brought is the truth, and have made a solemn pledge with you that we will listen to you and obey you. Therefore, O Messenger of Allah, do whatever you intend to do. We

swear by Allah Who has sent you with the truth that we are ready to accompany you to the sea shore and if you enter it, we will plunge into it. We assure you that not a single one of us will remain behind or forsake you, for we will not hesitate at all to go to fight, even if you should lead us to the battlefield tomorrow. We will remain steadfast in the battle and sacrifice our lives in the fight. We do hope that by the grace of Allah our behavior will gladden your heart. So, trusting in Allah's blessing, take us to the battlefield.

After these speeches, it was decided that they should march towards the army of the Quraish and not towards the trade caravan. But it should be noted that the decision was of an ordinary nature. For the number of people, who came forward to go to the battlefield, was only a little more than three hundred (86 Muhajirs, 62 from Aus and 170 from Khazraj). Then the little army was ill-armed and hardly equipped for battle. Only a couple of them had horses to ride and the others had to take their turn in threes and fours on the back of a camel, out of the 70 they had in all. Above all, they had not got enough weapons for the battle; only 60 of them had armors. It is, therefore, no wonder that with the exception of those who were prepared to sacrifice their lives for the cause of Islam, the majority of those who had joined the expedition, were so filled with fear that they felt as if they were knowingly going into the jaws of death. Then there were people who always looked at things from a selfish point of view. Though they had embraced Islam, they did not realize that their faith would demand the sacrifice of their lives and properties from them; they were

of the opinion that it was a mad expedition prompted by irrational enthusiasm for religion. But the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the true believers had realized the urgency of that critical hour which required the risk of life. Therefore, they marched straight to the south-west, wherefrom the army of the Quraish was coming. This is a clear proof of the fact that from the very beginning they had gone out to fight with the army and not to plunder the caravan. For if they had aimed at plundering the caravan they would have taken the north-westerly direction and not the south-westerly one.

The two parties met in combat at Badr on the seventeenth of Ramadan. When the two armies confronted each other and the Prophet (peace be upon him) noticed that the Quraish army outnumbered the Muslims by three to one and was much better equipped, he raised his hands up in supplication and made this earnest prayer with great humility: “O Allah! Here are the Quraish proud of their war material: they have come to prove that Thy Messenger is false. O Allah! Send now the success that Thou hast promised to give me. O Allah! If this little army of Thy servants is destroyed, then there will be left none in the land to worship Thee.”

In this combat the emigrants from Makkah were put to the hardest test for they had to fight against their own near and dear relatives and put to the sword their fathers, their sons, their paternal and maternal uncles and their brothers. It is obvious that only such people could have come out successful in this hardest of tests as had accepted

the truth sincerely and cut off all relations with falsehood. And in another way the test to which the Ansar were put was not less hard. So far they had only alienated the powerful Quraish and their allies by giving shelter to the Muslims against their wishes but now, for the first time, they were going to fight to them and sow the seeds of a long and bitter war with them. This was indeed a very hard test for it meant that a small town with a population of a few thousand inhabitants was going to wage a war with the whole of Arabia. It is obvious that only such people could take this bold step who believed in the truth of Islam so firmly that they were ready to sacrifice every personal interest for its sake.

So Allah accepted the sacrifices of the Muhajirin and the Ansar because of their true faith, and rewarded them with His success. The proud, well armed Quraish were routed by these ill equipped devotees of Islam. Seventy men of their army were killed and seventy captured as prisoners and their arms and equipment came into the hands of the Muslims as spoils of war. All their big chiefs, who were their best soldiers and who had led the opposition to Islam, were killed in this battle. No wonder that this decisive victory made Islam a power to be reckoned with. A Western research scholar says that before the battle of Badr, Islam was merely a religion and a state but after the battle it became the state religion, nay, the state itself.

Topics of Discussion

It is this great battle that has been reviewed in this Surah. But let it be noted that in some respects this review is quite

different from the reviews that are usually made by the worldly commanders after a great victory.

1. Instead of gloating over the victory, the moral weaknesses that had come to the surface in that expedition have been pointed out so that the Muslims should try their best to reform themselves.

2. It has been impressed upon them that the victory was due to the help of Allah rather than to their own valor and bravery so that the Muslims should learn to rely on Him and obey Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) alone.

3. The moral lesson of the conflict between the truth and falsehood has been enunciated and the qualities which lead to success in a conflict have been explained.

4. Then the Surah addresses the mushriks, the hypocrites, the Jews and the prisoners of this war in a very impressive manner that should teach them a good lesson.

5. It also gives instructions in regard to the spoils of war. The Muslims have been told not to regard these as their right but as a bounty from Allah. Therefore they should accept with gratitude the share that is granted to them out of it and willingly accede to the share which Allah sets apart for His cause and for the help of the needy.

6. Then it also gives normal instructions concerning the laws of peace and war for these were urgently needed to be explained at the stage which the Islamic movement had entered. It enjoined that the Muslims should refrain from ways of ignorance in peace and war and thus should establish their moral superiority in the world. It also

meant, to demonstrate to the world in actual practical life the morality which it had been preaching to the world from the very beginning of Islam and had been enjoining that practical life should be based on the same.

7. It also states some articles of the Islamic constitution which help differentiate the status of the Muslims living within the limits of Dar-ul-Islam (the Abode of Islam) from that of the Muslims living beyond its limits.

Problems of Jihad

This Surah enunciates general principles of war (one aspect of Jihad) and peace while reviewing the battle of Badr and uses them for the moral training of the Muslims.

Topics and their Interconnection

Ayats 1-41. This portion deals with the problems of the spoils of war. The Quran says that these are not the spoils of war but the bounties of Allah and proves this by showing that the victory at Badr (and in all other battles) was won by His succor and not by the efforts of the Muslims. It also declares (in Ayat 40) that the war aim of the Muslims should be to eliminate all unfavorable conditions for the establishment of Islam and not to gain spoils. Moreover, the spoils, being the bounties of God, belong to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and they alone are entitled to allocate them. Then after conditioning the Muslims to accept these things, the different shares have been allocated in Ayat 41.

Ayats 42-54. The battle of Badr was ordained by Allah so that Islam should triumph over ignorance. The lesson from this is that the Muslims should trust in God and prepare

themselves for war and should not be beguiled by Satan as the disbelievers were.

Ayats 55-59. Sanctity of treaties has been enjoined and the Muslims commanded to observe them as long as the other party does not break them.

Ayats 60-66. The Muslims should always be prepared for war on every front, but should be ready to make peace if the other party is inclined towards it.

Ayats 67-71. In these verses, instructions about prisoners of war have been given.

Ayats 72-75. In order to keep the Muslims joined together against their enemies, they have been taught to have cordial relations with one another.

1. They ask you (O Muhammad) about the bounties of war. Say: "The (decisions about) bounties of war belong to Allah and the Messenger." So fear Allah, and set things right between you, and obey Allah and His Messenger, if you are (true) believers.*1

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَنْفَالِ قُلِ
الْأَنْفَالُ لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ فَاتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ
وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
مُؤْمِنِينَ

*1 A dispute arose among the Muslims concerning the division of the spoils of victory after the battle of Badr, Allah used this opportunity for the benefit of the Muslims and gave instructions for the solution of the problems of peace and war.

As Badr was the first battle fought under the flag of Islam,

naturally the Muslims were unaware of the Islamic laws about war and the problems created by it. Some preliminary instructions had already been given in Surah Al-Baqarah and Surah Muhammad, but more instructions were needed for the humanization of war, because their notions were still the same that they had during the pre-Islamic days. That is why according to the old usage each Muslim claimed to be the rightful owner of the spoils which came in his hand after the victory. But there were others, who had gone in pursuit of the enemy instead of plundering the spoils, They claimed that they, too, were entitled to a share of the spoils, for, they said, “If we had not pursued the enemies to a long distance, they would have come back and by a surprise attack turned the victory into a defeat”. There were still others, who were standing guard for the Prophet (peace be upon him): they also claimed a share, saying that they had rendered the greatest service in the battle by protecting the person of the Prophet (peace be upon him), for, without this, there could have been no victory at all. But the people of the first group who possessed the spoils, were adamant and were not amenable to any reason whatsoever; for them, possession was the strongest of all arguments. By and by, the dispute began to take a very serious turn.

It was at this psychological moment that Allah sent down Surah Al-Anfaal and chose the same thorny problem for the introduction of the review of the battle of Badr. And it is a miracle of the divine Book that it solved the thorny problem in a few words. The very first sentence, “They ask

you about the bounties of war,” contained the solution for the problem. The use of the Arabic word *anfaal* means bounties, instead of *ghanaim*, which means spoils of victory, provided the answer to the problem. The word *anfaal* is the plural of *nafal*. It means something which is in addition to the thing to which one is entitled by right. When that something is from the servant, it denotes the additional service to what is obligatory on the servant, but when it is from the master it denotes the additional reward which is bestowed on the servant as a bounty over and above to what the servant is entitled. The verse, therefore, implies: “Are you having a dispute concerning the bounties of Allah? If these are not the spoils of victory, but the bounties of Allah, who are you to decide about their division? It is for the Giver of the bounties to decide whom to give and how much.”

This conception of the spoils of victory helped to bring about a great moral reform in the attitude towards war. Muslims do not go to war for the sake of material gains but for the sake of reforming the moral and social evils in the world in accordance with the principles of the truth; and that they wage war only when the opposing forces make it impossible for them to carry out the reform work by means of preaching and teaching. Therefore the reformers must keep in view only that aim and object and not the material gains that may be bestowed on them by Allah as His bounties. That is why the Muslims were warned after the very first battle for the cause of Islam to guard themselves against the material gains of the battle lest these should

become the sole aim and object of the fight.

This also brought about a great reform in connection with the division of the spoils of war. Formerly these spoils became the property of anyone who got possession of them, or of the commander or of the king who became the owner of all of them. In the first case, the selfishness of the soldiers of the victorious army led to a bitter competition for the grabbing of spoils and sometimes even brought about a civil war with all its horrible consequences. In the second case, the soldiers would resort to pilfering, which would degrade them to the low level of thieves. The Quran reformed these evils by declaring the spoils of war to be the property of Allah and His Messenger, and then further on in Ayat 41 by laying down equitable shares for its fair division. The first reform demanded that all these spoils, be they worth much or little, should be brought at one place before the chief commander. Then by the second reform, one-fifth of this should be kept for the Islamic State for the cause of Allah and for the help of the poor, and the remaining part should be divided among all those who had taken part in the battle. In this way the evils of the age of ignorance were reformed to the satisfaction of all.

Here this subtle point should also be kept in view: the Quran leaves the problem of the division after declaring that these bounties belong to Allah and the Messenger (peace be upon him), and does not even touch it so that the minds should first be prepared for obedience and its acceptance: Then in Ayat 41 it gives the command for the division of the spoils. That is why these have been called the

bounties here and the spoils of war in Ayat 41.

2. The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith,^{*2} and upon their Lord they trust.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا
ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا
تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ
إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

*2 This implies that a man's faith increases on every occasion he acknowledges the revelations of Allah to be true and submits to them. Most surely his faith increases and grows, whenever he surrenders himself to the Book of Allah and to the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) though they may be against his own desires, his opinions, his conceptions, his theories, his habits, his interests, his desires, his comforts, his affections and his friendships. For, instead of changing the teachings, he changes himself in accordance with the commands of Allah and the instructions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and accepts them for his guidance. In contrast to this, if a believer hesitates to accept these, his faith begins to decrease and fade away.

This also shows that faith is not something that is incapable of growth and increase and which always remains in one and the same state, but it is capable of both improvement and decay. Every denial of the truth corrupts its quality, and likewise every acknowledgment and acceptance improves it. But as far as the grading of the rights and

ranks of the people, according to the acceptance or denial of the truth, is concerned, all the Muslims shall be placed in one and the same position, and likewise the non-Muslims. In the Islamic society, the legal rights and obligations of all the Muslims shall be the same, irrespective of the differences in the quality of the faith. In the same way, the non-Muslims shall be Zimmis or belligerents or allies of the same rank, irrespective of the quality of their denial of the Islamic faith.

3. Those who establish prayer, and from what We have provided them, they spend.

الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ
وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

4. Those are they who are in truth believers. For them are high ranks with their Lord, and forgiveness,^{*3} and honorable provision.

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا
لَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ
وَمَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

*3 The promise, that the shortcomings of the believers shall be forgiven, gives great solace to them, for everyone, however great and good he may be, is liable to commit offenses and it is not at all possible that a human being will always do such deeds as conform in every case to the highest standard and are absolutely free from defect, deficiency and fault. Allah, however, shows one of His greatest blessings to those who perform obligatory duties, and forgives their shortcomings by His grace, and rewards His servants with a far greater recompense than the one

they deserve. Otherwise, if His rule had been to reward and punish each and every virtue and vice separately, then even the most righteous people could not have escaped punishment.

5. Even as your Lord brought you forth from your home (for the battle of Badr) in truth. And indeed, a party among the believers were averse (to it).

كَمَا أَخْرَجَكَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَيْتِكَ
بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
لَكَرِهُونَ ﴿٦﴾

6. Disputing with you about the truth after it had become evident, as if they were being driven toward death while they were looking on.^{*4}

تُجَادِلُونَكَ فِي الْحَقِّ بَعْدَ مَا
تَبَيَّنَ كَأَنَّمَا يُسَاقُونَ إِلَى
الْمَوْتِ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٦﴾

*4 The verse may mean either of the two things: as translated it means at that time the truth required that they should go to the fight but they were afraid of this; and now the truth required that they should not argue concerning the spoils of war and wait for the command, but they did not seem to submit to this for the sake of the truth. The second meaning will be this: "In the battle of Badr, you have seen with your own eyes the good results of following the truth. Although you were afraid of going to the fight as if you were being driven towards death, yet by obeying Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him), you won a great victory: likewise, if you now abide by the truth in regard to the division of the spoils and submit to the

command of Allah and obey the decision of the Prophet (peace be upon him) instead of yielding to the desires of your hearts, you will see good results with your own eyes”. Incidentally, verses 5-6 refute all those traditions about the battle of Badr that are related in the books on the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his wars. They say that the real plan of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers was to plunder the caravan and accordingly they had marched out of Al-Madinah for the same purpose. But when they had traveled some distance, they learned that an army of the Quraish was coming for the protection of the caravan, and they held a council to decide whether to attack the caravan or the army. The Quran, however, contradicts this. It says that Allah brought forth the Prophet (peace be upon him) from his home with the truth at the very beginning and he had this truth before him that they should meet the army of the Quraish in a decisive battle. For these consultations were held before they had started from Al-Madinah and not after. It was then that some Muslims were arguing with the Prophet (peace be upon him) concerning the truth that they should go to meet the army of the Quraish, though it had become quite evident to them. That was why these people felt as though they were being driven towards death, when they were commanded to march out of Al-Madinah at the very start of the expedition.

7. And when Allah promised you one of the two groups*⁵ (caravan or army of Quresh)

وَإِذْ يَعِدُّكُمْ اللَّهُ إِحْدَى
الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ أَنَّهَا لَكُمْ وَتَوَدُّونَ

that it would be yours, and you wished that the unarmed one should be yours.*⁶ And Allah intended that He should establish the truth by His words, and cut the root of the disbelievers.

أَنَّ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ الشَّوْكَةِ
تَكُونُ لَكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُحِقَّ
الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَيَقْطَعَ دَابِرَ
الْكَافِرِينَ



*⁵ That is, the trade caravan, or the army of the Quraish.

*⁶ That is, the trade caravan, that was accompanied by a guard band numbering between thirty and forty.

8. That He should establish the truth to be true and the falsehood to be false, even if the criminals might dislike.*⁷

لِيُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ وَيُبْطِلَ الْبَاطِلَ
وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ



*⁷ This makes it clear that the march of the army of the Quraish towards Al-Madinah amounted to a challenge from the system of ignorance to the system of Islam, as stated in the introduction to this Surah. Allah willed that the Muslims should accept that challenge and fight a decisive battle for the survival of Islam in Arabia. If the Muslims had not marched out boldly on that occasion, they would have lost all chances of their survival. Their bold march and victory at Badr in the very first battle crushed the power of the Quraish and created such favorable conditions for Islam that after this it went on defeating the system of ignorance.

9. When you asked your Lord for help, and He

إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ

responded to you: “Indeed I will help you with a thousand of angels, rank on rank.”

لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُدِّدُكُمْ بِأَلْفٍ مِّنَ
الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُرَدِّفِينَ ﴿٩﴾

10. And Allah made it not but glad tidings, and that your hearts may be assured therewith. And there is no victory except from Allah. Indeed, Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.

وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ
وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ بِهِ قُلُوبُكُمْ ۚ وَمَا
النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

11. When He covered you with a slumber as a security from Him,^{*8} and He sent down rain upon you from the sky that He might cleanse you through it, and take away from you the pollution of Satan and strengthen your hearts, and make your feet firm through it.^{*9}

إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ اللَّيْلُ أَمَنَةً مِّنْهُ
وَيُنزِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
لِّيُطَهِّرَكُم بِهِ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمْ
رِجْسَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَىٰ
قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ
﴿١١﴾

***8** The Muslims experienced the same thing during the battle of Uhd. (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 154). On both these critical occasions, Allah filled the hearts of the Muslims with such peace and security that they were overpowered by drowsiness.

***9** On the eve of the battle of Badr, there was a rainfall,

which helped the Muslims in three ways. First, they got an opportunity of storing water in reservoirs. Secondly, it made the sandy ground hard in the upper part of the valley where the Muslims were camping and they could move about with steady footsteps. Thirdly, it created difficulties for the army of the disbelievers who were camping in the lower part of the valley for the rain-water gathered there and made the ground marshy and their feet sank into the mud.

“The defilement (pollution) caused by Satan” was the fear and confusion he had imbued in their minds because of the coming battle. The God sent rainfall and slumber at that critical occasion helped to remove that fear and confusion.

12. When your Lord inspired to the angels, I am certainly with you, so keep firm those who believed. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieved, so smite at the necks and smite over all their fingers.*10

إِذْ يُوحِي رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ فَثَبِّتُوا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا سَأَلِقَى فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرَّعْبَ فَأَضْرِبُوا فَوْقَ الْأَعْنَاقِ وَأَضْرِبُوا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ بَنَانٍ ﴿١٢﴾

*10 From what we have learned about the basic principles from the Quran, we are of the opinion that the angels were not employed directly to take part in fighting and killing but probably they were used to help the Muslims in making their strokes hard and effective. But the true knowledge is with Allah.

13. That is because they opposed Allah and His Messenger. And whoever opposes Allah and His Messenger, then indeed Allah is severe in punishment.*11

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُوا اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ
الْعِقَابِ

*11 Up to this place references have been made one by one to some events in connection with the battle of Badr: this is to show the real significance of the Arabic word *anfaal*. At the very beginning of the Surah, it is decreed that bounties belong to Allah and the Messenger (peace be upon him) and not to you because the spoils are not the fruit of your efforts. As a proof of this, these events have been enumerated for the consideration of the believers and they have been asked to judge for themselves how much they contributed to the spoils by their courage and bravery and how these owed to the bounty of Allah.

14. That*12 is your (punishment) so taste it, and indeed for the disbelievers is the punishment of the Fire.

ذَٰلِكُمْ فَذُوقُوهُ وَأَنَّ
لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابَ النَّارِ

*12 The address has been suddenly turned to the disbelievers because of the mention of the punishment they deserved.

15. O those (of you) who believe, when you meet

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ

those who disbelieve, in battle, so do not turn your backs to them.

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا زَحَفًا فَلَا تُوَلُّوهُمْ
الْأَدْبَارَ



16. And whoever turns his back to them on that day, unless maneuvering for war or intent to join to the company, he certainly has incurred wrath from Allah, and his abode is hell, and worst is that destination.*13

وَمَنْ يُؤَلِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ دُبُرَهُ إِلَّا
مُتَحَرِّفًا لِقِتَالٍ أَوْ مُتَحَيِّزًا إِلَى
فِئَةٍ فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ
وَمَا أُولَئِكَ بِمُصِيرٍ



*13 The Quran does not forbid an orderly retreat if necessitated by military strategy. It is lawful to retreat if there is a hard pressure of the enemy, and the fighting troops retreat to get re-enforcements or to join another pan of the army in the rear. However, what has been forbidden is a rout in utter defeat, involving disorderly and cowardly flight for safety. Such a retreat is obviously a heinous sin, because it is to save one's own life and it deserves the most painful retreat in Hell. Anyone, who runs away in disorder from the battlefield, does so because he loves his own life more than the cause for which he professed to fight. Accordingly the Prophet (peace be upon him) condemns this emphatically, saying, "There are three sins which make virtue vain, shirk, violation of the rights of parents, and flight from the battlefield when fighting in the way of

Allah.” Likewise in another tradition, he mentions seven sins that are ruinous and destructive for the life-after-death. One of these is that one should turn his back to the disbelievers and run away from the conflict between Islam and kufr. Such a rout is condemned because, besides being a cowardly act, it leads to serious consequences: the flight of one soldier may cause the rout of a platoon and that in turn of a regiment or of the whole army. Then it is also possible that the rout of the army might ruin the whole country.

17. So you did not kill them, but Allah killed them, and you (O Muhammad) threw not when you did throw, but Allah threw.*14

And that He might test the believers by a fair test from Him. Indeed, Allah is All Hearing, All Knowing.

فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ وَلِيُبْلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْهُ بَلَاءً حَسَنًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ



*14 This refers to an event that happened during the battle of Badr. After single bouts, when a general fight was going to ensue, the Prophet (peace be upon him) took a handful of sand and threw it towards the army of the disbelievers, saying, “May their faces be scorched.” At the same time he made a gesture and the Muslims attacked the disbelievers in a body.

18. That is (the case), and that Allah weakens the plot of the disbelievers.

ذَٰلِكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُوهِنُ كَيْدِ الْكَافِرِينَ



19. If you sought a judgment, then surely a judgment has come to you.*¹⁵ And if you desist (from hostilities), so it is better for you. And if you return (to war), so shall We return. And never will avail you your forces at all, even if it be numerous, and indeed Allah is with the believers.

إِنْ تَسْتَفْتِحُوا فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ
الْفَتْحُ وَإِنْ تَنْتَهُوا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ
لَكُمْ وَإِنْ تَعُودُوا نَعُدْ وَلَنْ
تُغْنِيَ عَنْكُمْ فِئَتِكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَوْ
كَثُرَتْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ



***15** This refers to the prayer that was offered by the Quraish at the Kaabah before they marched for the fight. The mushriks held the curtains of the Kaabah and prayed: “O Allah, grant victory to the better of the two parties.” Abu Jahl particularly invoked Allah’s decision, saying, “O God, grant victory to that party which is in the right, and disgrace that one which is the aggressor.” Accordingly Allah gave His decision and granted their prayer to the letter by giving a signal victory to the Muslims to show that they were the better of the two parties and they were in the right.

20. O those (of you) who believe, obey Allah and His Messenger and do not turn away from him, while you are hearing.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ
وَأَنْتُمْ تَسْمَعُونَ



21. And do not be like those who say: “We have heard,” while they do not hear.*16

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ قَالُوا
سَمِعْنَا وَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

***16** This exposes the attitude of the hypocrites, who heard the truth with their ears, yet did not accept and believe in it: they professed to believe but did not obey the commands.

22. Indeed, the worst of living creatures in the sight of Allah are the deaf and dumb,*17 those who do not understand.

﴿٢٢﴾ إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا
يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

***17** That is, those who do not listen to the truth and do not utter it with their tongues, are deaf and dumb concerning the truth.

23. And if Allah had known in them any good, He would have made them hear. And even if He had made them hear, they would have turned away, while they were refusing.*18

وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا
لَأَسْمَعَهُمْ وَلَوْ أَسْمَعَهُمْ
لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

***18** As those hypocrites had no love for the truth and no desire to work in its cause, they would have turned their backs from the battle at the first critical juncture, even if Allah had helped them to obey the command and march to the battlefield. Thus their company would have proved to

be harmful rather than useful.

24. O those (of you) who believe, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when He calls you to that which will give you life. And know that Allah intervenes between a man and his heart, and that He it is unto whom you will be gathered.*¹⁹

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا
لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا
تُحْيِيكُمْ وَاَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ
يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ
وَأَنَّهُ رَاجِعٌ إِلَىٰ إِلَهِ يُحْشِرُونَ

*¹⁹ In Ayats 21-23, the believers were warned to guard against behaving like the hypocrites and here the remedy is being prescribed for it. The most effective antidote against hypocritical behavior is the belief in Allah and the life in the Hereafter. If a person sincerely believes that he has to deal with that Allah Who knows everything, even the intentions, desires, designs, thoughts hidden in the hearts, etc. are known to Him and that one has ultimately to return to Him, he will try his best to refrain from such a behavior. That is why the Quran mentions these two articles of faith over and over again as a remedy to cure the evil of hypocrisy.

25. And fear a mischief that will not strike those who have wronged among you exclusively.*²⁰ And know that Allah is severe in punishment.

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ
ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاَعْلَمُوا
أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

***20** “That mischief” refers to those collective evils that are not confined to individuals but are so widespread that a large number of persons in a locality become addicted to these at the same time. In such a case, it is not the wrongdoers alone who are seized by the scourge of Allah but also those few people who are involved in those evils. This is because they put up with life in such evil surroundings.

In order to illustrate this, let us consider the case of a town from the point of view of its sanitary conditions. If filth lies scattered at a few places, its evil effects remain confined to that particular locality or localities and only those people who keep their houses or persons dirty suffer from the consequent diseases. But if filth gets scattered all over the town and there is no one to prevent it and restore sanitary conditions, then the air, the water and the soil will all be contaminated and become so poisonous as to cause the outbreak of an epidemic in the whole town. Obviously, it will not discriminate between those who scattered the filth and those who refrained from it, but will affect all the people who live in those surroundings. The same is the case of moral impurity, corruption and obscenity. If these evils are found in some persons individually but the fear of the good people of the society keeps them under check, the evil effects remain confined to the wrongdoers alone. On the other hand, if the collective conscience of the society becomes so weak that it cannot keep the evil suppressed, and the wrongdoers, the indecent and the immoral people become so bold that they begin to commit their filthy acts

openly, that mischief takes the form of an epidemic of immorality. Then even those good people who remain content with their own individual goodness and adopt a passive attitude towards the widespread evils, fall victims to the consequent scourge because they did nothing to prevent the spread of the epidemic.

In this way Allah impresses upon the Muslims the importance of the mission of reform and guidance for which the Messenger (peace be upon him) had risen and to which he was inviting them, as if to say, "There is life for you as individuals and as a community in this work. If you do not sincerely exert for its achievement and for the eradication of evils, an epidemic of evils will break out which will involve in its scourge all of you, even though there may be some among you who might not have been guilty of either the commission of those evils or of their spread; nay, they might have been leading good lives as individuals". The same thing has already been enunciated in Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 164. And this may be regarded as the fundamental principle of that war which has been permitted by Islam for the reform of the people in general.

26. And remember when you were few and deemed weak in the land, fearing that people might abduct you. Then He provided you refuge, and strengthened you with His help, and provided you

وَأَذْكُرُوا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيلٌ
مُسْتَضْعَفُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
تَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَتَخَطَّفَكُمُ
النَّاسُ فَعَاوَنَكُمُ وَأَيَّدَكُمُ

with good things that you might be grateful.*21

بِنَصْرِهِ وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

*21 The words “That you might be grateful” are very significant in the context in which they occur. They require that the Muslims should not merely acknowledge the kindness of Allah that He brought them out of their weak position in Makkah to the security of Al-Madinah and provided them with pure and good things of life. They should also show their gratitude in a practical manner and obey Allah and His Messenger and work sincerely and devotedly for the success of his mission, facing bravely, with trust in God, the dangers, hardships, obstacles and misfortunes that come in the way. They should firmly believe that if they sincerely exert in the way of Allah, He will most surely become their Guardian and Helper as before and bring them out safely from all sorts of dangers. Thus gratitude does not mean mere acknowledgment; it has to be given a practical shape as well. It is not gratitude if one acknowledges the kindness of a benefactor but does nothing to please him or serve him sincerely or entertains doubts about the kindness of the benefactor in future; it is ingratitude.

27. O those (of you) who believe, do not betray Allah and the Messenger, nor betray your trusts while you know.*22

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَخُونُوا
اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ وَتَخُونُوا أَمْنَتِكُمْ
وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

***22** “Your trusts” is a very comprehensive term and includes all those things that are entrusted to anyone for fulfillment, whether they concern individuals or communities. For instance, one should not violate treaties and agreements or betray secrets of community or misappropriate property and office entrusted to his care. (Refer to E.N. 88 of Surah An-Nisa).

28. And know that your possessions and your children are but a trial,^{*23} and that Allah has with Him an immense reward.

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ
وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

***23** Worldly goods and children generally prove to be the greatest temptations that lead a person to the ways of hypocrisy, treachery and dishonesty. That is why Allah has warned the believers to be on their guard against indulging in too much love of money and children, as if to say, “This world is a big examination hall, and your wealth and your children are two of its tests. These have been given to you only to test whether you fulfill their prescribed rights and keep the prescribed limits; whether you walk straight on the right way while carrying the burden of responsibilities or swerve from it because of the attractions of allurements and temptations; and whether you control yourself which is liable to become their slave in a way that it remains the slave of Allah, and at the same time renders their rights in the way He has prescribed.

29. O those (of you) who believe, if you fear Allah, He will grant you a criterion*24 and will remove from you your evil deeds and will forgive you. And Allah is possessor of great bounty.

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ
عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

*24 The believers have been assured that if they behave in a God fearing way, Allah will provide them with the criterion (that is, the true knowledge and the right understanding of all affairs), to enable them to discern between right and wrong. Thus, if they so intend, they will be able to do the Will of God and follow the way He approves of. That criterion will serve as a signal at every turning, every crossing, every up and down and show them the right way, the Way of God, and warn them of the false ways, the ways of Satan.

30. And when those who disbelieve plotted against you (O Muhammad) to restrain you, or kill you, or drive you out.*25 And they plotted, and Allah did plan. And Allah is the best of those who plan.

وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ
وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ
خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينَ

*25 This plot was made at the time when the Quraish realized that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was also going to migrate to Al-Madinah. They felt that if he

succeeded in emigrating from Makkah, he would be out of their reach and become formidable. Accordingly, they held an urgent meeting of their chiefs in Dar-un-Nadvah (council house) to discuss the matter and come to a final decision in regard to him. Some were of the opinion that he should be chained and imprisoned for life. But this plan was not approved for it was feared that his companions would go on working for the mission and would do their best to get him released, even at the risk of their own lives, as soon as they would gain some power. The others proposed that he should be exiled from Makkah for that would at least relieve them of the disorder he was creating among them. Then it would not matter for them where he lived and what he did. But the chiefs rejected this plan, saying, this man possesses the art of a charming speech and of winning hearts. If he leaves this place, he may go to the other Arab clans and win them over to his side, and then after gaining power, he may attack Makkah. At last Abu Jahl, putting forward his plan, said, let us select from each of our families one strong, stout and smart young man of high rank. They should all attack Muhammad (peace be upon him) at one and the same time and kill him. In this way, the responsibility for his blood will be divided equally among all the families of the Quraish, and it will not be possible for Banu Abd Manaf, the family of Muhammad (peace be upon him), to fight with all of them and they will be forced to accept blood money for him. They approved this plan unanimously and nominated young men to kill him at the appointed time. Accordingly, the would be

murderers reached their places on the night fixed for the crime, but the Prophet (peace be upon him), throwing dust in their eyes, escaped safely from Makkah. Thus their plot ended in utter failure at the eleventh hour.

31. And when Our verses are recited to them, they say: “We have heard. if we willed, we could say the like of it. This is not but legends of the ancients.”

وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا قَالُوا
قَدْ سَمِعْنَا لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَقُلْنَا مِثْلَ
هَذَا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسْطِيرُ
الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

32. And when they said: “O Allah if this be that which is the truth from You, then rain down upon us stones from heaven, or bring upon us a painful punishment.”*26

وَإِذْ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِن كَانَ
هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ
فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِّنَ
السَّمَاءِ أَوْ آتِنَا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ
﴿٣٢﴾

***26** These words were not uttered as a prayer but as a challenge. What they really meant was this: Had this been really the truth sent down by God, He would have rained down stones on us from heaven or sent down some other painful torment on us, in consequence of its rejection by us. But as nothing of the sort has happened, it means that it is neither the truth nor has it been sent down by Allah.

33. And Allah was not to punish them while you are in their midst, nor was Allah going to punish them while they seek forgiveness.*27

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ
وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ
مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ

***27** This is the answer to their challenge that was implied in their seeming prayer. They have been told that a torment was not sent down during the Makkan period because of the presence of the Messenger (peace be upon him) in their midst. For, Allah gives respite to the people to reform themselves as long as the Messenger (peace be upon him) continues to invite them to the truth, as He does not deprive them of the opportunity of reforming themselves by sending down a scourge before the expiry of the term. The second reason is that Allah does not send down a scourge on an habitation as long as there remain in it any people, who may ask His forgiveness for their past negligence and deviations and mend their ways. However, a scourge is sent down on the habitation when the Messenger considers that he has done all he could to admonish its people and emigrates from it or is expelled from it or is murdered by its people. This is because that habitation proves practically that it cannot tolerate in it even the presence of any good element.

34. And what have they that Allah should not punish them, and they obstruct (others) from Al-Masjid

وَمَا لَهُمْ إِلَّا يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُمْ
يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ

al-Haram, and they are not its guardians. Its (true) guardians are not but those who are righteous. But most of them do not know.

الْحَرَامِ وَمَا كَانُوا أَوْلِيَاءَهُ^{٢٨}
إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ^{٢٩} إِلَّا الْمُتَّقُونَ
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ



35. And their prayer at the House (Kabah) was not except whistling and handclapping.*²⁸ So taste the punishment because you used to disbelieve.*²⁹

وَمَا كَانَ صَلَاتُهُمْ عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ
إِلَّا مُمُكَّاتٍ وَتَصَدِيَةً^{٣٠} فَذُوقُوا
الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ



***28** They have been further warned to this effect: Now that you have incurred a torment, you should be ready for it for nothing will save you now from it. The Quraish were under the delusion that they would not be visited by any torment because they were the guardians and keepers of the House of God. This misunderstanding has been removed by declaring, so as to say: They are not its lawful guardians for mere inheritance does not entitle them to its guardianship. The pious people alone are the rightful guardians of this sacred place. The people of the Quraish have forfeited that right now if they had any right to it, because they were barring the way of the really pious people to this House, which is dedicated to the exclusive worship of Allah. The Quraish were behaving not as the

guardians and keepers and servants of the House but as its masters, and prevented anyone they liked from visiting it. As regards their worship in the House, it was nothing more than making meaningless noises by whistling and clapping of hands: it was void of devotion towards Allah and of His remembrance and of all its requirements. How could they, then, expect any favor from Allah or any guarantee of immunity from His scourge?

*29 They have been told that the scourge of Allah had visited them in the shape of utter defeat in the battle of Badr, which had given life to the Islamic way and brought death to their way of ignorance. This was necessary to remove their wrong notion that the scourge of Allah came only in the shape of rain or storm from the heavens or the like.

36. Indeed, those who disbelieve, they spend their wealth to hinder (people) from the way of Allah. So they will spend it, then it will become for them an anguish, then they will be overcome. And those who disbelieve will be gathered to Hell.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنْفِقُونَ
 أَمْوَالَهُمْ لِيَصُدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ
 اللَّهِ فَسَيُنْفِقُونَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ
 عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَةً ثُمَّ يُغْلَبُونَ
 وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ
 يُحْشَرُونَ

37. So that Allah may separate the wicked from

لِيَمِيزَ اللَّهُ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ

the good, and place wicked one upon another, then heap them together, then cast them into Hell. They, it is they who are the losers.*30

وَجَعَلَ الْخَبِيثَ بَعْضُهُ عَلَى
بَعْضٍ فَيَرْكُمَهُ جَمِيعًا
فَيَجْعَلُهُ فِي جَهَنَّمَ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الْخٰسِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

*30 “It is they who are the losers”, for all their efforts, abilities, time and wealth ultimately proved to be absolutely worthless. It not only failed to earn any interest or profit for them but has also driven them to utter ruin.

38. Say to those who disbelieve, if they desist, what has been the past shall be forgiven for them. And if they return, then indeed the example of those before has already preceded.

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِن يَنْتَهُوْا
يُغْفَرَ لَهُمْ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ وَإِنْ
يَعُودُوا فَقَدْ مَضَتْ سُنَّتُ
الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. And fight them until there is no more persecution, and the religion is for Allah, all of it.*31 So if they cease, then indeed Allah is Seer of what they do.

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ
فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ
لِلَّهِ ۗ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

*31 Here the war aim of Islam, which had previously been

declared in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 193, has been repeated. This aim has two aspects, one negative and one positive. On the negative side, the aim of war is to abolish *fitnah*, and on the positive, it is to establish Allah's Way completely and in its entirety. This is the only objective for which it is lawful, nay, obligatory for the believers to fight. There is no other object for which fighting is lawful, and it does not behoove the believers to resort to fighting for any other objective. (See E.Ns 204-205 of Surah Al-Baqarah).

40. And if they turn away, then know that Allah is your Protector, an excellent Protector and an excellent Helper.

وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ
مَوْلَانِكُمْ ۚ نِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ
النَّصِيرُ

41. And know that whatever of any thing you obtain as the spoils of war, then indeed, for Allah is one fifth of it, and for the Messenger, and for the near of kin, and the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer.^{*32} If you believe in Allah and that what We sent down to Our servant on the day of criterion,^{*33} the day when the two armies met. And Allah has power over all

۞ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ مَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِّنْ
شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُ وَلِلرَّسُولِ
وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ
وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۚ إِن
كُنْتُمْ ءَامِنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا
أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ
الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ
التَّقَىٰ أَجْمَعِينَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ

things.

كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

***32** This verse contains the answer to the question which was asked about the division of spoils at the very beginning of the Surah. There it was merely said that these are the bounties of Allah and belong to Him and His Messenger, and the authority to divide these belongs to them. In this verse, the verdict on the spoils has been given. After the battle is over, the fighters should bring all the spoils to the leader and hide nothing of these. Then one fifth should be set apart for the requirements stated in this verse, and the remaining four fifths should be divided among those who took part in the fighting. That is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to announce after every fight, “These spoils belong to you, and I have no share in these for my own person except only one-fifth and that, too, is spent for your common good. Therefore bring here everything, even a needle and its thread. Do not hide anything, big or small, for this is a shameful thing and leads to Hell.”

This one-fifth share of Allah and His Messenger has been reserved for the cause of Allah and for the establishment of His Way.

During his lifetime, by the relatives were meant the relatives of the Prophet (peace be upon him). A share from the one fifth of the spoils was to be given to those relatives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who were dependent on him for now he had to devote the whole of his time to the cause of Allah’s religion and it was not possible for him to earn for the maintenance of the members of his own family

and of the relatives who were dependent on him. But there has been a difference of opinion regarding this share of the relatives after his death. Some are of the opinion that this share was abolished after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him), others say that this share should go to the relatives of his successor. But there are still others who hold that this share should be spent for the needy persons from among his offspring. According to my research, this share was given to the needy ones of his offspring during the time of his rightly guided successors.

***33** "What We sent down to Our servant" means His timely succor that brought about the victory in the battle of Badr.

42. When you were at the nearer end (of the valley of Badr), and they were at the farther end, and the caravan below you (along the seaside). And if you had made a mutual appointment, you would certainly have failed in the appointment. But (it was) so that Allah might accomplish a matter that was to be ordained. That he should perish, who was to perish upon a clear evidence. And he should survive, who was to survive upon a clear

إِذْ أَنْتُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ
 بِالْعُدْوَةِ الْقُصْوَى وَالرَّكْبُ
 أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَوْ تَوَاعَدْتُمْ
 لَأَخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِي الْمِيعَادِ وَلَكِنْ
 لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ
 مَفْعُولًا لِيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ
 عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَيَحْيَى مَنْ حَيَّ عَنْ
 بَيِّنَةٍ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَسَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

evidence.^{*34} And indeed,
Allah is All Hearing, All
Knowing.^{*35}



***34** That is, it should be proved that whichever (Islam or ignorance) survived in the battle, really deserved to live, and whichever perished, ought to have perished. It should be noted that here the conflict for survival was not between different persons as such but between Islam and ignorance as represented by the believers and the disbelievers.

***35** As Allah hears everything and sees everything and knows everything, He is running His universe with wisdom and justice and will allow the right alone to survive.

43. When Allah showed them to you in your dream as few.^{*36} And if He had shown them to you as numerous, you would have lost courage and disputed with one another in the matter. But Allah saved you. Certainly, He is the All Knower of what is within the breasts.

إِذْ يُرِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَنَامِكُمْ
قَلِيلًا وَلَوْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ كَثِيرًا
لَفَشِلْتُمْ وَتَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي الْأُمُورِ
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ سَلَّمَ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ



***36** This happened when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was marching from Al Madinah towards the battlefield and it was not then known how large the army of the disbelievers was. In this dream, he saw the army and concluded from what he saw that it was not large. He related what he saw in his dream to the Muslims, and this filled them with courage and they marched on boldly

towards the enemy.

44. And when He showed them to you, when you met (enemy in Badr), as few in your eyes. And He made you (appear) as few in their eyes, so that Allah might accomplish a matter that was (already) ordained. And to Allah all matters return.

وَإِذْ يُرِيكُمُوهُمْ إِذِ التَّقَيْتُمْ فِي
أَعْيُنِكُمْ قَلِيلًا وَيُقَلِّلُكُمْ فِي
أَعْيُنِهِمْ لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا
كَانَ مَفْعُولًا ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ
تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٤٤﴾

45. O those (of you) who believe, when you encounter an army, hold firm and remember Allah much that you may be successful.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا
لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً فَاثْبُتُوا وَاذْكُرُوا
اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ
﴿٤٥﴾

46. And obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not dispute (one with another), lest you should lose courage and your strength depart, and be patient (practice fortitude).^{*37} Indeed, Allah is with those who are patient.

وَاطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا
تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ
رِيحُكُمْ وَأَصْبِرُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ
الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

***37** As the Arabic word *sabr* which has been translated into fortitude is very comprehensive in meaning, “practice

fortitude” implies: Keep your feelings and passions under control; avoid rashness, bewilderment, despair, and greediness: keep cool and calm and make considered decisions; remain firm and steadfast in the face of dangers and difficulties; don’t take any wrong step even under the greatest provocations; don’t lose your senses even when you are attacked by afflictions and are in a sad plight; don’t take any hasty action in your impatience to achieve your objective without delay with the help of some seeming effective device and don’t be enticed by the temptation of some worldly interest or gain or lust. Allah helps those who practice fortitude (*sabr*) in accordance with the above implications.

47. And do not be like those who came forth from their homes exulting, and to be seen by people, and hindering others from the way of Allah.*38 And Allah encompasses of what they do.

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ
دِيَارِهِمْ بَطْرًا وَرِئَاءَ النَّاسِ
وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ



*38 The Muslims have been forewarned never to behave like the disbelievers of Makkah, who had marched arrogantly out of their homes and who were debarring the Muslims from the Way of Allah. They had singing girls with them and they held singing, dancing and drinking parties at many halting places. Moreover, they made a great display of their power, grandeur, numerical strength and equipment before the clans and habitations which

came in their way and freely bragged that none could have the courage to fight with them. This was the state of their morality but the objective for which they were marching out was even worse than this. They had not marched out to raise the standard of truth, righteousness and justice, but to prevent it from rising up. Their objective was to annihilate the only people who were exerting to raise up that standard. This bad example was held out before the Muslims so that they should guard against such behavior for their faith required that their conduct should be righteous and their war aim should be pure and noble.

It may also be noted that this guidance was not needed only at that time but it is equally needed even today and will be needed in future as well, for the moral condition of the armies of the modern civilized nations is the same as of the disbelievers of Makkah. Prostitutes, indecent recreations, and wine constitute their essential parts, and they do not ask for these things secretly but openly and brazen facedly. More than that, their soldiers openly demand from their own people that they should present their own daughters to them for the gratification of their lusts. How can, then, any other people expect from them that they would spare their women and will not make them the plaything of their passions? As regards their arrogance, suffice it to say that each and every soldier and officer of their army is an embodiment of pride and vanity. Then their politicians are never tired of bragging like this: None is able to defeat us today for none is more powerful than us. And their war aims are still wicked. Whereas everyone of their leaders

most solemnly and cunningly assure the world that they have nothing but the good of humanity before them, they might have, in fact, all other aims but this. They wage war in order to capture all the resources of the earth that God has created for all mankind, and to monopolize these for the benefit of their own country and nation, and make all other people their servants and dependents. That is why the Quran forbids the Muslims to follow the evil ways of those wicked people and enjoins them to refrain from expending their wealth and life for the achievement of the objective for which the wicked people fight.

48. And when Satan made their deeds seem fair to them and said: “No one can overcome you this day from among the people. And indeed, I am your protector.” Then when the two armies came in sight of one another, he turned on his heels, and said: “Indeed I am dissociated from you. Indeed, I see what you do not see. Indeed, I fear Allah. And Allah is severe in punishment.”

وَإِذْ زَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ
أَعْمَلَهُمْ وَقَالَ لَا غَالِبَ
لَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ
وَإِنِّي جَارٌ لَكُمْ فَلَمَّا
تَرَأْتِ الْفِئْتَانِ نَكَصَ عَلَى
عَقْبَيْهِ وَقَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنْكُمْ
إِنِّي أَرَىٰ مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّي
أَخَافُ اللَّهَ وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ

49. When the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease said: “These people (Muslims) are deceived by their religion.”*39 And he who puts his trust in Allah, then indeed, Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.

إِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ غَرَّ هَؤُلَاءِ دِينُهُمْ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٤٩﴾

***39** This was the opinion of the hypocrites and the worldly wise people of Al-Madinah. When they saw that the small band of Muslims was going to fight with the large and superior force of the Quraish, they said to one another, “Over enthusiasm for their religion has made these people mad and they are going to meet with utter destruction. As they have been blinded by their Prophet (peace be upon him), they cannot see that they are going into the very mouth of death”.

50. And if you could see when the angels take away the souls of those who disbelieve, striking on their faces and their backs. (Saying): “And taste the punishment of burning.”

وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذْ يَتَوَفَّى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبِرَهُمْ وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿٥٠﴾

51. “That is for what your hands have sent before. And that Allah is not unjust to His slaves.”

ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَمٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ ﴿٥١﴾

52. (Theirs is) as the way of the people of Pharaoh and those before them. They disbelieved in the signs of Allah, so Allah seized them for their sins. Indeed, Allah is All Powerful, Stern in retribution.

كَذَابِ ءَالِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِينَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ
فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٥٢﴾

53. That is because Allah would not change the favor which He had bestowed upon a people, until they change that which is within their selves.^{*40} And indeed, Allah is All Hearing, All Knowing.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا
نِعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ
يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٣﴾

***40** That is, Allah does not withdraw His favor from any people until they themselves prove by their conduct that they have become unworthy of it.

54. (Theirs is) as the way of the people of Pharaoh and those before them. They denied the signs of their Lord, so We destroyed them for their sins, and We drowned the people of Pharaoh. And all were wrong doers.

كَذَابِ ءَالِ فِرْعَوْنَ
وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَّبُوا
بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ
بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا ءَالَ
فِرْعَوْنَ وَكُلٌّ كَانُوا
ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾

55. Surely, the worst of living creatures in the sight of Allah are those who disbelieved, so they shall not believe.

إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

56. They are those with whom you made a treaty, then they violate their treaty every time and they do not fear (Allah).^{*41}

الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتَ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَهُمْ فِي كُلِّ مَرَّةٍ وَهُمْ لَا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

***41** “Violate their treaty” were the Jews. On his migration to Al-Madinah, they were the first people with whom the Prophet (peace be upon him) had entered into an alliance to cooperate for mutual good. He did his very best to establish good relations with them, for he considered them to be nearer to Islam than the mushriks, and he preferred their way to those of the mushriks whenever a choice had to be made between the two. But their scholars and rabbis did not at all like the pure doctrine of *Tauhid*, taught by him, and the high standard of morality presented by him, and the exertions put in by him for the establishment of the right way. Therefore, in spite of the treaties they were persistently trying to defeat the new movement. Accordingly, they adopted several measures: they conspired with the hypocrites of Al-Madinah against the true Muslims: they incited the clans of Aus and Khazraj against each other in order to kindle the fire of the old enmity that existed between the two before the advent of Islam and had led to bloody feuds, and they contrived plots

with the Quraish and other hostile clans to ruin the Muslims. Though the Jews had all along been violating the written treaty the Prophet (peace be upon him) had made with them. After the victory at Badr their enmity and jealousy had become even more furious than before. For they had expected that the movement would receive a crushing blow at the hands of the Quraish, but the result had been quite the reverse of it. Therefore they increased their inimical activities all the more in order to prevent Islam from becoming a formidable force. So much so that on hearing the news of the defeat of the Quraish, one of their leaders, Kaab bin Ashraf, cried out in anguish, "Today the bowels of the earth are far better for us than its surface". Accordingly, he himself went to Makkah and recited exciting elegies to incite the people of Quraish to wreak their vengeance. More than that: the people of one of their clans, Bani Qainqa, setting aside the good neighborly manners, began to tease the Muslim women who used to go to their habitations for business. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) reproved them, they gave an impudent reply and said, "We are not weak like the Quraish: we are a people who know how to fight even to the death: you will have an experience of our courage when you encounter us."

57. So if you gain dominance over them in the war, (punish them in order) to disperse those who are behind them, so perhaps

فِيمَا تَتَّقَنَّهُمْ فِي الْحَرْبِ فَشَرِّدْ
بِهِمْ مَنْ خَلْفَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ

they may be reminded.*42

يَذَكِّرُونَ

*42 That is, if we have made a treaty with a certain people and they disregard its obligations and take part in a fight against us we shall also be absolved from the obligations of the treaty and fight against them. Likewise if we are fighting against any people and find any of our allies among the enemies we should not hesitate to kill them and treat them as enemies. For by discarding the obligations of the alliance as individuals, they forfeit all the rights of an ally in regard to the security of life and property.

58. And if you fear treachery from any people, then throw (their covenant) at them on equal terms.*43
Indeed, Allah does not love the treacherous.

وَأِمَّا تَخَافُ مِنْ قَوْمٍ خِيَانَةً
فَأَنْبِذْ إِلَيْهِمْ عَلَى سَوَاءٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
لَا يُحِبُّ الْخَائِبِينَ

*43 This verse lays down a very clear and strict rule for the breaking of a treaty when necessary, and enjoins the Muslims to throw their treaty openly before them. According to this verse, it is unlawful to make a unilateral decision of its termination, even if the Muslims felt that the other party with whom they had entered into an alliance, was not observing the treaty strictly and properly, or if they were afraid that the other party would turn treacherous on the first opportunity. Therefore it forbids them to treat the other party in a way as if there had been no treaty with it at all. On the other hand, this verse binds the Muslims to inform the other party in clear words,

before taking any step against it, that the treaty with it had been terminated. This is essential so that the other party should have no misunderstanding whatsoever that the treaty was still in force. The Prophet (peace be upon him) based the international policy of Islam on this verse. He decreed, "The one that has made a treaty with another party is bound by it until the expiry of its term. Or if obliged, then one should throw it before the other party so that both may be set on equal footing". Then he extended the same principle to all other affairs, saying, "Behave not treacherously even towards those who are treacherous to you". And he had impressed the same so deeply on the minds that this principle was observed most strictly both in letter and in spirit. That is why when Amir Muaviyah assembled his army near the frontiers of the Roman Empire with the intention that he would invade their territory immediately after the expiry of the term of the treaty, Amar bin Anbasah, a companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him), strongly protested against this and recited the same tradition before him according to which even concentration of army was a piece of treachery. The Amir had to submit to this, and he gave up the concentration of army.

It may also be noted that the practice of unilateral abrogation of treaties and invading the enemy without any declaration of war was common during the time of ignorance in the ancient times and is also in vogue in the civilized ignorance of today. For example, during World War II, Germany invaded Russia, and Britain and Russia

took military action against Iran without any formal declaration of war. It may be noted that the pleas put forward for such breaches and violations are very flimsy: it is argued that if a declaration of war had been made beforehand, the other party would take precautionary measures and give a tough fight; or that if they had not taken action, their enemy would have forestalled them. But they seem to forget that if moral responsibilities were to be set aside on such lame excuses, then there remains no crime and no sin that cannot be justified on one plea or the other, and every thief, every robber, every adulterer and every murderer can put forward a justification for his crime or sin. But it is strange that the modern leaders have two standards of judgment. While they justify the acts of treachery in the international sphere, they condemn the same when these are committed in their own national sphere.

There is, however, an exception to the above principle. The Islamic law allows the Muslims to attack the other party, if it violates the treaty openly and takes some specific inimical action against them. In such a clear case, this verse does not bind them to give a due notice of the termination of the treaty, but grants them the right to take military action against such a treacherous party without giving any ultimatum. The Muslim jurists have deduced this exception from a precedent set by the Prophet (peace be upon him). When the Quraish openly broke the treaty of Hudaibiyah, in regard to Bani Khuzaah, he did not consider it obligatory to give them a notice that he, too, had

terminated the same. He, therefore, invaded Makkah without giving them any notice. But here we must strike a note of warning. In order to take advantage of this exception, we must consider all the circumstances under which the Prophet (peace be upon him) thought it right to invade Makkah. In that case, and in that alone, it is lawful for us to follow the precedent set by him; otherwise we are liable to take undue advantage of it. We learn from the books of Hadith and Seerat that the following circumstances led him to take this step:

(1) The violation of the treaty by the Quraish was so glaring that there was absolutely no doubt that there had been a breach and they themselves confessed that the treaty had come to an end. That is why they sent Abu Sufyan to Al-Madinah for its renewal. Though that was a proof that they also knew that the treaty had come to an end, it does not mean that this exception will be justifiable only if those who violate the treaty also know it and confess it. The exception will be only justifiable if the violation would be quite clear and beyond any doubt.

(2) After the violation of the treaty, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not indicate in any way whatever by word or by deed or by implication that in spite of the violation of the treaty by them he regarded the treaty to be still in force; nor did he continue such relations with them as might indicate the same. All the traditions show that he rejected the offer of the renewal of the treaty made by Abu Sufyan.

(3) He openly took the military action against the Quraish

and did nothing at all to show an outward display of peace while harboring secret intentions of war.

This is the excellent precedent set by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this matter. An exception to the injunction contained in this verse can, therefore, be made under such specific circumstances that existed on the occasion, and that, too, in the same straightforward noble way.

Besides, it is lawful for the Muslims to use force for the settlement of an issue if and when they find that the other party is neither willing to solve it by mutual talk nor by international arbitration, but is bent upon using force. In such a case, this verse makes it incumbent on the Muslims to make a clear and open declaration to this effect before taking any action. Islam considers a secret military action as immoral and does not allow it if the Muslims are not prepared to make an open declaration of war.

59. And let not those who disbelieve suppose they can outstrip (Allah's Purpose). Surely they can not escape.

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَبِقُوا
إِنَّهُمْ لَا يُعْجِزُونَ

60. And prepare against them whatever you can, of the forces and of well-readied horses,^{*44} that thereby you may dismay the enemy of Allah and your enemy, and others besides them, of whom you do not know. Allah

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ
قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ
تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ
وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَءَاخِرِينَ مِنْ
دُونِهِمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمْ اللَّهُ

knows them. And whatever you spend of anything in the cause of Allah shall be fully repaid to you, and you shall not be wronged.

يَعْلَمُهُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ
فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ
وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

***44** This means, you should always keep in readiness the necessary military equipment and an organized standing army so that you may be able to take military action immediately without the least delay, should the enemy attack you suddenly. These precautionary measures should be taken so that there should be no confusion and no hurry to urge you to enlist semi trained and ill equipped volunteers; nor would there be any fear that the enemy would take you unawares and inflict irreparable losses on you before you could get ready for the defense.

61. And if they incline to peace, then incline you to it, and trust in Allah. Surely it is He who is All Hearing, All Knowing.

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلَامِ فَاجْنَحْ
لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ
السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦١﴾

62. And if they intend to deceive you, then indeed Allah is sufficient for you.^{*45} He it is who strengthened you with His help and with the believers.

وَإِنْ يُرِيدُوا أَنْ يَخْدَعُوكَ
فَأِنَّكَ حَسْبُكَ اللَّهُ هُوَ الَّذِي
أَيَّدَكَ بِنَصْرِهِ
وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٢﴾

***45** That is, your relations with other nations should be based on your trust in God for He is sufficient for you. Therefore you should boldly face the enemy both in war and in peace. When the enemy desires to have a talk with you for peace, you should be willing and ready to negotiate with the other party without any hesitation. Do not reject the offer on the assumption that the other party is not sincere and has treacherous intentions. For no one can have correct knowledge of the intentions of others. If the other party is sincere in its offer, then it will be wrong to reject it and continue the bloodshed. And if the enemy has treacherous intentions, then Allah will protect you from them because of your courage and moral superiority. In that case, fight bravely with the treacherous enemy so as to teach them such a lesson as may prove a deterrent.

63. And He has put affection between their hearts. If you had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have put affection between their hearts, but Allah has put affection between them.^{*46} Certainly He is All Mighty, All Wise.

وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ
مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مَا أَلَّفْتَ
بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ
أَلَّفَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

***46** This refers to the blessing of Islam which led to the union of the hearts of the different Arab clans and integrated them into a strong community, although before this there had been permanent enmities between them for

centuries. This favor of God had been very conspicuous in the case of Aus and Khazraj clans of Al-Madinah. These two clans had been mortal enemies, and the bloody war of Buath had taken place between them only two years before this. It was really a miracle that such enmities had been changed into such a union as was witnessed by the Islamic community during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It was quite obvious that this thing could not have been accomplished through any human powers or resources, for whatever had been accomplished, it had been accomplished by His grace and whatever will be accomplished, it will be accomplished by His grace.

64. O Prophet, Allah is sufficient for you and those who follow you of the believers.

يَتَأَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَسْبُكَ اللَّهُ وَمَنِ
اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

65. O Prophet, urge the believers to battle. If there are among you twenty steadfast (persons), they will overcome two hundred. And if there are among you one hundred, they will overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve, because they are a people who do not understand.*47

يَتَأَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَرِّضِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى الْقِتَالِ إِنْ
يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ عِشْرُونَ صَابِرُونَ
يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتِينَ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ
مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفًا مِّنَ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا
يَفْقَهُونَ

*47 Here the word “understanding” has been used in the same sense as morale is used now-a-days. Understanding is a better scientific term than morale: the moral and mental condition which enables a person to keep up courage and enthusiasm, etc. For, it is obvious that the one who understands clearly the objective for which he is fighting would realize that it is more precious than his own life which would be meaningless if that object was lost. He will possess a fighting power far greater than of the one who has no clear understanding of the object for which he is fighting, even though the two may be equal in their physical powers. Above all, the one who has the right understanding of the reality, of the existence of Allah, of his own position in the universe, of his relation with Allah, of the life and death in this world, of the life in the next world, of the distinction between truth and falsehood, of the consequences of the victory of falsehood over truth, has much more power even than those who fight for their country, their nation or for the sake of a class, even if the latter had the right understanding of their cause. Thus it is clear that the power of the believers, who have full understanding of their object, is ten times more than that of disbelievers of the same capability. But along with this understanding, the practice of fortitude is also essential for gaining and maintaining that power.

66. Now, Allah has lightened (hardship) for you, and He knows that among you is weakness. So if there are of

الَّذِينَ خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا فَإِنْ يَكُنْ

you a hundred steadfast, they will overcome two hundred. And if there are of you a thousand, they will overcome two thousand, by the permission of Allah.*48 And Allah is with those who are steadfast.

مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ صَابِرَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا
مِائَتَيْنِ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أَلْفٌ
يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفَيْنِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ
الصَّابِرِينَ



*48 This reduction of the ratio of the power of a Muslim to that of a non-Muslim from ten-to-one to two-to-one does not mean that this was due to some deterioration in the morale of the Muslims. It simply means that in Ayat 65 the general principle of the ratio of the power of the believers and the disbelievers was enunciated and in Ayat 66 that principle was applied in accordance with the then existing condition of their morale. At that time (A.H. 2) the morale of the Muslims had not attained perfection, for many of them had only recently entered the fold of Islam and were still under preliminary training. Afterwards when their morale reached the desired standard under the guidance of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the ratio of ten-to-one was actually established, and was demonstrated practically in the battles during his last years and during the time of his rightly guided successors.

67. It is not for a Prophet that he should have prisoners of war until he has sufficiently suppressed (the enemies) in the land. You

مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيِّ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُدَ
أَسْرَى حَتَّى يُثْخِنَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ تُرِيدُونَ عَرَضَ

desire the gains of the world, and Allah desires (for you) the Hereafter. And Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.

الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ وَاللَّهُ
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

68. If there had not been a decree from Allah that preceded, you would have been afflicted for what you have taken by a great punishment.

لَوْلَا كِتَابٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ سَبَقَ
لَمَسَّكُمْ فِيمَا أَخَذْتُمْ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيمٌ

69. So eat of what you have as booty in war, lawful and clean, and fear Allah.*49 Indeed, Allah is Ever Forgiving, Most Merciful.

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا غَنِمْتُمْ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ
رَّحِيمٌ

*49 As regards to the question why Allah rebuked the Muslims in Ayat 68 for taking ransom. The commentators have cited some traditions. According to these, after the battle of Badr, a consultation was held in regard to the prisoners taken from the army of the Quraish. Abu Bakr was of the opinion that they should be set at liberty after the payment of ransom but Umar opined that they should be slain. The Prophet (peace be upon him) agreed to the opinion of Abu Bakr and set them at liberty after the payment of their ransom. At this, Allah sent down this verse as a rebuke. But this interpretation is open to some objections.

The first difficulty of these interpreters is that they are

unable to give a satisfactory explanation that might fit into the words: “If there had not been a decree from Allah that preceded”. They say that it refers to the decree that was predestined by Allah or it means that Allah had already decreed to make spoils of war lawful though He had not sent down this decree to the Prophet (peace be upon him). But it is obvious that a thing does not become lawful unless it is made so by an explicit command. The second difficulty is that according to this explanation, the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself and his followers become guilty of the sin of taking ransom for prisoners. Therefore one would think many times before accepting an explanation that is based on traditions emanating from a single source.

In my opinion, Allah rebuked the Muslims for not complying fully with the condition laid down in the ordinance in Surah Muhammad, Ayat 4: “Then when you meet (in battle) those who disbelieve, strike (their) necks until, when you have crushed them, then secure their bonds. Then whether you show favor afterwards or accept ransom until the war lays down its arms. According to this previous ordinance, there was nothing wrong in taking prisoners of war and charging ransom for them, but what was wrong was that they did not fully comply with the prior condition, that is, “when you have crushed them”. For we learn that, when after the battle of Badr, the army of the Quraish was put to rout, many Muslims began to gather spoils or to take prisoners and only a few of them went in pursuit of the enemy to crush them. Had all the Muslims gone in pursuit of them, they would have crushed

down their power then and there. Therefore Allah rebuked the Muslims (and not the Prophet) as if to say, “O Muslims, you have not yet fully understood the meaning of the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He is not sent to take prisoners and charge ransoms or gather spoils. The main objective of his mission is to crush down the powers of disbelief. But you are overwhelmed by the worldly greed over and again. During the course of this campaign, you at first desired to attack the trade caravan instead of the army of the Quraish. Then you began to gather spoils and take prisoners, and afterwards entered into a dispute regarding the division of spoils. Had We not previously given you permission for taking ransom (Surah Muhammad, Ayat 4), We would have inflicted a severe chastisement on you. Very well, now you may enjoy what you have taken, but you should, in future, fear Us and refrain from incurring Our displeasure.”

Imam Jassas also is of the same opinion (as expressed in his book Ahkamul-Quran), and therefore the above interpretation is worth considering. This view is also supported by a tradition related in Seerat by Ibn Hisham. According to this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) noticed signs of disapproval on the face of Saad bin Muaz on the occasion when the Muslims were gathering the spoils and taking prisoners. So the Prophet said, “O Saad, it appears that you do not approve this conduct of the Muslims”. Saad replied, “It is so, O Messenger of Allah. This is the first victory that Allah has given us over the mushriks. Therefore it would have been much better for us to crush

down their power completely than to save their lives by taking them prisoners”. (Volume II, pp. 280-281).

70. O Prophet, say to whoever is in your hands of the captives: “If Allah knows any goodness in your hearts, He will give you better than what has been taken from you, and He will forgive you. And Allah is Ever Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

يَأَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِمَنْ فِي أَيْدِيكُمْ
مِنَ الْأَسْرَىٰ إِنْ يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ فِي
قُلُوبِكُمْ خَيْرًا يُؤْتِكُمْ خَيْرًا مِّمَّا
أَخَذَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

71. And if they intend to betray you, then they have indeed betrayed Allah before, so He made you prevail over them. And Allah is All Knowing, All Wise.

وَإِنْ يُرِيدُوا خِيَانَتَكَ فَقَدْ
خَانُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَأَمْكَنَ مِنْهُمْ
ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

72. Indeed, those who have believed and emigrated and strove with their wealth and their lives in the cause of Allah, and those who sheltered and helped (them), they are the true allies of one another. And those who believed and did not emigrate, for you there is no (obligation) of alliance to

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا
وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ
فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ ءَاوَأُوا
وَنَصَرُوا أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ
بَعْضٍ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ
يُهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ وَلِيَّتِهِمْ مِنْ

them at all unless they emigrate.^{*50} And if they seek help from you in (the matter of) religion, then it is (incumbent) on you to provide help, except it be against a people between you and whom is a treaty.^{*51} And Allah is Seer of what you do.

شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ يَهَاجِرُوا ۚ وَإِنِ
 اسْتَنْصَرُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ
 فَعَلَيْكُمْ النَّصْرُ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ
 بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا
 تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

***50** This verse contains a very important article of the Islamic constitution and lays down the terms of the relationship (*vilayat*-guardianship) between the Muslims. According to it, “Those Muslims only shall be bound by the relationship of *vilayat* who are either the inhabitants of Dar-ul-Islam or emigrate to it. As for the Muslims living outside the territorial borders of the Islamic State, there shall be the relationship of Islamic brotherhood only, but there shall be no relationship of *vilayat* with them. Likewise there shall be no relationship of *vilayat* with those Muslims who visit the Dar-ul-Islam as foreigners in the capacity of the subjects of Dar-ul-Kufr, without emigrating to it permanently.”

The Arabic word *vilayat* is very comprehensive in meaning and guardianship does not convey its full significance. It denotes the relationship of help, succor, protection, support, friendship, guardianship and the like between the citizens and the state and vice versa, and between the citizens themselves. Thus it is clear that this verse confines the limits of the Islamic, political and constitutional

citizenship to its territorial boundaries only and excludes from this particular relationship the other Muslims who live beyond its territorial boundaries.

The legal implications of this negation of guardianship are very extensive, but this is not the occasion for their statement. Here it will suffice to say that according to this, the Muslims of Dar-ul-Kufr cannot become the inheritors of the Muslims of Dar-ul-Islam and vice versa, nor can they be the legal guardians of one another, nor can there be inter-marriages between them; nor can the Islamic State appoint a citizen of Dar-ul-Kufr on any responsible post, until that one renounces the relationship of citizenship with Dar-ul-Kufr. Moreover, this verse affects also the foreign policy of the Islamic State and frees it from the responsibility of the Muslims living outside its territorial borders by restricting it only to the Muslims living within its territory. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also declared the same thing, saying, "I owe no responsibility for the protection of any Muslim who resides among the mushriks."

This foreign policy of Islam cuts at the very roots of such disputes as are generally responsible for creating international crises. For it is obvious that if states refuse to shoulder any responsibilities for the protection, etc. of the minorities living outside their territorial borders, there cannot arise such disputes concerning them as lead to wars over and over again.

*51 Though the Muslims living outside the territorial borders of the Islamic State have been excluded from

political protection in the preceding verse, this fact does not deprive them of the brotherly relationship of faith. Therefore it is obligatory on the Islamic State and its inhabitants to help their wronged and oppressed brethren if they ask for help. But even in this case, they should observe the international law and the universally accepted moral code. If Dar-ul-Islam has made a treaty with the persecuting people of Dar-ul-Kufr, the Muslims of Dar-ul-Islam are forbidden to give any help to the oppressed Muslims in Dar-ul-Kufr if that is against the moral obligations of the treaty.

In this verse the word *mithaq* has been used for treaty. It implies everything that gives the guarantee of peace in the known sense to the parties concerned even though there might not be any explicit mention of a no war agreement. Moreover, the original words of the Arabic text, “between you and whom is a treaty,” clearly show that a treaty of the Islamic State with a non-Islamic State is not merely a treaty between the two states but between the two nations. Therefore it is morally binding on both the Islamic State and the Muslims living in the Islamic State. The Islamic code does not tolerate that the Muslim subjects should be left free from the obligations of the treaty which a Muslim government makes with other countries or nations. Of course, those Muslims who reside outside the territorial borders of the State that makes a treaty are free from this obligation. That is why Abu Busair, Abu Jandal and other Muslims who were not the subjects of Dar-ul-Islam were not bound by the terms of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, which

the Prophet (peace be upon him) made with the disbelievers of Makkah.

73. And those who disbelieve, they are allies of one another. Unless you act likewise, there will be oppression on the earth and great corruption.*52

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ
بَعْضٍ إِلَّا تَفْعَلُوهُ تَكُن فِتْنَةً
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ كَبِيرٌ



***52** The sentence, “Unless you act likewise,” has two meanings:

(1) If it is considered in connection with the previous sentence, “And those who disbelieve, they are allies of one another”, it means: “If you, the believers, will not help one another just as the disbelievers help one another, there will be mischief and great disorder on the earth”.

(2) But if it is considered in connection with the instructions given in Ayat 72, it will mean: if the people living in Dar-ul-Islam;

(a) Do not become the guardians and protectors of one another,

(b) Do not consider the Muslims, who have not migrated to Dar-ul-Islam and live in Dar-ul-Kufr, outside their political protection,

(c) Do not give help to the persecuted Muslims, living outside Dar-ul-Islam, when they ask for it, and if at the same time, they do not observe the law that the Muslims living in Dar-ul-Islam would not help those Muslims living in Dar-ul-Kufr among the people with whom they made a

treaty of peace, and,

(d) Do not break all their friendly relations with the disbelievers, then there will be mischief and great chaos in the world.

74. And those who believed and have emigrated and strove in the cause of Allah, and those who gave shelter and helped (them), it is they who are the believers in truth. For them is forgiveness and honorable provision.

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا
وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ
ءَاوُوا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ
وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

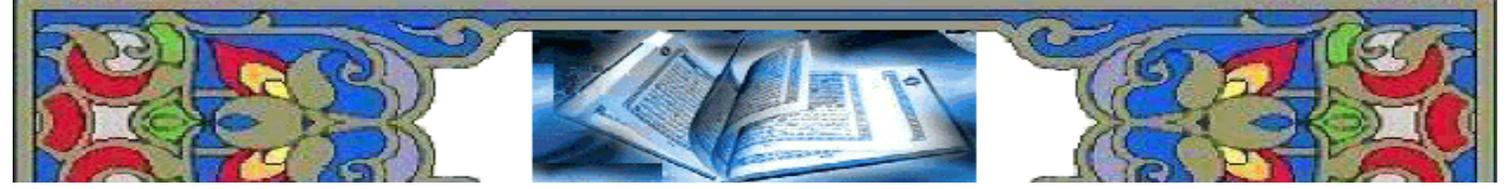
75. And those who believed afterwards and emigrated and strove along with you. They are of you. And those related by blood are nearer to one another in the decree of Allah.^{*53} Indeed, Allah has knowledge of all things.

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْ بَعْدُ
وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا مَعَكُمْ
فَأُولَئِكَ مِنْكُمْ وَأُولُوا
الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ
فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عَلِيمٌ

***53** This is to remove a misunderstanding. After migration to Al-Madinah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had established the relationship of brotherhood between the Muhajirin and the Ansar, which gave rise to the misunderstanding that they had become the inheritors of

one another. This verse says that inheritance shall be determined by the blood relationship and not by the relationship of brotherhood in the faith.





التَّوْبَةِ At-Taubah

The Repentance

Name

This Surah is known by two names -- *At-Taubah* and *Al-Baraat*. It is called *At-Taubah* because it enunciates the nature of taubah (repentance) and mentions the conditions of its acceptance. (Ayats 102-118). The second name Bara'at (Release) is taken from the first word of the Surah.

Omission of Bismillah

This is the only Surah of the Quran to which *Bismillah* is not prefixed. Though the commentators have given different reasons for this, the correct one that which has been given by Imam Razi: namely, this is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself did not dictate it at the beginning of the Surah. Therefore the companions did not prefix it and their successors followed them. This is a further proof of the fact that utmost care has been taken to keep the Quran intact so that it should remain in its complete and original form.

Discourses and Periods of Revelation

This Surah comprises three discourses:

The first discourse (Ayats 1-37), was revealed in Zil-Qaadah A.H.9 or thereabout. As the importance of the subject of the discourse required its declaration on the

occasion of Hajj, the Prophet (peace be upon him) dispatched Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) to follow Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), who had already left for Makkah as leader of the pilgrims to the Kaabah. He instructed Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) to deliver the discourse before the representatives of the different clans of Arabia so as to inform them of the new policy towards the mushriks.

The second discourse (Ayats 38-72) was revealed in Rajab A.H.9 or a little before this, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was engaged in making preparations for the campaign of Tabuk. In this discourse, the believers were urged to take active part in Jihad, and the others were severely rebuked for holding back their wealth and for hesitation to sacrifice their lives in the Way of Allah because of their hypocrisy, weak faith or negligence.

The third discourse (Ayats 73-129) was revealed on his return from the campaign of Tabuk. There are some pieces in this discourse that were sent down on different occasions during the same period and were afterwards consolidated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) into the Surah in accordance with inspiration from Allah. But this caused no interruption in its continuity because they dealt with the same subject and formed part of the same series of events. This discourse warns the hypocrites of their evil deeds and rebukes those believers who had stayed behind in the campaign of Tabuk. Then after taking them to task, Allah pardons those true believers who had not taken part in the Jihad in the Way of Allah for one reason or the other.

Chronologically, the first discourse should have come last; but being the most important of the three in regard to its subject matter, it was placed first in the order of compilation.

Historical Background

Now let us consider the historical background of the Surah. The series of events that have been discussed in this Surah took place after the peace treaty of Hudaibiyah. By that time, one-third of Arabia had come under the sway of Islam which had established itself as a powerful, well organized and civilized Islamic state. This treaty afforded further opportunities to Islam to spread its influence in the comparatively peaceful atmosphere created by it. After this treaty, two events took place, which led to very important results.

Conquest of Arabia

The first was the conquest of Arabia. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was able to send missions among different clans for the propagation of Islam. The result was that during a short period of two years, it became such a great power that it made the old order of ignorance feel helpless before it. So much so that the zealous elements from among the Quraish were so exasperated that they broke the treaty in order to encounter Islam in a decisive combat. But the Prophet (peace be upon him) took prompt action after the breach so as not to allow them any opportunity to gather enough force for this. He made a sudden invasion on Makkah in the month of Ramadan in A.H.8 and conquered it. Though this conquest broke the backbone of the order of

ignorance, it made still another attack on Islam in the battle-field of Hunain, which proved to be its death-knell. The clans of Hawazin Thaqif, Naur, Jushm and others gathered their entire forces in the battle field in order to crush the reformative revolution, but they utterly failed in their evil designs. The defeat of ignorance at Hunain paved the way for making the whole of Arabia the abode of Islam (Dar-ul-Islam). The result was that hardly a year had passed after the battle of Hunain, when the major portion of Arabia came within the fold of Islam and only a few upholders of the old order remained scattered over some corners of the country.

The second event that contributed towards making Islam a formidable power was the campaign of Tabuk, which was necessitated by the provocative activities of the Christians living within or near the boundaries of the Roman Empire to the north of Arabia. Accordingly, the Prophet (peace be upon him) with an army of thirty thousand marched boldly towards the Roman Empire but the Romans evaded the encounter. The result was that the power of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Islam increased manifold and deputations from all corners of Arabia began to wait upon him on his return from Tabuk in order to offer their allegiance to Islam and obedience to him. The Quran has described this triumph in Surah An-Nasr: "When the succor of Allah came and victory was attained and you saw people entering the fold of Islam in large numbers."

Campaign to Tabuk

The campaign to Tabuk was the result of conflict with the

Roman Empire, that had started even before the conquest of Makkah. One of the missions sent after the treaty of Hudaibiyah to different parts of Arabia visited the clans which lived in the northern areas adjacent to Syria. The majority of these people were Christians, who were under the influence of the Roman Empire. Contrary to all the principles of the commonly accepted international law, they killed fifteen members of the delegation near a place known as Zat-u-Talah (or Zat-i-Itlah). Only Kaab bin Umair Ghifari, the head of the delegation, succeeded in escaping and reporting the sad incident. Besides this, Shurahbil bin Amr, the Christian governor of Busra, who was directly under the Roman Caesar, had also put to death Harith bin Umair, the ambassador of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who had been sent to him on a similar mission.

These events convinced the Prophet (peace be upon him) that a strong action should be taken in order to make the territory adjacent to the Roman Empire safe and secure for the Muslims. Accordingly, in the month of Jamadi-ul-Ula A.H.8, he sent an army of three thousand towards the Syrian border. When this army reached near Maan, the Muslims learned that Shurahbil was marching with an army of one hundred thousand to fight against them and that the Caesar, who himself was at Hims, had sent another army consisting of one hundred thousand soldiers under his brother Theodore. But in spite of such fearful news, the brave small band of the Muslims marched on fearlessly and encountered the big army of Shurahbil at Mutah. And the result of the encounter in which the Muslims were fighting

against fearful odds, the ratio of the two armies being 1 to 33, was very favorable, for the enemy utterly failed to defeat them. This proved very helpful for the propagation of Islam. As a result, those Arabs who were living in a state of semi independence in Syria and near Syria and the clans of Najd near Iraq, who were under the influence of the Iranian Empire, turned towards Islam and embraced it in thousands. For example, the people of Bani Sulaim (whose chief was Abbas bin Mirdas Sulaimi), Ashjaa, Ghatafan, Zubyan, Fazarah, etc. came into the fold of Islam at the same time. Above all, Farvah bin Amral Juzami, who was the commander of the Arab armies of the Roman Empire, embraced Islam during that time, and underwent the trial of his faith in a way that filled the whole territory with wonder. When the Caesar came to know that Farvah had embraced Islam, he ordered that he should be arrested and brought to his court. Then the Caesar said to him, you will have to choose one of the two things. Either give up your Islam and win your liberty and your former rank, or remain a Muslim and face death. He calmly chose Islam and sacrificed his life in the way of the Truth.

No wonder that such events as these made the Caesar realize the nature of the danger that was threatening his Empire from Arabia. Accordingly, in 9 A.H. he began to make military preparations to avenge the insult he had suffered at Mutah. The Ghassanid and other Arab chiefs also began to muster armies under him. When the Prophet (peace be upon him), who always kept himself well-informed, even of the minutest things that could affect the

Islamic movement favorably or adversely, came to know of these preparations. He at once understood their meaning. Therefore, without the least hesitation he decided to fight against the great power of the Caesar. He knew that the show of the slightest weakness would result in the utter failure of the movement which was facing three great dangers at that time. First the dying power of ignorance that had almost been crushed in the battle field of Hunain might revive again. Secondly, the hypocrites of Al-Madinah, who were always on the lookout for such an opportunity, might make full use of this to do the greatest possible harm to it. For they had already made preparations for this and had, through a monk called Abu Amir, sent secret messages of their evil designs to the Christian king of Ghassan and the Caesar himself. Besides this, they had also built a mosque near Al-Madinah for holding secret meetings for this purpose. The third danger was of an attack by the Caesar himself, who had already defeated Iran, the other great power of that period, and filled with awe the adjacent territories.

It is obvious that if all these three elements had been given an opportunity of taking a concerted action against the Muslims, Islam would have lost the fight it had almost won. That is why in this case the Prophet (peace be upon him) made an open declaration for making preparations for the campaign against the Roman Empire, which was one of the two greatest empires of the world of that period. The declaration was made though all the apparent circumstances were against such a decision for there was

famine in the country and the long awaited crops were about to ripen: the burning heat of the scorching summer season of Arabia was at its height and there was not enough money for preparations in general, and for equipment and conveyance in particular. But in spite of these handicaps, when the Messenger of Allah realized the urgency of the occasion, he took this step which was to decide whether the mission of the truth was going to survive or perish. The very fact that he made an open declaration for making preparations for such a campaign to Syria against the Roman Empire showed how important it was, for this was contrary to his previous practice. Usually he took every precaution not to reveal beforehand the direction to which he was going, nor the name of the enemy whom he was going to attack; nay, he did not move out of Al-Madinah even in the direction of the campaign.

All the parties in Arabia fully realized the grave consequences of this critical decision. The remnants of the lovers of the old order of ignorance were anxiously waiting for the result of the campaign, for they had pinned all their hopes on the defeat of Islam by the Romans. The hypocrites also considered it to be their last chance of crushing the power of Islam by internal rebellion if the Muslims suffered a defeat in Syria. They had, therefore, made full use of the mosque built by them for hatching plots and had employed all their devices to render the campaign a failure. On the other side, the true believers also realized fully that the fate of the movement for which they had been exerting their utmost for the last 22 years was now hanging in the

balance. If they showed courage on that critical occasion, the doors of the whole outer world would be thrown open for the movement to spread. But if they showed weakness or cowardice, then all the work they had done in Arabia would end in smoke.

That is why these lovers of Islam began to make enthusiastic preparations for the campaign. Every one of them tried to surpass the other in making contributions for the provision of equipment for it. Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) and Abdur Rehman bin Auf (may Allah be pleased with him) presented large sums of money for this purpose. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) contributed half of the earnings of his life and Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) the entire earnings of his life. The indigent companions did not lag behind and presented whatever they could earn by the sweat of their labor and the women parted with their ornaments. Thousands of volunteers, who were filled with the desire of sacrificing their lives for Islam, came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and requested that arrangements for weapons and conveyance be made for them so that they should join the expedition. Those who could not be provided with these shed tears of sorrow; the scene was so pathetic that it made the Prophet (peace be upon him) sad because of his inability to arm them. In short, the occasion became the touchstone for discriminating a true believer from a hypocrite. For, to lag behind in the campaign meant that the very relationship of a person to Islam was doubtful. Accordingly, whenever a person lagged behind

during the journey to Tabuk, the Prophet (peace be upon him) on being informed, would spontaneously say, “Leave him alone. If there is any good in him, Allah will again join him with you, and if there is no good in him, then thank Allah that He relieved you of his evil company”.

In short, the Prophet (peace be upon him) marched out towards Syria in Rajab A.H. 9, with thirty thousand fighters for the cause of Islam. The conditions in which the expedition had undertaken may be judged from the fact that the number of camels with them was so small that many of them were obliged to walk on foot and to wait for their turns for several had to ride at a time on each camel. To add to this, there was the burning heat of the desert and the acute shortage of water. But they were richly rewarded for their firm resolve and sincere adherence to the cause and for their perseverance in the face of those great difficulties and obstacles.

When they arrived at Tabuk, they learned that the Caesar and his allies had withdrawn their troops from the frontier and there was no enemy to fight with. Thus they won a moral victory that increased their prestige manifold and, that too, without shedding a drop of blood.

In this connection, it is pertinent to point out that the general impression given by the historians of the campaigns of the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the campaign of Tabuk is not correct. They relate the event in a way as if the news of the mustering of the Roman armies near the Arabian frontier was itself false. The fact is that the Caesar had begun to muster his armies, but the Prophet (peace be

upon him) forestalled him and arrived on the scene before he could make full preparations for the invasion. Therefore, believing that “discretion is the better part of valor,” he withdrew his armies from the frontier. For he had not forgotten that the three thousand fighters for the cause of Islam had rendered helpless his army of one hundred thousand strong at Muthah. He could not, therefore, even with an army of two hundred thousand, dare to fight against an army of thirty thousand, and that, too, under the leadership of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself.

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) found that the Caesar had withdrawn his forces from the frontier, he considered these question whether it would be worthwhile to march into the Syrian territory or to halt at Tabuk and turn his moral victory to political and strategic advantage. He decided on the latter course and made a halt for twenty days at Tabuk. During this time, he brought pressure on the small states that lay between the Roman Empire and the Islamic state and were at that time under the influence of the Romans, and subdued and made them the tributaries of the Islamic state. For instance, some Christian chiefs Ukaidir bin Abdul Malik Kindi of Dumatul Jaiidal, Yuhanna bin Dobah of Ailah, and the chiefs of Maqna, Jarba and Azruh also submitted and agreed to pay Jizyah to the Islamic state of Al-Madinah. As a result of this, the boundaries of the Islamic state were extended right up to the Roman Empire, and the majority of the Arab clans, who were being used by the Caesar against Arabia, became

the allies of the Muslims against the Romans.

Above all, this moral victory of Tabuk afforded a golden opportunity to the Muslims to strengthen their hold on Arabia before entering into a long conflict with the Romans. For it broke the back of those who had still been expecting that the old order of ignorance might revive in the near future, whether they were the open upholders of shirk or the hypocrites who were hiding their shirk under the garb of Islam. The majority of such people were compelled by the force of circumstances to enter into the fold of Islam and, at least, make it possible for their descendants to become true Muslims. After this a mere impotent minority of the upholders of the old order was left in the field, but it could not stand in the way of the Islamic revolution for the perfection of which Allah had sent His Messenger.

Problems of the Period

If we keep in view the preceding background, we can easily find out the problems that were confronting the community at that time. They were:

To make the whole of Arabia a perfect Dar-ul-Islam.

To extend the influence of Islam to the adjoining countries.

To crush the mischief of the hypocrites. And,

To prepare the Muslims for Jihad against the non-Muslim world.

Now that the administration of the whole of Arabia had come in the hands of the believers, and all the opposing powers had become helpless, it was necessary to make a clear declaration of that policy which was to be adopted to

make it a perfect Dar-ul-Islam. Therefore the following measures were adopted:

A clear declaration was made that all the treaties with the mushriks were abolished and the Muslims would be released from the treaty obligations with them after a respite of four months. (Ayats 1-3). This declaration was necessary for uprooting completely the system of life based on shirk and to make Arabia exclusively the center of Islam so that it should not in any way interfere with the spirit of Islam nor become an internal danger for it.

A decree was issued that the guardianship of the Kaabah, which held central position in all the affairs of Arabia, should be wrested from the mushriks and placed permanently in the hands of the believers, (Ayats 12-18) that all the customs and practices of the shirk of the era of ignorance should be forcibly abolished: that the mushriks should not be allowed even to come near the House (Ayat 28). This was to eradicate every trace of shirk from the House that was dedicated exclusively to the worship of Allah.

The evil practice of Nasi, by which they used to tamper with the sacred months in the days of ignorance, was forbidden as an act of kufr (Ayat 37). This was also to serve as an example to the Muslims for eradicating every vestige of the customs of ignorance from the life of Arabia (and afterwards from the lives of the Muslims everywhere).

In order to enable the Muslims to extend the influence of Islam outside Arabia, they were enjoined to crush with sword the non-Muslim powers and to force them to accept

the sovereignty of the Islamic state. As the great Roman and Iranian Empires were the biggest hindrances in the way, a conflict with them was inevitable. The object of Jihad was not to coerce them to accept Islam they were free to accept or not to accept it, but to prevent them from thrusting forcibly their deviations upon others and the coming generations. The Muslims were enjoined to tolerate their misguidance only to the extent that they might have the freedom to remain misguided, if they chose to be so, provided that they paid jizyah (Ayat 29) as a sign of their subjugation to the Islamic state.

The third important problem was to crush the mischief of the hypocrites, who had hitherto been tolerated in spite of their flagrant crimes. Now that there was practically no pressure upon them from outside, the Muslims were enjoined to treat them openly as disbelievers (Ayat 73). Accordingly, the Holy Prophet set on fire the house of Swailim, where the hypocrites used to gather for consultations in order to dissuade the people from joining the expedition to Tabuk. Likewise on his return from Tabuk, he ordered to pull down and burn the mosque that had been built to serve as a cover for the hypocrites for hatching plots against the true believers.

In order to prepare the Muslims for Jihad against the whole non-Muslim world, it was necessary to cure them even of that slight weakness of faith from which they were still suffering. For, there could be no greater internal danger to the Islamic community than the weakness of faith, especially where it was going to engage itself single-

handed in a conflict with the whole non-Muslim world. That is why those people who had lagged behind in the campaign to Tabuk or had shown the least negligence were severely taken to task, and were considered as hypocrites if they had no plausible excuse for not fulfilling that obligation. Moreover, a clear declaration was made that in future the sole criterion of a Muslim's faith shall be the exertions he makes for the uplift of the word of Allah and the role he plays in the conflict between Islam and kufr. Therefore, if anyone will show any hesitation in sacrificing his life, money, time and energies, his faith shall not be regarded as genuine. (Ayats 81-96).

If the above mentioned important points are kept in view during the study of this Surah, it will facilitate the understanding of its contents.

Subject: Problems of Peace and War

In continuation of Surah Al-Anfal, this Surah also deals with the problems of peace and war and bases the theme on the Tabuk expedition.

Topics and their Interconnection

Ayats 1-12. This portion deals with the sanctity of treaties and lays down principles, rules and regulations which must be kept in view before breaking them, in case the other party does not observe them sincerely.

Ayats 13-37. In this portion the Muslims have been urged to fight in the Way of Allah with the mushrik Arabs, the Jews and the Christians, who were duly warned of the consequences of their mischievous and inimical behavior.

Ayats 38-72. In this discourse, the Muslims have been told

clearly and explicitly that they will inherit the rewards promised by Allah only if they take active part in the conflict with kufr, for that is the criterion which distinguishes true Muslims from hypocrites. Therefore true Muslims should take active part in Jihad, without minding dangers, obstacles, difficulties, temptations and the like.

Ayats 73-90. This portion deals with the problems of hypocrites and lays down rules and regulations governing the treatment that should be meted out to them and points out their distinctive marks from true Muslims.

Ayats 91-110. This portion deals with the case of those who remained behind and did not accompany the Prophet (peace be upon him) for Jihad to Tabuk. For this purpose they have been separated in different categories, that is, the disabled, the sick, the indigent, the hypocrites, the believers who realized their guilt and punished themselves before the return of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from Tabuk and those who confessed their error. Their cases have been dealt with in accordance with the nature and extent of their offense.

Ayats 111-118. In order to make their noble qualities look all the more conspicuous and dignified by contrast, the characteristics of the believers have been mentioned, and they have been reassured that Allah, the Sovereign of the universe, is their helper and guardian. Accordingly, because of their sincerity, He has forgiven the three believers who did not take part in the expedition.

Ayats 119-127. In the concluding portion, general instructions have been given to the believers for their

guidance.

Ayats 128-129. This is the conclusion: “Follow the Messenger who is gentle and compassionate and your greatest well-wisher, and trust in Allah, the Lord of the universe”.

1. (Declaration of) disassociation,^{*1} from Allah and His Messenger toward those with whom you made a treaty,^{*2} among the idolaters.

بِرَاءَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى
الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ



***1** As has already been stated in the preface to this Surah, this discourse (Ayats 1-37) was revealed in A.H.9, when Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) had left for Makkah as leader of the pilgrims to the Kaabah. Therefore the companions said to the Prophet (peace be upon him), “Send it to Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), so that he may proclaim it on the occasion of Hajj.” He replied, “The importance and nature of the declaration demands that this should be proclaimed on my behalf by someone from my own family.” Accordingly, he entrusted this duty to Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) and instructed him to proclaim it openly before the pilgrims, and also make these four announcements:

- (1) No one who rejects Islam shall enter Paradise.
- (2) No mushrik should perform Hajj after this.
- (3) It is forbidden to move round the Kaabah in a naked state.
- (4) The terms of the treaties which are still in force (i.e.

with those who have not broken their treaties with the Messenger of Allah up to that time) would be faithfully observed till the expiry of the term of the treaties.

In this connection, it will be worthwhile to know that the first Hajj of the Islamic period after the conquest of Makkah was performed in A.H. 8 according to the old customs. Then in A.H. 9 the second Hajj was performed by the Muslims in the Islamic way, and by the mushriks in their own way. But the third Hajj, known as "Hajja-tul-Widaa", was performed in A.H. 10 in the purely Islamic way under the guidance of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. He did not perform Hajj during the two previous years because up to that time the mushriks had not been forbidden from it, and so there were still some traces of shirk associated with it.

*2 This declaration of the abrogation of the treaties with the mushriks was made in accordance with the law enjoined in Surah Al-Anfaal: 58 regarding the treacherous people, for it is treachery from the Islamic point of view to wage war against any people with whom a treaty of peace had been made, without openly declaring that the treaty had been terminated. That is why a proclamation of the abrogation of the treaties was necessitated against those clans who were always hatching plots against Islam in spite of the treaties of peace they had made. They would break the treaties and turn hostile on the first opportunity for treachery, and the same was true of all the mushrik clans with the exception of Bani Kananah, Bani Damrah and one or two other clans.

This proclamation practically reduced the mushriks of Arabia to the position of outlaws and no place of shelter was left for them, for the major part of the country had come under the sway of Islam. As this released the Muslims from the obligations of the treaties made with them and forestalled them, they were driven into a tight corner. For, this smashed all their evil designs of creating trouble by inciting civil war at the time of a threat from the Roman and the Iranian Empires, or after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him). But Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) turned the tables on them before the opportune moment for which they were waiting. Now the only alternatives left with them were either to accept Islam that had become the state religion of Arabia, or to fight against it and be exterminated, or to emigrate from the country.

The wisdom of this grand plan became apparent when the mischief of apostasy broke out in different parts of Arabia a year and a half after this at the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This disturbance was so sudden and violent that it shook to its foundations the newly created Islamic state and would have done a far greater harm if the organized power of shirk had not been broken beforehand by this abrogation. It may be asserted that, but for this timely action the mischief of apostasy, that rose at the very beginning of the caliphate of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), would have done tenfold harm by rebellion and civil war, and might have changed the whole history of Islam.

2. So travel (freely) in the land four months,^{*3} and know that you cannot escape Allah, and that Allah will disgrace the disbelievers.

فَسِيحُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ
وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُحْزِي الْكٰفِرِينَ

*3 The respite of four months from the tenth of Zil-Haj (the date of the proclamation) to the tenth of Rabi-uth-thani was granted to give time to the mushriks so that they should consider their position carefully and decide whether to make preparation for war or to emigrate from the country or to accept Islam.

3. And (it is) a proclamation from Allah and His Messenger to the people on the day of the greater pilgrimage^{*4} that Allah is free from obligation to the idolaters, and (so is) His Messenger. So if you repent, then it is better for you, and if you turn away, then know that you cannot escape Allah. And give tidings to those who disbelieve of a painful punishment.

وَأَذَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى
النَّاسِ يَوْمَ الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ أَنَّ
اللَّهَ بَرِيءٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ
وَرَسُولُهُ فَإِنْ تُبْتُمْ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ
لَّكُمْ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا
أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ وَبَشِّرِ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

*4 Hajj-i-akbar refers to the 10th of Zil-Hajjah and is also known as Yaum-un-Nahr. This has been explained by the

Prophet (peace be upon him) in an authentic tradition. On the 10th of Zil-Hajjah, during the last Hajj of the Prophet (peace be upon him), he asked the people, “What is this day?” The people answered, “It is the day of sacrifice.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “This is the day of Hajj-i-akbar”. Here the word Hajj-i-akbar (greater pilgrimage) has been used in contrast to Hajj-i-asghar which the Arabs used for Umrah. Thus, the Hajj which is performed in the prescribed dates of Zil-Hajj is called Hajj-i-akbar.

4. Except those with whom you (Muslims) made a treaty among the idolaters, then they have not failed you in anything, nor have aided against you anyone. So, fulfill to them their treaty until their term. Indeed, Allah loves those who are righteous.*5

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِّنَ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْقُصُوكُمْ
شَيْئًا وَلَمْ يُظَاهِرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَحَدًا
فَاتِمُوا إِلَيْهِمْ عَاهِدَهُمْ إِلَى
مُدَّتِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ



*5 “So, fulfill to them their treaty.” For your violation in such cases shall be against piety. And Muslims should remain pious under all circumstances “Indeed, Allah loves those who are righteous” only.

5. Then, when the sacred months*6 have passed, then slay the idolaters

فَإِذَا أَنْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرَ الْحَرَّمَ
فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ

wherever you find them, and take them (captive), and besiege them, and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush. Then if they repent and establish prayer and give the poor-due,^{*7} then leave their way free. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ
وَأَحْصُرُوهُمْ وَأَقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ
كُلَّ مَرْصِدٍ فَإِنْ تَابُوا
وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتُوا
الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

***6** Here “the sacred months” are not those four months during which war is forbidden for the sake of Hajj and Umrah but the four months that were made unlawful for the Muslims to attack those mushriks who were granted respite by Ayat 2.

***7** That is, “Mere repentance from disbelief and shirk will not end the matter. But they shall have to perform the prescribed prayer and pay Zakat dues. Without these it will not be considered that they had given up disbelief and embraced Islam.” Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) based his decision on this verse in the case of the apostates, after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who argued that they were not rejecting Islam, because they offered Salat, even though they had refused to pay the Zakat dues. This argument roused doubts in the minds of the companions in general that they had no right to fight with such people as these. But Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) removed their doubts, saying,

“Verse 5 enjoins us to let those people go their way who fulfill all the three conditions, repentance from shirk, the establishment of Salat, and the payment of Zakat. We cannot forbear them, because they do not fulfill one of these three conditions.”

6. And if any one of the idolaters seeks your protection, then protect him so that he may hear the Word of Allah, then deliver him to his place of safety. That is because they are a people who do not know.*8

وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ
اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ
كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ ابْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ ذَٰلِكَ
بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

*8 That is, if during a fight, an enemy makes a request that he should be given an opportunity to understand Islam, the Muslims should give him a surety of protection and allow him to visit them. They should then present Islam before him in order to make him understand it. If, after this, he does not embrace Islam, they should convey him safely to his place. Such a person who comes to Dar-ul-Islam under the above mentioned protection is called mustamin in the Islamic code.

7. How can there be for the idolaters a treaty with Allah and with His Messenger, except those with whom you made a treaty near AlMasjid-AlHaram.*9 So as long as

كَيْفَ يَكُونُ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ
عَهْدٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ رَسُولِهِ
إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ عِنْدَ
الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ فَمَا

they stand true to you, so stand you true to them. Indeed, Allah loves those who are righteous.

أَسْتَقِمُوا لَكُمْ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا لَهُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ



***9** That is: Bani Kinanah and Bani Khuzaah and Bani Damrah.

8. How (can there be any treaty with them) while if they gain dominance over you, they do not respect concerning you any kinship, nor agreement. They seek to please you with their mouths,^{*10} while their hearts refuse. And most of them are disobedient.^{*11}

كَيْفَ وَإِنْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ
لَا يَرْقُبُوا فِيكُمْ إِلَّا وَلَا ذِمَّةً
يُرْضُونَكُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتَأْبَى
قُلُوبُهُمْ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ



***10** That is, “Though outwardly they negotiated for peace treaties, they cherished evil intentions in their hearts, and waited for an opportune moment to break them. And this was borne by later experiences.”

***11** They were evil-doers because they had no sense of moral responsibilities nor did they hesitate to break moral limits.

9. They have sold the signs of Allah for a small price^{*12} and have hindered (people) from His Way.^{*13} Indeed, evil is what they were doing.

أَشْتَرُوا بِعَايَتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا
فَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ^ج إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ
مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



***12** That is, when they had to make a choice between the divine guidance and the transitory worldly ambitions, they chose the latter, because they did not comprehend the comparative values of the two. Whereas the revelations of Allah were inviting them to goodness, righteousness and observance of the divine law, which lead to eternal bliss. They chose to follow the unbridled lusts of their selves which gained some transitory worldly benefits for them, but consequently led them to eternal perdition.

***13** Those evil-doers “hindered (people) from His Way”, for they not only chose misguidance for themselves but also tried to prevent others from following the right way. They put every kind of obstruction in the way of the invitation to righteousness; nay, they tried their best to gag the mouths of those who were extending that invitation and make their lives hard for them. In short, they did all they could to prevent the establishment of the righteous system of life that Allah required the people to establish.

10. They do not respect in regard to a believer any kinship, nor agreement. And it is they who are the transgressors.

لَا يَرْقُبُونَ فِي مُؤْمِنٍ إِلَّا وِلَا ذِمَّةً
 وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُعْتَدُونَ



11. But if they repent and establish prayer and give the poor-due, then they are your brothers in religion. And We detail

فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ
 وَآتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي
 الدِّينِ وَنُفِصِلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ

the verses for a people
who have knowledge.*14



*14 Here too, it has explicitly been stated that those who repent will not become your brethren in faith without the observance of Salat and Zakat.

“Then they are your brothers in religion”: This means that if they fulfill those conditions, then not only shall their lives and properties become unlawful for you but also they shall enjoy equal rights with you in the Islamic community. There shall be no distinction between them and the other Muslims in regard to social, cultural, legal and political rights, and nothing will stand in their way to the progress for which they are otherwise qualified.

12. And if they break their pledges after their treaty (with you) and assail in (the matter of) your religion, then fight the leaders of disbelief. Indeed, there are no oaths (sacred) to them, so that they might cease.*15

وَإِنْ نَكَثُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ
عَهْدِهِمْ وَطَعَنُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ
فَقَاتِلُوا أِيمَةَ الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَأَنْ
أَيْمَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْتَهُونَ



*15 In the context, the words, oaths, and compacts mean the compact of the acceptance of Islam. Therefore, the question of making a new compact with them does not arise. As regards the old pacts, they had already broken all of them. It is on account of this that the declaration of immunity (from obligations) by Allah and His Messenger

(peace be upon him) has been clearly made. It has also been stated that such people are not worthy of any treaty and they can only be let off if they repent of their disbelief and shirk and establish Salat and pay Zakat dues. This verse states clearly how the renegades should be treated. As a matter of fact, this verse forestalled the mischief of apostasy that broke out a year and a half after its revelation and Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) followed the guidance given in this verse to crush it.

13. Would you not fight^{*16} a people who have violated their oaths, and intended to expel the Messenger, and they begun (the attack upon) you the first time. Do you fear them. But Allah has more right that you should fear Him, if you are believers.

أَلَا تَقْتُلُونَ قَوْمًا نَكَثُوا
 أَيْمَانَهُمْ وَهَمُّوا بِإِخْرَاجِ
 الرَّسُولِ وَهُمْ بَدَءُوكُمْ أَوَّلَ
 مَرَّةٍ أَتَخْشَوْنَهُمْ فَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ
 تَخْشَوْهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

***16** In this passage the addressees are the Muslims. They have been urged to fight perseveringly in the Way of Allah, without paying the least heed to their ties of blood and relationship and to their worldly interests. In order to understand fully the spirit of this passage, the reader should keep in view the state of affairs at the time, when the abrogation of the treaties was declared. Though Islam was reigning supreme in the greater part of Arabia and there was no greater power to challenge its supremacy, still superficial observers saw a number of dangers in the extreme step which was being taken at that time.

First, it was feared that the abrogating of the treaties with all the mushrik clans at one and the same time, and debarring them from Hajj and changing the guardianship of the Kaabah and abolishing all the rituals of ignorance, would so incite the mushriks and the hypocrites and kindle such fire of enmity that they would be ready to shed the last drop of their blood for safeguarding their interests and prejudices.

Secondly, it was feared that the mushriks would be greatly enraged by this declaration which granted freedom of movement to the Muslims to perform Hajj, whereas it forbade the non-Muslims. Obviously this would also affect adversely their economic condition, for Hajj played a very important part in the economic life of Arabia during that period of her history.

Lastly, it was feared that this would put to a hard trial those people who had embraced Islam recently after the peace treaty of Hudaibiyah and the conquest of Makkah. For many of their kith and kin were still mushriks. Some of whom had their interests closely bound up with those offices of ignorance which were abolished. Now it was obvious that the total war against the mushriks demanded that these new Muslims should not only kill their own near and dear ones but should also themselves abolish those ancient offices and distinctions which they had enjoyed for centuries.

Though, it is true that none of these dangers took any practical shape, there were good reasons for these apprehensions, for none could foresee the trends of events

at the time of the abrogation of the treaties. And the dangers were averted because these commandments had prepared them beforehand to meet them. More than that: this preparedness produced other good results. The delegates from the remnants of the mushriks, their chiefs and rulers began to visit Al-Madinah and take the oath of allegiance to Islam and obedience to the prophet (peace be upon him), who let them retain their old positions and offices. These things proved that if the Muslims had not been in a state of readiness to take immediate action for enforcing the terms of the declaration with the sword, the events which followed might have taken a different direction. Therefore it was the need of the hour that the Muslims should have been vehemently urged for Jihad, and their apprehensions removed. That is why it was being enjoined that they should not let anything hinder them from doing the will of Allah. And this is the theme of this discourse.

14. Fight them, Allah will punish them by your hands, and He will disgrace them, and will give you victory over them, and He will heal the breasts of a people who are believers.

قَاتِلُوهُمْ يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ
بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَتُخْزِهِمْ وَيَنْصُرْكُمْ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَيَشْفِ صُدُورَ قَوْمٍ
مُؤْمِنِينَ

15. And He will remove the anger of their (believers) hearts. And Allah turns in forgiveness^{*17} to whom He

وَيُذْهِبُ غَيْظَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَيَتُوبُ
اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ

wills. And Allah is All
Knowing, All Wise.



*17 This was a subtle reference to the possibility of what actually was going to happen afterwards. “And He will remove”: this was to remove the misunderstandings of the Muslims who apprehended a bloody war as a result of the declaration. They were told that it was also possible that some of the enemies might repent and embrace Islam. This was not made quite plain lest it should slacken the war preparations of the Muslims on one side and weaken the force of the warning to the mushriks on the other. The latter thing might have hindered the mushriks from giving a serious thought to the critical position they were in that finally led them to embrace Islam.

16. Do you think that you shall be left alone while Allah has not yet made evident those who strive among you. And they have not taken, besides Allah and His Messenger and the believers,^{*18} (other) intimates. And Allah is Informed of what you do.

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُتْرَكُوا وَلَمَّا
يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ
وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَا
رَسُولِهِ وَلَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلِيجَةً
وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

*18 The addressees in Ayat 16 were those Muslims who had recently embraced Islam. It means to tell them plainly: “Now that you have embraced Islam, you shall have to give a genuine proof by a trial that you have accepted it because you believe in its truth and not because it has become

supreme in the country by the exertions of the true believers. The trial is that you shall have to sacrifice your lives, wealth, and your near and dear ones for the sake of Allah and His Way. Then and only then, you will be regarded as true believers.

17. It is not for the idolaters that they maintain the mosques of Allah, bearing witness against themselves of disbelief.*¹⁹ As for such, their deeds have become worthless*²⁰ and in the Fire they will abide.

مَا كَانَ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يَعْمُرُوا
مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ شَاهِدِينَ عَلَيْهِ
أَنْفُسِهِمْ بِالْكَفْرِ أُولَئِكَ
حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ هُمْ
خَالِدُونَ



*¹⁹ This lays down the general principle for the guardianship of the places of worship that have been built exclusively for the worship of Allah. Obviously, those people who associate others with Allah in His essence, His rights and His powers cannot be the proper persons to be the guardians, the servants, the managers etc. of such sacred places. And when they themselves reject the invitations to Tauhid, and openly declare that they are not going to dedicate their worship and obedience exclusively to Allah, they automatically forfeit any right they had for the guardianship of such places of worship that had been built for the worship of Allah alone. Though the principle is of a general nature, it has been mentioned here with the particular object of removing the mushriks from the guardianship of the Kaabah and Masjid-i-Haram and

establishing permanently the guardianship of the worshipers of one God over them.

***20** “Their deeds have become worthless”: including the little real service they did to the house of Allah because they mixed with it shirk and other practices of ignorance. Their little good was destroyed by their far greater evils.

18. The mosques of Allah shall be maintained only by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and establish prayer and give the poor-due and do not fear except Allah. For is it expected that those will be of the (rightly) guided.

إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ
ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ
وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ
أُولَٰئِكَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا مِنَ
الْمُهْتَدِينَ



19. Have you made the providing of water to the pilgrims and the maintenance of AlMasjid-AlHaram as (equal to the deeds of) him who believes in Allah and the Last Day, and strives in the Way of Allah.^{*21} They are not equal in the sight of Allah. And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.

﴿ أَجَعَلْتُمْ سِقَايَةَ الْحَاجِّ وَعِمَارَةَ
الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ كَمَنْ ءَامَنَ
بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَجَاهِدَ فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَوُونَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴾



***21** This question has been posed to bring home the fact that the guardianship of a shrine or attendance at it or other religious acts that are done for show, and are exploited by worldly people to establish and maintain the show of their piety, have no value whatsoever in the sight of Allah. The real worth of a person with Allah is that he should be sincere in his beliefs and make sacrifices in the Way of Allah, no matter whether he enjoys or does not enjoy such distinctions or happens to descend or not from a family of saints. On the contrary, those people who lack these excellences have no value with Allah, no matter whether they be the descendants of saints or inherit the guardianship of shrines from a long line of saints, or perform some religious acts for show on special occasions. And it is not lawful in any way that the guardianship, etc. of sacred places and institutions should be left in the hands of these worthless people just because they happen to inhere such rights from their forefathers.

20. Those who have believed, and emigrated, and striven in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives are of much greater ranks with Allah. And it is those who are the successful.

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا
وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ
أَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ



21. Their Lord gives them good tidings of mercy from

يُبَشِّرُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنْهُ

Him, and good pleasure, and gardens for them wherein is everlasting delight.

وَرِضْوَانٍ وَجَنَّاتٍ لَهُمْ فِيهَا نَعِيمٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٢١﴾

22. Abiding therein forever. Indeed, Allah has with Him an immense reward.

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

23. O those (of you) who have believed, do not take your fathers and your brothers as allies if they love disbelief over belief. And whoever takes them for friends among you, then it is those who are the wrong doers.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا ءَابَاءَكُمْ وَإِخْوَانَكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنِ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْكُفْرَ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنكُمْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. Say: "If your fathers, and your sons, and your brothers, and your wives, and your kindred, and the wealth you have acquired, and merchandise for which you fear a decline, and dwellings which you desire are more beloved to you

قُلْ إِن كَانَ ءَابَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ

than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His Way, then wait until Allah brings His command to pass.*22 And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.”

إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا
حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا
يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

*22 That is: “The judgment will deprive them of the blessings of the true faith, and of the honor of bearing its standard and leading the world towards its guidance and bestow these on others”.

25. Truly, Allah has given you victory on many (battle) fields*23 and on the day of Huneyn, when you exulted in your multitude, but it did not avail you at all, and the earth, with its vastness, was straitened for you, then you turned back fleeing.

لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ
كَثِيرَةٍ وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ
أَعْجَبْتَكُمْ كَثَرْتُمْ فَلَمْ
تُغْنِ عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا وَضَاقَتْ
عَلَيْكُمْ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا
رَحَبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُمْ مُدْبِرِينَ

*23 This has been mentioned to allay the fears of those who were afraid of the consequences of the declaration of the abrogation of the treaties, as if to say, “Why are you afraid of war.” That Allah, Who helped you in far worse and

dangerous situations on so many occasions before this, is there even now to help you. Had this mission depended on your might, it could not have come out victorious in the hard trials at Makkah, nor in the battle of Badr when the odds were heavily against you. This is because Allah's power has been helping you, and past experiences have shown you how effective that power is. Rest assured that the same power will help you to succeed in your mission. The battle of Hunain had taken place in the valley of Hunain between Taaif and Makkah in the month of Shawwal A.H. 8, a year or so before the revelation of this discourse. This was the first battle in which the Muslim army consisted of 12,000 fighters and this far outnumbered the army of the disbelievers. But in spite of this the archers of the Hawazin clan wrought havoc among the Muslim army and put them to rout. The Prophet (peace be upon him) and a few of his bravest companions, however, firmly stood their ground and rallied the routed army, and ultimately won the victory. It was because of their perseverance that the army reassembled and the Muslims ultimately won the victory; otherwise they would have lost much more at Hunain than they had gained by the conquest of Makkah.

26. Then Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers, and sent down hosts (angles) whom you did not see, and punished those

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَىٰ
رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَأَنْزَلَ جُنُودًا لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا وَعَذَّبَ

who disbelieved. And such is the recompense of the disbelievers.

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ
الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

27. Then Allah will accept repentance after that for whom He wills,^{*24} And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Merciful.

ثُمَّ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ
عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ
رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٧﴾

***24** “Allah will accept repentance” refers to the large number of the disbelievers who embraced Islam after the victory at Hunain as a result of the kind and generous treatment they received from the Prophet (peace be upon him), in spite of their former antagonism. This was mentioned to allay the anxiety of those new Muslims who feared that, as a result of the declaration, all of their mushrik relatives would be put to death. (E.N. 16). They have been told to expect, in the light of the previous experiences, that the mushriks would be obliged to accept Islam, when they realize that neither any hope of the revival of the order of ignorance was left nor of any props to support it.

28. O those (of you) who have believed, the idolaters only are unclean. So let them not come near the AlMasjid-AlHaram^{*25} after this their

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّمَا
الْمُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ فَلَا يَقْرَبُوا
الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ بَعْدَ عَامِهِمْ

year. And if you fear poverty, Allah shall enrich you of His bounty if He wills. Indeed, Allah is Knower, All Wise.

هَذَا وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ عَيْلَةً فَسَوْفَ
يُغْنِيكُمْ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنْ شَاءَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ



***25** This prohibition was meant to root out all the vestiges of shirk and ignorance. For the mushriks were prohibited not only from the performance of Hajj and attendance at the AlMasjid-AlHaram but also from entering into its sacred precincts.

They are unclean in their creeds, in their morals, in their deeds, and in their ways of ignorance, and not in their physical bodies by themselves. That is the reason why they have been prohibited from entering the sacred precincts of the holy place.

This prohibition has been interpreted in different ways. Imam Abu Hanifah is of the view that it prohibits them only from the performance of Hajj and Umrah, and from the observance of the rites of ignorance in the holy precincts. But Imam Shafii is of the opinion that they have been forbidden even to enter the AlMasjid-AlHaram for any purpose whatsoever. Imam Malik is of the opinion that they are forbidden not only to enter AlMasjid-AlHaram but any mosque at all. It is, however, obvious that the last opinion is not correct, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself permitted mushriks to enter the Prophet's mosque at Al-Madinah.

29. Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the Last Day,^{*26} nor make unlawful that which Allah has made unlawful^{*27} and His messenger, and who do not acknowledge the religion of truth, among those who were given the Scripture, until they pay the tribute out of (their) hand and they are utterly subdued.^{*28}

قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا
يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ
وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ
الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى
يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَنْ يَدٍ وَهُمْ
صَاغِرُونَ



***26** Though the people of the Book professed to believe in Allah and the Hereafter, in fact they believed in neither. For only that person really believes in Allah who acknowledges Him as the only one God and the only one Lord, and does not associate with Him any other, whatsoever, in His Being, in His characteristics, in His rights and in His powers and authority. But according to this definition of shirk both the Christians and the Jews were guilty of shirk as has been made plain in the verses that follow: therefore their profession of belief in Allah was meaningless. Likewise they did not really believe in the Hereafter, in spite of the fact that they believed in resurrection. For it is not enough: one must also believe that on that Day absolute justice will be done on the basis of one's belief and actions. One should also believe that no ransom and no expiation and no spiritual relationships

with any saint shall be of any avail on that Day. It is absolutely meaningless to believe in the Hereafter without this. And the Jews and the Christians had polluted their faiths because they believed that such things would protect them against justice on that day.

***27** The second reason why Jihad should be waged against them is that they did not adopt the law sent down by Allah through His Messenger.

***28** This is the aim of Jihad with the Jews and the Christians and it is not to force them to become Muslims and adopt the Islamic way of life. They should be forced to pay jizyah in order to put an end to their independence and supremacy so that they should not remain rulers and sovereigns in the land. These powers should be wrested from them by the followers of the true faith, who should assume the sovereignty and lead others towards the right way, while they should become their subjects and pay jizyah. Jizyah is paid by those non-Muslims who live as zimmi (protégés) in an Islamic state, in exchange for the security and protection granted to them by it. This is also symbolical of the fact that they themselves agree to live in it as its subjects. This is the significance of “they pay the tribute out of (their) hand,” that is, “with full consent so that they willingly become the subjects of the believers, who perform the duty of the vicegerents of Allah on the earth.” At first this command applied only to the Jews and the Christians. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself extended it to the Zoroastrians also. After his death, his companions unanimously applied this rule to all the non-

Muslim nations outside Arabia.

This is jizyah of which the Muslims have been feeling apologetic during the last two centuries of their degeneration and there are still some people who continue to apologize for it. But the way of Allah is straight and clear and does not stand in need of any apology to the rebels against Allah. Instead of offering apologies on behalf of Islam for the measure that guarantees security of life, property and faith to those who choose to live under its protection, the Muslims should feel proud of such a humane law as that of jizyah. For it is obvious that the maximum freedom that can be allowed to those who do not adopt the Way of Allah but choose to tread the ways of error is that they should be tolerated to lead the life they like. That is why the Islamic state offers them protection, if they agree to live as its zimmi by paying jizyah, but it cannot allow that they should remain supreme rulers in any place and establish wrong ways and impose them on others. As this state of things inevitably produces chaos and disorder, it is the duty of the true Muslims to exert their utmost to bring to an end their wicked rule and bring them under a righteous order.

As regards the question, "What do the non-Muslims get in return for jizyah", it may suffice to say that it is the price of the freedom which the Islamic state allows them in following their erroneous ways, while living in the jurisdiction of Islam and enjoying its protection. The money thus collected is spent in maintaining the righteous administration that gives them the freedom and protects

their rights. This also serves as a yearly reminder to them that they have been deprived of the honor of paying Zakat in the Way of Allah, and forced to pay jizyah instead as a price of following the ways of error.

30. And the Jews say: “Ezra is the son of Allah,”^{*29} and the Christians say: “The Messiah is the son of Allah.” That is their saying with their mouths. They imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before.^{*30} May Allah destroy them, how are they deluded (from the truth).

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللَّهِ
 وَقَالَتِ النَّصْرَى الْمَسِيحُ
 ابْنُ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُمْ
 بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ يُضَاهُونَ قَوْلَ
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ قَتَلَهُمُ
 اللَّهُ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

***29** Uzair (Ezra) lived during the period around 450 B.C. The Jews regarded him with great reverence as the revivalist of their Scriptures which had been lost during their captivity in Babylon after the death of prophet Solomon. So much so that they had lost all the knowledge of their law, their traditions and of Hebrew, their national language. Then it was Ezra who re-wrote the Old Testament and revived the law. That is why they used very exaggerated language in his reverence which misled some of the Jewish sects to make him ‘the son of God’. The Quran, however, does not assert that all the Jews were unanimous in declaring Ezra as the son of God. What it intends to say is that the perversion in the articles of faith of the Jews concerning Allah had degenerated to such an

extent that there were some amongst them who considered Ezra as the son of God.

***30** “Those who disbelieved before” were the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Persians, etc. The Jews and the Christians were so influenced by their philosophies, their superstitions and fancies that they also invented erroneous creeds like theirs. (See E.N. 101 of Al-Maidah).

31. They have taken their rabbis and their monks as lords other than Allah,^{*31} and the Messiah son of Mary. And they were not commanded except to worship one God. There is no god except Him. Be He glorified from all that they ascribe as partners (with Him).

أَتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهَبَانَهُمْ
أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا
أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا
لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا
يُشْرِكُونَ

***31** “They have taken their rabbis and monks as their lords”. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself explained its true significance. According to a tradition, when Adi bin Hatim (may Allah be pleased with him), who was formerly a Christian, came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) with the intention of understanding Islam, he asked several questions in order to remove his doubts. One of these was: “This verse accuses us of taking our scholars and monks as our lords. What is its real meaning. For we do not take them as our lords.”

As a reply to this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) put him a counter question: “Is it not a fact that you accept as unlawful what they declare to be unlawful, and lawful what they declare to be lawful?” Adi confessed, “Yes, it is so.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, “This amounts to making them your lords.” Incidentally, this tradition shows that those who themselves set limits to the lawful and the unlawful without the authority of Allah’s Book, assume for themselves the rank of godhead, and those who acknowledge their right of making laws take them as their lords.

It should be noted that they have been charged with (a) attributing sons to Allah, and (b) giving the right of making laws to others than Allah. These are to prove that their claim that they believed in Allah is false, even though they should believe in His existence. But such a wrong conception of Allah makes their belief in Allah meaningless.

32. They want to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah refuses except that His light should be perfected, even though the disbelievers may dislike.

يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يُتِمَّ نُورَهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ



33. He it is who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ

may cause it to prevail over all religions,^{*32} even though the idolaters may dislike.

عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ
المُشْرِكُونَ



***32** The Arabic word *ad-din* has been translated into 'ways'. For the word *deen*, as has already been explained in E.N. 204, Al-Baqarah, is used for the 'way of life' or the 'system of life', which is followed in obedience to the supreme authority.

Now let us try to understand the significance of this verse. The object of the mission of the Messenger is to make the guidance and the right way he has brought from Allah dominant over all the other ways and systems of life. In other words, the Messenger is not sent to allow Allah's Way to remain subordinate to other ways in order to enjoy concessions from them. He is sent by the Sovereign of the earth and the heavens to make His Way dominant over all other ways. And if a wrong way is at all allowed to remain on the earth, it should be tolerated only under its own protection by the payment of *jizyah* under the limits conferred by the divine system as in the cast of the system of life of the *zimmis* who pay *jizyah*.

34. O those (of you) who believe, indeed many of the (Jewish) rabbis and the (Christian) monks devour the wealth of mankind in falsehood, and hinder (people) from the

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّ
كثِيرًا مِّنَ الْأَحْبَارِ
وَالرُّهْبَانِ لَيَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ
بِالبَطْلِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنِ

Way of Allah.*³³ And those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in the Way of Allah, so give them tidings of a painful punishment.

سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ
يَكْتُمُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا
يُنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ
بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

***33** These religious leaders are guilty of two sins. First, they devour the wealth of the common people by selling false decrees, and by taking bribes, gifts and presents on different pretexts. They invent religious regulations and rituals as tempt people to buy their salvations and fortunes in life from them and make deaths and marriages dependent on the payment of due price to these monopolists of Paradise. To add to this another sin, they debar the people from the Way of Allah by involving them into different sorts of deviations and by obstructing the way of every righteous mission with the obstacles of learned doubts and pious suspicions.

35. On the day when heat will be produced out of it (wealth) in the fire of Hell, then with it will be branded their foreheads, and their flanks, and their backs. This is that which you hoarded for yourselves. So taste what you used to hoard.

يَوْمَ يُحْمَىٰ عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ
فَتُكْوَىٰ بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ
وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَظُهُورُهُمْ هَذَا مَا
كَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا مَا
كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ

36. Indeed, the number of the months with Allah is twelve months by Allah's ordinance (from) the day He created the heavens and the earth,^{*34} of them four are sacred. That is the right religion. So do not wrong yourselves in them.^{*35} And fight against the idolaters collectively as they fight against you collectively.^{*36}

And know that Allah is with those who are righteous.

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا
عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ
خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرْمٌ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ
الْقَيِّمُ فَلَا تَظْلِمُوا فِيهِنَّ
أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَقَتِلُوا
الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَافَّةً كَمَا
يُقْتَلُونَكُمْ كَافَّةً وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ
اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ



***34** This means that ever since Allah created the sun, the moon and the earth, the new moon takes place only once in a month; thus the year has always been of twelve months. This has been mentioned to refute the practice of nasi (Ayat 37) whereby the pagan Arabs increased the number of the months of a year to 13 or 14 to enable them to interpose in the calendar the forbidden month which had been made lawful by them.

***35** "So do not wrong yourselves in them." Do not let go waste the good things for which fighting has been made unlawful during these months by creating disorder in them that will ultimately be harmful to you also. The four

forbidden months are Zil-Qadah, Zil-Hajjah and Muharram for Hajj and Rajab for Umrah.

*36 That is, "If the mushriks do not desist from fighting during these months, you should also fight them and present a united front against them, just as they put up a united front against you". This verse has been explained by Ayat 194 of Al-Baqarah.

37. Postponing (of a sacred month) is only an addition in disbelief whereby those who disbelieve are misled. They make it lawful (one) year and make it unlawful (another) year, that they may adjust the number (of months) that is made unlawful by Allah. So that make lawful that which Allah has made unlawful.^{*37} Made pleasing to them is the evil of their deeds. And Allah does not guide the people who disbelieve.

إِنَّمَا النَّسِيءُ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ
يُضِلُّ بِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
تُحِلُّونَهُ عَامًا وَتُحَرِّمُونَهُ عَامًا
لِيُؤَاطِعُوا عِدَّةَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ
فِيحِلُّوا مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ زِينًا
لَهُمْ سُوءُ أَعْمَالِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا
يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

*37 The pagan Arabs practiced nasi in two ways. Whenever it suited them, they would declare a prohibited month to be an ordinary month in which fighting, robbery and murder in retaliation were lawful for them. Then they would declare an ordinary month to be a prohibited month instead of this month in order to make up for the deficiency

caused in the number of the prohibited months.

The other way of nasi was the addition of a month in order to harmonize the lunar with the solar year so that the Hajj should always fall in the same season and they should be saved from the bother and inconvenience that are experienced by its observance according to the lunar year. In this way Hajj was observed for 36 years on dates other than the actual dates. Then in the thirty seventh year it was again observed on the 9th and 10th of Zil-Hajjah, as they should have actually fallen according to the lunar calendar. It so happened that on the occasion when the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed Hajja-tul-Widaa (his last Hajj). these dates by rotation coincided with the actual dates of Hajj according to the lunar calendar. So he declared during the course of his historic address at Arafat: "This year the dates of Hajj have again occurred exactly at their natural and proper time after a long period of circulation." Accordingly, since that last Hajj of A.H. 9, it is being observed up to this day according to the correct dates of the lunar year.

By making nasi unlawful and forbidding it, the law declared that the two objects for which it was practiced were also sinful. First, they not only made lawful what Allah had made unlawful but also tried to practice deception on Allah by the seeming observance of the law. As regards the second object of making the season of Hajj fixed permanently according to the solar calendar, this too, was in fact the worst kind of rebellion against the divine law, although it appeared to be a harmless thing done for

public good. But it defeated the very object of the divine law which prescribed the lunar calendar instead of the solar calendar for the observance of obligatory duties. Allah did this to ensure many good things for the Muslims, one of which is that His servants should be so trained as to obey His commandments at all times of the year and under all circumstances. For instance, the month of Ramadan circulates among all the seasons of the year and the Muslims get used to obeying His commandments whether it be summer or winter, dry or rainy season. This gives them that excellent moral training which is the real object of all the obligatory duties imposed by the divine law. Likewise, the dates of Hajj according to the lunar calendar, fall during different seasons: therefore the servants of Allah have to travel during all the seasons, favorable and unfavorable. Thus they come out successful in the divine test under all the circumstances and learn to be steadfast in their obedience.

It is obvious that such a training will make them stand good in many other fields in which one has to fight the battle for the truth.

Now it would have become quite clear why nasi was made unlawful and forbidden. It was designed to fix the season of Hajj in order to suit their own conveniences though it defeated the divine purpose of Hajj and of the forbidden months. It meant that they had rebelled against Allah and become independent of Him; this is kufr. Besides this, Islam is a universal religion and for all human beings. It is obvious that the periods of fasting and performing Hajj

cannot satisfy all if they be fixed in accordance with the months of the solar year. For if they are performed in fixed months according to the solar year, the one and the same month will not equally suit all for the simple reason that it will fall during the same seasons in different places, summer or winter or very hot or very cold or rainy or dry or harvesting or sowing, year after year.

In this connection it may also be kept in view that the proclamation about the prohibition of nasi was made on the occasion of Hajj in A.H. 9 and next year the Hajj was performed on right dates which were in accordance with the lunar year. Since that time Hajj is being performed according to exact dates.

38. O those ^{*38} (of you) who believe, what is (the matter) with you, when it is said to you, march forth in the Way of Allah, you adhere heavily to the earth. Do you take pleasure in the life of the world rather than the Hereafter. So what is the enjoyment of the life of this world as compared with the Hereafter except a little. ^{*39}

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ
 إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ أَنْفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ
 اللَّهِ أَتَأْقَلْتُمْ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ
 أَرْضَيْتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ
 الْآخِرَةِ ۚ فَمَا مَتَّعُ الْحَيَاةِ
 الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ



***38** From here begins the discourse (Ayats 38-72) which was sent down at the time when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was engaged in making preparations for the campaign to Tabuk.

***39** “The enjoyment of the life of this world” may imply two meanings. First: “When you will find that the life in the Hereafter is eternal and see that the good things and the provisions of enjoyment are countless, you will realize that the potential and the actual enjoyments of the temporary life of this world were nothing as compared with the blessings of that great kingdom. At that time you will regret why you deprived yourselves of this everlasting happiness and bliss for the sake of a very little and short lived enjoyments of the mortal life of this world.” Second: “The goods of this worldly life are of no value in the Hereafter, howsoever abundant they might be. You shall have to give up each and everything as soon as you breathe your last. For nothing of this world can go with you to the next world. Of course, you will get credit for what you sacrificed for the pleasure and love of Allah, and love of Islam.”

39. If you do not go forth, He will punish you with a painful punishment,^{*40} and He will replace you by people other than you,^{*41} and you will not harm Him at all. And Allah is Powerful over all things.

إِلَّا تَنْفِرُوا يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا
أَلِيمًا وَيَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ
وَلَا تَضُرُّهُ شَيْئًا ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

***40** A general rule of the Islamic conduct has been derived from, “If you do not go forth, He will punish you with a painful punishment.” When the Muslims are commanded to go to Jihad by a public proclamation from their leader, it

becomes an obligatory duty for those who are called upon to do Jihad, whether they belong to any particular group or region. So much so that the faith of those who do not go for Jihad without a genuine excuse becomes doubtful. But even in cases where the Muslims are called upon to go forth for Jihad and there is no command for the compulsory enrollment of every able-bodied Muslim of a particular group or region, it is a religious duty (though not obligatory), and it shall be considered to have been performed even if only some Muslims go forth for it.

***41** That is, “Allah’s work does not depend on you and will be accomplished only if you do it. It is Allah’s grace and bounty that He is affording you the golden opportunity of serving the cause of His Way. Therefore if you miss this opportunity because of any foolish assumption, Allah will raise another people and bestow on them the opportunity and capability of doing His work, and you will be losers”.

40. If you do not help him (Muhammad), then Allah did indeed help him when those who disbelieved drove him out (of Makkah). The second of two, when they two were in the cave, when he (Muhammad) said to his companion: “Do not grieve, indeed Allah is with us.”^{*42} Then Allah sent down His tranquility upon him and

إِلَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ
أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِيًا
أَتَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ إِذْ
يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ مَعَنَا فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَمْ تَرَوْهَا

strengthened him with hosts which you did not see. And made the word of those who disbelieved the lowermost, and Allah's Word - that was the uppermost. And Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.

وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَىٰ ۗ وَكَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ
هِيَ الْعُلْيَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ



*42 This refers to the occasion when the disbelievers had decided to assassinate the Prophet (peace be upon him), and the very night, fixed for his assassination, he had left Makkah for Al-Madinah. By that time most of the Muslims had migrated to Al-Madinah in twos and threes and only a few helpless ones had remained behind in Makkah. As he was sure that he would be pursued, he took only Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) with him and went southward instead of following the northern route to Al-Madinah and remained hidden in the Thaur cave for three days. In the meantime the blood thirsty enemies had begun to make a thorough search for him all around Makkah and some of them reached the very mouth of the cave where he was hidden. On this critical occasion Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) naturally felt alarmed lest they should peep into the cave, and see them. But the Prophet (peace be upon him) remained as calm as before and reassured his companion, saying, "Do not grieve, indeed Allah is with us."

41. Go forth, light-armed and heavy-armed,*43

أَنْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا

and strive with your wealth and your lives in the Way of Allah. That is better for you if you did know.

بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ ذَالِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
تَعْلَمُونَ



***43** The words, “light-armed and heavy-armed” have a very comprehensive meaning: when it is enjoined to march forth for Jihad, you must go forth anyhow, whether you like it or not: whether you are in a state of prosperity or indigence, whether you are well-equipped or ill-equipped: whether the circumstances are favorable or adverse: whether you are young and healthy or old and weak.

42. If it had been a near adventure and an easy journey, they would have followed you, but the distance seemed too far for them.^{*44} And they will swear by Allah (saying): “If we had been able, we would have gone out with you.” Destroying their own selves. And Allah knows, indeed they are liars.

لَوْ كَانَ عَرَضًا قَرِيبًا وَسَفَرًا
قَاصِدًا لَّاتَّبَعُوكَ وَلَكِنْ بَعُدَتْ
عَلَيْهِمُ الشُّقَّةُ وَسَيَحْلِفُونَ
بِاللَّهِ لَوْ أَسْتَطَعْنَا لَخَرَجْنَا مَعَكُمْ
مُيْلِكُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُمْ
لَكَاذِبُونَ



***44** They felt the journey to Tabuk to be hard because they had to fight with the army of the great and powerful Roman Empire: because they had to journey in the scorching heat of the summer season of the desert: because

there was a famine in the country and the new harvest on which they had pinned their hopes was ready for reaping.

43. May Allah forgive you (O Muhammad), why did you grant them permission, until became manifest to you those who told the truth, and you had known the liars.^{*45}

عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْكَ لِمَ أَذِنْتَ لَهُمْ
حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكَ الَّذِينَ
صَدَقُوا وَتَعْلَمَ الْكٰذِبِينَ



*45 Allah did not approve of the exemption which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had granted to the hypocrites who had put forward lame excuses. Though he knew it well that they were inventing false excuses, he gave them leave to stay behind because of his inherent kindness. But Allah warned him that such a leniency was not well placed as he gave them an opportunity of hiding their hypocrisy. Had they remained behind without getting an exemption, the false profession of their faith would have been exposed.

44. Those who believe in Allah and the Last Day would not ask your permission to be exempted from fighting with their wealth and their lives. And Allah is Aware of those who are righteous.

لَا يَسْتَعْذِرُكَ الَّذِينَ
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ
وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ



45. Only those would ask permission of you, who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, and whose hearts are in doubt. So they, in their doubt, are hesitating.*46

إِنَّمَا يَسْتَعِذُّكَ الَّذِينَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَأَرْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ
يَتَرَدَّدُونَ



*46 This verse shows clearly that the conflict between Islam and kufr is the criterion to distinguish between a true believer and a hypocrite. The one who supports Islam in this conflict with the whole of his heart and expends all of his energies and resources in order to make it victorious and does not hesitate in the least to make any sacrifices for this purpose, is a true believer. On the contrary, the one who hesitates to support Islam in this conflict and refrains from making sacrifices in its way, when he confronts the threat of the victory of kufr, is a hypocrite, for such an attitude is itself a proof of the fact that there is no faith in his heart.

46. And if they had intended to go forth, they would have certainly made for it some preparation, but Allah disliked their being sent,*47 so He made them lag behind, and it was said: “Sit among those who sit (at home).”

﴿ وَلَوْ أَرَادُوا الْخُرُوجَ لَأَعَدُّوا
لَهُ عُدَّةً وَلَكِنْ كَرِهَ اللَّهُ
أَنْبِعَانَهُمْ فَثَبَّطَهُمْ وَقِيلَ اقْعُدُوا
مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ ﴾



*47 Allah held them back for He did not like that they

should join Jihad unwillingly without any sincere intention for it. As they had no mind to make sacrifices to exalt the cause of Islam, and, therefore, would have taken part in it half-heartedly to escape the taunts of the Muslims or to create mischief. This would have resulted in a greater evil, as has been stated explicitly in the next verse 48.

47. If they had gone out among you, they would not have added to you except trouble, and they would have hurried about in your midst, seeking to cause sedition among you. And among you are avid listeners to them. And Allah is Aware of the wrong doers.

لَوْ خَرَجُوا فِيكُمْ مَا زَادُوكُمْ إِلَّا
خَبَالًا وَلَا أَوْضَعُوا خِلَالَكُمْ
يَبْغُونَكُمْ الْأَفْتِنَةَ وَفِيكُمْ
سَمَّعُونَ لَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

48. Indeed, they had desired sedition before, and had upset matters for you, until the truth came and the decree of Allah became manifest though they were averse.

لَقَدْ أبتَغَوْا الْأَفْتِنَةَ مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَقَلَّبُوا لَكَ الْأُمُورَ حَتَّى جَاءَ
الْحَقُّ وَظَهَرَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَهُمْ
كَرْهُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

49. And among them is he who says: “Grant me permission and do not put me into trial.”^{*48} Surely, they have fallen into

وَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَقُولُ أُنْذِنْ لِي وَلَا
تَفْتِنِّي إِلَّا فِي الْأَفْتِنَةِ سَقَطُوا
وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ

trial.*⁴⁹ And indeed, Hell
is surrounding the
disbelievers.*⁵⁰

بِالْكَافِرِينَ

*48 Some of the hypocrites, who were requesting the Prophet (peace be upon him) to give them leave to stay behind on one pretext or the other, were so impudent that they were inventing excuses of a religious or moral nature for refraining from Jihad in the Way of Allah. One of these was Jad-bin-Qais, who, according to traditions came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said. "I am a lover of beauty and my people know that I am very weak in regard to women: therefore I am afraid to go forth lest the beauty of the Roman women should beguile me into sin. Therefore, "do not put me into trial."

*49 Though they wanted exemption, they had already fallen as a prey to the temptations of telling lies, of double dealings and hypocrisy. They deluded themselves that they would be considered pious people, if they would put forward the fear of temptations to avoid Jihad, when, in fact; they had already fallen into the greatest possible temptation of refraining from Jihad in the conflict between Islam and kufr.

*50 That is, "Such a show of piety has not taken them away from Hell; nay, on the other hand, the same thing has caused them to be entangled in the clutches of Hell."

50. If good befalls you
(O Muhammad), it grieves
them. And if a calamity
strikes you, they say: "We

إِنْ تُصِيبَكَ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ
وَإِنْ تُصِيبَكَ مُصِيبَةٌ يَقُولُوا

indeed took our precaution before hand, and they turn away while they are rejoicing.

قَدْ أَخَذْنَا أَمْرَنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَيَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ فَرِحُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

51. Say: “Never shall we be struck except what Allah has decreed for us. He is our protector. And upon Allah let believers put their trust.”*51

قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ
اللَّهُ لَنَا هُوَ مَوْلَانَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ
فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

***51** In this passage a demarcation has been made between the attitudes of a man of the world and of a man of God. Whatever the man of the world does, he does it to please his own self. He exults if he attains some worldly ends but feels utterly dejected if he fails to attain them. Besides, he depends entirely on his material resources for his success and feels encouraged if these are favorable, but loses heart if these are unfavorable.

In contrast to the man of the world, whatever the man of God does, he does it to please Him and trusts in Him and not in his own powers nor in material resources. Therefore he is neither exultant over his success in the cause of Allah, nor loses heart by failure, for he believes that it is the will of God that is working in both the cases. Therefore he is neither disheartened by disasters nor is filled with conceit by successes. This is because he believes that both prosperity and adversity are from Allah and are nothing but a trial from Him. Therefore his only worry is to do his best to come out successful in His test. Besides, as there are

no worldly ends before him, he does not measure his success or failure by the achievement or failure of his ends. On the other hand, the only object before him is to sacrifice his life and wealth in the Way of Allah, and he measures the success or failure of his efforts by the standard he achieves in the performance of this duty. Therefore if he is satisfied that he has done his best to perform this duty, he believes that he has come out successful by the grace of God, though he might not have been able to accomplish anything from the worldly point of view; for he believes that his Allah in whose cause he has expended his life and wealth will not let go waste the reward of his efforts. As he does not depend on the material resources only, he is neither grieved if they are unfavorable, nor feels exultant when these are favorable. His entire trust is in God who is the controller of all the resources; therefore he goes on doing his duty even under the most unfavorable circumstances with the same courage and perseverance that is shown by the worldly people unfavorable circumstances alone. That is why Allah asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) to say to the hypocrites, “There is a basic difference between you and us in regard to the conduct of affairs. We believe that both the good and the bad are from Allah: therefore the apparent result does not make us happy or sad. Moreover, we depend on Allah in our affairs and you depend on material resources: so we are content and happy in all circumstances.”

52. Say: “Do you await
for us (anything) except

قُلْ هَلْ تَرَبَّصُونَ بِنَا إِلاَّ

one of the two best things (martyrdom or victory),^{*52} while we await for you that Allah will afflict you with a punishment from Himself or at our hands. So wait, indeed we along with you are waiting.”

إِحْدَى الْحُسَيْنَيْنِ وَنَحْنُ
نَتَرَبَّصُ بِكُمْ أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمُ اللَّهُ
بِعَذَابٍ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ أَوْ
بِأَيْدِينَا فَتَرَبَّصُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ
مُتَرَبِّصُونَ

***52** This is the answer to those who, as usual, were not taking any part in the conflict between Islam and kufr, but were very wisely watching it from a distance to see whether the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions would return victorious from Tabuk or would be totally destroyed by the powerful Roman army. They were told that either of the two results, they were awaiting, would be good for the Muslims. For it was obvious that it would be a good thing if they won victory. But even if they were killed in the Way of Allah, it would be a success from their point of view, though not in the sight of the world, as the Muslims' standard of measurement is different from that of the hypocrites and the like. A believer considers it his success if he sacrifices his life and wealth in the Way of Allah, irrespective of whether he succeeds in conquering some country, or in establishing a government or not. According to him the criterion of success or failure is whether he has extended or not all the powers of his body and soul, his head and his heart to elevate the word of Allah, though from the worldly point of view the result of

his efforts might be nothing at all.

53. Say: “Spend willingly or unwillingly,^{*53} never will it be accepted from you. Indeed, you are disobedient people.”

قُلْ أَنْفِقُوا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا لَنْ
يُتَقَبَّلَ مِنْكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ
قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

***53** This ayat is a sharp retort to those hypocrites who desired exemption froth Jihad but, at the same time, wanted to make some monetary contributions in order to avoid the exposure of their hypocrisy, They said, “Please grant us leave from military service because we are unable to do this, but we are ready to make monetary contributions towards it.” To this Allah retorted, saying, “Whatever you may contribute, it shall not be accepted.”

54. And nothing prevents, from being accepted from them their contributions, except that they disbelieved in Allah and in His Messenger, and they do not come to the prayer except they are lazy, and they do not spend except they are unwilling.

وَمَا مَنَعَهُمْ أَنْ تُقَبَّلَ مِنْهُمْ
نَفَقَتُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا
بِاللَّهِ وَبِرِسُولِهِ وَلَا يَأْتُونَ
الصَّلَاةَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كُسَالَى وَلَا
يُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كَرِهُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

55. So let not amaze you (O Muhammad), their wealth, nor their children. Allah only intends to punish them

فَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا
أَوْلَادُهُمْ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ

through them in the life of the world,^{*54} and that their souls shall pass away while they are disbelievers.^{*55}

لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَتَرْهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ



***54** “Allah only intends to punish them through them in the life of the world”, because of their great love for their children and wealth as these misled them to adopt the hypocritical attitude which, in turn, degraded them in the Muslim society. Consequently, in the Islamic system they would lose the respect, tire reputation and the prestige they enjoyed in the pre-Islamic society. On the contrary, even the Muslim slaves and the sons of slaves, the farmers and the shepherds, who proved the sincerity of their faith would win honor in the new system, and the big hereditary chiefs, who refrained from this because of their love of the world, would lose their fame, honor and prestige.

In order to illustrate the above, we cite an incident that happened during the caliphate of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him). Once some big chiefs of the Quraish including Suhail-bin-Amr and Harith-bin-Hisham, went to see caliph Umar and took their seats near him. Soon after this some humble people from among the Muhajirin and the Ansar came there. The caliph asked those chiefs to make room for them, and seated these humble people near his own seat. This went on for some time till these chiefs reached the remotest corner in the assembly. When they came out, Harith-bin-Hisham said to his companions, “You have noticed what a humiliating treatment has been meted

out to us today!” Suhail-bin-Amr replied, “It is no fault of Umar but it is our own fault. When we were invited to Islam, we turned away from it, but these humble people accepted it and made sacrifices for it.” Then both of them returned to the meeting and said, “Today we have noticed your treatment and we feel that it is all due to our own shortcomings, but tell us if there is a way for us to make atonements for our past failures”. The caliph did not give any reply but merely pointed towards the Roman territory, which meant that the only way of regaining their prestige was to expend their lives and wealth in doing Jihad there.

***55** “Their souls shall pass away while they are disbelievers” because of their hypocrisy, which would not let them attain sincere faith till they die. Thus after ruining their moral and spiritual lives in this world, they would leave it in the state of unbelief, which will ruin their lives in the Hereafter in a far worse way.

56. And they swear by Allah that they are from among you, while they are not of you, but they are a people who are afraid.

وَتَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُمْ لَمِنْكُمْ
وَمَا هُمْ مِنْكُمْ وَلَكِنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ
يَفْرُقُونَ



57. If they could find a refuge, or caves, or a place to enter (and hide), they would turn to it while they run heedlessly. ^{*56}

لَوْ يَجِدُونَ مَلْجَأًا أَوْ مَغْرَاتٍ
أَوْ مَدَّخَلًا لَوَلَّوْا إِلَيْهِ وَهُمْ
يَجْمَحُونَ



***56** This was the condition of the hypocrites of Al-Madinah, the majority of whom were rich and old. We find from a list of the hypocrites, cited by Ibn-Kathir in Al-Badayah-wan-Nihayah, that only one of them was young and none was poor. These people had large properties and flourishing businesses in Al-Madinah. They were worldly-wise and their wide experience had taught them expediency, but their sense of self-interest had put them into a dilemma. When Islam reached Al-Madinah and a large majority of the population embraced it sincerely and enthusiastically, they found themselves in a very perplexing situation. They could not reject it outright for the majority of their own people, nay, their own sons and daughters, were filled with enthusiasm for Islam. If they had remained unbelievers, they would have lost their high position, their prestige and reputation and run the risk of a rebellion by the Muslims of their own household. On the other hand, if they sincerely embraced Islam, they would incur the danger of war, not only with the whole of Arabia but also with the adjoining nations and empires. Above all, self-interest had so blinded them that, in resolving the dilemma, they would not consider the problem from the point of view of truth and righteousness which by themselves are worthy of every sacrifice. Therefore they decided that the best thing for them was to profess Islam outwardly in order to make their positions, properties and businesses secure, but to adopt a hypocritical attitude towards it so that they might be able to avoid the losses and perils inherent in the sincere acceptance of Islam.

This verse 57 depicts the dilemma of the hypocrites, as if to say, “In reality these people are not Muslims, though they swear that they are Muslims like you; they profess Islam simply because they are afraid of losses they might incur, if they reject it outright. Then they dare not stay at Al-Madinah as non-Muslims for they would lose the high positions they enjoyed and might even have to cut off their connection with their wives and children; and if they decided to emigrate from Al-Madinah, they would have to abandon their properties and business. But they are not prepared for these sacrifices for they have no sincere attachment even to kufr. Therefore they are compelled against their beliefs by the force of circumstances to remain in Al-Madinah: they offer their Salat but regard this as forced labor: they pay the Zakat dues but as a penalty, for they are in their hearts averse to these things. To add to their calamities they are asked every now and then to make sacrifices of their lives and their wealth and to go forth for Jihad and to fight with one enemy or the other. They are so much afraid of these calamities that, in order to escape from them, they would run in frantic haste to take refuge in any hole, if they hoped that it would provide immunity against these calamities.

58. And among them are some who accuse you (O Muhammad) in the matter of the (distribution of) charities. So if they are given thereof, they are pleased, but

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَلْمِزُكَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ
فَإِنْ أُعْطُوا مِنْهَا رَضُوا وَإِنْ لَمْ
يُعْطُوا مِنْهَا إِذَا هُمْ

if they are not given thereof,
behold, they are enraged.*57



*57 The people referred to were the hypocrites, who felt depressed on every occasion of the distribution of the Zakat collections, for they thought that they were not being given their due share. Then they would taunt the Prophet (peace be upon him) with making unfair distributions. This happened when the payment of Zakat was made an obligatory duty on all those Muslims whose possessions exceeded the prescribed limits. They were required to contribute from their agricultural products, animals, commercial commodities, minerals dug out of mines and the gold and silver they possessed, at different rates, varying from 2.5% to 20%, and all these were collected and spent in a systematic way from a central place.

As a result of this so much wealth flowed into the hands of a single person, the Prophet (peace be upon him), that it had no parallel in the whole territory of Arabia. Naturally the materialists looked at these things with greedy eyes and wanted to grab as much as possible out of this wealth. But their greed could not be satisfied, for the Prophet (peace be upon him), who had made the use of Zakat fund unlawful for his own person and for his own relatives, could not be expected to give anything out of it to anyone who did not deserve it. It is thus obvious that they found fault with the Prophet (peace be upon him) not because he was unfair in the distribution of the Zakat collections but because he did not allow the hypocrites to grab anything from these without any right to them. They, however, very cunningly

hid their real grievance, and accused the Prophet (peace be upon him) of showing partiality and injustice in the distribution of the Zakat collection.

59. And if they had been content^{*58} with what Allah and His Messenger had given them, and had said: “Sufficient is Allah for us. Allah will give us of His bounty,^{*59} and (also) His Messenger. Indeed to Allah we are suppliants.”^{*60}

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوا مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ
سَيُوتِينَا اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
وَرَسُولُهُ إِنَّا إِلَى اللَّهِ رَاغِبُونَ



***58** That is, it would have been much better for them if they had been content with their share of the spoils which the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave them and what they earned by the grace of Allah and with the prosperity Allah had bestowed on them.

***59** It would have been good for them to adopt this attitude: “Sufficient is Allah for us,” for they ought to have known that they would receive their due shares besides the Zakat collections out of the wealth that would come to the state treasury, just as they were receiving their shares previously.

***60** “Indeed to Allah we are suppliants” means we give our attention to Allah and His grace and not to the world and its worthless riches and we desire to obey His will: we direct our expectations and hopes to Him and we are content with what He bestows on us.

60. Zakat expenditures are only for the poor,^{*61} and the needy,^{*62} and those employed to administer thereof (the funds),^{*63} and for attracting the hearts together (for Islam),^{*64} and for those in bondage,^{*65} and for those in debt,^{*66} and for Allah's cause,^{*67} and the wayfarer,^{*68} an obligation from Allah. And Allah is All Knower, All Wise.

﴿ إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ
وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَمَلِينَ عَلَيْهَا
وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ
وَالْغَرَمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأَبْنِ
السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴾

***61** According to the Arabic usage, *fuqara* are all those people who depend on others for the necessities of life. The Arabic word *fuqara* is a general word for all those who are needy because of some physical defects, or old age, or temporarily out of living means, and can become self-supporting if they are helped like orphans, widows, the unemployed, etc.

***62** According to the Arabic usage, *masakin* are those indigent people who are in greater distress than the needy people usually are. The Prophet (peace be upon him) especially enjoined the Muslims to help such people as are unable to find the necessary means to satisfy their wants and are in very straitened circumstances, but are so self-respecting that they would not beg for anything, nor would others judge from their outward appearance that they were deserving people. According to a tradition *maskin* is one

who cannot make ends meet, though his appearance does not show that he needs help nor does he beg for help. In short, he is a self-respecting person who has become needy.

***63** “Those employed to administer thereof” are those who collect Zakat dues, supervise the collections and keep accounts, and help in their distribution, irrespective of the fact whether or not they are needy or indigent; their remunerations shall be paid out of the Zakat funds. In this connection it should be noted well that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had declared the Zakat funds to be unlawful for himself and for the members of his own family (Bani Hashim). Accordingly, he never received any remuneration for collecting or distributing Zakat funds. As regards the other members of Bani Hashim, they were allowed to do this service without receiving any remuneration, but otherwise it is unlawful for them. On the contrary, the payment of the Zakat dues was obligatory on Bani Hashim if their possessions warranted this under the prescribed limits, but under no circumstances whatsoever were they allowed to accept anything out of Zakat collected from others.

There is, however, a difference of opinion as to whether they should accept anything out of the collections made from their own family or not. Imam Abu Yusuf opines that they are allowed to accept these when they are needy or poor or wayfarers, but the majority of the jurists regard this also unlawful.

***64** A portion of Zakat funds may also be given to win over to Islam those who might be engaged in anti-Islamic

activities or to those in the camp of the unbelievers who might be brought to help the Muslims or to those newly converted Muslims, who might be inclined to revert to kufr if no monetary help was extended to them. It is permissible to award pensions to them or give them lump sums of money to make them helpers of Islam or submissive to it or at least to render them into harmless enemies. A portion of the spoils or other incomes may be spent on them and, if need be, also a portion of Zakat funds. In such cases, the condition of being needy or indigent or on a journey etc. is also waived; nay, they might be even rich people or chiefs who are otherwise not eligible for anything from Zakat funds.

All are agreed that during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) pensions and gifts were given under the category of winning over people, but there is a difference of opinion whether this category of expenditure was abolished or not after his death. Imam Abu Hanifah and his followers are of the opinion that it was abolished during the caliphate of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), and now it is not lawful to spend anything under this category. Imam Shafii is of the opinion that something may be given to sinful Muslims under this category from Zakat funds but not to unbelievers, while other jurists are of the opinion that expenses under this category are lawful even now, if a need arises for them.

The Hanafis base their opinion on an incident that happened after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Uyainah bin Hisan and Aqraa bin Habis came to

Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) and asked him to allot to them a certain piece of land. So he gave them a written order for this. They took it to some other highly placed companions for further confirmation and some of them endorsed this order. But when they took it to Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), he tore the paper into pieces before their very eyes, saying, it is true that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to give something to win over your hearts because Islam was weak at that time, but now Allah has made Islam so strong that it does not stand in need of people like you. At this they went to Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) and complained to him about it and taunted him, saying” Are you the caliph or Umar (may Allah be pleased with him)? But he took no notice of this, nor did any of the companions differ with Umar's (may Allah be pleased with him) opinion. The Hanafis conclude from this incident that when the number and power of Muslims increased by the grace of Allah and they no longer stood in need of any support from such people; the reason for which expenses under this category were permitted in the first instance remained no longer there. Therefore the companions unanimously abolished expenditure under this head.

Imam Shafii says that there is nothing to prove that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ever spent anything out of Zakat funds under this category. All the incidents mentioned in the traditions show that whatever he spent for the purpose of winning over hearts to Islam, was spent out of the spoils of war and not out of Zakat funds.

In my opinion there is nothing to show that the expenses for winning over hearts have been made unlawful forever up to the Last Day. There is no doubt that the action taken by Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was absolutely right, for if and when the Islamic state does not consider it necessary to spend anything under this head, Islam does not make it obligatory to spend something for winning hearts. On the other hand, if need for this arises at any time, it is authorized to incur expenses under this category for Allah has kept a provision for this. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) and the other companions agreed only on this that there was no need to give anything for this purpose at that time because the circumstances did not warrant it. But there is no reason to conclude from this that the companions disallowed forever the expenses that were permitted by the Quran under certain circumstances for the good of Islam.

As regards the opinion of Imam Shafii, it appears to be correct in so far as it is not lawful to spend anything under this category out of Zakat funds, if these expenses can be met out of other funds. But if it is necessitated that something should be spent under this category out of Zakat funds, there is no reason why a differentiation should be made in this regard between sinful Muslims and unbelievers. For the Quran has not allocated the share because of the faith of the prospective recipients but because Islam required to win their hearts for its own good and because this could not be achieved except by giving them a portion of wealth. Therefore the Quran allows the

Amir of the believers to spend a part of the Zakat funds to achieve this end, if, when and where the required conditions exist. The fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not spend anything from the Zakat funds on unbelievers for this purpose does not mean that it is unlawful to do so, for he did not spend from this fund because there was enough money in other funds for this purpose. Had it been unlawful to spend anything from Zakat funds on unbelievers, he would have explicitly forbidden it.

***65** A portion of Zakat funds may be spent for the ransoming of slaves in two ways. First, help may be given to a slave for the payment of the ransom money, if he enters into an agreement with his master that he will set him free, if the slave pays him a certain amount of money. The second way is that the Islamic government may itself pay the price of his freedom and set him at liberty. There is a consensus of opinion about the first way, but there is difference of opinion about the second way. Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), Said bin Jubair, Laith Thauri, Ibrahim Nakhi, Shaabi, and Muhammad bin Sirin, (Hanafis and Shafiis) consider this as unlawful while Ibn, Abbas, Hasan Basri, Malik, Ahmad and Abu Thaur consider this as lawful expenditure from this fund.

***66** Help may be given out of Zakat funds to such debtors as would be reduced to a state of poverty, if they paid off all their debts out of their own possessions, irrespective of the fact whether they are earning any money or not, whether they are indigent in the general sense or well off. According

to some jurists, the only exceptions to this are those debtors who are spendthrifts or involve themselves in debts by spending money on wicked deeds. Help may be given to them only if and when they repent.

*67 “For Allah’s cause” is a general term which implies all those good works which please Allah. That is why some jurists are of the opinion that Zakat funds may be spent on every kind of good work. But the fact is, and the majority of the earliest Muslim scholars have opined, that here the ‘Allah’s cause’ stands for Jihad in the path of Allah, that is, the struggle to eradicate the systems based on kufr and to establish the Islamic system in their stead. Therefore the Zakat funds may be utilized to meet the expenses of the journeys the people make, or for procuring means of conveyance, equipment, weapons and other articles needed for Jihad, irrespective of the fact whether they are so well off or not as to need any help for personal requirements. Likewise help of a temporary or permanent nature may also be given to those people who devote all of their time and energies, temporarily or permanently, for this work. It should also be noted that there has arisen a misunderstanding regarding the “cause of Allah” for the early scholars usually use for Jihad the Arabic word as (ghazyah) which is synonymous with “fight”. They, therefore, are of the opinion that Zakat fund may only be used for the purpose of fighting. But Jihad in the Way of Allah is a much more comprehensive term than mere fighting in the Way of Allah. Jihad applies to all those efforts that are made to degrade the word of kufr and to

exalt the word of Allah and to establish the Islamic system of life, whether by propagating the message of Allah in the initial stage or by fighting in the final stage of the struggle.

*68 Help from Zakat funds may be given to a wayfarer on a journey even though he might be quite well off at home.

Some of the jurists are of the opinion that according to this verse only that wayfarer who does not undertake a journey for a sinful purpose may be helped out of Zakat funds. But no such condition has been laid down in the Quran or the Hadith to this effect. Besides this, we learn from the fundamental principles of Islam that the sins of a needy person would in no way prevent us from helping him. As a matter of fact, such a help may prove very useful in reforming sinful and depraved persons. For if they get a support in the time of need, it may reasonably be expected that they would turn towards purifying their souls.

61. And among them are those who hurt the Prophet and say: "He is (lending his) ear (to every news).^{*69} Say: "He listens to what is best for you,^{*70} he believes in Allah, and has faith in the believers,^{*71} and is a mercy to those who believe among you." And those who hurt Allah's Messenger, for them is a painful punishment.

وَمِنْهُمْ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ
وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ أُذُنٍ
خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِاللَّهِ وَيُؤْمِنُ
لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

*69 This was one of the charges which the hypocrites

leveled against the Prophet (peace be upon him). As he used to listen to everyone and let him say freely whatever he had to say, they would find fault with him, saying, “He is a credulous person. Everyone can approach him freely and may say whatever he pleases, and he readily believes whatever he hears” Though it was a good thing that he heard everyone, the hypocrites intentionally spread it as a vice, so that the poor and humble Muslims should be kept away from coming near the Prophet (peace be upon him). The hypocrites did not like that these true believers should inform the Prophet (peace be upon him) about their plots, mischief and hostile talks. They resented it very much that the Prophet (peace be upon him) listened to and believed in the talk of these humble people against such “respectable” people as themselves.

***70** The answer to this charge implies two things. First, “Though the Prophet (peace be upon him) listens to everything, he attends only to that which is good and is for the welfare of the community, for he is not the one who would listen to or encourage mischievous things.” Secondly, “It is good for yourselves that he listens patiently to everyone; otherwise he would not have allowed you to put forward lame excuses for your negligence from the struggle in the Way of Allah. Had he not been forbearing, he would not have paid attention to your false professions of faith and hypocritical expressions of good wishes for Islam, but would have taken you to task for your mischief and made it difficult for you to live at Al-Madinah. It is thus obvious that it is good for you that he listens to everyone.

***71** That is, you are wrong that he listens to everyone. He puts his trust only in the true believers. Accordingly, he believed only in those things about you that were conveyed to him by good and trustworthy people, who were neither liars nor tale-bearers. Therefore, whatever they said about you was true and should have been taken as true.

62. They swear by Allah to you (Muslims) so they can please you. And Allah and His Messenger have more right that they should be pleased, if they are believers.

تَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَكُمْ لِيَرْضَوْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُرْضَوْهُ إِنْ كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ



63. Do they not know that whoever opposes Allah and His Messenger, then certainly for him is the fire of Hell to abide therein. That is the great disgrace.

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ مَنِ يُحَادِدِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَأَنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا ذَٰلِكَ الْخِزْيُ الْعَظِيمُ



64. The hypocrites fear lest a surah should be revealed about them, informing them of what is in their hearts.^{*72} Say: “Ridicule (as you wish).

يَحْذَرُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ أَنْ تُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُورَةٌ تُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ قُلِ اسْتَهْزِئُوا إِنِ السَّيِّئَاتُ لِلَّهِ

Indeed, Allah will expose that which you fear.”

مُخْرِجٌ مَّا تَحْذَرُونَ

*72 The hypocrites were afraid that their secret plans would be disclosed in the Quran to their great discomfort. Though they did not believe that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was a Messenger of Allah, they were convinced from their experience of the last nine years or so that he possessed some supernatural powers by which he learned their hidden secrets, and revealed these through the Quran (which according to them was written by him).

65. And if you ask them, they will surely say: “We were only talking idly and playing.”*73 Say: “Is it at Allah and His verses and His Messenger that you were ridiculing.”

وَلَيْن سَأَلْتَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ قُلْ أَبِاللَّهِ وَءَايَاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

*73 This refers to the hypocrites who used to make fun of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the true Muslims in their secret meetings when they were making preparations for the expedition to Tabuk. In this way, they used to discourage those Muslims who sincerely and honestly intended to go forth for Jihad. We learn many things in this connection from the traditions. For instance, in one of their meetings, when the hypocrites were having a gossip, one of them remarked, “I say: Do you think that the Romans are no better than the Arabs? You will see that in the near future these brave men will be bound with ropes.” Another responded to this, “What a fun it would be if after this each

one of them is lashed with a hundred stripes.” Still another, ridiculing the preparations by the Prophet (peace be upon him) for the expedition, remarked, “Look at this man, and his preparations. He intends to go forth to conquer the forts in Syria and the Roman Empire.”

66. “Make no excuse. You have indeed disbelieved after your (confession of) belief.” If We forgive a party of you, We shall punish (another) party, because they have been criminals. *74

لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ
إِيمَانِكُمْ إِن نَّعَفُ عَنْ طَآئِفَةٍ
مِّنْكُمْ نُعَذِّبُ طَآئِفَةً
بِآسَاءِهِمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ

*74 That is, “Those foolish buffoons, who take interest in such conversations and mock even at serious things because there is nothing serious in the world for them, may be pardoned. But there are others who mock at these serious things deliberately with evil intentions, because they consider the Messenger (peace be upon him) and the way taught by him as ridiculous in spite of their professions of faith. As their real object is to discourage the believers from making preparations for Jihad, they are criminals and not buffoons; therefore they shall not be pardoned at all.”

67. The hypocrite men and the hypocrite women are from one another. They enjoin what is wrong, and forbid from

الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ
بَعْضُهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ

right, and withhold their hands (from spending).^{*75} They have forgotten Allah, so He has forgotten them. Indeed, the hypocrites, it is they who are the disobedient.

بِالْمُنْكَرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنْ
الْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَقْبِضُونَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ
نُؤُوا اللَّهَ فَنَسِيَهُمْ إِنَّ
الْمُنَافِقِينَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ



***75** These are the common characteristics of all hypocrites. All of them are interested in evil and inimical to good. If someone undertakes to do an evil thing, they would dedicate all their sympathies, counsels, encouragements, contributions, good wishes, praises, and their approvals to such a one. They would join hands to accomplish that evil thing and persuade others to take part in it and encourage others in every way. Moreover, they would show in every way their hearty pleasure if they perceived that the evil thing was progressing satisfactorily. On the other hand, if someone undertakes to do a good thing, they are shocked to bear the very news of it for it pains their hearts; nay, they do not even like that such a thing should be undertaken at all. Then, if they see someone coming forward to help it, they feel very uncomfortable and try their best to hinder him from it, and if he does not give it up, they would wish that he should fail in it. Then all of them have this common characteristic that they do not spend anything at all for good ends irrespective of the fact whether they be otherwise parsimonious or generous. At any rate, their wealth is

either for hoarding or for evil deeds. As a matter of fact, they would spend large sums on evil works generously but would not be willing to spend a farthing for good things.

68. Allah has promised the hypocrite men and the hypocrite women and the disbelievers fire of Hell, they shall abide therein. It is sufficient for them. And Allah has cursed them, and for them is an enduring punishment.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ
وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْكُفَّارَ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا هِيَ حَسْبُهُمْ
وَلَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِمٌ



69. (You disbelievers are) like^{*76} those before you, they were mightier than you in strength, and more abundant in wealth and children. So they enjoyed their portion (awhile), so you enjoy your portion (awhile) as those before you did enjoy their portion (awhile). And you indulged in play and pastime, like that in which they indulged in play and pastime. Such are they whose deeds have perished in the world and the Hereafter. And such

كَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ كَانُوا
أَشَدَّ مِنْكُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَكْثَرَ أَمْوَالًا
وَأَوْلَادًا فَاسْتَمْتَعُوا بِخَلْقِهِمْ
فَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِخَلْقِكُمْ كَمَا
اسْتَمْتَعَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
بِخَلْقِهِمْ وَخُضْتُمْ كَالَّذِي
خَاضُوا أُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ
أَعْمَلُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

are they who are the losers.

وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

***76** In the preceding verse, they were being mentioned in the third person, but here they are being addressed directly in the second person.

70. Has there not^{*77} reached them the news of those before them. The people of Noah, and (the tribes of) Aaad, and Thamud, and the people of Abraham, and the dwellers of Midian, and the towns overturned.^{*78}

Their messengers came to them with clear proofs. So Allah surely did not wrong them, but they used to wrong themselves.^{*79}

أَلَمْ يَأْتِهِمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ
وَقَوْمِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَأَصْحَابِ
مَدْيَنَ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَاتِ
أَتَتْهُم رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا
كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ
كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

***77** Again they are being mentioned in the third person.

***78** These were the people of Lot.

***79** “They used to wrong themselves” for they were themselves responsible for their destruction. Allah had no enmity with them and had no desire to destroy them. As a matter of fact, they themselves adopted the way of life that led to destruction, whereas Allah had sent His Messengers to them and afforded them the opportunities of thinking, understanding, and reforming. His Messengers admonished and warned them of the consequences of treading wrong

paths, and presented very clearly before them the way that leads to success, and also the ways that lead to destruction. But when they did not benefit from the opportunities that were offered to them to mend their ways, and persisted in treading the ways that led to destruction, they inevitably met with the end for which they were heading. And this horrible end was not due to Allah's will to be unjust to them but due to their own evil doings."

71. And the believing men and the believing women are protecting friends of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid from wrong, and they establish prayer and give the poor-due, and they obey Allah and His Messenger.*80 Those, Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ
بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ
يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ
وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

***80** The contrast between the characteristics of the hypocrites (Ayat 67) and of the true believers (Ayat 71) clearly shows that the two are entirely different from each other, in spite of their outwardly similar profession of faith in Islam and obedience to it. The difference lies in their morals, conducts, habits, attitudes and ways of thinking.

On the one hand, are the hypocrites whose tongues are never tired of professing faith in Islam, but who are void of sincere faith, and whose conduct belies their professions. They are, as it were, like bottles which have labels of musk, but contain cow-dung which may easily be recognized from its appearance and unpleasant odor. On the other hand, are the true believers, who are like those bottles which contain musk which may be tested in any way by its appearance, its smell and other characteristics to be the musk. Likewise, though the outward label of Islam apparently makes both of them one community of Muslims, the real characteristics of the hypocritical Muslims are so different from those of the true Muslims that they have, in fact, become two different communities. The hypocritical Muslims, men and women, form a separate community with those who have similar characteristics. They all are neglectful of Allah, take interest in evil things and deviate from all that is good and never cooperate with true believers. In short, they are allies to one another and practically dissociate themselves from true believers and form a group of their own. In contrast to them, the true believers, men and women, have practically become one community. All of them take interest in what is good, and abhor what is evil. They remember Allah day and night and cannot think of life without the constant remembrance of Allah. They are very generous in spending in the Way of Allah, and obey Him and His Messenger (peace be upon him) without any mental reservations. These common characteristics have dissociated them from the hypocrites and united them in one community and

made them allies to one another.

72. Allah has promised the believing men and the believing women gardens underneath which rivers flow, they will abide therein, and pleasant dwellings in gardens of Eden. And the greater (bliss) is the pleasure of Allah. It is that which is the great success.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
وَمَسَكِنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ فِي جَنَّاتٍ
عَدْنٍ ۚ وَرِضْوَانٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ
أَكْبَرُ ۚ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ



73. O Prophet,^{*81} strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be harsh upon them.^{*82} And their abode is Hell, and wretched is the destination.

يَأَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ
وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ ۚ وَاعْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ
وَمَا أُولَئِكَ إِلَّا فِي
جَهَنَّمَ ۚ وَبِئْسَ
الْمَصِيرُ



***81** From here begins the third discourse that was sent down after the expedition to Tabuk.

***82** This command enunciated the change of policy towards the hypocrites. Up to this time, leniency was being shown to them for two reasons. First, the Muslims had not as yet become so powerful as to take the risk of an internal

conflict in addition to the one with the external enemies. The other reason was to give enough respite to those people who were involved in doubts and suspicions so that they could get sufficient time for attaining to faith and belief. But now the time had come for a change of policy. The whole of Arabia had been subdued and a bitter conflict with the external enemies was about to start; therefore it was required that these internal enemies should be crushed down so that they should not be able to conspire with the external enemies to stir up any internal danger to the Muslims. And now it had become possible to crush them. As regards to the second reason, these hypocrites had been given respite for a period of nine years to observe, to consider and test the right way, and they could have availed of it, if they had any good in them. So there was no reason why any more leniency should be shown to them. Therefore, Allah enjoined the Muslims to treat the hypocrites on one and the same level with the disbelievers and start Jihad against them, and to give up the policy of leniency they had adopted towards them and adopt a fine and stern policy instead.

In this connection, it should also be noted that this verse does not enjoin the Muslims to fight with the hypocrites. It merely meant to end the policy of leniency that had hitherto been adopted towards them. This verse enjoined that they were no more to be considered a part and parcel of the Muslim community, nor were they to be allowed to take part in the management of its affairs, nor consulted about any matter, so that they might not be able to spread the

poison of hypocrisy. This changed policy required that the true believers should expose all those, who adopted a hypocritical attitude and conduct and showed in any way that they were not sincere allies to Allah, His Messenger (peace be upon him) and the true Muslims. Each and every one of such hypocrites should be openly criticized and reproved so that there should remain for them no more place of honor and trust in the Muslim society. They should be socially boycotted and kept away from the consultations of the community. Their evidence in the courts of law should be regarded as untrustworthy. The doors of offices and positions of trust should be closed against them and they should be held in contempt in the social meetings. In short, every Muslim should show by his behavior to such a one that there was no place of honor or respect or trust for a hypocrite in the Muslim society. Besides this, if any one of them was found to be guilty of treachery, there should be no connivance at his crime, nor should he be pardoned but openly tried in a court of law and should be duly punished. This command was urgently needed at the time it came. It was obvious that in order to save the Muslim community from fall and degradation, it was essential to purge it of all the internal dangers to its solidarity. A community which nourishes hypocrites and traitors and allows the internal enemies to flourish with honor and security will inevitably be doomed to moral degradation and ultimate destruction. Hypocrisy is a plague and a hypocrite is the rat that carries and spreads its germs. Therefore to allow him the freedom of movement in the society is to expose the whole

population to the danger of hypocrisy. Likewise, to give a place of honor and prestige to a hypocrite is to encourage many others in hypocrisy and treachery, for this shows that it is not sincerity, true faith, and its welfare that count in it. One may flourish and prosper in it even if one verbally professes to be a Muslim and at the same time indulges in dishonesty and treachery. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has expressed the same thing in a pithy saying. He said, “Whoso honors and respects the inventor of new practices which are un-Islamic, indeed helps to demolish the very structure of Islam.”

74. They swear by Allah that they did not say (anything wrong). And indeed, they did say the word of disbelief,^{*83} and did disbelieve after their (accepting of) Islam. And they planned that which they were not (able) to attain.^{*84} And they did not seek revenge except that Allah and His Messenger had enriched them of His bounty.^{*85} Then if they repent, it will be better for them. And if they turn away, Allah will afflict them with a painful punishment in the world and the Hereafter. And there will not be for

تَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ مَا قَالُوا وَلَقَدْ
 قَالُوا كَلِمَةَ الْكُفْرِ وَكَفَرُوا
 بَعْدَ إِسْلَامِهِمْ وَهَمُّوا بِمَا لَمْ
 يَنَالُوا وَمَا نَقَمُوا إِلَّا أَنْ
 أَغْنَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ مِنْ
 فَضْلِهِ فَإِنْ يَتُوبُوا يَكُ خَيْرًا
 لَهُمْ وَإِنْ يَتَوَلَّوْا يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ
 عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ
 وَمَا لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ

them on earth any protector,
nor helper.



***83** We cannot say with certainty what that “word of disbelief” was which they had uttered. There are, however, traditions that mention several things of unbelief which were uttered by the hypocrites during that time. For instance, it is related that a hypocrite, while he was talking to a young Muslim, a near relative of his, said, “If all that this man, referring to the Prophet (peace be upon him), is saying be true, then we are worse than donkeys.” Another tradition relates that when, during the expedition to Tabuk, one of the she-camels of the Prophet (peace be upon him) went astray and the Muslims were moving about in search of it, a party of the hypocrites made a good deal of fun of this, saying to one another, “Just consider the prophethood of this man. He tells news of heavens but cannot tell where his she-camel is.”

***84** This is a reference to the plots which the hypocrites had made during the Tabuk expedition. On the return journey they conspired to push the Prophet (peace be upon him) down into some ravine, while he would be passing over some hill at night. The Prophet (peace be upon him) got wind of the plot and ordered that the army should take the longer route through the valley round the hills, while he himself along with Ammar bin Yasir and Huzaifah bin-Yaman would make the short route over the hill. While they were on the way, suddenly they discovered that a dozen of the hypocrites, with covered faces, were following them. At this Huzaifah (may Allah be pleased with him)

turned towards them so that he may drive away their camels but they were terrified when they saw him coming towards them and took to flight lest they should be recognized.

The other plot was to declare Abdullah bin Ubayy as king at Al-Madinah as soon as they should hear some bad news about the Muslim army, because according to their expectations, the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his faithful companions could never fare well against the armies of the great Roman Empire.

***85** This is an insinuation to put to shame by an indirect suggestion the hypocrites of Al-Madinah. This referred to the prosperity of Al-Madinah and its peoples, for Al-Madinah was a small town before the migration of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to it, and its two clans Aus and Khazraj did not hold any high position in regards to wealth or prestige. But within the short period of nine years or so, this small town became the capital of Arabia because of the residence of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and the sacrifices of the Ansar, the true Muslims. As a result of which, the former peasants Aus and Khazraj of Al-Madinah became the great ones of the Islamic state, and wealth began to flow into this central city on account of spoils of war and increased commercial activity. The hypocrites were rebuked in this verse that, instead of being grateful to the Prophet (peace be upon him), they showed anger and spite against him for no other reason than that he had brought forth prosperity among them.

75. And among them are those who made a covenant with Allah (saying): “If He should give us of His bounty, we will surely give charity, and we will surely be among the righteous.”

﴿ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ عَاهَدَ اللَّهَ لَإِِنْ
ءَاتَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ لَنَصَّدَّقَنَّ
وَلَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴾

76. Then when He gave them from His bounty, they hoarded it and turned away, and they become evasive.*86

﴿ فَلَمَّا ءَاتَتْهُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهِ
بَخِلُوا بِهِ وَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴾

***86** This is an instance of their ingratitude for which the hypocrites were rebuked in Ayat 74.

They broke their covenant with Allah which enjoined them to spend money in charity, if Allah enriched them by His bounty. This shows that they were confirmed criminals and they did not care in the least for the agreements they made, and were niggardly and had no moral code to observe.

77. So He punished them by (putting) hypocrisy into their hearts until the Day they shall meet Him, because they broke that (covenant) with Allah which they had promised Him and because they used to lie.

﴿ فَأَعْقَبَهُمْ نِفَاقًا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَى
يَوْمٍ يَلْقَوْنَهُ بِمَا أَخْلَفُوا اللَّهَ مَا
وَعَدُوهُ وَبِمَا كَانُوا
يَكْذِبُونَ ﴾

78. Do they not know that Allah knows their secret and their private conversation, and that Allah is the Knower of the unseen.

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ
سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
عَلَّمُ الْغُيُوبِ



79. Those who criticize the contributors among the believers concerning (their) charities, and (also criticize) those who could not find (to give as charity) except their effort. So they ridicule them.^{*87} Allah will ridicule them. And for them is a painful punishment.

الَّذِينَ يَلْمِزُونَ
الْمُطَّوِّعِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَالَّذِينَ لَا
يَجِدُونَ إِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ فَيَسْخَرُونَ
مِنْهُمْ سَخِرَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ وَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ



***87** This refers to the mean conduct which the hypocrites evinced on the occasion of the appeal of the Prophet (peace be upon him) for contributions towards the Tabuk expedition. The well-to-do hypocrites did not themselves make any contributions, but when the sincere Muslims came forward with generous contributions according to their means, they began to deride them. If a well-to-do Muslim made a handsome contribution, they would at once accuse him to be guilty of a showoff. On the other hand, if a poor Muslim contributed a paltry sum which he could hardly spare after sacrificing some of the barest necessities of his family, or contributing the small earnings obtained

by hard work, they would at once ridicule, saying, “Lo! Here is the farthing that will help conquer the forts of the Roman Empire!”

80. Ask forgiveness for them (O Muhammad), or do not ask forgiveness for them. If you should ask forgiveness for them seventy times, Allah will never forgive them. That is because they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger. And Allah does not guide disobedient people.

أَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ أَوْ لَا تَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ
إِنْ تَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً فَلَنْ
يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ
كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا
يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

81. Those who remained behind (from Tabuk), rejoiced in their staying after (the departure of) the Messenger of Allah, and they disliked to strive with their wealth and their lives in the cause of Allah, and they said: “Do not go forth in the heat.” Say: “The fire of Hell is more intense in heat,” if only they could understand.

فَرِحَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ بِمَقْعَدِهِمْ
خَلْفَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَكَرِهُوا أَنْ
يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَالُوا لَا تَنْفِرُوا فِي
الْحَرِّ ۗ قُلْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ أَشَدُّ حَرًّا ۗ
لَوْ كَانُوا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

82. So let them laugh a little, and they will weep much, as the recompense for what they used to earn.

فَلْيَضْحَكُوا قَلِيلًا وَلْيَبْكُوا كَثِيرًا
جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

83. So if Allah brings you back (from the campaign) to a party of them (hypocrites), and they ask your permission to go out (to fight), say: “You will never go out with me, ever, and you will never fight along with me (against) an enemy. Indeed, you were content with sitting the first time, so you sit with those who stay behind.”

فَإِنْ رَجَعَكَ اللَّهُ إِلَى طَائِفَةٍ
مِنْهُمْ فَاسْتَعْذِنُوكَ لِلْخُرُوجِ فَقُلْ
لَنْ تَخْرُجُوا مَعِيَ أَبَدًا وَلَنْ
تُقَاتِلُوا مَعِيَ عَدُوًّا إِنَّكُمْ
رَضِيتُمْ بِالْقُعُودِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ
فَاعْزُبُوا مَعَ الْخَالِفِينَ



84. And do not (O Muhammad) pray over any of them who has died, ever, nor stand at his grave. Indeed, they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger, and they died while they were disobedient.*88

وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَاتَ
أَبَدًا وَلَا تَقُمْ عَلَى قَبْرِهِ إِنَّهُمْ
كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَمَاتُوا
وَهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ



***88** This verse was sent down to prevent the Prophet (peace be upon him) from saying funeral prayers for Abdullah bin Ubayy, the ringleader of the hypocrites, who died a short while after the Tabuk expedition. His son Abdullah who was a sincere Muslim called on the Prophet (peace be upon him) and requested him to give his shirt for his father's shroud. The Prophet (peace be upon him) very generously granted his request. Then he begged the

Prophet (peace be upon him) to lead his father's funeral prayer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) agreed to this also but Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) very respectfully requested him repeatedly not to do so, saying, "O Prophet of Allah! will you say funeral prayer for a person who was guilty of such and such crimes and sins."

The Prophet (peace be upon him), who was a blessing both for friends and for foes, got ready to say funeral prayer even for that man who was a deadly enemy of Islam. At last when he stood up to lead the funeral prayer, this verse was sent down to prevent him from this by a direct command from God, in accordance with the changed policy declared in Ayat 73 which forbade to do anything that might encourage the hypocrites among the Muslims.

The above incident led to the formulation of the regulation that the leaders and prominent people from among the Muslims should neither lead, nor offer the funeral prayers of the sinners against Islam, or for those notorious for their disobedience to Islam. After this, whenever a request was made to the Prophet (peace be upon him) for a funeral prayer, he would first inquire about the conduct of the deceased person. If he came to know that he was a bad person, he would say to his people, "You may perform his burial just as you like".

85. And let not amaze you their wealth and their children. Allah only intends that He punishes them thereby in the world, and

وَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَوْلَادُهُمْ
إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي

their souls should depart while they are disbelievers.

الدُّنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ
كَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

86. And when a surah was revealed (enjoining) that believe in Allah and strive along with His Messenger, those of wealth among them asked your permission (to be exempted) and said: “Leave us (behind), to be with those who sit (at home).”

وَإِذَا أَنْزَلَتْ سُورَةً أَنْ ءَامِنُوا
بِاللَّهِ وَجَاهِدُوا مَعَ رَسُولِهِ
أَسْتَعَذَّنَكَ أَوْلُوا الطَّوْلِ مِنْهُمْ
وَقَالُوا ذَرْنَا نَكُنْ مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ
﴿٨٦﴾

87. They were content that they be with those who stay behind (at home). And seal was placed upon their hearts, so they do not understand.^{*89}

رَضُوا بِأَنْ يَكُونُوا مَعَ
الْخَوَالِفِ وَطُبِعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ
فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾

***89** “They do not understand” for they deliberately and intentionally chose the shameful way of staying at home with women, when they were required to go forth for Jihad, though they were healthy, physically fit and well-to-do, and professed Islam. Therefore, according to the divine law of nature, a seal was set upon their hearts and they were bereft of those noble feelings which make one feel ashamed of adopting such a disgraceful conduct.

88. But the Messenger and those who believe with him strive with their wealth and their lives. And those, for them are the good things. And it is those who will be the successful.

لَيْكِنَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
مَعَهُ جَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ
وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَوْلِيَّكَ لَهُمْ
الْخَيْرَاتُ وَأَوْلِيَّكَ هُمْ
الْمُفْلِحُونَ



89. Allah has prepared for them gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide. That is the great success.

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ



90. And those with excuses among the wandering Arabs (Bedouins)^{*90} came, that permission might be given to them (to exempt). And those who lied to Allah and His Messenger sat (at home). There will strike those who disbelieved^{*91} among them a painful punishment.

وَجَاءَ الْمُعَذِّرُونَ مِنَ
الْأَعْرَابِ لِيُؤْذَنَ لَهُمْ وَقَعَدَ
الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ



***90** Here the word Bedouins refers to those Arabs who lived in the desert near Al-Madinah.

***91** The hypocritical profession of Islam has been called

the way of unbelief, because that profession of faith which lacks practical proof, surrender, sincerity and obedience is in fact unbelief. As such persons prefer their own interests and worldly desires to Allah and His Way, they shall be dealt with by Allah as unbelievers and rebels, even if they could not be legally treated as such in this world but were considered Muslims due to their profession of faith. This is because in the life of this world, the Islamic law treats as unbelievers only such hypocrites as are guilty of open unbelief, rebellion, treachery, or infidelity. That is why there are many cases of hypocrisy that do not come under kufr in the Islamic shariah. However, this does not mean that if one escaped the penalty according to the Islamic code, one will escape punishment according to the divine judgment also.

91. Not upon the weak, nor upon the sick, nor upon those who do not find anything to spend, is any blame (that they stayed at home), when they are sincere to Allah and His Messenger.^{*92} There is not any ground (for blame) upon those who do right. And Allah is Oft Forgiving, Merciful.

لَيْسَ عَلَى الضُّعَفَاءِ وَلَا عَلَى
الْمَرْضَىٰ وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا
يَجِدُونَ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ حَرَجٌ
إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ مَا
عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ
وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

***92** This implies that even those people who are otherwise excusable because of disability, sickness or indigence will be

pardoned only if they are sincerely and truly faithful to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him). Without this fidelity, no one shall be pardoned merely because he was sick or indigent at the time when he was called upon to go forth for Jihad. For Allah does not judge merely by appearances, and treats alike, and forgives all those who present medical certificates of their disability because of sickness, old age or some other physical defect. On the Day of Judgment, He will examine minutely the heart of each and everyone, and take into account his whole conduct, open and hidden, and will consider whether his excuse was of a faithful servant or of a traitor and rebel. It is obvious that each and every case, in spite of apparent similarity, requires a separate and different judgment. For instance, let us take the case of two men who suddenly fell ill on the eve of Jihad. One of them thanked his lucky stars for the timely disease, as if to say, "How lucky it is that I have fallen ill on the opportune moment! Otherwise, this calamity of Jihad could not have been avoided and I would have had to suffer it anyhow." On the contrary, the other man was filled with sorrow at his illness, and he cried in anguish, "Ah, what a bad luck! I have been attacked by this sudden disease at the time when I ought to have been in the battlefield instead of lying down here in bed." One of them made his illness not only an excuse for exemption from Jihad but also tried to dissuade others from it. On the contrary, the other one, though lying in the bed, went on urging his own dear relatives, friends, and others to go forth to Jihad; nay, he entreated even those who were

attending him, saying, “Leave me in the care of the real Master, and go forth to Jihad. I am sure that the arrangements for my nursing will be made somehow. Therefore, you should not waste your precious chance for my sake but go forth and serve the right way.” But the other, who stayed at home, spent all this time in spreading discontent and bad news and in damaging war efforts and in disrupting the affairs of the families of the fighters. The other man in similar circumstances did his very best to make the home front as strong as he could. Though these two men had similar excuses for exemption, they cannot be considered as equal in the sight of Allah: the second one only may expect Allah’s pardon, and not the first man who was a traitor and rebel against Allah, though he might have had a genuine excuse for exemption.

92. Nor (is the blame) upon those who, when they came to you (asking) that you should mount them, you said: “I can not find anything to mount you upon (for riding).” They turned back and their eyes overflowed with tears out of grief that they did not find the means to spend. ^{*93}

وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَا اتَّوَكَّ
لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ قُلْتَ لَا أُجِدُّ مَا
أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ تَوَلَّوْا وَأَعْيُنُهُمْ
تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا أَلَّا
يَجِدُوا مَا يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

***93** Such people as felt a strong urge for Jihad but could not join it because of some really genuine excuse, will be counted by Allah among those who actually took part in it,

even though they could not join it in person and do anything practically for it. This is because they were sincerely grieved at their absence from Jihad for no fault of theirs, just as a man of the world would be grieved if he were deprived of some lucrative business or of some high profit. Allah considers such a one as on duty, because his heart was serving in the Way of Allah, though he had been deprived of active service on account of some genuine excuse. The Prophet (peace be upon him), while returning from Tabuk, stated the same thing like this: “There are some people at Al-Madinah (at this time) who have been traveling and marching all along with you through every valley. Naturally the companions to whom he was speaking were wonder struck at this. So they asked, “While staying at Al-Madinah?” He replied, “Yes, while staying at Al-Madinah! This is because they were compelled by the circumstances to stay behind at Al-Madinah: otherwise they would certainly have accompanied you.”

93. The ground (for blame) is only upon those who ask permission of you (for exemption to stay at home) while they are rich. They are content that they be with those who stay behind. And Allah has placed seal upon their hearts so they do not know.

﴿ إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
يَسْتَعِذُونَكَ وَهُمْ أَغْنِيَاءُ
رَضُوا بِأَنْ يَكُونُوا مَعَ
الْخَوَالِفِ وَطَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ
فَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

94. They will make excuses to you when you return to them. Say: “Make no excuse, never shall we believe you. Allah has indeed informed us of your news. And Allah will observe your deeds, and His Messenger. Then you will be brought back to the Knower of the unseen and the seen. Then He will inform you of what you used to do.”

يَعْتَذِرُونَ إِلَيْكُمْ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ
إِلَيْهِمْ قُلْ لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا لَنَا
نُؤْمِنُ لَكُمْ قَدْ نَبَأْنَا اللَّهُ
مِنْ أَخْبَارِكُمْ وَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ
عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ
إِلَىٰ عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

95. They will swear by Allah to you when you return to them that you may turn away from them. So turn away from them.*94
Indeed, they are unclean, and their abode is Hell, a recompense for what they used to earn.

سَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَكُمْ إِذَا
أَنْقَلَبْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لِتُعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ
فَاعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ رِجْسٌ
وَمَا أَوْلَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَاءُ بِمَا
كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

*94 The Arabic words are of the same root but have different senses in the two sentences in which they occur. In the first sentence it means, “You may turn away from them” and forbear them and may not take them to task. In the second sentence it means, “So turn away from them” and break off all connections with them and have nothing to do with them, as if you had broken off completely with

them, and they with you.

96. They (the hypocrites) swear to you that you may be pleased with them, but if you are pleased with them, certainly Allah is not pleased with the people who are disobedient.

تَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ لِتَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ
فَإِنْ تَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
يَرْضَىٰ عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ



97. The wandering Arabs (Bedouins) are stronger in disbelief and hypocrisy, and more likely not to know the limits which Allah has revealed to His Messenger.*95

And Allah is All Knower, All Wise.

الْأَعْرَابُ أَشَدُّ كُفْرًا وَنِفَاقًا
وَأَجْدَرُ أَلَّا يَعْلَمُوا حُدُودَ مَا
أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ

عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ



***95** As has already been stated earlier the “Bedouins” here refers to those rustic Arabs of the desert who had settled in the suburbs of Al-Madinah.

The background which may help one to comprehend the meanings of the verse is this. Though these people had outwardly embraced Islam, they had not done so from conviction. When they saw the rising of the organized power of Islam in Al-Madinah, they were so overawed by it that they could not ignore it. So at first they adopted the attitude of the opportunists towards the conflict between Islam and kufr. But when the power of the Islamic government spread over the major portions of Hijaz and

Najd, and the power of its enemy clans began to decline, they thought it expedient to enter the fold of Islam. But there were very few among them who had sincerely accepted Islam from the conviction that it was the right way. That is why they did not make any sincere efforts to fulfill the implications of the true faith, and observe the obligatory duties imposed by Islam. On the contrary, the majority of them had accepted Islam just because it was the best policy for them. They merely desired to take advantages of being Muslims in order to gain those benefits to which they were entitled as members of the ruling party, without performing those duties which became obligatory on them by the very acceptance of Islam. Therefore they were utterly averse to saying the prescribed prayers, observing the fasting, paying the Zakat dues from their date palm gardens and their herds of cattle. Moreover, they smarted under the discipline of the Islamic state and resented being subdued by any power for the first time in history. Above all, it was against their very nature to make sacrifices of their lives and wealth in the Way of Allah, as was being demanded by Islam, for they were accustomed to fight only for plunder and spoils. That is why they always invented one excuse or the other for exemption from the restrictions and obligations that were being imposed on them. For, they had no interest in the truth or the welfare of humanity; their only concern was their camels and their goats, that is, the narrow world around their tents. As regards anything higher than these, the only thing which they could believe in was irrational reverence for those who

would guarantee their worldly welfare and protect them from calamities and give them amulets to safeguard them against haram and evil, and say prayers for them as a recompense for their offerings to them. But they were not prepared to accept any faith or belief that would bring under its moral and legal discipline every aspect of their cultural, social and economic life, and demand from them the sacrifices of lives and wealth for the cause of a universal reform.

In this verse, the above mentioned mental and moral condition of the Bedouins has been described like this: "These Bedouins are more hypocritical than the urban Arabs and are more stubborn and obdurate in their denial of the truth. This is because the urban people make use of the opportunities of meeting the learned and pious people and thus learn the laws and regulations of the true way. On the other hand, in all probability, the Bedouins will learn little about the divine way, because they get few opportunities for this. Moreover, they lead lives of economic animals rather than of human beings having moral and spiritual values; therefore they do not think of higher things than their animal urges.

It should also be noted that the main cause of the subsequent storm of rebellion and apostasy during the caliphate of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) two years after the revelation of these verses (97-99) was the same that has been mentioned therein.

98. And among the wandering Arabs are some

وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مَا

who take that which they spend (for the cause of Allah) as a loss,^{*96} and they await for you (evil) turns of fortune. Upon them will be the misfortune of evil. And Allah is All Hearer, All Knower.

يُنْفِقُ مَغْرَمًا وَيَتَرْتَضُ بِكُمْ
الدَّوَابِرَ عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةُ السَّوْءِ
وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

***96** This means that they regarded the payment of Zakat dues as a fine and the expenditure on hospitality, an Islamic duty, a penalty. Likewise, if they had to make any contributions towards Jihad, they did so to show that they were loyal to the Islamic state and not because they wanted to please Allah by giving sincere monetary help for His cause.

99. And among the wandering Arabs are some who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and take that which they spend as means of nearness to Allah, and (a cause of receiving) the Messenger's invocations. Behold, indeed it is a means of nearness for them. Allah will admit them to His mercy. Indeed, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ
بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَتَّخِذُ مَا
يُنْفِقُ قُرْبَتٍ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَصَلَوَاتِ
الرَّسُولِ ۚ آلَا إِنَّهَا قُرْبَةٌ لَهُمْ ۚ
سَيَدْخِلُهمُ اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ ۖ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

100. And the first to lead the way, of the

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ

Muhajirin and the Ansar, and those who followed them in goodness, Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. And He has prepared for them gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great triumph.

الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ
اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ
عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيمُ

101. And among those around you of the wandering Arabs are hypocrites, and among the people of AlMadinah. They persist in hypocrisy. You (O Muhammad) do not know them. We know them.^{*97} We shall punish them twice,^{*98} then they will be returned to a great punishment.

وَمِمَّنْ حَوْلَكُم مِّنَ الْأَعْرَابِ
مُنَافِقُونَ وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ
مَرَدُوا عَلَى النِّفَاقِ لَا تَعْلَمُهُمْ
نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ سَنُعَذِّبُهُمْ مَّرَّتَيْنِ
ثُمَّ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ عَظِيمٍ

***97** They had become so expert in the art of hiding their hypocrisy that even the Prophet (peace be upon him) could not recognize them, though he possessed immense sagacity and insight into human nature; so Allah informed him about them.

***98** This double chastisement will be the loss of their

worldly advantages and the victory of the Islamic mission in the teeth of their opposition. Thus one chastisement shall be the loss of their worldly benefits for which they practiced deceptions and adopted hypocritical attitudes, and instead of gaining wealth, honor and prestige they shall meet with disgrace and utter failure. The second chastisement will be in the shape of the victory of the Islamic mission to defeat which they exerted their utmost by their machinations and plots. But the Islamic mission will come out successful in the teeth of their evil wishes, desires, intentions and vicious efforts and they themselves shall witness its victory to their utter despair, regret, grief and sorrow.

102. And others who have acknowledged their sins. They had mixed a righteous deed and another that was evil. It may be that Allah will turn unto them in forgiveness. Indeed, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَأَخْرُونَ أَعْتَرَفُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ
خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَءَاخَرَ
سَيِّئًا عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَن يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

103. Take from their wealth a charity, (in order) to purify them and sanctify them with it, and pray for them. Indeed, your prayers are (a source of) security for them. And Allah is All Hearer, All Knower.

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً
تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا وَصَلِّ
عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ
وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

104. Do they not know that Allah is He who accepts repentance from His slaves, and receives charities. And that Allah is He who accepts repentance, the Merciful.

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ يَقْبَلُ
التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَأْخُذُ
الصَّدَقَاتِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ
التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٠٤﴾

105. And say: “Do (as you will), for Allah will see your deeds, and His Messenger, and the believers.*⁹⁹ And you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the seen. Then He will inform you of what you used to do.”*¹⁰⁰

وَقُلِ اعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ
وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ
وَسَتُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ
وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

***99** In this passage a clear line of demarcation has been drawn between the hypocritical Muslims and the true Muslims, and instructions have been given regarding the treatment that should be meted out to the hypocrites. Therefore, the one who claims to be a Muslim but does not sincerely devote himself to Allah, His Way, and the Islamic community, should be severely dealt with. If there is a clear proof, from his conduct, that he lacks sincerity or if he offers anything in the Way of Allah, it should be rejected forthwith. And when he dies, the Muslims should neither join his funeral prayer nor beg God’s pardon for him, even

though he be one's father or brother. In contrast to this, if a believer is guilty of some sin and confesses it, he should be pardoned, and his offerings should be accepted and prayers should be said for his forgiveness.

As regards the criterion by which it will be judged whether one is or is not a hypocrite, though one might have been guilty of an act of insincerity, three things have been implied in this passage:

(1) A sincere follower will openly and clearly confess his sin without offering any lame excuses and giving false explanations and interpretations of his offense.

(2) It will be judged from his previous conduct whether he was a habitual offender or he committed the sin on the spur of the moment because of some weakness. If he had been behaving like a righteous Muslim and if his record showed sincere services, sacrifices and good deeds to his credit, it will be reasonably concluded that he was not a hypocrite.

(3) His future conduct will be watched to see whether his confession was verbal or there had really been a change of heart. If he sincerely feels sorry for his sins and is anxious to compensate for them and his whole conduct shows that he intends to eradicate the root cause of the weakness in his faith that misled him into the sins, it will be concluded that he sincerely feels sorry for his sins and that he was not a hypocrite but a sinful believer.

The event that is connected with the occasion on which this passage was sent down, makes this subject quite clear. It is related by the scholars of traditions that these verses were revealed in regard to Abu Lubabah bin Abdul Manzar and

his companions. Abu Lubabah (may Allah be pleased with him) was one of those people who had embraced Islam on the occasion of the oath of allegiance at Aqabah before the migration of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to Al-Madinah. He had taken part in the battles of Badr, Uhd and other campaigns. But on the occasion of the Tabuk expedition, he succumbed to some inner weakness and stayed at home without any genuine and lawful excuse. The same was the case of the other six companions, who were sincere Muslims. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) returned from Tabuk and they came to know that Allah and His Messenger had a very bad opinion of those who had stayed behind, they were filled with shame and regret. Therefore they tied themselves to a pillar even before they were called upon to explain their conduct. Then they declared, "We will neither eat anything nor sleep unless we are pardoned or die in the same condition." After some days they fell down in an unconscious condition because of hunger and sleeplessness. When at last they were informed that Allah and His Messenger had pardoned them, they went to see the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: "We request that you accept from us as propitiatory offerings our houses and the whole of our possessions. As these were responsible for our sin of omission, we desire to give them away in the Way of Allah." But the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, "There is no need to give the whole of your property for only one third of it will suffice."

A deep consideration of this event clearly brings out the kind of weaknesses that are pardonable. All of these people

were not habitual offenders and defaulters. Their whole past conduct showed that they were sincere Muslims. None of them invented false explanations to excuse themselves but confessed their sins. By offering the whole of their properties as a propitiatory offerings, they proved that they were really sorry for their conduct and wanted to atone for their sins.

In this connection, another important lesson should also be learned from these verses. In order to atone for one's sins, one should give a practical proof along with the verbal confession and heartfelt regret. One way of this is to give charity in the Way of Allah for this helps to cleanse the filth which was being nourished in the heart and which was responsible for the sins. This not only eradicates the hidden evil but also increases the capacity for good works. For the confession of one's sin is like the feeling of one who has fallen into a pit. He at once realizes that he is in a critical situation in a pit, where he does not like to abide, and is troubled over it. Therefore he thinks out plans for getting out of it and makes practical efforts for this. Likewise the one who confesses his sins and feels ashamed of them and takes practical steps to atone for it by making offerings and doing other good works, intends to come out of the pit of sins.

***100** “And you will be returned to the Knower,” Who is the ultimate judge of everything and from Whom nothing can be concealed. Therefore even if one succeeds in hiding one's hypocrisy in this world or is judged to be up to the standard in one's faith and sincerity, it does not mean in

any way that such a one will succeed in escaping chastisement for hypocrisy in the Hereafter also.

106. And others who await Allah's decree, whether He will punish them or will forgive them. And Allah is All Knowing, All Wise. *101

وَأَخْرُوتَ مُرْجُونَ لِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ
إِمَّا يُعَذِّبُهُمْ وَإِمَّا يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

*101 The case of these people had been deferred because it could not yet be legally decided whether they were sinners or hypocrites, and not because their case was doubtful in the sight of Allah. This was because the symptoms of their diseases had not as yet come to the surface to indicate clearly which of the two they were. For Islam teaches the Muslims not to pass judgment on a person or a party unless they possess definite knowledge based on conscious reasoning and not on intuition and the like to support it.

107. And those who took (for themselves) a mosque for (causing) harm and disbelief, and (to create) division among the believers, and as a station for those who warred against Allah and His Messenger before. *102 And they will indeed swear: "We did not intend except good." And Allah bears witness

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مَسْجِدًا
ضِرَارًا وَكُفْرًا وَتَفْرِيقًا بَيْنَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِرْصَادًا لِّمَنْ
حَارَبَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَلِيَحْلِفْنَ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا الْحُسْنَ
وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

that they are certainly liars.



***102** “Who warred against Allah and His Messenger” was Abu Amir who belonged to the clan of Aus of Al-Madinah. He had become Christian monk during the period of ignorance before the migration of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and was well known as a scholar of the Scriptures and was held in great reverence as a pious monk. But his scholarship and asceticism, instead of leading him to the truth, became hindrance in the way. That was why he not only rejected Islam but also became a bitter enemy of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his mission, for he took the Prophet (peace be upon him) for a rival in the holy business of priesthood. At first he ignored the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his mission in the hope that the power of the Quraish would suffice to crush him and his mission. But when the Quraish suffered an utter defeat in the battle of Badr, he could no longer ignore it, so he started a vigorous vicious campaign against the Islamic movement. Accordingly, he left Al-Madinah and visited different clans, in order to incite them against Islam, and was one of those who brought about the battle of Uhd. It is said that he had gotten some pits dug in the battle field of Uhd, and that the Prophet (peace be upon him) fell into one of these and received injuries. Then he played an important role in organizing the armies which came to invade Al-Madinah in the battle of Al-Ahzab. Likewise this Christian monk took a very active part in giving support to the mushriks against Islam in all the

subsequent battles up to the battle of Hunain. At last, when he realized that no power in Arabia could withstand the onslaught of Islam, he left Arabia and went to the Roman Caesar in order to warn him of the rising danger from Al-Madinah. It was because of his efforts that the Caesar began to make preparations for invading Arabia, to counteract which the Prophet (peace be upon him) went forth on the expedition to Tabuk.

Now let us consider the background of the building of the mosque that was built to harm the righteous mission.

A section of the hypocrites of Al-Madinah collaborated wholeheartedly with Abu Amir in all the above mentioned hostile activities against Islam. They also fully agreed with him that he should use his spiritual influence to obtain military help from the Roman Caesar and the Christian states of northern Arabia. Accordingly, when he was preparing to go to the Roman Caesar to urge him to invade Arabia, they devised a plan of making a mosque of their own to serve as a safe meeting place for organizing themselves into a separate party because none would suspect that they were carrying on evil activities under the garb of religion. Moreover, this mosque would serve as an ambush for the agents of Abu Amir who could stay in it as travelers and mendicants without raising any suspicion that they were spies of the enemy.

As there were already two mosques in Al-Madinah, one at Quba and the other Masjid-i-Nabavi in the city. Obviously there was no need for a third one. The hypocrites themselves understood this: therefore they began to invent

reasons to show that there was really a need for a third mosque. Accordingly, they went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, “We need another mosque because it is very difficult for the people of this area, especially the old, the sick and the disabled, to offer the five prescribed prayers in either of the two mosques, during the winter season and the rainfall. Therefore we intend to build a new mosque only for the convenience of those who live at a distance from the two mosques but are desirous of saying their prayers in congregation.

With such professedly pure motives, these mischief makers built the mosque and then went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) with the request to stand in this new mosque and lead the congregation in one of the prescribed prayers so as to perform its opening ceremony. But the Prophet (peace be upon him) postponed the matter, saying, “At this time I am wholly engaged in making preparations for the expedition to Tabuk. I shall consider the matter on my return home.” After this he went forth to Tabuk, and they started their nefarious activities. They went on organizing themselves and conspiring against Islam in the mosque and decided to crown Abdullah bin Ubayy as their king, as soon as the Muslims would meet with reverses and be utterly crushed down by the Romans, as they had expected. But their expectations were all frustrated by what happened at Tabuk. Then on the revelation of these verses during the return journey at a place, Zi-Avan, near Al-Madinah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) dispatched some men to demolish the mosque before his entry into the city.

108. Do not stand (for prayer) therein, ever. The mosque whose foundation was laid on righteousness from the first day, is more worthy that you stand therein (to pray). In it are men who love to purify themselves.

And Allah loves those who purify themselves.

لَا تَقُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا لَمَْسْجِدٍ
أُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَى مِنْ أَوَّلِ
يَوْمٍ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُومَ فِيهِ
رِجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَطَهَّرُوا
وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَهَّرِينَ



109. Is it then he who laid the foundation of his building on righteousness from Allah and His pleasure better, or he who laid the foundation of his building on the edge of a precipice^{*103} about to collapse, so it collapsed with him into the fire of Hell. And Allah does not guide the people who are the wrongdoers.^{*104}

أَفَمَنْ أُسِّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَى
تَقْوَى مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ
أَمْ مَنْ أُسِّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَى شَفَا
جُرْفٍ هَارٍ فَانْهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ
جَهَنَّمَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الظَّالِمِينَ



***103** In order to comprehend fully the implications of this simile, let us first consider the significance of the Arabic word *Juruf*. This applies to the brink of that piece of land which has been undermined by a river or a stream, leaving its surface without any support. In this meaningful simile the construction of the structure of life on the Godless

foundations has been compared to that building which is built on the river brink, which has been undermined by its water. It is obvious that the ignorant man who builds a structure on the surface of such a piece of land, merely because it is a piece of land, will not only lose the building but will also lose his own life, for it will inevitably fall down into the river along with him because it has nothing to support it. Likewise, the one who lays the foundation of the structure of the system of his life on the surface of worldly things, without any regard to God's fear or His favor which are the only permanent supports of human life, is like the man who builds his structure on the surface undermined by the river. For such a man, he himself undermines the structure of his life by his wrong deeds which inevitably follow if there is no bedrock of God's fear and His favor. Therefore the surface on which he had built his life would one day inevitably tumble down into the abyss of Hell along with the earnings of his whole life.

***104** "Guide", that leads to man's real success.

110. Their building which they built will not cease to be a doubt in their hearts until that their hearts are torn to pieces.^{*105} And Allah is All Knowing, All Wise.

لَا يَزَالُ بُنِيْنُهُمُ الَّذِي بَنَوْا رِيبَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَقَطَّعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ



***105** That is, these hypocrites have deprived their hearts of the capability of receiving and accepting faith by the commission of the most heinous sin of building a mosque to do harm to that very Islam for the propagation of which

mosques are built. This crime has set the desire of disbelief so deep in their hearts that it will remain there as long as they are alive and will leave them only at the time of death when their hearts will cease to beat in their breasts. Obviously, the case of such people is quite different from that of those unbelievers, who openly build idol-temples or openly make preparations for war against God. For it is possible that such a one may get guidance just because he is honest, sincere and bold. Moreover, his open antagonism shows that he has the courage of his convictions and may, therefore, accept Islam, when he would be convinced of its truth. But there is no hope for that cowardly lying and cunning man who builds a mosque for the service of kufr and puts on the garb of God's worship for fighting against Allah's Way. This is because a conduct like this kills all the noble sentiments within him and renders him utterly incapable of understanding and accepting Islam.

111. Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their wealth (in exchange) for that theirs shall be the Paradise.^{*106} They fight in the Way of Allah, so they kill and are killed. A true promise (binding) upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Quran.^{*107} And who

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعَدَّا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ ﴾

fulfills His covenant more than Allah. So rejoice in your bargain that which you have contracted. And it is that which is the great success.

وَالْقُرْآنِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ
مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمْ
الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ هُوَ
الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

***106** In this verse that aspect of the Islamic faith which determines the nature of the relationship between Allah and His servants has been called a transaction. This means that faith is not merely a metaphysical conception but is, in fact, a contract by which the servant sells his life and possessions to Allah and in return for this accepts His promise that He would give him the Garden in the life after death. In order to comprehend the full implications of this transaction, let us first understand its nature.

We should note it well at the outset that, in reality, this transaction is not in regard to the actual selling of the life and possessions of the servant to Allah in the literal sense, for Allah is in fact the real Owner of man's life and possessions. Allah alone has the right of ownership because He is the Creator of man and of everything he possesses and uses. Therefore there is no question at all of selling and buying in the worldly sense; for man possesses nothing of his own to sell, and Allah has no need to buy anything because everything already belongs to Him. However, there is one thing which has entirely been entrusted to man by Allah, that is, the freedom of will and the freedom of choice,

and the transaction concerns that thing.

Of course, it is true that this freedom does not make any change in the real position of man with regard to the right of ownership to his own life and his possessions. They belong to Allah Who has delegated to him only the authority to use or abuse these things as he wills, without any coercion or compulsion from Him. This means that man has been given the freedom to acknowledge or not to acknowledge that Allah is the owner of his life and property. The transaction mentioned in Ayat 111 is concerning the voluntary surrender of this freedom to Allah's will. In other words, Allah wills to test man whether he acknowledges the ownership of Allah over his life and property, in spite of that freedom, and considers himself to be their trustee only, or behaves as if he were their owner and so could do whatever he liked with them.

Thus, the terms of this transaction from Allah's side are these: "If you voluntarily, and not by compulsion or coercion, agree to acknowledge that your life, your property and everything in this world, which in fact belong to me, are mine: And if you consider yourself only as their trustees; And if you voluntarily surrender the freedom I have given you to behave; And if you, in a dishonest way do not intend to become their master and owner; Then, I will give you in return, Gardens in the eternal life of the next world". The one who makes this bargain with Allah is a believer, for faith is in fact the other name for making this bargain. On the other hand, the one who refuses to make this bargain, or after making it adopts the attitude of the

one who has not made the bargain, is a kafir. For, technically, kufr is the term applied to the refusal to make this bargain.

The following are the implications of making this transaction:

(1) Allah has put man to two very hard tests in this matter. The first is whether he acknowledges the real Owner as owner, in spite of the freedom of choice given to him. Or he refuses this and becomes ungrateful, treacherous and rebellious. The second test is whether he puts his trust in his God or not. And he surrenders his freedom and sacrifices his desires and wishes in this present world in return for His promise of the Gardens and eternal bliss in the next world. Even though the world were to proclaim, "A bird in hand is worth two in the bush".

(2) This matter helps to draw a clear line of demarcation between the legal conception of the Islamic faith and the higher and spiritual one according to which Allah will judge one in the Hereafter.

According to its legal conception, the mere verbal profession of the articles of the faith is a sufficient proof that one is legally a Muslim and after this no jurist is authorized to declare such a one to be a disbeliever or to expel one from the fold of the Islamic community, unless there is a definite and clear proof that the one made a false profession of the faith. But this is not so with Allah. Allah considers the faith of only that person to be true, who makes this bargain with Him and sells his freedom of thought and action to Him and gives up his entire claim to

ownership in His favor. That is why a man might profess the articles of the faith and observe the prescribed obligatory duties, but if he considered himself alone to be the master and owner of his body and soul, his heart and brain and his other faculties, his property and his resources and other things in his possession, and reserved to himself the right of expending them as he willed, he shall be regarded a disbeliever in the sight of Allah, even though he should be regarded a believer in the sight of the world. This is because such a man has not made that bargain with God which is the essence of the faith according to the Quran. The very fact that a man does not expend his life and property in the way Allah approves of, or expends these in the way He disapproves, shows that the one who claimed to profess the faith either did not sell these to Allah, or after having made the transaction still regarded himself to be their master and owner.

(3) The above conception of the Islamic faith draws a clear line of demarcation between the attitude of a Muslim and that of a disbeliever towards life. The Muslim, who sincerely believes in Allah, surrenders himself completely to Allah's will, and does nothing whatsoever which may show that he is independent in his attitude, except when he temporarily forgets the terms of the bargain he has made with Him. Likewise no community of the Muslims can collectively adopt an independent attitude in political, cultural, economic, social and international matters and still remain Muslim. And if sometimes it temporarily forgets its subordinate position and its voluntary surrender

of its freedom, it will give up the attitude of independence and readopt the attitude of surrender, as soon as it becomes aware of its error. In contrast to this, if one adopts the attitude of independence towards Allah and makes decisions about all the affairs of life in accordance with ones own wishes, whims and caprices, one shall be regarded to have adopted the attitude of disbelief, even though one was a Muslim or a non-Muslim.

(4) It should also be noted well that the will of God to which a man is required to surrender himself is that which is specified by Allah himself and not the one which the man himself declares to be the will of God. For in the latter case one does not follow God's will but one's own will, which is utterly against the terms of the transaction. Only that person (or community) who adopts the attitude that conforms to the teachings of His Book and His Messenger, shall be deemed to have fulfilled the terms of the transaction.

From the above implications of this transaction, it also becomes clear why the fulfillment of the terms by Allah has been deferred to the next world after the termination of the life of this world. It is obvious that the Garden is not the return for the mere profession that the buyer has sold his life and property to Allah but it is the actual surrender of these things in the worldly life and their disposal by him as a trustee of Allah according to His will. Thus, this transaction will be completed only when the life of the buyer comes to an end in this world and it is proved that after making the bargain, he went on fulfilling the terms of

the agreement up to his last breath. For then and there alone, he will be entitled to the recompense in accordance with the terms of the transaction.

It will also be worthwhile to understand the context in which this matter has been placed here. In the preceding passage, there was the mention of those people who failed in the test of their faith and did not make the sacrifice of their time, money, life and interests for the sake of Allah and His Way, in spite of their professions, because of their negligence or lack of sincerity or absolute hypocrisy. Therefore after criticizing the attitudes of different persons and sections, they have been told in clear words the implications of the faith they had accepted: "This is not the mere verbal profession that there is God and He is One, but the acceptance of the fact that He is the Owner and the Master of your lives and possessions. Therefore, if you are not ready and willing to sacrifice these in obedience to the command of Allah, but expend these and your energies and resources against the will of Allah, it is a clear proof that you were false in your profession of the faith. For, the true believers are those who have truly sold their persons and possessions to Allah, and consider Him to be their Owner and Master, and expend their energies and possessions without any reservations, where He commands them to expend, and do not expend the least of these where He forbids them to expend.

***107** Some critics say that the statement of promise in the Torah and the Gospel is not confirmed by these Books. Their objection in regard to the Gospel is obviously wrong

for even in the existing Gospels there are sayings of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) that confirm this verse. For instance:

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (MAT. 5: 10).

“He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.” (MAT. 10: 39).

“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life.” (MAT. 19: 29).

It is, however, true that the matter of this transaction is not confirmed in its entirety by the existing Torah. For instance, there is a mention of the first part of the bargain at several places in one forth or the other:

“Is not He thy father that hath bought thee? hath He not made thee, and established thee?” (DEUT. 32: 6).

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (DEUT. 6: 4-5).

But as regards the other part of the bargain, that is, the promise of the Gardens, they applied it to the land of Palestine:

“Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.” (DEUT. 6: 3).

This is because the Torah does not give any conception of the life-after-death, the Day of Judgment, rewards and

punishments in the Hereafter, though this creed has always been an inseparable part of the right way. This does not, however, mean that the Torah did not originally contain this creed. The fact is that the Jews had become so materialistic during the period of their degeneration that they had no other idea of a reward from God than the well-being and prosperity in this world. Therefore they perverted all the promises made by God in return for man's service and obedience to Him and applied those to the land of Palestine.

In this connection, it should also be noted that the above-mentioned changes became possible because the original Torah had been tampered with in several ways. Some portions were taken away from it and others were added to it. Thus, the Torah in the existing form is not purely the word of God but also contains the comments, etc. of the Jewish scholars mixed up with it. So much so that at some places it becomes difficult to distinguish the word of God from the Jewish traditions, their racial prejudices, their superstitions, their ambitions and, wishes, their legal interpretations, etc. all of which have gotten mixed with the word of God. (See E.N. 2 of Aal-Imran).

112. Those who turn repentant (to Allah),^{*108} those who worship (Him), those who praise (Him),^{*109} those who fast, those who bow down, those who fall prostrate (in prayer), those

التَّائِبُونَ
الْحَامِدُونَ
السَّائِحُونَ
الرَّاكِعُونَ
الْعَابِدُونَ

who enjoin the right and who forbid from the wrong and those who observe the limits (ordained) of Allah.*110 And give good tidings to believers.

الْأَمْرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَالنَّاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَالْحَافِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ اللَّهِ وَبَشِّرِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ



*108 The Arabic word *atta-i-bun* literally means “those who repent”. But in the context it occurs it implies “those who possess repentance as their permanent characteristic”, that is, they repent over and over again. Moreover, the literal meaning of *taubah* is “to turn to” or “to turn back”. Therefore its explanatory translation will be “those who turn back to Allah over and over again”. This is the first and foremost characteristic of a true believer because even a true believer is liable to forget the bargain he makes with Allah by which he sells his life and property to Him. As this matter does not concern his sense organs but pertains to his mind and heart, he is liable to forget that these things are not really his property but they belong to Allah. Therefore, even the true believer occasionally forgets the bargain, and behaves in a way as if he were their owner. But as soon as he becomes conscious of this transitory lapse and realizes that he had violated the terms of his agreement, he feels sorry and ashamed of his conduct and turns to his God, begs His pardon and renews the terms of the bargain with Him, and pledges his allegiance to Him after every slip of its violation. This kind of repentance alone is the guarantee

that one will always come back to one's faith: otherwise it is not possible for man because of the inherent human weaknesses, to observe strictly and deliberately the terms of the bargain without ever falling a prey to negligence and error. That is why Allah says in praise of the true believer that "he turns back to Allah over and over again" and not that "he never slips into error after making the bargain of obedience and service to Him". And this is the greatest excellence that man can accomplish. Let us now consider the wisdom of placing this characteristics first in the list of the characteristics of the true believers. It is to admonish those who had been guilty of crimes after the profession of their faith. They have been told in Ayat 3 that the true believers are those who sell their lives and property to Allah. After this they are being told that if they sincerely intend to become true believers they should first of all create in themselves this characteristic and at once turn to Allah without showing any obduracy so that they should not deviate further into error.

***109** Some commentators are of the opinion that here *Assa-i-hun* means "those who observe fast". As this is not the lexical meaning of the word but only its figurative sense, which has been based on an unauthentic tradition attributed to the Prophet (peace be upon him). We are of the opinion that there is no need to depart from its lexical meanings, that is, "move about in the land (for His sake)". For here the Arabic word does not mean merely to "move about in the land" but "move about in the land for the sake of noble and high aims, e.g. to propagate Islam, to do Jihad,

to emigrate from those places where the unbelievers are in power, and to reform the people, to seek true knowledge, to earn a lawful livelihood and the like”. This characteristic of the believers has been especially mentioned here to reprove those who had not gone forth to Jihad, in spite of their claim that they were believers. They have been admonished that a true believer is the one who goes forth into the land to raise high His word, and exerts his utmost to fulfill the implications of his faith, and not the one who stays behind when he is called upon to move about in the land.

***110** That is those who “strictly observe the limits prescribed by Allah” in regard to the articles of the faith, worship-morality, social behavior, culture, economics, politics, judiciary, peace and war, and in all the aspects of their individual and collective lives. They neither transgress these limits in order to follow their lusts nor invent laws, nor replace the divine law by other laws. They establish these limits and prevent their violations. Hence, the true believers are those who not only strictly observe the limits prescribed by Allah, but also do their very best to establish them and safeguard them so as to prevent their violation to the best of their powers and capabilities.

113. It is not for the Prophet, and those who believe, that they ask for the forgiveness for the idolaters even though they may be near of kin, after it has become clear to them

مَا كَانَتْ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا
لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أَوْلَىٰ
قُرْبَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ

that they are companions of
Hellfire.*111

أَنْتُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ

*111 “That they ask for the forgiveness for the idolaters.” implies two things. First, we love them and sympathize with them. Secondly, we consider their crime to be pardonable. There is no harm to cherish these things for the one who is loyal, though a sinner, but it is absolutely wrong in principle to love and sympathize with a person who is an open rebel and to consider his case as pardonable as it renders our own loyalty doubtful. Besides, it adds to the intensity of the crime, if we pray for the forgiveness of a mushrik, who is our near relative. For it means that we consider our relationships to be more valuable than the fulfillment of the implications of our loyalty to Allah and that our love with Allah. And His Way is not wholly unalloyed and that we desire that Allah should also be influenced by the love we have with His rebels and pardon our criminal kinsmen, even though He should throw the other criminals into the fire of Hell. Obviously, all such things are wrong and are against loyalty and sincerity and the faith demands that our love with Allah and His Way should be absolutely unalloyed and that His friend should be our friend and His enemy our enemy. That is why Allah has not said, “Do not pray for the forgiveness of the mushriks.” But has instead warned, “It is not for the Prophet (peace be upon him), and those who believe, that they ask for the forgiveness for the idolaters”, which implies this: “The right thing for you is that you yourselves should regard it as improper to show sympathy with our

rebels and consider their crime as pardonable: nay, you should not wait for any command from Us about this.” In this connection, it should also be noted well that it is forbidden to show sympathy with the mushriks only in matters of faith. As regards the human relationships that demand the observance of the rights of one’s own relatives, of showing love, sympathy and kindness, and cherishing fellow-feelings with them is not forbidden at all but it is considered to be a virtue. We must fulfill the worldly rights of a relative whether he be a believer or a disbeliever: we should help him in affliction and give support to the needy ones and the orphans and show all possible sympathy with a sick or wounded person, irrespective of whether he is a Muslim or a non-Muslim.

114. And the prayer of Abraham for the forgiveness of his father was not except because of a promise, he had promised it to him,^{*112} but when it had become clear to him that he (father) was an enemy to Allah, he (Abraham) disowned him. Indeed, Abraham was soft of heart, forbearing.^{*113}

وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَنْ مَوْعِدَةٍ وَعَدَهَا
إِيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ أَنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ لِلَّهِ
تَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُ ج إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَأَوَّاهٌ
حَلِيمٌ



***112** The reference is to what Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) said when he broke off all connections with his father:

(1) “Peace be upon you. I will pray to my Lord to forgive

you: for He is very kind to me”. (Surah Maryam, Ayat 47).

(2) “And forgive my father: indeed he is of those who have gone astray. And disgrace me not on the Day, when mankind shall be brought back to life; when neither riches nor children shall avail anyone, and none shall obtain salvation except the one who comes before his Lord with a sound and pure heart”. (Ash-Shuara Ayats 86-89).

(3) “I will pray for your forgiveness, but I have no power to rescue you from Allah”. (Al-Mumtahina Ayat 4).

In the first place it should be noted that even the wording and the tone of the prayer for his father were very guarded, but when Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) realized that the person for whom he was praying was an open rebel against Allah and a bitter enemy of His Way, he refrained himself from saying even such a guarded prayer for him and declared in clear words that he would have nothing to do with him in future, even though the rebel was his father who had brought him up with love and care.

***113** The words *awwah* and *haleem* which the Quran uses for Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) are very comprehensive in meaning. *Awwah* is the one who is lamenting, humble, weeping, grief-stricken and God fearing. And *haleem* is the one who can keep control over himself under all circumstances, and is neither beside himself in anger and enmity nor transgresses the proper limits in his affections, friendships, and relationships. Here both the words have been used in their comprehensive senses. Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) prayed for his father because he was tender-hearted and lamented for

him that he would become the fuel for the fire of Hell. As he had full control over himself, and was very forbearing, he prayed even for that father who had persecuted him cruelly in order to hinder him from the way of Islam. Lastly, he was God fearing and did not want to go beyond the limits in his love for his father; so he broke off all his relations with his father when he realized that he was an enemy of Allah.

115. And Allah would not let a people astray after when He has guided them until He has made clear to them what they should avoid.^{*114} Indeed, Allah is the All Knower of every thing.

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ قَوْمًا
بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَاهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يُبَيِّنَ
لَهُمْ مَا يَتَّقُونَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ
شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ



***114** “He has made clear to them” beforehand that they should avoid such and such thoughts, deeds, and ways. But if they take no heed, and persist in wrong thinking and wrongdoing, Allah withholds His guidance from them and lets them follow the wrong way they themselves choose to follow.

This is the general formula that helps understand those passages of the Quran in which Allah ascribes to Himself the guidance and the deviation of the people. Allah’s guidance is that He makes plain to them the right way through His Prophets and Books. Then He enables those who have the intention, to follow the right way. On the other hand, He does not force and compel them to follow

the right way, if they themselves intend to persist in the wrong ways in spite of the fact that the right way has been made quite clear to them; He rather enables them to follow the way they themselves intend to follow.

As regards the context in which this occurs here, it is plain that it is meant to warn those people who have been mentioned in the preceding passage, and to introduce those who are going to be mentioned in the succeeding passage.

116. Indeed, to Allah belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He gives life and He causes death. And you do not have, other than Allah, any protecting friend, nor a helper.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ طَيِّحِي وَيُمِيتُ وَمَا
لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ
وَلَا نَصِيرٍ

117. Allah has indeed turned with forgiveness to the Prophet, and the Muhajirin, and the Ansar, those who followed him in the hour of hardship.^{*115} After the hearts of a party of them had almost deviated (from the right path),^{*116} then He forgave them.^{*117} Indeed, He was to them Kind, Most Merciful.

لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ
وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ
الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ
الْعُسْرَةِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيغُ
قُلُوبَ فَرِيقٍ مِّنْهُمْ ثُمَّ تَابَ
عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّهُ رءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

***115** Allah forgave the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions for those inadvertent lapses that had been made in connection with the Tabuk expedition, in view of their excellent services. The inadvertent lapse made by the Prophet (peace be upon him) was that he had given leave to stay behind to those people who were able to take part in the Jihad. (Ayat 43).

***116** This refers to those sincere companions who were at first somewhat unwilling to go to war on that critical occasion, but at last overcame their weakness, for they had true faith in their hearts and loved the right way.

***117** That is, Allah will not take them to account for their wrong inclinations for He does not punish a man for that weakness which he himself has overcome and corrected.

118. And upon the three, those who were left behind,^{*118} until when the earth, in spite of its vastness, was straitened for them, and their own souls were straitened for them, and they perceived that there is no refuge from Allah but towards Him. Then He turned to them, that they might repent. Indeed, Allah is He who accepts repentance, Most Merciful.^{*119}

وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خَلْفُوا
حَتَّى إِذَا ضَاقتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ
بِمَا رَحِبَتْ وَضَاقتْ عَلَيْهِمْ
أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوا أَنْ لَا مَلْجَأَ مِنْ
اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ
لِيَتُوبُوا^ج إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ
الرَّحِيمُ

***118** These three were among those who came to the

Prophet (peace be upon him) to present their excuses for staying behind. More than eighty of them were hypocrites, who put forward lame excuses and the Prophet (peace be upon him) accepted these and let them go. Then came the turn of these three, who were true believers, and they confessed their fault plainly. Therefore the Prophet (peace be upon him) postponed the decision of their case and ordered the Muslims not to have any social relations with them till the decision of their case came from Allah. This verse was sent down to decide their case.

In this connection it should be kept in mind that the case of these three was different from the case of the seven mentioned in E.N. 99. They had inflicted the punishment on themselves before they were called to account for their fault.

***119** The three whose condition has been described in this verse, were Kaab bin Malik, Hilal bin Umayyah and Murarah bin Rubai. They were sincere believers, as has been stated above, and had made many sacrifices and given proofs of their sincerity before this. The last two had taken part in the battle of Badr also, and therefore their faith was above every kind of suspicion. Though Kaab had not taken part in the battle of Badr, he had accompanied the Prophet (peace be upon him) in every other expedition. But in spite of all these services, they were severely punished for the negligence they had shown on the critical occasion of the Tabuk expedition, when all the able-bodied Muslims were commanded to go forth to Jihad.

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) came back from

Tabuk, he ordered the Muslims to break away completely from them; so much so that they should not even respond to their greetings. After forty days of this boycott their wives also were ordered to have nothing to do with them. In short, they were reduced at Al-Madinah to the same sad plight which has been described in this verse. At last, after a boycott of fifty days, this verse was sent down to announce their forgiveness.

The story of the above-mentioned boycott has been described in detail by Kaab bin Malik, who was one of the three. When he became old and blind, he himself told his story to his son, Abdullah, who used to accompany him everywhere. As this story is an excellent lesson for all, it is given below in Kaab's own words:

“When the Prophet (peace be upon him) urged upon the people to get ready for Jihad, I made up my mind to make preparations for this. But when I went home, I became negligent, saying to myself, “There is no hurry. When the time comes I will readily make preparations and start forthwith”. In this way I went on putting off my preparations till the time came when the army was going to start on the expedition. As I had made no preparations for the journey, I said to myself, “It does not matter. I will be able to join the army in a couple of days during the journey”. But again the same negligence prevented me from putting my intention into practice. At last no occasion was left for me to join the army. To add to my misery my conscience pricked me over and over again that the people with whom I had stayed behind in Al-Madinah were either

the hypocrites or those Muslims who were old or otherwise unfit for Jihad.

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) came back from Tabuk, he, as usual, said two rakats of prayer in the mosque. Then he sat there to meet the people. At first, the hypocrites, whose number was a little more than eighty, came to him and offered lame excuses on solemn oaths. The Prophet (peace be upon him) listened to the false story of each of them and accepted their apparent excuses and left the decision about their hearts to Allah, saying, “May Allah forgive you”. Then it was my turn to put forward my excuse. I went forward and uttered my salutations. He smiled and said, “Well, what kept you behind?” I hesitated for a moment. By God, I would have invented one excuse or the other to satisfy any man of the world, for I am well versed in the art of conversation. But here was the Prophet (peace be upon him) who was demanding an explanation from me. I believed that even if I succeeded in satisfying him by making a false excuse, Allah will inform him of the truth of the case and I shall again incur his displeasure. On the other hand, if I told the truth, I expected that Allah would forgive me, even though I were to incur his displeasure for the time being. So I replied, “I have no excuse for staying behind. I was in every way able to go forth (to Tabuk)”. At this the Prophet (peace be upon him) remarked, “This is the man who has told the truth”. Then turning to me, he said, “Go and wait till Allah decides your case”.

I rose from there and took my seat among the people of my

own clan. They at once began to tease and reprove me because I had made no excuse. At this, I was tempted to go and make some false excuse. But when I came to know that there were also two good people (Murarah bin Rubai and Hilal bin Umayyah), who had told the same thing that I had, I felt satisfied and stuck to the truth.

After this the Prophet (peace be upon him) issued a general order that no one should have any kind of talk with us. The other two confined themselves to their houses but I used to go out of my house and say my prayers in congregation and walk through the bazaars. As nobody spoke to me, it appeared to me that I was a foreigner in some strange city where I had no acquaintances. When I attended the mosque, I would utter the usual salutations and wait in vain for a response from the Prophet (peace be upon him). I would turn stealthy looks at him to read his thoughts in regard to me, but he would turn his eyes away from me, though he had been looking at me while I was engaged in prayer. As this condition became intolerable for me, one day I went to see Abu Qatadah who was a cousin of mine and a friend from childhood. I climbed over the wall of his garden and uttered my salutations, but even he did not make any response to it. Then I said, "O Abu Qatadah! I ask you to tell me on oath whether I love or do not love Allah and His Messenger". But he remained silent. Again I repeated the question but he kept silent. I asked him on oath to answer my question. Then he merely replied, "Allah and His Messenger know best". At this my eyes were filled with tears, and I came back.

Another incident happened during those days. Once I was passing through the bazaar, when a Syrian came to me and gave me a letter wrapped in silk. This was from the king of Ghassan and read like this: We have come to know that your leader is persecuting you these days. As you are not an ignoble person, we will not leave you to rot there. Therefore come to us and we will honor you (as you deserve). I said to myself, "Here is another hard trial for me". Then I threw the letter into the burning oven.

The boycott continued for forty days, when a man brought this message from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that I should separate from my wife. I asked whether I should divorce her but was told that I should only separate from her. Accordingly I said to my wife, "Go to your parental home and wait till a decision comes from Allah."

On the fiftieth day, when after the morning prayers, I was sitting in a state of utter despair on the top of my house, all of a sudden someone cried aloud, "O Kaab bin Malik! please accept my congratulations." Hearing this, I fell prostrate to the ground before Allah, for I understood that the command of my forgiveness had come. After this, people began to pour in, each trying to forestall the other in congratulating me on the acceptance of my repentance. I rose and went directly to the Mosque. I noticed that the face of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was glowing with happiness and in response to my salutations, he said, "I congratulate you on this: it is the best day of your life." I said, "Is this forgiveness from you or from Allah?" He replied, "It is from Allah." Then he recited these verses

(117-118). I asked, “O Messenger of Allah! Does my repentance require that I should give the whole of my property in charity?” He replied, “Keep a part of it, for it will be better for you.” Accordingly, I kept my property at Khaibar for myself and gave all the rest in charity. Then I solemnly pledged that I would stick to the truth throughout rest of my life, for Allah had forgiven me in return for the truth I had told. That is why I have never uttered a word against reality intentionally up to this time and hope and expect that Allah will protect me from lies in future as well. This story contains many lessons, and every believer should impress these on his mind and heart.

The first and foremost lesson we learn from this story is that the matter of the conflict between Islam and kufr is so important and delicate that we should take the greatest possible care to be on our guard in regard to this. Not to mention the case of one who takes active part on the side of kufr, if a Muslim shows the least negligence even inadvertently in taking part on the side of Islam once in his life; and that, too, not with any evil intention, he is liable to lose all the lifelong services and devotions rendered by him in the cause of Islam. That was why such a severe action was taken even against those worthy people who had done great deeds of valor in the battles of Badr, Uhd, Ahzab and Hunain, and whose sincerity and faith were absolutely above suspicion.

The second thing, which is as important as the first, is that one should never consider lightly any negligence in the performance of a duty, for this often misleads one to

commit an offense that is counted among heinous sins. The fact that one did not commit the offense with any evil intention cannot save one from punishment.

Lastly, this story presents the true spirit of the society that had been evolved out under the leadership of the Prophet (peace be upon him). On the one side, there were the hypocrites whose treacherous deeds were quite well known to all. They offered lame excuses which were accepted without demur for nothing better could be expected from them. On the other side, let us take the case of Kaab bin Malik, who was a tried believer, and whose sacrifices were above every kind of suspicion. He did not invent any false story to justify himself but confessed his fault quite plainly and clearly. But in contrast to the hypocrites, a severe chastisement was inflicted on him, not because there was any suspicion about his faith but because a sincere believer like him had behaved in a way in which only a hypocrite could behave. Thus the chastisement was meant to remind them: "You are the salt of the earth. But if you, too, become tasteless, from where will then salt be obtained?"

There is another noteworthy side of the matter. The part played by the leader and the follower and the Muslim society in this incident is unique. The leader inflicts the most severe punishment but with the feelings of affection and without any tinge of anger or hatred in it. It is like the punishment which a father gives to his son. It is always understood that the punishment is given for the good of the son, who knows that as soon as he mends his ways, he will regain the fatherly love. And the follower sets an excellent

example of obedience under very trying circumstances. He suffers hard from the severity of the chastisement but never thinks of rebelling against the leader because of any false personal or clannish pride; nay, he does not cherish in his heart any complaint against his beloved leader, but begins to love him even more than before. During this saddest period of his life the only thing he yearns for is a look of affection from his leader. For he is like a famine-stricken farmer whose only hope is the piece of cloud which he sees floating in the sky.

Now let us have a glimpse of the Muslim society, which displayed the greatest discipline and the highest moral spirit that had ever been shown by any society. No sooner does the leader order the boycott than the whole community becomes a stranger to the follower not only in public but also in private. So much so that his nearest relatives and closest friends do not even speak to him; nay, his own wife leaves him alone. He implores them on oath to tell him if they suspected his sincerity, but even his lifelong companions make a point-blank refusal, saying that he should ask Allah and His Messenger for that testimony. But in spite of the show of this strict discipline, the moral spirit of the community is so high and so pure that not a single person tries to take advantage of the position of the fallen brother by adding insult to his injury; nay, everyone feels sorry for his brother in disgrace, and is important to embrace him as soon as he is forgiven. That is why the people run in haste to tell him the good news.

The above is the model of the righteous community that the

Quran aims.

This background makes it plain why Allah not only forgave them but also manifested His kindness; gentleness and compassion in His forgiveness to these people. It was because of their sincerity which they proved during the fifty days of their chastisement. Had they shown arrogance after the commission of their offense and retaliated by taking angry and hostile actions as does every self-worshiper whose pride is wounded: had they behaved during their boycott in a manner as if they would break away from the community but never bow down before it: had they passed this period in spreading dissatisfaction in the community and gathering around them all the disgruntled people in order to organize a strong opposition against the leader, then they would have most certainly been expelled from the community, as if to say, “Go you now and worship the idol of yourself, for henceforth you will never be given any opportunity for exerting to raise the word of Allah”. But these three did not adopt this way though it was open to them. On the contrary, they took a different way, as has been seen, and proved that God-worship had destroyed every idol that might have remained hidden in their hearts: that they had dedicated themselves entirely to the exertion in the Way of Allah: that while joining the Islamic community they had burnt their boats to make it impossible for themselves to go back anywhere: that they would put up with every kind of treatment but would remain in the community and die as a member of it and would scornfully reject any offer of an honorable place

outside it; and would rather bear disgrace in it. That was why they were again taken in the community with the same honor as before. This is the explanation of the kind words of forgiveness: “Then He turned to them, that they might repent.” In these concise words, the Quran has depicted the true picture of the matter. The Master had at first turned away His attention from His three servants but when He saw that they had not left His door but had remained there with broken hearts, He again turned to them in appreciation of their fidelity so as to bring them back into the fold.

119. O those (of you) who believe, fear Allah, and be with those who are true.

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

120. It was not (proper) for the people of AlMadinah and those around them of the wandering Arabs that they remain behind after (the departure of) the Messenger of Allah, nor they prefer themselves over his self. That is because they are not afflicted by thirst, nor fatigue, nor hunger in the cause of Allah, nor they tread any ground to enrage the disbelievers,

مَا كَانَ لِأَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ وَمَنْ
حَوْلَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ أَنْ
يَتَخَلَّفُوا عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَلَا
يَرْغَبُوا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَنِ نَفْسِهِ
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ لَا يُصِيبُهُمْ ظَمَأٌ
وَلَا نَصَبٌ وَلَا مَخْمَصَةٌ فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَطْئُونَ مَوْطِئًا

nor do they inflict upon an enemy any infliction, but is written for them that as a righteous deed. Indeed, Allah does not waste the reward of those who do good.

يَغِيظُ الْكُفَّارَ وَلَا يَنَالُونَ
مِنَ عَدُوِّ نِيْلًا إِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ
بِهِ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾

121. Nor do they spend any expenditures, small or large, nor do they cross a valley, but it is written for them, that Allah may reward them the best of what they used to do.

وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ نَفَقَةً صَغِيرَةً
وَلَا كَبِيرَةً وَلَا يَقْطَعُونَ
وَادِيًا إِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ
اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾

122. And it was not (necessary) for the believers to go forth (for battle) all together. So why did not go forth from every division of them a party, so that those (left behind) may gain sound knowledge in religion, and that they may warn their people when they return to them, that they might avoid (wrong). *120

﴿ وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ
لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ
كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا
فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا
رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

***120** In order to comprehend the meaning of this verse, Ayat 97 with which it is connected, should be kept in view: These bedouins are most stubborn in unbelief and hypocrisy, and, in all probability, will remain ignorant of the laws of the way which Allah has sent down to His Messenger.

In Ayat 97, the Quran merely diagnosed the disease and pointed out its symptoms. The bedouins were suffering from the disease of hypocrisy because of their ignorance of the laws of the Way of Allah. This was so because they had not had any connections with the center of that knowledge. Here in this concluding portion of the Surah, the remedy of that disease has been prescribed so that they should have an understanding of Islam and its implications. It is not necessary that for this purpose all of them should leave their homes and come to Al-Madinah to learn that knowledge, but some of them should come from each habitation, clan and region to the centers of the knowledge (Al-Madinah, Makkah and the like) and understand Islam. Then they should go back to their own habitations and create its understanding among the common people.

This was a very important instruction that was given at the opportune moment to strengthen the Islamic movement. For, at that time, the people were entering into the fold of Islam in large numbers without its proper understanding. Obviously, this instruction was not needed in the initial stages of the movement, for at that time everyone who embraced Islam did so with its full understanding. No one would think of becoming a Muslim without this as this was

an invitation to persecution. When the movement became successful and won power in the land, the clans and the habitations began to enter en bloc into the fold of Islam. Naturally very few of them understood the full implications of the faith before accepting it, but the majority of them were being carried into the fold, as it were, by the strong current that had been generated by the movement. Outwardly this immense increase in numbers appeared to be a source of strength to Islam, but in reality such people as had no true understanding of Islam and were, therefore, not prepared to fulfill its moral obligations, were not only useless for the Islamic system but were actually harmful to it. This side of the matter became quite apparent during the preparations for the Tabuk expedition. That is why Allah sent down the instruction that necessary steps should be taken for the integration of the Islamic community so that it may keep pace with the immense increase in its number. Therefore some people should be brought out from every habitation and taught and trained in the requirements of Islam and these in their turn should teach and train their own people so that the whole Muslim population should understand Islam and obtain the knowledge of the limits prescribed by Allah.

In this connection, it should also be clearly understood that the command about mass education given in this verse is not merely about literacy but it had the definite aim of imparting the understanding of the way of Islam among the masses and enabling them to refrain from un-Islamic ways. This is the real and permanent aim of education that has

been set before the Muslims by Allah himself. Therefore every system of their education shall be judged by this criterion and shall be regarded Islamic only to the extent it fulfills this aim. It does not, however, mean that Islam is against the spreading of literacy and teaching of the purely mundane subjects to the masses, but it simply means that the primary aim of the Islamic education should be the achievement of the objective which has been mentioned above in italics. Without this, it does not consider any education to be education at all, even if it were to produce Einsteins and Freuds of the age.

It will be worthwhile to consider the true significance of the words used in the context, for they created a strange misunderstanding among the people of the later period, and produced lasting poisonous effects on the religious education of the Muslims, nay, on their whole religious life in general. It is obvious that Allah used these words in order to lay down the objective of education before the Muslims, which was this: to understand the Islamic way of life and have an insight into its system: to be familiar with its true nature and spirit so as to be able to judge and differentiate between the Islamic and the un-Islamic ways of thought and conduct in every aspect of life. But later on when the knowledge of the Muslim law was given the technical name of *fiqh*, it gradually developed into the science of the details of external form (as opposed to the spiritual aspect of the Islamic law). As the word *fiqh* is of the same root as used in this verse, a misunderstanding was created that this command of the Quran was about

acquiring the knowledge of *fiqh* in the above-mentioned sense. It is true that this knowledge is of great importance in the Islamic system of life, but it is not all that is required by the Quran but only a part of the objective. It is not possible to recount here all the damages that the Muslim community has suffered because of this misunderstanding, but suffice it to say that this is the thing, which is responsible for reducing the religious education of the Muslims to the knowledge and interpretation of the external form of Islam without paying any attention to the spirit of Islam. This inevitably resulted in making lifeless formalism the ultimate goal of the life of the Muslims.

123. O those (of you) who believe, fight those who are near to you of the disbelievers,^{*121} and let them find harshness in you.^{*122} And know that Allah is with those who are righteous.^{*123}

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قَاتِلُوا
الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ مِّنَ
الْكُفَّارِ وَلِيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلْظَةً
وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ
الْمُتَّقِينَ



***121** From the apparent wording of this verse, it may be inferred that only those Muslims have at first been held responsible to fight with those enemies of Islam who live near their territory. But if we read this verse along with the succeeding passage, it becomes clear that here disbelievers who are near you refers to those hypocrites who were doing great harm to the Islamic society by mixing up with the sincere Muslims. This very thing was stated in Ayat 73 at

the beginning of this discourse. The command has been repeated at its end in order to impress on the Muslims the importance of the matter and to urge them to do Jihad and crush these internal enemies, without paying the least regard to the racial, family and social relations that had been proving a binding force with them. The only difference between the two commands is that in Ayat 73, the Muslims were asked to do Jihad with them, while in this verse stronger words “fight those” have been used, which were meant to impress on them that they should crush the hypocrites thoroughly and completely. Another difference in the wordings is that in Ayat 73, two different words, “disbelievers and hypocrites” have been used, while in this verse only one word, “disbelievers” has been used so that the hypocrites should forfeit all their claims as Muslims. For there was room for this concession in the word hypocrite.

***122** This is meant to impress that they should not, in future, show the lenient treatment they had been meting out to them up to that time. This has already been commanded in Ayat 73 as be firm and stern with them.

***123** This warning has two-fold meanings and both are implied here. First, If you show any kind of leniency towards them because of your personal or family or economic connections with them, you should know that such a thing shall be against the fear of God. For the fear of God and friendly relations with the enemies of Allah are contradictory things. Therefore, you should give these up if you desire to obtain Allah’s help. Secondly, You should

scrupulously observe the moral and humane limits in doing Jihad, and in fighting against them. For you should always keep yourselves within the prescribed limits in everything. If you transgress these in any way, you should know that Allah will forsake you for He helps only those who are God-fearing.

124. And whenever a surah is revealed, there are among them those who say: "Which of you has this increased in faith." As for those who believe, it has increased them in faith and they rejoice.

وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلَتْ سُورَةٌ فَمِنْهُمْ مَن
يَقُولُ أَيْكُمُ زَادَتْهُ هَذِهِ
إِيمَانًا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
فَزَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَهُمْ
يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ

125. And as for those in whose hearts is disease, it only increases wickedness to their wickedness,^{*124} and they die while they are disbelievers.

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم
مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَتْهُمْ رِجْسًا إِلَى
رِجْسِهِمْ وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ
كَافِرُونَ

***124** As regards the increase and decrease in faith, disbelief and hypocrisy, please refer to E.N.2 of Surah Al-Anfal.

126. Do they not see that they are tried in every year once or twice.^{*125} Then they do not turn

أَوَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُمْ يُفْتَنُونَ فِي
كُلِّ عَامٍ مَّرَّةً أَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ

in repentance, nor do they remember.

لَا يَتُوبُونَ وَلَا هُمْ
يَذْكُرُونَ

*125 That is, during the course of every year such circumstances are created as put to test once or twice their claim to the faith, and these disclose that their profession of Islam was like a counterfeit coin. For instance, some time their faith is tested by:

- (a) A commandment of the Quran which lays some new restriction on their lust or by;
- (b) A demand of the faith that hits hard at their self interests or by;
- (c) an internal dispute which discloses their preference for worldly interests and for their personal, family and clannish relations to Allah, His Messenger and the faith or by;
- (d) A war that requires the sacrifice of their lives, wealth, time and energies. All these tests help bring to the open that filth of hypocrisy that lay hidden in their hearts under the garb of the profession of Islam. Besides, these things increase that filth which had already gathered in their hearts because of their deviations from the implications of the faith.

127. And whenever a surah is revealed, they look at one another (saying): "Does any one see you." Then they turn

وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلَتْ سُورَةً نَّظَرَ
بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ هَلْ
يَرَىٰكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ ثُمَّ

away.*¹²⁶ Allah has turned their hearts because they are a people who do not understand.*¹²⁷

أَنْصَرَفُوا صَرَفَ اللَّهِ قُلُوبَهُمْ
بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ



*126 This happened when the hypocrites had to attend a meeting that was specially held for the recital of some new Surah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite as an address every new Surah before the assembly. The true believers would listen to it very attentively and respectfully. But the hypocrites, who had to attend the meeting to show that they were Muslims, would sit listlessly in the meeting for they had no interest in the recital. But when they would be assured that their attendance had been marked, they would look for an opportune moment to slip away without being seen and noticed.

*127 Allah has turned away their hearts from the Quran, because they do not understand that it is in their own interest to listen to the Quran and to act upon its teachings. These foolish people do not realize that by ignoring the Quran and the Prophet (peace be upon him), they in fact deprive themselves of a great blessing. As they are deeply engaged in their own narrow interests, they do not see that the great knowledge of the Quran and the right guidance of the Prophet (peace be upon him) has the potentiality of making them the leaders of this world, and of bringing salvation to them in the next world. As a result of their folly and neglect of the great blessing, Allah has, in accordance with His law, deprived them of the capacity of making use of this blessing and turned away their hearts from it. That

is why these unfortunate, people do not even feel the great loss they are suffering, while the blessed people are taking full advantage of this great fountainhead of power and strength and are preparing themselves for achieving the greatest success that human beings could ever achieve.

128. There has certainly come to you a Messenger from amongst yourselves. Grievous to him is that you should suffer (any difficulty), concerned over you, for the believers full of kindness, merciful.

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ
أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ
حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ
بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

١٢٨

129. Then if they turn away, (O Muhammad) say: “Sufficient for me is Allah. There is no deity except Him. In Him have I put my trust, and He is the Lord of the Tremendous Throne.”

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ لَا
إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ
وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ

١٢٩





يُونُسَ Younus

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from Ayat 98, in which there is a reference to Prophet *Yunus* (Jonah). The name, as usual, is symbolical and does not indicate that the Surah deals with the story of Prophet Jonah.

Period of Revelation

We learn from traditions, and this is supported by the contents of the Surah itself, that this entire Surah was revealed at Makkah. But there are some people who are of the opinion, that some of its verses were revealed at Al-Madinah. This is, however, a superficial view. The continuity of the theme clearly shows that this does not comprise isolated verses or discourses that were revealed at different times and on different occasions. On the contrary, it is, from the beginning to the end, a closely connected discourse which must have been revealed at one sitting. Besides this, the nature of its theme is itself a clear proof that the Surah belongs to the Makkan period.

Time of Revelation

We have no tradition in regard to the time of it's revelation,

but its subject matter gives clear indication that it must have been revealed during the last stage of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) residence at Makkah. For the mode of the discourse suggests that at the time of its revelation, the antagonism of the opponents of the Message had become so intense that they could not tolerate even the presence of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers among themselves, and that things had come to such a pass as to leave no hope that they would ever understand and accept the Message of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This indicates that the last stage of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life among these people had come, and the final warning like the one in this Surah had to be given. These characteristics of the discourse are clear proof that it was revealed during the last stage of the movement at Makkah.

Another thing that determines more specifically the order of the Surahs of the last stage at Makkah is the mention (or absence) of some open or covert hint about *Hijrat* (emigration) from Makkah. As this Surah does not contain any hint whatsoever about this, it is a proof that it preceded those Surahs which contain it.

Now that we have specified the time of its revelation, there is no need of repeating its historical background because that has already been stated in Surahs Al-Maidah and Al-Anaam.

Subject

This discourse deals with the invitation to the message, admonition and warning. In the very introductory verses, the invitation has been extended like this:

The people consider it a strange thing that this message is being conveyed by a human being and charge him with sorcery, whereas there is nothing strange in it nor has it any connection with sorcery or sooth saying. It simply informs you of two realities. First, Allah, Who has created the universe and manages it is, in fact, your Master and Lord, and He alone is entitled to your worship. The second reality is that after the life in this world, there will be another life in the next world, where you shall have to render full account of the life of this world and be rewarded or punished according to whether you adopted the righteous attitude as required by Him after acknowledging Him as your Masters or acted against His will. Both of these realities, which the Messenger (peace be upon him) is presenting before you, are realities in themselves whether you acknowledge them as such or not. He is inviting you to accept these and regulate your lives in accordance with them. If you accept these, you will have a very blessed end, otherwise you shall meet with evil consequences.

Topics

After the introduction, the following topics have been dealt with in an appropriate order:

1. Proofs of the doctrines of *Tauhid*, providence and life-after-death have been given by such arguments as may satisfy the minds and hearts of those who listen to the message without prejudice and bigotry with the sole intention of safeguarding themselves against deviation and its evil results and not for the sake of seeking opportunities

for useless discussions.

2. Those misunderstandings which were (and always are) hindering people from accepting the doctrines of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter, have been removed and they have been warned to guard against those negligence that stand in their way.

3. Those doubts have been removed and answers to those objections given which were being raised about the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the message brought by him.

4. Graphic descriptions of the life in the Hereafter have been presented in order to warn the people beforehand so that they should mend their ways here and be not sorry afterwards for their conduct in this world.

5. They have been admonished and warned that the life in this world is really a test and a trial, and that the time allowed for it is only up to the last moment of the earthly life, and that this is the only opportunity that shall be given to them for accepting the message and achieving success in the test. Therefore, they should make the best use of the opportunity that has been provided for them by the appointment of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) for their guidance and obtain the true knowledge of the reality from the Quran that is being sent down to him. Otherwise, they shall be remorseful forever and ever.

6. Their attention has been drawn to some of their acts of manifest ignorance and deviation which were the direct result of discarding divine guidance from their lives.

In this connection, the story of Prophet Noah (peace be

upon him) has been related in brief and that of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) in detail in order to impress four things on the minds:

First, as your behavior towards Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is like that of the peoples of Prophets Noah and Moses (peace be upon them) towards them, you should know it for certain that you shall also meet with the same consequences which they met with. Secondly, you should not be deluded into believing by the helpless and weak condition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers, you are witnessing today, that it will always remain like this. You should know that the same All-Powerful Allah Who supported Prophets Moses and Aaron (peace be upon them) is supporting them and that He changes the circumstances in such a sudden and thorough manner that none can foresee it. Thirdly, if you do not make use of the term that has been granted to you by Allah and mend your ways now, and postpone this to the last moment like Pharaoh, your repentance shall not be accepted. Lastly the followers of the Prophet (peace be upon him) have been reassured that they should not lose heart because of the severity of the circumstances created by their opponents, especially at the time when they themselves were in an utterly helpless condition. They have also been given instructions as to how they should carry on their mission under those harsh conditions. Moreover, they have been warned to be on their guard against the kind of behavior which was adopted by the Israelites, when they were rescued by Allah from the tyranny of the People of

Pharaoh.

7. At the end of the Surah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been commanded to make a declaration to this effect: This is the creed and this is the rule of conduct that has been prescribed for me by Allah. No change can be made at all in this. He who will accept this will do so for his own good and the one will reject this will do so at his own peril.

1. Alif. Lam. Ra. These are verses of the wise Book.*1

الرَّحْمَٰنُ
تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ
الْحَكِيمِ

*1 This introductory verse contains a subtle answer to those foolish people who presumed that the discourses, which the Messenger (peace be upon him) was presenting as the Quran, were nothing more than eloquent speeches, poetic lofty thoughts, and some predictions like those of the soothsayers. They are being warned that the Quran is not what they supposed it to be but this is the Book of wisdom, and that if they did not pay due attention to it, they would deprive themselves of wisdom.

2. Is it astonishing for mankind that We have revealed to a man (Muhammad) from among them, (saying) that: "Warn mankind and give good tidings to those who believe that they shall have a

أَمَّا لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا أَنْ أَوْحَيْنَا
إِلَىٰ رَجُلٍ مِّنْهُمْ أَنْ أَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ
وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنَّ لَهُمْ
قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ قَالَ

firm footing with their Lord.”*2 The disbelievers say: “Indeed, this is an evident sorcerer.”*3

الْكَافِرُونَ إِنَّ هَذَا لَسَاحِرٌ



*2 This question has been posed to impress on them that if they considered the matter coolly, they themselves would come to the conclusion that:

(a) There is nothing strange in appointing a man to warn his fellow men of the consequences of neglecting the Message. For it is obvious that a man, and not a jinn nor an angel nor any other being, was the proper messenger for human beings.

(b) There is nothing strange in it that the Creator and Lord of mankind should make arrangements for the guidance of erring human beings; nay, it would have been strange if He had made no such arrangements, and

(c) There is nothing strange in this that real honor and success should come to those who accept the guidance and not to those who reject it.

*3 They dubbed him “evident sorcerer” but did not consider whether the epithet appropriately applied to him or not. It is obvious that the mere fact that he was moving the hearts and influencing the minds of the believers with his eloquence was not a sufficient proof that he was using magic to achieve this object. And it is not difficult at all to distinguish rhetoric of a Messenger from that of an sorcerer for these are quite distinct from each other in their nature, in the objectives for which they are used and in the effect they produce on the lives of the believers. The

irresponsible sorcerer does not care at all whether what he utters is correct, just and righteous because his only object is to influence the hearts of the hearers in order to achieve his own unlawful ends. That is why he does not hesitate at all to utter any false, exaggerated or unjust thing, if it serves his purpose. For his only aim is to produce an emotional effect in order to deceive the people by using an artificially ornamented and exaggerated language rather than to state things of wisdom. As a result of this, his talk is contradictory, imbalanced and unsystematic. As his sole object is self-interest, he abuses his rhetoric for exploitation, or for sowing seeds of discord or for setting one party against the other. Therefore, the sorcerer fails to produce any high moral effects on the lives of the people or to imbue them with any righteous thoughts or to urge them to noble deeds or to bring about any healthy change in their lives; nay, as a result of his magic the people begin to exhibit even worse qualities than they did before.

Thus it is implied that by the application of this criterion, the charge of the unbelievers that “This man is a manifest sorcerer” is refuted, for it means to say to them: You yourselves are witnessing that the talk of this person is wise, systematic, balanced, right and just. Every word he utters is well-thought out and everything he says is most valuable and precious. His eloquence aims at nothing but reform of the people. There is not the least tinge of personal, family, national or any other worldly interest in his talk. His only intention and desire is to warn the people of the consequences of their negligence and to invite them

to the way of their own good. Then consider the effects of his eloquence and you will find that they are quite different from those produced by the rhetoric of the enchanters. The lives of all those who have been influenced by him have been so reformed that they have become models of high moral character and excellent conduct. Therefore, you should consider the matter and decide for yourselves whether he is an enchanter or a prophet.

3. Indeed, your Lord is Allah, He who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then He established Himself upon the Throne, governing all affairs.*4 There is not any intercessor (who can plead with Him) except after His permission.*5 That is Allah, your Lord, so worship Him.*6 Will you then not receive admonition.*7

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ
أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ
يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مَا مِنْ شَفِيعٍ إِلَّا
مِنْ بَعْدِ إِذْنِهِ ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ
رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ أَفَلَا
تَذَكَّرُونَ



*4 This is to impress the fact that after creating the universe, Allah has not cut off connection with it, but has sat Himself upon His Throne and is practically directing and conducting and governing each and every part of it. The foolish people think that after creating the universe, Allah has left it to itself or to others to exploit it as they will. But the Quran refutes this and says that Allah Himself is governing His entire creation and He has kept all the

powers and the reins of government in His own hands and whatever is taking place in each and every part of the universe is happening with His command or permission. In short, He is not only the Creator but also the Ruler, Designer and Supporter of the universe, which is working in accordance with His will. (See also E.Ns 40, 41 of Surah Al-Aaaraf).

***5** This is to emphasize the other side of the matter. He is All-Powerful and there is none who dare make even a recommendation to Him about anything, not to speak of interfering with His management of affairs so as to cause any change in His decrees or in the making or marring of anyone's fate. The most one can do is to make a supplication to Him but it all depends on His will to grant or reject it. There is none so powerful in His Kingdom as to have his own way in anything or to get his recommendations through anyhow.

***6** After stating the bare fact that Allah alone is the Lord, people are being told the kind of conduct that fact demands from them. That is, when Allah alone is your Lord, you should worship Him alone. In this connection, it should also be noted that just as the Arabic word *Rabb* implies three things namely Providence, Supremacy and Sovereignty, likewise the Arabic word *ibadat* also contains three corresponding implications.

(1) **Worship:** As Allah is his sole Providence, man should show his gratitude to Him by worshiping Him alone. He should pray and supplicate to Him and bow his head in reverence to Him and none else.

(2) Servitude: As Allah is the only Supreme Being, man should behave like His servant and slave and should not adopt the attitude of independence towards Him nor should he subject himself to the mental or practical servitude of anyone else.

(3) Obedience: As Allah is his sole Sovereign, man should obey His commands, and follow His law, and he should neither become his own sovereign nor should he acknowledge anyone else as his sovereign.

*7 That is, will you not then understand the implications of the reality that has been expounded? Will you not open your eyes and see the misunderstandings which have been misleading you into wrong ways opposed to Reality? Will you persist in them?

4. To Him is your return all together.*8 The promise of Allah in truth. Indeed, it is He who begins the creation, then He repeats it,*9 that He may reward those who believed and did righteous deeds in justice. And those who disbelieved, they will have a drink of scalding water and painful punishment for what they used to disbelieve.*10

إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا^ط وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ
حَقًّا^ج إِنَّهُ يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ
يُعِيدُهُ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ بِالْقِسْطِ^ج
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِّنْ
حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَكْفُرُونَ



*8 This is the second basic principle of the teachings of

every prophet; “You shall have to return to your Lord and render an account of all you did in this world.” The first principle has been stated in the preceding verse: Allah alone is your Lord: therefore worship only Him.

***9** This sentence contains both a statement and its proof. The statement is, “Allah will again bring to life all human beings,” and the proof is, “This is as easy for Allah as it was to create them the first time.” The one who acknowledges that Allah has originated all creation (and who can deny this except those atheists who accepted the absurd theory of “creation without a creator” merely to get a plea for discarding the religion of the Christian clergy?) cannot consider this as impossible or irrational.

***10** The reason why Allah will again bring the whole mankind to life is to reward the believers and to punish the disbelievers. After showing that this is possible to raise the dead, it is stated that it is absolutely necessary to fulfill the demands of common sense and justice, for full justice cannot be done without this. Common sense and justice demand that those who believe and do righteous deeds should be given their full rewards, and those who disbelieve and reject the truth and do evil deeds, should be duly punished. As every sensible and just person knows that this demand of justice is not fulfilled in its entirety, and cannot be fulfilled, in this world. It is absolutely essential that the entire mankind should again be brought to life for this purpose. (See also E.N. 30, Surah Al-Aaraf and E.N. 105, Surah Hud.)

5. It is He who made the sun a radiance and the moon a light, and measured out for it stages, that you may know the number of the years, and the reckoning (of time). Allah did not create this but in truth. He explains in detail the signs for people who have knowledge.

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ
ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَّرَهُ
مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ
وَالْحِسَابَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ
إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ
لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦﴾

6. Indeed, in the alternation of the night and the day, and what Allah has created in the heavens and the earth, are indeed signs for a people who fear (Allah).^{*11}

إِنَّ فِي اخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا
خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
لآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦﴾

***11** This is the third argument in proof of the doctrine of the life in the Hereafter. It is based on Allah's manifestations in the heavens and on the earth. The greatest and most manifest of these are the sun the moon and the alternation of the night and day, for these are ever present before each and every human being. All these clearly show that the Creator of this great and vast universe is not a child who has made all this for mere fun and will break it up when he is satiated with it. These manifestations of His are a clear proof of the fact that the Creator is All-Wise, for there is a system, a wisdom, a

design and a serious object in each and every particle of His creation. These seem, as it were, to say: When you yourselves learn from the signs and manifestations of His wisdom that He is All-Wise, how can you, then, expect that He will not call man to account after granting him common sense, moral feelings, independent responsibility and authority to exploit His endless resources, and that He will not reward those who make the right use of these and punish those who abuse them?

Thus, it has become obvious that in Ayats 4-6, three arguments have been given in their logical order to present the doctrine of the Hereafter:

(1) The fact of the origination of life in this world is a proof that life in the next world is also possible.

(2) There must be life in the Hereafter, because it is essential for the recompense of the deeds that one does, and of the use or abuse one makes of the moral responsibilities that have been entrusted to man. Therefore, it is the demand of common sense and justice that there must be another world in which one should bear the consequences of his deeds, for this is not possible in this world.

(3) When common sense and justice demand that there must be life in the Hereafter, this need will surely be satisfied, for the Creator of man and the universe is All-Wise, and it cannot be conceived that the All-Wise will not satisfy the demands of common sense and justice.

A serious thinking will show that these are the only possible arguments for the proof of the life in the Hereafter and these suffice, too. After this the only thing that might be

demanded in this connection is that it should be actually demonstrated before man to convince him that this thing is possible, necessary and demanded by the Wisdom of Allah. But it is obvious that this will not be done in this world for this is for the trial of man and not for recompense, and Allah wills to test whether man believes in the Hereafter without seeing it, merely by his reasoning on the right lines. Besides this, the words, “He explains in detail the signs for a people who have knowledge” and “Are indeed signs for a people who fear Allah” are worthy of serious consideration. These words imply this: Allah has in His wisdom spread such signs in each and every manifestation of His as clearly point to the realities that are hidden behind them; but only those people can reach to those realities, who (a) free themselves from the prejudices of ignorance and acquire knowledge from the sources with which Allah has provided man for this purpose, and (b) have the intention of avoiding wrong ways and following the right way.

7. Indeed, those who do not expect the meeting with Us, and are content with the life of the world, and are satisfied with it. And those who are neglectful of Our revelations.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ
 لِقَاءَنَا وَرَضُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
 وَاطْمَأَنُّوا بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ
 آيَاتِنَا غَافِلُونَ ﴿٧﴾

8. Those, their abode will be the Fire because of what they used to earn.^{*12}

أُولَئِكَ مَأْوَهُمُ النَّارُ بِمَا
 كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨﴾

***12** This passage also contains a statement and its proof. The statement is that those who reject the doctrine of the Hereafter shall inevitably go to Hell and its proof is that those who reject or pay no heed to this, commit such evil deeds as deserve nothing less than the fire of Hell. The fact which is supported by the experience of thousands of years, is that those who do not consider themselves responsible and accountable to God in the Hereafter, go astray into wrong ways for lack of any control over themselves, and commit immoralities and fill God's earth with tyranny, chaos and filth and thus merit Hell. This is inevitable. If a man leads his life on the presumption that there is no other life, he will have no fear that he shall have to render a full account of all his deeds in this world. Therefore his sole aim in this life will be to win, by hook or by crook, prosperity, happiness, fame and power in this world. Naturally these materialistic attitudes make people heedless of the signs of Allah and mislead them into wrong ways that lead to Hell. The above argument for the doctrine of the Hereafter is in its nature different from the previous three arguments. This is based on the knowledge gained by human experience while the former were based on rational reasoning. Though here only a hint has been given about it, the same has been stated in detail in other places in the Quran. This is the argument in brief: Human beings cannot adopt individually or collectively the right attitude towards life unless the doctrine of accountability to God is deeply embedded in their hearts. The fact that human beings begin to behave erroneously, if and when their belief in this

doctrine disappears or becomes weak, is borne out by a long experience. Had not the creed of the Hereafter been real, its acceptance or rejection would not have produced the results inevitably and continuously for centuries. The fact that the acceptance of a doctrine should have continuously produced right sort of results, and its denial wrong results, is a clear proof that it is real. Though the premises of the above argument and the conclusion drawn from these are clear and closely connected, there are some people who do not agree with this proposition. They argue their point like this. There are many instances of people who deny the Hereafter and base their moral philosophy and their rule of conduct on atheism and materialism, still they possess high moral characters and abstain from every sort of evil. In short, they are virtuous in their affairs and render great services to the people. But a little thinking will show that this is a weak argument. If we probe into the materialistic philosophies and systems, we shall find that all these lack solid foundations for the moral excellence and practical virtuous deeds; therefore they cannot produce those qualities with which the atheists and the materialists are credited. Indeed no such motivating factors exist in those philosophies as may produce the qualities of righteousness, honesty, trust worthiness, justice, compassion, generosity, sacrifice, sympathy, self control, purity, the fulfillment of duties, obligations and pledges and the like. The only alternative to the doctrines of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter is utilitarianism which might become the basis for a practical moral system, for all the other

philosophies are merely hypothetical and impracticable. It is quite obvious that the motivating power of utilitarianism is very limited because it is incapable of carrying a person farther than utility itself. Therefore the one who believes in this doctrine will consider a virtue a “virtue” only as long as it is useful to his own person, family, society etc. and will direct all his efforts towards promoting their welfare and happiness and will adhere to moral qualities only as long as they are conducive to his own good or to that of his own people. But he will discard these virtues when he is convinced that these will be harmful. That is why a utilitarian does not believe in absolute morality but adopts truth or falsehood, honesty or dishonesty, faithfulness or treachery, justice or injustice, in short, any virtue or vice that may suit the occasion and be useful for his own interests.

Nevertheless, if there be any up-holders of absolute morality from among the disbelievers of Allah and the Hereafter, they could not have gotten these virtues from the doctrine of utilitarianism but from those latent religious influences that might have remained embedded in their hearts without their conscious knowledge. Such a person is, in fact, indebted to religion for his moral excellences, though he may be attributing these to secularism and materialism, for he cannot point out anything, whatsoever, in them that might have motivated those virtues.

9. Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds, their Lord will guide

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ

them because of their faith.
Rivers will flow beneath
them in the Gardens of
Delight.*13

بِأَيْمَانِهِمْ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ
الْأَنْهَارُ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

*13 We should not pass cursorily over this verse and should consider it deeply in the order it has been presented:

(1) Why will they be given Gardens of delight in the life of the Hereafter? This will be because they followed the right way in the life of this world and adopted the right ways in every aspect of life, both as individuals and as a community, and discarded the false and erroneous ways.

(2) How did they obtain at every step, at every turning and at every crossroad the correct criterion of judging between the right and the wrong, the true and the false, the righteous and the erroneous? Then from where did they get the power to remain steadfast on the right way, avoiding scrupulously wrong ways, after getting the right sort of discernment? It was their Lord Who is the real source of everything, Who gave them the guidance and the power of doing good works on every critical occasion.

(3) Why did their Lord give them that guidance and power? He gave them these things because of their faith.

(4) What is that characteristic of the faith which produces the above results? The faith which produces those results does not comprise mere profession but it is that faith which becomes the moving spirit of one's conduct and character and has the power of reforming one's morals and deeds.

In order to illustrate this point, let us consider, in the physical life of man, the case of food that is consumed for

nourishment, health, energy and happiness. It is obvious that these results cannot be produced by the mere taking in of any food, but by that food which is so digested as turns into blood and circulates into every vein to provide energy to every part of the body for its proper functioning. In the same way, in the moral life, guidance, righteous attitude and pure conduct and true success, depend on those right creeds that get deeply embedded in the mind, heart and soul. Otherwise, creeds which are merely professed by the tongue or lie dormant in some corner of the mind and the heart cannot produce such results, for they cannot influence one's conduct, character, way of thinking and attitude towards life for the better. Just as one may eat food and still not obtain those useful results which are produced only if it is digested properly according to the physical laws of God. In the same way, one who professes those right creeds merely with his tongue, but does not make them a part of his mind, heart and soul does not deserve those rewards which are only for those whose deeds correspond to the creeds.

10. Their call therein will be: "Glory be to You, O Allah." And their greeting therein will be: "Peace." And the conclusion of their call will be that: "Praise to Allah, Lord of the worlds."*14

دَعْوَتُهُمْ فِيهَا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ
وَتَحِيَّاتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلَامٌ وَءَاخِرُهُ
دَعْوَتُهُمْ أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ
الْعَالَمِينَ

*14 These facts about the life in Paradise have been stated

in order to make conspicuous the high thinking and the noble qualities of the believers. When they enter Paradise after coming out successful in this worldly test, they will manifest the same high qualities of character that they had in this world. Instead of making urgent and immediate demands for beautiful articles of luxury, musical instruments, wine and women, they will sing hymns of praise to their Lord. This also belies that picture of the life in Paradise that some crooked people have formed of it. The fact is that the noble personalities which the believers build in this world and the high ways of thinking and the excellent moral characters they form in this world and the great and rigid training they give to their feelings, emotions and desires, will become all the more prominent in the pure surroundings and environments of Paradise. That is why they will love it most to sing hymns of praise to Allah and glorify His name just as they did in this world. Besides this, their greatest wish and desire in Paradise will be peace for one another, as it was in their collective life in this world.

11. And if Allah^{*15} were to hasten evil for mankind, just as they seek to hasten good, their term would have been decreed for them. So We leave those who do not expect the meeting with Us, in their transgression wandering blindly.

﴿ وَلَوْ يُعَجِّلُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ الشَّرَّ أَتَعَجَّلَهُمْ بِالْخَيْرِ لَاقْضَىٰ إِلَيْهِمْ أَجْلُهُمْ ۗ فَنَذَرُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴾



***15** After the introductory verses (1-10), the Quran takes up admonition which is the main subject of the Surah. In order to understand this fully we should keep two things in view as its background:

First, a little before its revelation, the continuous horrible famine, which had afflicted Makkah for seven long years and humbled the haughty Quraish, had come to an end. Naturally this had given a blow to idol worship and acted as a stimulus to God worship. For, in their utter helplessness, they had to supplicate to Allah and cry meekly for help. So much so that Abu Sufyan had to approach the Prophet (peace be upon him) with this request: Please pray to Allah to remove this affliction from us. But when the famine was over, and rains began to fall, and prosperity returned, they began to show rebellion and do evil deeds and started their hostile activities against the believers. Thus the hearts that had turned to Allah, again became neglectful of Him. (See Surah An-Nahal, Ayat 113, Surah Al-Mominoon, Ayats 75-77, Surah Ad-Dukhan, Ayats 10-16).

Secondly, the Quran answered the question with which they confronted the Prophet (peace be upon him) whenever he warned them of the consequences of rejecting the truth. They would say” You are always threatening us with Allah’s wrath; why doesn’t the divine torment visit us and why is it being delayed?

Keeping the above background in view, Ayats 11-12 may be expanded like this: Allah does not hasten in punishing and seizing the people for their sins as He hastens in showing

kindness and compassion to them. Do they, then, want Him to hasten His torment for their rebellions, as He hastened to remove famine in answer to their supplications? As this is not Our Way, We give them time to mend their evil ways in spite of their transgressions and rebellions. We send warning after warning and give them respite until their term comes to an end. Then the law of requital comes into force. In contrast to this, their way is the way of mean and narrow minded people. When affliction comes, they remember Allah, begin to cry and call Him meekly, but forget it all during the time of prosperity. Such bad ways as these are leading them to divine torment.

12. And when affliction touches man, he calls upon Us, reclining on his side, or sitting, or standing. Then when We have removed from him his affliction, he goes his way as though he had not called upon Us because of the affliction that touched him. Thus it seems fair to the transgressors that which they used to do.

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا
لِجَنبِهِ أَوْ قَاعِدًا أَوْ قَائِمًا فَلَمَّا
كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ ضُرَّهُ مَرَّ كَأَن لَّمْ
يَدْعُنَا إِلَى ضُرِّ مَسَّهُ كَذَلِكَ
زِينٌ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

13. And indeed, We destroyed the generations before you,^{*16} when they wronged,^{*17} and their messengers came to them

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونََ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا وَجَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ
بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا ﴿١٣﴾

with clear proofs, and they would not believe. Thus do We recompense the people who are criminals.

كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ



*16 The Arabic word *qarn* is commonly used for the people living during the same period. But from the way the Quran has used this word on different occasions, it is evident that by *qarn* is, meant the community which had been invested with power and authority and appointed wholly or partially to the position of leadership of the world. One way in which such a community is destroyed is that it is totally exterminated but there are other forms of its destruction also.

*17 Here the word *zulm* has not been used in its commonly known limited sense, but it covers all sorts of sins that are committed, when people transgress the boundaries of Allah's slavery. (Refer to E.N. 49 of Surah Al-Baqarah).

14. Then We appointed you as successors in the land after them, that We might see how you would act.*18

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لِنَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ



*18 Ayats 13-14 have been pointedly addressed to the Arabs so as to say, "O Prophet (peace be upon him) of Arabia, learn a lesson from the communities that have passed before you. They were given an opportunity for doing good deeds in their time but instead of this they adopted the attitude of transgression and rebellion and

rejected the teachings of the Messengers who had been sent for their guidance. As they failed in Our test, We dismissed them from leadership. Now, O people of Arabia, your turn has come and you have replaced them and have gotten the opportunity for doing the same work under the guidance of Our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). You must understand that you are undergoing the same test in which your predecessors have failed. If you do not want to meet with the end they met, you should make the right use of this opportunity by learning a lesson from their end and by avoiding the errors, which became the ultimate cause of their destruction.

15. And when Our revelations are recited to them as clear evidence, those who do not expect for their meeting with Us, say: “Bring a Quran other than this, or change it.”^{*19} Say: “It is not for me to change it on my own accord. I do not follow but that which is revealed unto me. Indeed, I fear, if I were to disobey my Lord, the punishment of a Great Day.”^{*20}

وَإِذَا تُلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ
 قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا
 أَنْتَ بِقُرْآنٍ غَيْرِ هَذَا أَوْ بَدِّلْهُ
 قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أُبَدِّلَهُ
 مِنْ تِلْقَائِي نَفْسِي إِنْ أَتَّبَعُ إِلَّا
 مَا يُوْحَىٰ إِلَيَّ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ
 عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

***19** They implied two things when they said these words. First, they meant that what Muhammad (peace be upon

him) was presenting as divine revelation was really the product of his own mind but he was ascribing it to Allah merely to make his claim weighty. Secondly, they implied this: If you want to be the leader of your people, present something that may make them prosperous in the world and give up the doctrines of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter and the moral restrictions you are prescribing in your teaching. And if it is not possible, make some amendments in the Quran so that a compromise may be made between you and us on the principle of give and take so that there should be some scope for our *shirk* in your *Tauhid* and for our self worship and for our salvation in the Hereafter, irrespective of what we do in this world. You should also note it well that we cannot accept your absolute morality: therefore you should make an allowance for our prejudices, our rites and customs, our personal and national interests and our desires. We propose that with mutual agreement we should make a list of those religious demands which should be obligatory on us for the fulfillment of Allah's rights, and beyond that we should be free to conduct our worldly affairs in any way we like. This compromise is necessary because we cannot accept your demand that human life in all its aspects should entirely be led in accordance with the implications of the doctrines of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter and the regulations of the Islamic code of life.

*20 This is the answer to the two above mentioned demands: I have no authority of making any alterations in this Book for I am not its author but Allah is the One Who is sending it down to me. Therefore there is no question of

any compromise about it. If you want to accept its way, you will have to accept it as it is; otherwise you are free to reject it.

16. Say: “If Allah had so willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor He would have made it known to you. Surely, I have lived amongst you a life time before this. Have you then no sense.”*21

قُلْ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا تَلَوْتُهُ
عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَدْرَاكُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ
لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ عُمُرًا مِّن قَبْلِهِ
أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ



*21 This is a very strong argument against their accusation that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was himself the author of the Quran but was ascribing it to Allah, and in support of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) claim that it was being sent down to him by Allah, Who was its Author. The argument is this: You yourselves have witnessed the forty years of his life before his appointment to Prophethood. He was born in your own city and passed his boyhood, youth and middle age before your very eyes. He lived among you and had all kinds of relations, social, marital, economic, etc. with you. So much so that no aspect of his life was hidden from you. Did you notice anything in his whole life that might show that he could be the author of this Book? Do you not use your commonsense?

The question posed in the Quran implied two things which were well known to everyone in Makkah about the Prophet (peace be upon him):

First, during the forty years of his life before Prophethood,

he had neither received any education nor training nor sat in any company that should have enabled him to become the author of such a Book as was full of unique things that were unknown to the people around him. No one had ever heard from him anything about the problems that had been dealt with in different Surahs of the Quran. So much so that not even a relative or close friend of his had ever noticed anything in his talk or in anything about him that might have shown any signs of gradual development towards it before he made his great claim to Prophethood when he reached the age of forty. This was a clear proof of the fact that the Quran was not the invention of his own mind and that it must have been sent down to him from outside. For it is impossible for a human being to produce anything like this, all of a sudden and without ever manifesting any signs of its evolution and development in his earlier life. That is why when some intelligent people of Makkah felt the absurdity of this accusation, they began to say that it was some other person who taught these things to him. But this was even more absurd than the first thing because they could not point out specifically a single person in the whole of Arabia, not to say of Makkah, who had the ability of producing such unique things as were contained in the Quran. They also knew that a person of such high caliber could not have remained obscure in some unknown corner for forty years.

The second thing, that had distinguished him during those forty years of his life, was his noble character both from the negative and from the positive aspects. He was never

known to have told a single lie or practiced any kind of deceit, forgery, cunning, craftiness and the like in any way whatsoever, On the other hand, all those people with whom he had come into contact in any capacity bore witness to the fact that he had been truthful, honest, and trustworthy without any blemish whatsoever. As an instance, a most well known historical fact may be cited. Only five years before his Prophethood, the Kaabah was damaged by rains. When they were re-building it, a quarrel arose among the different clans of the Quraish as to who should have the honor of setting Hajr-i-Aswad (the Black Stone) in its proper place. Therefore it was agreed that the one who would be the first to enter into the Haram next morning should arbitrate in the quarrel. Next morning the first person who entered the Haram was Muhammad (peace be upon him). At this all the people cried out with joy, he is an absolutely trust worthy man, and we are fully satisfied with him; he is Muhammad (peace be upon him).” This is how Allah had made that large gathering of the Quraish bear witness to the fact that he was “the trustworthy” before appointing him as His Messenger (peace be upon him). Therefore there was no justification for anyone to accuse the man, who had never told a lie nor ever practiced forgery nor craftiness in his whole life, of ascribing falsely to Allah his own literary creation, and claiming categorically and persistently that it was of divine origin. That is why Allah has asked His Messenger (peace be upon him) to refute their absurd charge by saying, as it were, only this: O my people, use your common sense before

making this absurd accusation, for I am not a stranger or a foreigner among you. I have lived a life time of forty years among you before making a claim that I have received revelation from Allah. How can you expect from my past that I would present the Quran to you as Allah's Book, without gaining knowledge from Him and without His command?" (See Surah Al-Qasas, E.N. 109).

17. So who does greater wrong than he who invents a lie against Allah, or denies His revelations.*²² Indeed, the criminals will not be successful.*²³

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَىٰ
اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ
إِنَّهُمْ لَا يَفْلَحُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ



*²² That is, if these revelations are not from Allah and I myself compose them and present them as revelations from Him, there can be no greater sinner than I am. On the other hand, if these revelations are truly from Allah and you are falsifying these, then there can be no greater sinner than you.

*²³ Some foolish people draw wrong and misleading conclusions from this verse, by a fallacious reasoning. They confine the meanings of *falah* to long life or worldly prosperity or worldly success and argue like this: This verse declares categorically that criminals can never attain success. The converse of this proposition, that is, anyone who is successful cannot be a criminal must also be true. Hence, if a claimant should live a long life after his claim to Prophethood or prosper in the world or his claim receives a

good response in the world from the people, he should be acknowledged as a true prophet. For they argue, if he had been a false prophet he could not have prospered, but would have been killed or starved to death or rendered unsuccessful in his mission, as soon as he had claimed to be a prophet. But even a little thinking will show that this argument is fallacious on the face of it. Firstly, the converse of every proposition is not always true. Secondly, the Quran does not use the word *falah* in this limited sense. Thirdly, Allah deals with the criminals according to His divine law of respite.

Now let us consider the matter in detail. The words “Indeed, the criminals will not be successful”, have not been used, in the context they occur, to prescribe a criterion for judging a true Prophet from a false one, so that if a claimant is successful, he should be accepted, and if he is not, he should be rejected. As a matter of fact, these words have been put in the mouth of the Messenger to make a declaration like this: I know it for certain that the criminals cannot attain (true) success: therefore I cannot commit the crime of making a false claim to Prophethood. But as regards you, I am absolutely sure that you cannot attain true success because you are guilty of falsifying me who is a true Prophet of Allah.

The other thing is that the word *falah* is not used in the limited sense of worldly success, but it has been used to denote the permanent success which never suffers any loss whatsoever irrespective of the fact whether the claimant gains or does not gain any worldly success in the initial

stage. Nay, it is just possible that a false claimant who invites people to misguidance should attain great worldly success and his misguidance might also prosper. This is, however, not success in the terminology of the Quran, but this would be an utter failure. On the other hand, it is also possible that the inviter to the truth should suffer untold afflictions or fall a prey to the persecutions of the transgressors, and leave this world without winning over anyone to the side of the truth, but this will be, in the terminology of the Quran, true success and not a failure.

The other thing that refutes the fallacy of these foolish people is that they do not take into consideration the divine law of respite, according to which the mere fact that a false prophet enjoyed a long prosperous life is not a proof that he was a true prophet. The Quran has made it clear at many places that Allah does not expedite the matter of the punishment of the criminals, but gives them respite to mend their ways; nay, He also lets them loose in their deviation if they abuse that respite and become more corrupt. Sometimes He makes them even more prosperous so that they should fully manifest all the evils they had hidden in their hearts and incur full punishment which they really deserve for their evil deeds. The divine law of respite takes its due course in the case of false prophets as it does in the case of other criminals. And there is no reason why they should be an exception to this. Satan, the greatest of all criminals, has been allowed to practice every kind of deception up to the Day of Judgment, and there is no mention of any exception to this effect that he will not be

allowed to set up a false prophet.

As a last resort, such perverse interpreters of the Quran turn to Ayats 44-47 of Surah Al-Haqqah: If Muhammad had fabricated something himself and ascribed that to Us, We would have seized his hand and cut off his heart's vein. But these cannot serve their purpose, for what they imply is only this: If the true Prophet appointed by Allah were to ascribe any false thing to Allah, he would be seized forthwith. Therefore it is no more than a fallacy to argue from this to the erroneous conclusion that the impostor who is not seized is a true prophet, for this divine principle applies only to a true Prophet and not to an impostor. In order to grasp this point, let us take the instance of the government servants. It is obvious that the rules and regulations which are prescribed for government servants apply only to those who are actually government servants and not to impostors. Those who pretend to be government servants are dealt with according to the criminal code like other criminals and villains and not according to the code of employment. Besides this, the context in which these verses occur clearly shows that these are not laying down any criterion of judging whether a claimant is a true Prophet or an impostor. Moreover, a true Prophet can easily be distinguished from an impostor by his high character, his noble mission and the unique Message he presents. Hence there was no need of setting up such an irrational and unnatural standard of distinguishing a true Prophet from an impostor.

18. And they worship other than Allah that which neither hurts them nor benefits them, and they say: “These are our intercessors with Allah.” Say: “Would you inform Allah of that which He does not know in the heavens, nor in the earth.”*24 Glory be to Him, and High Exalted above all that they associate (with Him).

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا
لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ
وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شَفَعَاؤُنَا
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۚ قُلْ أَتُنَبِّئُونَ اللَّهَ
بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا
فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ سُبْحٰنَهُ وَتَعَالَى
عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ



***24** This is a fine way of saying that no such intercessors exist as can plead their cases with Allah. For if something is not in the knowledge of Allah, it implies that it does not exist at all, for everything that exists anywhere in the heavens and the earth is in His knowledge.

19. And mankind were not but one community, then they disagreed.*25 And if it had not been for a decree that had already gone forth from your Lord, it would have been judged between them in that wherein they disagree.*26

وَمَا كَانَ النَّاسُ إِلَّا أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً
فَاخْتَلَفُوا ۚ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ
سَبَقَتْ مِن رَّبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ
بَيْنَهُمْ فِيمَا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ



***25** See E.N. 230 of Surah Al-Baqarah and E.N. 24 of Surah Al-Anaam.

*26 The decree that Allah has ordained is that the *reality* that shall be kept hidden from man's senses in order to test whether he recognizes this by using his common sense, intelligence, conscience and intuition, and if he does not, he shall be allowed to tread the wrong ways he chooses. That is why their differences about the reality are not being resolved by uncovering it today.

This thing has been stated here to remove a common misunderstanding about the diversity of religions in the world.

At that time, there was a confusion in the minds of the people (and is even today) concerning this. They said: Different people profess different religions, and the followers of each religion claim that their religion alone is the true one. How may then a seeker of truth judge which one of these is the true religion? The answer is: In the beginning all mankind had only one religion, and that was the true religion. Then people strayed away from it and invented different religions of their own with different creeds and ways. Now if you desire that Allah Himself should uncover the truth and present it to you to enable you to decide which religion is the true one, you should know that this will not be done in this life, because you are required to decide this by using your common sense and intelligence. This worldly life is a trial to see whether or not you yourselves recognize the truth by using your common sense and intelligence.

20. And they say: "Why is not sent down to him a sign

وَيَقُولُونَ لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ

from his Lord.”*27 Say, (O Muhammad): “The unseen is only for Allah, so wait you. Indeed, I am with you among those who wait.”*28

ءَايَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا
الْغَيْبُ لِلَّهِ فَانْتَظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ
مِنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ

*27 That is, though they demanded a sign as a proof of the fact that he was a true Prophet (peace be upon him) and was presenting true revelations, this was not based on a genuine desire for recognizing and accepting the truth but was merely a pretext for rejecting it. For they had no intention of molding their habits, their morality, their social system, in short, reforming every aspect of their life in accordance with the implications of the acceptance of the Message of the Prophet (peace be upon him). As they did not intend to believe in it, they would say even after seeing a sign: No sign had been shown to them. Obviously, they would not give up that freedom which they were enjoying in following their desires and lusts, by accepting the unseen (the creeds of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter), which would bind them to the absolute moral principles.

*28 That is, I have presented before you what Allah has sent down to me. But what He has not sent down to me is unseen, both for me and for you, and it is entirely with Allah to reveal or not to reveal it. Now if you will not believe unless Allah sends down what He has not sent down, you may wait for it: I, too, shall wait and see whether your persistent demand is or is not satisfied.

21. And when We cause mankind a taste of mercy after adversity had afflicted them, behold, they have some plotting^{*29} against Our revelations. Say: "Allah is more swift in plotting." Surely, Our messengers write down that which you plot.^{*30}

وَإِذَا أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ بَعْدِ
ضَرَّاءَ مَسَّتْهُمْ إِذَا لَهُم مَّكْرٌ فِي
ءَايَاتِنَا قُلِ اللَّهُ أَسْرَعُ مَكْرًا إِنَّ
رُسُلَنَا يَكْتُبُونَ مَا تَمْكُرُونَ



***29** They practiced deceptions regarding the sign of the famine that had been inflicted on them (Ayats 11, 12). This verse alludes to the same, as if to say, "How dare you demand a sign again, whereas recently the sign of the famine has been shown to you? At that time you invoked the help of your deities but in vain, though you had set them up as intercessors with Allah and believed that offerings to their shrines would prove very effective in removing the famine. But you yourselves learned by the first hand experience that those so called gods possessed no power at all. Therefore when you were convinced that all power belongs to Allah alone, you turned to Him and began to invoke His help. This experience ought to have convinced you of the truth of the Message of Muhammad (peace be upon him) for this was the very fundamental thing which he was teaching. Instead of learning a lesson from this sign, you began to practice deceptions to explain it away, as soon as the famine was over and there had come the blessed rainfall. You invented many explanations (deceptions)

concerning the causes of the famine and its subsequent end in order to escape from the doctrine of *Tauhid* and stick to your shirk. The verse is meant to declare that no sign would convince such people as those who had not benefited from the great sign of the famine. Therefore there was no use of showing any sign to them.

*30 “Allah is more swift in plotting” means this: If you practice deceptions in order to explain away the sign of the famine so that you might find excuses to evade the implications of its acceptance in order to continue your rebellious attitudes. Allah is more swift in carrying out His plans to outdo your deceptive methods. He will leave you free to move in your wrong ways. He will even bestow upon you the worldly prosperity, which will so delude you that you will forget that you were being closely watched. And you will commit evil deeds with apparent immunity and enjoy yourselves to your heart’s content. But His angels will go on keeping a full and complete record of your deeds, which will be presented for your prosecution after your death.

22. He it is who makes you travel through the land and the sea, until when you are in the ships, and they sail with them with a fair breeze, and they rejoice therein, there comes to them a stormy wind, and the waves come upon them from all

هُوَ الَّذِي يُسِيرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ
وَالْبَحْرِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي
الْفُلْكِ وَجَرَيْنَ بِهِمْ بِرِيحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ
وَفَرِحُوا بِهَا جَاءَتْهَا رِيحٌ عَاصِفٌ
وَجَاءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ

sides, and they think that they are surrounded therein. (Then) they call upon Allah, making (their) faith pure for Him (saying): “If You deliver us from this, we shall surely be of the thankful.”*31

وَضُنُوعًا أَنَّهُمْ أَحْيَطَ بِهِمْ دَعَاؤُا
اللَّهِ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ لَئِن
أُنجَيْتَنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ
مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

*31 The fact that even the most obdurate mushriks and the most hardened atheists who forget Allah when things go well with them, begin to invoke Allah’s help when they are pressed hard from all sides and despair of help from any other quarter, is a clear evidence that there is the All Powerful Allah Who is controlling each and every thing in the universe. (Refer to E.N. 29, Surah Al-Anaam).

23. Then when He has delivered them, behold, they rebel in the earth without right. O mankind, your rebellion is only against your own selves. An enjoyment of the life of the world, then unto Us is your return, then We shall certainly inform you of what you used to do.

فَلَمَّا أُنجَاهُمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَبْغُونَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ يَأْتِيهَا
النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا بَغْيُكُمْ عَلَىٰ
أَنفُسِكُمْ مَتَّعَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَنُنَبِّئُكُمْ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. The example of the life of the world is only

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ

as water that We send down from the sky, then by its mingling arises the produce of the earth, which men and cattle eat. Until when the earth has taken on its ornaments and is beautified, and its people think that they have powers of disposal over it, there reaches to it Our command by night or by day, so We make it a harvest clean mown, as if it had not flourished the day before.*31a

Thus do We explain the revelations for a people who give thought.

أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ حَتَّى إِذَا أَخَذَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ أَهْلُهَا أَنَّهُمْ قَادِرُونَ عَلَيْهَا أَتَاهَا أَمْرُنَا لَيْلًا أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَاهَا حَصِيدًا كَأَن لَّمْ تَغْنَ بِالْأَمْسِ ۚ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ



*31a The parable is meant to warn those who are utterly neglectful of the life-after-death because of their apparent success in this worldly life. They have been likened to the owners of the land who were happy to presume that the crop was ripe and luxuriant and it was within their power to reap it and enjoy the produce of their harvest. They were so sure of this that they began to enjoy the fore-taste of the ripened crops, unaware of the decree of Allah which destroyed their crops and all their great expectations also. Likewise those who neglect to make preparations for the life-after-death will find to their sorrow that all they did to

earn for the enjoyments of this world was, in relation to the next world, like the ripe crop that was destroyed all of a sudden.

25. And Allah calls to the abode of peace,^{*32} and He guides whom He wills to a straight path.

وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُوا إِلَىٰ دَارِ السَّلَامِ
وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ
مُسْتَقِيمٍ

***32** That is, Allah invites to the way that leads to the abode of peace in the Hereafter.

“The abode of peace” here means Paradise, where there will be no fear whatsoever of any loss, calamity, sorrow, pain and trouble.

26. For those who do good is the best (reward) and more.^{*33} Neither darkness shall cover their faces, nor ignominy. Those are the companions of the Garden. They will abide therein forever.

لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ
وَزِيَادَةٌ وَلَا يَرْهَقُ وُجُوهَهُمْ قَتَرٌ
وَلَا ذِلَّةٌ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ
هُم فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

***33** That is, Allah by His grace will give to those who did good deeds more than their due reward.

27. And those who have earned evil deeds, the recompense of an evil deed is the like thereof,^{*34} and

وَالَّذِينَ كَسَبُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ جَزَاءُ
سَيِّئَةٍ بِمِثْلِهَا وَتَرَهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ مَّا

ignominy will cover them. They will not have from Allah any defender. It will be as if their faces are covered^{*35} with pieces from the night, so dark (they are). Those are the companions of the Fire. They will abide therein forever.

هُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ كَأَنَّمَا
أَغْشَيْتَ وُجُوهَهُمْ قِطْعًا مِّنَ
الَّيْلِ مُظْلِمًا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ
النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ



***34** That is, in contrast to the additional rewards to the good people, those who earned evil deeds, shall be punished only in proportion to their crimes. (See E.N. 110 of An-Namal).

***35** It shall be that kind of gloom that overspreads the faces of the criminals when they are caught, and they despair all hopes of escape.

28. And the day (when) We will gather them all together, then We will say to those who ascribed partners (unto Us): “(Remain in) your places, you and your (so called) partners (of Allah). Then We will separate, one from the other.^{*36} And their partners will say: “It was not us that you used to worship.”

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ
لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا مَكَانَكُمْ أَنْتُمْ
وَشُرَكَاءُكُمْ فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَقَالَ
شُرَكَاءُهُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ إِيَّانَا تَعْبُدُونَ



***36** Some commentators are of the opinion that the original words of the text mean this: We will cut off every kind of

connection and relation between them so that they are not able to show any concern for one another. But these meanings are opposed to the Arabic usage, according to which they mean: We will distinguish them from one another, or We will cause a distinction among them. That is why these have been translated like this: Then We will separate, one from the other. That is, the mushriks and their deities shall stand in front of each other and recognize their mutual and respective positions. The mushriks shall come to know the whole truth about those whom they worshiped and their deities will learn everything about their worshipers.

29. “So sufficient is Allah for a witness between us and you, that We indeed were unaware of your worship.”^{*37}

فَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ
 إِن كُنَّا عَنْ عِبَادَتِكُمْ
 لَغَافِلِينَ



^{*37} That is, their deities, the angels, the jinns, the spirits, the forefathers, the prophets, the saints, the martyrs and all others, whom they had set up as partners with God and rendered those rights to them which belonged to God alone, will dissociate themselves from their worshipers and declare: We did not know at all that you worshiped us, for no reverence, no respect, no honor, no admiration, no regard, no adoration, no homage that you paid to us; no prayer, no supplication, no request, no offering, no gift you presented to us; and no praise, no prostration, no bowing down, no remembrance, no religious service, or ceremony

or ritual you made in our name ever reached us.

30. Thereupon, every soul shall experience (the recompense of) that which it did in the past, and they will be brought back to Allah, their rightful Lord, and lost from them is that which they used to invent.

هٰنَالِكَ تَبْلُوٓا۟ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا
اَسْلَفَتْ ۗ وَرُدُّوٓا۟ اِلَى اللّٰهِ مَوْلٰهُمُ
الْحَقِّ ۗ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُوٓا۟
يَفْتُرُوۡنَ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. Say (O Muhammad): “Who provides for you from the sky and the earth, or who owns hearing and sight, and who brings forth the living from the dead, and brings forth the dead from the living, and who disposes the affairs.” They will say: “Allah.” Then say: “Will you not then fear (Allah).”

قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ
وَالْاَرْضِ اَمَّنْ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ
وَالْاَبْصَرَ وَمَنْ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ
الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ
الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يُدَبِّرُ الْاَمْرَ
فَسَيَقُولُوۡنَ اللّٰهُ ۗ فَقُلْ اَفَلَا
تَتَّقُوۡنَ ﴿٣١﴾

32. Such then is Allah, your Lord in truth.^{*38} So what else is there, after the truth, except error. How then are you turned away.^{*39}

فَذٰلِكُمْ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ الْحَقُّ ۗ فَمَاذَا
بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ اِلَّا الضَّلٰلُۗ۾ ۗ فَاِنَّ
تُصْرَفُوۡنَ ﴿٣٢﴾

***38** That is, as you yourselves admit that Allah alone is your real Provider, Owner and Master, He alone is your true Lord, and, therefore, entitled to your servitude and worship. How have you, then, made others as partners with Him?

***39** It should be kept in mind that these questions have been posed to the common people: therefore they are not being asked, “How are you turning away?” but “How are you turned away” The passive voice clearly shows that there must be some person (or persons) who was turning away the people from the right direction to the wrong one. That is why this appeal is being made to the people: Why are you blindly following those who are misguiding you? Why don't you use your own common sense? When you yourselves admit the truth about Allah, why don't you consider the fact that you are being turned away from Him?

This question has been posed at many places in the Quran to bring home the truth to the common people, but at every place the passive voice has been employed in order to keep back the names of the misguiding ones so that their followers should consider the matter coolly and objectively. This also contains a valuable piece of advice for those engaged in propagation work. By avoiding the names of the misguiding ones, the Quran has taken away a very strong weapon from the hands of those, who could otherwise incite the followers that their revered leaders were being made the target of ridicule and criticism.

33. Thus is the word of your Lord proved true against those who disobeyed, that they will not believe.*40

كَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى
الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ



***40** That is, this Word of your Lord has come true that those who have made up their minds that they would not believe in any case would never believe because of their obduracy, even if the truth were to be presented before them with very plain and clear arguments.

34. Say: “Is there of your (Allah's so called) partners, any who originates the creation, then repeats it.”*41
Say: “Allah originates the creation, then He repeats it. How then, are you being turned away.”*42

قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَبْدُوُ
الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ ۚ قُلِ اللَّهُ يَبْدُوُ
الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ ۗ فَأَنْتُمْ تُؤْفَكُونَ



***41** It is to be noted that the answers to the questions posed in this and the following verse have been put in the mouth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in contrast to the answers posed in the preceding verses. This is because the mushriks themselves believed, and therefore could not deny, that Allah originated the creation and that their gods had no share in this. But they would not admit that He could or would bring it back, for they could not in that case reject the doctrine of the life-after-death, though it was obvious that the One Who originated the creation could

also bring it back again, and not any one of those who had not originated it. That is why the answer has been put in the mouth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he should declare it openly and boldly that Allah originated the creation and could and would bring it back again.

***42** This question has been posed to bring home to them the folly of the doctrine of shirk. The argument is this: When Allah originates the creation and has the power to bring it back again, where do the gods you have set up come in? If you think a little, you yourselves will realize that there is no room for anyone in the universe for any claim or title to your reverence or worship or servitude.

35. Say: "Is there of your (Allah's so called) partners, any who guides to the truth."^{*43} Say: "Allah guides to the truth. Is then He, who guides to the truth, more worthy to be followed, or he who guides not unless that he is guided. Then, what is with you. How do you judge."

قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَهْدِي
إِلَى الْحَقِّ قُلِ اللَّهُ يَهْدِي لِلْحَقِّ
أَفَمَنْ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ
أَنْ يُتَّبَعَ أَمْ لَا يَهْدِي إِلَّا
أَنْ يَهْدِيَ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ
تَحْكُمُونَ



***43** This is one of the series of questions that have been posed to refute the doctrine of shirk and to establish the doctrine of *Tauhid*. Besides, it is also meant to focus attention on the importance of the guidance to the truth, which is one of the greatest human necessities. For it is

obvious that the human needs and requirements are not confined to food, clothes and the like necessities of the physical life nor to its protection from losses, distresses, calamities etc. But one of man's needs (nay, his greatest need) is to have the knowledge of the right way of life so that he may, on the whole, achieve success in it. It is obvious that in order to be successful in life, man should have the correct knowledge of the use he should make of and the way he should employ his own physical, mental and spiritual powers and capabilities and natural resources. He should also know the nature and the kind of behavior he should adopt towards other human beings (and as a whole, towards the system of the universe in which he has to inevitably live and work), with whom he comes into contact in different capacities. The Quran calls that right way "The Truth" and the guidance that leads to that way, "The Guidance to the Truth".

Now let us turn to the question that has been posed in this verse. The Quran asks the mushriks and all those people who reject the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him): Is there any of the partners and gods you have set up besides Allah, who guides you to the truth or can do so? Obviously the answer to this will surely be in the negative for neither of the classes of gods is capable of this: First, let us consider this with regard to those gods and goddesses and living or dead human beings who are worshiped as gods. Though it is true that people turn to them for the fulfillment of their needs or for their protection from calamities in some supernatural way, yet they never turn to

them to seek guidance to the truth nor have they themselves ever sent it nor do their devotees ever claim that their deities teach them the principles of morality, sociology, culture, economics, politics, law, justice and the like.

Then there is the case of those who make rules, regulations and laws which others accept and follow. It is true that such persons are accepted and followed as leaders, but the pertinent question is this: Are they the real guides to the truth, or are they capable of becoming guides to it? Does any one of them possess the kind of knowledge that comprehends all those truths that are a prerequisite for formulating right principles for the guidance of human life? Can anyone of them have full vision of the vast field of activities over which the human problems spread? Is there anyone of them who is absolutely free from the weaknesses, prejudices, personal or communal interests, which become hindrances to the formulation of just laws? If the answers to these questions are in the negative (and obviously no one in his senses can answer otherwise), how can then people with such limitations be expected to be the source of guidance to the truth?

In the light of the above questions, we are able to grasp the signification of the question that has been posed in the Quran: Is there any of the partners you have set up with Allah who can guide you to the truth?

This shows conclusively that Allah alone has the power to satisfy all the human needs and requirements, which may be divided into two categories. First, man stands in need of a provider, a protector, a being to hear and grant his

prayers, in short, a permanent support to which he may turn whenever other supports should fail him. The above question inevitably leads to the conclusion that there is no god other than Allah who can fulfill these needs. The other human needs and requirements demand that there should be a guide to lay down such principles for the conduct of human life in its entirety as should be obeyed with perfect confidence and peace of mind. The question posed in Ayat 35 implies that that “Being” can be none other than Allah. Therefore there remains no argument in support of the point that the principles of culture, morality, and politics should be based on shirk or secularism except that one should persist in obduracy and obstinacy.

36. And most of them follow not but conjecture.*⁴⁴ Indeed, conjecture can be of no avail against the truth, at all. Indeed, Allah is All Aware of what they do.

وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا إِنَّ
الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ

*⁴⁴ It means that neither the authors of religion, nor philosophers, nor law makers based their opinions on knowledge but on mere guesswork and conjecture. Likewise, those who followed these religious or worldly leaders did it on the mere assumption that their authors were great people; therefore they must be right. That was why their forefathers and the common people followed them.

37. And this Quran is not such as could be produced

وَمَا كَانَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ أَنْ

(by anyone) other than Allah. But (it is) a confirmation of that which was before it, and an explanation of the Book,^{*45} there is no doubt wherein, from the Lord of the worlds.

يُفْتَرَى مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ
تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ
وَتَفْصِيلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ
مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

***45** The arguments contained in Ayat 37 may be elaborated like this:

(1) The Quran confirms that which had been revealed before and presents the same fundamental principles and teachings which were taught by the Prophets who came before Muhammad (peace be upon him). Had he invented the Quran, he would have made additions to the truths of the former books in order to make himself conspicuous.

(2) The Quran explains in detail and amplifies the fundamental principles and teachings contained in “the Book”, that is, the Scriptures brought by the former Prophets, and adds more evidence and explanations to it so that it may be better understood and practiced.

38. Or do they say: “He (Muhammad) has invented it.” Say: “Then bring forth a surah like it, and call upon (for help) whomsoever you can, other than Allah, if you are truthful.”^{*46}

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا
بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَنْ
أَسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
صَادِقِينَ

***46** There is a general misunderstanding that the challenge

of the Quran to produce a book, nay, a Surah like this, is in regard to its eloquent, pure and unique literary excellence. This has been the natural result of the way in which discussions have been carried on to prove the miracle of the Quran. But the Quran is far above this that it should claim to be a unique and matchless book because of its excellent diction. There is no doubt at all that it is unique and matchless in this respect also, but the real basis of its claim and challenge, that no human brain is capable of producing a book like this, is its subject matter and teachings. The Quran itself has stated at different places those aspects which are a sure proof of its revelation from Allah and the refutation of the false aspersions that it was a human invention. This has already been explained at appropriate places and will be explained in the succeeding pages. (See E.N. 26, 27 of Surah At-Toor).

39. Nay, but they have denied that which they could not comprehend in knowledge, and has not yet come to them its interpretation. Thus did deny those before them. Then see how was the end of the wrong doers. ^{*47}

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا
بِعِلْمِهِ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِهِمْ تَأْوِيلُهُ
كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الظَّالِمِينَ



***47** They could declare the Quran as forged on two grounds only, but neither of these existed: First, if they had had a proof that the Book had not been revealed by Allah,

but had been forged by someone; secondly, that the truths enunciated in it and the information given in it were false. But no one could say on the basis of true knowledge that the Book had been really forged and then ascribed to God: nor could anyone say that he had peeped behind the curtains of the unseen and discovered that there was not One God (as taught in this Book) but many gods in the heavens: nor could anyone assert on the basis of true knowledge that there were no angels, no revelations and no God, but these were mere fictions that had been invented by some fertile imagination: nor had anyone witnessed by actually visiting the Hereafter that the information about rewards and punishments was utterly wrong. But in spite of the lack of any proof to the contrary; they were challenging the genuineness of the Quran with the boldness and impudence of one who had made a thorough research into the matter and proved it to be false.

40. And among them are those who believe in it, and among them are those who do not believe in it. And your Lord is Best Aware of the corrupters. *48

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِۦ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهِۦ ۗ وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ
بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ

*48 Those who do not believe in the Quran have been called “corrupters” or mischief makers because their rejection is not based on any sound reason but on prejudice and selfishness and because it prevents others from believing in it. “And your Lord is Best Aware” because there is nothing that is hidden from Him. They can deceive the people that

they are rejecting the Quran because they are convinced that it is not the Book of God, but they cannot deceive Allah that they are doing this with good intentions for he knows that it is because of their mischief. They are obdurate and obstinate and are suppressing the voice of their consciences and hearts: they deliberately shut their ears and minds against the truth and prefer their worldly interests, their fancies, their lusts and desires to it. That is why they cannot be regarded as innocent sinners, but they are, in fact, the mischief makers.

41. And if they deny you, then say: “For me are my deeds, and for you are your deeds. You are disassociated of what I do, and I am disassociated of what you do.”*49

وَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ لِي عَمَلِي
وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ أَنْتُمْ بَرِيءُونَ
مِمَّا أَعْمَلُ وَأَنَا بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا
تَعْمَلُونَ



*49 This is to say, I don't want to enter into useless discussions and disputes with you on this score. If I am an impostor, I alone shall bear the consequences for it; and if you are rejecting the truth, you are not doing any harm to me but only to yourselves.

42. And among them are those who listen to you. So can you make the deaf to hear, even though they do not apprehend.*50

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ
أَفَأَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ وَلَوْ كَانُوا
لَا يَعْقِلُونَ



***50** Though this and the succeeding verse have been addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), these are meant to reprove those people who were not paying attention to the Message. For they only heard the sounds of the words he spoke to them, just as the animals hear the sound of the words, but pay no attention to understand what is said to them. This was because they were prejudiced against him and had already decided that they would not acknowledge anything, however, reasonable that may be, if it went against the creeds and ways they had inherited, and against their own desires, lusts, and interests. Likewise those people who live like animals hear the sounds of his words, but pay no attention to their meaning for they are not interested in anything other than eating, drinking and making merry. They are so engaged in and intoxicated with the gratification of their lusts that they never bother to find out whether what they are doing is right or wrong. All such people are deaf to the Message, though they might have ears for other things.

43. And among them are those who look towards you. So can you guide the blind, even though they do not see. ^{*51}

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنْتَ
تَهْدِي الْعُمْىَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا
يُبْصِرُونَ



***51** Here again they may be likened to animals which see with their eyes but cannot perceive anything beyond what appears on the surface. Likewise those people saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions, but did

not perceive their pure life for they did not have the true vision to see the wonderful change that was coming in the lives of those who had listened to and accepted the Message. As has been pointed out in E.N. 50, though these verses were addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), they were really meant to reprove and admonish the disbelievers in a subtle manner so as to arouse their dormant faculties of hearing and seeing and open these for the reception and acceptance of the rational and sympathetic Message. In order to understand the wisdom of this indirect method of admonition, let us take the example of two righteous friends. One of them who lived among corrupt people did his very best to convey the righteous message both by precept and by practice. He set the model of the highest moral conduct and character before them, and urged them in a sincere and sympathetic manner to consider their own moral condition, and admonished them in a very sincere and rational manner to make them realize that they were living in a very corrupt moral state, and advised them to adopt the right way of life. But none of them would pay any attention to his admonition nor learn any lesson from his pure life. Suppose his friend came there at that time and said: Why are you giving advice to these deaf people and showing the way to these blind ones, who have no ears for good things and no eyes for the right way? It is obvious that these words would not have been uttered by way of dissuading the first friend from doing his reform work but for arousing the dormant faculties of the corrupt people by this subtle indirect method.

44. Indeed, Allah does not wrong mankind at all, but mankind wrong themselves.*52

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا
وَلَكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ



*52 “Allah does not wrong mankind” because He gives them ears to hear, eyes to see and hearts to feel and ponder, and everything that is required to enable them to discriminate between right and wrong, truth and falsehood. But it is “But mankind wrong themselves” by refusing to make the right and proper use of their faculties and by following their lusts and enjoying the things of this world. Naturally this has made their eyes so blind and their ears so deaf and their hearts so dead that they are incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong, good and bad, for their conscience has also become dead.

45. And the day (when) He will gather them, (it will be) as if they had not stayed (in the world) but an hour of the day.*53 They will recognize each other. Ruined indeed will be those who denied the meeting with Allah, and they were not guided.*54

وَيَوْمَ تَحْشُرُهُمْ كَأَن لَّمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا
سَاعَةً مِّنَ النَّهَارِ يَتَعَارَفُونَ
بَيْنَهُمْ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا
بِلِقَاءِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ



*53 That is, when they will enter the Hereafter and contrast its eternal life with the transitory life they lived in this

world, they will realize that their past life was nothing in comparison with the eternal future life of the Hereafter. Then they will see clearly that it was a big folly to spoil the eternal life for the sake of transitory joys and paltry gains of the world.

*54 They were losers because they forgot that one day they would have to present themselves before Allah and as a result of this disbelief they committed evil deeds.

46. And whether We show you (O Muhammad) some of that which We promise them, or We cause you to die, still unto Us is their return, then Allah is a witness over what they are doing.

وَأَمَّا نُزِينَكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي
نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَإِلَيْنَا
مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ اللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَىٰ مَا
يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

47. And for every nation is a messenger.*55 Then when their messenger comes, it will be judged between them with justice, and they will not be wronged.*56

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ
رَسُولُهُمْ قُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ
وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

*55 Here the word *ummat* does not merely mean a nation or a community but includes all those people whom the message of a Messenger reaches after his appointment, even though he may not be alive among them. More than this: as long as his teachings remain intact and within the reach of everyone to ascertain what they really are, all such people will be treated and judged as his *ummat* and their

cases decided with justice in accordance with Ayat 47. According to this standard, all the people of the world are the ummat of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and will remain so, as long as the Quran continues to be published in its original and complete form as today. That is why it has not been said, “There is a Messenger in every ummat” but “There is a Messenger for every ummat.”

*56 That is, when the message of a Messenger reaches a people, they should know that henceforth they are on trial and that no excuse would be accepted that they were ignorant of it. Then judgment is passed on them with scrupulous justice. Those, who accept the message and mend their way in accordance with it, are declared to be worthy of Allah’s blessings, and those who reject it are doomed to a torment that may be inflicted both in this world and in the next world or only in the Hereafter.

48. And they say: “When will this promise be (fulfilled), if you are truthful.”

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

49. Say: (O Muhammad): “I have no power for myself to harm, nor to benefit, except that which Allah wills.*57 For every nation there is a term (appointed). When their term is reached, then neither can they delay (it) an hour, nor can they advance.”*58

قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ إِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ فَلَا يَسْتَعْجِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

***57** This is to say, I never said that I will sit in judgment on you and inflict torment on those who do not believe in me. Therefore, I am not in a position to tell when the threat will be made good. As the threat has been held out by Allah, He will pass His judgment on you when He wills, and in whatever way He wills, for everything depends on His will.

***58** That is, Allah passes His judgment on individuals and communities after the expiry of the term that He Himself has set and He alone knows how long it lasts for a community. He is not hasty in giving rewards or punishments. When He sends His Messenger to deliver His Message, He allows sufficient time to each individual and to each community to consider it and ponder over it and mend his (or its) way, during the appointed term. The period of the term may extend to centuries in the case of a community and He knows best how long it should be.

When that term, which is based on justice, expires, and that person or community does not repent of its rebellious conduct, then Allah passes His judgment. When the time of the judgment comes, it is neither advanced nor delayed even by a single hour.

50. Say: “Do you see, if His punishment should come to you by night or by day, what (part) of it would the criminals seek to hasten.”

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُهُ
بَيِّنًا أَوْ نَهَارًا مَاذَا يَسْتَعْجِلُ مِنْهُ
الْمُجْرِمُونَ

51. Is it then, when it has befallen, you will believe in

أَتُمْ إِذَا مَا وَقَعَ ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ

it. What, now (you believe). And indeed, you have been hastening it on.

ءَأَلَّنَ وَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ



52. Then it will be said to those who had wronged: “Taste the enduring punishment. Have you been recompensed except for what you used to earn.”

ثُمَّ قِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا
عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ هَلْ تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ



53. And they ask information of you (O Muhammad), (saying): “Is it true.” Say: “Yes, by my Lord, indeed it is truth. And you can not escape.”

۞ وَيَسْتَنْبِئُونَكَ أَحَقُّ هُوَ قُلٌّ
إِىٰ وَرَبِّىٰ إِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ
بِمُعْجِزِينَ



54. And if that each soul who had wronged had all that is on the earth, it would offer it in ransom (it will not be accepted). And they will feel remorse when they see the punishment.^{*59} And the judgment between them will be with justice, and they will not be wronged.

وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِكُلِّ نَفْسٍ ظَلَمَتْ مَا
فِى الْأَرْضِ لَأَفْتَدَتْ بِهِ
وَأَسْرَوْا النَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا رَأَوْا
الْعَذَابَ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ
بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ



***59** “And they will feel remorse”. When all of a sudden, they face the torment on the Day, which they had denied throughout their lives, and on that presumption had gone

on doing wrong deeds. Not only this: they will also feel very sorry that they had denied the Messengers and brought baseless charges against them, who had warned them of it. Therefore when they witness it against all their expectations, they will find the ground slipping from under their feet and will feel utterly helpless and guilty in their minds because of the remembrance of their wrong doings and of the pricking of their conscience. In short, their condition will be that of a gambler, who turns a deaf ear to the counsel of his well wishers and stakes his all on mere speculation and goes bankrupt. But such a person has to blame none but himself only for his sad plight.

55. No doubt, surely to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. No doubt, surely the promise of Allah is true. But most of them do not know.

أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

56. It is He who gives life and causes death, and to Him you will be returned.

هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَإِلَيْهِ
تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

57. O mankind, there has indeed come to you an advice from your Lord, and a healing for what (disease) is in the breasts, and a guidance and a mercy for the believers.

يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ
مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا
فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ
لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

58. Say: “In the bounty of Allah and in His mercy, so in that let them rejoice.” It is better than what (the riches) they accumulate.

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ
فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا
يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. Say: (O Muhammad), “Have you seen what Allah has sent down for you of rizq,^{*60} then you have made of it unlawful and lawful.”^{*61} Say: “Has Allah permitted you, or do you invent a lie against Allah.”^{*62}

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ
مِّنْ رِّزْقٍ فَجَعَلْتُمْ مِّنْهُ حَرَامًا
وَحَلَالًا قُلْ ءَأَلَّهُ أَذِنَ لَكُمْ
أَمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

***60** It has been purposely avoided to translate the Arabic word *rizq* into provisions, for it is liable to create a very serious misunderstanding regarding the implications of this verse. For in this sense *rizq* will be confined to food and eatables only, whereas it is very comprehensive in its meaning and it covers everything that Allah has given to man, food, children, knowledge, law etc. Instances can be cited from the Quran and the traditions in support thereof. Thus it has become, obvious that according to this verse, in Allah’s sight it is wrong and sinful to adopt the attitude of independence towards every kind of *rizq*, including articles of food.

Thus it has become clear that the consequences of this misunderstanding about the meaning of *rizq* are far-reaching. As a result of this limited meaning of *rizq*, it will

be sinful only to make the unlawful articles of food lawful and vice versa but it will not be sinful if the people become their own law makers in regards to the social, economic, political and international matters. It is because of this misunderstanding that even some scholars of the Islamic law do not consider it sinful if people do not take guidance from the *Sharia* in regard to matters other than those of food; whereas in this verse, Allah has taken to task all those people, who arrogate to themselves the right of making lawful or unlawful not only the articles of food but anything that has been made lawful or unlawful by the *Sharia*.

***61** The question has been posed to impress how horrible and rebellious their crime is, as if to say: How dare you make your own regulations contrary to those which Allah has given you, when, in fact, you yourselves are His creation? What do you think about the servant, who claims that he himself has the right to prescribe the limits concerning the things which his master has entrusted to his care, and therefore, there is no need of consulting him? How will you treat your own servant if he were to claim that he had every right to use and spend as he will all that belongs to you? Leave alone the case of that servant who does not acknowledge at all that he has any master, or that he is a servant, and the things that are in his possession are not his but belong to someone else; for the case under discussion does not concern such a villainous usurper. The question has been posed concerning that servant who himself acknowledges that he is a servant of some master and that the things in his possession belong to the master

and not to himself. Yet he claims that he has the right to make rules and regulations and set limits for himself regarding the use of those things, and that there is no need for him to consult his master.

*62 This question has been posed to corner the transgressors who arrogate to themselves the right to make rules and regulations in regards to the use they could make of the things of their Master. It is meant to impress on them that they have placed themselves in an awkward position by arrogating that right without any lawful authority. Their claim would have been valid, if the Master had Himself authorized them to make whatever laws they liked concerning the use of the things entrusted to the servants by Him. The pertinent question is whether they possessed any such authority from the Master, or were putting forward this claim without any delegation of such rights to them. If they had any such warrant they should show it: otherwise they would be guilty of two crimes, rebellion and forgery.

60. And what think those who invent lies against Allah on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed, Allah is full of bounty to mankind, but most of them are not grateful.*63

وَمَا ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ
عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى
النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ
لَا يَشْكُرُونَ



*63 It is a pity that most of the servants are not grateful to

the Master for this great favor that He has given them full instructions about the way they should live in His house, and the use they should make of His things, and the conduct they should adopt, as if to say: If you live in the world according to My instructions, you will win My approval and deserve the greatest rewards, but if you live as rebels, you would incur My wrath and merit a painful chastisement. Nay, instead of showing gratitude for this favor, many of the servants seem to think like this: The Master ought to have left us in the world without any guidance and secretly watched us to see which of us was living in rebellion against His law, and then punished the criminals. They do not seem to realize that if the Master had put them to this hard test none would have escaped punishment.

61. And (O Muhammad) you are not (engaged) in any matter, and you do not recite any (portion) of the Quran, and you (mankind) do not do any deed, except that We are witness over you when you are engaged therein. And not absent from your Lord is (so much as) of the weight of an atom on the earth, nor in the heaven, nor smaller than that, nor greater, except (it is written)

وَمَا تَكُونُ فِي شَأْنٍ وَمَا تَتْلُوا
 مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْءَانٍ وَلَا تَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ
 عَمَلٍ إِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُودًا
 إِذْ تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ وَمَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْ
 رَبِّكَ مِنْ مِثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي
 الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَا
 أَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرَ إِلَّا فِي

in a clear Book.*64

كِتَابِ مُبِينٍ

*64 These things have been mentioned here in order to comfort the Prophet (peace be upon him) and give a warning to his enemies. These are meant to lessen his worry and to strengthen him, as if to say: We see all that you are doing in propagating the Message of the truth with great patience and fortitude, and exerting your utmost to reform mankind. Rest assured that We have not left you alone after entrusting you with this arduous duty. We are not unaware of whatever you are doing for the performance of your mission, and also whatever your enemies are doing to oppose you. On the other hand, a warning has also been administered to his opponents: Don't remain under the delusion that no one is seeing what you are doing in opposing the Messenger of the truth and the reformer of mankind? We are seeing whatever mischief you are doing and whatever obstacles you are placing in the way of the mission. We are keeping a detailed and accurate record of all these things. Therefore beware that you shall be called upon to render an account of all your doings.

62. No doubt, indeed the friends of Allah (are those), no fear (shall come) upon them nor shall they grieve.

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

63. Those who believed and used to fear (Allah).

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ

64. For them are good tidings in the life of the world and in the Hereafter. The words of Allah shall not change. That is the supreme success.

لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ۚ لَا تَبْدِيلَ
لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَلِكَ هُوَ
الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

65. And let not their talk grieve you (O Muhammad). Indeed, honor (due to power) belongs to Allah entirely. He is the All Hearer, the All Knower.

وَلَا يَحْزُنكَ قَوْلُهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ
لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا ۚ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

66. No doubt, surely to Allah belongs whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth. And those who call upon other than Allah do not (actually) follow (His so called) partners. They do not follow but a conjecture, and they do not but falsify.

أَلَّا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَن فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَن فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ
مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ ۚ إِنَّ
يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنَّ هُمْ
إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ

67. He it is who made for you the night that you may rest therein, and the day giving sight.

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ اللَّيْلَ
لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا

Indeed, in that are sure signs
for a people who listen.*65

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
يَسْمَعُونَ



*65 This is a concise statement of a very important subject and requires a detailed explanation. The Quran declares in a few words that all religions other than the revealed one are false because they have been founded on the philosophical research for the primary cause of the origin of the universe. The philosophical research is after all based on guesswork, and is in its very nature incapable of reaching to the truth. The right way of arriving at the truth is to make a study of the signs (e.g. day and night) and of the Message of the Prophets in a dispassionate manner. For this is the only way of discovering the truth. Otherwise, if one follows wrong ways, he shall always arrive at wrong conclusions. Let us now consider several methods that different people have adopted in search of this knowledge:

- a. The mushriks base their search entirely and solely on superstition.
- b. The hermits and ascetics pretend and claim that they acquire that knowledge by means of contemplation and meditation and see the reality by peeping into the hidden. But the fact is that they do not see the reality; it is only a trick of their own imagination. They form a mental image and then concentrate their mind on it and eventually it takes the shape of the so called reality.
- c. The philosophers claim to base their research on rationalism but it is really only surmise and guesswork,

even though they may give logical arguments and sound reasons in its support.

d. Then there are the scientists: though they follow the scientific method of research in the physical world, they abandon it completely in regards to their investigation into metaphysics and start to follow conjectures, surmises, and guesswork.

Then these groups invariably suffer from prejudices and are not inclined to understand the point of view of those who differ with them, and, therefore, obstinately stick to their own theories.

In this passage (Ayats 66-67), the Quran declares that this way of search after knowledge is basically wrong, as if to say: The real cause of your deviation is that you base your search of reality on mere surmise and guesswork, and then, because of your prejudices, refuse to listen even to reasonable things. The result is that you have not only failed to arrive at the truth but also to judge rightly the revealed religion, presented by the Messengers.

In contrast to the above ways of research, the Quran presents its own way and asserts that it alone is the correct, rational and scientific way of arriving at the truth. It is this: The prerequisite for research is that you should give up your preconceived prejudices and listen to the Message of those who claim that their information about the reality is based on knowledge and not on surmises, guessworks, meditations and contemplations, abstract deductions etc. Then consider deeply the signs in the universe to which the Quran invites your attention. If these also point to the

reality they claim to reveal, then there is no reason why should you deny the truth taught by those Messengers. This is the basis of the philosophy of Islam. What a pity that even the Muslim philosophers have forsaken this way and followed in the footsteps of Plato and Aristotle.

The Quran has inculcated this method at many places and has over and over again presented many a phenomenon as a proof of the reality, and taught the people how to arrive at the right conclusion so as to perceive the reality. Accordingly, in verse 67, the sign of the night and the day has been presented for the deep consideration of the people. The change of day and night is a wonderful sign and clearly points to the Universal Designer and the All-Powerful Ruler; for it takes place by the turning of the earth on its axis and in relation to the sun with mathematical precision. This change is due to the great wisdom of the Designer and has a great purpose behind it because of its innumerable benefits for all that exists on the earth. This points out also to the Providence of the Creator for it demonstrates conclusively that He has made perfect arrangements for the existence of His creation. Moreover, this also shows that the Universal Designer is One and also that He is not playful but Wise and purposeful. This change also points towards the great reality that He, being the Benefactor and Lord, is worthy of worship and none else. This is because every other being is provided with its requirements by this change of day and night and none provides others; therefore none of them can be the Lord and the Master. In the light of these signs, how can, any other religion, based

on mere surmise and guesswork, be considered to be true when it is compared with the revealed religion which is based on such clear signs as these?

68. They say: “Allah has taken (unto Him) a son.*⁶⁶ Glory be to Him.*⁶⁷ He is self sufficient. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.*⁶⁸ You do not have any authority for this (claim of son). Do you say about Allah that which you do not know.”

قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهُ
هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ لَهُ مَا فِي
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ اِنْ
عِنْدَكُمْ مِّنْ سُلْطٰنٍ بِهٰذَا
اَتَقُولُوْنَ عَلَىٰ اِلٰهِ مَا لَا
تَعْلَمُوْنَ



*⁶⁶ In the preceding passage people were taken to task for founding false religions on mere surmise and guesswork. In this passage the Christians and others, who believe that God has begotten a son, have been taken to task for this blasphemy which has no authority other than mere presumption.

*⁶⁷ The Arabic phrase *Subhan-Allah* is used to express astonishment at something apparently inexplicable. But its literal meaning is, Allah is All-Pure, and is absolutely free from any defect, blemish and flaw. Here it implies both these things. It expresses astonishment at their blasphemy that Allah has taken a son to Himself, and also refutes it, saying, Allah, being perfect in every way, does not stand in need of a son.

***68** Three things have been put forward to refute their blasphemy:

- (1) Allah is pure and without any defect.
- (2) Allah is Self-sufficient in every way, and
- (3) Allah is the Owner of everything in the heavens and the earth.

Let us now briefly explain how these three things refute that blasphemy.

It is obvious that a son is either sprung from the loins or is adopted. In the first case, such a conception of Allah amounts to this: He is mortal like every other being: therefore He stands in need of a spouse in order to propagate His offspring like other beings. In the second case, it shall have to be presumed that Allah stands in need of a son to inherit His Kingdom in order to make up, to some extent, for the deficiency that is caused by His childlessness. Or that Allah also cherished paternal love like human beings, and therefore, adopted as son one of the millions of His slaves.

Whatever be the case, it is obvious that the blasphemy shall have to be based on such a creed which presumes that Allah suffers from many defects, many weaknesses, many shortcomings and many wants. The Quran refutes all such blasphemous creeds, saying, He is All-Pure and therefore, is free from all such defects; and by, He is Self-sufficient, the Quran asserts that He does not suffer from any of those weaknesses and wants which impel the mortals to have children. Lastly, it says clearly that all the beings in the heavens and the earth belong to Him and that He has no

particular relation with anyone of them so as to make such a one His son or only son or heir apparent. Though it is true that Allah loves some of His slaves more than the others because of their excellences, it does not in any way mean that He raises such a one from the rank of a slave to that of a partner in His Godhead. For, the highest rank He bestows on them is that they are Allah's friends, "Who believe and fear Allah, (and therefore they) shall have no occasion for fear and sorrow. There is nothing but good news for them in this world and in the Hereafter (Ayats 62-63).

69. Say: "Indeed, those who invent lie against Allah will not be successful."

قُلْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى
اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُونَ

70. An enjoyment in this world, then to Us will be their return, then We shall make them taste the severe punishment because they used to disbelieve.

مَتَّعْ فِي الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا
مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ نُذِيقُهُمُ الْعَذَابَ
الْشَّدِيدَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ

71. And recite^{*69} to them the news of Noah, when he said to his people: "O my people, if it is hard on you, my staying (here) and my reminding (you) of the signs

﴿ وَآتَلْ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ نُوحٍ إِذْ قَالَ
لِقَوْمِهِ يَاقَوْمِ إِن كَانَ كَبُرَ
عَلَيْكُمْ مَّقَامِي وَتَذَكِيرِي بِعَايَتِ

of Allah, then I have put my trust in Allah. So resolve upon your course of action and (call upon) your partners. Then, let not your course of action be obscure to you. Then carry it out against me, and do not give me respite.”*70

اللَّهُ فَعَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ فَأَجْمِعُوا
أَمْرَكُمْ وَشُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُنْ
أَمْرُكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ غُمَّةً ثُمَّ اقْضُوا
إِلَيَّ وَلَا تَنْظِرُونِ



*69 The story of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) has been related here to serve as a warning to those who were rejecting the Message of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Up to this place, arguments had been presented before them to show the errors of their creeds, thoughts and ways, and impressive appeals had been made to them to adopt the right way. But from here onward they are being warned of the consequences of the attitude they had adopted towards their Messenger and admonished indirectly to learn a lesson from the fate of Prophet Noah's (peace be upon him) people, who had behaved towards their Prophet like the Quraish, the addressees. The Prophet had been pointing out to them in a very befitting manner their errors and deviations, and was trying to correct them. But instead of considering and re-considering these things, they had become his mortal enemies, though he had no self-interest in his Mission and was extending the Message for their good, but they responded to his arguments with rudeness, abuses and stones. So much so that his very person had become

intolerable and unbearable for them. This was because of their prejudices against the right way, which had so blinded them that they could not tolerate even the presence of the one who was following the right way. At this Allah commanded His Messenger (peace be upon him) to recite to them the story of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) so that they might get in it the answer to their misbehavior towards him.

***70** This was a challenge that amounted to this: I am not going to give up my mission at all, whatever you may do against me, for I have my full trust in Allah. (See Ayat 55 of Surah Hud).

72. So if you turn away, then I have not asked you for any payment. My payment is not but upon Allah. And I have been commanded that I become among those who surrender (unto Him).

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَمَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ مِنْ
أَجْرٍ إِنْ أُجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ
وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ



73. Then they denied him, so We saved him and those with him in the Ark. And We made them inherit (the earth), and We drowned those who denied Our signs. See then how was the end of those who were warned.

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ فِي
الْفُلِّ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ خَلَائِفَ
وَأَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
فَأَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الْمُنْذَرِينَ



74. Then We sent after him messengers to their people, so they came to them with clear proofs. But they would not believe in that which they denied before. Thus do We seal over the hearts of those who transgress.*71

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رُسُلًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَاءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِمَا كَذَّبُوا بِهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ كَذَلِكَ نَطْبَعُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِ الْمُعْتَدِينَ



***71** The transgressors whose hearts are sealed are those obstinate and obdurate people who are so hardened against persuasion that they firmly and perversely adhere to the opinion they have once formed erroneously. As they themselves refuse to listen to counsel and admonition, Allah's curse falls on them and they are deprived of the ability of ever coming to the right way.

75. Then We sent after them Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and his chiefs with Our signs,*72 but they behaved arrogantly*73 and were a criminal people.

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِم مُّوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ بِآيَاتِنَا فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ



***72** E. Ns 84-111 about the story of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and Pharaoh, already added to Surah Al-Aaraf, should be kept in view, as the things explained therein will not be repeated here.

***73** “They behaved arrogantly” because of their wealth, power, pomp and show, and considered themselves above subjection to the Message. Therefore they showed haughtiness instead of surrender and obedience to it.

76. So when there came to them the truth from Us, they said: “Indeed, this is clear sorcery.”^{*74}

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا
قَالُوا إِنَّ هَذَا لَسِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ

***74** The story of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and Pharaoh is also being related to serve as an object lesson for the Quraish, who were behaving towards Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the same way as Pharaoh and his people had behaved towards Prophet Moses (peace be upon him); for the response to the Message by the Quraish was similar to that of Pharaoh’s people. (Refer to Ayat 2 of this Surah).

In this connection, it will also be worthwhile to note that the mission of Prophets Moses and Aaron (peace be upon them) was not merely to liberate the Israelites from the slavery of Pharaoh, as some people have opined. If we keep in view the context in which the story occurs here, it will be quite clear that they, too, were appointed to pursue the same mission that was entrusted to all the Prophets from Noah to Muhammad (peace be upon them all). The theme of this Surah from its very beginning has been this: Acknowledge Allah alone as your Lord and Deity for He is the Lord of the whole universe. Believe in the life-after-death in which you shall have to present yourselves before Allah and render the account of all you did in this world.

Then the Surah makes it clear to those who rejected the message that history bears witness to this that the true success of humanity has always followed the acceptance of this message. Therefore it admonished them: You should also accept the message which has always been put forward by all the Messengers, and establish your life in its entirety on these articles of faith. For, those who rejected the message were destroyed in the end.

Thus it has become quite clear from the context in which their story occurs, that the main object of the mission of Prophets Moses and Aaron (peace be upon them) was the same as that of all the other Prophets. It is true that one of their objects was also to liberate the Israelites, a Muslim community, from the domination of a kafir community if it persisted in its unbelief. But this had a secondary place in their mission, and was not its main object. The real object has been stated explicitly in Surah An-Naziat, Ayats 17-19, wherein his Lord said to Moses: Go to Pharaoh for he has transgressed the bounds of subjection and say to him, “Are you prepared to reform yourselves and fear your Lord, if I guide you towards Him”.

The part played by the two Prophets in liberating the Israelites from Pharaoh’s slavery became prominent in history because he and his nobles rejected the message and the Prophets had to rescue their people from their slavery. Accordingly, the Quran gave it the same prominence as in history. But if one does not commit the error of isolating the details of the Quran from its fundamental principles but studies them in the light of these principles, one cannot

fall a prey to the misunderstanding that the mere liberation of a community could be the main object of the mission of a Prophet and the propagation of the message its secondary object only. (See Surah Taha, Ayats 44-52, Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayats 46-56, Surah Al-Muzammil, Ayats 15-16).

77. Moses said: “Do you say about the truth when it has come to you. Is this sorcery. And the sorcerers will not succeed.”*75

قَالَ مُوسَىٰ أَتَقُولُونَ لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا
جَاءَكُمْ ^طأَسِحْرٌ هَذَا وَلَا
يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُونَ

*75 “And the sorcerers will not succeed” is meaningful for this is the answer to their charge: “Is this a sorcery.” It means this: You have called the signs presented by Moses (peace be upon him) a sorcery on account of its apparent likeness to it. You have not considered the clear and marked distinctions between the characteristics of the Prophets and sorcerers. Otherwise you would never have dared to make such an absurd charge. Have you ever seen a sorcerer go before a tyrant and talk boldly and fearlessly to him as Moses (peace be upon him) did, and admonish him for his deviation and invite him to adopt the way of purity and God-worship? You know that a sorcerer behaves quite differently. He starts with the flattery of the courtiers so that they may obtain for him the permission to show his tricks. After this he goes to the presence of His Majesty and makes obsequious bows and very humbly requests him to see his tricks. Then he prays for his long life and prosperity and begs for his reward. Now, you can judge for yourselves

whether the Prophet is a sorcerer or a far greater and far higher personality than even kings and the like.

78. They said: “Have you come to us to turn us away from that (faith) upon which we found our fathers, and you two may have greatness in the land.*76 And we shall not believe in you two.”

قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا لِنَلْفِتَنَّا
وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ ءَابَاءَنَا وَتَكُونُ
لَكُمْ الْكِبْرِيَاءُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا
نَحْنُ لَكُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

*76 It is obvious that if this demand had been merely for the liberation of the Israelites, there could have been no question of any threat to Pharaoh’s kingdom. The threat was because of the message which demanded subordination to the truth, for it threatened the system which was based on shirk and on which depended the domination of Pharaoh and his chiefs and priests. (See E.N. 66 of Surah Al-Aaraf and E.N. 43 of Surah Al-Momin).

79. And Pharaoh said: “Bring to me every learned sorcerer.”

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ أَتْتُونِي بِكُلِّ سَاحِرٍ
عَلِيمٍ

80. So when the sorcerers came, Moses said to them: “Throw down whatever you will throw.”

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالَ لَهُمْ
مُوسَىٰ أَلْقُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ مُلْقُونَ

81. Then when they had thrown down, Moses said: “That which you have brought is sorcery.^{*77} Certainly, Allah will make it vain. Certainly, Allah does not set right the work of corrupters.”

فَلَمَّا أَلْقَوْا قَالَ مُوسَىٰ مَا جِئْتُمْ
بِهِ السِّحْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَيَبْطِلُهُ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ لَا يُصْلِحُ عَمَلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ



***77** That is, what I showed was not sorcery but sorcery is that which you are showing.

82. And Allah will establish the truth by His words, even if the criminals dislike it.

وَيُحِقُّ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَلَوْ
كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ



83. So no one believed in Moses, except (some) youth (offspring)^{*78} among his people,^{*79} because of the fear of Pharaoh and their chiefs, lest they should persecute them. And indeed Pharaoh was a tyrant in the land. And indeed, He was of those who transgressed (all bounds).^{*80}

فَمَا ءَامَنَ لِمُوسَىٰ إِلَّا ذُرِّيَّةٌ مِّنْ
قَوْمِهِ عَلَىٰ خَوْفٍ مِّنْ
فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِمْ أَن يَفْتِنَهُمْ
وَإِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ لَعَالٍ فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ



***78** Though literally *zurriyyah* means offspring, it has been translated into youths because the Quran has used this word here to point out a specific aspect of the matter. It is

this: During that fearful period of persecution only a few young men and women showed the moral courage of acknowledging the Messenger of the truth as their leader and becoming his standard bearers. On the contrary, their fathers, mothers and elders had not the courage to follow him and endanger their worldly interests and even their lives. They not only followed the way of ease and expediency, but also discouraged their youth, saying, “Don’t go near Moses: for you will thus invite trouble both for yourselves and your elders.”

The Quran has mentioned this particular aspect of the matter because the same was the case of the response to the mission of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In its initial stage, those who came forward were not the elders and the old people but some courageous youth. These first Muslims who were boldly facing persecution and enduring hardships for the sake of Islam were the young people. For instance, Ali-ibn-Abi Talib, Jaafar Tayyar, Zubair, Talhah, Saad bin Abi Waqqas, Musab bin Umair, Abdullah bin Masud, etc. were under twenty years when they embraced Islam. Abdur-Rahman bin Auf, Bilal, Suhail were under thirty years, and Abu Ubaidah-bin-al-Jarrah, Zaid bin Harithah, Uthman bin Affan and Umar Faruq were under thirty-five years. Abu Bakr was no more than 38 when he embraced Islam. Among the early Muslims, there is only one instance of a companion, Ammar bin Yasir, who was of the same age as the Prophet (peace be upon him) and another of Ubaidah bin Harith Muttalabi, who was older than the Prophet (peace be upon him).

***79** Some people have misinterpreted the Arabic words say that all the people of Israel were unbelievers and at first only a few of them believed in the message. But when *amama* is followed by the letter *lam*, it generally means obeying and following. Thus the original words of the text will mean “a few youth from his own people obeyed and followed Moses,” that is, only a few young people from the whole tribe of the Israelites had the courage to accept and acknowledge Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) as their leader and guide and stand by him in his struggle with Pharaoh and his chiefs. The words that follow make it quite clear that the Israelites refrained from this not because they did not believe in Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) or his message but because they (specially their elders) were afraid of exposing themselves to the persecution of Pharaoh. This state of fear was the result of their moral degeneration. Though all of them racially and religiously belonged to the community of Prophets Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (peace be upon them all) and, therefore, were Muslims, yet slavery of centuries had so much degraded them that they had lost that spirit of Islam which impels one to become the standard bearer of Islam against the domination of unbelief and deviation, or imbues one with the courage to stand by the one who had raised that banner.

The Bible has described their degraded condition at the time of the conflict with Pharaoh in Exodus 5: 20-21: And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: And they said unto them, the

Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savior to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us. The Talmud (Selections by H. Polano, page 152) confirms the same: Yea, said the overburdened children of Israel to Moses and Aaron: We are like a lamb which the wolf has carried from its flock, the shepherd strives to take it from him, but between the two the lamb is pulled to pieces; between ye and Pharaoh will we all be killed.

The Quran also refers to this in Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 129: His people answered, we were oppressed before you came and now again we are being oppressed after you have come.

***80** The Arabic word *musrifin* literally means transgressors, or those who are not bound by any limits. They are the people who do not hesitate to employ even the most wicked methods to achieve their object: who practice without any pangs of conscience, cruelty, immorality, barbarism etc. if these serve their purpose, and who cross all limits in pursuit of their desires. In short, they are such people as know no limits to stop at.

84. And Moses said: “O my people, if you have believed in Allah, then put your trust in Him, if you are Muslims (have surrendered unto Him).”^{*81}

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يٰقَوْمِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ
ءَامِنْتُمْ بِاللّٰهِ فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوْا اِنْ كُنْتُمْ
مُّسْلِمِيْنَ



***81** The fact that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) in his address called his people “Muslims” shows that all the people of the community of Israel were Muslims; otherwise

he could not say to them, “if you are Muslims”. He meant to urge them to be brave, saying: If you are true Muslims, as you profess to be, do not fear the might of Pharaoh but put your trust in the might of Allah.

85. So they said:^{*82} “In Allah we put our trust. Our Lord, do not make us a trial^{*83} for wrongdoing people.”

فَقَالُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا لَا
تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ



***82** Those, who responded to the appeal of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) were those youth who obeyed and followed him, and not the Israelites, as a community, as is obvious from the context.

***83** The prayer, “Our Lord, do not make us a trial for the wrongdoing people” is very comprehensive in meaning. Whenever the standard bearers of the truth rise up to establish virtue and eradicate the prevalent evil, they come into conflict with unjust people, who, for one reason or the other, are always on the lookout to find fault with them. First, there are the champions of falsehood, who try their level best to crush down with full force the champions of the truth. Then there are the so called champions of the truth who profess to believe in it but are not prepared to enter into conflict with the powerful government of the time. Therefore they declare it to be a useless and foolish effort, and begin to invent excuses to justify the wrong stand they take in regard to the struggle with falsehood in order to silence the prick of conscience they feel for their

criminal attitude of cowardice. Accordingly, they try to prove that it is these standard bearers of the truth who are in the wrong and not them. Lastly, there are the common people, who watch the conflict as bystanders and join forces with those who prove to be more powerful of the two, whether they are the supporters of the truth or of falsehood.

Now let us consider how the champions of the truth are liable to become a cause of trial for these unjust people. If they are crushed down or defeated, the first group declares, we were in the right and not these foolish people: otherwise they could not have been defeated. The second group says, their defeat has proved that they did not make the correct estimate of the circumstances and caused the destruction of valuable lives by coming in conflict with the mighty powers. Moreover, the Shariat has not made it obligatory on us to expose ourselves to risk, when we are fulfilling the most essential religious duties without any restrictions from the tyrants of the day. As regards to the common people, their criterion of judging the truth is this: Whatever triumphs is truth. Therefore their defeat has proved that the champions of the truth must be in the wrong. Likewise, every mistake and error the champions of the truth commit, every weakness they show in the face of overwhelming odds against them, every moral fault to which anyone of them succumbs, becomes a good excuse for those who intend to stick to falsehood. Consequently, the invitation to the truth becomes dormant for years after their defeat.

Thus it has become quite clear that this prayer of the companions of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was well timed and meaningful: Our Lord, have mercy upon us so that we might not become a cause of trial for the unjust people: protect us from errors, defects and, weaknesses and make our efforts successful in this world so that we may become a source of goodness to Thy creatures and not a source of evil for the unjust people.

86. And save us by Your mercy from the disbelieving people.

وَنَجِّنَا بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ
الْكَافِرِينَ

87. And We inspired to Moses and his brother, (saying) that: “Appoint houses for your people in Egypt, and make your houses as places for worship, and establish prayer.^{*84} And give glad tidings to the believers.”^{*85}

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَأَخِيهِ أَنْ
تَبَوَّءَا لِقَوْمِكَمَا بِمِصْرَ بُيُوتًا
وَأَجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ قِبْلَةً
وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَبَشِّرِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

^{*84} There is a difference of opinion among the commentators in regard to the meaning of this verse. As for me, I have considered deeply its wording and the circumstances under which this was sent down, and have come to the conclusion that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was commanded to build or acquire some houses for the establishment of Salat in congregation This was

necessitated because the system of Salat in congregation had been abandoned by the Israelites and the Egyptian Muslims as a result of their persecution by the government, and owing to the weakness of their faith. As this had brought about their disintegration and killed their religious spirit, it was essential to re-establish the system of Salat in congregation, which is indeed the first and foremost thing for the revival of that spirit and the integration of a scattered Muslim community and its powers.

As regards to appointing your houses as qiblah, I am of the opinion that it means: Set apart these houses as common places of worship for offering Salat in congregation and the central places for holding their meetings. That is why it is followed by establishing Salat, which means that they should offer their Salat collectively in congregation instead of individually.

*85 The Arabic word *bashshir* means: Fill them with hope and courage by giving them the good news of success by the grace of Allah. And they needed that very badly at that time, for they were full of despair, fear and depression.

88. And Moses said:^{*86} “Our Lord, indeed You have given Pharaoh and his chiefs splendor^{*87} and wealth^{*88} in the life of the world. Our Lord, that they may lead (people) astray from Your path. Our Lord, send destruction upon their

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ
ءَاتَيْتَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَأَهُ زِينَةً
وَأَمْوَالًا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا رَبَّنَا
لِيُضِلُّوا عَن سَبِيلِكَ رَبَّنَا
أَطْمَسْ عَلَىٰ أَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَشَدُّ

wealth and put hardness upon their hearts so that they may not believe until they see the painful punishment.”*89

عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّى
يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ



*86 This prayer was offered by Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) during the last period of his stay in Egypt. There was a long interval between this and the events mentioned in the preceding verse which happened during the early days of his mission. The details of this intervening period are available at other places in the Quran.

*87 The Arabic word *zeenat* includes the magnificence, grandeur, glory and the apparent brilliance of their culture and civilization which attracted other people towards them with the desire of imitating them.

*88 “Wealth”, possessions, resources and means which help the people like Pharaoh to put into practice all their devices and plans, and the lack of which prevents the standard bearers of the truth from carrying out their plans.

*89 As it has already been stated, Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) made this prayer during the last period of his stay in Egypt. When he had shown many signs, one after the other, to Pharaoh and his chiefs and pointed out the way clearly to them, but they had persisted obdurately in their antagonism to the truth. The Prophet begged his Lord to destroy their possessions and harden their hearts. And this was in accordance with the decree of Allah. As they had merited this punishment according to the divine law of retribution, Allah decreed that they should not get the light

of faith, which they themselves had extinguished with their persistent disbelief.

89. He (Allah) said: “Verily, the prayer of you both has been answered. So keep to the straight path, and follow not the path of those who do not know.”*90

قَالَ قَدْ أُجِيبَت دَعْوَتُكُمَا
فَاسْتَقِيمَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعَانِ سَبِيلَ
الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ



*90 In this verse, Allah has urged Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and his followers to guard against a common misunderstanding that is likely to arise in such cases. It so happens that those people who have no knowledge of the reality and who do not understand the wisdom of Allah’s ways are liable to believe from the apparent success of His rebels that perhaps it is His will that they should dominate in the world. When they witness the failures of the upholders of the truth in their conflict with falsehood in contrast to the splendor and vast possessions of the champions of falsehood, they begin to think that Allah does not will to help the truth in its conflict with falsehood. Therefore some foolish people further conclude from these wrong suppositions that it is useless to exert for the establishment of the truth. Then they consider it to be the best and most proper thing to rest content with the little religiosity that the sovereignty of falsehood and unbelief allows them. That is why Allah has urged Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and his followers to guard against such a misunderstanding and to carry on the mission entrusted to them with patience under the adverse circumstances.

90. And We led the Children of Israel across the sea. Then Pharaoh and his hosts pursued them in rebellion and enmity. Until, when the drowning overtook him, he said: “I believe that there is no god but Him in whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of those who surrender (unto Him).”^{*91}

﴿ وَجَوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ
فَاتَّبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُودُهُ بَغْيًا
وَعَدْوًا ۖ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَدْرَكَهُ
الْغَرَقُ قَالَ ءَأَمِنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ
إِلَّا الَّذِي ءَأَمِنْتُ بِهِۦ بَنُو
إِسْرَائِيلَ وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ



***91** The Bible does not mention this happening but the Talmud says explicitly that when he was drowning he said: Who is like Thee, O Lord, among the gods?

91. Now (you believe), and indeed you had disobeyed before, and were of the corrupters.

ءَأَلْسِنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ
مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

92. So this day We shall deliver you in your body,^{*92} that you may be a sign for those after you. And indeed, many among mankind are heedless of Our signs.^{*93}

فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيكَ بِبَدَنِكَ
لِتَكُونَ لِمَنْ خَلْفَكَ ءَايَةً ۗ
وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ عَنِ
ءَايَاتِنَا لَغَافِلُونَ

***92** Even today the place, where the dead body of Pharaoh

was found floating, is pointed out by the inhabitants of that region. It lies on the western coast of the Sinai Peninsula and is now known by the name of Jabl-i-Firaun (Pharaoh's Mount). There is also near to it a hot spring called Hammam-i-Firaun (Pharaoh's Bath), which is situated at a distance of a few miles from Abu Zenimah, where, they say, Pharaoh's dead body was found lying.

If the Pharaoh who was drowned was Mineptah, who ruled over Egypt when Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was sent to him, his embalmed dead body is still lying in the Cairo Museum. When Sir Grafton E. Smith removed the bandages from his mummy, a layer of salt was found on the body, which was a clear proof that he was drowned in the sea.

***93** That is, We show signs to the people over and over again so that these should serve as warnings and be the means of teaching them lessons, but it is a pity that they do not learn lessons even from such signs as the dead body of Pharaoh.

93. And indeed, We settled the Children of Israel in a blessed dwelling place,^{*94} and We provided them with good things. So they differed not until the knowledge had come to them.^{*95} Indeed, your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection in that in which

وَلَقَدْ بَوَّأْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مُبَوَّأً
صِدْقٍ وَرَزَقْنَهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ
فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا حَتَّىٰ جَاءَهُمُ
الْعِلْمُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ

they used to differ.

***94** That is, in Palestine after their exodus from Egypt.

***95** This refers to the dissensions the Israelites had caused in the divine way and the new religions they had invented. This verse accuses them of falling into variances, even though they possessed the divine knowledge, which had provided them with the criterion of judging between the right way and the wrong ways. They did this because of mischief of their hearts in spite of the fact that the right way had been made clear to them, and its fundamental principles had been imparted to them and instructions had been given about its implications and demands and its boundaries had been distinctly demarcated from those of the ways of unbelief. Besides, they had been admonished to follow the path of obedience and guard against the paths of disobedience, and establish their lives entirely in accordance with the rules and regulations based on that knowledge, for they shall have to render an account of all they did in this life. But in spite of all the instructions that were given to them, they divided one original religion into many divergent sects and built different ways on foundations other than those laid down by Allah.

94. So if you (O Muhammad) are in doubt about that which We have revealed to you, then ask those who have been reading the Book before you. The truth has

فَإِنْ كُنْتَ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا أَنْزَلْنَا
إِلَيْكَ فَسْأَلِ الَّذِينَ يَاقُرْءُونَ
الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۚ لَقَدْ

certainly come to you from your Lord, so be not of those who doubt.

جَاءَكَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا
تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾

95. And be not you of those who deny the revelations of Allah, for then you shall be among the losers.*96

وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا
بِعَايَةِ اللَّهِ فَتَكُونُ مِنَ
الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

***96** Though these words were addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), they were meant for those who expressed doubts about his message. As regards to the reference to the people of the Book, it is because they possessed the knowledge of the scriptures, whereas the common people of Arabia lacked this, and were, therefore, strangers to the voice of the Quran. It was also expected that their just and pious scholars would testify that its message was the same as that of the scriptures of the former Prophets.

96. Indeed, those upon whom the word of your Lord has been justified,*97 they will not believe.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ
كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

***97** Allah's decree that had become applicable to them was this: Allah does not thrust the faith on those who do not seek after the truth: who obstinately and obdurately shut their hearts against it with prejudice: who are so lost in the love of this world that they do not care at all about the

Hereafter.

97. Even if every sign should come to them, until they see the painful punishment.

وَلَوْ جَاءَهُمْ كُلُّ آيَةٍ حَتَّى
يَرَوْا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿١٧﴾

98. So why was there not a (single) township (among those We warned) that believed so its belief benefited it, except the people of Jonah.^{*98} When they believed, We removed from them the punishment of disgrace in the life of the world,^{*99} and We gave them comfort for a while.^{*100}

فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ
فَنَفَعَهَا إِيْمَانُهَا إِلَّا قَوْمَ
يُونُسَ لَمَّا ءَامَنُوا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ
عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١٨﴾

***98** Though Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) 860-784 B.C. was an Israelite Prophet, he was sent to Iraq for the guidance of the Assyrians, who have been called the people of Jonah for this reason. At that time, Nineveh, a very ancient and famous city, was their capital. Its vast remains are scattered on the left bank of the Tigris, opposite to the city of Mosul, and one of the mounds bears the name of Prophet Jonah. In order to form an estimate of the glory of these people, suffice it to say that the circumference of their capital Nineveh was 60 miles or so.

***99** As regards to the question why the threatened torment was warded off from the people of Jonah as an exception to the divine principle, "Why was there not a (single)

township (among those We warned) that believed so its belief benefited it,” the Quran does not give any details of this, but merely refers to the story at three places. (See Surah Al-Anbia, Ayats 87, 88; Surah As-Sajadah, Ayats 139-148; Surah Al-Qalam, Ayats 48-50). Though the story contained in the Book of Jonah gives some details, these cannot be depended upon because it was neither composed by Prophet Jonah nor it is a revealed Book but was written by some unknown person and then inserted in the Bible. Besides this, it contains some apparently absurd things which cannot be accepted as true. Nevertheless if we consider this deeply in the light of the allusions made in the Quran and details in the Book of Jonah, the explanation given by various commentators of the Quran seems to be correct. Prophet Jonah left the place of his mission without divine permission after warning the people of the torment. Therefore Allah forgave the Assyrians when they repented after seeing some signs of the coming torment. This was in accordance with the divine principles as stated in the Quran. For, according to one of these, Allah does not inflict any torment on any people, till He has the message fully demonstrated to them. As the Prophet did not continue his admonition in accordance with the appointed term and left the place of his mission of his own accord, Allah’s justice did not inflict the chastisement because the legal argument against his people had not been fulfilled. (For further explanation see E.N. 85 of Surah Yaseen).

***100** When the Assyrians believed in the message, they were given a new lease of life. But after some time, they

adopted the wrong ways of thought and deed. Prophet Nahum (720-698 B.C.) warned and admonished them but without any effect. Then Prophet Zephaniah (640-609 B.C.) gave them the last warning that “He ... will destroy Assyria and will make Nineveh a desolation”, but it also proved in vain. At last in about 612 B.C. Allah made the Medes dominant over them.

The Median king, with the help of the Babylonians, invaded Assyria, and their army was defeated and was besieged within the walls of Nineveh. They put up a stiff resistance for some time but then the floods in the Tigris swept away the city wall and the invaders swarmed into the city and burnt it to ashes along with the surrounding countryside. The Assyrian king set fire to his palace and was himself burnt to death. Thus the Assyrian Empire and its culture came to an end forever. The recent archaeological excavations reveal widespread effects of the fire.

99. And if your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed, all of them together.^{*101} Will you (O Muhammad) then compel mankind, until they become believers.^{*102}

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مِنَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا أَفَأَنْتَ
تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَكُونُوا
مُؤْمِنِينَ



***101** This refers to the freedom that Allah has granted to mankind to believe or not to believe in Him. Otherwise He could have very easily created all the people as born believers and obedient servants and there would have been

no disbelief and disobedience at all on the earth. Or He could have very easily inspired them to turn towards belief and obedience. But these methods would have defeated the wisdom that underlies the creation of mankind.

*102 This does not at all mean that the Prophet (peace be upon him) desired to force people to become believers, and that Allah was forbidding him to do this. In fact, the Quran has here adopted the same method of admonishing the people that it has adopted at many other places, that is, though the words have apparently been addressed to the person of the Prophet (peace be upon him), in fact, these have been addressed to the people. The implication is this: "O people! Our Messenger has made the distinction between the guidance and deviation quite clear and plain by argument and pleading. Now, therefore, it is for you to believe or not to believe in the guidance. If you accept that someone should force you to adopt the right way, you should know that this duty has not been assigned to Our Prophet. Had Allah willed this, He could have done it Himself: then there would have been no need of sending any Prophet to you.

100. And it is not for a soul that it would believe except by the permission of Allah.*103 And He has set uncleanness upon those who will not understand.*104

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ
إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَتَجْعَلُ
الرَّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا
يَعْقِلُونَ



***103** This is to emphasize the principle that the bestowal of all these blessings is in the power of Allah alone: therefore none can acquire or bestow on anyone any blessing without the permission of Allah. As faith and guidance are also blessings, they, too, can be acquired only with Allah's permission; and no one can acquire these without His permission nor bestow these on anyone else even though one should desire to do so. That is why, even if the Prophet had sincerely desired to make people believers forcibly, he could not have done this, for this could be done only with Allah's permission and help.

***104** This points out clearly that the above principle is not applied blindly and irrationally so as to bestow the blessing of faith on or withhold it from anyone without any rhyme or reason, but it works according to a system which is based on wisdom. Allah bestows this on anyone who uses his common sense properly in search of the truth, for Allah provides for such a one the means of attaining it in proportion to the sincerity of his intention and the extent of his exertion and grants him its correct knowledge required for faith. But He throws the filth of ignorance, deviation, wrong thinking and wrong doing on the one who is not a seeker after the truth and does not use his common sense properly because of his prejudices, or does not use it at all in search of the truth. And this is what such people deserve.

101. Say: "Behold all that is in the heavens and the earth." And of no avail will be signs and warners to

قُلْ أَنْظَرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا تُغْنِي الْآيَاتُ

a people who do not believe.*105

وَالنُّذُرُ عَنْ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾

*105 This is the answer to the condition that they would believe him to be a true Prophet, if a sign would be shown to them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has been asked to say to them: There are countless signs in the heaven and the earth, which confirm and testify the message I am giving you. You could have easily recognized them, had you observed and considered them with open eyes and open hearts. But if you lack this urge and desire for the truth, you will not accept and acknowledge it, however wonderful, miraculous and supernatural the sign may be, for you will declare that it was a piece of sorcery like Pharaoh and his chiefs. The fact is that the people, who suffer from this malady, see the truth only when the torment with all its horrors overtakes them, just as Pharaoh came to believe only when he was drowning. But you should note it well that the repentance at the time of punishment is of no avail.

102. Then do they wait for (anything) except like the days of those who passed away before them. Say: "Wait then, indeed, I am with you among those who are waiting."

فَهَلْ يَنْتَظِرُونَ إِلَّا مِثْلَ أَيَّامِ
الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قُلْ
فَأَنْتَظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ
الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

103. Then We will save Our messengers and those who have believed. Thus, it is

ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا كَذَلِكَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نُنَجِّ

incumbent upon Us to save the believers.

اَلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

104. Say (O Muhammad):^{*106}
“O mankind, if you are in doubt of my religion, then I do not worship those whom you worship other than Allah. But I worship Allah who causes you to die.^{*107} And I have been commanded that I should be of the believers.”

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِّن دِينِي فَلَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِن أَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

﴿١٠٤﴾

***106** In this concluding portion, the same thing that was stated at the beginning of the discourse, has been reiterated. Therefore it will be worthwhile to keep in view the introductory passage (Ayats 1-10).

***107** The Arabic word *yatawaffa-kum* literally means “gives you death”, but it has been purposely translated into “who causes you to die” in order to convey its real spirit in the content it occurs. It implies this: I worship only that One, who has full power over your life: He has complete authority and power to let you live as long as He wills and cause you to die at any moment He wills. That is why I am fully convinced that I should submit and surrender, worship, serve and obey Him alone.

Now let us consider why of all His characteristics, this quality of Allah was specifically cited here. This was to bring home to the mushriks of Makkah that the doctrine of

shirk was absolutely false. For they also believed (and all the mushriks have always believed) that death is entirely in the hands of Allah, the Lord of the universe, and none else has any power over it; so much so that they confessed that even those beings, whom they believed to be partners with God in other qualities and powers of, His, could not avert death even from themselves. Thus the mention of this quality of Allah along with the statement of the doctrine of *Tauhid* has been made to serve as a proof of that creed. That is, I serve only Him for He alone has the full power over life and death. Why should, then, I serve others who have no power at all over their own lives and deaths, not to mention the lives and deaths of others? The eloquence and force of the statement has been enhanced manifold by saying, “Who gives you death” instead of “Who gives me death”. For this contains the statement of the doctrine, its proof and invitation to it, all the three combined in one concise sentence. Had it been said, “I serve that one Who gives me death” then it would have implied, “I alone should serve Him.” But by saying, “Who gives you death” the implication is: It is not only I, who should serve Him, but you also should serve Him. For it is absolutely wrong to serve any other than Allah, Who alone has such powers.

105. And that (O Muhammad), direct your face toward the religion, as by nature upright,^{*108} and do not be of those who associate partners (to Allah).^{*109}

وَأَنْ أَقِمَّ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا
وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

***108** The force of the Arabic words “direct your face toward the religion” of the text means “dedicate yourself sincerely, exclusively and steadfastly to this faith”, is worth deep consideration. The purpose might have been served by the use of such words as “Adopt this faith” or “Follow this faith”. But Allah considered such expressions as weak and incapable of serving the real purpose, which is implied in the wording of the text. For the literal meaning is “Set your face steadfastly”, which implies: You should steadfastly turn your face in one direction only, without turning it even slightly to right or left, or backward, and go on marching in the same direction. Though these words were in themselves quite sufficient, the addition of the word made it all the more forceful. For *hanif* is one who turns away from all others and exclusively turns to one direction. Thus what Allah demands is this: Adopt this faith, this way of the worship of Allah and this way of life in such a manner that your worship, subjection, submission, servitude and obedience should be dedicated exclusively to Allah, the Lord of the universe, so that you do not deviate in the least after adopting this way. You should have nothing to do with those ways that you have discarded and that you should not even have a look at the crooked paths that erroneous people follow.

***109** This negative way of forbidding from shirk has been purposely adopted. It implies this: You should not at all be one of those, who set up in any way whatsoever other gods as partners with Allah in His essence, His attributes, His rights and His powers, whether that god be one's own self

or another man or a group of men or some spirit or jinn or angel or some material or imaginary being. The demand of *Tauhid* has been made both in the positive form, “Dedicate... faith”, and in the negative form, “and do not be of those who associate partners (to Allah).” Thus it forbids shirk both in deed and in creed, in individual and in collective life, in places of worship and in education, in courts and in legislative assemblies, in political and in economic activities. Therefore it demands from the worshiper of *Tauhid* to adopt a different way in every aspect of life from the way of those who adulterate God-worship with ungodly worships, for the former can never be a fellow traveler with those who practice shirk. As such things can never be expected from him, it can never be imagined that he would follow them.

Thus it is clear that it cuts at the very root of shirk, both *jali* (open) and *khafi* (hidden). As a matter of fact, shirk in its latter form is even more dangerous and should therefore be avoided most scrupulously. This warning is necessary, as some foolish people consider it to be almost harmless just because it is hidden. The fact is that open shirk is like an avowed enemy who makes an attack in the open and hidden shirk is like an enemy in the guise of a friend. Or the former is like a disease of which the symptoms are quite apparent and the latter like the hidden disease that gradually undermines one’s health. Thus it is obvious that when the open shirk comes into conflict with the faith of *Tauhid*, it may be cured. But the one who suffers from the hidden shirk does not realize the threat posed by it and

slowly and gradually succumbs to it, while the victim remains quite unaware that his faith is being devoured by the deadly secret enemy.

106. And do not call upon, other than Allah, that which neither benefits you, nor harms you. For if you did, so indeed, you would then be of the wrongdoers.

وَلَا تَدْعُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ فَإِنْ فَعَلْتَ فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا مِنْ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

107. And if Allah afflicts you with adversity, then there is none who can remove it except Him. And if He intends for you good, then there is none who can repel His bounty. He causes it to reach whomever He wills of his slaves. And He is the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَإِنْ يَمَسُّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يُرِدَكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَادَّ لِفَضْلِهِ ؕ يُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ؕ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٠٧﴾

108. Say (O Muhammad): “O mankind, the truth has indeed come to you from your Lord. Then whoever is guided, so he is guided only for (the good of) his own self. And whoever goes astray, so he goes astray only to his own

قُلْ يَتَأْتِيَ النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَا

(loss). And I am not a custodian over you.

عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾

109. And (O Muhammad) follow that which is revealed to you, and remain patient until Allah gives judgment. And He is the Best of those who judge.

وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَأَصْبِرْ
حَتَّىٰ تَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ ۚ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ

الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿١٠٩﴾



هُودًا Houd

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah has been named after Prophet *Houd* whose story has been related in Ayats 50-60.

Period of Revelation

If we consider its theme deeply, we come to the conclusion that it was revealed during the same period as Surah Yunus and most probably followed it immediately.

Subject

The Surah deals with the same subject as Surah Yunus, that is, invitation to the message, admonition and warning, with the difference that the warning is sterner. This is also supported by a tradition:

It is related that after its revelation, once Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) said to the Prophet (peace be upon him), “lately I have been noticing that you are growing older and older. What is the cause of it?” The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, “Surah Houd and the like Surahs have made me old.” This shows that it was a very hard time for the Prophet (peace be upon him) and these stern warnings added greatly to his anxieties that

were caused by the persecution from the Quraish, who were doing their best to crush down the message of Islam. For it was obvious to the Prophet (peace be upon him) that the limit of the respite given by Allah was approaching nearer and nearer and he was afraid lest the term of the respite should expire and his people be seized by the torment.

The invitation is this: Obey the Messenger of Allah; discard shirk, and worship Allah and Allah alone: establish the entire system of your life on the belief that you shall be called to account in the Hereafter.

The admonition is this: Remember that those people who put their faith in the outward appearance of this worldly life and rejected the message of the Prophets met with dire consequences. Therefore you should consider it seriously whether you should follow the same way that history has proved to be the path to ruin.

The warning is this: You should not be deluded by the delay in the coming of the punishment: it is because of the respite that Allah has granted you by His grace so that you might mend your ways: if you do not make use of this opportunity, you shall be inflicted with an inevitable punishment that will destroy you all except the believers.

Instead of addressing the people directly, the Quran has used the stories of the people of Noah, Houd, Salih, Lot, Shuaib and Moses (peace be upon them all) to achieve the above mentioned objects. What is most prominent in their stories is that when Allah passes His judgment on the people, He does not spare anyone whosoever, even if he be

the nearest relative of the Prophet of the time. Only that one is rescued who had believed in the Prophet, and none else, not even his own son or wife. More than that: the faith demands from each and every believer that he should totally forget his relationships when that judgment comes and remember only the relationship of the faith. For it is against the spirit of Islam to show any regard whatsoever for the relationships of blood and race. And the Muslims demonstrated these teachings practically in the battle of Badr, four years after the revelation of this Surah.

1. Alif. Lam. Ra. (This is) a Book,^{*1} the verses whereof are perfected, then explained in detail,^{*2} from All-Wise, Well Informed.

الرَّ كِتَابٌ أُحْكِمَتْ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ
فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ



*1 The Arabic word *kitab* has been translated into Book because of the context. For its meaning is not confined to book or something written but it includes command and sovereign decree as well and has been used in several places in the Quran in the same sense.

*2 The contents of this Book are firm, strong, and unchangeable: they are well balanced and measured. There is no tinge of verbosity, pedantry, volubility, poetic fancy and rhetorical exaggeration. The truth has been stated accurately, and there is nothing more and nothing less than the truth. Moreover, the contents have been given in detail and everything has been made so clear and plain that there is neither confusion nor complication nor ambiguity in it.

2. That you do not worship except Allah. Indeed, I am to you, from Him a warner and a bringer of good tidings.

أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي لَكُمْ
مِّنْهُ نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ

3. And that you seek forgiveness of your Lord, then you turn in repentance to Him. He will let you enjoy a fair provision for a term appointed.*³ And He will bestow His bounty on everyone who merits favor.*⁴ And if you turn away, then indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a great Day.

وَأَنِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا
إِلَيْهِ يُمَتِّعْكُمْ مَّتَعًا حَسَنًا إِلَىٰ
أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَيُؤْتِ كُلَّ ذِي
فَضْلٍ فَضْلَهُ وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنِّي
أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ كَبِيرٍ

*³ The assurance that “He will let you enjoy a fair provision for a term appointed” has been given to remove the misunderstanding which Satan has imbued in the heart of every foolish worshiper of the world that piety ruins one’s worldly life, though it might lead to one’s success in the Hereafter. Allah has reassured the true believers that He will shower His blessings on God fearing people and they will live happy and peaceful lives and will be honored and respected everywhere. The same thing has been stated in a different manner in Surah An-Nahal, Ayat 97: “Whoso will do good deeds, whether a man or a woman, provided the one is a believer, We will surely make such a one lead a pure and clean life in this world.” Allah has refuted this theory of Satan and his disciples that piety inevitably

brings poverty, distress and affliction and ignominy to the person who adopts truth, righteousness and virtue. He has assured that He will make the life of the one who will believe in Him and adopt a righteous life truly successful both in this world and in the Hereafter. And it is common experience that only those people enjoy real peace of mind and are honored and respected who are God fearing and possess a pure character, who are fair and generous in all their affairs and dealings and who are free from evil. For they are trusted by all and none fears any wrong or wickedness from them.

According to the Quran, the provisions of life are either *mataul-hasana* meaning good provisions or *mataul-ghuroor* meaning deceptive provisions. Here those, who return to Allah, have been assured that they will be given good provisions of life and not deceptive ones. The provisions are good if their recipient becomes even more grateful to Allah than before and uses these for fulfilling His rights and the rights of mankind and of his own self. Such good provisions make his life truly successful in this world and also in the next world. On the contrary, the provisions are deceptive, if they become a temptation for the recipient, and get him involved in the worship of the things of this world more than before. Though the deceptive provisions might appear to be a blessing and a favor, these are, in fact, a curse and means of some future torment.

*4 This verse enunciates a fundamental divine principle. The higher a person rises in character and conduct, the higher is the rank he obtains in the sight of Allah. That is to

say that Allah does not let go waste the good deed of anyone. He does neither appreciate any evil deed, nor detracts from any good deed. Everyone will be given the honor which he deserves for his deeds.

4. Unto Allah is your return. And He is Powerful over every thing.

إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤﴾

5. Behold, indeed they fold up their breasts, that they may hide from Him.*5 Behold, (even) when they cover themselves with their garments, He (Allah) knows what they conceal and what they proclaim. Indeed, He is the All Knower of what is (secret) in the breasts.

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ يَثْنُونَ صُدُورَهُمْ لِيَسْتَخْفُوا مِنْهُ ۗ أَلَا حِينَ يَسْتَغْشُونَ ثِيَابَهُمْ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ۗ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٥﴾

*5 They were those people of Makkah, who though not very active in their antagonism against the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him), nevertheless were very averse to it. Therefore they did not like to hear it nor come face to face with him, and did their very best to avoid him. If, by chance, they found him sitting somewhere and talking to the people, they would at once turn back on their heels. Or if they saw him coming towards them, they would slink away or hide their faces with cloth for fear that he might address them and convey his message to them. As they did not have the courage to face the truth, they would bury

their heads ostrich-like and make believe that the reality from which they were hiding had disappeared, whereas it was all along there and watching their ridiculous attempts to hide from it.

6. And there is not any living creature on the earth but that upon Allah is its provision. And He knows its definite abode and its temporary deposit.*⁶ All is in a clear Book.

﴿ وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا
عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا
وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا كُلٌّ فِي كِتَابٍ
مُبِينٍ ﴾



*6 That is, it is foolish on your part to deceive yourselves that you can escape punishment by hiding yourselves from Allah Who has full and perfect knowledge of everything. Who knows the nest where the tiniest sparrow lives and the hole where the smallest insect resides, and provides their sustenance to them wherever they be. Who knows the dwelling place and the final resting place of every creature and gives life and death to them at the appointed time. Do you think that by hiding yourselves from His messenger, you can also hide yourselves from the All-Knowing Sovereign Who has sent him? Do you think that Allah does not see His messenger doing his very best to convey His message to you and you are trying to turn a deaf ear to it?

7. And it is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and His Throne was

﴿ وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ﴾

upon the water,^{*7} that He might test you, which of you is best in deed.^{*8} And if you (O Muhammad) were to say: “Indeed, you shall be raised up after death.” Those who disbelieve will surely say: “This is not but an obvious magic.”^{*9}

وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ
لِيَبْلُوكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا
وَلَئِنْ قُلْتَ إِنَّكُمْ مَبْعُوثُونَ
مِنْ بَعْدِ الْمَوْتِ لَيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ

مُبِينٌ

***7** This is a parenthetical clause that has probably been inserted in answer to a question, which has not been cited: if the heavens and the earth were created afterwards in six days, what was there before their creation? The answer is: then there was water. It is not possible for us to say what exactly was the nature of that water. It might have been the common fluid known by that name. Or perhaps, the word water has been used as a symbol for the fluid state of the matter before it was changed to its present form. As regards to “His Throne was upon the water” I am of the opinion that it means: “His Kingdom was over water.”

***8** This enunciates the purpose of the creation: Allah created the heavens and the earth for the sake of the creation of mankind and He created mankind to test human beings by delegating to them the powers of vicegerency and making them morally responsible for using or abusing them, just as they liked. Thus it has been emphasized that the sole purpose of the creation is the

moral trial of man and his consequent accountability to the Creator for the use or abuse of the delegated powers, and the award of rewards and punishments. For without this basic purpose, the whole work of creation would have become meaningless and useless.

*9 That is, the disbelievers very foolishly considered the purpose of the creation to be no more than a pastime in which they themselves were mere playthings. They were so absorbed in their foolish conception that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) told them what the real purpose of creation was and what part they were required to play in it, they would scoff at him, saying: Your message is like a piece of sorcery and beyond our understanding.

8. And if We delay from them the punishment until a determined period, they will surely say: "What withholds it." Behold, on the day it comes to them, it will not be averted from them, and will surround them that which they used to mock at.

وَلَيْنَ أَخْرَجْنَا عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابَ إِلَى
أُمَّةٍ مَّعْدُودَةٍ لَّيْقُولُ مَا
يَحْبِسُهُ ۗ أَلَّا يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمْ
لَيْسَ مَصْرُوفًا عَنْهُمْ
وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ
يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٨﴾

9. And if We give man a taste of mercy from Us, and then We withdraw it from him. Indeed, he is

وَلَيْنَ أَذَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً
ثُمَّ نَزَعْنَاهَا مِنْهُ إِنَّهُ لَيَكُوسُ

despairing, ungrateful.

كُفُورٌ

10. And if We let him taste of favor after harm has touched him, he is sure to say: "The ills have gone from me." Indeed, he is exultant, boastful.*10

وَلَيْنَ أَذْقَنَّهُ نِعْمَاءَ بَعْدَ ضِرَّاءَ
مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ ذَهَبَ السَّيِّئَاتُ
عَنِّي إِنَّهُ لَفَرِحٌ فَخُورٌ

*10 This disgraceful characteristic of man has been mentioned here because the disbelievers were exhibiting it at that time. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) warned them of the consequences of their disobedience to Allah, they would scoff at him as if to say: Are you mad? Can't you see our prosperity and power? We are enjoying all the good things of life and dominating over everything and everyone all around us. How is it that you are prophesying torment for us?

The above mentioned arrogant behavior was due to the disgraceful human characteristic which has been mentioned in this verse. It is this: Man is, by nature, shallow and superficial and lacks the depth of thought. Therefore, when he enjoys prosperity and power he becomes joyous, arrogant and boastful; so much so that he never even dreams of any possibility that his happy condition would ever come to an end. And if and when adversity befalls him, he becomes an embodiment of despair and begins to complain of his misfortune here, there, and everywhere; so much so that he does not hesitate even to abuse God and taunt at His Godhead. But

whenever there is a change for the better in his fortune, he again begins to brag of his foresight, wisdom and success. That is why the disbelievers were exhibiting such a shallow and superficial characteristic in answer to the warning of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They forgot that Allah was deferring their punishment because of His mercy to give them sufficient time to consider well their absurd attitude and mend their ways during the respite given to them, and not to delude themselves by imagining that their prosperity had very deep foundations and would last for ever.

11. Except those who are steadfast and do righteous deeds.^{*11} Those, theirs will be forgiveness and a great reward.^{*12}

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ
وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ

***11** Here *sabr* (fortitude) also implies another meaning, that is, steadfastness, the antonym of shallowness etc. that has been mentioned in the preceding verse. Those “Who are steadfast” remain fine and unwavering in their purpose in spite of the vicissitudes of life. They are not influenced by the changes of circumstances but stick to the right reasonable and correct attitudes they have adopted. They do not give themselves airs nor become intoxicated nor over jubilant and boastful if they win power, prosperity and name. On the contrary, they are neither subdued nor depressed if they are visited by adversity. In short, they come out successful in their trial by Allah, whether it be in

the shape of favor or adversity and remain steadfast in both the cases.

*12 This is the favor that Allah shows to such people; He forgives their shortcomings and gives them rich rewards for their good deeds.

12. Then (O Muhammad), would you possibly give up some of what is revealed to you, and your breast feels straitened by it, because they say: “Why has not been sent down to him a treasure, or come with him an angel.” You are only a warner. And Allah is Trustee over all things.*13

فَلَعَلَّكَ تَارِكُ بَعْضَ مَا يُوحَىٰ
إِلَيْكَ وَضَائِقٌ بِهِ صَدْرُكَ أَنْ
يَقُولُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ كِتَابٌ أَوْ
جَاءَ مَعَهُ مَلَكٌ ۖ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ نَذِيرٌ
وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ



*13 In this verse, Allah has comforted and urged His Messenger (peace be upon him) to propagate the message without the least hesitation and not to waver in his determination for fear of ridicule or for lack of response from his people. He should convey the message in its entirety and leave the result to Allah for He has full power over everything. In order to grasp its full significance, we should keep in view the circumstances that necessitated it. At the time of this revelation, the Quraish were the most powerful and influential of all the clans. As they were the guardians of the Kabah (Makkah), the religious center of the Arabs, they enjoyed religious, economic, and political superiority over the entire Arabia. Thus it was quite natural

that they should resent and oppose that message which proclaimed: “The religion of which you are the leaders is absolutely false, and the system of life you are following is rotten to the core. As you are rejecting the message, torment of Allah is threatening you. The only way of escape from it is that you should accept the right way and the righteous system of life I have brought from Allah.” Obviously this message struck a hard blow at their superiority and therefore they were averse to it from the very beginning.

The second reason why they did not accept it was that the Messenger (peace be upon him) possessed nothing extraordinary to convince the people of his Prophethood except his pure character and his rational, and understandable message. Then for the Quraish, there was nothing to warrant a torment from Allah except the rotten condition of their religion, morality and culture. On the contrary, there was prosperity to delude them that that was a sure sign of the favors of Allah and of their gods and goddesses, which was a clear proof that the ways they were following were the right ways. The inevitable result was that only a small minority of those people, who had sound minds and hearts, accepted the message and the remaining large majority became hostile to it. Then some of them tried to suppress the message by persecutions and some did their worst to defame it by false accusations and frivolous objections and others resorted to calculated indifference to discourage it. There were still others who adopted an attitude of ridicule, derision, taunt and mockery in order to

make light of it.

The above condition went on for many years and was liable to fill one with despair and discouragement. Therefore the Sovereign reassured His Messenger, as if to say, “We disapprove of these shallow, superficial and mean people, who are trying to make your mission a failure by their prejudice, indifference, ridicule, mockery and frivolous objections. You should go on following the right way with perseverance and courage: you should go on proclaiming the truth that has been revealed to you without the least hesitation: you should never be afraid of propagating the message for fear of ridicule or indifference: you should go on inculcating the truth in its entirety whether anyone accepts it or rejects it for it is Allah Who has everything in His power and charge and He alone affords guidance to everyone He considers fit for it.”

13. Or do they say: “He (Muhammad) has invented it (Quran).” Say: “Then bring ten surahs like unto it, invented, and call upon whomever you can other than Allah, if you are truthful.”

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ أَفْتَرَنَاهُ قُلْ فَاتُوا
بِعَشْرِ سُورٍ مِثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيَةٍ
وَادْعُوا مَنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ
اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

14. “Then if they do not answer you, then know that this (revelation) is sent down with the knowledge of Allah, and that there is no

فَالِمَ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا
أَنَّمَا أَنْزَلَ بِعِلْمِ اللَّهِ وَأَنْ لَا إِلَهَ

god except Him. Would you then be those who surrender.”*14

إِلَّا هُوَ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ



*14 Here one and the same argument has been advanced to prove two things. First, the Quran has been revealed by Allah. Secondly, it proves the truth of the doctrine of Tauhid. The argument is this:

(1) You say that the Quran has not been revealed by Allah but has been devised and invented by myself and ascribed to Him. If your claim had been genuine you would have been able to invent a book like this in answer to the challenge I have given you over and over again. As you have failed to do so even with your combined resources and forces, my claim that it has been revealed with Allah’s knowledge has been proved absolutely and completely true.

(2) Then there was a twofold challenge from the Quran to your deities but they utterly failed to meet it. They were challenged to come to your aid and help produce a book like the Quran. As they have not helped you, it is a clear proof that they are absolutely powerless and have no share at all in Godhead. You have seen that they have not only failed in this decisive test, but have also proved to be impotent to defend themselves against the open attacks made on them in this Book, which asks the people not to worship them for they have no share in the powers of Godhead. These things have proved that there is nothing divine in them and you have made them your deities without rhyme or reason.

Incidentally, this verse shows that chronologically this Surah was revealed earlier than Surah Yunus. For at first they were challenged in this Surah to bring ten Surahs like the Surahs of the Quran, but they failed to do so. Then in Surah Yunus they were challenged (Ayat 38 and E.N. 46) to bring even one Surah like this.

15. Whoever desires the life of the world and its adornments,^{*15} We shall pay in full to them (the wages for) their deeds therein. And they will have no diminution therein.

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا
وَزِينَتَهَا نُوَفِّ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَلَهُمْ
فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يُبْخَسُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

***15** This general statement has been made in continuation of the theme of the preceding verses, to refute the false excuses of the disbelievers mentioned therein for rejecting the message of the Quran. This verse says that in general those people who rejected the Quran then (and are rejecting it now) were the worshipers of this world and its pleasures. As the root cause of their rejection was (and is) this false creed that there is nothing more valuable than the pleasures of this world and its material gains. And there should be no restrictions, like the ones imposed in the Quran, on their acquisition. They first made this choice, and afterwards invented arguments, like the ones mentioned in the Quran, to deceive their own minds and those of others.

16. They are those for whom there is nothing in

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي

the Hereafter, except Fire.*16
And lost is what they
did therein, and worthless
is that which they used to
do.

الْآخِرَةَ إِلَّا النَّارَ وَحَبِطَ مَا
صَنَعُوا فِيهَا وَبَطِلَ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ



*16 This is a clear and stern warning to the worshipers of the world. They should know that they will get the full reward for the exertions (whatever they be) they put forth in order to acquire the worldly gains but they should note it well that they would get nothing in the next world. As they confined their efforts to the benefits of this world, and did nothing to earn the benefits of the next world, they should expect nothing for the deeds they have done for the material gains of this world. In order to illustrate this, let us take the case of a person who desires to build a palace for himself in this world and adopts all those devices, measures and means which help build such a palace. Most surely, he will succeed in building a grand palace, for no brick will refuse to stick to its place simply because he was an unbeliever. But it is equally obvious that he shall have to leave behind in this world that grand palace along with all its furnishings as soon as he breathes his last breath. For there is no reason why the palace he had built (or done anything else) for this world, should be credited to him in the next world, if he had done nothing to provide himself with a palace in the next world. For only those who provide for themselves with the necessary material for a palace in the next world in accordance with the divine law, deserve to get a palace there.

Now a question arises in regard to the logical conclusion of this argument, according to which he should not get a palace in the next world. It is this: "Well, he may not get a palace, but why should he be thrown into the fire of Hell?" The answer is this (and the Quran itself has given this same answer in different places) that the one who exerts and works only for a palace in this world in utter disregard of the Hereafter, naturally and inevitably adopts such treasures and means as help build a large fire for himself in the Hell. (Refer to E.N. 12 of Surah Yunus.)

17. So is he who is upon a clear proof from his Lord (like aforementioned).^{*17} And a witness from Him recites it.^{*18} And before it was the Book of Moses, guidance and mercy. Those believe in it (Quran). And whoever disbelieves in it among the factions,^{*19} then the Fire will be his promised destination. So be not you in doubt about it. Indeed, it is the truth from your Lord, but most of mankind do not believe.

أَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ
وَيَتْلُوهُ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْهُ وَمِنْ قَبْلِهِ
كُتِبَ مُوسَىٰ إِمَامًا وَرَحْمَةً
أُولَٰئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ
بِهِ مِنَ الْأَحْزَابِ فَأَلْنَا
مَوْعِدَهُ فَلَا تَكُ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْهُ
إِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ وَلَٰكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

*17 This shows that even apart from revelation, there is ample evidence in man's own self, in the structure of the

heavens and the earth, and in the order that prevails in the universe to prove that God is the only creator, master, lord and sovereign of the universe. The evidence referred to above also inclines man to believe that the present life will be followed by another one in which man will be required to render an account of his deeds and wherein he might be requited.

***18** The “witness from Him” is the Quran. The testimony of the natural phenomena combined with that provided by man’s own self had already created in man the disposition to affirm the truths mentioned earlier. All that was further reinforced by the Quran which came as reassurance that what he was predisposed to believe in was indeed true.

***19** In the present context the verse means that those who are overly infatuated with the allurements of a worldly life will be inclined to reject the message of the Quran. Distinguishable from these are those who take full note of the testimony furnished by their own beings and by the structure and order prevailing in the universe in support of God’s unity. This testimony was further reinforced by the heavenly books revealed before the Quran. How could such persons close their eyes to such overwhelming testimony as this and join their voice with those of the unbelievers?

This verse clearly indicates that even before the Quran was revealed, the Prophet (peace be on him) had reached the stage of belief in the Unseen. We have seen, in Surah Al-Anam Ayat 75, the case of Abraham. Before being appointed as a Prophet, Abraham (peace be on him) was led by a careful observation of the natural phenomena to

knowledge of God's unity. Likewise, the present verse makes it clear that by his reflection, the Prophet (peace be on him), had been led to believe in the Unseen even before the Quran was revealed. Subsequently, when the Quran was revealed it not only confirmed what he had already become inclined to accept, but also provided definite knowledge about it.

18. And who is more unjust than he who invents a lie about Allah.*²⁰ Those will be brought before their Lord, and the witnesses will say: "These are they who lied against their Lord." Behold, the curse of Allah is upon*²¹ the wrong doers.*²²

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ
كَذِبًا ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ يُعْرَضُونَ
عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَقُولُ الْأَشْهَادُ
هَٰؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا عَلَىٰ
رَبِّهِمْ ۗ أَلَا لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى
الظَّالِمِينَ



*²⁰ To invent a lie against God consists of stating that beings other than God also have a share with God in His godhead, that like God they are also entitled to be served and worshiped by God's creatures. Inventing a lie against God also consists of stating that God is not concerned with providing guidance to His creatures, that He did not raise Prophets for that purpose, and that He rather left men free to behave as they pleased. Inventing a lie against God also consists of stating that God created human beings by way of jest and sport and that He will not have them render an

account to Him, and that He will not requite them for their deeds.

*21 Such a proclamation would be made on the Day of Judgment.

*22 This is a parenthetical statement. That is, that God's curse will be proclaimed in the Hereafter against those who are guilty of the crimes mentioned.

19. Those who hinder (others) from the path of Allah, and seek a crookedness therein.*23 And they are disbelievers in the Hereafter.

الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا وَهُمْ
بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

*23 Such persons do not like the straight way being expounded to them. They would rather have the straight way rendered crooked by altering it under the influence of lust, prejudice, fancy, and superstition. It is only after the way that was once straight has been rendered crooked that they will be willing to accept it.

20. They will not be able to escape (from Allah's punishment) on the earth.*24 And for them, other than Allah, there are not any protecting friends. The punishment for them will be doubled.*25 They were not able to hear, nor did they see.

أُولَئِكَ لَمْ يَكُونُوا مُعْجِزِينَ
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ يُضْعَفُ
لَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ ۚ مَا كَانُوا
يَسْتَطِيعُونَ السَّمْعَ وَمَا كَانُوا

- *24 This, again, refers to what will happen in the next life.
 *25 They will suffer punishment for being in error and for misleading others and leaving behind a legacy of error and misguidance for coming generations. (Surah Al-Araf, E.N. 30).

21. They are those who have lost their own selves, and has vanished from them that which they used to invent.^{*26}

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ
 وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ

*26 All their conjectures regarding God, the universe and their own selves will prove to be absolutely baseless in the next life. Similarly, the notions they entertained about the help and support they would receive from those they considered to be either their deities, or their intercessors with God, or their patrons will prove to be false. Likewise, it will become obvious that all their notions about the After-life were utterly untrue.

22. Without a doubt they are those, in the Hereafter, they will be the greatest losers.

لَا جَرَمَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ
 الْأَخْسَرُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

23. Certainly, those who believe and do righteous deeds and humble themselves before their Lord. They will

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
 الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَخْبَتُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ

be the companions of the Garden. They will abide therein forever.*27

أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا
خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

***27** This concludes the account about the Hereafter.

24. The similitude of the two parties is as the blind and the deaf and the seer and the hearer. Are they equal in similitude.*28 Will you not then take heed.

﴿ مَثَلُ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ كَالْأَعْمَى
وَالْأَصْمِ وَالْبَصِيرِ وَالسَّمِيعِ
هَلْ يَسْتَوِيَانِ مَثَلًا ﴾ أَفَلَا
تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

***28** Can the attitude and ultimate end of both these types of people be the same? Obviously, he who fails to see the right way and ignores the instruction of the guide who directs him to the right way will necessarily stumble and meet with some terrible mishap. However, he who perceives the right way and follows the instructions of his guide will reach his destination, and reach it safely.

The same difference is found between the two parties mentioned here. One of these carefully observes the realities of the universe and pays heed to the teachings of God's Messengers. The other party, however, neither uses their eyes properly to perceive God's signs nor pays heed to His Messengers. The behavior of the two parties is, therefore, bound to be different. And when their behavior is different, there is no reason to believe that their ultimate end will be identical.

25. And indeed, We sent Noah to his people^{*29} (he said): “Surely, I am a plain warner to you.”

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ
إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

***29** E.Ns 47-50 of Surah Al-Aaraf should be kept in view.

26. That you worship none, but Allah. Surely, I fear for you, the punishment of a painful day.^{*30}

أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ
عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ أَلِيمٍ

***30** This is the same thing that has been put into the mouth of Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Ayats 2-3.

27. So the chiefs, those who disbelieved among his people, said: “We do not see you but a mortal like ourselves.^{*31} And we do not see you being followed except by those who are the lowest of us, immature in judgment.^{*32} And we do not see in you any merit above us.^{*33} In fact we think you as liars.”

فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ
قَوْمِهِ مَا نَرَكَ إِلَّا بَشَرًا مِّثْلَنَا
وَمَا نَرَكَ اتَّبَعَكَ إِلَّا
الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَرَادُوا بِادِّئِ
الرَّأْيِ وَمَا نَرَىٰ لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ
فَضْلٍ بَلْ نَظُنُّكُمْ كَاذِبِينَ

***31** The same foolish objection was being raised by the people against the Prophet (peace be upon him). They argued like this: You are a man like us: you eat and drink, you walk and sleep and have a family, and there is nothing

in you that might show that you have been sent by God. (See E. N. Surah Yaseen).

*32 The big people of Makkah passed the same remarks about those who followed the Prophet (peace be upon him). They taunted him with things like these: Your followers consist of mere inexperienced boys or slaves or the lowest strata of society, in short, of such people as are credulous and lack commonsense and wisdom. (Refer to E.Ns 34-37 of Surah Al-Anaam and E.N. 75 of Surah Yunus).

*33 This is to say, You claim that you are the favored ones of God Whose blessings are on you, and that those who do not follow your way are under His wrath. But the reverse of this is true for it is we who have been favored with wealth, servants and power and you possess nothing of the sort. Please point out anything in which you are superior to us.

28. He said: "O my people, see you, if I should be upon a clear evidence from my Lord, and He has given me a mercy from Himself,^{*34} and it has been made obscure to you. Shall we force it upon you while you have a hatred for it."

قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَىٰ
بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَءَاتَنِي رَحْمَةً مِّن
عِنْدِهِ فَعُمِّيَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ
أَنْزَلْنَاهَا وَأَنْتُمْ لَهَا كَرِهُونَ

*34 This is the same thing that has been put into the mouth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Ayat 17. That is, At first I recognized the reality of *Tauhid* by observing keenly the signs of God in the universe and in my own self. Then

the same was confirmed by revelation to me. This shows that all the Prophets acquired the knowledge of the Unseen by observation and contemplation. Then Allah blessed them with the actual knowledge of the same at the time of their appointment as Prophets.

29. “And O my people, I ask of you no wealth for it.^{*35} My recompense is not but with Allah, and I am not going to drive away those who have believed. Indeed, they will meet their Lord.^{*36} But I see you a people that are ignorant.”

وَيَقَوْمٍ لَّا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا
 إِنِّ أَجْرِي إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا
 بِطَارِدِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّهُمْ
 مُلْقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَلَكِنِّي أَرَأَيْتُمْ قَوْمًا
 تَجَاهَلُونَ



*35 This was to bring home to them the fact that he had no selfish motive in the performance of his mission, as if to say: I am conveying the admonition to you without any demand or hope or expectation of worldly gains. Nay, I am bearing all the sufferings in the hope that you may at last realize that I have no axe to grind. And you cannot point out anything to show that I have any personal or selfish interest before me in the mission of the Message. (See. E.N. 70 of Surah Al-Mominoon, E.N. 17 of Surah Saba and E.N. 41 of Surah Ash-Shura).

*36 That is, their true worth will be known only when they shall meet their Lord. Therefore it is not proper for you to treat them with contempt here in this world. Maybe they are precious stones, their Lord alone knows, and you are

treating them as mere worthless stones. (See Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat, 52, Surah Al-Kahaf, Ayat 28).

30. “And O my people, who will help me against Allah if I drove them away. Then will you not give a thought.”

وَيَقَوْمٍ مِّنْ يَّنصُرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ طَرَدْتُهُمْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

31. “And I do not say to you that with me are the treasures of Allah, nor do I have knowledge of the unseen, nor do I say that I am an angel,^{*37} nor do I say of those whom your eyes look down upon that Allah will never grant them any good. Allah knows best of what is in their souls. Indeed, I would then be among the wrong doers.”

وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ وَلَا أَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ تَزْدَرِي أَعْيُنُكُمْ لَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنِّي إِذَا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢١﴾

*37 This is the answer to their objection that he was no more than a man like themselves. Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) admitted this: In fact I am a man and I never claimed to be more than this. My only claim is that God has shown me the right way of knowledge and action and you are welcome to test this in any way you like. But instead of this, you are asking me questions about the Unseen, though I never claimed to have its knowledge. You ask me to produce such things as can be produced only by that person who possesses God’s treasures and I never claimed to

possess them. You object that my physical life is like that of other men, though I never claimed that I was an angel and not a man. The true test of my claim is that you should ask me about the true creeds, the principles of morality and culture and not about frivolous things about the future events for I never claimed to possess their knowledge.

32. They said: “O Noah, surely, you have disputed with us, then much have you prolonged the dispute with us, so bring upon us that with which you threaten us, if you are of the truthful.”

قَالُوا يَنْوُحُ قَدْ جَدَلْتَنَا
فَأَكْثَرْتَ جِدَالَنَا فَأْتِنَا بِمَا
تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ
الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

33. He said: “Only Allah will bring it upon you if He wills, and you will not escape.”

قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ إِنْ شَاءَ
وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

34. “And my advice will not benefit you, even if I wish to advise you, (and) if Allah should intend to keep you astray.^{*38} He is your Lord, and to Him you will be returned.”

وَلَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ نُصْحِي إِنْ أَرَدْتُ
أَنْ أَنْصَحَ لَكُمْ إِنْ كَانَ اللَّهُ
يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُغْوِيَكُمْ هُوَ رَبُّكُمْ
وَأِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

***38** That is, all my efforts to do good to you cannot prove effective, if Allah has decided to withhold the right way from you because of your obduracy in evil and the lack of

interest in good ways. For Allah lets people go astray on the way they choose for themselves.

35. Or do they say: “He (Muhammad) has invented it (Quran).” Say: “If I have invented it, then upon me will be my crimes, and I am free of what you commit.”*39

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ أَفْتَرْتَهُ قُلْ إِن
أَفْتَرَيْتُهُ فَعَلَىٰ إِجْرَامِي وَأَنَا
بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تَجْرُمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

*39 The wording of the verse shows that during the recital of the story of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him), the opponents of the Prophet (peace be upon him) might have felt that he himself had invented that story in order to hit them hard indirectly. So they might have interrupted him, saying: You are inventing such stories as these in order to apply these to us and hit us hard indirectly. That is why the narration of the story has been broken to answer their false accusation.

And the fact is that the mean people always behave like this. As they have no interest in goodness, they would turn to the dark side of everything. Even if one gives them wise counsel or teaches them a useful lesson or warns them of an error, they would never benefit from these nor mend their ways. Instead of this, they would search out for that aspect of the matter which will not only undo the wisdom and goodness of the counsel but also bring an accusation against the admonisher. It is obvious that in this way, even the best of counsels can be made void and ineffective, if the hearer dubs that as a hit and takes it ill as an affront. Moreover, their thinking is always based on suspicion and mistrust.

Supposing there is a certain story which appears to be true. A wise man will take it as a fact and learn a lesson from it, even if it applies exactly to his own condition and points out his error. On the contrary, a suspicious and crooked man will at once jump to the conclusion without any proof at all that the story had been invented for the sole purpose of applying it to him in order to hit him hard.

The same was the condition of those who accused the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he himself had forged the story and ascribed it to Allah to make it more effective. Allah has asked him to say to them: If I have forged the story, I shall have to bear its consequences, but this cannot lessen the punishments of the crimes you are committing for which you alone will be held responsible.

36. And it was revealed to Noah that: “No one will believe from your people except those who have believed already. So be not distressed because of what they have been doing.”

وَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ نُوحٍ أَنَّهُ لَنْ يُؤْمِنَ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ إِلَّا مَنْ قَدْ ءَامَنَ فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

37. “And build the ship under Our eyes and Our inspiration, and do not address Me on behalf of those who have wronged. Surely, they will be drowned.”*40

وَأَصْنَعِ الْفُلَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُغْرَقُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

*40 This verse lays down the limits of the divine law of

respice. When the message of a Prophet has been conveyed to a people and is rejected, they are granted respice from punishment only as long as there is the possibility that some of them might accept it. But when there remains no such possibility and there is left nothing but evil element among them, Allah does not grant them any further respice. And this is a manifestation of His mercy, just as for the safety of the good fruit the rotten ones should be thrown away and discarded. Conversely, it shall be an act of cruelty to the good people and the future generations if pity is shown to those wicked people who are incorrigible.

38. And he built the ship, and whenever the chiefs of his people passed by him, they made a mockery of him. He said: "If you mock at us, so do we indeed mock at you, just as you mock."

وَيَصْنَعُ الْفُلْكَ وَكُلَّمَا مَرَّ
عَلَيْهِ مَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ سَخِرُوا
مِنْهُ قَالَ إِنْ تَسْخَرُوا مِنَّا فَإِنَّا
نَسْخَرُ مِنْكُمْ كَمَا تَسْخَرُونَ



39. "Then soon you will know who it is to whom will come a punishment that will disgrace him, and upon whom will fall a lasting punishment."^{*41}

فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ
عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَيَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ
عَذَابٌ مُقِيمٌ



*41 This is a very appropriate example of the points of view of those who look merely at the surface of things and of

others who know the reality about them. It appears that when Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) was building the Ark on the land, it looked to be a ridiculous act to those wicked people who did not believe in him. They jeered at him as if to say: Just see the madness of the old man. He wishes to float a ship on the land. For they could never imagine that after a few days, a ship would actually float there. Therefore naturally they regarded that act of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) to be a clear proof of his madness. Probably they might be pointing their fingers at him and the Ark he was constructing, saying to one another: Have you any doubt now, if you had any before, that he is really a mad man, who is constructing a ship to float on the waterless land? But the one, who had the knowledge of the reality and who knew that a ship would actually be needed there in the near future, was laughing at their ignorance and lack of knowledge of the real matter and their arrogant self satisfaction, as if to say: How foolish these people are. The catastrophe is threatening them overhead but they are not only self satisfied but also regard me mad, who has warned them of it and who is himself making preparations to meet it. And these are exactly the two ways, in general, of judging the wisdom or folly of things. One man judges an act to be wise by looking merely at the surface, while the other goes down deep into it and knows it to be foolish. Likewise the former considers an act to be foolish and mad while the latter who has the real knowledge of the matter, knows that it is based on wisdom and foresight, and is the very same thing that was required

under the circumstances.

40. Until when Our command came to pass and the oven gushed forth (with water).^{*42} We said: “Embark therein, of each kind two (male and female), and your household, except him against whom the word has gone forth already,^{*43} and those who believe.”^{*44} And none believed with him, except a few.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّورُ
قُلْنَا أَحْمِلْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ
زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا مَنْ
سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ وَمَنْ ءَامَنَ
وَمَا ءَامَنَ مَعَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ

^{*42} Different interpretations have been given of this, but we are of the opinion that the correct one is the one that is based on the plain words of the text. The deluge started from *at-tannur*, a particular oven from under which water began to boil up. At the same time heavy rain began to fall and springs began to gush up water from many places in the earth. This is given in detail in Ayats 11-12 of Surah Al-Qamar: We opened the gates of the sky from which it began to rain heavily and constantly, and We tore open the earth and springs began to gush forth water from every side. Thus the two kinds of water gathered together to fulfill the destined doom.

In this connection, it should also be noted that the prefix *al* (the) before *tannur* (oven) shows that a particular oven had been specifically marked by God for the purpose of starting the deluge. This began to boil up water as soon as it was

commanded to do so, and afterwards it began to be called the oven. It has been explicitly stated in Ayat 7 of Surah Al-Mominoon that the said *tannur* was specified before hand.

***43** That is, don't embark in the Ark those who had specifically been marked as unbelievers from your household, for they do not deserve to be shown Our compassion. Most probably they were two persons. One was his son who was drowned (Ayat 43), and the other was his wife. (Surah At-Tahrim, Ayat 10). And if there were any others, they have not been mentioned in the Quran.

***44** Incidentally, this refutes the theory of the historians and genealogists who trace the genealogy of the whole human race to the three sons of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him). This wrong theory became prevalent because of the stories in the Bible that none other than Prophet Noah (peace be upon him), his three sons and his wife were rescued from the deluge. (Genesis 6: 18, 7: 7, 9, and 9: 19). But the Quran contradicts this in many places, saying that besides the people of his own household, some other people of his community, though small in number, were also rescued along with him. Moreover, the Quran declares that the generations which came after Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) were his descendants and of all those people who were rescued in the Ark: You are the descendants of those whom We bore in the Ark with Noah. (Surah Al-Isra, Ayat 3). They were from the descendants of Adam, and from the seed of those whom we carried in the Ark with Noah. (Surah Maryam, Ayat 58).

41. And he (Noah) said: “Embark therein. In the name of Allah is its moving course and its resting anchorage. Surely, my Lord is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.”*45

﴿ وَقَالَ أَرْكَبُوا فِيهَا بِسْمِ اللَّهِ
مَجْرِبَهَا وَمُرْسَاهَا إِنَّ رَبِّي لَغَفُورٌ
رَّحِيمٌ ﴾



*45 This humility shown by Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) that his delivery from the deluge was not due to his own plans, measures and efforts but to the mercy and compassion of his Lord, who is most Forgiving, is the true characteristic of a believer. The servant of God adopts all necessary measures as a man of the world does, but he does not put his trust in those measures alone. Along with these he puts his trust in his Lord for their success, because he knows well that no measure can be adopted without His sanction, nor can it be put into practice nor can it achieve the required object unless it is helped by the compassion and favor of Allah.

42. And it sailed with them amidst waves like mountains, and Noah called out to his son, and he was at a distance (from the rest): “O my son, come ride with us, and do not be with the disbelievers.”

﴿ وَهِيَ تَجْرِي بِهِمْ فِي مَوْجٍ
كَالْجِبَالِ وَنَادَى نُوحٌ ابْنَهُ
وَكَانَ فِي مَعَزٍ يَبْنِي
أَرْكَب مَعَنَا وَلَا تَكُن مَعَ
الْكَافِرِينَ ﴾



43. He (son) said: “I shall take refuge on a mountain, it will protect me from the water.” He (Noah) said: “There is no protector this day from the decree of Allah, except for whom He has mercy.” And a wave came in between them, so he was among those who were drowned.

قَالَ سَأْوَىٰ إِلَىٰ جَبَلٍ يَعْصِمُنِي
مِنَ الْمَاءِ ۖ قَالَ لَا عَاصِمَ
الْيَوْمَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ ۗ
وَحَالَ بَيْنَهُمَا الْمَوْجُ فَكَانَ
مِنَ الْمُغْرَقِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

44. And it was said: “O earth, swallow up your water, and O sky, withhold (rain).” And the water was made to subside. And the decree was fulfilled. And it (the ship) came to rest upon (the mount) Al-Judi,^{*46} and it was said: “A far removal for wrong doing people.”

وَقِيلَ يَا أَرْضُ ابْلَعِي مَاءَكِ
وَيَسْمَاءُ أَقْلِعِي وَغِيضَ الْمَاءِ
وَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَأَسْتَوَتْ عَلَى
الْجُودِيِّ ۗ وَقِيلَ بُعْدًا لِلْقَوْمِ
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

***46** According to the Quran, the Ark rested upon Mount Judi, which is situated to the north-east of Jazirah Ibn Umar in Kurdistan. But according to the Bible its resting place was Mount Ararat in Armenia, which is one of the ranges of mountains of the same name that extends from Armenia to southern Kurdistan. Mount Judi is one of the mountains of the Ararat range, and is known by the same name even today. The ancient histories confirm that the

resting place of the Ark was Mount Judi. For instance, Berasus, a religious leader of Babylonia, who lived about 250 years before Christ, says in his history of the Chaldeans that Noah's Ark rested upon Mount Judi. Abydenus, a pupil of Aristotle, not only confirms the same but also says that many people of Iraq of his time possessed pieces of the Ark, which they ground in water and gave to the sick as a medicine.

Now let us consider the question: Did the deluge mentioned here cover the whole earth or was it confined to that particular region where Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) lived? This is a question which has not been finally settled up to this day. As far as the Bible and the Israelite traditions are concerned, this was universal. (Genesis 7: 18-24). But the Quran is silent about it, though it does say things which show that the whole human race after the deluge was the descendant of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) and of those with him in the Ark, but this does not mean that the deluge covered all the earth. It may be explained like this: At that time of the history the only region of the earth, which was inhabited by the human race, was the region in which Noah lived, and the generations which came after the deluge, gradually spread over other parts of the earth. This theory is supported by two things. First, there is a conclusive proof that a great flood did come over the land of the Tigris and the Euphrates. This is confirmed by historical traditions, archaeological remains and geological evidence. But there are no such proofs in the other parts of the earth as might

show that the deluge was universal. Secondly, traditions have come down to almost all the peoples of the earth living even in distant places like America and Australia, that once a great flood had come all over the earth. The only conclusion which can be drawn from the above is that at one time the forefathers of all the people of the earth lived at one place. But, when afterwards they spread over different lands in the earth; they carried the traditions of the deluge along with them. (Refer to E.N. 47 of Surah Al-Aaraf).

45. And Noah called upon his Lord, so he said: “My Lord, surely, my son is of my household. And surely, Your promise is true,^{*47} and You are the Most Just of Judges.”^{*48}

وَنَادَى نُوحٌ رَبَّهُ فَقَالَ رَبِّ
إِنَّ ابْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِي وَإِنَّ وَعْدَكَ
الْحَقُّ وَأَنْتَ أَحْكَمُ الْحَاكِمِينَ



*47 That is, You promised that You will save the members of my family from this calamity; so save my son for he is also a member of my family.

*48 That is, You are the greatest of all rulers: therefore Your decision is final and there can be no appeal against it. And You are the best of all rulers: therefore all Your decisions are based on perfect knowledge and absolute justice.

46. He (Allah) said: “O Noah, indeed, he is

قَالَ يَنْوُوحُ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ

not of your household. Indeed, his conduct was other than righteous.*49 So do not ask Me for that about which you have no knowledge. Indeed, I advise you, lest you be among the ignorant.”*50

أَهْلِكَ إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ
فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ
عِلْمٌ إِنِّي أَعِظُكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ
الْجَاهِلِينَ



*49 Allah has called the wicked son of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him), as “His conduct was other than righteous”, for children are entrusted by the Creator to the care of parents so that they may bring them up and train them to become good persons, and fulfill the purpose for which He created man. If a father does his very best to process and turn the child into a righteous person, but fails in his efforts, the child, who was a sort of raw material in his hands, would be likened to a worthless act. It is obvious that the wicked son was a worthless act, for he was not the sort of good work which his father had desired him to be. So in this sense he did not belong to the family of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him), whom the Creator had sent to mold all his people into good acts, especially those who were of his own flesh and blood. Thus that unrighteous son had forfeited all the rights of blood he had with the Prophet as far as the torment of the deluge was concerned.

Now let us consider the other question: Why was not the request of the Prophet regarding his own flesh and blood granted? The answer is this: If any part of the body of a man becomes so rotten that the surgeon is of the definite

opinion that that part must be cut off for the sake of the safety of the rest of the body, the surgeon will not comply with the request of the man not to cut that part of his body, but will say: It is not a part of your body because it is rotten. This will not, however, mean that it was never actually a part of the body but will imply only this: As it has ceased to function rightly as a part of the body, it is no more a part of the body in the sense and for the purpose the healthy parts of the body are its parts. Likewise, when it was said to Prophet Noah (peace be upon him): He is not of your family, it did not negate the fact that he was from his loins but implied: He does not deserve to be treated as a member of your righteous family because of his spoiled morals and conduct. As the torment of the deluge has been brought about to punish those who had sided with the unbelievers in the conflict of kufr and faith, your son does not deserve to be rescued from it along with the believers. Had it been a conflict between your descendants and those of the unbelievers, the result would have been different, but this being a conflict between the righteous and the unrighteous, the former alone will be delivered from it. The epithet, a worthless act, has been purposely applied to the son of Noah, for it is very meaningful. It points to the two different objects that the parents have in view in bringing up their children. Those parents who look merely at the surface of things, bring up and love their children because they are from their loins or their wombs, irrespective of the fact whether they are righteous or unrighteous. But this epithet requires the believers to look

upon their children as pieces of work entrusted to them in a natural way by their Creator, so that they should prepare and mold them so as to fulfill the object for which Allah has created man. Therefore, if a certain parent fails in his efforts to mold his child in a way to fulfill the very object for which the child was entrusted to him and the latter becomes a servant of Satan instead of his Lord, the parent should regard all his efforts for the child to have gone utterly waste. In that case there is no reason why that parent should have any consideration for that worthless act.

As a corollary to the above, the same rule will apply to the other relationships of a believer. As a believer is one who believes in certain creeds and behaviors, all his relationships with the other people will be determined by those creeds and behaviors. If his blood relations have the qualities of a believer, their relationship with him becomes doubly stronger. But if they are void of the qualities of a believer; the believer will confine his relationship with them only to the extent of blood relationships and will have no spiritual relationship with them. Consequently, if such a relative comes face to face with the believer in the conflict between kufr and the faith, the believer should fight with him just as he would with any other unbeliever.

***50** This warning from his Lord does not mean that Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) was suffering from the lack of faith or that his faith had any tinge of weakness or that he had beliefs like those of the ignorant people. His response to this is rather a proof of his high moral

character. As Noah was like the other Prophets, a human being, he also suffered from the common human weakness, that is, natural parental love for children. So he begged his Lord to deliver his son from the deluge. Allah admonished him because the high character of a Prophet demanded that he ought not to have made such a request even for his own flesh and blood. That is why no sooner was the warning administered to him than he realized that he had come down from the high position of a Prophet to the level of a mere father because of the critical psychological human weakness. Therefore immediately after the warning, he repented of his weakness, and behaved as if his own son had not been drowned in the deluge a moment before this. This character shown by him is a clear proof that he was a true Prophet. He returned to the same height and meekly asked his Lord's forgiveness for showing any concern for his own son who had forsaken the truth and sided with falsehood.

47. He (Noah) said: "My Lord, indeed, I seek refuge with You, that I should ask You that of which I have no knowledge. And unless You forgive me and have mercy upon me, I would indeed be among the losers."^{*51}

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ
أَسْأَلَكَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ
وَإِلَّا تَغْفِرْ لِي وَتَرْحَمْنِي أَكُن
مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ



*51 The Quran has cited the story of the drowning of the son of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) to bring home to the people that Allah's decrees are absolutely just and final.

This also served as a warning to the Quraish who considered themselves to be immune from the torment of Allah simply because they were the descendants of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), and had several gods and goddesses as their interceders. Likewise it was a warning to the Jews and the Christians who cherished, and still cherish, such beliefs, nay, even to those Muslims, who foolishly believe that their saintly ancestors and holy people will guard them against the consequences of the justice of Allah. For the tragic scene depicted here categorically refutes such false expectations and beliefs, saying: O foolish people! Why do you cherish such false hopes? When Our Prophet Noah could not save his son who was drowned before his very eyes, and his prayer for the son was not only rejected but he was rebuked for making such a prayer, how can you then expect that anyone much less than a Prophet can deliver you from the justice of Allah?

48. It was said: “O Noah, disembark^{*52} with peace from Us, and blessings upon you and upon nations (descending) from those with you. And (other) nations (of them) We shall give enjoyment for a while, then will reach them from Us a painful punishment.”

قِيلَ يٰنُوحُ اٰهْبِطْ بِسَلٰمٍ مِّنَّا
وَبَرَكَاتٍ عَلٰيكَ وَعَلٰى اٰمِرٍ مِّمَّنْ
مَعَكَ ۚ وَاٰمُرٌ سَنُمَتِّعُهُمْ ثُمَّ
يَمْسُهُم مِّنَّا عَذَابٌ اَلِيمٌ



*52 That is, go down from the Mountain on which the Ark is resting.

49. That is of the news of the unseen which We have revealed to you (Muhammad). You did not know it, (neither) you, nor your people before this. So have patience. Indeed, the (good) end is for those who fear (Allah).^{*53}

تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا
إِلَيْكَ مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَا أَنْتَ وَلَا
قَوْمَكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا فَاصْبِرْ
إِنَّ الْعَاقِبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

***53** That is, you and your companions will come out successful at the end of the conflict just as Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) and his companions did. For this is the divine law that those who exert for the right cause, avoiding erroneous ways for fear of Allah, should come out successful in the end, even though they should meet with failures in the beginning of the conflict at the hands of the enemies of the truth. Therefore you should patiently bear the afflictions which you are suffering and stand steadfast against the obstacles you are encountering in the way, and you should not be in the least disheartened by the painful and superficial successes of your enemies. If you practice fortitude, you will come out successful in the end like Noah and his companions.

50. And to (the tribe of) Aad (We sent) their brother, Houd.^{*54} He said: “O my people, worship Allah. You do not have any god other than Him.

وَإِلَىٰ عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا ۖ قَالَ
يَقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ
مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۗ إِنَّ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا

You are not but inventors
(of lies).”*55

مُفْتَرُونَ

*54 Please keep in view E.Ns 51-56 of Surah Al-Aaraf.

*55 That is, you have forged falsehood about all the deities you worship beside Allah, for in fact they possess no powers and no qualities that might entitle them to Godhead. As they have absolutely nothing in them which might make them the objects of worship and service, you have put in them false hopes that they would fulfill your desires and needs.

51. “O my people, I ask you of no reward for it. My reward is not except from Him who created me. Will you then not understand.”*56

يَقَوْمٍ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِنِّ
أَجْرِي إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي
أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

*56 This concise sentence contains a very strong argument: The fact that you are taking a superficial view of my Message and rejecting it without paying due and deep consideration to it is a clear proof that you are not using your common sense. Had you tried to understand the matter, you would have found much material for your consideration. You would have noticed that I have absolutely no personal interests: nay, I am suffering hardships, in conveying the message which cannot bring any benefit to me or to the members of my family. This is a conclusive proof that my faith has very sound bases which are strong enough to enable me to forsake all the worldly joys and comforts and encounter the enmity of the whole

world by waging a war against the centuries old, established rites, customs and ways of life. Do these things not demand a deep and serious consideration? Why don't you then use your common sense before rejecting the message outright?

52. “And O my people, ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him (in repentance). He will send (from) the sky upon you abundant rain, and will add unto you strength to your strength.^{*57} And do not turn away as criminals.”

وَيَقَوْمٍ أَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ
تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ
عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا وَيَزِدْكُمْ
قُوَّةً إِلَى قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوْا
مُجْرِمِينَ

*57 This is the same thing that has been stated by the tongue of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Ayat 3. This is a clear proof that moral values count not only in the life of the Hereafter but also determine the rise and fall of nations in this world. This is because Allah rules over the world in accordance with moral principles and not on the basis of His physical laws alone. That is why Allah has declared in many places in the Quran that the fate of a community hangs on the message which He sends to it through His Prophet. If it accepts the message, He opens the gates of His favors and blessings for it, but if it rejects the message, then it is destroyed.

In short, this verse is an article of the moral law in accordance with which Allah deals with man. Conversely,

the other article of the same principle of the law is that the community which, deluded by its worldly prosperity, begins to tread the paths of sin and iniquity is ultimately destroyed. But if, during its headlong race towards its doom, it realizes its erroneous behavior and gives up its disobedience and turns in repentance towards Allah, its evil fate is changed and the impending scourge is averted and it is given a further term of respite along with blessings and favors.

53. They said: “O Houd, you have not brought us clear evidence,^{*58} and we shall not leave our gods on your (mere) saying, and we are not believers in you.”

قَالُوا يَا هُودُ مَا جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَمَا
نَحْنُ بِتَارِكِي ءَالِهَتِنَا عَنْ
قَوْلِكَ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ
بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

***58** That is, you have not brought a clear sign as evidence to prove conclusively to us that you have been sent by Allah and that the message you are presenting before us is the truth.

54. “We say nothing but that some of our gods have possessed you with evil.”^{*59} He said: “Indeed, I take Allah as witness,^{*60} and you bear witness that I am free from that which you ascribe as partners (to Allah).”^{*61}

إِنْ نَقُولُ إِلَّا أَعْتَرْنَاكَ بِبَعْضِ
ءَالِهَتِنَا بِسُوءٍ ۗ قَالَ إِنِّي أُشْهِدُ
اللَّهَ وَأَشْهَدُونَ أَنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا
تُشْرِكُونَ

*59 That is, it appears that you had behaved rudely towards a god or goddess or saint: Consequently you have been smitten with madness and are being abused, dishonored and pelted with stones in the same streets in which you were respected and honored before this.

*60 This was the refutation of their charge that he had not brought any clear evidence to them. It implied: You say that I have brought no evidence to prove that I have been sent by Allah who is a standing witness everywhere in His universe and giving evidence with the phenomena of nature to show that the truth I have stated before you is absolutely correct. This also proves conclusively that there is no sign of truth in what you falsely ascribe to your gods.

*61 This is the answer of Prophet Houd (peace be upon him) to their assertion: We are not going to give up our gods at your word. (Ayat 53). His reply implied: Note it well that I, too, feel a strong disgust at the gods you have set up beside Allah.

55. "Other than Him. So plot against me all together, then do not give me any respite."*62

مِنْ دُونِهِ ۖ فَكِيدُونِي جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ
لَا تُنظِرُونِ ﴿٥٥﴾

*62 This is his answer to their threat: "Some of our gods have smitten you with some evil" (Compare this with Surah Yunus, Ayat 71).

56. "Indeed, I have put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord. There is not of a moving creature

إِنِّي تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ رَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ
مَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ آخِذٌ

but He has grasp of its forelock. Indeed, My Lord is on the straight path.”*63

بِنَاصِيَتِهَا إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ



*63 That is, whatever my Lord does is always right and correct for all His ways are straight and just, and the judgments He passes are based entirely on truth and justice. Therefore you cannot come out successful in your conflict with me: for you have deviated from the right way and are committing wicked deeds, while I am on the right way.

57. “So if you turn away, then indeed, I have conveyed to you that which I have been sent with to you. And my Lord will replace you with people other than yourselves. And you will not harm Him at all.*64 Indeed, my Lord is Guardian over all things.”

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ مَا أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ إِلَيْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفُ رَبِّي قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ وَلَا تَضُرُّونَهُ شَيْئًا إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيظٌ



*64 This is his answer to their obdurate denial: “Nor will we believe in you.”

58. And when Our command came, We saved Houd and those who believed with him by a mercy from Us. And We saved them from a severe punishment.

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا هُودًا وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَنَجَّيْنَاهُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ



59. And such were Aaad. They rejected the signs of their Lord, and disobeyed His messengers,^{*65} and followed the command of every obstinate tyrant.

وَتِلْكَ عَادٌ جَحَدُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَصَوْا رُسُلَهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ كُلِّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ ﴿٥٩﴾

***65** Though only one Messenger had come to them, he had presented the same message that had been presented by every Messenger in every age to every community. Therefore disobedience to one Messenger has been declared to be disobedience to all the Messengers.

60. And they were followed in this world with a curse and on the Day of Resurrection. Behold, indeed Aaad disbelieved in their Lord. Behold, a far removal for Aaad, the people of Houd.

وَاتَّبَعُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ عَادًا كَفَرُوا رَبَّهُمْ ۗ أَلَا بُعْدًا لِعَادٍ قَوْمِ هُودٍ ﴿٦٠﴾

61. And to Thamud (We sent) their brother Salih.^{*66} He said: “O my people, worship Allah. You do not have any god other than Him. It is He who has brought you forth from the earth, and has settled you therein.^{*67} So ask forgiveness of Him,^{*68} then turn to Him

﴿٦١﴾ وَإِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا ۚ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۗ هُوَ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّ

(in repentance). Indeed, my Lord is Near, Responsive.”*69

رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ مُجِيبٌ

*66 Please keep in view E.Ns 57-62 of Surah Al-Aaraf.

*67 This is the proof of the claim: “You have no other Deity than Allah” .The argument is based on the fact which the mushriks themselves acknowledged that it is Allah Who is their Creator. Therefore Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) argued like this: You yourselves acknowledge that it is Allah Who has created your wonderful human body out of the lifeless particles of the earth and that it is Allah Who has made the earth a suitable place for you to live. How can then there be any Deity other than Allah Who may be worthy of Godhead, service and worship?

*68 That is, so ask His forgiveness for the sin you have been committing by worshiping others.

*69 In this concise sentence, the Quran has refuted a grave misunderstanding of the mushriks, which has in every age misled people into wrong creeds. They presumed that Allah lived far away from them and, therefore, was unapproachable like their own rulers on the earth. As the only way of approach to them was an intercessor who alone could receive and present their requests and applications to their rulers, and convey their answers to them, they presumed that there should be some intercessor to help approach Allah and bring to them the answers to their prayers. Obviously this is a false presumption, which has been endorsed and encouraged by clever people that Allah is out of the reach of common people and it is not possible for them to reach Him and present their prayers and get

their answers. So they should search for such sacred beings as may have an approach to Him. Accordingly, they tried to secure the services of those who were well versed in the art of conveying the requests with the necessary presents and gifts to the Highest Authority. This misunderstanding created hosts of intercessors, and the establishment of the system of priesthood, which has so incapacitated the followers of mushrik creeds of ignorance that they cannot perform by themselves any religious ceremony from birth to death.

Now let us consider the concise answer of Prophet Salih (peace be upon him), by which he broke asunder the false presumption of the mushriks. It is this: Allah is near at hand, so you can invoke His help directly without the help of any interceder. He answers prayers, so you can yourselves receive the answer to your prayer. Though He is the Highest, each one of you will find Him so near to yourself that you will be able to convey your request even in a whisper, nay, you are permitted to convey your requests openly or secretly to Him. Therefore give up the folly of seeking interceders and setting them up as His partners, and address your prayers to Him Who is near at hand and answers prayers. (Refer also to E.N. 188 of Surah Al-Baqarah).

62. They said: “O Salih, indeed you have been among us as a figure of hope before this.^{*70} Do you (now) forbid us to worship of what our

قَالُوا يَصْلِحُ قَدْ كُنْتَ فِيْنَا
مَرْجُوًّا قَبْلَ هَذَا أَتَنْهَانَا أَنْ
نَعْبُدَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا وَإِنَّا لَفِي

forefathers have worshipped.*71 And indeed, we are really in grave doubt about that to which you invite us.”*72

شَكِّ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ



*70 That is, we had expected that by your wisdom, intelligence, foresight, serious behavior and dignified personality, you would become a great and prosperous man. So we had looked forward to the great success you would achieve and to the manifold advantages we would gain over other clans and tribes because of you. But you have brought to naught all of our hopes by adopting the way based on *Tauhid* and the Hereafter which is bound to lead us to utter ruin.

It may be noted here that the people of Muhammad (peace be upon him) have had the same great expectations of him. They, too, had a very high opinion of his abilities and capabilities before his appointment as a Prophet. For they expected that he would become a great leader, and his foresight would bring innumerable benefits to them also. But when, contrary to their expectations, he began to invite them to the doctrines of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter, and preach the principles of high morality, they lost not only all hope in him, but began to entertain and express quite the reverse views. They said: What a pity, this man who was quite good till now has, under the influence of some charm, not only ruined his own career but has destroyed all of our hopes as well.

*71 That was their argument for the worship of their gods.

They said that they would worship them because their forefathers worshiped them. Prophet Salih (peace be upon him), argued like this: Worship Allah...Who has created you from the earth, and Who made it a living place for you. In answer to this they argued, as if to say: These deities are also worthy of worship, and we will not give them up because our forefathers have been worshiping them for a long time. This is an apt example of the type of arguments employed by the supporters of Islam and those of ignorance. The former base their arguments on sound reasoning, while the latter base them on blind imitation.

*72 The Quran has not specified the nature of the doubts and feelings of distraction. This is because, though all of them had these feelings, these were different in different persons. For it is one of the characteristics of the message that it takes away the peace of mind of all these people to whom it is addressed. Though the feelings of distraction are of various kinds, everyone gets a portion of them. This is because it becomes simply impossible for anyone to continue treading the paths of deviation with that peace of mind which one had before the coming of the message. For it impels everyone to think whether one is following the right way or any of the wrong ways of ignorance. No one can shut one's ears and eyes against the penetrating and merciless criticism of the weaknesses of the ways of ignorance, and the strong and rational arguments for the right way. Then the high moral character of the Messenger, his perseverance, his nobility, his gentle conduct, his frank and righteous attitude and his dignity cannot fail to shake

their impressions even on the most obdurate, and prejudiced opponents. The message by itself attracts the best elements from that society and brings about the most revolutionary changes in the characters of its followers so as to make them models of excellence. Naturally all these things combine to produce the feelings of distraction in the minds of those who desire to uphold the ways of ignorance even after the coming of the truth.

63. He said: “O my people, do you see, if I am upon a clear evidence from my Lord, and there has come to me from Him a mercy, then who will save me from Allah if I disobeyed Him. So you would not increase me but in loss.”*73

قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَرَأَيْتُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُ
عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّيْ وَاَتٰنِيْ مِنْهُ
رَحْمَةً فَمَنْ يَنْصُرُنِيْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ
اِنْ عَصَيْتُهُ فَمَا تَزِيْدُوْنِيْ غَيْرَ
تَحْسِيْرٍ



*73 This is the answer to the preceding question: If I disobey Allah by discarding the guidance I have received from Him in order to please you, you cannot defend me against Him. You will rather add to the intensity of my guilt of disobedience to Him. Thus I shall incur additional punishment from Him for misleading you instead of showing the right way for which I had been sent to you.

64. “And O my people, this is the she-camel of Allah, a sign to you, so let her pasture on Allah’s

وَيٰقَوْمِ هٰذِهِ نٰقَةُ اللّٰهِ لَكُمْ
ءَايَةٌ فَذُرُوْهَا تَاْكُلْ فِيْ اَرْضِ

earth, and do not touch her with harm, lest a near punishment should seize you.”

اللَّهُ وَلَا تَمْسُوهَا بِسُوءٍ
فِيَأْخُذْكُمْ عَذَابٌ قَرِيبٌ ﴿٦٤﴾

65. Then they hamstrung her. So he said: “Enjoy yourselves in your dwelling-place three days. This is a promise not to be denied.”

فَعَقَرُوهَا فَقَالَ تَمَتَّعُوا فِي
دَارِكُمْ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ ذَٰلِكَ
وَعَدٌ غَيْرُ مَكْذُوبٍ ﴿٦٥﴾

66. So when Our command came, We saved Salih and those who believed with him by a mercy from Us, and from the ignominy of that day.^{*74} Indeed, your Lord, He is the All-Strong, the All Mighty.

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا صَالِحًا
وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ
مِّنَّا وَمِن خِزْيِ يَوْمِئِذٍ إِنَّ
رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ ﴿٦٦﴾

***74** According to the traditions that are current in the Sinai Peninsula, Allah delivered them from the torment and led them there. There is a Mount near Jabal-i-Musa, known by the name of Prophet Salih where, it is said, the Prophet took refuge after the destruction of his people.

67. And the (awful) cry overtook those who had wronged, so they lay prostrate (dead) in their dwellings.

وَأَخَذَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةَ
فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دِيَارِهِمْ
جَٰثِمِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

68. As though they had not dwelt therein. Behold, indeed Thamud disbelieved in their Lord. Behold, a far removal for Thamud.

كَانَ لَمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيهَا ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ
ثَمُودًا كَفَرُوا رَبَّهُمْ ۗ أَلَا بُعْدًا
لِثَمُودَ

69. And indeed, Our messengers came to Abraham with good news. They said: “Peace.” He said: “Peace,” then delayed not to bring a roasted calf.*75

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ
بِالْبُشْرَىٰ قَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ
سَلَامٌ ۗ فَمَا لَبِثَ أَنْ جَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ
حَنِيدٍ

***75** This shows that the angels had come to Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) in the form of human beings and had not disclosed their identity. Therefore he took them for strangers and brought a roasted calf for their entertainment.

70. Then when he saw their hands not reaching to it, he mistrusted them and conceived a fear of them.*76 They said: “Fear not, indeed, we have been sent to the people of Lot.”*77

فَلَمَّا رَأَىٰ أَيْدِيَهُمْ لَا تَصِلُ إِلَيْهِ
نَكِرَهُمْ وَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً
قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَىٰ
قَوْمِ لُوطٍ

***76** Some commentators are of the view that Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) was afraid of them because

of their refusal to eat his meal. He had concluded that they had come to him with some evil intention. For, according to the Arab tradition, if some strangers refused hospitality, it meant that they had not come as guests but as enemies to plunder. But this view is not supported by the succeeding verse.

*77 The wording of their answer shows that Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had understood from their refusal to eat that they were angels. But he was afraid of their visit because he knew that the coming of the angels in the human shape did not bode well: So he was fearful that they might have come to take them to task for some offense committed by the people of his household or of his habitation or by himself. Had it been the same thing that the commentators presumed, then their answer should have been, “Don’t fear us for we are angels from your Lord.” But the answer they gave to remove his fear, “Don’t have any fear for we have been sent to the people of Lot (and not to you),” shows that Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) knew that they were angels but was troubled in his mind as to the reason of their visit in the human form. This was because the angels came in human form when some one was either to be put to a hard trial or punished severely for some offense.

71. And his wife was standing by, so she laughed.*78 Then We gave her good tidings (of the birth) of Isaac, and after Isaac, Jacob.*79

وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ قَائِمَةٌ فَضَحِكَتْ
فَبَشَّرْنَاهَا بِإِسْحَاقَ وَمِنْ وَرَاءِ
إِسْحَاقَ يَعْقُوبَ

***78** It appears from this that the news of the visit of the angels in the human form had made the people of the house uneasy. So Prophet Abraham's Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) wife had also come there to know what the matter was. She laughed with joy when she learned that the angels were sent not to punish their people but the people of Lot (peace be upon him).

***79** The angels told the good news of a son to Sarah instead of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) because he already had a son, Ismail from Hajirah but had no child from her. Therefore to remove her sorrow they told her the good news that a son, Isaac, will be born to her, who will have a son, Jacob, both of whom will be great Messengers of Allah.

72. She said: “woe unto me,^{*80} shall I bear a child and I am an old woman, and this, my husband is an old man.^{*81} Surely, this is indeed a strange thing.”

قَالَتْ يَوَيْلَتِي ءَأَلِدُ وَأَنَا عَجُوزٌ
وَهَذَا بَعْلِي شَيْخًا إِنَّ هَذَا
لَشَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ



***80** These words were not used by her in their literal sense as an exclamation of grief and lamentation. She uttered these words merely to express surprise at the news.

***81** According to the Bible Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) was 100 years old at the time and Sarah was 90 years.

73. They said: “Do you wonder at the command of Allah.^{*82} The mercy of Allah

قَالُوا أَتَعْجَبِينَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ

and His blessings be upon you, O people of the house. Surely, He is All Praiseworthy, All Glorious.”

رَحْمَتُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ
الْبَيْتِ إِنَّهُ حَمِيدٌ مَّجِيدٌ



*82 The question was posed to her to remind her that though people of old age do not bear children, it is not beyond Allah’s power to bring this about. Therefore a true believer like her should not show any surprise at the good news when it is conveyed to her from Allah.

74. Then when the fear had gone away from Abraham, and the glad news had reached him, he began to argue*83 with Us on behalf of the people of Lot.

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الرَّوْعُ
وَجَاءَتْهُ الْبُشْرَىٰ يُجَادِلُنَا فِي
قَوْمِ لُوطٍ



*83 “He began to argue with Us” is the expression of affection and endearment which manifests the nature of close relationship of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) with his Lord. This helps depict the picture of the argument that the servant had with his Lord for pleading the case of the people of Lot. He pleaded persistently: Lord, avert the coming scourge from the people of Lot. The Lord replied: These people have become so degraded that no good was left in them and their crimes have become so heinous that they deserve no leniency at all. But the servant still persisted: Lord, give them more respite, even if a little good yet remains in them; maybe it should bear some fruit. This dispute has been recorded in the Bible rather in detail, but the concise mention in the Quran is more meaningful. (For

comparison please refer to Genesis 18: 23-32).

75. Surely, Abraham was, without doubt forbearing, compassionate, oft-turning (to Allah).

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ ﴿٧٥﴾

76. (It was said): “O Abraham, desist from this. Indeed, your Lord’s command has gone forth. And indeed, there will come to them a punishment which cannot be turned back.”*84

يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَا إِنَّهُ قَدْ جَاءَ أَمْرٌ رَبِّكَ وَإِنَّهُمْ آتِيهِمْ عَذَابٌ غَيْرُ مَرْدُودٍ ﴿٧٦﴾

***84** A superficial view of this incident from the life of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) in the context it occurs might lead one to consider it to be irrelevant, especially as an introduction to the coming scourge on the people of Lot. But if one reviews this in the light of the object for which these historical events have been related here, one will come to the conclusion that its mention is most apt here. In order to understand its relevancy we should keep in view the following two things:

(1) These historical events have been related here to warn the Quraish that they were absolutely wrong in their self-delusion that they were quite immune from the scourge with which the Quran was threatening them because of their relationship with Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and their guardianship of the Kabah and their religious, economic and political leadership of Arabia. They thought that Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), whose

descendants they were, was a beloved servant of Allah and would, therefore, intercede for them and defend them against any scourge from Him. That is why the graphic picture of the death of Prophet Noah's (peace be upon him) son has been drawn to show that the prayer of a great Prophet like him could not save his own son from the scourge. Not only was his prayer rejected but he was also taken to task for making a request for his wicked son. Then this second incident from the life of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) has been related to show that, though Allah was very kind to him, He rejected his appeal for the people of Lot because he had tried to intercede for the wicked people, which was against the requirements of justice.

(2) This incident from the life of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) has been related along with, the destruction of the people of Lot for another object as well. The Quraish had forgotten that the law of divine justice had always been operating continuously and regularly and there were open proofs of this all around them. On the one hand, there was the case of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). He had to leave his home for the sake of the truth and righteousness and to live in a foreign country where, to all appearances, he had no outward power to support him. But divine justice rewarded him for his righteousness with a son like Isaac and a grandson like Jacob (peace be upon them) whose descendants, the Israelites, reigned supreme for centuries over the same Palestine where he had taken refuge as a stranger. On the other hand, there were the

people of Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) who were living nearby in great prosperity, which had intoxicated them so much that they lived in open wickedness, totally forgetting that they would be overtaken by retribution from Allah. So much so that they scoffed at the admonition of Prophet Lot (peace be upon him). But divine justice came into operation at the same time, when it was conveying the good news to Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and decreed that those wicked people should be annihilated from the face of the earth. As a result of this, no vestige of their habitations was left on the surface of the earth. This fact should serve as a lesson to the wicked people for all times.

77. And when Our messengers (the angels) came to Lot,^{*85} he was anguished for them, and felt for them discomfort. And he said: “This is a distressing day.”^{*86}

وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا سِيءَ
بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَقَالَ هَذَا
يَوْمٌ عَصِيبٌ



***85** Please keep in view E.Ns 63-68 of Surah Al-Aaraf.
***86** From the tenor of the details of the story as given in the different parts of the Quran, it becomes quite clear that the angels came to Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) in the form of handsome boys and that he was unaware that they were angels. He was troubled and distressed in his mind, for he knew how wicked and shameless his people were.

78. And his people came to him, rushing to him. And before (this), they had been doing evil deeds. He

وَجَاءَهُمْ قَوْمُهُمْ يَهْرَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ وَمِنْ
قَبْلُ كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ

said: “O my people, here are my daughters, they are purer for you.^{*87} So fear Allah, and do not disgrace me concerning my guests. Is there not among you a right-minded man.”

قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ هٰتُوْا لِيْ بَنَاتِيْ هُنَّ
اَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ ۗ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَلَا
تُخْزَوْنِيْ فِيْ ضَيْفِيْ ۗ اَلَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ
رَجُلٌ رَّشِيْدٌ



***87** By “My daughters”, Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) might have meant either of the two things. He might have referred to the daughters of the community as “my daughters” because the relationship of a Prophet to his people is as of a father to his children. But it is also possible that he ought have meant by this his own daughters. Anyhow, this could not have been an offer of adultery, for the succeeding sentence “they are purer for you” leaves no room for such a misunderstanding. This makes it quite obvious that Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) admonished them in this way so as to turn them to the females for the lawful gratification of their sexual desires instead of seeking unnatural ways.

79. They said: “Surely, you know that we do not have any right to your daughters,^{*88} and indeed you know what we want.”

قَالُوْا لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا لَنَا فِيْ
بَنَاتِكَ مِنْ حَقٍّ وَاِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا
نُرِيْدُ



***88** This answer of the people of Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) shows that they had gone to the lowest depth of

depravity and openly and brazen facedly declared that they did not want females but males. This was the proof that they had not only left the natural way of purity and strayed into the unnatural way of impurity but had also lost all interest in the natural way of gratification. Such a depraved condition is the worst form of moral degradation, for it shows that no good has been left at all. Supposing a person has fallen as a victim to an unlawful and sinful behavior, but at the same time considers it to be a wrong behavior which should be avoided, there is hope for the reform of such a person, and even if he does not mend his way the utmost that can be said about him is that he is a depraved person. On the other hand, if a person gives himself wholly to the unlawful because he has no interest in the lawful, such a filthy person is not worthy of being considered a man at all, and therefore should be wiped out of the earth. That is why Allah decreed that the people of Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) should be completely annihilated from the face of the earth.

80. He said: “If only that I had strength against you, or I could seek refuge in some powerful support.”

قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ آوِي
إِلَىٰ رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ ﴿٨٠﴾

81. They (the angels) said: O Lot, indeed we are messengers from your Lord. They shall never reach you. So travel with your family in a part of the night, and

قَالُوا يَلُوطُ إِنَّا رُسُلُ رَبِّكَ لَن
يَصِلُوا إِلَيْكَ فَأَسْرِ بِأَهْلِكَ
بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ وَلَا يَلْتَفِتْ

let not any of you turn around,^{*89} except your wife. Indeed, will afflict her, that which will afflict them.^{*90} Indeed, their promised hour is morning. Is not the morning near.”

مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا أَمْرَأَتَكَ إِنَّهُ
مُصِيبًا مَا أَصَابَهُمْ إِنَّ
مَوْعِدَهُمُ الصُّبْحُ أَلَيْسَ
الصُّبْحُ بِقَرِيبٍ ﴿٨١﴾

***89** This meant to impress on them the urgency of the matter so that they should get out of the doomed place and should not even turn round to look behind to see what was happening there. They were warned lest they should be attracted by the loud noises caused by the explosions and by the wailing of the people and thus lag behind in the territory that had been marked for the scourge and was to be overtaken by it.

***90** The doom of the wife of Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) is the third incident related in this Surah to serve as a lesson that no relationship can deliver a people from the horrible consequences of their sin.

82. So when Our command came, We turned it (the township) upside down, and We rained upon it stones of layered baked clay.^{*91}

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا
سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا حِجَارَةً
مِّن سِجِّيلٍ مَّنضُودٍ ﴿٨٢﴾

***91** Probably the scourge came in the form of a horrible earthquake which turned their habitations upside down and the explosion of a volcano which rained stones on them.

“Stones of layered baked clay” probably refers to the stones that are formed by the underground heat and lava in the volcanic regions. The signs of such a formation are found even today near the Lot Sea.

83. Marked from your Lord.^{*92} And it (punishment) is not far off from the wrong doers.^{*93}

مُسَوَّمَةٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ وَمَا هِيَ
مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٨٣﴾

*92 That is, every stone had been specified by Allah to do some particular work of destruction there, and to hit a particular offender.

*93 This was meant to warn the workers of iniquity who were engaged in their evil work, as if to say: You should not consider yourselves immune from scourge as though it were far from you. If it could visit the people of Prophet Lot (peace be upon him), it could overpower you as well. Neither the people of Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) were able to defend themselves against Allah, nor can you frustrate Him now.

84. And to the Midian (We sent) their brother Shueyb.^{*94} He said: “O my people, worship Allah. You do not have any god other than Him. And do not decrease from the measure and weight. Indeed, I see you in prosperity, and indeed, I fear for you the

﴿٨٤﴾ وَإِلَىٰ مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا
قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا
لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ وَلَا
تَنْقُصُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ
إِنِّي أَرٰنَكُمْ بٰخَيْرٍ وَإِنِّي أَخَافُ

punishment of a day that will encompass (you) all around.”

عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُّحِيطٍ



***94 Please keep in view E.Ns 69-76 of Surah Al-Aaraf.**

85. “And O my people, give full measure and weight in justice, and reduce not people in respect of their goods. And do not go about in the land creating corruption.”

وَيَقَوْمٍ أَوْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ



86. “That which Allah leaves (with you) is better for you if you are believers. And I am not a guardian over you.”*95

بَقِيَّتُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ



***95 That is, I have no power over you. The most I can do for you is to admonish you as a well wisher, but it rests with you to accept my advice or reject it. As you are accountable to Allah and not to me for your deeds, therefore you should fear Him and desist from your mischievous deeds, if you sincerely believe in Him.**

87. They said: “O Shueyb, does your prayer command

قَالُوا يَشُعَيْبُ أَصَلَوْتُكَ

you^{*96} that we should leave off that which our fathers used to worship, or that what we do with our wealth as we please.^{*97} Indeed you are the forbearing, the guide to right behavior.”

تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ نَتْرَكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ
ءَابَاؤُنَا أَوْ أَنْ نَفْعَلَ فِي أَمْوَالِنَا
مَا نَشَاءُ إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ الْحَلِيمُ
الرَّشِيدُ



***96** This taunting question was an expression of the feelings of hatred those ungodly people cherished against the religious observances of Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) and other God fearing pious people. They selected Salat as a target of their taunt because it is the first and foremost outwardly observance of true religion which naturally has always been strongly hated by all ungodly wicked people. This hatred may also be noticed today among those who deliberately intend to follow the wicked ways, for they consider religious observances to be the greatest threat to their evil ways. As they regard Salat to be a symbol of the coming trouble, they begin to taunt the one who observes it. For they know that the victim of the disease of religiosity will not rest content with his own reformation but will exert his utmost to reform others as well. They fear that he will preach piety and righteous ways to them and criticize their ungodly and immoral ways. That is why Salat becomes the target of the taunts of wicked people. And if the person who observes Salat actually begins to preach the observance of virtues and criticize their evil ways just as they had feared, then they condemn

it even more vehemently as though it were the cause of the whole trouble.

***97** These two things clearly distinguish the theory of the way of ignorance from the theory of the way of Islam. The way of ignorance is based on the assumption that one should follow the way of his forefathers, and for the mere reason that it has been inherited from his forefathers. Its second assumption is that one's faith and religion are concerned only with worship, and these have nothing to do with the worldly affairs of life, in which one is absolutely free to do as he pleases. On the other hand, the basic theory of Islam is that every way that is not founded on the submission to Allah is wrong, and, therefore, should not be followed, for no other way has any proof of its truth from reason, knowledge and revelation. Besides, Islam is not confined to the worship of Allah but it covers in its entirety all aspects of cultural, social, economic and political life. This is because all that man possesses really belongs to Allah and, therefore, man has absolutely no right to do as he pleases with his possessions.

Incidentally, this demand of the people of Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) that they had every right to do as they pleased with their goods and possessions shows that there is nothing new about the theory of the division of life into separate compartments, religious and mundane. Some three thousand years or so ago they insisted on this division just as western and westernized people insist on it today. And they are absolutely wrong to presume that their division is the result of the light that had dawned upon

humanity because of the intellectual progress that man has made as a result of the evolutionary process. Thus it is clear that it is not light but darkness which prevailed with the same intensity thousands of years ago as it is today and that the conflict of Islam against it is also as old as that.

88. He said: “O my people, do you see, if I am upon a clear evidence from my Lord, and He has provided me from Him a fair provision.*98 And I do not intend that, in opposition to you, to do that what I forbid you from.*99 I intend not but reform as much as I am able. And my success is not except from Allah. Upon Him I trust, and unto Him I turn.”

قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِن كُنْتُ
عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَرَزَقَنِي مِنْهُ
رِزْقًا حَسَنًا وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ
أُخَالِفَكُم إِلَىٰ مَا أَنهَكُم عَنْهُ
إِن أُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا
أَسْطَعتُ وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ
عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ

***98** Here *rizq* implies two things: provision of the knowledge of the truth and provision of the necessities of life from Allah. In the first sense, it refers to the same thing that has been declared in this Surah by Prophets Muhammad, Noah and Salih (peace be upon them all), that is, Allah bestowed on me by revelation that knowledge of the truth, which I already had gained by making keen observations of my own self and of the phenomena of nature. Therefore I cannot be a party to your evil creeds and unlawful practices. In the second sense, it is the answer

to this taunt of theirs: Indeed you are the only generous and righteous person left in the land! It meant, so to say, this: When my Lord has bestowed on me both the knowledge of the truth and the good and lawful provisions of life, your taunts cannot turn this favor into disfavor. Therefore I cannot be so ungrateful to Him as to declare your deviations to be the truth and your unlawful practices lawful.

*99 That is, It is a proof of the truth of my claim that I myself practice what I preach to you. For instance, if I had forbidden you to visit the shrines of gods and goddesses but had myself become the guardian of some such shrine, you would have been justified in bringing this charge against me that I was preaching the doctrine of *Tauhid* merely for the sake of ruining the business of others in order to make room for my own trade. Likewise, if I had prohibited the use of unlawful means for you but had myself applied the same in my own trade, you would have been justified in charging me with preaching honesty merely for winning good reputation for the prosperity of my own trade. But you yourselves are a witness to this that I myself abstain from those evils which I forbid you to practice and I keep myself pure from those blemishes of which I desire to cleanse you and I follow the way to which I invite you. All this is a clear proof that I believe in the truth of the message I am conveying to you.

89. “And, O my people, let not (your) opposition to me lead you (to any crime)

وَيَقَوْمٍ لَا تَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شِقَاقِي أَنْ
يُصِيبَكُمْ مِثْلُ مَا أَصَابَ قَوْمَ

that there befall you, similar to that which befell the people of Noah, or the people of Houd, or the people of Salih. And the people of Lot are not far off from you.”*100

نُوحٍ أَوْ قَوْمِ هُودٍ أَوْ قَوْمِ صَالِحٍ
وَمَا قَوْمِ لُوطٍ مِّنْكُمْ بِبَعِيدٍ



*100 That is, your land is not far from the land of the people of Lot, which has been totally destroyed. It is quite near and what happened did not take place long ago. **here**

90. “And ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn unto Him (in repentance). Surely, my Lord is Most Merciful, Most Loving.”*101

وَأَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا
إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي رَحِيمٌ وَدُودٌ



*101 Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) brought the attribute of love of Allah for His creation specially to the notice of his people in order to induce them to give up despair and turn to Allah for forgiveness for their evil deeds, so as to say: Allah is not hard hearted and cruel, and cherishes no feelings of enmity towards His creatures. He does not desire to punish them anyhow as if He were to derive pleasure from their torture. As a matter of fact, He inflicts punishment on you only when you transgress all limits and that, too, for the good of mankind. Therefore if you feel ashamed of your sins and repent of these, you will find Him Forbearing, for He loves His creation very much. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has explained the same thing by citing a parable. He said: Suppose one of you was traveling in a waterless desert and lost his camel on whom

he had laden all his provisions for the journey. He made a thorough search for the missing camel, but in vain. Then, in despair of his life, he lay down under a tree. Then, all of a sudden, the camel with all the provisions intact on it appeared before him. Just imagine his happiness. Allah is more pleased than that man, when a sinful servant returns to Him in penitence. There is another incident even more effective than this related by Umar: Once some prisoners of war were brought before the Prophet (peace be upon him). One of them was a mother whose infant child had been lost. This had made her so restless and uneasy that she would hold any child she came across close to her breasts and suckle it. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw this, he put this question to the bystanders: Can you imagine that this mother would ever throw her own child into the fire? We replied, never; not to speak of throwing it into the fire, she would do her utmost in every possible way to prevent it from falling into the fire. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Allah is much more merciful to His servants than this mother is to her child.

Let us consider the same thing from another point of view. It is Allah Who has created love in the hearts of the mother and the father for their child, and without this parental love, they would never have shown the care and the sacrifice they shower on their child; nay, they would have even become its enemies because of the trouble and inconvenience they have to bear for it. From this, it is quite evident that the love of the Creator of this parental affection for His own Creation must be far greater than this

parental love.

91. They said: “O Shueyb, we do not understand much of what you say,^{*102} and indeed we do see you weak among us. And if (it was) not for your family, we would certainly have stoned you. And you are not powerful against us.”^{*103}

قَالُوا يَشْعِبُ مَا نَفَقَهُ كَثِيرًا
مِمَّا تَقُولُ وَإِنَّا لَنَرُكَ فِينَا
ضَعِيفًا وَلَوْلَا رَهْطُكَ لَرَجَمْنَاكَ
وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْنَا بِعَزِيزٍ ﴿١١﴾

***102** They did not understand what Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) said to them, not because he talked to them in some foreign language or because the theme was too difficult or complicated for them. For he talked to them in their own language and his theme was simple and clear. As a matter of fact, they did not understand because they would not: Their crooked thinking left neither any desire nor any aptitude for understanding his talk. And this is true of all those people who become such slaves of their prejudices and lusts as render them incapable of accepting anything against their preconceived notions. For they are neither inclined to listen to such things nor understand them as though these things were not for them nor were they for them.

***103** While studying this part of the story of Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him), it should be kept in view that similar conditions were prevalent at Makkah at the time of the revelation of this story. The Quraish were as blood thirsty to kill the Prophet (peace be upon him) as were the

people of Madian to take the life of Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him). Just as the people of Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) desisted from this evil design because they were afraid of his family, likewise the Quraish were afraid of Bani Hashim and refrained from executing their evil designs. So this story was being related to warn the Quraish that they should learn a lesson from the answer of Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) (Ayats 92-93), as if to say: O people of Quraish, this same is the answer to you from Muhammad (peace be upon him).

92. He said: “O my people, is my family more to be honored by you than Allah. And you cast Him behind your back. Indeed, my Lord is surrounding all that you do.”

قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ أَرَهْطِي أَعَزُّ
عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ اللَّهِ وَآتَخَذْتُمُوهُ
وَرَاءَكُمْ ظَهْرِيَّ إِنَّ رَبِّي بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ

93. “And O my people, work according to your ability. Indeed, I am working (on my way). You will soon know to whom will come the punishment that will disgrace him, and who is a liar. And watch you, indeed, I (too) am watching with you.”

وَيَقَوْمِ أَعْمَلُوا عَلَى
مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ سَوْفَ
تَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ
يُخْزِيهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ كَذِبٌ
وَأَرْتَقِبُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ رَقِيبٌ

94. And when Our command came, We saved Shueyb and those who believed with him by a mercy from Us. And the (awful) cry seized those who had wronged. And by morning, they lay prostrate in their dwellings.

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا شُعَيْبًا
وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا
وَأَخَذَتِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةَ
فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دِيَرِهِمْ
جَاثِمِينَ

95. As if they had never prospered there. Behold, a far removal for Midian, just as Thamud had been removed afar.

كَأَن لَّمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيهَا ۚ أَلَا بُعْدًا
لِّمَدْيَنَ كَمَا بَعَدَتِ ثَمُودُ

96. And indeed, We sent Moses with Our signs and a clear authority.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا
وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ

97. To Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they did follow the command of Pharaoh, and the command of Pharaoh was no right guide.

إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِۦ فَاتَّبَعُوهُ
أَمْرٌ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَا أَمْرُ فِرْعَوْنَ
بِرَشِيدٍ

98. He will precede his people on the Day of Resurrection, and he will lead them into the Fire.^{*104} And

يَقْدُمُ قَوْمَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ
فَأَوْرَدَهُمُ النَّارَ وَيَسَّ الْوِرْدُ

evil indeed is the place to
which they are led.

***104** From this verse and some other narrations of the Quran it appears that the leaders of a community in this world will be its leaders also on the Day of Resurrection. If they guided and led the people towards virtue, righteousness and truth in this world, their followers will gather together under their banner on the Day of Resurrection and march to the Gardens under their leadership. On the other hand, if they called people to some deviation, immorality or unrighteous ways, their followers will follow them there also, and march to the fire of Hell under their leadership. The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained this thing in a tradition: On the Day of Resurrection, the banner of the poets of ignorance will be in the hands of Imra-ul-Quais, and all of them will march towards Hell under his leadership.

Now let us try to picture the march of these two processions. It is obvious that the first procession will march happily and joyously, praying for and praising their leaders whose guidance had led them to this happy state of marching to the blessed Paradise. On the other hand, when the followers of the leaders of errors will find themselves in the miserable plight, to which the leaders had brought them, naturally their anger against them will be beyond description. For the followers will march towards Hell, abusing and cursing their leaders, who had brought them to that horrible state of torture.

99. And a curse is made to follow them in this (world) and on the Day of Resurrection. Evil is the gift (that will be) given (to them).

وَأَتَّبِعُوا فِي هَذِهِ لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ بِئْسَ الْوَرْدُ الْمَرْفُودُ



100. That is from the news of the townships (destroyed), We relate it to you (Muhammad). Some of them are standing and (some already) mown down.

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْقُرَى نَقِصُهُ
عَلَيْكَ مِنْهَا قَائِمٌ وَحَصِيدٌ



101. And We did not wrong them, but they did wrong to themselves. So their gods, on whom they called upon other than Allah, did not avail them any thing when the command of your Lord came. And they increased nothing to them other than ruin.

وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِنْ ظَلَمُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَمَا أَغْنَتْ عَنْهُمْ
ءَالِهَتُهُمُ الَّتِي يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ
اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ لَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ
وَمَا زَادُوهُمْ غَيْرَ تَتْبِيبٍ



102. And such is the seizure of your Lord when He seizes the townships while they are doing wrong. Indeed, His seizure is painful, severe.

وَكَذَلِكَ أَخْذُ رَبِّكَ إِذَا أَخَذَ
الْقُرَى وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ إِنَّ أَخْذَهُ
أَلِيمٌ شَدِيدٌ



103. Indeed, in that there is a sure sign for those who fear the punishment of the Hereafter.*¹⁰⁵ That is a Day whereon mankind will be gathered together, and that is a Day (that will be) witnessed.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّمَنْ خَافَ
عَذَابَ الْآخِرَةِ ۗ ذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ
مَّجْمُوعٌ لَّهُ النَّاسُ وَذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ
مَّشْهُودٌ



***105** That is, in these historical events there is a sign which will show conclusively to the one who considers this deeply that the torment of the Hereafter is inevitable, as warned by the Messengers. One can also judge from this how terrible it will be. This knowledge will fill one with such fear that will keep him on the straight way.

Now let us consider the question: How are these historical events a sign of the Hereafter and the chastisement therein. Everyone who makes a critical study of history with this consideration that it is not merely a collection of events, but also a means of drawing logical conclusions, will find that the rise and fall of communities and nations has been taking place in a regular succession. Moreover, one will find that this rise and fall takes place in accordance with some moral laws in an extraordinary way. This is a clear proof that man is subordinate to the Sovereign, Who is ruling over the universe in accordance with some rational moral laws. Accordingly, He raises up those who keep the moral limits above a certain minimum standard set for this purpose and degrades those who fall below it. Then He gives respite to the latter to mend their ways, but if they do

not avail of it and continue their downward march and fall below the limit set for their complete degradation, He annihilates them in a way as to serve as a lesson for others. The fact that these events always take place in a regular cycle leaves no shadow of doubt that rewards and punishments are permanent parts of the law of His kingdom.

A further consideration of the chastisements that were inflicted on different communities shows that, though these punishments fulfilled the demands of justice to some extent, there was still need of more to fulfill all the demands of justice, for these criminals were punished only for those sins which they themselves committed but not for those committed by the succeeding communities, which followed the bad example left by them as their predecessors. It is obvious from the study of history that the law of retribution must take its course and justice demands that they should be punished for the evil legacy they left for others to follow after them. Common sense and justice demand that life in this world should be reproduced in its entirety in order to fulfill all the demands of the law of retribution. The just Sovereign will, therefore, bring into existence all those people for this purpose and award them due punishments. (Please see also E.N. 10 of Surah Yunus).

104. And We do not delay it except for a term appointed.

وَمَا نُؤَخِّرُهُ إِلَّا لِأَجَلٍ مَّعْدُودٍ

105. The day (when) it comes, no soul shall speak except by His (Allah's) permission.*106 So some among them will be wretched, and (others) blessed.

يَوْمَ يَأْتِ لَا تَكَلِّمُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا
بِإِذْنِهِ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ شَقِيٌّ وَسَعِيدٌ



***106** This is to warn these foolish people who depend on the promises of their intercessors that they would protect them from the torment of the Day. They have been warned to desist from the evil deeds they are committing in the hope that their intercessors would not rest content till they succeed in obtaining from Allah permits of forgiveness for their sinful followers. This is because they believe them to be the beloved favorites of Allah Who cannot afford to displease them at any cost. Then they have been told that, not to speak of wielding any such influence, they shall not dare utter a word except with His permission. No saint, no angel, howsoever high, is so powerful or influential as to speak a word or make any recommendation in the Court of the Highest Sovereign unless He Himself permits it. Therefore such people as make offerings to others than Allah will be utterly disillusioned and disappointed on that Day, for they will come to know that they were foolish in relying on their intercessors and committing evil deeds in the world in the hope that they would deliver them from the torment of the Day.

106. So as for those who were wretched, they shall be

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ شَقُوا فِي النَّارِ لَهُمْ

in the Fire. For them therein will be sighing and wailing. *107

فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَشَهيقٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾

*107 This is to emphasize that there is no power that can deliver them from that everlasting torment. Of course, Allah has full powers to forgive anyone He wills or to make a change in the term of the torment of anyone, for He Himself devises laws for Himself and there is no law higher than His Law so as to limit His powers.

107. They will dwell therein, so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except that which your Lord wills. Indeed, your Lord is doer of what He wills.

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ
السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا
شَاءَ رَبُّكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَّالٌ لِّمَا
يُرِيدُ ﴿١٠٧﴾

108. And as for those who were blessed, they shall be in the Garden, dwelling therein, so long as the heavens and the earth endure, *108 except that which your Lord wills. A gift without an end. *109

﴿١٠٨﴾ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ سَعِدُوا فَيَفِي الْجَنَّةِ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ
السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ
رَبُّكَ عَطَاءٌ غَيْرَ مَجْدُوذٍ ﴿١٠٩﴾

*108 In Ayats 107-108, the words “the heavens and the earth” might have been used idiomatically to denote the everlasting state or they might refer to the new earth and the heavens that will be made in the next world. Anyhow

these cannot be the earth and the heavens in their existing state for two reasons. First, according to the Quran, they shall be changed on the Day of Resurrection. Secondly, the events that are being related in these verses will happen in the Hereafter.

***109** That is, they will not be sent to the Garden nor will dwell there in accordance with any extraneous law which might have forced Allah to let them dwell therein anyhow. They shall dwell there simply because of His favor. He has full powers to make any changes, if He will, about them.

109. So do not be in doubt (O Muhammad) as to what these (pagans) worship. They worship nothing except what their fathers worshipped before.^{*110} And indeed, We shall repay them in full their portion without diminution.

فَلَا تَكُ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّمَّا يَعْبُدُ
هَتُوْلَاءِ ۚ مَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا
يَعْبُدُ ءَابَاؤُهُمْ مِّن قَبْلُ ۚ وَإِنَّا
لَمُوفُوهُمْ نَصِيْبَهُمْ غَيْرَ مَنقُوصٍ



***110** It does not mean at all that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had any doubts concerning their deities. Though these words have been addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), as a matter of fact they are meant for the common people. What they mean is this: No reasonable person should entertain any presumption that the people who worship the deities must have been convinced of their miraculous powers, otherwise they would not have worshiped them nor offered gifts to them nor invoked their

help. The fact of the matter is that their worship, their offerings and their prayers are not based on any knowledge nor any experience nor any real observation, but are the result of blind imitation of their forefathers. The proof of their falsehood is that the deities could not save them when Allah's scourge visited their worshipers who were completely annihilated in spite of them.

110. And indeed, We gave Moses the Book, but there arose disagreements about it.*111 And if it had not been for a word that had already gone forth from your Lord, it would have been judged between them.*112 And indeed, they are in grave doubt concerning it.

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ
فَاخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ ۚ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ
سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ ۚ
وَإِنَّهُمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيبٍ ﴿١١٠﴾

*111 It means this: There is nothing new in the different opinions expressed by different people regarding the Quran. They behaved in the same manner towards the Book that was given to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). Therefore, O Muhammad (peace be upon him), do not be disheartened by their rejection of the Quran, though its teachings are simple and plain.

*112 This is to reassure the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the believers that they should patiently wait for the consequences of the misbehavior of the unbelievers towards the Quran. But this will happen in due course as previously ordained by Allah, for Allah does not make haste in passing

judgment, though the people demand haste.

111. And indeed, to each your Lord will certainly repay in full for their deeds. Indeed, He is All Aware of what they do.

وَإِنَّ كُلًّا لَّمَّا لِيُوفِيَنَّهُمْ رَبُّكَ
أَعْمَلَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ
خَبِيرٌ

112. So stand firm on the straight path as you are commanded, and those who turn (unto Allah) with you, and transgress not. Indeed, He is All-Seer of what you do.

فَأَسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَمَنْ تَابَ
مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا ۚ إِنَّهُ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

113. And do not incline toward those who do wrong, lest the Fire should touch you, and you do not have other than Allah any protecting friends, then you would not be helped.

وَلَا تَرْكَبُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ ثُمَّ لَا
تُنصَرُونَ

114. And establish the prayer at the two ends of the day and in some hours of the night.*¹¹³ Indeed, the good deeds drive away the evil deeds. That is a reminder for those who are mindful (of Allah).*¹¹⁴

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفِي النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفًا
مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ ۚ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ
الْسَّيِّئَاتِ ۚ ذَلِكَ ذِكْرِي
لِلذَّاكِرِينَ

*113 This was to urge Salat at three times, that is, *morning*, *evening* and *Isha*. This shows that this was revealed before Salat had been made obligatory five times a day during the *Miraj*. (For explanation, see E.N. 95 of Surah Al-Isra, E.N. 111 of Surah Taha, and E.N. 124 of Surah Ar-Room).

*114 This is the remedy for eradicating evil from the world: Do good deeds and defeat evil with them. The best way of making you virtuous is to establish salat, which will remind you of Allah over and over again: which will produce those good characteristics in you that shall help you fight successfully against the systematic and united front of evil that has been formed against the mission of the truth. This will also enable you to establish practically the system of virtue and reform. (For explanation see E.Ns 77-79 of Surah Al-Ankaboot).

115. And be patient, for indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.

وَأَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ



116. So why were there not, among the generations before you, who possessed remnant (wisdom), prohibiting from corruption on earth, except a few of those We saved from among them. And they followed those who did wrong in what they had been luxuriating in, and they were

فَلَوْلَا كَانَ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِنْ
قَبْلِكُمْ أُولُوا بَقِيَّةٍ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
الْفَسَادِ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
مِمَّنْ أَنْجَيْنَا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّبَعَ
الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَا أُتْرِفُوا فِيهِ

criminals.

وَكَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١١٦﴾

117. And your Lord would not destroy the towns unjustly, while their people were reformers. ^{*115}

وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ لِيُهْلِكَ
الْقَرْيَ بِظُلْمٍ وَأَهْلِهَا
مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾

***115** In this passage, the real cause of the fall of the communities mentioned in Ayats 25-99 has been pointed out in a very instructive manner. In reviewing their history Allah declares that the cause of the downfall of not only these but of all the former communities was this: When Allah bestowed His favors on them, they abused these favors and were so intoxicated with their own prosperity that they began to make mischief in the land. By and by, their collective conscience became so corrupt that no righteous persons were left among them to forbid evil and, if a few were left, their voice was so weak that they could not prevent them from causing mischief. As a result of this, evil became so strong and prevalent among them as to warrant the scourge of Allah. Otherwise Allah bears no enmity against His servants that He should destroy them without any just cause, while they were performing righteous works. This has been mentioned here for impressing the following three things.

First, it is imperative that there should be some persons who should invite the people to virtue and forbid evil. For Allah approves virtue only and tolerates evil for its sake so

long as there is any potential good left in them. But when a community has no righteous persons left in it and contains only wicked ones, or even if there be some such righteous persons in it as are so weak that nobody pays any heed to them, and the community as a whole rushes headlong towards moral degradation, then Allah's scourge becomes its inevitable doom.

Second, a community, which tolerates everything and everyone except those few who invite it to righteous deeds seals its own doom and invites its destruction.

Third, it is clear from this passage that the destiny of a community is determined by the influence the righteous people can wield in it. If it contains such a number of good persons as may be able to eradicate evil and mischief and establish virtue and righteousness, a general scourge is withheld from it so as to afford an opportunity to them for carrying on their work of reform. On the other hand, if the number of the righteous persons in it remains too small to carry on the reform work, and the community does not tolerate them at all and does not allow them to perform their reform work, then that community incurs its own destruction, for thus it proves itself to be a worthless community which has no justification for its existence. (For further explanation, See E.N. 34 of Surah Az-Zariate).

118. And if your Lord had so willed, He could surely have made mankind as one nation, but they will not cease to disagree.

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً
وَّاحِدَةً وَلَا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ

119. Except whom your Lord has bestowed mercy. And for that did He create them. ^{*116} And the word of your Lord has been fulfilled. “Surely, I shall fill Hell with the jinns and mankind all together.”

إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ رَبُّكَ^ج وَلِذَلِكَ
خَلَقَهُمْ^ط وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ
لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْ
الْجِنَّةِ
وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ



***116** This is the answer to the objection raised in the name of *taqdir* (destiny) against the principle that has been laid down in the preceding verse for the destruction of the wicked communities. It is this: Why should these communities be punished for lack of a sufficient number of righteous persons in them? Why didn't Allah Himself will to produce that sufficient number of righteous persons in it? Allah has answered this objection, so as to say: It is not the will of Allah to bind mankind inherently to a fixed course of life as He has bound the vegetable and animal life. Had it been so, there would have been no need of sending the Messengers and the Books for inviting mankind to the faith. For, in that case all human beings would have been born Muslims and born believers and there would have been no unbelief and no disobedience. But it is the will of Allah to grant freedom of choice and action to man so that he may be free to choose and follow any way of life. That is why He has left open both the way to Paradise and the way to Hell for man and given every individual and every community the opportunity to choose and follow either of the two ways with full freedom and win any of the two

abodes as a result of his own efforts and exertions. It is obvious that this scheme of Allah demands that it should be based on the freedom of choice and the option to adopt faith or unbelief. This is why Allah does not compel a community to the right way if it itself intends to follow the wrong way, and plans and works for it. Allah's scheme does not interfere with the plans and works of such a community. When it makes deliberate arrangements to mold the wicked, unjust, and sinful people, He does not supply it with righteous persons by birth to set it right. Every community is free to produce good or bad people as it wills. And if a community wills to follow a wrong way as a community, leaving little room for the production and the development of the righteous people in order to raise up the standard of virtue, God does not will to coerce it to follow the righteous way. He will let it follow the way it chooses for itself with its inevitable consequences. On the contrary, Allah shows His mercy to that community which produces a sufficiently large number of such people as accept the invitation to virtue, and leaves room in its collective system for such people to work for its reform and purification. (For further explanation, See E.N. 24 of Surah Al-Anaam).

120. And all that We relate to you (O Muhammad) of the news of the messengers is that by which We make firm your heart. And in this has come to you the truth, and an admonition, and a

وَكُلًّا نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ
الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ
وَجَاءَكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ

reminder for the believers.

وَذِكْرِي لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾

121. And say to those who do not believe: “Work according to your ability. We indeed are working (too).”

وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ أَعْمَلُوا
عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنَّا عَمِلُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾

122. “And wait. We indeed are waiting (too).”

وَأَنْتَظِرُوا إِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

123. And to Allah belongs the unseen of the heavens and the earth, and to Him all matters will be returned. So worship Him and put your trust in Him. And your Lord is not unaware of what you do. ^{*117}

وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ كُلُّهَا فاعْبُدْهُ
وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ ۗ وَمَا رَبُّكَ
بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

***117** At the end of the discourse, Allah has warned the champions of kufr, and comforted the believers, so as to say: Allah is closely watching the behaviors of both the parties in the conflict between kufr and Islam, and the Sovereign is fully aware of all that is happening in His kingdom. He is watching and controlling everything with perfect wisdom. He will reward richly the champions of the truth and will not let go waste their efforts and exertions. And though He is showing tolerance to the champions of kufr, and giving them respite, He will take them to task because they are unjustly persecuting the standard bearers of the truth and are spreading chaos in the land, and

exerting their utmost to put obstacles in the way of the work of reform. All these things are in the knowledge of Allah and the evil doers shall have to bear the consequences of their misdeeds, and the true believers will ultimately come out successful.





يُوسُفِ Yousuf

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah has been named after Prophet Yousuf whose story has been related in this Surah.

Period of Revelation

The subject matter of this Surah indicates that it was revealed during the last stage of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) residence at Makkah, when the Quraish were considering the question of killing or exiling or imprisoning him. At that time some of the unbelievers put this question (probably at the instigation of the Jews) to test him: Why did the Israelites go to Egypt? This question was asked because they knew that their story was not known to the Arabs for there was no mention of it whatsoever in their traditions and the Prophet (peace be upon him) had never even referred to it before. Therefore they expected that he would not be able to give any satisfactory answer to this question or would first evade it, and afterwards try to inquire about it from some Jew, and thus he would be totally exposed. But, contrary to their expectations, the tables were turned on them, for Allah revealed the whole

story of Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) then and there, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited it on the spot. This put the Quraish in a very awkward position because it not only foiled their scheme but also administered a warning to them by aptly applying it to their case, as if to say: As you are behaving towards this Prophet (peace be upon him), exactly in the same way the brothers of Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) behaved towards him, so you shall meet with the same end.

Objects of Revelation

From the above it is clear that this Surah was sent down for two objects:

The first object was to give the proof of the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) at the demand by the opponents themselves so as to prove conclusively that his knowledge was not based on mere hearsay, but was gained through revelation. This aspect has been stated explicitly in its introductory verses and explained plainly in its concluding portion.

The second object was to apply it to the Quraish and warn them that ultimately the conflict between them and the Prophet (peace be upon him) would end in his victory over them. As they were then persecuting their brother, the Prophet, in the same way the brothers of Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) had treated him. The Quraish were told indirectly that they would also fail in their evil designs just as the brothers of Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) had failed in his case, even after casting him into the well. This is because none has the power to defeat the divine will.

And just as the brothers of Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) had to humble themselves before him, so one day the Quraish shall have to beg forgiveness from their brother whom they were then trying to crush down. This, too, has been made quite plain in Ayat 7: Certainly, in Joseph and his brothers are signs for those who inquire.

The fact is that by applying this story to the conflict, the Quran had made a bold and clear prophecy, which was fulfilled literally by the events that happened in the succeeding ten years. Hardly two years had passed after its revelation, when the Quraish conspired to kill the Prophet (peace be upon him) like the brothers of Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) did conspire, and he had to emigrate from Makkah to Al-Madinah, where he gained the same kind of power as Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) had gained in Egypt. Again, in the end the Quraish had to humble themselves before him just like the brothers of Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) did, when they humbly requested: Show mercy to us for Allah rewards richly those who show mercy (Ayat 88), and Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) generously forgave them, (though he had complete power to wreak vengeance on them) saying: Today no penalty shall be inflicted on you. May Allah forgive you: He is the greatest of all those who forgive. (Ayat 92). The same story of mercy was repeated, when after the conquest of Makkah, the Quraish stood meekly before the Prophet (peace be upon him), who had full power to wreak his vengeance on them for each and every cruelty committed by them. But instead, he merely

asked them: What treatment do you expect from me now? They replied: You are a generous brother and the son of a generous brother. At this, he very generously forgave them, saying: I will give the same answer to your request that Joseph gave to his brothers. Today, no penalty shall be inflicted on you, you are forgiven.

Topics of Discussion

Moreover, the Quran does not relate this story as a mere narrative but uses it, as usual, for the propagation of the message in the following ways.

Throughout the narrative the Quran has made it clear that the faith of Prophets Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (peace be upon them all) was the same as that of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and they invited the people to the same message to which Muhammad (peace be upon him) was inviting them.

Then it places the characters of Prophets Jacob and Joseph (peace be upon them) side by side with the characters of the brothers of Joseph, the members of the trade caravan, the court dignitary; Al-Aziz of Egypt and his wife, the ladies of Egypt and the rulers of Egypt and poses a silent question to the reader, as if to say: Contrast the former characters molded by Islam on the bedrock of the worship of Allah and accountability in the Hereafter with the latter molded by kufr and ignorance on the worship of the world and disregard of Allah and the Hereafter, and decide for yourselves which of these two patterns you would choose.

The Quran has used this story to bring forth another truth: Whatever Allah wills He fulfills it, and man can never

defeat His plan with his counter plans nor prevent it from happening nor change it in any way whatsoever. Nay, it often so happens that man adopts some measure to fulfill his own design and believes that he has done that very thing which would fulfill his design, but in the end he finds to his dismay that he had done something which was against his own and conducive to the divine purpose. When the brothers of Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) cast him into the well, they believed that they had once for all had gotten rid of the obstacle in their way but in fact, they had paved the way for the divine purpose of making him the ruler of Egypt, before whom they would have to humble themselves in the end. Likewise, the wife of Aziz had sent Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) to the prison, floating over the thought that she had wreaked her vengeance on him, but, in fact, she had provided for him the opportunity for becoming the ruler of Egypt and for putting herself to the shame of confessing her own sin publicly.

And these are not the solitary instances which prove the truth that even if the whole world united to bring about the down fall of the one whom Allah willed to raise high, it could not succeed. Nay, the very sure and effective measures that were adopted by the brothers to degrade Joseph were used by Allah for the success of Joseph and for the humiliation and disgrace of his brothers. On the other hand, if Allah willed the fall of one, no measure, howsoever effective, could raise him high: nay, it helped to bring about his fall and the disgrace of those who adopted them.

Moreover, the story contains other lessons for those who

intend to follow the way of Allah. The first lesson it teaches is that one should remain within the limits, prescribed by the divine law, in his aims and objects and measures, for success and failure are entirely in the hands of Allah. Therefore if one adopts pure aims and lawful measures but fails, at least he will escape ignominy and disgrace. On the other hand, the one who adopts an impure aim and unlawful measures to achieve it, shall not only inevitably meet with ignominy and disgrace in the Hereafter, but also runs the risk of ignominy and disgrace in this world.

The second lesson it teaches is that those who strive for the cause of truth and righteousness and put their trust in Allah and entrust all their affairs to Him, get consolation and comfort from Him, for this helps them face their opponents with confidence and courage and they do not lose heart when they encounter the apparently terrifying measures of the powerful enemies. They will persevere in their task without fear and leave the results to Allah.

But the greatest lesson this story teaches is that if the believer possesses true Islamic character and is endowed with wisdom, he can conquer a whole country with the strength of his character alone. The marvelous example of Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) teaches us that a man of high and pure character comes out successful even under the most adverse circumstances. When Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) went to Egypt, he was only a lad of seventeen years, a foreigner, all alone and without any provisions; nay, he had been sold there as a slave. And the horrible condition of the slaves during that period is known

to every student of history. Then he was charged with a heinous moral crime and sent to prison for an indefinite term. But throughout this period of affliction, he evinced the highest moral qualities which raised him to the highest rank in the country.

Historical and Geographical Background

The following historical and geographical details will help understand the story.

Prophet Joseph was a son of Prophet Jacob and a grandson of Prophet Isaac and a great grandson of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon them all). The Bible says (and the allusions in the Quran also confirm this) that Prophet Jacob had twelve sons from four wives. Prophet Joseph and his younger brother Benjamin were from one wife and the other ten from the other wives. Prophet Jacob had settled at Hebron (Palestine) where his father Prophet Isaac and before him Prophet Abraham lived and owned a piece of land at Shechem as well.

According to the research scholars of the Bible, Prophet Joseph was born in or about 906 B. C. and the incident with which this story begins happened in or about 890 B. C. He was seventeen when he saw the dream and was thrown into the well. This well was near Dothan to the north of Shechem according to Biblical and Talmudic traditions, and the caravan, which took him out of the well, was coming from Gilead (Trans-Jordan), and was on its way to Egypt.

At that time Fifteenth Dynasty ruled over Egypt, whose rulers are known in history as the Hyksos kings. They

belonged to the Arab race, but had migrated from Palestine and Syria to Egypt in or about 2000 B. C. and taken possession of the country. The Arab historians and the commentators of the Quran have given them the name of Amaliq (the Amalekites), and this has been corroborated by the recent researches made by the Egyptologists. They were foreign invaders who had gotten the opportunity of establishing their kingdom because of the internal feuds in the country. That is why there was no prejudice in the way of Prophet Joseph's ascendancy to power and in the subsequent settlement of the Children of Israel in the most fertile region of Egypt. They could gain that power and influence which they did, because they belonged to the same race as the foreign rulers of Egypt.

The Hyksos ruled over Egypt up to the end of the fifteenth century B. C. and practically all the powers remained in the hands of the Israelites. The Quran has made a reference to this in Ayat 20 of Al-Maidah: "He raised Prophets among you and made you rulers." Then there arose a great nationalist movement which overthrew the power of this dynasty and exiled 250,000 or so of the Amalekites. As a result of this, a very bigoted dynasty of Copts came into power and uprooted everything connected with the Amalekites. Then started that persecution of the Israelites which has been mentioned in connection with the story of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him).

We also learn from the history of Egypt that the Hyksos kings did not acknowledge the gods of Egypt and, therefore, had imported their own gods from Syria, with a

view to spreading their own religion in Egypt. This is the reason why the Quran has not called the king who was the contemporary of Prophet Joseph by the title of Pharaoh, because this title was associated with the religion of the original people of Egypt and the Hyksos did not believe in it, but the Bible erroneously calls him Pharaoh. It appears that the editors of the Bible had the misunderstanding that all the kings of Egypt were Pharaohs.

The modern research scholars who have made a comparative study of the Bible and the Egyptian history are generally of the opinion that Apophis was the Hyksos king, who was the contemporary of Prophet Joseph.

At that time Memphis was the capital of Egypt, whose ruins are still found on the Nile at a distance of 4 miles south of Cairo. When Prophet Joseph was taken there, he was 17 or 18 years old. He remained in the house of Aziz for three years and spent nine years in prison, and then became the ruler of the land at the age of thirty and ruled over Egypt independently for eighty years. In the ninth or tenth year of his rule he sent for his father, Prophet Jacob, to come from Palestine to Egypt with all the members of his family and, according to the Bible, settled them in the land of Goshen, where they lived up to the time of Prophet Moses. The Bible says that before his death, Prophet Joseph bound his kindred by an oath: When you return from this country to the house of your forefathers you must take my bones out of this country with you. So he died a hundred and ten years old, and they embalmed him.

Though the story of Prophet Joseph as given in the Quran

differs very much in its details from that given in the Bible and the Talmud, the three generally agree in regard to its component parts. We shall explain the differences, when and where necessary, in our explanatory notes.

1. Alif. Lam. Ra. These are the verses of the clear Book.

الرَّ تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ



2. Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran*¹ that you might understand.*²

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ



*1 The Arabic word *Quran* “to read” is originally the infinitive form of the verb *qara*. When the infinitive form of a verb in Arabic is used as a name, it implies that that thing or person possesses the characteristics in their perfection. This Book has been named *Quran* to indicate that it is meant to be read by all and sundry and is to be read often and over and over again.

*2 This does not mean that this Book has been sent down exclusively for the Arabs. What it means is only this: Of all the people, O Arabs, you should understand the excellence of the Quran, which is a sure proof of its being divine revelation, for it is in your own language and you have no excuse to put forward that it is in a foreign language which you do not understand.

Some people wrongly infer from this verse that this Book had been sent down for the Arabs and not for the non-Arabs; therefore, they assert, it cannot be claimed that it is

the guidance for the whole mankind. But obviously this is a frivolous objection raised by those who do not understand its real significance. It is obvious that a book, though meant for universal guidance, will necessarily have to be put in words in some language so that the people speaking that language should understand its teachings and then become the means of conveying its guidance to other peoples. This is the only natural way of spreading the message of a movement on a universal scale.

3. We narrate to you (O Muhammad) the best of the narratives, through what We have revealed to you of this Quran. And though you were, before this, among those who were unaware (of it).^{*3}

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ
الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ
هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

^{*3} This was to impress indirectly on the unbelievers of Makkah the fact that the Messenger (peace be upon him) did not know anything about the story of the settlement of the Israelites in Egypt, but was being informed of this by revelation from Allah. This introduction was necessary because, as has been stated in the preface to this Surah, the disbelievers had put an abrupt question concerning this matter in order to expose the Prophet (peace be upon him) by this test. The answer is to this effect: Tell them, O Muhammad (peace be upon him), that, though you did not know anything about the settlement of the Israelites in Egypt before this, you have now received a revelation about

this from Us.

4. When Joseph said to his father: “O my father, indeed I saw (in a dream) eleven stars and the sun and the moon, I saw them prostrating to me.”

إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي
رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا
وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي
سَاجِدِينَ

5. He (father) said: “O my son, do not narrate your vision to your brothers, lest they plot against you a plot.*4 Indeed Satan, to man, is an open enemy.”

قَالَ يَبْنِي لَا تَقْصُصْ رُؤْيَاكَ
عَلَى إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا
إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ
مُبِينٌ

*4 As the meanings of the dream were quite obvious, Prophet Jacob (peace be upon him) had a genuine fear that Joseph’s ten step brothers would become all the more envious of him when they would hear this. So he warned his righteous son not to mention his dream to his brothers, for he knew that those sons of his did not bear the moral character worthy of the sons of a Prophet, and, therefore they were up to any evil design against him out of mere envy. As regards to the dream, the sun in it was Prophet Jacob (peace be upon him), the moon his wife, Prophet Joseph’s step mother, and the eleven stars were his eleven brothers.

6. “And thus will your Lord choose you,^{*5} and He will teach you of the interpretation of events (dreams),^{*6} and He will perfect His favor upon you and upon the family of Jacob, as He perfected it upon your fathers before, Abraham and Isaac. Indeed, your Lord is All Knowing, All Wise.”^{*7}

وَكَذَلِكَ تَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ
وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنَ التَّوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ
وَيُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى
عَالِ يَعْقُوبَ كَمَا أَتَمَّهَا عَلَى
أَبَوَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ
إِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

***5** That is, “Bless him with Prophethood.”

***6** The Arabic words of the text do not mean merely “the interpretation of dreams”, as has been generally understood. They are comprehensive and imply also this: Allah will bless you with the full understanding of the problems of life and their solutions and will give you the insight to reach at the reality of every matter.

***7** Here it should be noted that the response of Prophet Jacob to the dream of Prophet Joseph (peace be upon them), according to the Bible and the Talmud, was quite different from this: “And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?” (Gen. 37: 10). Even a little thinking will help one to arrive at the conclusion that his reaction as narrated in the Quran is worthy of the high

character of Prophet Jacob and not the one found in the Bible and the Talmud. For Prophet Joseph had not expressed any personal ambition of his but merely narrated his dream. If the dream was a true one, and it is obvious that Prophet Jacob interpreted it, believing it to be true, there was no reason why he should rebuke his own son, for it meant that it was the will of God and not his own ambition that he should one day rise to a high rank. Can then one expect from any reasonable person, not to mention a Prophet, that he would take it ill and rebuke the one who dreamed such a dream? And can there ever be such a noble father who would say bitter and stinging things to his own son for the sin of telling him a true dream, prophesying his future greatness?

7. Certainly, in Joseph and his brothers are signs for those who inquire.

﴿ لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ
آيَاتٌ لِّلسَّائِلِينَ ﴾

8. When they said: “Truly, Joseph and his brother*8 are more beloved to our father than we, although we are a group of so many. Indeed, our father is in clear error.”*9

﴿ إِذْ قَالُوا لِيُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ
إِلَىٰ آبِنَا مِنَّا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ
آبَانَا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴾

*8 This brother was Benjamin. He was the real younger brother of Prophet Joseph, and was his junior by many years. Their mother had died at the birth of Benjamin. That is why Prophet Jacob paid special attention to these two motherless children. Besides, Joseph was the only son,

in whom he had discerned signs of righteousness and capabilities. Accordingly, when Prophet Joseph narrated his dream to him, he was all the more convinced of his future greatness, and was perturbed at the idea lest his brothers conspired against him out of envy, if they came to know of his dream, which was self explanatory. For Prophet Jacob knew that his other ten sons were not of the right type, and this was proved by the subsequent events. Therefore, naturally he was not happy with them. It is, however, strange that the Bible gives a different reason for the envy his brothers bore against Prophet Joseph. They were filled with envy against him because Joseph gave unto his father their evil report.

***9** In order to grasp the full significance of the grievance the ten sons had against their father for neglecting them, we should keep in view the conditions of the clannish life. As there was no established state, each clan led its own independent life side by side with other clans. It is obvious that the power of the head of the clan depended entirely on the number of sons and grandsons, and brothers and nephews he had to defend the life, honor and property of the family. Therefore, the one leading the clannish life naturally paid more attention to his own grown up sons, etc., than to children and women of the family. As Prophet Jacob was leading clannish life, these sons of his expected a preferential treatment from him, but the Prophet thought otherwise. So they remarked: Truly our father seems to have lost his balance of mind; otherwise he could not have neglected us, and loved our two younger brothers more

than us, for we are strong young men and can stand him in good stead at the time of need while these youngsters are useless as they themselves stand in need of protection.

9. “Kill Joseph or cast him out to some land, so that your father’s favor may be all for you, and you may become after that righteous people.”*10

أَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوْ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا
يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا
مِنْ بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ

*10 This sentence depicts the true psychology of those people who give themselves up to the lusts of their hearts, and, at the same time, do not want to break away completely from faith and religion. This is how a person of this type behaves. Whenever he is tempted to do a certain evil thing, he makes up his mind to do it first and puts off the demands of his faith for the time being. And if his conscience pricks him, he tries to soothe it, saying: Have a little patience. Let me first do this evil thing, which is an obstacle in my way. Then I will repent and become as good as thou desirest to see me. As the brothers of Prophet Joseph belonged to this type, they soothed their pricking consciences, saying: After doing away with Joseph, who is the chief obstacle in our way, we will again become righteous.

10. One speaker among them said: “Do not kill Joseph, but throw him down to the bottom of a well, some caravan may pick him

قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوا
يُوسُفَ وَالْقَوْهُ فِي غَيْبَتِ الْجُبِّ
يَلْتَقِطُهُ بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ

up, if you must be doing (something).”

فَعَلِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. They said: “O our father, why do you not trust us with Joseph, and indeed, we are to him true well-wishers.”

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مَا لَكَ لَا تَأْمَنَّا
عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَنَصِٰحُونَ

﴿١١﴾

12. “Send him with us tomorrow that he may eat well and play. And indeed, we shall be to him guardians.”*11

أَرْسَلْهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَرْتَعُ وَيَلْعَبُ
وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

***11** In this thing also the Quran differs from the Bible and the Talmud, according to which it was not the brothers, who requested their father to send Joseph with them but Prophet Jacob himself sent him with an errand to Shechem, where they were feeding their father’s flocks. Obviously the version of the Quran is more realistic, for Prophet Jacob could never have thought of sending his beloved son with them because he knew it well that they were envious of him, and sending him there would have been sending Joseph deliberately into the jaws of death.

13. He (Jacob) said: “Indeed, it saddens me that you should take him away. And I fear lest a wolf should devour him while you are negligent of him.”

قَالَ إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَنَّ تَذْهَبُوا
بِهِ وَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَأْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ
وَأَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غَافِلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

14. They said: “If a wolf should devour him while we are a strong group, surely we would then be the losers.”

قَالُوا لَيْنِ أَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَنَحْنُ
عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّا إِذًا لَّخَسِرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

15. Then, when they went away with him, and agreed that they will throw him to the bottom of the well. And We inspired to him: “Indeed, you shall inform them (some day) of this deed of theirs, while they do not perceive.”*12

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبُوا بِهِ وَاجْتَمَعُوا أَن
يَجْعَلُوهُ فِي غِيَابَتِ الْجُبِّ
وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَنَّهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِمْ
هَذَا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

*12 The Arabic words “they do not perceive” may very appropriately mean three things. First, We were comforting Joseph, and his brothers were quite unaware of this that a revelation was being sent to him. Second, you will let them know of this evil act of theirs in such circumstances that they can never even imagine you to be there. Third, today they are committing an evil act, but they do not know its future consequences.

There is no mention of this in the Bible and the Talmud that Allah sent a revelation to comfort Prophet Joseph at that time of his affliction. On the contrary, the Talmud says that when he was thrown into the well, Prophet Joseph wept and cried aloud and implored his brothers for mercy, as if he was no better than any other lad of the desert, who would weep and cry if he were to be thrown into a well. But the picture the Quran depicts is that of a young man, who is

destined to play the part of a great personality in history.

16. And they came to their father at night, weeping.

وَجَاءُوا آبَاهُمْ عِشَاءً يَبْكُونَ



17. They said: “O our father, we went racing one with another and left Joseph with our belongings, and then a wolf devoured him. And you will not believe us even if we were truthful.”

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا إِنَّا ذَهَبْنَا نَسْتَبِقُ
وَتَرَكْنَا يُوسُفَ عِنْدَ مَتَعِنَا
فَأَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَمَا أَنْتَ
بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَنَا وَلَوْ كُنَّا صَادِقِينَ



18. And they brought upon his shirt false blood. He (Jacob) said: “But your own selves have enticed you to something. So (for me is) patience in grace.*13 And Allah it is whose help is to be sought against that which you assert.”*14

وَجَاءُوا عَلَى قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ
كَذِبٍ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ
أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْراً فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ
وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَى مَا



*13 The literal meaning of “patience in grace” which implies a patience that enables one to endure all kinds of troubles and afflictions in a calm, self possessed and unemotional manner, without complaining or crying or

weeping, as is worthy of great minds.

***14** Prophet Jacob's reaction to the news of Joseph's death, as depicted in the Quran, is also different from that given in the Bible and the Talmud. According to them he was upset by the sad news and behaved like an ordinary father. The Bible says: And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins. And mourned for his son many days. (Gen. 37: 34). And the Talmud says that at the sad news Jacob gave himself up to the abandonment of grief, and lay with his face to the ground and refused to be comforted, and cried: Some wild beast has devoured Joseph and I shall never see him more; and he mourned for Joseph for many years. (The Talmud, H. Polano, pp. 78, 79).

When we contrast this picture with the one depicted in the Quran, we clearly see that the Quranic picture is that of a dignified and great personality. He is not upset in the least at hearing the sad news of his beloved son but at once gets to the bottom of the matter, and tells the envious brothers: Your tale is false and fabricated. Then he shows good patience as a Prophet should and puts his trust in the help of God.

19. And there came a caravan, and they sent their water drawer, then he let down his bucket (in the well). He said: "What a good news, here is a boy." And they hid him as a merchandise. And Allah was Aware of what

وَجَاءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ فَأَرْسَلُوا وَارِدَهُمْ
فَادَلَّى دَلْوَهُ^ط قَالَ يَبْشُرِي هَذَا
غُلْمٌ^ج وَأَسْرُوهُ بِضَعَةٌ^ج وَاللَّهُ
عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ

they were doing.

20. And they sold him for a low price,^{*15} a few dirhams counted out. And they were, concerning him, of those content with little.

وَشَرَوْهُ بِثَمَنٍ بَخْسٍ دَرَاهِمَ
مَعْدُودَةٍ وَكَانُوا فِيهِ مِنَ
الزَّاهِدِينَ



*15 Though the matter of the disposal of Prophet Joseph by his brothers was simple, the Bible has made this very complicated. It is obvious that the brothers threw Joseph into the well and went away. Afterwards a caravan came there and pulled him out and carried him to Egypt where they sold him. But the Bible says that the brothers cast him into a pit: then a company of Ishmaelites came there and they agreed to sell him to them. But in the meantime the Midianite merchantmen had drawn and lifted up Joseph and sold him to the Ishmaelites who brought him into Egypt. (Gen. 37: 25-28). But the authors of the Bible forget this sale transaction and further on in v. 36 say that Prophet Joseph was sold in Egypt by the Midianites and not by the Ishmaelites as stated in v. 28. But the Talmudic version of the matter is a little different from this. It says that the Midianites drew Joseph up from the pit and carried him along with them. As they passed by, the sons of Jacob saw Joseph with them and accused them of stealing their slave. At this a furious quarrel arose and they were ready to enter upon a bloody fray. But a bargain was concluded and the sons of Jacob sold their brother to the Midianites for twenty pieces of silver, who afterwards sold

him to the Ishmaelites for the same amount. Then the Ishmaelites took him into Egypt and sold him there. Incidentally, it is this Talmudic version that has given rise to the tradition among some Muslims that the brothers of Joseph had sold him. But it should be noted that the Quran does not confirm this tradition.

21. And he^{*16} (the man) from Egypt who purchased him, said to his wife:^{*17} “Make his stay dignified. May be that he will benefit us or we may adopt him as a son.”^{*18} And thus We established Joseph in the land, and that We might teach him of the interpretation of events.^{*19} And Allah has full control over His affairs, but most of mankind do not know.

وَقَالَ الَّذِي اشْتَرَاهُ مِنْ مِصْرَ
لِامْرَأَتِهِ أَكْرِمِي مَثْوَاهُ عَسَى
أَنْ يَنْفَعَنَا أَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَوَلَدًا
وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَلِنُعَلِّمَهُ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ
الْأَحَادِيثِ وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَى
أَمْرِهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ



*16 According to the Bible his name was Potiphar. But the Quran mentions him merely by the title (Al-Aziz). As the Quran uses the same title for Prophet Joseph, when he rose to a high rank, it appears that the person held a high office or rank in Egypt, for the word Aziz stands for a powerful person who cannot be opposed and disobeyed. The Bible and the Talmud say that he was an officer of Pharaoh's

body guards and captain of the guard. And according to a tradition from Ibn Abbas, related by Ibn Jarir, he was the officer of the royal treasury.

***17** According to the Talmud the name of his wife was Zuleikha and she is known by the same name in the Muslim traditions. As regards to the other tradition among the Muslims that Prophet Joseph married her afterwards, it is neither based on the Quran nor on the history of the Israelites. And the fact is that it is below the dignity of a Prophet to have married such a woman about whom he had personal knowledge that she was of a bad character. And this opinion is confirmed by this general statement of the Quran: Women of bad character are for men of bad character and men of bad character are for women of bad character. And the women of pure character are for men of pure character, and the men of pure character for the women of pure character. (Surah An-Noor, Ayat 26).

***18** The fact that Potiphar had a very high opinion of Prophet Joseph from the very beginning is also confirmed by the Talmud and the Bible. The Talmud says that at this time Joseph was about eighteen years of age (and) Potiphar was very favorably impressed with his bearing and appearance. So he came to the conclusion that he belonged to some noble family and had been made a slave by the force of adverse circumstances. When the Midianites carried him before Potiphar, he said: He does not look like a slave and I fear he has been stolen from his country and his home. That is why Potiphar did not treat him like a slave, but put him in charge of his house and all his

possessions. Likewise the Bible says: And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. (Gen. 39: 6).

***19** This verse alludes to the special training Prophet Joseph needed at that time for the performance of the duties of the high rank to which he was destined to rise. Up to that time, he had been brought up in the desert, under the environment of a semi nomadic life of a shepherd. There was neither any settled state in Canaan and Northern Arabia nor had there been any appreciable progress in culture and civilization, for it was inhabited by different independent clans with no settled government. Thus it is obvious that the training that Prophet Joseph had received in Canaan, had equipped him with the good characteristics of nomadic life coupled with the qualities of God worship and high morality of the family of Prophet Abraham. But this was not enough to enable him to direct the affairs of Egypt, which was at that time one of the most cultured and civilized countries of the known world and required a different experience and training for the conduct of its affairs. The All Powerful Allah made arrangements for this training and sent him to the house of an officer of a very high rank in Egypt, who entrusted him with full powers over his house and estate. This enabled him to develop all those latent abilities that were needed to fulfill his destiny, and he gained the experience that was required for the efficient conduct of the affairs of the kingdom of Egypt in the years to come.

22. And when he reached his full manhood, We gave him wisdom and knowledge.*20 And thus do We reward those who do good.

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ رَءَاتَيْنَهُ حُكْمًا
وَعِلْمًا ۚ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي
الْمُحْسِنِينَ



*20 By the use of such words as the Quran usually means, We bestowed on him Prophethood, for the Arabic word *hukmun* stands for both judgment and authority and *ilmun* stands for that knowledge which is directly revealed to the Prophets by Allah. Thus, the Arabic words of the text will mean: We gave him the power and the authority and the knowledge needed for judging rightly the affairs of the people.

23. And she, in whose house he was, sought to seduce him from his self. And she bolted the doors and said: “Come on, O you.” He said: “(I seek) refuge in Allah. Indeed, he (your husband) is my master, he made my stay honorable. Indeed, the wrong doers will not succeed.”*21

وَرَاوَدَتْهُ الَّتِي هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَنْ
نَفْسِهِ ۖ وَعَلَّقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ
وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ ۚ قَالَ مَعَاذَ
اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ
إِنَّهُ لَا يَفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ



*21 Generally the commentators and translators are of the opinion that Prophet Joseph used *Rabbi* “My Lord” for the master of the house, and what he meant to imply by way of argument was this: My Lord has treated me very kindly and kept me well in the house. How can I, then, be so

disloyal and ungrateful as to commit adultery with his wife? I, however, strongly differ with such a translation and commentary. Though the Arabic usage of *rabb* admits of such a meaning, I have two strong reasons against this here. First, it is far below the dignity of a Prophet to refrain from a sin because of the regard he had for some person other than Allah. Second, there is not a single instance in the Quran that a Prophet ever called anyone other than Allah his *rabb*. Prophet Joseph himself differentiates between his creed and that of the Egyptians making it plain that his *rabb* "Lord" was Allah, while they had made other human beings their *rabb*. Then this verse should be considered from another point of view: when *rabbi* may also mean My Lord, Prophet Joseph might have invoked Allah. Why should then one take the other meaning, my master, which most surely implies something that is against the right creed?

24. And certainly she desired him, and he would have desired her, if it had not been that he saw the evidence (sign) of his Lord.*²² Thus it was, that We might turn away from him evil and lewdness.*²³ Indeed, he was of Our sincere servants.

وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ^ط وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا
 أَنْ رَأَى بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ^ج كَذَلِكَ
 لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوءَ وَالْفَحْشَاءَ
 إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِينَ^ج

*²² "Evidence of his Lord" means inspiration from Allah to rouse his conscience to the fact that it was not worthy of

him to yield to the temptation by the woman. As regards to the question, “What was that evidence”, it has been stated in the preceding verse, that is: My Lord has shown much kindness towards me. Should I, then, misbehave like this? Such workers of iniquity never fare well. This was the divine evidence that saved Prophet Joseph in the prime of youth from that great temptation. The significance of “And he would have desired her, if it had not been that he saw the evidence (sign) of his Lord” is this: “Even a Prophet like Joseph could not have been able to save himself from sin, had not Allah guided him rightly with His evidence. Incidentally, this verse makes plain the nature of the immunity of Prophets from sin. It does not mean that a Prophet is infallible and incapable of committing any error, offense or sin or doing wrong or making a mistake. What it means is this: though a Prophet possesses passions, emotions, and carnal desires like other human beings, and is capable of committing a sin, he is so virtuous and God fearing that he never deliberately cherishes any evil intentions, for he is endowed with such great arguments from his Lord as do not allow the lusts of the flesh overpower the voice of his conscience. And if ever he succumbs inadvertently to any of the human weaknesses, Allah at once sends a revelation to him to set him on the right path. For the consequences of his error do not remain confined to his own person but react on the whole mankind, for even his slightest error might mislead the world to the most horrible sins.

***23** “That We might turn away from him evil and

lewdness” implies two things. First, it was because of Our grace that he could perceive Our evidence, and save himself from sin, for We willed to remove indecency and immodesty from Our chosen servant. The second meaning is rather deeper: This incident took place in the life of Joseph because this was essential for his spiritual training: It was Our will to pass him through this hard test so that he should become immune from indecency and immodesty, for he would have to apply all his powers of piety to withstand such a great temptation, and thus become really so strong as not to yield to such things in future as well. The importance and the need of such a hard training becomes quite obvious, if we keep in view the moral conditions of the Egyptian society of that period. We can have a glimpse of this from Ayats 30-32. It appears that the women in general and the ladies of high society in particular, enjoyed almost the same sexual freedom as is rampant today in the civilized West and in the Westernized East. Allah made arrangements for the special training of Prophet Joseph in the house of his master because he had to perform his divine mission in a perverted society, and that too as a ruler and not as a common man. It is thus obvious from the behavior of those ladies of high rank, who did not feel any shame nor modesty in openly admiring the beauty of the young slave and from that of the lady of the house who was not ashamed of confessing openly that she did her best to tempt him and would continue to do so, that they would have done all they could to allure the young handsome ruler. Thus Allah not only made Prophet Joseph strong

enough to resist such temptations in future by passing him through the hard test, but also filled the ladies with despair of gaining any success in this matter.

25. And they both raced to the door, and she tore his shirt from behind, and they found her lord (husband) at the door. She said: “What shall be the recompense (punishment) for him who intended against your wife an evil, except that he be imprisoned, or a painful punishment.”

وَأَسْتَبَقَا أَلْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ
قَمِيصَهُ مِنْ دُبُرٍ وَأَلْفِيَا سَيِّدَهَا
لَدَا أَلْبَابٍ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ
أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا أَنْ
يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. He (Joseph) said: “It was she who sought to seduce me from myself.” And a witness from her household testified: ^{*24} “If his shirt is torn from the front, then she has told the truth, and he is of the liars.”

قَالَ هِيَ رَاوَدَتْنِي عَنْ نَفْسِي
وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ
كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِنْ قُبُلٍ
فَصَدَقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

***24** It appears that when the master of the house came on the scene, he was accompanied by a person of his wife’s household. When he heard the story of the incident, he made this proposal: As each of them accuses the other and there is no eye witness of what happened between the two,

the matter should be decided by the help of the circumstantial evidence, by examining the condition of Joseph's shirt. Obviously this was a very reasonable way of deciding the matter, and there was, therefore, no need to resort to a miracle. According to some traditions this witness was an infant, lying in the cradle, whom Allah had given the power of speech for giving this evidence. As this story is not supported by any authority, there is no reason why the obvious, plain and reasonable thing should not be accepted that the witness was a wise and experienced member of the family of the wife, instead of having resort to a miracle based on an unauthentic tradition.

27. "And if his shirt is torn from behind, then she has lied, and he is of the truthful."*25

وَإِنْ كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِنْ دُبُرٍ
فَكَذَبَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ



*25 This is what was implied in the evidence: If Joseph's shirt is torn from the front, it means that Joseph is the aggressor and she has struggled to defend her honor. But if the shirt is rent from the back, it is obvious that he must have been running away from her and she must have been tugging from behind. The circumstantial evidence implied another thing. As the witness invited the master's attention to Prophet Joseph's shirt only, it meant that there was no sign at all of violence on the garments of the woman, for had he been the aggressor, there must have been some signs of violence on her garments.

28. So when he (her husband) saw his shirt torn from behind, he said: “Surely, it is of your (women’s) tricks. Certainly, mighty are your tricks.”

فَلَمَّا رَأَى قَمِيصَهُ قُدَّ مِنْ دُبُرٍ
قَالَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ كَيْدِكُنَّ إِنَّ
كَيْدِكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

29. “O Joseph, turn away from this. And you (O woman) ask forgiveness for your sin. Indeed, it is you who are of the faulty.”*25a

يُوسُفُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَا
وَاسْتَغْفِرِي لِذَنْبِكِ إِنَّكِ
كُنْتِ مِنَ الْخَاطِئِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

*25a A comparative study of the story as given in the Quran and in the Bible and the Talmud will be worthwhile. The Bible says: And she caught him by his garment, saying: Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand and fled, and got himself out. And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, that she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying: See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice: And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got himself out. And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home...And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying: After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. And Joseph’s master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the

king's prisoners were bound. (Gen. 39: 12-16, 19-20).

The clumsy manner of the above version is obvious. It appears from this that Prophet Joseph's garment was so shaped that the whole of it fell into her hands when she tugged it. Then he ran away all naked, leaving it with her, as if to supply her with a clear proof of his own guilt.

Now let us turn to the Talmud. It says: ...hearing the accusation, Potiphar commanded at once that the lad should be whipped severely. Then he carried Joseph before the judges.....They ordered that the torn garment should be brought to them and upon an examination of the same, they pronounced Joseph not guilty. (The Talmud Selections, H. Polano, pp. 81-82). Obviously this version is also faulty, for it cannot be imagined that a person of such a high rank would himself take the case to a court that his own slave had tried to assault his wife criminally. Incidentally, this Quranic version of the story is a clear proof of the fact that it has no copied stories from the Israelite traditions as the pseudo-orientalists allege, but has, on the other hand, corrected them and told the real facts to the world.

30. And women in the city said: "The ruler's wife is seeking to seduce her slave-boy from his self. Indeed, he has impassioned her with love. Indeed, we see her in clear error.

❖ وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ
أَمْرًا تُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا عَنْ
نَفْسِهِ ۗ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا إِنَّا
لَنَرُهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ



31. So when she heard of their scheming, she sent for them and prepared for them a banquet (with cushioned couch)^{*26} and gave to every one of them a knife and said (to Joseph): “Come out unto them.” Then, when they saw him, they exalted him, and cut their hands. And they said: “Perfection for Allah. This is not a human being. This is none other than a gracious angel.”

فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ
إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَكًا
وَأَتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِّنْهُنَّ سِكِّينًا
وَقَالَتْ أَخْرِجِ عَلَيْنَّ فَلَمَّا
رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ
وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا بَشَرًا إِنْ
هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ

***26** The ancient Egyptians used to place pillows and cushions in such feasts for the guests to recline. And this is confirmed by the archaeological remains in Egypt. There is no mention at all of this banquet in the Bible but it has been described in the Talmud in a way quite different from that of the Quran. Needless to say that while this narrative in the Quran is natural, life like and teaches moral lessons, the one in the Talmud lacks all these things.

32. She said: “This is he about whom you blamed me. And certainly, I did seek to seduce him from his self, but he held himself back. And if he does not do what I order him to, he shall

قَالَتْ فَذَلِكُنَّ الَّذِي لُمْتُنِنِي
فِيهِ وَلَقَدْ رَاودْنَاهُ عَنِ نَفْسِهِ
فَأَسْتَعْصَمَ وَلَئِن لَّمْ يَفْعَلْ مَا

certainly be cast into prison, and will be among those who are disgraced.”*27

ءَامْرُهُ لِيَسْجَنَنَّ وَلَيَكُونَا مِّنَ
الصَّغِيرِينَ



*27 This open demonstration of her love and declaration of her immoral designs show that the moral condition of the higher class of the Egyptian society had declined to the lowest ebb. It is quite obvious that the women whom she had invited must have been ladies belonging to the upper most stratum of the society. The very fact that she presented her beloved before them without any hesitation, in order to convince them of his beauty and youth that had urged her to fall in love with him, shows that there was nothing uncommon in this demonstration. Then these ladies did not reproach her but themselves practically demonstrated that, in those circumstances, they themselves would have done the same that she did. Above all, the hostess did not feel that it was immodest to declare openly: No doubt, I sought to seduce him and he succeeded in escaping from me. Yet I am not going to give him up. If he will not do as I bid him, he shall be cast into prison and humbled and disgraced.

33. He said: “O my Lord, prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me. And if You do not avert from me their plot, I will feel inclined towards them, and become

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا
يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ وَإِلَّا تَصْرِفْ
عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَكُنَّ

of the ignorant.”*28

مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

*28 In order to grasp the full significance of this prayer of Prophet Joseph, we should try to form a mental picture of the circumstances in which he was placed at that time. In the light of this passage the picture will be something like this. There is the handsome young man of twenty in the prime of his life, who has brought health and vigor of youth from the desert into Egypt, after passing through the ordeal of forced slavery and exile. Fortune has placed him in the house of one of the highest dignitaries in the capital of the most civilized country of the world at the time. There this handsome young man meets in the prime of life with a strange experience. The lady of the house in which he has to live day and night falls passionately in love with him and begins to tempt and seduce him. Then the fame of his beauty spreads all over the capital and the other ladies of the town also become enamored of him. Now this is the critical position. He is surrounded on all sides by hundreds of beautiful snares that have been spread to entrap and catch him unaware. All sorts of devices are employed to excite his passions and entice him: wherever he goes he encounters sin lying in ambush with all its charms and allurements and waiting for an opportune moment to make a surprise attack upon him. Such are the circumstances that are tempting him with sin, but the pious young man successfully passes through the ordeal, set for him by Satan, with the self control that is praiseworthy indeed. But it is all the more praiseworthy that he does not feel any

pride for showing such extraordinary piety in such trying and tempting circumstances. On the other hand, he very humbly invokes his Lord to protect him from those traps of sin, for he is afraid of the common human weaknesses and cries out: My Lord, I am weak. I fear lest these temptations should overpower me, I would rather prefer imprisonment to doing such an evil thing into which they are tempting to ensnare me.

In fact, that was the most important and critical period of Prophet Joseph's training, and this hard ordeal helped to bring forth all his latent virtues of which he himself was unaware up to that time. Then he himself realized that Allah had endowed him with the high and extraordinary qualities of honesty, fidelity, piety, charity, righteousness, self control, balance of mind, and he made full use of these when he gained power in Egypt.

34. So his Lord responded to him, and He averted from him their plot.*29 Indeed, He is the All Hearer, the All Knower.

فَأَسْتَجَابَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ فَصَرَفَ
عَنْهُ كَيْدَهُمْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ
الْعَلِيمُ

*29 Allah warded off their guile from Prophet Joseph by strengthening his character in such a way as to make ineffective all their devices to ensnare him, This also implies that Allah opened the door of prison for him in order to keep him safe from their tricks and temptations.

35. Then it occurred to them after what they had

ثُمَّ بَدَأَ هُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا رَأَوْا

seen the proofs (of his innocence) to imprison him for a time.*30

الآيَاتِ لَيْسَجْنَهُ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ



*30 It occurred to them to imprison Prophet Joseph in order to save face after they had seen clear proofs of his innocence and of the guilt of their own women, for no other alternative was left, in their opinion, to undo the scandal that was spreading fast in the land. But it did not occur to them that in fact his imprisonment was his moral victory and the moral defeat of the rulers and the dignitaries of Egypt. By that time, Prophet Joseph had not remained an unknown person, for all and sundry had heard stories of his beauty and piety, and of the love the ladies had shown towards him. Therefore when those wise courtiers put into practice their plausible device to imprison him in order to reverse the doings of their ladies, the common people must have drawn their own conclusions for they knew Prophet Joseph to be a man of pure, strong and high character. So it was obvious to them that he had committed no crime to merit imprisonment, and that he had been imprisoned because it was an easier way of escape for the chiefs of Egypt than to keep their own ladies under control.

Incidentally, this shows that imprisonment of innocent people without trial and due procedure of law is as old as civilization itself. The dishonest rulers of today are not much different from the wicked rulers who governed Egypt some four thousand years ago. The only difference between the two is that they did not imprison people in the name

and for the cause of democracy but they committed unlawful acts without any pretext of law. On the contrary, their modern descendants make use of the specious pretenses of honesty when they are acting unjustly. They first enact the necessary unlawful laws to justify their unlawful practices and then lawfully imprison their victims. That is to say, the Egyptian rulers were honest in their dishonesty and did not hide the fact that they were imprisoning people to safeguard their own interests, and not those of the community. But these modern disciples of Satan cast innocent people into prison to ward off the danger they feel from them, but proclaim to the world that their victims are a menace to the country and the community. In short, they were mere tyrants but these are shameless liars as well.

36. And there entered with him two^{*31} young men in the prison.^{*32} One of them said: “Indeed, I see myself (in a dream) pressing wine.” And the other said: “Indeed, I see myself (in a dream) carrying upon my head bread whereof the birds were eating.” (They said): “Inform us of the interpretation of this. Indeed, we see you of those who do good.”^{*33}

وَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ السِّجْنَ فَتَيَانٍ قَالَ
 أَحَدُهُمَا إِنِّي أَرِنِي أُعْصِرُ
 خَمْرًا وَقَالَ الْآخَرُ إِنِّي أَرِنِي
 أَحْمِلُ فَوْقَ رَأْسِي خُبْزًا تَأْكُلُ
 الطَّيْرُ مِنْهُ نَبِّئْنَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ إِنَّا
 نَرَاكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

***31** At the time when Prophet Joseph was sent to prison, he

probably was about twenty years old. This has been inferred from two statements in the Quran and the Talmud. The Quran (Ayat 42) says that...he remained in the prison for a decade or so and the Talmud says that ...Joseph was thirty years old when he was elevated to his honorable and trustworthy position.

***32** One of the two prisoners, according to the Bible, was the chief of the butlers of the king of Egypt, and the other the chief of the bakers. And according to the Talmud, they were condemned to the prison because during a feast stone grits were found in the bread and a fly in the wine.

***33** The fact that two prisoners attested his righteousness shows that Prophet Joseph was held in high esteem in the prison. Otherwise there was no reason why the two should have requested him alone to interpret the dreams and paid their homage like this: We have seen that you are a righteous man. It clearly means that the events narrated in the preceding verses had reached all and sundry and the people, inside the prison and outside it, knew that he had not been guilty of any crime or sin. On the other hand, he had proved himself to be a noble soul who had come out successful in the hardest test of his piety. So much so that there was not the like of him in piety, not even among their own religious leaders in the whole country. That is why not only the prisoners but also the officers and officials of the prison looked upon him as an honorable man and had full confidence in him. The Bible confirms this: And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he

was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand. (Gen. 39: 22-23).

37. He said: “No food will come to you, that is provided, but I shall inform you of its interpretation before that it comes to you. That is from what my Lord has taught me. Indeed, I have forsaken the religion of a people who do not believe in Allah, and they, in the Hereafter, they are disbelievers.”

قَالَ لَا يَأْتِيكُمَا طَعَامٌ تُرْزَقَانِيهِ
إِلَّا نَبَأْتُكُمَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ
يَأْتِيكُمَا ۚ ذَٰلِكُمَا مِمَّا عَلَّمَنِي
رَبِّي ۚ إِنِّي تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ
كَافِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

38. “And I have followed the religion of my fathers, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. It was not for us that we attribute any thing as partners to Allah. This is from the favor of Allah upon us and upon mankind, but most of the people are not grateful.”

وَاتَّبَعْتُ مِلَّةَ آبَائِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ ۚ مَا كَانَ
لَنَا أَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۚ
ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا
وَعَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. “O my two companions of the prison, are many different lords better or

يَصْٰٓحِبِي ٱلسِّجْنِ ؕ أَرَبَابٌ
مُّتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمِ ٱللَّهُ

Allah, the One, the Irresistible.”

الْوَحْدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿٣٦﴾

40. “You do not worship besides Him except (only) names you have named them, you and your fathers. Allah has not sent down for them any authority. The judgment is none but for Allah. He has commanded that you worship none but Him. That is the right religion, but most of the people do not know.”

مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا
أَسْمَاءَ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ
وَأَبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ
سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ
إِلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ
الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

41. “O my two companions of the prison, as for one of you, he will pour out wine for his master to drink, and as for the other, he will be crucified so that the birds will eat from his head. The matter has been judged, that concerning which you both did inquire.”*34

يَصْدِحِي السِّجْنِ أَمَّا أَحَدُكُمَا
فَيَسْقِي رَبَّهُ خَمْرًا وَأَمَّا الْآخَرُ
فَيُصَلَّبُ فَتَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْ
رَأْسِهِ قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ الَّذِي فِيهِ
تَسْتَفْتِيَانِ ﴿٤١﴾

*34 This discourse, which is the soul of this story, and is one of the best on the doctrine of *Tauhid* in the Quran itself, finds no place at all in the Bible and the Talmud. This is because they regard him merely as a wise and pious man

and not as a Prophet. That is why Rev. Rodwell has, in regard to this passage, accused Muhammad (peace be upon him) of putting his own doctrine and conviction into the mouth of Joseph (peace be upon him). But the Quran not only puts forward and presents these two aspects of his life in a much better and clearer way but also presents him as a Prophet, who had started propagating the message even in the prison.

As this discourse suggests several very important things, it will be worthwhile to consider these one by one:

(1) This is the first occasion on which Prophet Joseph appears to have begun the preaching of the true faith. For before this, the Quran reveals him in the different stages of his life as a man of high morality but does not say anything to show that he conveyed the message also. From this it is clear that those stages were of a preparatory nature and the mission of Prophethood was entrusted to him at the stage of his imprisonment and this was his first discourse as a Prophet.

(2) Moreover, this was the first occasion when he revealed his identity to others. Before this, we find him bearing patiently everything that happened to him without revealing anything about his relationships with Prophet Abraham and others. He kept silent when the caravan made him a slave and carried him to Egypt, when Al-Aziz bought him and when he was sent to prison. As Prophet Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (peace be upon them all) were quite well known, he might have used their names to his advantage. The members of the caravan, both the

Ishmaelites and the Midianites, were closely related to his family, and the Egyptians were, at least, familiar with the name of Prophet Abraham. Nay, the way in which Prophet Joseph mentioned their names in this discourse, shows that the fame of his father, grandfather and great grandfather had reached Egypt. But in spite of this, Prophet Joseph did not use their names on any of the critical occasions to save himself from the plight in which he was placed. This shows that probably he himself knew that these things were inevitable for his training for the mission for which Allah had chosen him. Now it was absolutely necessary for him, for the sake of his mission, to reveal this fact in order to show that he was not presenting any new faith but the same faith that was preached by Prophets Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (peace be upon them all). This was necessary because the message demanded that it should not be presented with the claim that it was a new and novel thing but that it was the same universal and eternal truth that has always been presented by its bearers.

(3) This teaches us that one can, like Prophet Joseph, carve out a way for the propagation of the message, if one has the intention and the required wisdom. The two men pay their homage to him and request him to interpret their dreams. In answer to this he says: I will tell their interpretations but let me first inform you about the source of my knowledge that enables me to understand dreams. Thus he takes advantage of their request and preaches his own faith to them. We learn from this that if a person is imbued with the true and strong desire for propagating the truth, he can

very gracefully turn the direction of the conversation towards the message he desires to convey. On the contrary, if a person has no strong desire for the propagation of the message, he never finds any opportunity for it, even though hundred and one such opportunities might have come his way which could have been utilized for this purpose. But one must be on his guard to discriminate between the right use of an opportunity by a wise man from the crude propagation of a foolish and uncultured person, who tries to thrust the message into the ears of unwilling hearers and succeeds only in creating aversion for it in their minds because of his crude way of presentation.

(4) This also teaches the right procedure that should be followed in presenting the message. Prophet Joseph does not present, at the very start, the details of the creed and regulations of the faith but the most fundamental thing that distinguishes a believer from a non-believer, that is, the distinction between *Tauhid* and *shirk*. Then he presents it in such a rational manner as cannot fail to convince any man of common sense. And his argument must have impressed deeply on the minds of the two slaves. Which is better, various gods or One Omnipotent Allah? They knew it from their personal experience that it was much better to serve one master than a number of them. Therefore it was far better to serve the Lord of the universe than His servants. Moreover, he does not invite them directly to accept his faith and discard their own faith, but he very wisely draws their attention to this fact; This is Allah's bounty upon us and upon all mankind that He has not made us the servants

of any other than Himself, yet most of the people are not grateful to Him. Instead of serving Him alone, they invent gods for themselves and worship them. Then it is also noteworthy that his criterion of the faith of his addressees is based on wisdom and has no tinge of bitterness in it. He says: The gods whom you call, the god of wealth or the god of health or the god of prosperity or the god of rain etc. are mere names you have given them without any reality behind them. The real Owner of everything is the Supreme Allah Whom you also acknowledge as the Creator and the Lord of the whole universe. He has sent no authority and given no sanction to anyone for Godhead and worship, but has reserved all the powers, all the rights and all the authorities for Himself, and commanded, "Serve and worship none but Me."

(5) It may also be inferred from this discourse that Prophet Joseph must have made full use of this opportunity of a decade for the propagation of the message. Some people think that that was the only time when he extended the invitation to the message. This is wrong for two reasons. First, it is absurd to imagine that a Prophet could have been neglectful of his mission for a long period. Second, it cannot be imagined that the person who availed himself of the opportunity when two men approached him for the interpretation of their dreams, could ever have passed a decade of imprisonment without propagating the message entrusted to him by his Lord.

42. And he (Joseph) said to him he thought that he

وَقَالَ لِلَّذِي ظَنَّ أَنَّهُ نَاجٍ

would be released of the two: "Mention me to your master." But Satan caused him to forget to mention to his master, so he (Joseph) stayed in prison for some years.*35

مِنْهُمَا أَذْكَرُنِي عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ
فَأَنَسَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ ذِكْرَ رَبِّهِ
فَلَبِثَ فِي السِّجْنِ بِضْعَ سِنِينَ



*35 Some commentators have interpreted it like this: Satan made Prophet Joseph neglectful of his Lord, Allah, so he placed his confidence in a man rather than Allah and desired him to mention him to his lord, the king, for his release. So Allah punished him by letting him languish several years in the dungeon. In fact, such an interpretation is absolutely erroneous for as Allamah Ibn Kathir and some early commentators like Mujahid, Muhammad-bin-Ishaq and some others say, the pronoun him refers to that person who he thought would be released. Therefore it will mean: Satan made him (the would be free man) so neglectful that he forgot to mention him (Prophet Joseph) to his lord (the king). They also cite a tradition in support of their interpretation to this effect. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: If Prophet Joseph had not said that what he said, he would not have remained in imprisonment for several years. But Allamah Ibn Kathir says: This *Hadith* cannot be accepted because all the ways in which it has been reported are weak. Moreover, two of the reporters, Sufyan-bin-Wakii and Ibrahim-bin-Yazid, are not trustworthy. Besides being weak on technical grounds, it is also against the dictates of common sense: if a wronged

person adopted some measures for his release, he cannot be considered to be neglectful of God and guilty of the lack of trust in Allah.

43. And ^{*36} the king said: “Indeed, I saw (in a dream) seven fat cows, whom seven lean ones were eating, and seven green ears of corn, and (seven) other dry. O you chiefs, explain to me about my dream, if you can interpret dreams.”^{*37}

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ إِنِّي أَرَى سَبْعَ
بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ
عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعُ سُنبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ
وَأُخْرَى يَابِسَاتٍ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأَئِئَةُ
أَفْتُونِي فِي رُؤْيَايَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لِلرُّؤْيَا
تَعْبُرُونَ



***36** Leaving the account of the events of the intervening years of imprisonment, the story has been resumed from the time when Prophet Joseph began to rise in worldly rank.

***37** According to the Bible and the Talmud, the king was greatly disturbed, troubled and confused because of these dreams. So he proclaimed throughout the entire land of Egypt, and called upon all the wise men, and the sooth-sayers, and magicians of the land to interpret his dreams.

44. They said: “Mixed up dreams. And we are not learned in the interpretation of dreams.”

قَالُوا أَضْغَثٌ أَحْلَمٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ
بِتَأْوِيلِ الْأَحْلَمِ بِعَلَمِينَ



45. And he, of the two, who was released, and he

وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ

remembered after a lapse of time, said: “I will tell you of its interpretation, so send me forth.”*38

بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ أَنَا أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِتَأْوِيلِهِ
فَأَرْسَلُونِ



*38 The Quran has told in brief the essence of the request of the chief butler, but the Bible and the Talmud have given its details. According to these (and it stands to reason that it must have been so), he told the king of the life of Prophet Joseph in prison and how he interpreted their dreams rightly and prayed the king to give him leave to see Prophet Joseph in prison for that purpose.

46. “Joseph, O the truthful one,*39 explain to us (the dream) of seven fat cows, whom seven lean ones were eating, and the seven green ears of corn and (seven) other dry, that I may return to the people, so that they may know.”*40

يُوسُفُ أَيُّهَا الصِّدِّيقُ أَفْتِنَا فِي
سَبْعِ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ
سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعِ سُنبُلَاتٍ
خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ لَعَلِّي
أَرْجِعُ إِلَى النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَعْلَمُونَ



*39 The Arabic word *Siddiq* is used for the one who is an embodiment of truth and righteousness. Thus it shows that the butler had been so deeply impressed with the pure character of Prophet Joseph that even years had failed to blot it from his heart. (For its meaning please refer to E.N. 99 of Surah An-Nisa).

***40** That is, they might understand your true worth and realize their own error in keeping you in prison without any just cause. And in a way I may get the opportunity of fulfilling the promise I made with you during my imprisonment.

47. He (Joseph) said: “You shall sow seven years as usual. But that (the harvest) which you reap, leave it in the ears, except a little of which you eat.”

قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ دَأْبًا
فَمَا حَصَدْتُمْ فَذَرُوهُ فِي
سُنْبُلِهِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ



48. “Then after that, will come seven hard (years), which will devour what you have planned ahead for them, except a little of that which you have stored.”

ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ سَبْعٌ
شِدَادٌ يَأْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ إِلَّا
قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تَحْصِنُونَ



49. “Then, after that, will come a year in which the people will have abundant rain, and in which they will press (wine).”^{*41}

ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَامٌ فِيهِ
يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيهِ يَعْصِرُونَ



***41** The literal meaning of *yasiroon* is: “they will press.” Here it has been used to denote that state of verdure which was going to prevail after the famine years because of rainfall and flood in the Nile. For, when the land will be

watered, there will be abundance of seed to press oil, and abundance of fruit to press juice and abundance of fodder for cattle to press milk out of them. It should be noted that Prophet Joseph not only interpreted the king's dream but also told them how to preserve and reserve grain during the first seven years of prosperity for the subsequent seven years of famine. Moreover he foretold the good news of prosperity after the seven years of famine, though there was no hint of this in the dream of the king.

50. And the king said: "Bring him to me." So when the messenger came to him, he (Joseph) said: "Return to your lord^{*42} and ask him what was the case of the women, those who cut their hands. Indeed, my Lord (Allah) is well Aware of their plot."^{*43}

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ أَتُؤْنِي بِهِ فَلَمَّا
جَاءَهُ الرَّسُولُ قَالَ أَرْجِعْ إِلَى
رَبِّكَ فَسَأَلَهُ مَا بَأْسَ النِّسْوَةِ
الَّتِي قَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ إِنَّ رَبِّي
بِكَيْدِهِنَّ عَلِيمٌ



*42 There is no mention in the Bible and the Talmud of this most important part of the story that Prophet Joseph declined to quit the prison till his character was cleared. On the other hand, according to the Bible: Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. And the Talmud depicts even a more degrading picture of the event. It says: The king ordered that Joseph should be brought before him. But he commanded his officers to be careful not to frighten the

lad, lest through fear he should be unable to interpret correctly. And the servant of the king brought Joseph forth from his dungeon, and shaved him and clothed him in new garments, and carried him before the king. The king was seated upon his throne, and the glare and glitter of the jewels which ornamented the throne dazzled and astonished the eyes of Joseph. Now the throne of the king was reached by seven steps, and it was the custom of Egypt for a prince or noble who held audience with the king, to ascend to the sixth step; but when an inferior or a private citizen of the land was called into his presence, the king descended to the third step and from there spoke with him. (The Talmud, H. Polano, pp. 87-88).

A comparison of the degrading picture in the Talmud with this self respecting grand, and noble picture depicted in the Quran will convince every unbiased critic that the one in the Quran is worthy of a Prophet of God. Moreover the picture in the Talmud is open to a grave objection: Had Prophet Joseph behaved like a frightened and cringing lad who was so dazzled by the glitter and glare of the jewels of the throne that he bowed to the ground, how was it that the king and the courtiers were so impressed by him that they declared, “.....the Hebrew has proved himself wise and skillful and through his wisdom shall our country be saved the pangs of want”? So much so that the king appointed him, without demur as governor over the land, second only to himself. All this shows that by that time he had proved his moral and mental superiority and had enhanced it by his refusal to quit the prison without proving his innocence.

Otherwise, they would have never raised him to the highest rank in such a civilized and advanced country as Egypt.

*43 He demanded an inquiry into the matter not because he himself had any doubt of his innocence, but because he was perfectly confident of this: My Lord has full knowledge of my innocence and of their cunning. But your lord should also make a thorough inquiry as to why I had been sent to prison, for I do not want to go before the public with any blemish or blot on my reputation. Therefore a public inquiry should be held to prove that I was an innocent victim of the injustice of the chiefs and nobles of the country, who had cast me into prison in order to cover up the guilt of their own ladies.

The words in which the demand was made clearly show that the king was already fully acquainted with the details of the incident that had happened at the banquet of the wife of Al-Aziz. That is why a mere reference to it was enough.

Another noteworthy thing in this demand was that Prophet Joseph did not in any way hint at the part the wife of Al-Aziz had played in the event. This is another proof of his noble character that he did not like to involve and entangle the wife of his benefactor in the matter, even though she had done him her worst.

51. He (the king) said^{*44} (to the women): "What was your affair when you did seek to seduce Joseph from his self. They said: "Perfection for Allah. We

قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُنَّ إِذْ رَاوَدْتُنَّ
يُوسُفَ عَنِ نَفْسِهِ ۗ قُلْنَ
حَشْ لِلَّهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنْ

have not known about him any evil.” The wife of the ruler said: “Now the truth is manifest, it was me who sought to seduce him, from his self, and indeed, he is surely of the truthful.”*45

سُوِّءَ قَالَتْ أَمْرًا تُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَن
حَصَّحَصَ الْحَقُّ أَنَا رَاوَدْتُهُ
عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ
الصَّادِقِينَ



*44 As regards to the way in which this inquiry was held, it is just possible that the king might have summoned the women to his presence or gotten their evidence through a trusted officer of his court.

*45 The inquiry and the evidences must have helped to pave the way for Prophet Joseph's rise in the land by concentrating the public attention on him, especially under the circumstances when the inquiry had been demanded by him. He had interpreted the dream of the king, when all the wise men, sooth sayers and the magicians had failed. Then he had refused to quit prison even though the king himself had ordered that he should be brought before him, and, instead of this, demanded an inquiry of the matter which had been the cause of his imprisonment. Naturally this thing would have filled the people with wonder and they would have been looking eagerly for the result of the inquiry. Thus it can be imagined how the evidences and the result of the inquiry raised his prestige so high that the king and his courtiers declared that he was the only fit person to save the country from the coming calamity. It is no wonder, then, that Prophet Joseph proposed that all the resources of

the land should be placed in his hands, and the king accepted this proposal as soon as it was made. For, had it been merely the matter of the interpretation of a dream, the most he would have deserved was some reward and his release from prison. But he could not have said: Place the resources of the land in my hands, and the king would not have readily acceded to his proposal and given him all the powers in the land, as is contained in Ayats 55-56, and confirmed by the Bible and the Talmud.

52. (Joseph said: ^{*46} “I asked for) this, that he (my lord) may know that I did not betray him in secret. And that Allah does not guide the plot of the betrayers.”

ذَلِكَ لِيَعْلَمَ أَنِّي لَمْ أَخُنَّهُ
بِالْغَيْبِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي
الْخَائِبِينَ

***46** Prophet Joseph might have said these words in the prison when he came to know the result of the inquiry. But some commentators, including great scholars like Ibn Taimiyyah and Ibn Kathir, regard this sentence to be a continuation of the preceding speech of the wife of Al-Aziz. They argue that this sentence has been placed contiguous to her preceding speech without any dividing word between them to indicate that her speech had ended at “indeed, he is surely of the truthful”, and that the succeeding words were spoken by Prophet Joseph. They construe that if two speeches made by two different persons are placed in contiguity, they must be separated by means of some definite word, or there must be some definite clue to it. As neither of these two things exists in this case, it may rightly

be construed that the words contained in Ayat 52 are the continuation of her preceding speech in Ayat 51. I, however, am surprised how a great scholar of Ibn Taimiyyah's insight has missed this point that the characteristic of a speech is in itself a clear and self-sufficient clue. Her confession in Ayat 51 fits in with her low character, but obviously the succeeding dignified and grand speech in Ayat 52 is too high for her. That fits in only with the noble character of Prophet Joseph. It is obvious that this must have been uttered by one, who was righteous, generous, humble and God fearing. It is by itself a clear evidence that it could not have come out of the mouth of the one, who said: Come here, and what punishment does the one deserve, who shows evil intentions towards your wife? And if he will not yield to my bidding, he shall be cast into prison. On the other hand, such a pure speech fitted in with the one who said: May Allah protect me. My Lord has shown so much kindness towards me. Should I, then, misbehave like this? And my Lord, I prefer imprisonment to that to which they invite me. If Thou dost not ward off their cunning devices from me, I might be caught in their snares. Therefore one cannot ascribe such a pure speech to the wife of Al-Aziz unless there is a clear clue showing that by that time she had repented and believed and mended her ways, but there is no such clue. Thus it is clear that this speech must have been made by Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him).

53. "And I do not acquit myself. Indeed, human self

﴿ وَمَا أُبْرِئُ نَفْسِي ۚ إِنَّ النَّفْسَ

is prone to evil, except him upon whom my Lord has mercy. Indeed, my Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي
إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

54. And the king said: “Bring him to me. I will choose him (to serve) to my person.” Then when he spoke to him, he said: “Indeed, this day, you are in our presence, established, trusted.”*47

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ أَتُؤْنِي بِهِ
أَسْتَخْلِصُهُ لِنَفْسِي فَلَمَّا كَلَّمَهُ
قَالَ إِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَيْنَا مَكِينٌ
أَمِينٌ

***47** It implied this: we have such a high opinion of you that we can safely entrust you with the highest office of responsibility in the country."

55. He (Joseph) said: “Appoint me over the treasures of the land. I will indeed be guardian (over them) with knowledge.”*47a

قَالَ أَجْعَلْنِي عَلَى خَزَائِنِ
الْأَرْضِ إِنِّي حَفِيظٌ عَلِيمٌ

***47a** As this verse has given rise to some important questions, let us consider these one by one. The first question is: Was it an application made by Prophet Joseph to the king for some post? In the light of the preceding explanatory notes, it would have become obvious that it was neither an application nor a request made by an ambitious person who had been on the lookout for an opportune moment for its submission, and no sooner

did the king express his approval of him than he presented his request before him. As a matter of fact, this was a sort of proposal, giving his assent to the great desire of the king and the courtiers that he should be appointed as governor over the land. For, according to the Talmud, the Hebrew has proved himself wise and skillful, and "...surely there can be none more discrete than myself to whom God has made known all these things." The king, his courtiers, his princes, officers, and men of rank, had by that time, come to know and recognize his true worth and had had experience of his moral superiority during the last decade of the vicissitudes of his life. He had proved that there was none equal to him in honesty, righteousness, forbearance, self discipline, generosity, intelligence and understanding. They knew and believed that he was the only one who knew how to guard and utilize the resources of the land and could be safely entrusted with them. Therefore, as soon as he showed his willingness, they heartily put these in his trust. This is also confirmed by the Bible that the king had formed a very high opinion of Prophet Joseph. He said to his servants: Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is? Above all, he said to Prophet Joseph: There is none so discreet and wise as thou art. (Gen. 41: 38-39). Accordingly, therefore, the king, of his own accord, set him over his house and land. (Gen. 41: 41). Let us now take up the second question: What was the nature of the powers that were entrusted to Prophet Joseph? This is important because those who are not well versed in the Quran have been misled by the words in this

verse and by his subsequent work of the distribution of grain. They wrongly conclude from these that this post was like the present day posts of a “Treasury Officer” or a “Famine Commissioner” or a “Finance Minister” etc. etc. In fact, it was none of these, for, according to the Quran and the Bible and the Talmud, Prophet Joseph had been invested with the full powers and privileges of a ruler. That is why he sat on the throne (Ayat 100) and they used the title of *malik*, king, for him. (Ayat 72). He himself was grateful to Allah for bestowing the kingdom on him. (Ayat 101). Above all, Allah Himself testifies to this fact: Thus We gave power to Joseph in the land, so he had every right to take possession of any piece of it, if he so desired. (Ayat 56). As regards the Bible, it says: And Pharaoh said unto Joseph: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt... and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt, and called Joseph’s name Zaphnath-paaneah (savior of the world). (Gen. 41: 40-45). And according to the Talmud, when his brothers returned with their father, Prophet Jacob, from Egypt, they said about Prophet Joseph: The king of Egypt is mighty potentate, over his people he is supreme; upon his word they go out and upon his word they come in; his word governs, and the voice of his master, Pharaoh, is not required.

Another pertinent question is: What was the object for which Prophet Joseph made a proposal for powers in the land? Did he offer his services for the enforcement of the

laws of a non-Muslim state? Or did he intend to establish the cultural, moral and political systems of Islam by taking the powers of government in his own hands? As for its answer let us quote the comments on this verse 55 by Allamah Zamakhshari in his Kashshaf. He says, "When Prophet Joseph proposed: Please place all the resources of the country under my trust, he meant to get an opportunity for enforcing the commandments of Allah and for establishing truth and justice, and to gain that power which is essential for fulfilling the mission for which the Messengers are sent. He did not make this demand for the love of kingdom or for worldly desires and ambitions. He did this because he knew well that there was none else who could perform that work.

In fact, the above question leads to a very important and basic issues. These are: Was Joseph a Prophet of Allah or not? If he was, does the Quran put forward such a conception of a Prophet that he himself should (as they allege Prophet Joseph did) offer his services to a system of unbelief to carry on its work on un-Godly principles? Nay, it leads to a more delicate and important question: Was he a righteous person or not? And, if he was, could it ever be expected that he would (according to their interpretation,) practically accept the theory that Sovereignty belongs to the king and not to Allah, whereas in the prison he preached, "Sovereignty belongs to none but Allah (Ayat 40)? For if, as they interpret, he submitted an application for service to the king, it meant that he did so against his own principles which he inculcated while in prison: "Which

is better: various gods or the One Omnipotent Allah?" As the king of Egypt was one of the gods they had set up, so to offer services to carry on the work of the un-Islamic system under the existing un-Islamic law would have been tantamount to acknowledging the king as his Lord. Are they prepared to place Prophet Joseph in that position?

It is an irony that such Muslims as interpret this verse in this way, lower the character of Prophet Joseph. They have evinced the same mentality that the Jews had developed during the period of their degeneration. When they became morally and mentally depraved, they deliberately began to represent their Prophets and saints as people of low character like themselves in order to justify their own degraded characters and to make room for excuses for going still lower. Likewise, when the Muslims came under the sway of non-Muslim governments, they wanted to serve under them, but the teachings of Islam and the patterns of their worthy forefathers stood in their way and they felt ashamed of this. So, in order to pacify their consciences, they sought refuge in this verse and by its misinterpretation thought that that great Prophet had made an application for a post to serve under a non-Muslim under un-Islamic laws. Whereas the Prophet's own life taught the lesson that even a single Muslim could all by himself bring about the Islamic revolution in a whole country by his pure Islamic character, his faith, intelligence and wisdom and that a true believer is able to conquer, by the proper use of his moral character, a whole country without any army, ammunition or material provisions.

56. And thus did We establish Joseph in the land, to take possession therein, as where he wished.*48 We bestow of Our mercy on whom We will. And We do not cause to be lost, the reward of those who do good.

وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ يَتَّبِعُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ
نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَشَاءُ وَلَا
نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

***48** This is to show that the whole land of Egypt was under his complete control, as if it belonged to him and he could claim any piece of it as his, and there was no piece of it that could be withheld from him. The early commentators have also made the same comment on this verse. For instance, Allamah Ibn Jarir Tabari, on the authority of Ibn Zaid, says that this verse means: We made Joseph the owner of all those things that were in Egypt, and in this part of the world he could do whatever he liked and wherever he liked for he had been given complete authority over this land. So much so that he could bring Pharaoh under his sway and become his master, if he so desired. He has quoted another thing from Mujahid, who is one of the most learned commentators, to the effect that the King of Egypt had embraced Islam through Prophet Joseph.

57. And the reward of the Hereafter is better for those who believed and used to fear (Allah).*49

وَلَا أَجْرُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ

***49** This is a warning against a misunderstanding that one might have had from the preceding verse that kingdom and

power were the real ultimate rewards for virtue and righteousness, for the best reward that a believer should desire and strive for will be the one that Allah will bestow upon believers in the Hereafter.

58. And Joseph's brothers came, and they entered before him.^{*50} So he recognized them, and they did not know him.^{*51}

وَجَاءَ إِخْوَةُ يُوسُفَ فَدَخَلُوا
عَلَيْهِ فَعَرَفَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُ مُنْكَرُونَ



***50** The events of several years after his coming into power have been left out for the sake of brevity, and the story has been resumed from the time when the brothers of Prophet Joseph came to Egypt, and paved the way for the eventual settlement of the Israelites in Egypt. It will, however, be worthwhile to have a glimpse of those events. During the first seven years of his reign, there was abundance of food as he had predicted while interpreting the dream of the king. Accordingly he adopted all the measures he had put before the king concerning the years of plenty. Then the seven years of scarcity began and famine reigned not only over Egypt but all over the adjoining countries. Accordingly, Syria, Palestine, Trans Jordan and the Northern part of Arabia began to suffer from the scarcity of food, but there was plenty of it in Egypt in spite of famine because of the wise steps Prophet Joseph had taken as a safeguard. That was why his brothers, like other neighboring people, were forced by circumstances to go to Egypt and present themselves before him. It appears that Prophet Joseph had so arranged things that no foreigner

was allowed to buy food without a special permit from him. Therefore when the brothers reached Egypt, they might have had to present themselves before him for obtaining the special permit for buying the fixed quantity allowed under the famine regulations.

***51** It is no wonder that his brothers could not recognize Prophet Joseph, for, when they cast him into the well, he was merely a lad of seventeen and at the time of their meeting, he was a grown up man of thirty eight years or so. Naturally, he must have changed in form during this long period. Besides, they could never have imagined that the brother whom they had cast into the well had become the ruler of Egypt.

59. And when he had furnished them with their provisions, he said: "Bring to me a brother of yours from your father. Do you not see that I give full measure, and I am the best of the hosts."

وَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَّازِهِمْ قَالَ
 أَتُونِي بِأَخٍ لَّكُمْ مِّنْ أَبِيكُمْ أَلَا
 تَرَوْنَ أَنِّي أَوْفِي الْكَيْلَ وَأَنَا
 خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾

60. "So if you do not bring him to me, then there shall be no measure (of provisions) for you with me, nor shall you come near me."***52**

فَإِن لَّمْ تَأْتُونِي بِهِ فَلَا كَيْلَ
 لَّكُمْ عِنْدِي وَلَا تَقْرَبُونِ ﴿٦٠﴾

***52** As the Quran has omitted the details, someone might be at a loss to know as to how he brought Benjamin into the

conversation with his brothers, and why he insisted on them to bring him with them, when he intended to keep his own identity secret from them. For, obviously these things might have led to the revelation of that secret. But a little thinking will show that he could have very easily and naturally led the conversation up to Benjamin without arousing their curiosity. As there were strict restrictions on the purchase of food, everyone was permitted to buy only a fixed quantity of it. Most probably the ten brothers had applied for food for their father and the eleventh brother as well. At this Prophet Joseph might have asked the reason why their father and brother had not personally come for it. Then he might have accepted the excuse for their father that he was old and blind but he would have expressed his doubts about their excuse for their brother that he was their step brother and the father would not send him with them and so forth. Then he might have declared: Well, this time we give you as much food as you have asked for, but the next time you come here you should bring your step brother with you; otherwise you will not get any food at all because of this false statement of yours. Along with this threat, he tried to win them over by reminding them of his liberal and generous treatment with them, because he yearned for the sight of his younger brother, and was anxious to know how his family had fared during his absence.

The above is a simple and natural explanation of the matter. Thus this part of the story as given in the Bible (Gen. chapters 42 and 43) appears to be far fetched,

exaggerated, unreal and, therefore, unreliable.

61. They said: “We shall try to get permission for him from his father, and indeed we shall do that.”

قَالُوا سَنُرَوِّدُ عَنْهُ أَبَاهُ وَإِنَّا لَفَاعِلُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

62. And He (Joseph) said to his servants: “Place their merchandise back in their saddlebags, so they might recognize it when they return to their people, thus they may come back.”

وَقَالَ لِفِتْيَانِهِ اجْعَلُوا بِضْعَتَهُمْ فِي رِحَالِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْرِفُونَهَا إِذَا أُنْقَلِبُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

63. Then when they returned to their father, they said: “O our father, the measure (provisions) is denied to us, so send with us our brother, that we may get the measure, and indeed, we will be his guardians.”

فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا إِلَىٰ أَبِيهِمْ قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا مُنِعَ مِنَّا الْكَيْلُ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا أَخَانَا نَكْتَلْ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

64. He (father) said: “Should I trust you with regard to him except as I trusted you with regard to his brother before. But Allah is best at guarding, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.”

قَالَ هَلْ ءَامَنُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا كَمَا أَمِنْتُكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَخِيهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ حَافِظًا وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

65. And when they opened their belongings, they found that their merchandise had been returned to them. They said: “O our father, what can we ask. Here is our merchandise returned to us. And we shall get provision for our family, and we shall guard our brother, and we shall have the extra measure of a camel (load). That should be such an easy load.”

وَلَمَّا فَتَحُوا مَتَاعَهُمْ وَجَدُوا
بِضْعَتَهُمْ رُدَّتْ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالُوا
يَا أَبَانَا مَا نَبْغِي هَذِهِ
بِضْعَتُنَا رُدَّتْ إِلَيْنَا وَنَمِيرُ
أَهْلَنَا وَنَحْفَظُ أَخَانَا وَنَزِدَادُ كَيْلٍ
بَعِيرٍ ذَلِكَ كَيْلٌ يَسِيرٌ

66. He (father) said: “Never will I send him with you until you give me a solemn oath in (the name of) Allah that you will bring him back to me, unless that you are surrounded.” Then when they gave him their solemn oath, he said: “Allah is a Trustee over what we say.”

قَالَ لَنْ أُرْسِلَهُ مَعَكُمْ حَتَّى
تُؤْتُونِ مَوْثِقًا مِنْ اللَّهِ لَتَأْتِنِي
بِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يُحَاطَ بِكُمْ فَلَمَّا
ءَاتَوْهُ مَوْثِقَهُمْ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَا
نَقُولُ وَكِيلٌ

67. And he said: “O my sons, do not enter from one gate, but enter from different gates.^{*53} And I can not avail you against (the decree of) Allah at all. The

وَقَالَ يَبْنِي لَا تَدْخُلُوا مِنْ بَابٍ
وَاحِدٍ وَأَدْخُلُوا مِنْ أَبْوَابٍ
مُتَفَرِّقَةٍ وَمَا أُغْنِي عَنْكُمْ مِنَ

decision is not but for Allah. Upon Him do I put my trust, and upon Him let all the trusting put their trust.”

اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ
عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَعَلَيْهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ
الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ

***53** Prophet Jacob’s great concern over this journey of his sons was due to the fact that his youngest son, Benjamin, was to accompany them. He was anxious about his safety because he had already had a bad experience of his son Joseph. Naturally his heart must have been full of such misgivings that it might be his last meeting with his other beloved son. Though he had full trust in Allah and was patiently resigned to His will, but, as a human being, advised his sons to take certain precautionary measures. In order to understand the significance of this precautionary measure of entering the capital by different gates, we should have a glimpse of the political conditions of that period. As the Israelites lived on the Eastern frontier of Egypt as independent clans, they were looked at with suspicion like all frontier people. Therefore Prophet Jacob feared that if they entered the city in a group, they might be taken for a gang of suspects, especially during that time of famine. Thus there was an apprehension of some severe action being taken against them as if they had come there for organized robbery. That was why he gave them this allowance that if under such adverse circumstances there was any trouble, he would not accuse them of breach of the pledge for the safety of Benjamin.

68. And when they entered from where their father had ordered them, it did not avail them against (the will of) Allah in anything (at all), except (it was) a need in Jacob's soul which he thus discharged. And indeed, he was possessor of knowledge because of what We had taught him, but most of mankind do not know.*54

وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَهُمْ
 آبُوهُمْ مَا كَانُ يُغْنِي
 عَنْهُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا
 حَاجَةً فِي نَفْسِ يَعْقُوبَ قَضَاهَا
 وَإِنَّهُ لَذُو عِلْمٍ لِّمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ
 وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
 يَعْلَمُونَ



*54 “Most of mankind do not know” how Prophet Jacob was able to hold the balance between trust in Allah and adoption of precautionary measures. This was because Allah had favored him with the real knowledge. That was why he took all those measures which were dictated by common sense, deep thinking and experience. He admonished them for their ill treatment with their brother Joseph so that they should not dare repeat it in the case of Benjamin. He took a solemn pledge from them in the name of Allah that they would take good care of the safety of their step brother. Then he advised them to be on their guard against the dangerous political situation and to enter the capital by different gates so as not to give cause for alarm and suspicion. In short, as far as it was humanly possible, he took all the precautionary measures to avoid every possible risk. On the other hand, he always kept this

thing in view and expressed it that no human precautionary measure could avert the enforcement of Allah's will. And that the real protection was Allah's protection, and that one should not rely on the precautionary measures but on the favor of Allah. Obviously only that person who has the real knowledge can keep such a balance in his words and deeds, who knows what kind of efforts are demanded of his human faculties bestowed by Allah for the solution of worldly problems, who also realizes that it is Allah alone Who has the power to make them a success or a failure. This is what most people do not understand. Some of them rely merely on their efforts and measures and discard trust in Allah, while there are others who rely merely on trust in Allah and do not adopt any practical measure to solve their problem.

69. And when they entered before Joseph, he took his brother to himself, he said: "Indeed, I am your brother, so do not despair for what they used to do."*55

وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ
 ءَاوَىٰٓ إِلَىٰٓ أَخَاهُ ط قَالَ إِنِّي أَنَا
 أَخُوكَ فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوا
 يَعْمَلُونَ



*55 The entire story of their reunion after a separation of twenty years or so has been summed up in this brief sentence. In all probability Prophet Joseph might have told him the story of the vicissitudes that ultimately had led to his high rank, and Benjamin in his turn might have related the story of the ill treatment of the heartless step brothers.

Then Prophet Joseph might have reassured him that he would not be allowed to go back with them but remain with him. It is also possible that the plan to retain him there, without disclosing the secret of Prophet Joseph's identity, would have then been thought out and decided upon.

70. Then when he had furnished them with their provisions, he put the drinking-cup in his brother's saddlebag.^{*56} Then called out an announcer: "O you caravan, surely you are thieves."^{*57}

فَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُم بِجَهَّازِهِمْ جَعَلَ
السَّقَايَةَ فِي رَحْلِ أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ أَذَّنَ
مُؤَدِّنٌ أَيُّهَا الْعِيرُ إِنَّكُمْ
لَسَرِقُونَ

***56** In all probability, Prophet Joseph put the cup in his brother's pack with his knowledge and consent, as may be inferred from the preceding verse. Obviously, Prophet Joseph desired to free his brother from the oppression of the cruel step brothers and he himself was reluctant to go back with them. But this could not be done directly and openly without disclosing his own identity, which was not then expedient under the circumstances. Therefore both the brothers might have thought out this plan, though this would have put the younger brother in an embarrassing situation for the time being because of his involvement in a case of theft. But they had adopted this plan because afterwards both the brothers could clear it easily by disclosing the real matter.

***57** There is nothing in this verse nor in the succeeding verses to show that Prophet Joseph took his servants in his

confidence in regard to this matter, and instructed them to bring a false accusation against the travelers. The simple explanation of the incident may be this. The cup might have been quietly and secretly put in the pack. Afterwards when the servants did not find it, they might have come to the inevitable conclusion that it must have been stolen by the travelers who were staying there.

71. They said while turning to them: “What is it you have lost.”

قَالُوا وَأَقْبَلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ مَاذَا تَفْقَدُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

72. They said: “We have lost the king’s goblet, and whoever brings it back (shall have) a camel load (of provisions), and I (said Joseph) guarantee for it.”

قَالُوا نَفَقْدُ صُوعَ الْمَلِكِ وَلِمَنْ جَاءَ بِهِ حِمْلُ بَعِيرٍ وَأَنَا بِهِ زَعِيمٌ ﴿٧٢﴾

73. They said: “By Allah, certainly you know that we did not come to make corruption in the land, and we are no thieves.”

قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا جِئْنَا لِنُفْسِدَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كُنَّا سَارِقِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾

74. They said: “Then what is the penalty for it, if you are liars.”

قَالُوا فَمَا جَزَاؤُهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ كَاذِبِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾

75. They said: “Its penalty should be that he, in whose

قَالُوا جَزَاؤُهُ مَنْ وُجِدَ فِي

bag it (the goblet) is found, so he is the penalty for it. Thus do we recompense the wrongdoers.”*58

رَحْلِهِ فَهُوَ جَزَاؤُهُ كَذَلِكَ
نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ



*58 It should be kept in mind that these people were the descendants of Prophet Abraham. Therefore they put forward his law regarding a thief, that is, the thief should be made the bondsman of the one whose goods he had stolen.

76. Then he (Joseph) began (the search) with their bags before his brother's bag, then he brought it out of his brother's bag. Thus did We plan for Joseph.*59 He could not have taken his brother by the law of the king, except that Allah willed (it).*60 We raise by degrees whom We will. And over all those endowed with knowledge is the All-Knowing (Allah).

فَبَدَأَ بِأَوْعِيَّتِهِمْ قَبْلَ وِعَاءِ أَخِيهِ
ثُمَّ اسْتَخْرَجَهَا مِنْ وِعَاءِ أَخِيهِ
كَذَلِكَ كِدْنَا لِيُوسُفَ مَا كَانَ
لِيَأْخُذَ أَخَاهُ فِي دِينِ الْمَلِكِ إِلَّا
أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَن
نَشَاءُ وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ



*59 Now let us consider the question: How did Allah directly support Prophet Joseph with His plan? It is obvious that the plan of placing the cup in Benjamin's pack was thought out and executed by Joseph himself. And it is also obvious that the royal servants checked their packs as a matter of routine for such is the procedure that is generally followed on such occasions. There is nothing in

this passage that might be called supernatural support by Allah except that the servants asked the brothers to prescribe the punishment for the thief, and they answered that he should be made a bondsman. The sentence that follows also confirms this interpretation.

***60** Had Allah willed it, He would not have removed the flaw in the plan of Prophet Joseph. It was this: he could seize his brother according to his plan only by the help of the king's law, but it was not worthy of a Prophet of Allah to apply that un-Islamic law to his own personal case. For he had taken political power in his hands in order to establish gradually the Islamic law and not to enforce and keep the king's law in vogue. Had Allah willed it, He would have left no other course for His Prophet except to have resort to the un-Islamic law. But He did not will it so because He did not like to tarnish the fair name of His Prophet. Therefore he made the servants inquire from the brothers (an unusual thing) about the punishment of a thief and they stated the law of Prophet Abraham. Thus not only was the flaw removed, but also no room was left for the brothers to raise any objection against this on the plea that they were not Egyptians, and therefore the law of the land could not be applied against them. As has already been pointed out, this was the support of Allah to which He has referred in the two subsequent verses as a token of His favor and a sign of the perfection of His knowledge.

The favor of Allah was that He saved Prophet Joseph from applying the un-Islamic law of the king of Egypt to his personal case, for he was liable to do so under the stress of

human weakness. And there can be no greater favor for one than this that Allah Himself should arrange to guard his high moral position. It should, however, be noted that such a high rank is awarded only to those who prove themselves to be righteous in very hard trials.

By removing the flaw in his plan, Allah showed that His knowledge was far superior to the knowledge of those, whom (like Prophet Joseph) He had endowed with knowledge.

In this connection, there are some other points worthy of consideration and we will deal with them briefly.

(1) Generally the words are translated like this: Joseph could not seize his brother by the law of the king, or Joseph was not authorized to seize his brother according to the law of the king. In other words, it means: He could not do this, as there was no provision for it in the king's law. Whereas it means this: He ought not to have seized him by the king's law, as it did not behoove him to do so. This version is open to two objections. Firstly, this is against the Quranic usage which usually means, it did not behoove him, it was not right for him and he ought not to have done this. For instance, this is what it means in the following verses.

Indeed, Islam alone is the right way in the sight of Allah. (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 18). Whosoever will adopt any other way than the way of Islam, it shall not be accepted. (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 85).

Secondly, such a version is meaningless, for there could have been no reason why he had not the power to seize him for theft according to the law of the king. Can there be any

kingdom without having a law for taking action against a thief?

(2) As the Quran uses the word which connotes the king's way of life in addition to the king's law, it helps to understand the meaning of the sentence under discussion. For it is obvious that the Prophet was sent to establish the way of Allah and not the un-Islamic way of the king. Though by that time he had only partially succeeded in this mission, it was not proper and worthy of a Prophet to adopt the way of the king for his own personal case. Though there was no legal hindrance in his way to seize his brother according to the king's law, nevertheless, it was inappropriate for him, as a Prophet, to adopt the king's way which he had hitherto scrupulously avoided as far as his own person was concerned. Thus it is clear that its appropriate interpretation will be this: It did not behoove Joseph to seize his brother by the king's law.

(3) Besides this, by using the word for the law of the land, Allah has denoted the vast comprehension of the word *deen* and this cuts at the root of the conception of *deen* of those people who confine the scope of the message of the Prophets to mere worship of One Allah and believe that it has nothing to do with the cultural, political, social, judicial, legal and other mundane affairs of life. Or, they opine that, if at all it has any concern with those matters, it is merely to give some instructions of an optional nature in regard to these, and leave it to the believers to adopt these or their own man made laws, because, they think, there is no harm even in adopting the latter course. This erroneous

conception of *deen*, which has been in vogue among the Muslims for a long time, has been responsible for rendering them neglectful of making exertions for the establishment of the Islamic way of life. As a result of this misconception of *deen*, they became reconciled to un-Islamic ways of unbelief and ignorance. Nay, they considered this misconception of theirs to be the pattern set by Prophet Joseph and became willing helpers and servants of these un-Islamic systems. Whereas this verse categorically refutes this misconception by declaring that the law of the land is as much a part of the *deen* of Allah as Salat, Hajj, Fast, and Zakat are. Therefore, the demand of the acceptance of *ad-deen* made in Ayat 19 and Ayat 85 of Surah Aal-Imran, that is, “Indeed, Islam alone is the right way, in the sight of Allah” and “Whosoever will adopt any other way than the way of Islam, it shall not be accepted”, includes laws as well as Salat and other obligatory duties prescribed by Allah. Therefore the exclusion of this part of *deen* from any system would incur the displeasure of Allah.

(4) The above interpretation, however, is open to one objection. It does, at least, imply that an un-Islamic way was in vogue in Egypt at the time, when Prophet Joseph was, even according to the present commentator, the supreme head of the country. It is, therefore, a proof that that Prophet himself was enforcing the un-Islamic law of the king. What difference, then, could it have made, if Prophet Joseph had followed, in his personal case too, the system of law of the king which he himself was enforcing instead of the system of law of Prophet Abraham? Most

certainly this would have made a vast difference because it would have compromised his position as a Prophet, because he was trying to establish the Islamic Way of life, which naturally could have been accomplished gradually in course of time, during which the king's law would have inevitably remained in vogue. The same thing happened in Arabia during the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Al-Madinah, which took nine years to establish the Islamic system in its entirety. During that period, several un-Islamic laws remained in vogue. For instance, drinking, interest, the un-Islamic laws of inheritance and marriage and some wrong ways of trade, etc. had to continue for some time. Likewise the civil and penal codes of Islam took some time for their complete introduction. So there is nothing strange in this that the king's law continued to be in vogue during the first nine years or so of Prophet Joseph's reign. But the continuance of the un-Islamic law of the king during the period of transition is no argument to prove that Allah's Prophet was sent to follow the way of the king and not to establish the way of Allah.

77. They said: "If he steals, so indeed, a brother of his did steal before. But Joseph kept his secret to himself and did not reveal it to them.^{*61} He said (within himself): "You are in a worse plight." and Allah knows best that which you assert.

﴿ قَالُوا إِن يَسْرِقَ فَقَدْ سَرَقَ أَخٌ
لَّهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَأَسْرَهَا يُوسُفُ فِي
نَفْسِهِ وَلَمْ يُبْدِهَا لَهُمْ قَالَ
أَنْتُمْ شَرُّ مَكَانًا وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ
بِمَا تَصِفُونَ ﴾

***61** As regards to the question why it was not worthy of Prophet Joseph to apply the king's law to his personal case, its best answer is again found in the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him). During the interim period, when the laws of ignorance had not yet been replaced by Islamic laws, other Muslims went on drinking wine and taking interest as before, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) never practiced any of these things. Likewise some un-Islamic laws of marriage, such as taking in marriage of real sisters at one and the same time, were practiced, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) never practiced any such thing. Thus it is clear, that there was a difference between leaving in vogue some un-Islamic laws during the period of the evolution of the Islamic law and practicing the same. Had Prophet Joseph applied the king's law to his own case, it would have meant that he had lent his seeming sanction to that law. But it is obvious that a Prophet, who is sent to eliminate the ways of ignorance cannot follow these even under the temporary leave that is given to others.

Their position and dissociated themselves from Benjamin, declaring that he was a thief like his brother Joseph. It is obvious that this was a false accusation the clever brothers had invented on the spot. But it is an instance of the malice these brothers bore to their two step brothers, and is also the answer to the question why Prophet Joseph desired to keep his brother with him.

78. They said: "O ruler of the land,^{*62} indeed, he has a father, an age-stricken

قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الْعَزِيزُ إِنَّ لَهُ أَبًا
شَيْخًا كَبِيرًا فَخُذْ أَحَدَنَا

man. So take one of us in his place. Indeed, we see you of those who do kindness.”

مَكَانَهُدُ إِنَّا نَرٰكَ مِن
الْمُحْسِنِينَ



*62 The use of the title Al-Aziz, ruler of the land, with which they addressed Prophet Joseph has given rise to the confusion that he held the same office as the husband of Zuleikha held before him. Then this misunderstanding let the commentators to the invention of further comments, such as. Al-Aziz had died and Prophet Joseph was appointed in his place, and Zuleikha was rejuvenated by a miracle and was married to him by the king. They have not stopped at this. They have, somehow or other, discovered even the conversation that took place between Prophet Joseph and Zuleikha in the first night of their marriage. In fact, all this is mere fiction, for, as has already been pointed out, the word Al-Aziz was the Arabic translation or equivalent of some Egyptian title, and was not the designation of any particular office. It was merely a title used for the high ones in Egypt like “His Excellency” or “Your Excellency”, etc. As regards to the said marriage, this fiction has been built on the story of Prophet Joseph’s marriage in the Bible and the Talmud. According to these, he was married with Asenath, the daughter of Poti-pherah. As the name of the husband of Zuleikha was Potiphar, the two names got confused together. Accordingly, when the story was handed down from the traditions of the Israelites from one commentator to the other, the name Potiphar got interchanged with Poti-pherah because the two were so like

each other in sound. Consequently, the daughter in the story was replaced by wife. Then Potiphar was killed in order to facilitate the marriage. Then the only remaining difficulty, that is, the disparity of their ages, was gotten over with the help of a miracle. She was rejuvenated so completely as to enable her to become the worthy wife of the ruler of the land.

79. He said: “(I seek) refuge in Allah, that we should take any except him with whom we found our property,^{*63} then indeed, we should be wrongdoers.”

قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ أَنْ نَأْخُذَ إِلَّا مَنْ
وَجَدْنَا مَتَعَنَا عِنْدَهُ إِنْ أِذَا
لَظَلِمُونَ



*63 The use of the words “with whom we have found our property” instead of the word thief is very significant. Prophet Joseph avoided the use of the word thief for his brother because he was not really a thief. This is called *touriyah*, that is, to put a cover over a reality or to hide a reality. Such a practice is allowed by the Muslim law under certain conditions and with certain limitations. It may be practiced not to gain any selfish end, but to ward off some evil or to protect and save an oppressed person from some oppressor, provided that no other course might have been left except saying something against the truth or of having a resort to a deceitful device. It is obvious that in such a case, a righteous person will not tell a blunt lie or resort to an open deceit. Instead, he will say something or do something that might not be strictly truthful or strictly right, yet at the same time is not a blunt lie, so that he might hide the reality

to ward off the evil. Such a practice is lawful, legally and morally, provided that it is not practiced to gain some personal or selfish ends but to ward off a greater evil with a lesser evil. Accordingly, Prophet Joseph scrupulously fulfilled all the conditions in this case. He placed the cup in the pack of his brother with his consent, but he did not ask his servants to make a search of his pack and accuse him of theft. After this, when the servants brought the brothers before him as suspects, he quietly rose from his seat and began to make a search of their packs. Then afterwards, when the brothers requested that one of them should be taken instead of Benjamin, he answered them back in their own words that he would detain only that person in whose possession the cup was found and none else.

Instances of such a practice during his campaigns are found in the life history of the Prophet (peace be upon him). And this cannot be regarded as morally objectionable according to any moral or legal standard.

80. So when they had despaired of him, they conferred together in private. The eldest of them said: “Do you not know that your father has taken from you an oath by Allah. And before that which you failed in (regard to) Joseph. So I shall never leave (this) land until my father

فَلَمَّا اسْتَيْسُوا مِنْهُ خَلَصُوا
نَجِيًّا قَالَ كَبِيرُهُمْ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا
أَنَّ أَبَاكُمْ قَدْ أَخَذَ عَلَيْكُمْ
مَوْثِقًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ مَا
فَرَطْتُمْ فِي يُوسُفَ فَلَنْ أَبْرَحَ
الْأَرْضَ حَتَّى يَأْذَنَ لِي أَبِي أَوْ

permits me, or Allah judges for me. And He is the best of the Judges.”

يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ لِي وَهُوَ خَيْرُ
الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

81. “Return to your father and say: “O our father, indeed your son has stolen. And we do not testify except to that which we know, and we are not guardians of the unseen.”

أَرْجِعُوا إِلَىٰ أَبِيكُمْ فَقُولُوا
يٰٓأَبَانَا إِنَّ ابْنَكَ سَرَقَ وَمَا
شَهِدْنَا إِلَّا بِمَا عَلَّمْنَا وَمَا
كُنَّا لِلْغَيْبِ حَافِظِينَ ﴿٨١﴾

82. “And ask (the people of) the township, that (town) wherein we were, and that caravan in which we returned. And indeed, we are truthful.”

وَسْأَلِ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيهَا
وَالْعِيرَ الَّتِي أَقْبَلْنَا فِيهَا وَإِنَّا
لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

83. He (Jacob) said: “But your ownelves have enticed you to something.*⁶⁴ So (for me is) patience in grace. May be that Allah will bring them to me all together. Indeed, it is He who is All-Knowing, All-Wise.”

قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ
أَمْرًا فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَنْ
يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِمْ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ
الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٨٣﴾

***64** That is, you readily believed that my son, whom I know to be of a noble character, had committed the theft of a cup. You have behaved in his case just as you behaved in the

case of his elder brother. You made away with him and then pretended, without any pangs of conscience, that a wolf had devoured him and now, with the same ease, you tell me that the other brother has committed a theft.

84. And he turned away from them and said: “Alas, my grief for Joseph.” And his eyes whitened with sadness, so he was choked trying to suppress his grief.

وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسْفَىٰ عَلَىٰ
يُوسُفَ وَأَبْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ
الْحُزَنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿٨٤﴾

85. They said: “By Allah, you will continue remembering Joseph until you become one whose health is ruined or you become of those who perish.”

قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ تَفْتُونَ تَذَكَّرُ
يُوسُفَ حَتَّىٰ تَكُونَ حَرَضًا
أَوْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْهَالِكِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

86. He said: “I only complain of my grief and my sorrow to Allah, and I know from Allah that which you do not know.”

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَشْكُوا بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَىٰ
اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

87. “O my sons, go and enquire about Joseph and his brother, and do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Certainly, no one

يَبْنِيَّ أَذْهَبُوا فَتَحَسَّسُوا مِنْ
يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ وَلَا تَيْعَسُوا مِنْ
رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يَأْتِئُ مِنْ

despairs of the mercy of Allah, except the people who disbelieve.”

رَوْحَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرُونَ



88. Then, when they entered (back) to him (Joseph), they said: “O ruler, distress has struck us and our family, and we have come with meager merchandise. So give us in full measure (of provisions) and be charitable towards us. Indeed, Allah rewards those who are charitable.”*65

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا
الْعَزِيزُ مَسَّنَا وَأَهْلَنَا الضُّرُّ
وَجِئْنَا بِبِضْعَةٍ مُزَجَّجَةٍ فَاؤْفِ
لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّ
اللَّهَ يَجْزِي الْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ



*65 That is, it will be charitable of you if you give us that much grain as we require to fulfill our needs, because the goods we have brought for its barter are of less value than of the grain we require.

89. He said: “Do you know what you did with Joseph and his brother, when you were ignorant.”

قَالَ هَلْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ
بِيُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ
جَاهِلُونَ



90. They said: “Are you indeed Joseph.” He said: “I am Joseph and this is my brother. Allah has surely been gracious to us. Indeed,

قَالُوا أَيْ نَحْنُ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِي
كُنَّا نَعْبُدُ قَالَ أَتَأْتُونَ
مَنَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ
قَالُوا إِنَّ هَذَا أَخِي الَّذِي كُنَّا
نُحَذِّرُكَ مِنَ يُوسُفَ قَالَ إِنَّ
يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ هَذَا صُورَةُ
الَّذِينَ كُنَّا نُتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِمْ
قَالَ إِنِّي لَأَشْعُرُ أَنَّ هَذَا
يُوسُفُ وَأَخِيهِ قَالَ إِنِّي
لَأَشْعُرُ أَنَّ هَذَا يُوسُفُ
وَأَخِيهِ قَالَ إِنِّي لَأَشْعُرُ
أَنَّ هَذَا يُوسُفُ وَأَخِيهِ
قَالَ إِنِّي لَأَشْعُرُ أَنَّ هَذَا
يُوسُفُ وَأَخِيهِ

He who fears (Allah) and remains patient, then surely, Allah does not (allow to go to) waste the reward of those who do good.”

مَنْ أَلَّهَ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَتَّقِ
وَيَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ
أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾

91. They said: “By Allah, certainly Allah has preferred you above us, and we indeed have been sinners.”

قَالُوا تَأَلَّهَ لَقَدْ ءَاثَرَكَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا
وَإِنْ كُنَّا لَخَطِيئِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

92. He said: “No reproach on you this day. May Allah forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.”

قَالَ لَا تَثْرِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَيُّومَ
يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ
الرَّحِيمِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾

93. “Go with this shirt of mine, then lay it on the face of my father, he will become seeing. And come to me with your family, all together.”

أَذْهَبُوا بِقَمِيصِي هَذَا فَأَلْقُوهُ
عَلَى وَجْهِ أَبِي يَأْتِ بَصِيرًا
وَأْتُونِي بِأَهْلِكُمْ
أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

94. And when the caravan departed, their father said: “I do indeed feel the smell^{*66} of Joseph, if you think me not that I am doting.”

وَلَمَّا فَصَلَتِ الْعِيرُ قَالَ أَبُوهُمْ
إِنِّي لِأَجِدُ رِيحَ يُوسُفَ لَوْلَا أَنْ
تُفَنِّدُونِ ﴿٩٤﴾

*66 This is an instance of the extraordinary powers the Prophets possess. Prophet Jacob perceived in Canaan the smell of Prophet Joseph's shirt from such a distant place as Egypt as soon as the caravan started on the journey. At the same time it also shows, by contrast, that these powers of the Prophets are not inherent or personal characteristics but are bestowed on them by Allah as and when He wills. That is why Prophet Jacob could not perceive the smell of the clothes of Prophet Joseph as long as Allah did not will it, when he had been living in Egypt.

In this connection, it should also be noted that in contrast to the Quran which represents Prophet Jacob as a great Prophet who was able to perceive the smell of Prophet Joseph from such a long distance, the Bible represents him as an ordinary uncultured father. According to Genesis 45: 26-27, when they told him, saying: Joseph is yet alive and he is governor over all the land of Egypt, Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not, and only when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived.

95. They said: "By Allah, you indeed are in your old error."*67

قَالُوا تَأَلَّهَ إِنَّكَ لَفِي ضَلَالِكَ
الْقَدِيمِ

*67 This remark shows that no member of his family except Prophet Joseph appreciated the true worth of Prophet Jacob. He himself was aware of the low state of their mental and moral condition. And it is one of the ironies of fate that the majority of the great personalities who made

history got very little appreciation at home.

96. Then, when the bearer of good news came, he laid it on his face and his sight was restored. He said: “Did I not say to you, that I know from Allah that which you do not know.”

فَلَمَّا أَنْ جَاءَ الْبَشِيرُ أَلْقَاهُ عَلَى
وَجْهِهِ فَارْتَدَّ بَصِيرًا ۖ قَالَ أَلَمْ
أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنَّي أَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا
لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

97. They said: “O our father, ask forgiveness for us of our sins, indeed we have been sinners.”

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا اسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا
إِنَّا كُنَّا خَاطِئِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾

98. He said: “Soon I shall ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Indeed, it is He who is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.”

قَالَ سَوْفَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّي
إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٩٨﴾

99. Then, when they entered before Joseph,^{*68} he took his parents to himself, and said: “Enter you in Egypt, if Allah wills, safely.”

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَى يُوسُفَ ءَاوَىٰ
إِلَيْهِ أَبُوَيْهِ وَقَالَ ادْخُلُوا مِصْرَ
إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ ءَامِنِينَ ﴿٩٩﴾

*68 It is worthwhile to take notice of the total number of Prophet Jacob’s family members that migrated to Egypt with him, for it is closely connected with the problem that is raised concerning the total number of the Israelites who emigrated from there some five hundred years after this.

According to the Bible, the total number of the family members was 70, including Prophet Joseph and his two sons, and excluding those daughters-in-law who did not belong to the family of Prophet Jacob. But according to the census figures given in Numbers, their number was about two million when they were counted in the wilderness of Sinai in the second year, after they come out of the land of Egypt. The problem is this: how is it possible that these three score and ten souls of his house had multiplied into two million souls during five hundred years or so?

It is obvious that no family can multiply to such a large number in five hundred years merely by the generative process. Thus the only other way in which their number could have been increased was proselytism. And there are sound reasons to believe that this must have been so. The Israelites were the descendants of Prophets. They had migrated to Egypt because of the power Prophet Joseph enjoyed there. And we have seen that he made full use of every opportunity he got for carrying out the work of the mission of Prophethood. Therefore it may reasonably be expected that the Israelites would have done their very best to convert the Egyptians to their faith of Islam during the five centuries of their power in Egypt. As a result of this the Egyptian converts to Islam would not only have changed their religion but also their culture so as to make them look quite different from the other Egyptians and look like the Israelites. Naturally the non Muslim Egyptians would have declared them to be foreigners just as the Hindus treat the Indian Muslims of today. By and by they themselves would

have accepted this position and become members of the Israelite nationality. Afterwards, when the Egyptian nationalists began to persecute the alien Israelites, the Muslim Egyptians were also made a target of their tyranny. So when the Israelites migrated from Egypt, they, too, left their country along with them and began to be counted among them.

The above mentioned explanation is confirmed by the Bible also. For instance, it says “that when they left Egypt, the children of Israel journeyed from Remases to Suceoth...and a mixed multitude went up also with them...” (Exodus 12: 37-38) and “the mix multitude that was among them fell a lusting”. (Numbers 11: 4). Then by and by these non-Israelite converts to Islam began to be called the stranger. “One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance forever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord. One law and the one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.” (Numbers 15: 15-16). “And I charged your judges at that time, saying: Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him.” (Deut. 1: 16). Now it is not an easy thing to find out the exact term which was applied in the original Scriptures to the Egyptian converts to Islam, and which was afterwards changed into the stranger by the translators.

100. And he raised his
parents on the throne^{*69}

وَرَفَعَ أَبَوَيْهِ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوا

and they fell down before him prostrate,^{*70} and he said: “O my father, this is the interpretation of my dream of before. Indeed, My Lord has made it come true. And He was certainly kind to me, when He took me out of the prison, and has brought you from bedouin life after that Satan had sown enmity between me and my brothers. Certainly, my Lord is Most Courteous to whom He wills. Indeed, it is He who is the All-Knowing, the All Wise.”

لَهُ سُجَّدًا وَقَالَ يَا أَبَتِ هَذَا
تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ
جَعَلَهَا رَبِّي حَقًّا وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ
بِي إِذْ أَخْرَجَنِي مِنَ السِّجْنِ
وَجَاءَ بِكُمْ مِنَ الْبَدْوِ مِنْ بَعْدِ
أَنْ نَزَعَ الشَّيْطَانُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ
إِخْوَتِي إِنَّ رَبِّي لَطِيفٌ لِمَا
يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ



***69** According to the Talmud, “when Joseph learned that his father was upon the way, he gathered together his friends and officers, and soldiers of the realm, attired in rich garments,...and formed a great company to meet Prophet Jacob on the way and escort him to Egypt. Music and gladness filled the land, and all the people, the women and the children, assembled on the house tops to view the magnificent display.” (H. Polano, p. 111).

***70** The interpretation of this verse has given rise to some serious misunderstandings, which are against the very fundamentals of the divine guidance. So much so that some people have gone to the extreme of making it lawful to prostrate before kings and saints as a mark of respect.

Others more strict on this point have explained it away, saying, “In the former divine laws, it was unlawful only to prostrate in worship before others than Allah, though it was permissible to prostrate before others if it was done without the intention of worship, but now in the divine law given to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) it has been made absolutely unlawful.

Such misunderstandings as these have resulted from taking the words in this verse to mean “to perform *sajadah*” in the technical sense in which it is now used in the Islamic code, that is, “lying flat in such a way that the hands, the knees and the forehead touch the ground,” whereas the word *sujadan* has been used here in its literal meaning of *sajud* “to bow down”. The parents and brothers of Prophet Joseph bowed down before him in accordance with the ancient custom among the people of the age, (and the custom is still in vogue among some people), who used to bow down before others to show their gratitude, or welcome them, or merely to salute them by placing their hand on the breast. There are many instances of this in the Bible. “...and when he (Abraham) saw them (the three men) coming towards him, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself towards the ground.” (Please refer to Arabic translation: Gen. 18: 32). Further on it says that when the children of Heth gave a field and a cave as a burying place for Sarah, Prophet Abraham was so grateful to them that “he stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth,” (Gen. 23: 7) and “Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the

land.” (Gen. 23: 12). In both cases the words `bowed down' have been translated into (Sajada).

These and other like instances in the Bible are a conclusive proof of the fact that in this verse (100), the Quran has not used the word in its technical Islamic sense but in its literal sense.

Besides, those commentators are absolutely wrong who suppose that in the former laws, sajadah in the present Islamic sense was allowed as a mark of respect laws. For instance, during the Babylonian captivity of the Children of Israel, king Ahasuerus promoted Haman above all the princes and commanded all his servants to bow and reverence him, but Mordecai, who was a holy and righteous man among the Jews, bowed not, nor did him reverence. (Esther3: 1-2). The Talmud has elaborated this point in a way that is worth reading:

The servants of the king said to Mordecai: “Why wilt thou refuse to bow before Haman, transgressing thus the wishes of the king? Do we not bow before him?” “Yea are foolish,” answered Mordecai, “aye, wanting in reason. Listen to me. Shall a mortal, who must return to dust be glorified? Shall I bow down before one born of woman, whose days are short? When he is small he cries and weeps as a child; when he grows older sorrow and sighing are his portion; his days are full of wrath and anger, and at the end he returns to dust. Shall I bow to one like to him? No, I prostrate myself before the Eternal God, who lives forever. To Him the great Creator and Ruler of the Universe, and to no other will I bow.” (The Talmud Selections by H. Polano, p. 172).

This speech which was made by a believer from among the Israelites a thousand years before the revelation of the Quran, is conclusive on the point. Thus there is absolutely no room for the performance of *sajadah* before any other than Allah.

101. “My Lord, You have indeed bestowed on me of the sovereignty, and taught me of the interpretation of dreams. Creator of the heavens and the earth. You are my protecting Guardian in this world and the Hereafter. Cause me to die as Muslim, and join me to the righteous.”*71

رَبِّ قَدْ ءَاتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْمَلِكِ
وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ
فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنْتَ
وَلِيِّ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ تَوَفَّنِي
مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ



*71 The few sentences that were uttered by Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) at the happiest occasion of his life help depict the most graceful pattern of the virtues of a true believer. There is the man from the desert, whom his own brothers had, out of jealousy, attempted to kill, now sitting on the throne after passing through many vicissitudes of life. All the members of his family have been forced by famine to come before him for help. The same jealous brothers, who had made an attempt on his life, are now standing before him with downcast heads. Had there been a “successful man of the world” in his place, he would have used this opportunity for boasting of his greatness and bragging of his successes, and giving vent to his grievances

and hurling malicious taunts at his defeated enemies. In utter contrast to this, the true man of God behaves in a quite different way. Instead of boasting and bragging of his own greatness, he is grateful to his God Who had shown grace to him by raising him to such a high position of power, and for arranging his meeting with his people after such a long period of separation. Instead of giving vent to his grievances against his brothers, making taunts at them for their ill treatment, he does not make even a mention of such things but puts up a defense for them, saying that it was all due to Satan, who had stirred up strife between them: nay, he even puts it forward as a blessing in disguise, being one of the mysterious ways of Allah by which He had fulfilled His design of raising him to the throne. After saying these things in a few concise sentences, he at once turns to his Lord in gratitude for bestowing on him kingdom and wisdom, instead of letting him rot in the prison, and prays to Him to keep him as His faithful and obedient servant as long as he was alive, and to join him with the righteous people after his death. What a pure and high pattern of character.

It is strange that this speech of Prophet Joseph has neither found a place in the Bible nor in the Talmud, though these books are full of irrelevant and unimportant details of this story and others. It is an irony that these Books are void of those things that teach moral values and throw light on the real characters and the mission of the Prophets.

Now that this story has come to an end, the readers are again reminded that this story of Prophet Joseph as given

in the Quran is not a copy of the story given in the Bible and the Talmud for there are striking differences between them. A comparative study of these Books will show that the story in the Quran differs from that given in the other two Books in several very important parts. The Quran contains additional facts in some cases and omits certain facts in other cases or even refutes some parts as contained in the Bible and the Talmud. Therefore there is absolutely no room for anyone to allege that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) related this story merely in the form he heard it from the Israelites.

102. That is from the news of the unseen that We reveal to you (Muhammad). And you were not with them when they agreed on their affair while they were plotting.

ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ
إِلَيْكَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ
أَجْمَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَمْكُرُونَ



103. And most of mankind will not become believers, even if you desire it eagerly.*72

وَمَا أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ
بِمُؤْمِنِينَ



*72 In order to grasp the full significance of the underlying admonition implied in it, we must keep in view the background of the revelation of this story given in the introduction to this Surah. The Quraish themselves had invited the Prophet (peace be upon him) to a meeting that had been arranged for putting him to a test which was to

show whether he was a true Prophet or not. When he arrived there, they put this question to him without any previous notice or intimation: why did the Israelites go to Egypt? In answer to this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited this Surah then and there. As they themselves knew that this was an abrupt question and there had been no preparation for its answer beforehand, it was expected that they would believe in his Prophethood. But they were so obdurate that they did not believe in him even then. As Allah was aware of their intentions, he informed His Messenger beforehand, as if to say: Though you have come out successful in the test, to which they themselves put to you, yet most of them are not going to believe it because they are not sincere in their quest for the truth. That is why they will not believe even now when the revelation of this Surah has proved conclusively that the Quran is not being forged by you but is being sent down by Allah Himself. As their real aim and intention is to reject your message anyhow, they will now invent another excuse for their denial.

This is not meant to remove any misunderstanding the Prophet (peace be upon him) might have cherished, but is merely an indirect warning to the questioners that Allah knew their intentions well. This was meant to warn them like this: O obdurate people, this Surah has been placed before you to serve as a mirror for you. You demanded a proof from Our Messenger that he was not forging the Quran: had you been reasonable and sincere people, you would have accepted the truth that has been established

according to your own test, but you are obdurate people and are still denying it.

104. And you do not ask them for it any payment. This is not but a reminder for the worlds.*73

وَمَا تَسْأَلُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ

*73 This is another admonition more subtle than the one given above. Though this, too, has been addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), it is meant for the unbelievers, as if to say: O people, consider your attitude towards the message from another point of view. Had you noticed anything in the mission and the message of Our Prophet that might have smelt of any self interest whatsoever, you would have been justified in rejecting it as the work of a selfish person. But you yourselves have experienced it that he has absolutely no self interest in his work and demands no recompense for the message, which is nothing but instruction for all the people of the world. Therefore you should listen to it and consider it without prejudice and make your decisions about it on merit and merit alone.

105. And*74 how many of the signs are in the heavens and the earth they pass over. Yet they turn (their faces) away from them.*75

وَكَأَيِّن مِّنْ آيَةٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُونَ

*74 Now that the story of Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) has come to an end, the Quran has made use of the

opportunity for conveying its basic message, for it does not tell stories merely for the sake of storytelling. As they themselves had invited the Prophet and were attentively listening to the story, the essence of the message was presented in a few concise sentences (Ayats 105-111).

***75** This is to arouse people from their apathy towards the signs of Allah that lie scattered all over the earth and the heavens and to urge them to make a search for the reality by making right observations. As each and everything is not merely a thing but also a sign which points to the reality, a seeker after it should look at these with a look different from that of animals. This is because even an animal sees a tree, a mountain and water and takes it as a mere tree, a mountain or water, and with the help of his senses makes use of these according to his needs. But Allah has endowed man with a mind that is able to consider things in other than their physical and material aspects so that he may think deeply and make a search for the reality by means of these signs of Allah. The reason why people fail to discover the reality and go astray is that they do not consider things as signs and pay no heed to this aspect. Had they not deliberately shut their minds against the message of the Prophets, it would not have been difficult for them at all to understand it and get guidance from it.

106. And most of them do not believe in Allah except that they attribute partners (unto Him).^{*76}

وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا
وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ



***76** They associate other deities with Allah because they do

not pay heed to His signs, which serve as pointers to the right way. So they go astray from it and get lost in thorny bushes. Nevertheless, many of them do not lose sight of the reality entirely, and do not disbelieve in Allah as their Creator and Sustainer, but they get involved in shirk. That is, they do not deny the existence of God, but they believe that there are other deities who are also partners in His being, His attributes, His powers, and His rights. They should never have been involved in shirk, had they considered these signs in the heavens and the earth from this point of view, for in that case they would have discovered everywhere, in each and every one of them, the proofs of the Oneness of Allah.

107. Then do they feel secure, that there will (not) come to them an overwhelming of the punishment of Allah, or that the Hour will (not) come upon them suddenly, while they do not perceive.^{*77}

أَفَأَمِنُوا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ غَشِيَةٌ مِّنْ
عَذَابِ اللَّهِ أَوْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ
بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ



***77** This question has been posed to rouse the people from their care free attitude towards life produced by temporary security from dangers, and by a feeling that there is a long life to enjoy: so the problems can be postponed safely to a distant future. This is obviously a wrong attitude, for no man has any guarantee that he will live up to a certain age: for no one knows when, where and how one would die. Therefore the questions meant to ask, “Does not your daily experience tell you that you knew nothing even a minute

beforehand what your future was hiding for you? Therefore, wisdom demands that you should make preparations for it now, and consider seriously whether the path you are treading is the right path. Have you any real proof to show that it is right? Do you find any sound argument in the heavens and the earth to support your decision? Did the people who trod such a path before you reach their destinations safely and securely? Finally, do the results of following such a path, which are appearing in your own time and culture, confirm that you are treading the right path?

108. Say: (O Muhammad):
 “This is my Way. I do invite
 unto Allah with sure insight,
 I and whosoever follows me.
 And Glorified be Allah.*78
 And I am not of those who
 associate (with Allah).”

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ
 عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي
 وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ
 الْمُشْرِكِينَ



*78 That is, Allah is absolutely free from such things that are ascribed to Him: He is free from the weaknesses and shortcomings which every believer in shirk ascribes to Him; He is free from all defects, evils and errors that must necessarily be ascribed to Him as a logical result of the conception of God hold by mushriks.

109. And We have not
 sent before you (as
 messengers) except men to
 whom We revealed from

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا
 رِجَالًا نُوحِيَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ

among the people of townships. Have they not then traveled in the land and observed how was the end of those who were before them. And surely, the abode of the Hereafter is the best for those who fear (Allah). Do you not then understand.*79

الْقُرَىٰ ۗ أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي
الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ
عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ ۗ وَلَدَارُ
الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا ۗ
أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

*79 A very comprehensive subject has been condensed here into a couple of sentences, which may be expanded like this: “O Muhammad! these people do not listen to you because it is not an easy thing for them to believe you to be a Messenger of Allah just because you are a mere human being who was born in their own city among them and brought up like other people. But there is nothing strange in this. For this is not the first instance of its kind. All the Prophets, whom We sent before you, were also human beings and lived in the same habitations to which they were sent. It never happened that a stranger came to a town and declared, “I have been sent as a Messenger to you. On the other hand, all the Prophets, Jesus, Moses, Abraham and Noah (peace be upon them all), who were raised for the reform of the people, were human beings who were born and brought up in their own habitations. Then it addresses the disbelievers directly, as if to say: Now it is for you to judge and decide whether you should accept the Messenger or reject him on such flimsy grounds as these. You have traveled abroad and seen the end of those people who

rejected the message of their Prophets and followed their own desires. You have seen, on your journeys, the ruined habitations of the people of Aad, Thamud, Midian, Lot, and others. Have you not observed these as object lessons, for these warn you that they would meet with far worse consequences in the Hereafter, and that conversely, those who are pious and God fearing will have a very happy life?

110. Until, when the messengers despaired, and thought that they had been denied, (then) came to them Our help. So We saved, whomever We willed. And Our wrath can not be averted from the people who are criminals.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا اسْتَيْسَسَ الرُّسُلُ
وَوَظَنُوا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ كُذِّبُوا
جَاءَهُمْ نَصْرُنَا فَنُجِّىَ مَنْ نَشَاءُ
وَلَا يُرَدُّ بَأْسُنَا عَنِ الْقَوْمِ
الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١١٠﴾

111. Indeed, in their stories, there is a lesson for men of understanding. It (the Quran) is not a forged statement but a confirmation of what was before it, and a detailed explanation^{*80} of every thing, and a guidance, and a mercy for the people who believe.

لَقَدْ كَانَتْ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ
لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ۗ مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا
يُفْتَرَىٰ وَلَكِن تَصْدِيقَ
الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً
لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١١﴾

***80** That is, it gives details of everything that is required for the guidance of man. Some people take details of everything to mean the details of everything in the world. So, when they do not find in it the details of mathematics, physics, medicine etc. etc. they become skeptical. Whereas the Quran claims to give the details of only one subject, “Guidance”, for which it has been sent down, and it does give the details of everything that is essential for it.





الرَّعْدُ Ar-Raad

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah takes its name from the word *ar-Raad* (thunder) that occurs in Ayat 13. It is merely the symbolic name of the Surah and does not in any way mean that the Surah deals with the scientific problems connected with thunder.

Period of Revelation

The internal evidence (Ayats 27-31 and Ayats 34-48) shows that this Surah was revealed in the last stage of the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him) at Makkah and during the same period in which Surahs Yunus, Hud and Al-Aaraf were revealed. The manner of speech indicates that a sufficiently long time had passed since the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been conveying the message. On the one hand, his opponents had been contriving different devices to defeat him and his mission, and, on the other, his followers had been expressing a desire that by showing a miracle the disbelievers might be brought to the right way. In answer, Allah impressed on the believers that it is not His way to convert people by this method and that they should not lose heart, if He is giving the enemies of the

truth a rope long enough to hang themselves. Otherwise, He is able to show such signs as may bring the dead out of their graves and make them speak (Ayat 31), but even then these obdurate people will invent an excuse to explain this away. All this decisive evidence clearly proves that this Surah was revealed during the last stage of the Prophet's mission at Makkah.

Central Theme

The first verse enunciates the main theme of this Surah, that is, "The Message of Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the very truth, but it is the fault of the people that they are rejecting it." This is the pivot on which the whole Surah turns. This is why it has been shown over and over again in different ways that the basic components of the Message, Tauhid, Resurrection and Prophethood are a reality: therefore they should believe sincerely in these for their own moral and spiritual good. They have been warned that they shall incur their own ruin if they reject them, for kufr by itself is sheer folly and ignorance. Moreover, the aim of the Surah is not merely to satisfy the minds but also to appeal to the hearts to accept the faith. Therefore it does not merely put forward logical arguments in support of the truth of the message and against the people's wrong notions, but at appropriate intervals it makes frequent use of sympathetic and earnest appeals to win over their hearts by warning them of the consequences of kufr and by holding out the happy rewards of faith so that the foolish people should give up their obduracy.

Besides this, the objections of the opponents have been

answered without any mention of them, and those doubts which are proving a hindrance in the way of the message or were being created by the opponents have been removed. At the same time, the believers; who had been passing through long and hard ordeal and were feeling tired and waiting anxiously for Allah's succor, have been comforted and filled with hope and courage.

1. Alif. Lam. Mim. Ra.
These are the verses of the Book. And that which has been revealed to you from your Lord is the truth, but most of the people do not believe.*1

الْمَرْجُ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ
وَالَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
الْحَقُّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ

*1 This is the introduction to this Surah, in which its aim and object has been enunciated in a few words. Allah has addressed the Prophet (peace be upon him) to this effect: O Prophet, most of your people are rejecting the teachings of the Quran for one reason or the other, but the fact is that what We are sending down to you is the truth whether people believe it or not.

After this brief introduction, the discourse deals with the main subject of the Surah which consists of three basic things. First, the entire universe belongs to Allah alone, and none besides Him has any right to service and worship. Second, there is another life after this life in which you shall have to render an account of all your actions. Third, I am a Messenger of Allah: whatever I am presenting before you is

not from myself but from Allah. As the people were rejecting these three things, these have been reiterated over and over again in various forms to remove doubts and objections from the minds of the disbelievers.

2. Allah is He who raised the heavens without (any) pillars that you can see,*² then He established upon the Throne.*³ And He has subjected the sun and the moon.*⁴ Each running for a term appointed.*⁵ He arranges matter. He details the revelations,*⁶ that you may believe with certainty in the meeting with your Lord.*⁷

اللَّهُ الَّذِي رَفَعَ السَّمَوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ
عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى
الْعَرْشِ ط وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ
وَالْقَمَرَ ط كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ
مُّسَيَّجٍ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ
الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّكُمْ
تُوقِنُونَ ﴿٢﴾

*2 In other words, “Allah is He who raised the heavens without (any) pillars that you can see.” Though there is nothing apparent and visible that is supporting these heavens, yet there is an invariable and imperceptible Power which is not only holding but keeping in its place each and every one of these huge heavens and whatever is in between them.

*3 For further details of “Then He established upon the Throne,” please refer to E.N. 41 of Surah Al-Aaraf. Here the purpose will be served if it is understood that this thing has been mentioned in the Quran at many places in order to bring out clearly the fact that Allah has not only created

the earth, but also rules over His Kingdom, and that His universe is a factory that is not working automatically as some ignorant people seem to think nor is it being ruled by many gods as other ignorant people seem to believe. But it is a regular system that is being run and ruled over by its Creator.

*4 It should be noted here that the addressees themselves accepted the truth of all the claims that have been made in this verse. Therefore no proofs were required of the facts that it is Allah Who has raised up the heavens without any visible support and subjected the sun and the moon to a fixed order. These things have been mentioned here only as arguments to prove that Allah is the sole Sovereign and ruler of the entire universe.

Now let us consider this question: How can such an argument as this convince those who do not believe at all in the existence of God nor acknowledge that He is the Creator of the universe and the Director of all of its affairs? The answer is that the arguments in support of the doctrine of Tauhid advanced in the Quran to convince the mushriks equally apply against the atheists to prove the existence of God. It is like this: The entire universe, the earth, the moon, the sun and the countless heavenly bodies constitute a perfect system which is working under the same all-powerful law. This is a proof that such a system must have been designed by some All-Powerful Sovereign, Who possesses wisdom and unerring knowledge. This proves conclusively the existence of that Allah Who has no other equal nor associate nor partner. For there can be no system

without an administrator, no law without a ruler, no wisdom without a sage, and no knowledge without the possessor of that knowledge. Above all, no one can ever conceive that there can be any creation without a Creator except the one who is obdurate or has no sense left in him at all.

***5** This system is not only a standing proof of the fact that an All-Powerful Sovereign is ruling over it, but is also an evidence of the great wisdom underlying it. It also bears witness that there is nothing everlasting in it. Everything in it remains for a fixed term after which it comes to an end. This is equally true for each and every component part of it as well as for the whole system. It is quite evident from its physical structure that there is nothing everlasting and immortal. There must be some fixed term for the system as a whole, after the expiry of which it shall come to an end. Then there shall be another world. Therefore it is most likely that there shall be Resurrection as predicted in the Quran: nay, its inevitability is beyond any doubt.

***6** Allah makes plain those signs which help prove the truth of what the Prophet (peace be upon him) was informing them. These signs are spread all over the universe and everyone who observes these with open eyes can perceive that the realities towards which the Quran invites the people are testified by these signs.

***7** The preceding signs have been cited to prove two things. First, the universe has only one Creator and Administrator. Second, there shall be life in the Hereafter in which everyone shall be judged in the divine court and awarded

rewards and punishments on merit. As the first thing was quite obvious, it has not been mentioned in the conclusion drawn from the signs. But the second thing, life in the Hereafter, has been mentioned because that was rather hidden from perception. Therefore it has specifically been stated that these signs have been made plain in order to convince you that you shall meet your Lord in the Hereafter and render an account of all your actions in this world.

Now let us consider how these signs help prove life in the Hereafter. These make it evident in two ways.

(1) When we consider how big heavenly bodies as the sun and the moon are completely subject to the will of Allah, our hearts feel convinced that Allah Who has created these things and regulated their movements so orderly around their orbits, has undoubtedly the power to bring to life the whole human race after its death.

(2) The terrestrial system also proves that its Creator is All-Wise. Therefore it can never be imagined that the All-Wise Creator could have created man and endowed him with wisdom and intelligence and invested him with power and authority, and then left him free to do what he liked with these, without being responsible and accountable for their use or abuse. For His Wisdom demands that He should take full account of all the acts and deeds of man in this world. It requires that He should take to task those who committed aggressions and compensate their victims and He should give rewards to those who practiced virtue and punishments to those who did wicked deeds. In short, His

Wisdom requires that He should call to account every human being and demand: How did you carry out the trust that was placed in your hands in the shape of your wonderful body with its wonderful faculties and the numerous resources of the earth? It may be that a foolish and unjust ruler of this world might entrust the affairs of his kingdom in the hands of his agents and then forget to call them to account, but such a thing can never be expected from the All-Wise and All-Knowing Allah. It is this way of observing and considering the heavenly bodies that can convince us that life in the Hereafter is both possible and inevitable.

3. And He it is who spread the earth, and placed therein firm mountains and flowing streams. And of every kind of fruits, He has made in them two pairs. He covers the night with the day.*⁸ Indeed, in these are sure signs for a people who reflect.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْهَارًا وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ يُغْشَى اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ



*⁸ After citing some heavenly signs in support of the doctrines of Tauhid and the Hereafter, a few signs are being cited from the earth for the same purpose. Briefly the following are the arguments for Tauhid, Resurrection and Accountability.

(1) **Tauhid:** The fact that the earth is closely connected with the heavenly bodies (which help create life on it), and the fact that the mountains and the rivers are so interrelated with that life are clear proofs that all these things have not been created by separate and different gods nor are being governed, by gods with independent powers and authorities. Had it been so, there could not have been so much harmony, congruity, accord and unity of purpose among them; nor could these relationships have continued for such a long time. For it is quite obvious that if there had not been One All-Powerful and All-Wise Allah, it could not have been possible and practicable for different gods to sit together and evolve out such a harmonious system of the universe without any discord or conflict between its myriads of bodies.

(2) **Resurrection:** This wonderful planet, the earth, is itself a great proof that its Creator is All-Powerful and can, therefore, raise the dead whenever He will. For it is floating in space round the sun and it has high mountains fixed in it and has large rivers flowing on its surface: it produces countless fruit-bearing trees and it brings about the cycles of the day and the night with precise regularity.

All these things bear witness to the boundless power of its Creator. It would, therefore, be sheer folly to doubt that such All-Powerful Creator is incapable of raising mankind to life after death.

(3) **Accountability:** The earth, with all its wonderful and purposeful signs, is a clear evidence of the fact that its Creator is All-Wise. Therefore it cannot even be imagined

that He has created man, His noblest creation, without any purpose. Just as His wisdom is apparent from the structure of the earth, its mountains, its rivers, the pairs of its trees and fruits, its night and day, so it is quite obvious that it has not been made the habitation of man without any purpose, nor will it be brought to naught without the fulfillment of that purpose. Clearly mankind shall be accountable to its Creator for the fulfillment of that divine purpose.

4. And in the earth are neighboring tracts,^{*9} and gardens of grapevines, and crop, and date palms, some growing in clusters from one root, and others alone on one root,^{*10} which are watered with one water. And We have made to excel some of them over others in (quality of) fruits. Indeed, in these are sure signs for a people who understand.^{*11}

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قِطْعٌ مُتَجَاوِرَاتٌ
وَجَنَّاتٌ مِّنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَزُرْعٌ
وَنَخِيلٌ صِنَوَانٌ وَغَيْرُ صِنَوَانٍ
يُسْقَىٰ بِمَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ وَنُفِضٌ
بَعْضُهَا عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فِي
الْأَكْلِ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ



*9 That is, If you observe carefully, you will find divine wisdom, design and purpose in the diversity of the structure of the earth. Though it has countless regions adjoining one another, they are different from one another in their shapes, colors, component parts, characteristics, potentialities, productive capacity and source of minerals. This diversity has countless points of wisdom and

advantage. Let alone other creatures, if we consider the diversity of regions from the point of the good it has done to mankind, we shall have to acknowledge that this is the result of the well thought and well planned design of the All-Wise Creator. For this diversity has helped the growth of human civilization so much that only an unreasonable person can assign this to mere accident.

***10** Some of the date palm trees have only a single trunk from the root while others have two or more stems from the same root.

***11** The things mentioned in this verse contain many other signs besides the proofs of Tauhid and the boundless powers and All-Comprehensive Wisdom of Allah. Let us consider one of these, that is, the diversity in the universe, including mankind. There is the one and the same earth but all its regions are quite different from one another. Then there is one and the same water but it helps to produce different kinds of corn and fruits. Then one and the same tree bears fruits which, in spite of likeness, differ from one another in shapes, sizes, and other features. Then there is one and the same root from which sometimes one and at others two trunks sprout up, with their own different characteristics. If one considers these aspects of diversity, one shall come to the conclusion that the divine wisdom demands the same kind of diversity in the natures, temperaments and inclinations of human beings, and, therefore, in their conducts. So, one need not worry about the existence of this diversity. As it has been stated in Ayat 31, if Allah had willed, He could have created all human

beings alike and virtuous by birth. But the wisdom that underlies the creation of the universe, including mankind, requires diversity and not uniformity. Otherwise, all this creation would have become meaningless.

5. And if you (O Muhammad) wonder, then wondrous is their saying: “When we are dust, shall we indeed be (raised) in a new creation.” They are those who disbelieved in their Lord,^{*12} and they shall have shackles upon their necks.^{*13} And they are the dwellers of the Fire, wherein they will abide forever.

وَإِنْ تَعْجَبَ فَعَجَبٌ قَوْلُهُمْ
 إِذَا كُنَّا تُرَابًا أَيْنَا لِفِي خَلْقِ
 جَدِيدٍ^ط أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 بِرَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ الْأَغْلَلُ فِي
 أَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ
 النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

***12** They “disbelieved in their Lord”: their denial of the Hereafter is, in fact, the denial of the Power and Wisdom of Allah. As they say that it is impossible to bring them again to life after their death, it implies that, God forbid, their Allah Who has created them lacks not only power but wisdom, too.

***13** As a shackle around the neck is a symbol of imprisonment, the words “shackles upon their necks” have been used here idiomatically to show that they are slaves of ignorance, obduracy, lust and are blind followers of their forefathers. As their thinking is influenced by their prejudices, they cannot believe in the Hereafter and would deny this, though there is every reason to believe that it is

inevitable.

6. And they ask you to hasten the evil before the good,^{*14} while indeed exemplary (punishments) have occurred before them. And indeed, your Lord is full of forgiveness for mankind despite their wrongdoing. And indeed, your Lord is (also) severe in retribution.

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ
الْحَسَنَةِ وَقَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
الْمَثَلُ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ
لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى ظُلْمِهِمْ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ
لَشَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٦﴾

***14** This refers to the demand of the Quraish from the Prophet (peace be upon him): If you are a true Prophet (peace be upon him) of God, why don't you hasten to bring that scourge of God upon us of which you have been threatening us, when we are flouting and denying you? They did this in different ways. Sometimes they would invoke God mockingly and say: O Lord, settle our accounts now and do not postpone these to the Day of Resurrection. At another time, they would say: Our Lord, if what Muhammad (peace be upon him) says be true, and be from Thee, then stone us from the sky or send down some other scourge upon us from the sky or send down some other painful torment upon us. In this verse an answer has been given to such impudent demands of the disbelievers. They have been admonished to refrain from such foolish demands and avail of the respite that was being given to them and mend their ways, for they were incurring the wrath of God by adopting the attitude of rebellion.

7. And those who disbelieve say: “Why is not sent down upon him a sign from his Lord.”*¹⁵ You are only a warner, and for every people there is a guide.*¹⁶

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ
عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ ^ط إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ
مُنذِرٌ ^ص وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ

*¹⁵ This showed their mentality. The only criterion of judging whether Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a true Prophet or not according to these disbelievers, was whether he would perform a miracle to them. This was because they would not judge his message by rational arguments: they would not learn a lesson from his high character nor from the moral revolution that was being brought about among his companions by his message and noble example: nor would they carefully consider the rational arguments given in the Quran to prove the errors of their religion of shirk and superstitions of ignorance. They would ignore these rational things and demand a miracle to decide the issue.

*¹⁶ This is the concise answer to their demand, though it has not been directly addressed to the disbelievers but to the Messenger (peace be upon him). It is this: O Prophet, you should not worry at all about some miracle which you might show to these people in order to convince them, for it is not a part of your mission. Your duty is only to warn the people of their negligence and of the evil consequences of their wrong ways. And for this purpose, We have always sent a guide to every people. Now you, too, are performing this duty, and it is for them to open their eyes and judge the

truth of your Message. After giving this concise answer, Allah overlooks their demand but warns them, in the succeeding verses, that they have to deal with the All-Knowing Allah Who has full knowledge about everyone of them from the time they were in the wombs of their mothers, and Who keeps a keen watch over everything they do. Therefore their fates shall be decided strictly with justice in accordance with their merits and that there is no power on the earth and in the heavens that can influence in the least His decisions and judgments.

8. Allah knows what every female carries and by how much the wombs fall short (of their time) and what they may exceed.^{*17} And every thing with Him is in (due) proportion.

اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ أُنْثَىٰ
وَمَا تَغِيضُ الْأَرْحَامُ وَمَا تَزْدَادُ
وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ بِمِقْدَارٍ



*17 When amplified the verse will mean: Allah remains fully aware of all the developments that take place in the child while in its mother's womb, and He watches over the decrease or increase in each of its limbs, and its potentialities, capabilities and powers.

9. All Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Most Great, the High Exalted.

عَلِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْكَبِيرُ
الْمُتَعَالَى



10. It is the same (to Him) whether any one of you

سَوَاءٌ مِنْكُمْ مَنْ أَسْرَأَ الْقَوْلَ

conceal his speech, or any one openly declare it, and whether one who is hidden by night or goes forth freely by day.

وَمَنْ جَهَرَ بِهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ
مُسْتَخْفٍ بِاللَّيْلِ وَسَارِبٌ بِالنَّهَارِ



11. For him (each person), there are (angels) in succession, before him and behind him, they guard him by the command of Allah.*18
Indeed, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change that which is in themselves. And when Allah intends to a people something ill, no one can avert it, nor do they have besides Him any defender.*19

لَهُرَّ مُعَقِّبَتٌ مِّنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ
خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ
يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ
اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ
وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَالٍ



***18** That is, Allah not only directly watches over whatever each person does, and is fully aware of everything he does, but He has also appointed such guardians as accompany him everywhere and keep a full record of all his deeds. This has been stated here to warn those people who live their lives under the delusion that they have been left absolutely free to do whatever they like and shall not be required to render an account of what they did in this worldly life. The warning is that such people invite their own retribution.

***19** This is to warn them further that they should not

remain under any delusion that some holy person or saint or angel has the power to rescue them from divine retribution, for there is none who could defend them against Allah, even though they might have been paying homage and making offerings to their so called patrons and protectors in the hope that they would rescue them from punishment from Allah on the Day of Judgment.

12. He it is who shows you the lightning as a fear and a hope, and He raises the heavy clouds.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ الْبَرْقَ
خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَيُنشِئُ
السَّحَابَ الثِّقَالَ

13. And the thunder glorifies His praise^{*20} and (so do) the angels from fear of Him.^{*21} And He sends the thunderbolts then therewith He strikes whom He wills, while they dispute about Allah, and He is severe in assault.^{*22}

وَيُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ خِيفَتِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ
الصَّوَاعِقَ فَيُصِيبُ بِهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَهُمْ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ
شَدِيدُ الْحَالِ

***20** The thunder is a proclamation of *Tauhid* for those who have ears to hear the real meaning of its loud noise which follows the flash of lightning, though it is merely a kind of noise for those who hear it like animals. For it proclaims that Allah Who raises clouds from the oceans and carries them wherever He wills, and makes the lightning flash from

the clouds and then turns them into rain so as to supply water to the dwellers of the earth, is perfect and worthy of all praise, is All-Wise and All-Powerful and is flawless in every respect and has no partner whatsoever.

***21** The mention of the fact that the angels are filled with awe of their Lord, and they proclaim His praise has a special significance here. This is to refute the shirk of the ignorant people who have always worshiped the angels as gods and deities and believed them to be partners with God in His Godhead. It has been stated that they are not partners with Allah but His most obedient servants; so much so that they praise Him and are filled with awe of Him.

***22** He has countless plans and measures which are so effective and sudden that He can smite anyone with any one of them from any side He wills. So much so that the intended victim is absolutely unaware of it. This is a proof that those people, who say absurd things about such All-Powerful Being, are absolutely void of sense.

14. For Him is the supplication of truth.^{*23} And those they call upon besides Him do not respond to them a thing, except as one who stretches forth his hand toward water that it may come unto his mouth, and it will never reach it. And the prayers of the disbelievers is

لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ
مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ لَهُمْ
بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا كَبَسِطَ كَفِّهِ إِلَى
الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُغَ فَاهُ وَمَا هُوَ بِبَلِغِهِ
وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي

nothing but in error.

ضَلَّلِي ١٤

***23** “For Him is the supplication of truth,” for Allah alone has the power and the authority to give help and remove difficulties.

15. And to Allah falls in prostration whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly and by compulsion,^{*24} and (so do) their shadows in the morning and the evening.^{*25} **AsSajda**

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَكَرْهًا وَظِلَّلُهُمْ
بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ ١٥

***24** “And to Allah falls in prostration whoever is in the heavens and the earth” in the same sense that every creation of His has to obey and submit to His Physical law in every detail. The only difference between the submission of a believer and an unbeliever is that the former submits to it with a willing heart while the latter is forced to do so against his will, for it is absolutely beyond his power to oppose it.

***25** “Their shadows” in the sense that they fall to the west in the morning and to the east in the evening and so on. This shows that they, too, have to submit to some law.

16. Say (O Muhammad): “Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth.” Say: “(It is) Allah.”^{*26} Say: “Have you then taken other than Him as protectors. They

قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ قُلِ اللَّهُ قُلْ أَفَاتَّخَذْتُمْ
مِّنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ

have no power to benefit, nor to harm for themselves.” Say: “Can the blind man and the one who sees be deemed equals,^{*27} or are the darkness and light equivalent.”^{*28} Or do they assign to Allah partners who created the like of His creation so that the creation (of each) seemed alike to them.^{*29} Say: “Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Prevailing.”^{*30}

لَأَنْفُسِهِمْ نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا ۗ قُلْ
 هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ
 أَمْ هَلْ تَسْتَوِي الظُّلُمَاتُ وَالنُّورُ
 ۗ أَمْ جَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ خَلَقُوا
 كَخَلْقِهِ فَتَشَبَهَ الْخَلْقُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ
 قُلِ اللَّهُ خَلِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ
 الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ



***26** It will be worthwhile to note that though the question, “Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?” was put to the disbelievers, Allah told the Prophet (peace be upon him) to answer it himself and say, “Allah”. This was because the disbelievers hesitated to answer it one way or the other. They could not say that it was not Allah for they themselves believed that Allah was the Creator of everything. On the other hand, they could not acknowledge this fact in so many words in answer to such question. For, they would then have to acknowledge the doctrine of Tauhid. Then no basis could have been left in favor of shirk. As they realized their weak position, they would not give any answer to such questions. That is why Allah asks His Messenger (peace be upon him) to put such questions to the disbelievers: “Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth? Who is the

Lord of the Universe? Who sustains you with provisions of life?” When they do not give any answer to such questions, Allah asks His Messenger (peace be upon him) to say “Allah” in answer. He then proceeds on with this argument: When Allah does all these things, how do the deities you worship come in?

***27** The blind man is the person who cannot see any of the countless signs of the Oneness of Allah, though these lie spread over before him in the universe. On the other hand, the seeing man is the person who can see in every particle of the universe and in every leaf of grass and tree signs pointing to their Creator. Thus the question that has been posed means: O disbelievers, if you are blind to the signs, why should the one who can see the signs should behave like a blind man and stumble along like you?

***28** Here “light” means the light of the knowledge of the truth which the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers possessed. In contrast to this, there was the “darkness” of ignorance in which the disbelievers were wandering about. The question that has been posed means to ask this: Why should those, who have received the light, extinguish it and wander about in the darkness like you? Well, if you do not know the worth of the light, you may choose to wander in the darkness. But how can you expect the one who has received the light and who appreciates the difference between the light and the darkness, and who is seeing the right way as if in broad daylight, to leave the light and wander about in the darkness?

***29** The question is intended to impress on the disbelievers

that there is absolutely no reason why they should practice shirk. When they themselves admit that their gods did not create even an iota in the universe and that they do not have even the smallest and most insignificant share in the creation, there remains no ground for them to cherish any doubts about it. Why should, then, their false gods and deities share the rights and powers of the Real Creator?

***30** The Arabic word *Qahhar* literally means “The one who rules over all by virtue of His own power, and keeps all under His complete control.”

This fact that He is “the One, the Prevailing” follows naturally from the preceding fact that “Allah is the Creator of all things” for this fact was also acknowledged by the mushriks and was never denied by them. This is so because the Creator of everything should logically be Unique, and every other thing or being must necessarily be His creation. Therefore nothing could be the equal of the Creator or partner in His Being, attributes, powers and rights. Likewise, the Creator must have complete power and control over His Creation.

For, it can never be imagined that the Creator would create anything over which He has not full control. Therefore, the one who acknowledges Allah to be the Creator must also acknowledge Him to be the Unique and the All-Powerful. After this, there remains no reason why one should worship anyone other than the Creator or invoke someone else for help in resolving his difficulties and fulfilling his needs.

17. He sends down water from the sky, so that valleys

أَنْزَلَ مِنْ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً

flow according to their measure, then the flood carries away the foam^{*31} that mounts up to the surface. And (also) from that (ore) which they heat in the fire desiring ornaments or utensils, (rises) a foam like it.^{*32} Thus does Allah (by parables) show forth truth and falsehood. Then, as for the foam, it passes away as scum upon the banks, while, as for that which is of use to mankind, it remains on the earth. Thus Allah sets forth parables.

فَسَأَلَتْ أَوْدِيَةً بِقَدَرِهَا
فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَابِيًا
وَمِمَّا يُوقِدُونَ عَلَيْهِ فِي النَّارِ
أَبْتِغَاءَ حِلْيَةٍ أَوْ مَتَاعٍ زَبَدٌ مِثْلُهٗ
كَذَٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ ٱلْحَقَّ
وَٱلْبَاطِلَ ۚ فَمَا ٱلْزَبْدُ فَيَذْهَبُ
جُفَاءً ۗ وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ ٱلنَّاسَ
فَيَمْكُثُ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ
يَضْرِبُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْأَمْثَالَ



***31** In this simile the knowledge which had been sent down by Allah to the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been likened to the rain from the sky, and the believers to the streams, rivulets and rivers. Just as the streams etc. fill themselves with rain water, each according to its capacity, so his followers gained knowledge from him, each according to his ability. On the other hand, the hue and cry that was raised by the opponents of the Islamic movement has been likened to the swelling foam etc. that begins to dance about on the surface of flood water, but soon vanishes away.

***32** As it is but natural that scum should appear on the

surface when ornaments are heated in the furnace for purification, likewise bad people would come to the surface and take prominent part in persecuting the good people who are passed through the furnace of persecution for their purification.

18. For those who responded to (the call of) their Lord is the best (reward). And those who did not respond to Him, if indeed they had whatever is on the earth entirely, and with that the like thereof, they would (attempt to) ransom themselves thereby.^{*33} Those will have the worst reckoning.^{*34} And their refuge is Hell, and worst is the resting place.

لِّلَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمُ الْحُسْنَىٰ
وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُ لَوْ
أَنَّ لَهُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا
وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لَافْتَدَوْا بِهِ
أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ الْحِسَابِ
وَمَا أُولَٰئِكَ بِمُعَذِّبِينَ
وَمَا أُولَٰئِكَ بِمُعَذِّبِينَ



***33** This shows that the disbelievers would be in such a sad plight that they would not hesitate to give their all for their redemption.

***34** “Those will have the worst reckoning”: they shall have to bear the full consequences of their evil deeds. No sin, no shortcoming, in short, nothing will be forgiven and no evil shall go unpunished.

We learn from the Quran that the rebels of Allah shall have to render a reckoning, whereas there shall be a light reckoning from those who have been faithful and obedient

to their Lord. In consideration of their loyal services, their cases will be dealt with leniently, and taking their general goodness into account many of their shortcomings will be forgiven.

This is further amplified by a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Aishah relates: I said, O Messenger of Allah, the most dreadful verse of the Quran is this: “Whoso shall commit an evil, he shall be punished for it. (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 123).” The Prophet answered: O Aishah, don’t you know how Allah clears the accounts of His faithful and obedient servant. Whatever harm or trouble he receives in this world, even so much as the pricking of a thorn, is taken by Allah as atonement for one or the other of his sins. As regards to the Hereafter, everyone who shall be called upon to render an account of any sin, shall be punished for it. At this Aishah asked: Then what is meant by light reckoning in this verse: Whoso shall be given his “Book of Deeds” in his right hand, he will render a light reckoning? (Surah Al-Inshiqaq, Ayats 7-8). The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered: This means merely the presentation of his whole conduct, that is, all his deeds, good and bad, shall be presented before Allah but he shall not be called upon to clear the account of all his deeds; for the one who shall be called upon to clear the whole of his account, shall be totally ruined.

The same thing is happening even in this world. A master deals very leniently with his faithful and obedient servant and connives at his minor faults and even forgives his major faults in consideration of his meritorious services.

On the other hand, if a servant is proved to be treacherous and dishonest, no consideration is given even to his services, and he is punished both for his minor and for major faults.

19. Then is he who knows that what has been revealed unto you (O Muhammad) from your Lord is the truth, like him who is blind.*³⁵ They will only pay heed who are people of understanding.*³⁶

﴿ أَفَمَنْ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ الْحَقُّ كَمَنْ هُوَ أَعْمَى ﴾
﴿ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ﴾

*³⁵ That is, as the attitude of the two in this world will be different from each other, so shall be their ultimate end in the Hereafter.

*³⁶ That is, those who listen to the message that has been sent down by Allah, and accept His Messenger, are really very wise people. This is why their conduct in this world is quite different from those foolish people who are blind to its merits: and so is their ultimate end in the Hereafter, as stated in the subsequent verses.

20. Those who fulfill the covenant of Allah and do not break the treaty.*³⁷

﴿ الَّذِينَ يُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَنْقُضُونَ الْمِيثَاقَ ﴾

*³⁷ This covenant is the same that was made by Allah with the entire mankind at the beginning of the creation that they would worship Him alone. (Refer to E.Ns 134 and 135 of Surah Al-Aaraf). As this covenant has been made with every human being, it has been imbued firmly in human nature. When a human being is born in this world, he, so to

say, confirms the same covenant because he owes his creation to the same Allah with Whom he had made that covenant. Then he is brought up by His Provider and fed and nourished with His provisions, and uses the powers and faculties endowed by Him. All these things bind him by themselves into a covenant of bondage with his Lord. It is obvious that wise, loyal and faithful people fulfill their covenant and dare not break it except that they might break it unconsciously and unwillingly.

21. And those who join that with which Allah has commanded to be joined,^{*38} and fear their Lord, and dread the terrible reckoning.

وَالَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ
 أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ
 وَيَخَافُونَ سُوءَ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢١﴾

***38** That is, all those social and civil relations that are conducive to the correct and right conduct of collective human life.

22. And those who are patient, seeking the countenance of their Lord,^{*39} and establish prayer, and spend of that which We have provided them secretly and openly, and who ward off evil with good.^{*40} Those shall have the ultimate abode.

وَالَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ
 وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا
 رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً
 وَيَدْرَءُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ
 أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عِاقِبَةُ الْحَسَنَةِ ﴿٢٢﴾

***39** “Those who are patient”: They remain self possessed

and keep under control all their desires and lusts and do not transgress the bounds, and they do not yield to temptations to disobey their Lord in order to gain advantages and gratify their desires. Nay, they bear with calm courage and endurance losses and afflictions that are inevitable in the obedience of Allah. If we consider the life of a believer from this point of view, we shall find that his entire life is the life of endurance and fortitude, for he keeps himself under control in very trying circumstances in this world in the hope of winning the approval of his Lord and in the expectation of gaining permanent benefits in the Hereafter: so he fights with fortitude every temptation to sin.

***40** That is, if others do evil to them, they do not do evil in return but do good instead. They do not fight mischief with mischief but with virtue. Howsoever unjust one may be to them, they do justice in every case. Likewise, they remain truthful and honest even in the case of those who tell lies against them and show dishonesty towards them.

There is a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the same effect: You should not imitate others in your conduct towards other people, for it is wrong to say: We will do goodness to others, if they do goodness to us and we will do injustice to them if they are unjust to us. On the other hand, you should follow this principle: If others do goodness to you, you should do goodness to them, but if they do evil to you, you should not be unjust to them.

There is another tradition, which begins with the words: My Lord has bidden me to do nine things. Four of these

things are, I should behave justly towards everyone whether I am pleased or offended with him. I should render the right even of the one who violates my rights. I should pay the dues even of the one who depraves me of my due. I should forgive the one who has been unjust to me. There is yet another tradition to the same effect: Don't be faithless even to the one who has been faithless to you. There is also a saying of Umar that amounts to the same thing: The best way of punishing the one, who does not fear God in his dealings with you, is that you should fear God in your dealings with him.

23. Gardens of Eden which they shall enter, and (also) those who acted righteously from among their fathers, and their wives, and their offspring. And angels shall enter unto them from every gate.

جَنَّتْ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا وَمَنْ
صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ
وَذُرِّيَّتِهِمْ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَدْخُلُونَ
عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ بَابٍ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. (Saying): “Peace be upon you ^{*41} for that you persevered in patience. And excellent is the final abode.”

سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ
عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ﴿٢٤﴾

***41** This implies two things. The angels will come in large numbers from every side and give them this good news: Now you have come to a place where there is peace for you. Here you are immune from every affliction, every trouble, every hardship, and every danger and worry. (For details see E.N. 29 of Surah Al-Hijr).

25. And those who break the covenant of Allah after firmly confirming it, and sever that which Allah has commanded that it should be joined, and spread corruption in the land. Those are, on them is the curse, and for them is the ill abode.

وَالَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ
بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا
أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ
وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ
لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. Allah increases the provision for whom He wills, and straitens (it for whom He wills),^{*42} and they rejoice in the life of the world. While the life of the world is not, as compared with the Hereafter, except (a brief) enjoyment.

اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَيَقْدِرُ^ج وَفَرِحُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فِي
الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا مَتَعٌ ﴿٢٦﴾

***42** This verse refutes the wrong criterion by which the disbelievers of Makkah (and all other disobedient people of the world) judged whether one was or was not a favorite of God. They judged a man's worth by his wealth and worldly prosperity and not by his faith and righteous conduct. They thought that the one who was enjoying all the good things of life was a favorite of God, even if he had erroneous beliefs and did wicked deeds. On the other hand, they considered the one who was poor and indigent to be under the wrath of God, even though he was righteous. That is

why in their judgment the chiefs of the Quraish were far superior to the followers of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They would say, "You can see for yourselves that God is with the chiefs of the Quraish.

In this verse, Allah has warned them that they are absolutely wrong in drawing such a conclusion from the worldly conditions of the people. Allah gives His provision to the people abundantly or sparingly for reasons different from those which they presumed and richness or poverty is no criterion by which to judge the worth of people. The real criterion of judging the worth of people is their beliefs and deeds. The one, who has righteous beliefs and does good deeds, shall be higher in rank than the one who has wrong beliefs and does evil deeds. Thus the real criterion is the quality of his deeds and not the possession or the lack of wealth.

27. And those who disbelieve say: "Why is not a sign sent down to him (Muhammad) from his Lord."^{*43} Say: "Indeed, Allah sends astray whom He wills, and guides unto Himself whoever turns to Him."^{*44}

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ
عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ ۗ قُلْ إِن
اللَّهِ يُضِلُّ مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَىٰ
مَنْ أَنَابَ



***43** Please also keep in view the answer that has been given to this question in Ayat 7.

***44** This is the answer to their question. It is not due to the lack of signs that they were going astray, but it is the lack of any desire in them to seek right guidance. For Allah does

not force one to follow the right way, if he deliberately turns away from it. He lets such persons wander on the wrong ways they choose to wander. Nay, even all those things that should serve as a means to guidance for a seeker of truth become the means of deviation for the one who seeks deviation. So much so that the light which helps show the way to the former, dazzles the eyes of the latter. This is how Allah leads astray a person.

This answer to the demand of a sign is matchless in its eloquence. It says to them: O misguided people, it is not due to the lack of signs that you are not finding the right path, but it is due to the lack of any desire in you for it. You do not see any of the countless signs that are scattered all around you because you have no desire to go to the right way. How can then any sign be helpful to you? For you would not see any of those signs. However those, who seek the right way to Allah, see these signs and find the right way with their help.

28. Those who believe and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah. Behold, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction.

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ
بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ
تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ ﴿٢٨﴾

29. Those who believe and do righteous deeds, joy is for them, and bliss (their) journey's end.

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ طُوبَىٰ لَهُمْ وَحَسَنُ
مَّعَابٍ ﴿٢٩﴾

30. Thus have We sent you^{*45} to a nation before which (other) nations have passed on, that you might recite unto them that which We have revealed to you, while they disbelieve in the Beneficent.^{*46} Say: “He is my Lord, there is no god but Him. In Him I put my trust and to Him is my return.”

كَذَلِكَ أَرْسَلْنَاكَ فِي أُمَّةٍ قَدْ
خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا أُمَمٌ لِيَتْلُوا
عَلَيْهِمُ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ
يَكْفُرُونَ بِالرَّحْمَنِ قُلْ هُوَ رَبِّي
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ
وَإِلَيْهِ مَتَابِ ﴿٣٠﴾

***45** That is, in this way that We have not given you a sign they demanded.

***46** That is, instead of serving that most Compassionate Lord, they are discarding His service and setting up other partners in His attributes, powers, rights and giving thanks to others for His blessings.

31. And if indeed there was a Quran with which mountains could be moved, or the earth could be torn asunder by it, or the dead could be made to speak by it,^{*47} (this Quran would have done so). But to Allah belongs the command entirely.^{*48} Do not those who believe despair that, if Allah had willed, He would have guided mankind, all of

وَلَوْ أَنَّ قُرْءَانًا سُيِّرَتْ بِهِ الْجِبَالُ
أَوْ قُطِّعَتْ بِهِ الْأَرْضُ أَوْ كُفِّمَتْ بِهِ
الْمَوْتَىٰ ۗ بَلْ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ جَمِيعًا
أَفَلَمْ يَأْيَسِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْ
لَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَهْدَى النَّاسَ
جَمِيعًا ۗ وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

them.^{*49} And will not cease to strike, those who disbelieve, a disaster for what they have done, or it (the disaster) will settle close to their homes, until the promise of Allah comes to pass. Indeed, Allah does not fail in (His) promise.

تُصِيبُهُمْ بِمَا صَنَعُوا قَارِعَةً أَوْ
تَحُلُّ قَرِيبًا مِّن دَارِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ
وَعْدُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ
الْعَهْدَ



*47 This verse has been addressed to the believers who were feeling uneasy that no such sign was being sent as was demanded by the disbelievers. They thought that such a sign would convince the disbelievers and they would accept Islam. Therefore when no such sign was sent, they became all the more uneasy for the lack of the fulfillment of the demand that gave rise to doubts about the Prophethood of the Messenger (peace be upon him). The question posed in this verse is meant to remove that uneasiness of the Muslims. It is like this: Do you think that they would have embraced Islam if such and such signs had been shown to them all of a sudden along with a Surah of the Quran? Are you under the delusion that they are quite ready to accept Islam and are waiting only for such a sign? Do you think that those people who have failed to see the light of the truth in the teachings of the Quran, in the phenomena of the universe, in the pure and spotless life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and in the wonderful change in the lives of his companions, would see the light of the truth in the moving of the mountains, in the cleavage of the earth

and in the coming out of the dead from the graves?

***48** “But to Allah belongs the command entirely” and He can show any sign if He so desires. He is not showing any sign for it does not fit in the scheme laid down for the guidance of man. As the real object is to show guidance to mankind through the Prophet and not to compel them to believe in the Prophethood of a Prophet, He desires that the people should gain guidance by thinking and observing wisely and not by seeing signs.

***49** That is, if the object had been to make human beings believers even without consciously understanding it, Allah could have created them believers by birth.

32. And indeed messengers (of Allah) were ridiculed before you, but I granted respite to those who disbelieved, then I seized them, so how (awful) was My punishment.

وَلَقَدْ اسْتَهْزِئُ بِرُسُلٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ
فَأَمَلَيْتُ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ
أَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ



33. Then is He (Allah) who watches over every soul what it has earned (like any other).^{*50} But they ascribe partners to Allah.^{*51} Say: “Name them. Or you inform Him of that which He knows not on the earth, or is it a show of words.”^{*52} Nay, their plotting is made fair

أَفَمَنْ هُوَ قَائِمٌ عَلَى كُلِّ نَفْسٍ
بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ
قُلْ سَمُّوهُمْ أَمْ تُنَبِّئُونَهُ بِمَا لَا
يَعْلَمُ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ بِيْظَهْرِ مِّن
الْقَوْلِ بَلْ زَيْنٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

seeming to those who disbelieve,^{*53} and they have been hindered from the path.^{*54} And he whom Allah sends astray, then for him, there is not any guide.

مَكْرَهُمْ وَصُدُّوا عَنِ السَّبِيلِ
وَمَنْ يُضَلِّ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ
هَادٍ



***50** That is, they are so audacious that they set up partners with Allah Whose knowledge is All-Comprehensive and Who is aware of even the minutest details of the good and bad actions of each individual.

***51** These are the audacious things they do. They ascribe partners and equals to Him. They believe that some of His creatures are a part and parcel of His Being, and have attributes and rights like Him. They presume that they shall not be called to account for whatever they do, even though they live in His kingdom.

***52** That is, you give empty names to the partners you ascribe to Him for you have no real knowledge about them. For you could get this knowledge only in one of the three following ways.

First, you might have received some authentic information that Allah had made such and such people as His partners in His attributes, powers and rights. If it is so, let us also know their names and the source of your information.

Second, the possibility that Allah might have remained ignorant that some beings have become His partners. Therefore you are going to inform Him about this. If it is so, say it clearly in so many words so that it may be decided whether there are some foolish people who can believe in

such a nonsensical claim.

Third, obviously the above two suppositions are absurd. Therefore the only alternative is that, you are ascribing partners to Him without any rhyme or reason, and you, without any knowledge, make one the relative of God, another the hearer of supplications, and still another the helper and fulfiller of certain needs and the ruler of a certain region etc.

***53** Shirk has been called fraud because none of the angels, spirits, saints, heavenly bodies, to whom they ascribe divine attributes and powers or render divine rights, ever claimed to possess these attributes or powers. Neither did they ever demand these rights from the people nor told the people that they would fulfill their desires and wants if they would perform some rituals of worship before them. As a matter of fact, some clever people invented these gods in order to practice willful deception and dishonesty so that they might wield powerful influence over the common people and exploit them and deprive them of a part of their hard earned possessions. Accordingly, they made the common people credulous followers of the gods of their inventions and set themselves up as their representatives to get money, etc. from them by this fraud.

The second reason why shirk has been called fraud is that a worldly man pretends to believe in it not because he wants to believe in it but in order to free himself from all moral restraints to enable him to lead an irresponsible life of greed and lust.

The third reason is given below in E. N. 54.

***54** Shirk is also fraud in the sense that it has been made to appear fair for them and so leads them into deviation and prevents them from coming back to the right way. It is like this: When mushriks adopt wrong ways of deviation that suit the kind of lives they wish to lead, they have to invent arguments to pacify their consciences and convince other people that they are on the right way. Naturally this fraud confirms them on the way of deviation and they are debarred from the right way.

34. For them is a punishment in the life of the world, and the punishment of the Hereafter is more severe. And they do not have against Allah any protector.

لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَشَقُّ وَمَا لَهُمْ
مِّنَ اللَّهِ مِن وَّاقٍ

35. The example of the Garden, which the righteous have been promised, is beneath it rivers flow. Its fruit is eternal, and (so is) its shade. Such is the end of those who are righteous, and the disbelievers' end is the Fire.

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ
الْمُتَّقُونَ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ أَكْلُهَا دَائِمٌ وَظِلُّهَا
تِلْكَ عُقْبَى الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا
وَعُقْبَى الْكَافِرِينَ النَّارُ

36. And those to whom We have given the Book rejoice in that which is revealed to you. And among the factions

وَالَّذِينَ
ءَاتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ
يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ

are those who reject part of it. Say (O Muhammad): “I am only commanded that I worship Allah and not to join partners with Him. To Him I call, and unto Him is my return.”*55

وَمِنَ الْأَحْزَابِ مَنْ يُنْكِرُ
بَعْضَهُ ۗ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ
أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلَا أُشْرِكَ بِهِ ۗ إِلَيْهِ
أَدْعُوا وَإِلَيْهِ مَأْبٍ



*55 This is in reply to a specific objection which was then raised by the disbelievers. They would say: If he has brought the same message that was brought by the Messengers before him (as he claims), why don't the Jews and the Christians who are the followers of the former Prophets come forward and welcome it? The verse answers the objection and says that the true followers of the former Prophets really rejoice in the message of the Quran, but the false ones have been offended by it. Then it asks the Prophet (peace be upon him) not to worry at all about this, saying: O Prophet, you should not mind at all whether they are pleased or offended by it. Tell them plainly that this is the guidance I have received from my Lord and I will follow it at all costs.

37. And thus have We sent it (the Quran) down, a judgment of authority in Arabic. And if you were to follow their desires after that which has come to you of the knowledge, you will not have

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ حُكْمًا عَرَبِيًّا ۗ
وَلَيْنِ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ مَا
جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ

against Allah any protector,
nor a defender.

مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا وَاكِفٍ

38. And indeed We sent messengers before you, and We made for them wives and offspring.^{*56} And it was not (given) to (any) messenger that he should bring a sign except by the command of Allah.^{*57} For every term there is a decree.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَذُرِّيَّةً وَمَا
كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِعَايَةٍ إِلَّا
بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ لِكُلِّ أَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ

***56** This is the answer to another objection. The disbelievers said that he could not be a Prophet of Allah because he has wives and children, for they argued that Prophets had nothing to do with carnal desires.

***57** This is the answer to yet another objection: Had he been a true Prophet, he would have shown a sign like the shining hand and the miraculous staff of Prophet Moses or he would have restored sight to the blind or cured lepers like Prophet Jesus, or brought a sign like the she camel of Prophet Salih. (peace be upon them all). The answer is this: None of the former Messengers had any power to show any sign nor has this Prophet (peace be upon him). Allah showed a sign whenever and through whomsoever He considered it to be necessary and will show any sign whenever He will consider it necessary and that I have not claimed to possess any such power that such a demand might be made from me.

39. Allah eliminates what He wills, and establishes (what He wills), and with Him is the Mother of the Book. *58

يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ
وَعِنْدَهُ رَأْسُ الْكِتَابِ

*58 This is the answer to another objection raised against the revelation of the Quran. The disbelievers said: What was the need of this new Book, when there already had existed the former revealed Books? You say that this need has arisen because the former Books have been tampered with; therefore Allah has abrogated them and commanded that this new Book should be followed. This position you have taken is wrong for how can anyone tamper with the Book of Allah and how is it possible that any Book of Allah might be tampered with? Why did not Allah protect these Books from such things as these? You say that this Book has been revealed by the same Allah Who revealed the Torah and the Gospel. How is it then that your way is different from that of the Torah? You consider certain things lawful while they are unlawful according to the Torah, etc. etc. Detailed answers to these objections have been given in other Surahs but here only a brief and comprehensive answer has been given to them.

The Arabic word *Umm-ul-Kitab* literally means the Mother Book, that is, the Original Book which is the source and origin of all the revealed Books.

40. And whether We show you (O Muhammad) part of what We have promised them, or We cause you to die,

وَإِنْ مَا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي
نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَإِنَّمَا

then upon you is only to convey (the message), and upon Us is the reckoning. *59

عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَّغُ وَعَلَيْنَا الْحِسَابُ



*59 This is to console the Prophet (peace be upon him), as if to say: O Prophet, you need not concern yourself as to the end of these disbelievers who have rejected the truth. You should go on performing with peace of mind the mission that has been entrusted to you and leave it to Us to give them suitable punishment. Though this has been addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), it is obvious that it is really meant to warn the opponents of the truth, who were demanding definitely from the Prophet (peace be upon him) by way of a challenge to bring about the scourge about which threats were being held out to them.

41. Do they not see that We are advancing in the land (in their control), diminishing it from its outlying borders. *60

And Allah commands, there is none to put back His command. And He is swift in calling to account.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَأْتِي الْأَرْضَ
نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ
يَحْكُمُ لَا مُعَقِّبَ لِحُكْمِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ



سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

*60 “We are advancing in the land.” This is a very subtle way of warning the opponents of the truth. The fact that Our message is spreading fast in Arabia. It does, in fact, mean that We Ourselves are advancing very fast in the country against you for We are with those who are carrying Our message.

“Diminishing it from its outlying borders.” We are causing the influence of Islam to spread fast in the land and are thus reducing the boundaries of the influence of its opponents. Are not these things the portents of their coming disaster?

42. And indeed, those who were before them did devise plots,^{*61} but to Allah belongs the plan entirely. He knows what every soul earns. And the disbelievers will know for whom will be the final home.

وَقَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلِلَّهِ
الْمَكْرُ جَمِيعًا يَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُ
كُلُّ نَفْسٍ^ق وَسَيَعْلَمُ الْكُفْرُ لِمَنْ
عُقِبَى الدَّارِ



*61 That is, these people, who are now devising schemes to defeat the message of the truth, do not take a lesson from the sad end of the people who devised similar schemes before them to suppress the voice of the truth by falsehood, fraud and persecution.

43. And those who disbelieve say: “You are not a Messenger.” Say (O Muhammad): “Sufficient is Allah as a witness between me and you, and those with whom is the knowledge of the Book.”^{*62}

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَسْتَ
مُرْسَلًا قُلْ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا
بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ
الْكِتَابِ



*62 That is, everyone who has the knowledge of the divinely revealed Books will bear witness to the fact that my teachings are the same that were imparted by the former

prophets.





إِبْرَاهِيمَ Ibrahim

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from Ayat 35 in which Prophet *Ibrahim* (peace be upon him) has been mentioned. But it does not mean that it contains the life story of Prophet Abraham. The name is merely a symbol like the names of many other Surahs.

Period of Revelation

It appears from the tone of the Surah that it belongs to that group of the Surahs which were revealed during the last stage of the Makkan period. For instance, Ayat 13 (The disbelievers warned their Messengers, you shall have to return to our community or we will assuredly expel you from our land) clearly indicates that the persecution of the Muslims was at its worst at the time of the revelation of this Surah, and the people of Makkah were bent on expelling the believers from their land like the disbelievers of the former Prophets. That is why in Ayat 14 they have been warned: We will destroy these evil doers. And the believers have been comforted as were the believers before them: And after them settle you in the land. Likewise the stern

warning contained in the concluding portion, Ayats 43-52, also confirms that the Surah relates to the last stage of the Makkan period.

Central Theme and Purpose

This Surah is an admonition and a warning to the disbelievers who were rejecting the Message of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and devising cunning schemes to defeat his mission. But warning, reproof, censure and reproach dominate admonition. This is because a good deal of admonition had already been made in the preceding Surahs, but in spite of this their obduracy, enmity, antagonism, mischief, persecution etc. had rather increased.

1. Alif. Lam. Ra. (This is) a Book which We have revealed to you (Muhammad) that you might bring mankind out from darkneses into the light, by the permission of their Lord, to the path^{*1} of the All Mighty, the Owner of Praise.^{*2}

الرَّ كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ
لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ
إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطِ
الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿١﴾

*1 This is the purpose for which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been sent. He was entrusted with the mission that he should bring mankind back from the ways of darkness and ways of wickedness into the way of God by the help of the light of the Quran. For everyone who is not on the way of God is, in fact, wandering about in the ways of the darkness and ignorance, even though he might

consider himself to be very enlightened and full of knowledge. On the other hand, the one who finds the Way of Allah, comes into the light of knowledge, even though he might be an illiterate person.

As regards to “by the permission of their Lord”, this implies that the most a missionary of Islam, even though he be a Messenger of Allah, can do is to present the right way. It is not in his power to bring anyone forcibly to the way, for this can only happen by the help and permission of Allah. That is why only that person whom Allah helps and permits gets guidance. Otherwise, even a perfect missionary like a Messenger fails to bring a person to the right way. As regards to the divine law, according to which Allah helps and permits a person to gain guidance, we learn from different passages of the Quran that Allah gives help only to that person who himself has a desire to get guidance: who frees himself from obduracy, obstinacy and prejudice: who is not a follower of his lust, nor a slave of his desires: who is inclined to see with open eyes and hear with open ears and think with a clear mind, and is ready to accede to any reasonable thing.

*2 The word *Hameed* is more comprehensive than *Mahmud*. A person will be entitled to be *Mahmud* only when he is praised. But the Being Who is *Hamed*, is naturally and permanently worthy of praise, whether anyone praises Him or not, because the element of praise is inherent in Him and is inseparable from Him.

2. Allah it is, to whom
belongs all that is in the

اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي

heavens and all that is on the earth. And woe unto the disbelievers from severe punishment.

السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَوَيْلٌ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ

شَدِيدٍ ﴿٢﴾

3. Those who love the life of this world over the Hereafter,^{*3} and hinder (people) from the path of Allah and seek therein crookedness,^{*4} such are in error, far away.

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَحِبُّونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنِ
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا
أُولَئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٣﴾

***3** Those who reject the truth are the people whose interests are entirely bound with the life of this world, and who do not care at all for the interests of the life of the Hereafter: who are prepared to undergo any punishment in the next world for the sake of the interests, pleasures and comforts of this world: who, on the other hand, cannot bear the sacrifice of even the smallest pleasure in this world, nor are ready to bear any loss or encounter danger or trouble in this world for the sake of the joys of the next world. In short, such are the people who have coolly considered and weighed the pleasures of this world against the joys of the next world, and decided in favor of this world: therefore, they readily sacrifice the interest of the next world whenever there is a clash between the two.

***4** That is, "They do not want to follow the Way of Allah,

but endeavor that Allah's Way should follow their desires: it should adjust itself in such a way as to include all their conjectures, theories and whims as its part and parcel, and exclude every creed that does not suit their way of life: it should provide sanction for all their habits, customs and manners: it should not demand from them anything which they do not like: in short, the way of Allah should be their obedient slave and turn in the direction their devilish lusts want it to turn: nay, it should neither criticize them nor ask them to follow Allah's injunctions. This is their condition for accepting the guidance of Allah.

4. And We have not sent any messenger except in the language of his people, that he might state (the message) clearly for them.*⁵ Then Allah sends astray whom He wills, and guides whom He wills.*⁶ And He is the All Mighty, the All Wise.*⁷

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا
بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ
فِيضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي
مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ



*⁵ This implies two things: First, Allah sent down His message in the language of the people from among whom a Prophet was raised so that they might not have any excuse left that they could not understand the language of the message. Secondly, this ruled out the presumption that a Messenger was ever given the message in a different language merely for the sake of a miracle. For Allah considered it more important to make the people

understand the message and guide them rightly than to satisfy their curiosity. Obviously the purpose could best be served only if the message was sent down to them in their own language by their Prophet and not in any other.

*6 That is, although the Messenger conveys the message in the mother tongue of the people, which is understood by everyone of them, yet all of them are not guided aright. This happens because of the fact that all of those who understand a message do not necessarily accept it. For it is entirely with Allah to show guidance by means of His message to anyone He wills and to let go astray anyone in spite of it.

*7 As Allah is All-Powerful, no one is able by oneself to get guidance or to go astray, for none is completely independent but is under the power of Allah. But as He is All-Wise, He does not use His power blindly so as to show guidance to anyone He wills and to let go astray anyone He desires without rhyme or reason. In fact, the one who gets guidance from Him gets it on merit and the one who is let go astray is deprived of guidance because he himself deliberately chooses deviation.

5. And indeed We sent Moses with Our signs, (saying) that: "Bring out your people from darkneses into light. And remind them of the days of Allah."*8 Certainly, in that are sure signs*9 for each

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا
أَنْ أَخْرِجْ قَوْمَكَ مِنَ
الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَذَكِّرْهُمْ
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ

steadfast, thankful.*10

لَا يَتِي لِكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ

*8 The Arabic word *ayyam* technically means memorable historical events. Therefore *Ayyam-u-Allah* (divine history) implies all those eventful chapters of human history which mention the rewards and punishments that were meted out to the great personalities and nations according to their deeds in the past ages.

*9 Those historical events are signs in this sense that their proper and intelligent study provides proofs of the fact that there is only one God: and that the law of retribution is universal and is based absolutely on the differentiation between the knowledge and moral practice of the truth and falsehood: that this law also requires another world (the Hereafter) for its due fulfillment. Moreover, these events contain signs that serve as warnings against the evil consequences of building up systems of life on false creeds and theories, and help one to learn lessons from them.

*10 Though these signs are always there, only those persons learn lessons from them who remain steadfast in trials and appreciate the blessings of Allah rightly and are grateful to Him. Obviously, frivolous and ungrateful persons cannot learn any lesson from these signs, even though they might grasp their significance.

6. And when Moses said to his people: "Remember Allah's favor upon you when He saved you from Pharaoh's people who were

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ أَنْجَاكُمْ مِنْ عَالِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ

afflicting you with dreadful torment, and were slaughtering your sons and letting your women live. And in that was for you a tremendous trial from your Lord.”

سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ وَيَذْحِكُونَ
أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ
نِسَاءَكُمْ فِي ذَالِكُمْ بَلَاءٌ
مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١﴾

7. And when your Lord proclaimed: “If you are grateful,^{*11} I will surely increase you (in favor), and if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.”^{*12}

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن
شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن
كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿٧﴾

***11** That is, if you are grateful, you will appreciate Our favors and make right use of them, and will not rebel against Our commandments, but will surrender and submit to Us to show your gratitude to Us.

***12** Deuteronomy (Bible) contains a long and detailed discourse to this effect. According to it, Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), on the eve of his death, reminded the Israelites of all important events from their history, and reiterated all the divine commandments of the Torah which Allah had sent to them through him. Then he told them in a long speech that if they obeyed their Lord, they would be given great rewards. But if they adopted the attitude of disobedience, they would get a terrible punishment. This discourse spreads over chapters 4, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 28, 30. Some of these passages are so impressive and instructive that it will be worthwhile to quote a few of them:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. (Deut. 6: 47).

And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways; and to love him, and to serve the Lord Thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is thy Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. (Deut. 10: 12-14).

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face. The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto. The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by

the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee. And thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath. (28: 1-13).

But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all those curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do. The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee. And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them. Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build an house and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof. Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes. Therefore, shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: And he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other. (Deut: 28: 15-64).

8. And Moses said: “If you disbelieve, you and whoever is on the earth together, then certainly, Allah is indeed Self Sufficient, Owner of all Praise.”*13

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِنَّ تَكْفُرُوا أَنْتُمْ
وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا فَإِنَّ
اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ



*13 It should be noted that a reference to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and his people has been made here to warn the people of Makkah of the consequences of their ingratitude towards this favor of Allah that He has raised Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) from among them. This was a timely warning, for at that time they were showing ingratitude by rejecting that message. They were, therefore, warned to learn a lesson from the miserable condition of the Israelites, which was the result of their ingratitude to and rebellion against Allah’s favors.

As the Quraish themselves could see the consequences of that rebellious attitude of the Israelites, they were, so to say, asked this question: Do you also desire to meet with the same consequences by showing ingratitude towards the message which is a great favor to you?

Obviously, the great favor which was shown to the Quraish was that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was raised from among them with that message about which he assured them over and over again: Accept this Message of mine: all the Arabs and the non-Arabs will surrender and submit to you?

9. Has^{*14} there not reached you the news of those

أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ

before you, the people of Noah, and Aaad, and Thamud, and those after them. None knows them but Allah. To them came their messengers with clear proofs, but they thrust their hands into their mouths,^{*15} and said: “Indeed, we disbelieve in that with which you have been sent, and indeed we are in grave doubt of that^{*16} to which you invite us.”

قَبْلِكُمْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ
وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لَا
يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا اللَّهُ جَاءَتْهُمْ
رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرَدُّوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ
فِي أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَقَالُوا إِنَّا كَفَرْنَا
بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ وَإِنَّا لَفِي شَكٍّ
مِمَّا تَدْعُونَنَا إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ ﴿١١﴾

***14** The speech of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) ended with Ayat 8. From here begins a direct address to the disbelievers of Makkah.

***15** There has been a great deal of difference of opinion in regard to the meaning of the Arabic words of the text and different commentators have assigned different meanings to them. But we are of the opinion that these express merely the intolerance and perplexity and a bit of anger that was being shown by the disbelievers towards the message and this is confirmed by the subsequent sentence.

***16** They had a “grave doubt” about the message because it had taken away their peace of mind. This was because invitation to the message always makes the minds uneasy, for it becomes hard even for its opponents to reject it outright or oppose it with peace of mind. Howsoever they

might give vent to their doubts about it and oppose it tooth and nail the force of its truth and its sound arguments, its frankness and candor and its winning manners of exposition produce a great agitation in the minds of its bitterest opponents. Then the pure and spotless character of the Messenger and the marked change for the better brought about in his followers produce such an accumulative effect on their minds that even their most bitter antagonists begin to feel uneasy about their own stand. Thus, those who try to disturb the peace of mind of the upholders of the truth are themselves deprived of their own peace of mind.

10. Their messengers said: “Can there be any doubt about Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth.*¹⁷ He calls you that He may forgive you of your sins and give you respite for a term appointed.”*¹⁸ They said: “You are not but mortals like us.*¹⁹ You wish to turn us away from what our fathers used to worship. Then bring to us a clear authority.”*²⁰

قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ أَفِي اللَّهِ شَكٌّ
 فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
 يَدْعُوكُمْ لِيَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِنْ
 ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُؤَخِّرَكُمْ إِلَىٰ
 أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى قَالُوا إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا
 بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَصُدُّونَا
 عَمَّا كَانَتْ يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا
 فَآتُونَا بِسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ

*¹⁷ The Messengers posed this question to those who rejected the message in order to bring home to them the

absurdity of their stand with regard to God. For though, the mushriks of every age believed in the existence of God and acknowledged that He was the Creator of the heavens and the earth, they did not accept the message, its logical result, that He alone was entitled to their worship. That is why the Messengers asked them: Do you have any doubt about the existence of Allah?

***18** In the case of individuals, the appointed term may be either the time of one's death or the doomsday. As regards the appointed term for the rise and fall of communities, it is determined by their collective behavior. For instance, if a capable community degenerates before the expiry of its term, the assigned period is shortened and it is deposed. On the other hand, if a degenerate community changes its ways for the better, its term is extended, so much so that it may extend even to the doomsday. This same thing is implied in Ayat 11 of Surah Ar-Raad: The fact is that Allah does not change a people's lot unless they themselves change their own characteristics.

***19** The disbelievers meant to imply: You are a human being like us in every respect: you eat, drink and sleep like us and have wife and children like us. You feel hungry and thirsty, and suffer from heat and cold, disease and calamities like us. In short, you have every human limitation like us, and we see nothing unusual and extraordinary in you to induct us to accept you as a Prophet and believe that God communicates with you and sends His angels to you.

***20** That is, if you still insist that you are a Prophet, bring a

tangible proof of your appointment so as to convince us that you have really been sent by God and your message is from Him.

11. Their messengers said to them: “We are not but mortals like yourselves, but Allah bestows favor upon whom He wills of His slaves.*21 And it is not ours that we bring you an authority, except by the permission of Allah. And upon Allah let those who believe put their trust.”

قَالَتْ لَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ إِنْ نَحْنُ إِلَّا
بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَمُنُّ
عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ۖ وَمَا
كَانَ لَنَا أَنْ نَأْتِيَكُمْ بِسُلْطٰنٍ
إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ
فَلْتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١﴾

***21** That is, no doubt we are human beings like you but it is Allah’s will that He has chosen us from among you and blessed us with the knowledge of the truth and keen discernment. And this is Allah’s will and He has full power to bestow anything on anyone He wills. We are not in a position to ask Him to send that blessing to you or to anyone else: nor can we deny the realities which have been shown to us.

12. “And what is it with us that we should not put our trust upon Allah, and indeed He has guided us our ways. And we shall certainly bear with patience of what hurt you may cause us. And

وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نَتَوَكَّلَ عَلَى اللَّهِ
وَقَدْ هَدَانَا سُبُلَنَا ۗ وَلَنَصْبِرَنَّ
عَلَىٰ مَا ءَاذَيْتُمُونَا ۗ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ

upon Allah let those who trust put their trust.”

فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

13. And those who disbelieved said to their messengers: “We will surely drive you out from our land, or you must return to our religion.”^{*22} So their Lord revealed to them: “Surely, We shall destroy the wrong doers.”

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِرُسُلِهِمْ لَنُخْرِجَنَّكُمْ مِّنْ أَرْضِنَا أَوْ لَتَعُوذُنَّ فِي مِلَّتِنَا فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ لَنُهْلِكَنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ

﴿١٣﴾

***22** It will be wrong to conclude from this demand of theirs that the Prophets professed the religion of their people before their appointment to the divine office. This only meant that their people thought so because before their appointment they led a quiet life and did not propagate a new religion nor refuted the religion in vogue at that time. That is why their people were under the wrong impression that the Prophets also professed the religion of their forefathers, and, therefore, accused them of apostasy. The fact, however, is that they had never followed the religion of their mushrik forefathers and were not guilty of apostasy.

14. “And surely, We shall make you dwell in the land after them.”^{*23} That is for him who fears standing before Me and fears My threat.”

وَلَنَسْكِنَنَّكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن خَافَ مَقَامِي وَخَافَ وَعِيدِ ﴿١٤﴾

***23** This was to reassure the Prophets that they should not

worry at all about the threat that the disbelievers would banish them from their country, as if to say: We will uproot them from their land, and establish you and your followers firmly in their place.

15. And they sought victory (from their Lord), and was bought to a complete loss every obstinate, arrogant dictator.*24

وَأَسْتَفْتَحُوا وَخَابَ كُلُّ

جَبَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ ﴿١٥﴾

*24 In order to grasp the real significance of these historical events, it should be kept in view that these are being related here as answers to those objections which the disbelievers of Makkah raised before the Prophet (peace be upon him). As the conditions there at the time of the revelation of this Surah were exactly like those of the peoples of the former Prophets, they have been cited here to warn the Quraish along with the other mushriks of Arabia of the consequences, as if to say: The former disbelievers challenged their Messengers and were destroyed and the believers were established in the land. Likewise your future also entirely depends on the attitude you adopt towards the message of your Prophet. If you accept this, you will be allowed to remain in the land of Arabia, and if you reject it you shall be utterly uprooted from here. The subsequent events proved that this prophecy was literally fulfilled within fifteen years after this, for there remained not a single mushrik in the whole of Arabia.

16. Beyond him there is Hell, and he will be made to drink of festering water.

مِنْ وَرَائِهِ جَهَنَّمَ وَيُسْقَى مِنْ
مَاءٍ صَدِيدٍ ﴿١٦﴾

17. He will sip it unwillingly, and not quite swallow it, and death will come to him from every side, yet he will not die. And beyond him will be a great punishment.

يَتَجَرَّعُهُ وَلَا يَكَادُ يُسِغُهُ
وَيَأْتِيهِ الْمَوْتُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ
وَمَا هُوَ بِمَيِّتٍ وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِ
عَذَابٌ غَلِيظٌ ﴿١٧﴾

18. The parable of those who disbelieve in their Lord is (that) their deeds are like ashes, which the wind blows furiously on a stormy day. No power have they over anything that they have earned.*25

That is the straying, far away.

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ
أَعْمَلُهُمْ كَرَمَادٍ اشْتَدَّتْ بِهِ
الرِّيحُ فِي يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ لَأَسْفَلُ
يَقْدِرُونَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا عَلَىٰ
شَيْءٍ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلَالُ
الْبَعِيدُ ﴿١٨﴾

*25 That is, those who were perfidious, faithless, and disobedient to the divine message, and refused to adopt that way to which the Messengers invited, will find in the end that all the deeds and earnings of their lives were as worthless as a heap of ashes. Just as each and every particle

of a high mound of ashes formed during a long course of years is scattered by the wind on a stormy day, likewise all their grand works will prove on the stormy doomsday to be no more than a mound of ashes. Their dazzling culture, their grand civilization, their wonderful kingdoms and states, their magnificent universities, their sciences and their literatures, nay, even their hypocritical worship, and so called virtuous deeds, their charitable and reformative works of which they were very proud in the worldly life, shall prove to be as worthless as a heap of ashes, and will be scattered by the storm of the Day of Resurrection. So much so that there shall not remain a single particle of their works worthy of being placed in the divine scale on that Day in their favor.

19. Have you not seen that Allah has created the heavens and the earth in truth.*²⁶ If He wills, He could take you away and bring in a new creation.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّ
يَشَاءُ يَذْهَبْكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ

جَدِيدٍ

*²⁶ This is the proof of the preceding statement that the works of the disbelievers are worthless like ashes. The question implies: Why are you skeptical of this? Do you not see that the grand system of the earth and the heavens is based on the survival of truth and not on the survival of falsehood. Everything bears witness to the fact that anything which is not based on truth and reality but rests

on unreal speculation and guess work cannot continue to live long. Therefore anyone who builds his works on the latter will most surely fail in his designs. For it is obvious that such a person builds his works on sand and should not, therefore, expect that they can last long. Likewise those who discard the truth and reality and build their works on false theories and presumptions should not expect at all that they can have any lasting value for they are bound to be scattered like worthless ashes. If this is obvious as it is, why should you cherish any doubts about the fact that anyone who builds the system of his life on the basis that he is independent of Allah or on the godhead of someone else (whereas there is no other God) shall inevitably find all his works to be worthless. When the fact is that man is not absolutely independent in this world nor is he the servant of anyone else than Allah, why should you not expect that anyone who builds his works on this falsehood, shall find that all his works were worthless like the heap of ashes that was scattered all over by the wind?

20. And that is not at all difficult for Allah.*27

وَمَا ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ

*27 This is by way of admonition that follows immediately the proof of the statement in the preceding verse. This removes also any doubt that might arise concerning that decisive statement. One might question it like this: If the creation is really based on the survival of truth, why is it that every follower of falsehood and every wrongdoer is not destroyed forthwith? This is the answer: O foolish man, do you think that it is difficult for Allah to destroy such a

person? Or, do you think that Allah does not destroy him because he has some close relationship with Him? If this is not so, and you yourself know that it is not so, you should understand it well that any community that follows falsehood and commits wicked deeds is always in danger of being removed to make room for a better community to work in its stead. If respite is given and the threat does not take a practical shape, it does not mean that there is no danger at all. Instead of being neglectful, you should make use of every moment of this respite and realize that the false system which you are following is not stable and durable. You should, therefore, build it on stable and durable foundations.

21. And they shall appear before Allah all together,^{*28} then the weak ones will say to those who were arrogant: “Indeed, we were following you, so can you avail us against the punishment of Allah any thing.” They will say: “If Allah had guided us, we would have guided you. It is all the same for us, whether we rage or have patience. For us (there is) not any place of refuge.”^{*29}

وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا فَقَالَ
الضُّعْفَاءُ لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا
كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ
مُغْنُونَ عَنَّا مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ
مِنْ شَيْءٍ قَالُوا لَوْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ
لَهَدَيْنَاكُمْ سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْنَا
أَجْرَعْنَا أَمْ صَبَرْنَا مَا لَنَا مِنْ
مَحِيصٍ

***28** The word *baruz* means to emerge and also implies to

become known. That is why it has been translated into “shall appear before Allah”, for it implies both these meanings. As a matter of fact, all the people are fully exposed all the time before Allah but they do not realize it. They will, however, realize it on the Day of Judgment when they shall be presented before the Greatest of all Judges that they were fully exposed before Him all along. So much so that every deed they did and each and everything they thought and desired is known to Him.

***29** This is to serve as a warning to all those people who follow others blindly or obey and submit to tyrants because they say: We are weak. They are warned, as if to say: You should note it well that those leaders, saints, officers and rulers whom you are following blindly today, will not be able to protect you at all from the chastisement of Allah. Therefore, you should consider it well today where such people, whom you are following or obeying, are themselves going and where they are leading you.

22. And Satan will say when the matter has been decided: “Indeed, Allah promised you the promise of truth. And I (too) promised you, then I betrayed you.^{*30} And I did not have over you any authority except that I invited you and you responded to me.^{*31} So do

وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعَدَ الْحَقُّ
 وَوَعَدْتُكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ وَمَا
 كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا
 أَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي فَلَا
 تَلُومُونَ وَلَوْ مَوْأَأَنْفُسِكُمْ مَا

not blame me, and blame yourselves. I can not help you, and you can not help me. Indeed, I disbelieved in that which you ascribed to me before.^{*32} Indeed, the wrong doers, for them is a painful punishment.”

أَنَا بِمُصْرِحِكُمْ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ
بِمُصْرِحِي إِيَّيْ كَفَرْتُمْ بِمَا
أَشْرَكْتُمُونِ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنَّ
الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ



***30** When the criminals will charge Satan with leading them astray, he will plead guilty, as if to say: You yourselves see now that all the promises and warnings made by Allah have come out true and all the promises which I made have proved to be false. I also confess that it was all deception that I gave you false assurances of prosperity, beguiled you by greed and enticed you in the snare of great expectations. I assured you that in the first instance there will be no life in the Hereafter, and that, if there be any, you will be freed by the intercession of such and such a saint. The only thing you have to do is to make offerings before him: then you may do whatever you please, for he will deliver you from all the consequences. I repeat that I said all these things and asked my agents to say the same.

***31** That is, you cannot say and prove that it was I who forced you to follow the wrong way, whereas you wanted to follow the right way. You will yourselves admit that it is not so. I did no more than this that I invited you to falsehood in opposition to the invitation to the truth and tempted you to

vice instead of virtue. But I had no power to force you to the wrong way, if you desired to follow the right way, when you had the power and the option to follow either of the ways. Now I am ready to bear the burden of the wicked invitation I extended to you, but you are not justified in any way to throw on me the burden of accepting my invitation for you did it on your own responsibility. You should, therefore, yourselves bear all its consequences.

***32** This is a clear proof of shirk in practice, as apart from shirk in creed. As Satan will charge his followers with making him a partner with God, it is obvious that as far as creed is concerned there is no one who makes Satan a partner with God in His Godhead or His worship: nay, every one curses him for his evil ways. Nevertheless, people obey and submit to him and follow him blindly, as if he were their god and that is what has been termed shirk.

Let us now consider this thesis from the opposite point of view. Someone might say that this does not hold good, for this is based on a mere saying of Satan which has been cited here. First, this objection is not sound because Allah Himself would have refuted it, had it been baseless. Secondly, this is not the only instance of shirk in practice in the Quran. Here are a few more instances of this.

(a) It charges the Jews and Christians with shirk because they set up their priests and monks as their Lords besides Allah. (Surah At-Tauba, Ayat 31).

(b) Those who follow the superstitious customs have been called mushriks. (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 136-139).

(c) Those who follow their lusts have been charged with

making their selves as their god. (Al-Furqan, Ayat 43).

(d) Those who are disobedient to Allah have been accused of worshiping Satan. (Suranh Saba, Ayat 60).

(e) Those who follow man made laws without Allah's sanction have been reproved for setting up the makers of the laws without Allah's sanction as partners with God. (SUra Ham-Sajdah, Ayat 21).

All the above instances are clear proofs of the fact that shirk is not confined to this creed alone that one might set up a partner with Allah in His Godhead as an article of faith. But it is also shirk that one should follow and surrender to someone other than Allah without any divine sanction or in spite of a divine prohibition. Such a one shall be guilty of shirk even though the follower might be at the same time cursing him whom he follows and obeys. The only difference between the two kinds of shirk may be the extent of the crime and not its nature.

23. And those who believed and did righteous deeds will be admitted to gardens underneath which rivers flow, abiding therein with the permission of their Lord. Their greeting therein will be: "Peace."^{*33}

وَأُدْخِلَ الَّذِينَ
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ
تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ
فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ تَحِيَّتُمْ فِيهَا
سَلَامٌ

***33** The Arabic word *tahiyyah* is literally a prayer for long life, but in usage it is a greeting at meeting. Therefore, the

expression may mean: They will welcome one another with peace be upon you, or will be welcomed with these words. It may also be noted that the word *salam* implies both a prayer for peace and a congratulation on it.

24. Have you not seen how Allah sets forth a parable. A pure word^{*34} like a good tree, its root sets firm, and its branches (reaching) into sky.^{*35}

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا
كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ
أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ



*34 Though the expression literally means pure word, here it stands for truthful saying and righteous creed. According to the Quran, this saying and creed are the acceptance of the doctrine of *Tauhid*, belief in Prophethood and revelation, and in the life of the Hereafter, for it declares these things to be the fundamental truths.

*35 This is to show the strength and extent of the pure word. As the entire system of the universe hangs upon the reality contained in this pure word which the believer professes, the earth and its entire system cooperates with him and the heaven with its entire system welcomes him. There is, therefore, no conflict between him and the law of nature, and everything in its very nature extends its help to him.

25. Giving its fruit at all times, by the permission of its Lord.^{*36} And Allah

تُؤْتِي أَكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ
رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ

sets forth parables for mankind that perhaps they will reflect.

لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ



***36** That is, the pure word is so fruitful that every person (or community) who bases his system of life on it, gets benefit from it every moment for it helps to produce clearness in thought, balance in temperament, strength in character, purity in morals, firmness in conduct, righteousness in talk, straightforwardness in conversation, good temperament in social behavior, nobility in culture, justice and equity in economy, honesty in politics, nobility in war, sincerity in peace; confidence in promises and pledges. In short, it is the elixir that changes everything into gold if one makes the proper use of it.

26. And the parable of an evil word^{*37} is like an evil tree, uprooted from above the earth, not possessing any stability.^{*38}

وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ



***37** Evil word is the opposite of pure word. It may be applied to everything that is unreal and wrong but here it stands for any false creed that one might adopt as a basis of his system of life, irrespective of whether it be atheism or heresy or disbelief or shirk or idol worship or any other ism that has not been brought by a Messenger.

***38** And evil word (false creed) has no stability because it is against the law of nature. Therefore, everything in the universe opposes it and refutes it, as if the earth hates it

and is ready to spit out its seeds every time they are sown in it, and if some seed succeeds in growing an evil tree, heaven suppresses down its branches. In fact, false creed could never have been allowed to develop, if man had not been given the freedom of choice and respite for work for the sake of his trial. That is why when same foolish people exert to establish a system of life on it, it is allowed to grow to a certain extent, but it produces nothing but harmful results as long as it lasts. And no sooner does it encounter with adverse circumstances than it is thoroughly uprooted from the earth.

The distinction between the pure word and the evil word is so apparent that anyone who makes a critical study of the religious, moral, intellectual and cultural history of the world can perceive it easily. For the pure word has always been the one and same during the whole history of mankind and has never been uprooted. On the contrary, there have been innumerable evil words but each and every one has been so uprooted that there has remained hardly anything of it except its name in the pages of history. Nay, some of these had proved to be so absurd that if these are mentioned today one wonders how one could have followed such nonsensical things.

There has been another noteworthy difference between the two words. Whenever and wherever the pure word has been adopted by an individual or a community, its blessings had not been confined to that individual and community but had benefited all around them. On the contrary, whenever and wherever an evil word has been adopted by

an individual or a community, its evils had spread chaos and disorder all around them.

In this connection, it should also be noted that the parable of the pure word and the evil word explains the same theme that had been explained by the similitude of the mound of ashes that is blown away by the wind of the stormy day (Ayat 18) and of the foam of flood, and the scum of the melted metals. (Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 17).

27. Allah keeps firm those who believe, by a firm saying, in the life of this world and in the Hereafter.*³⁹

And Allah will cause to go astray those who are wrong doers.*⁴⁰ And Allah does what He wills.

يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الآخِرَةِ وَيُضِلُّ
اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا

يَشَاءُ



*³⁹ That is, the believers remain steadfast during the life of this world because of their stable system of life based on this pure word. For this gives them a straight point of view, a sound system of thought and a comprehensive theory of life, and it serves as a master key to the unraveling of all knots and the solving of all problems. With its help, they acquire that strength of character and that firmness of conduct which keep them steady in the face of every vicissitude of life. This provides them also with such solid principles of life which give them peace of mind and heart, and prevent them from deviation and caprice. Above all,

when, after the life of this world, they will enter into the life of the Hereafter, they will remain perfectly calm without any tinge of fear or anxiety, for they will find everything therein to be in accordance with their expectations, as if they were fully acquainted with every aspect of it before they entered into it. For they had been fully informed of, and therefore fully prepared for every stage and phase of this life. That is why they will pass through every stage with perfect calmness and firmness in contrast to the disbelievers who built their worldly lives on an evil word and will, therefore, be taken aback to find everything against their expectations.

*40 That is, Allah lets the transgressors, who discard the pure word and follow an evil word, go astray by creating confusion in their minds and misdirecting their efforts because of this deviation. That is why they cannot find the right way of thought and action and so fail miserably.

28. Did you not see at those who have exchanged Allah's favor with ingratitude, and settled their people to the abode of ruin.

﴿ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ بَدَّلُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ كُفْرًا وَأَحَلُّوا قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ ﴾

29. Hell, in which they will (enter to) burn, and an evil place to settle in.

﴿ جَهَنَّمَ يَصَلُّونَهَا وَبِئْسَ الْقَرَارُ ﴾

30. And they set up rivals to Allah that they may mislead

﴿ وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا لِيُضِلُّوا عَنْ

(people) from His path. Say: “Enjoy for a while, then certainly, your journey’s end will be to the Fire.”

سَبِيلِهِ ۗ قُلْ تَمَتَّعُوا فَإِنَّ مَصِيرَكُمْ إِلَى النَّارِ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. Say (O Muhammad) to My those slaves who have believed that they should establish prayer and spend from what We have provided them, secretly and publicly, before^{*41} that there comes a day in which there will be no bargaining, nor friendship.^{*42}

قُلْ لِعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعَ فِيهِ وَلَا خِلَالٌ ﴿٣١﴾

***41** That is, the believers should adopt an attitude of gratitude in contrast to the disbelievers (Ayat 29). The practical form their gratitude should take is that they should establish Salat and spend their wealth in the way of Allah.

***42** That is, on that Day none shall be able to rescue himself either by ransom or by intercession.

32. Allah is He^{*43} who has created the heavens and the earth, and He sent down water from the sky, producing thereby of the fruits as provision for you. And He has made the ships to be of service to you, that

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْفُلُوكَ

they may sail through the sea by His command, and He has made rivers to be of service to you.

لَتَجْرَىٰ فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ
وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْأَنْهَارَ

*43 That is, it is the same Allah Whose bounties they are repaying with ingratitude and disobedience and with Whom they are setting up equals even though He has been so bountiful to them.

33. And He has made to be of service to you the sun and the moon, constantly pursuing their courses. And He has made of service to you, the night and the day.*44

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ
دَائِبِينَ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ
وَالنَّهَارَ

*44 The words *sakh-khara-lakum* of the text in Ayats 32-33 have misled those people who have translated these into “subjected to you”. So much so that some of them interpret these verses to mean that the main aim of the life of man is to bring the earth and heavens under his subjection, whereas their real meaning is “the earth and heavens are subjected to certain laws and they serve you under these laws.” As a matter of fact Allah has subjected all these things to such laws as are beneficial for man. Had not a ship been subjected to certain physical laws, there could have been no navigation at all. Had not a river been subjected to certain laws, it could not have been possible to take out canals from them. Likewise if the heavenly bodies (the sun and the moon, etc.) and the earth and day and night had not been subjected to certain fixed laws, life

could not have been possible, not to speak of civilized life

34. And He gave you from all that you asked of Him.^{*45} And if you would count the blessings of Allah, never will you be able to count them. Certainly, man is indeed a wrong doer, exceedingly ungrateful.

وَأَاتَكُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ مَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُ
وَإِن تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَظَلُومٌ
كَفَّارٌ

***45** “And He gave you from all that you asked of Him”: He has provided for everything that is required for your life, its development and evolution.

35. And when Abraham said:^{*46} “O my Lord, make this city^{*47} secure, and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols.”

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ
هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا وَاجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ
أَنْ نَّعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ

***46** In the preceding verses (32-35), an appeal was made to the Quraish to be grateful to that Allah Who has bestowed so many bounties on mankind in general. But in this passage the same appeal is being made on the plea that Allah had bestowed His special bounties on the Quraish in particular. They have been asked to remember that Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had settled forefathers of the Quraish near the Kabah and made their city, Makkah, a city of peace and Allah showered His blessings on the Quraish in answer to the prayer of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). They have been

admonished to remember those bounties and mend their ways.

*47 Makkah.

36. “O my Lord, they indeed have led astray^{*48} many among mankind. So whoever follows me, then he is indeed of me. And whoever disobeys me, then You are certainly Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.”^{*49}

رَبِّ إِنِّمَنْ أَضَلَّلْنَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ
النَّاسِ فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي
وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ غَفُورٌ
رَّحِيمٌ

*48 This is a figurative way of saying that idols have been the means of turning many people away from Allah’s way into the ways of deviation.

*49 This forbearance shown towards those who followed a different way from the right way is an instance of Prophet Abraham’s (peace be upon him) leniency to mankind. He left their case to the Forgiveness and Mercy of Allah for he could not bear to see them under divine scourge. Another instance of this has been cited in Surah Houd. When the angels were on their way to destroy the wicked people of Lot, Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) began to plead for them: Abraham began to dispute with Us concerning the people of Lot for he was tender hearted and merciful. (Surah Houd, Ayats 74-75). Likewise Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was so tender hearted that even when Allah will show to him that his followers had deviated from the right way, he will plead their case: Now if you punish them, they are your own servants, and if you forgive them, you

are All-Mighty and All-Wise.(Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 118).

37. “O our Lord, I have indeed settled some of my offspring in an uncultivated valley near your sacred House. O our Lord, that they may establish prayer. So make the hearts among the people affectionately inclined toward them, and provide for them from the fruits^{*50} that they might be thankful.”

رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي
بَوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ
الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ
فَاجْعَلْ أَفْئِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ
تَهْوَى إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِنْ
الْثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ

***50** Allah granted this prayer of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). That was why people from the whole of Arabia used to come there for Hajj and Umrah at the time of the revelation of this Surah, and now people gather there from all over the world.

Besides this, there is plenty of food and fruit in all seasons of the year, though the valley is absolutely barren and no vegetation grows in it even for animals.

38. “O our Lord, certainly You know that which we conceal and that which we proclaim.^{*51} And is^{*52} not hidden from Allah any thing on the earth, nor in the heavens.”

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ مَا نُخْفِي وَمَا
نُعَلِنُ وَمَا تَخْفَى عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ
شَيْءٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ

***51** That is, Lord: You hears what I utter with my tongue and also has full knowledge of my thoughts and feelings.

***52** This parenthetical clause has been inserted to confirm the statement of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him).

39. “All the praises be to Allah who has given me, in my old age, Ishmael and Isaac. Surely, my Lord is indeed the All Hearer of supplication.”

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى
الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ
رَبِّي لَسَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴿٣٩﴾

40. “O my Lord, make me to establish prayer, and from my offspring (also). O our Lord, and accept my supplication.”

رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ
ذُرِّيَّتِي رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءِ ﴿٤٠﴾

41. “O our Lord, forgive me and my parents and the believers on the day when the reckoning will be established.”^{*53}

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ
وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ ﴿٤١﴾

***53** Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) included his mushrik father in his prayer because he had made promise that he would pray to his Lord for his forgiveness (Surah Maryam, Ayat 48). But afterwards, when he realized that he should not pray for his forgiveness because he was an enemy of Allah, he absolved himself of that promise. (Surah At-Tauba, Ayat 114).

42. And do not think that Allah is unaware of what the wrong doers do. He merely gives them respite until a day wherein eyes will stare in horror.

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفِيلاً عَمَّا
يَعْمَلُ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنَّمَا
يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ
الْأَبْصَارُ

43. (They will be) hastening forward, their heads lifted up, their gaze not returning towards them,^{*54} and their hearts as empty.

مُهْطِعِينَ مُقْنِعِي رُءُوسِهِمْ لَا
يَرْتَدُّ إِلَيْهِمْ طَرْفُهُمْ وَأَفْئِدَتُهُمْ
هَوَاءٌ

***54** This graphic picture depicts the horrible plight of the wrongdoers on the Day of Reckoning. When they will realize the situation, they will be so taken aback that they will have their looks fixed straight in front of them without seeing anything.

44. And warn mankind of a day when the punishment will come upon them, then those who did wrong will say: “Our Lord, relieve us for a little while. We will answer Your call and will follow the messengers.” (It will be answered): “And had you not sworn before (that there)

وَأَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمُ
الْعَذَابُ فَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
رَبَّنَا أَخْرِنَا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ نَجِبْ
دَعْوَتَكَ وَنَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُلَ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ
تَكُونُوا أَقْسَمْتُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلُ مَا

would not be any decline for you.”

لَكُمْ مِنْ زَوَالٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

45. “And you dwelt in the dwellings of those who wronged themselves (of old) and it became clear to you how We dealt with them. And We put forth parables for you.”

وَسَكَنْتُمْ فِي مَسْكِنِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمْ كَيْفَ فَعَلْنَا بِهِمْ وَضَرَبْنَا لَكُمْ الْأَمْثَالَ ﴿٤٥﴾

46. And indeed, they plotted their plot, and their plot was with Allah. And even though their plot was such whereby the mountains should be moved.^{*55}

وَقَدْ مَكَرُوا مَكَرَهُمْ وَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَكَرُهُمْ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ مَكَرُهُمْ لِتَرْوِلَ مِنْهُ الْجِبَالُ ﴿٤٦﴾

***55** That is, you have seen that the former people who violated the divine law, and who opposed the message, devised very effective and cunning schemes to avert the consequences of their iniquity, but Allah defeated them with His single counter device. You did not give up your crafty schemes against the message of truth in the vain hope that your strong measures would succeed where the schemes of your predecessors had failed.

47. So do not think that Allah will fail to keep His promise to His messengers.^{*56} Certainly, Allah is All

فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْلِفَ وَعْدِهِ رُسُلَهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ

Mighty, All Able of Retribution.



***56** Though this has been addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), it is really meant for his opponents. They are being warned that they should not delude themselves because of the delay in their punishment. They should note it well that Allah fulfilled the promises He made to the former Messengers and defeated their opponents. Likewise He will surely fulfill the promises He had made to Muhammad (peace be upon him).

48. The day when the earth will be changed to another earth, and the heavens (also)^{*57} and they will come forth to Allah, the One, the Irresistible.

يَوْمَ تُبَدَّلُ الْأَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ
وَالسَّمَوَاتُ وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ
الْقَهَّارِ



***57** It is obvious from this verse and some hints in the Quran that on the occasion of Resurrection, the Earth and the Heavens will not be totally destroyed but at the blowing of the First Trumpet, the existing physical system shall be disarranged. After this, between the blowing of the First and the Last Trumpet (Allah alone knows how long this interval will last), the present form and aspect of the earth and the heavens shall be transformed and a new physical system with new physical laws will come into existence. That will be the world of the Hereafter. When the Last Trumpet will be blown, all human beings from Adam to those born before the First Trumpet, shall be brought to life and appear before Allah. The Quran calls this *Hashr*

which literally means “to muster and gather together”. It appears from the wording of the Quran and some clear statements in the traditions that this will take place on this Earth. The Seat of Judgment and the Scales will be established on the Earth and the decisions will be passed here. This is also clear from the Quran and the traditions that the life in the Hereafter will not merely be a spiritual life but the very physical and spiritual life which we are living now on this earth; and every individual shall receive his reward or punishment exactly in that personality in which he or she is living in the life of this world.

49. And you will see the criminals on that day bound together in shackles.

وَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ
مُقَرَّنِينَ فِي الْأَصْفَادِ ﴿٤٩﴾

50. Their garments of pitch (tar),^{*58} and fire covering their faces.

سَرَابِيلُهُمْ مِنْ قَطَرَانٍ وَتَغْشَى
وُجُوهُهُمْ النَّارُ ﴿٥٠﴾

***58** Some commentators and translators are of the opinion that *Qatiran* stands for sulphur or molten copper but actually it stands for tar and the like.

51. That Allah may recompense each soul for what it has earned. Truly, Allah is swift at reckoning.

لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ مَّا
كَسَبَتْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٥١﴾

52. This is a proclamation for mankind and that they may be warned by it, and that they may know that He is only One God, and that those of understanding may take heed.

هَذَا بَلَّغٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنذَرُوا بِهِ
وَلِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌُ وَاحِدٌ
وَلِيَذْكُرُوا الْأَلْبَابَ





Al-Hijr

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah takes its name *Al-Hijr* from Ayat 80 about the people of Al-Hijr (Thamud) who denied the messengers.

Period of Revelation

It is clear from its topics and style that the period of its revelation is about the same as that of Surah Ibrahim. For two things are quite prominent in its background. First, it appears from the repeated warnings in this Surah that in spite of the fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been propagating the message for many years, his people in general had not shown any inclination towards its acceptance. Nay, they had become more and more obdurate and stubborn in their antagonism, enmity and ridicule with the passage of time. Secondly, by that time the Prophet (peace be upon him) had begun to feel a little tired of making strenuous efforts to eradicate disbelief and opposition of his people. That is why Allah has consoled and comforted him over and over again by way of encouragement.

Topics and the Central Theme

Though the main topics of the surah are:

1. warning to those who rejected his message, opposed it tooth and nail, and ridiculed him, and
2. Comfort and encouragement to the Prophet (peace be upon him).

It does not mean that this Surah does not contain admonition and instructions. As a matter of fact, the Quran never confines itself to mere warning; rebuke and censure, but resorts to precept in every suitable place. Accordingly, this Surah contains brief arguments for *Tauhid* on the one hand, and admonition in the story of Adam and Satan on the other.

1. Alif. Lam. Ra. These are the verses of the Book and a clear Quran.*¹

الرَّءِيسُ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ
وَقُرْءَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١﴾

*¹ This verse is the brief introduction to the Surah, and immediately after this begins its theme. "These are the verses of the Book and a clear Quran": These are the verses of that Quran which makes its meaning lucid and understandable.

2. Perhaps those who disbelieve will wish if they were Muslims.

رُبَّمَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ
كَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٢﴾

3. Leave them to eat and enjoy, and let false hope distract them. Soon they will come to know.

ذَرَّهُمْ يَأْكُلُوا وَيَتَمَتَّعُوا
وَيُلْهِمُهُمُ الْأَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣﴾

4. And We did not destroy any township but that for it there was a known decree.*2

وَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا وَهَهَا
كِتَابٌ مَّعْلُومٌ

*2 This is to refute the fallacious argument of the disbelievers that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was not a true Prophet because they had received no prompt punishment for their disbelief. It is like this: We have never seized a community at the first committal of kufr. We prescribe a limit for every community to hear and understand the message and reform its ways. Then We tolerate its mischief and evil deeds up to that limit and allow it full freedom to do as it likes, and give it respite till the term expires. That is why We are tolerating their attitude of ridicule and denial. (For the full meaning of respite, please refer to E.N. 18 of Surah Ibrahim).

5. Any nation will not precede its term, nor will they ever postpone it.

مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلَهَا وَمَا
يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ

6. And they say: “O you upon whom the admonition*3 has been sent down, surely you are indeed a mad man.”*4

وَقَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِي نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ
الذِّكْرُ إِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُونٌ

*3 The word *zikr* literally means “to cause to remember”, “to caution” and “to give advice”. But the Quran has used it as a technical term for “admonition”, which comes as a precept. Thus all the Books that had been sent down to the Messengers were *zikr*, and the Quran is also *zikr*.

***4** This was a sarcastic remark that was made by the opponents, for they did not acknowledge that the admonition had been sent down to the Prophet (peace be upon him): otherwise they could not say that he was insane. What they really meant by this remark was: You, who claim that the admonition has been sent down to you, are insane. A similar remark was also made by Pharaoh concerning Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). Addressing his courtiers, he said: The Messenger who has been sent to you is insane. (Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayat 27).

7. Why do you not bring to us the angels if you are among the truthful.

لَوْ مَا تَأْتِينَا بِالْمَلَائِكَةِ إِن كُنْتَ
مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٧﴾

8. We do not send down the angels except with truth, and they (the disbelievers) would not then be reprieved.^{*5}

مَا نُنَزِّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا
كَانُوا إِذَا مُنْظَرِينَ ﴿٨﴾

***5** “We do not send down the angels.” We do not send down the angels for the mere fun of it in response to the request of the people, nor are they sent to unveil the reality before them in order to show to them all the unseen things to which the Messengers invite them to believe. As a matter of fact, angels are sent down on that occasion when it is decreed to pass judgment on sane wicked people. At that time the judgment comes into operation without extending any invitation to the condemned people to accept the message, for their period of respite ends as soon as the reality is unveiled before them. “Except with truth.” They

bring down truth with them. That is, they come down to eradicate falsehood and to establish truth in its stead. Or, in other words, it means, they come down to put into force the judgment of Allah.

9. Certainly We, It is We who have sent down the admonition (the Quran), and certainly We are indeed its guardian.*6

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُد
لِحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾

*6 That is, you should note it well that it is We Who have sent down this *zikir*. Thus it is not Our Messenger whom you are calling insane but in fact this abusive remark applies to Us. Moreover, you should know that it is Our Word and We are preserving it. Therefore, you can do no harm to it, nor can you discredit it by your ridicules, taunts and objections, nor can you hamper its progress. Whatever you may do against it, no one will ever be able to change or tamper with it.

10. And surely, We sent (messengers) before you (O Muhammad) among the factions of the former people.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي شِيَعِ
الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. And never came to them any messenger except that they did ridicule him.

وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا كَانُوا
بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١١﴾

12. Thus do We make it enter into the hearts of the criminals.

كَذَلِكَ نَسْلُكُهُ فِي قُلُوبِ
الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

13. They would not believe in it,^{*7} and indeed the example of the former people has gone before.

لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ ^ط وَقَدْ خَلَتْ سُنَّةُ
الْأَوَّلِينَ

*7 The majority of the translators and commentators are of the opinion that the pronoun “it” Ayat 12, refers to their mockery, occurring in Ayat 11, and in “they would not believe in it” in Ayat 13, refers to the admonition occurring in Ayat 9. Then Ayats 12-13 will be rendered like this: “Thus we cause mockery enter into the hearts of the criminals and they do not believe in the admonition”. Though grammatically there is nothing wrong with this version, yet our version of “it” will be better even grammatically. According to this Ayat 12 will mean, when the admonition enters into the hearts of the believers it gives them peace of mind and comfort of heart. But when the same enters into the hearts of the criminals it becomes a hot rod, and burns their minds and hearts.

14. And (even) if We opened to them a gate from the heaven and they continued therein to ascend.

وَلَوْ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَابًا مِّنَ
السَّمَاءِ فَظَلُّوا فِيهِ يَعْرُجُونَ

15. They would say: “Our eyes have only been dazzled. Nay, but we are a people bewitched.”

لَقَالُوا إِنَّمَا سُكِّرَتْ أَبْصَارُنَا بَلْ
نَحْنُ قَوْمٌ مَّسْحُورُونَ

16. And indeed, We have set within the heaven

وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا

mansions of stars,^{*8} and We have beautified it for the beholders.^{*9}



وَزَيَّنَّا لِلنَّظِيرِينَ

***8** In the preceding Ayats 14-15 it was stated that the disbelievers had become so hardened against the Quran that they would not have believed in it even if they had ascended the Heaven and seen with their own eyes the signs mentioned in it. Now in Ayats 16-22, some of the signs are being cited in order to convince there of its truth.

Buruj (mansions of stars) are signs of Allah. For it is not possible to pass through one sphere of the Heaven into another, as each sphere of the space has been fortified by invisible boundaries. In this connection, it may be noted that literally the Arabic word *burj* means a fortified place, but as a technical term of ancient astronomy this stood for each of the twelve signs of the Zodiac, which marked the sun's path through the heavens. This has led some of the commentators to form the opinion that in this verse the word *buruj* refers to the same. But there are some others who think that it means stars or planets. However, if we consider this word in the context of Ayat 19, we are led to the conclusion that probably it stands for spheres.

***9** "We have beautified it": We have placed a shining star or planet in each of these spheres and made them look beautiful. In other words, it means; We have not made the boundless universe dismal, desolate and frightful, but so beautiful that one finds marvelous order and harmony in it everywhere, and sights therein are so attractive that each one of these charms hearts and minds. This wonderful

structure of the universe is a clear proof of the fact that its Creator is not only Great and All-Wise but is also a perfect Artist. The Quran has also stated this aspect of the Creator in Surah As-Sajadah, Ayat 7: (Allah is) that God Who has created in perfect beauty everything He has created.

17. And We have guarded it from every accursed devil.*¹⁰

وَحَفِظْنَاهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِيمٍ

*¹⁰ That is, these spheres are so fortified that they are beyond the reach of every Satan, for all Satans including those of jinns, have been confined to that sphere in which the Earth has been placed and they enjoy no more access to visit other spheres than the other dwellers of this sphere. This has been mentioned in order to remove a common misunderstanding. The common people believed, and still believe, that Satan and his descendants have a free access to every place in the universe. On the contrary, the Quran says that Satans cannot go beyond a certain limit and they have no unlimited power of ascension.

18. Except him who steals the hearing (eavesdrop),*¹¹ he is then pursued by a clear flaming fire.*¹²

إِلَّا مَنْ أَسْتَرَقَ السَّمْعَ فَاتَّبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ مُبِينٌ

*¹¹ This is the answer to the false claim of the soothsayers, diviners, hermits, conjurers and the like who pretended to receive communications from the Heaven. The Quran says that in fact they do not possess any means of obtaining information about unseen things. Satans, however, try to

eaves-drop because they are by nature more like angels than human beings, but in reality, they succeed in obtaining very little information about it.

*12 In Arabic the word *shihab-i-mubin* literally means a fiery flame. In Surah As-Saffaat, Ayat 10, the same thing has been called *shihab-i-thaqib* (flame that pierces through darkness). This may or may not necessarily be a meteor for it is just possible that it may be some type of rays such as cosmic rays or even a stronger type which we have not been able to discover as yet. Anyhow, if the fiery flame that pursues Satans may be taken to be a meteor, a countless number of these can form a fortification around our sphere of the universe. Scientific observations made with the help of the telescope have shown that billions of these meteors are rushing from space in a mass of rainfall.

19. And the earth, We have spread it out, and We have placed therein firm mountains, and We have caused to grow therein of all kinds of things in due proportion.*13

وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَوْزُونٍ

*13 The growth of every kind of plant in a limited extent is another sign of the wisdom and power of Allah. For the generative power of every vegetable plant is so great that if free growth had been allowed to even one kind of plant, it would have covered the whole surface of the earth. But it is by the design of the All-Wise and All-Powerful Creator that every kind of vegetable is produced in a balanced measure.

There is another aspect of the vegetable life. Each and every kind of it is allowed to grow only to a fixed size, height, and thickness, which is a proof of the fact that the Creator himself prescribed the structure, the shape, the size, the height, the leaves and branches, and the number of each and every plant, and no plant is allowed to go beyond any of these fixed limits.

20. And We have made for you therein means of livelihood, and (for) those for whom you are not providers.

وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعِيشَ وَمَنْ
لَسْتُمْ لَهُدْ بَرَازِقِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

21. And there is not any thing, but that with Us are its treasures. And We do not send it down except in a known measure. ^{*14}

وَإِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا
خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنزِّلُهُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ
مَّعْلُومٍ ﴿٢١﴾

*14 This is to bring home the fact that it is not vegetable life alone that has a fixed limit to its growth, etc. The same is true of everything that exists, whether it be air, water, light, heat, cold, mineral, vegetable, animal or power or energy, in short, each and every thing exists in the prescribed quantity, number, etc. which neither decreases nor increases. It is this determined course in each and every thing which has produced appropriate balance and proportion in the entire system of the universe to such a perfection that one is led to the inevitable conclusion that the whole thing has been designed by its All-Wise Creator. For, had the universe come into existence by mere accident

or had it been created by many gods, it was impossible to have such a perfect balance and appropriate proportion with perpetual consistence in so many different things and powers.

22. And We send the winds fertilizing, then We send down water from the sky, then We give you drink from it. And you are not the guardians of its stores.

وَأَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيحَ لَوَاقِحَ فَأَنْزَلْنَا
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَسْقَيْنَاكُمُوهُ
وَمَا أَنْتُمْ لَهُ بِخَازِنِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

23. And certainly We, We it is who give life, and cause death, and We are the Inheritors.*15

وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَنَحْنُ
الْوَارِثُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

***15** It is to impress this: Your worldly life and all you possess are transitory and temporary, and Allah alone is Eternal. Your end shall come sooner or later, and you shall leave everything behind in this world, which will again become a part of Our treasure.

24. And certainly, We know the preceding (generations) among you, and certainly We know those who will come later.

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَقْدِمِينَ
مِنْكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَأْخِرِينَ
﴿٢٤﴾

25. And indeed, your Lord, it is He who will gather them. Indeed, He is All Wise, All Knowing.*16

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَجْمَعُهُمْ
إِنَّهُ
حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

***16** “He is All-Wise”, therefore His Wisdom demands that He should gather the entire mankind and reward or punish each individual in accordance with his deeds. And “He is All-Knowing”, therefore no individual, whosoever he may be, can escape from Him. As each and every particle of each and every individual is in His knowledge, He is able to bring entire mankind to life in the Hereafter. Thus anyone who denies life in the Hereafter is really ignorant of the Wisdom of Allah; and anyone who considers it impossible that those particles of the human body, which were all scattered about, could again be brought together in the form of the body that was alive, is ignorant of the All Comprehensive knowledge and power of Allah.

26. And indeed, We created man from sounding clay, from mud molded into shape. ^{*17}

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَلٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ

***17** The Arabic word *salsal* means the dried clay which produces a sound like pottery. *Hams* is the black mud which has become so rotten as to be in a fermented state. *Masnun* has a double meaning: (a) rotten clay which has become greasy, (b) clay which has been molded into a shape. It is clear from the wording of the text that at first the image of man was made of clay from rotten earth and when it dried up, soul was breathed into it. Thus the Quran positively refutes the Darwinian theory of evolution that man came into existence after passing through continuous genetic adaptations. It will, therefore, be a futile attempt, as some modernized commentators have done, to prove that

theory from the Quran.

27. And the jinn, We had created before, from the fire of a scorching wind.*18

وَالْجَانَّ خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ مِنْ نَارِ
السَّمُومِ

*18 As *samum* is not wind, *nar-i-samum* will mean flame of intense heat and not of fire. This is the explanation of those passages in which it has been stated that jinns have been created from fire.

28. And when your Lord said to the angels: “Indeed I will create a man from sounding clay, from mud molded into shape.”

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي
خَلَقْتُ بَشَرًا مِّنْ صَلْصَلٍ مِّنْ
حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ

29. “So when I have fashioned him and have breathed into him of My Spirit,*19 then fall down, to him in prostration.”

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ
رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ

*19 “And have breathed into him of My Spirit” means when I have cast a reflection of My divine characteristics on him. This shows that the soul of man implies life, knowledge, power, will, discretion and other human characteristics in the aggregate. These are in reality a slight reflection of divine characteristics that has been cast on the human body, which was originally created from dried clay. And it is this divine reflection on the human body which has raised him to the position of the vicegerent of Allah and

made him that worthy being before whom angels and every earthly thing should bow down.

As a matter of fact, the source of each characteristic of everything is one divine characteristic or the other, as is borne by a tradition: Allah divided mercy into one hundred parts: then He reserved ninety-nine parts for Himself and sent down the remaining one part to the earth. It is because of that one part that the creatures show mercy to one another. So much so that it is due to this that an animal refrains from placing the hoof on its young ones.

In this connection one has to be on strict guard against the notion that the possession of a part of any divine characteristic amounts to the possession of a part of Godhead. This is because Godhead is absolutely beyond the reach of each and every creation.

30. So the angels fell prostrate, all of them together.

فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ

31. Except Iblis. He refused to be with those who prostrated.*20

إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى أَنْ يَكُونَ مَعَ السَّاجِدِينَ

*20 Please compare this passage (Ayats 30-43) with Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 30-39; Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 117-120; and Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 11-25 and also refer to E.Ns appended to these Ayats.

32. He (Allah) said: “O Iblis, what is (matter) with

قَالَ يَا إِبْلِيسُ مَا لَكَ أَلَّا تَكُونَ

you that you are not with those who prostrate.”

مَعَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

33. He said: “Never would I prostrate to a man whom You created from sounding clay, from mud molded into shape.”

قَالَ لَمْ أَكُنْ لِأَسْجُدَ لِبَشَرٍ خَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ صَلْصَلٍ مِنْ حَمَإٍ مَسْنُونٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

34. He (Allah) said: “Then get out from here. Indeed, you are rejected.”

قَالَ فَأَخْرِجْ مِنْهَا فَإِنَّكَ رَجِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. “And indeed, the curse shall be upon you until the Day of Recompense.”*21

وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَةَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٣٥﴾

*21 That is, you shall remain accursed up to the Resurrection. Then you shall be punished for your disobedience on the Day of Judgment.

36. He said: “My Lord, then relieve me until the day they will be resurrected.”

قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

37. He (Allah) said: “So indeed, you are of those relieved.”

قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

38. “Until the Day of the appointed time.”

إِلَى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. He said: “My Lord, because You have sent me astray, I shall indeed adorn (the path of error) for them on the earth, and I shall indeed mislead them all.”*22

قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا أَغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ



*22 That is, thou hast beguiled me by commanding me to bow down before a creature who is inferior to me: for it is obvious that I could not obey such an order. Therefore, I will now beguile them and disobey Thee. In other words, Iblis meant to say: I will make the worldly life, its enjoyments and its transitory benefits so alluring for man that he will forget the responsibilities of the vicegerent of Allah, and that he shall have to render his account in the Hereafter. They will also forget Thee and will disobey Thee, even though they would profess to remember Thee.

40. “Except your sincere slaves among them.”

إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ الْمُخْلِصِينَ مِنْهُمْ



41. He said: “This is the path to Me, (leading) straight.”*23

قَالَ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ عَلَيَّ مُسْتَقِيمٌ



*23 This verse (41) may have another meaning: This is the right thing: I also will stick to this.

42. “Certainly My slaves, you shall have no authority over them, except those who

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ إِلَّا مَنْ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنْ

may follow you from among
the misguided.”*24

*24 This verse (42) also may have another meaning: You will have no power over My servants (common people) to force them to disobey Me. However, We will give freedom of action to those who will willingly or deliberately follow you, and we will not forcibly prevent them from your way, if they intended to follow you.

According to the first rendering, these verses will mean this: The way followed by My sincere servants is the only straight way to reach Me. Satan will have no power over those people who follow it, for I will choose them to be My own servants. Satan himself admitted that he will not be able to entice them. On the contrary, he will succeed in beguiling those people who themselves will deviate from the way of obedience. They will then wander farther and farther away following his temptations and allurements.

According to the second meaning, the passage will mean this: When Satan challenged that he would beguile people from the way of Allah by making this worldly life very tempting to them, Allah accepted his challenge but made it clear to him that he was being allowed only to beguile people with temptation, but was not being given any power to force them to deviate from the right way. At this, Satan clarified that his challenge did not apply to those people whom Allah will choose for Himself. As this exception might have led to a misunderstanding that Allah may choose any people for Himself to keep them safe and secure from the reach of Satan, Allah clarified it, saying: Only that

person will follow you, who himself will deviate from the right way. As a corollary to this, that person, who will not deviate from the right way will not follow you, and will, thus become Our servant, whom We will choose for Ourselves.

43. “And certainly, Hell is the promised place for them all.”*25

وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمَوْعِدُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ



*25 In order to comprehend the purpose for which the story of Prophet Adam and Satan has been related here, we should keep in mind the context in which this has occurred. In the preceding verses (1-25), it has been stated that the disbelievers were following the ways of deviation that would lead them to perdition. This story has been related to warn them that the ways they were following were the ways of Satan, their eternal enemy, so as to say: You should realize the consequences of following Satan, who has enticed you in this snare, and is leading you to the lowest depths of degradation because of this enmity and envy. In contrast to this, Our Prophet is doing his utmost to free you from his snare and lead you to the height of success, which as a man you should desire to achieve. But it is a pity that you are regarding your enemy (Satan) as your friend, and your friend (Our Prophet) as your enemy.

Secondly, the story also makes quite clear to them this thing: There is only one way of salvation and that is the way of obedience to Allah. If you discard this way, every other way will be a way of Satan which will take you

directly to Hell.

Then this story is meant to bring home to them this fact: You yourselves are responsible for your wrong deeds and not Satan; for, the most he can do is to beguile you from the obedience of Allah and hold temptations before you. It is, therefore, your own concern and responsibility to be beguiled or not to be beguiled by Satan.

44. “There are seven gates in it. To each gate, a portion of them has been designated.”*26

لَهَا سَبْعَةُ أَبْوَابٍ لِّكُلِّ بَابٍ مِنْهُمْ
جُزْءٌ مَّقْسُومٌ

*26 Sinners will be divided into different groups in accordance with their different sins for their entry into Hell from seven different gates specified for each different sin. For instance, the group of atheists shall enter into Hell by one of the seven gates specified for their group. Likewise, mushriks, hypocrites, self-seekers, sensualists, tyrants, propagandists and leaders of disbelief etc. shall each enter into Hell through the gates specified for their group.

45. Indeed, the righteous*27 will be amidst gardens and springs.

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ
وَعُيُونٍ

*27 The righteous people are those who did not follow Satan but feared Allah and lived lives of obedience to Him.

46. (It will be said): “Enter therein, in peace, security.”

أَدْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ ءَامِنِينَ

47. And We shall remove whatever is in their breasts of

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِّنْ غَلٍ

resentment.*²⁸ As brothers,
(they will rest) on raised
couches, facing each other.*²⁹

إِخْوَانًا عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُّتَقَابِلِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

*²⁸ That is, if any spite might have been caused in their hearts in this world because of misunderstandings between the pious people, it shall be removed at the time of their entry into Paradise and they will bear no ill feelings there against each other. (Refer to E.N. 320 of Surah Al-Aaraf).

*²⁹ This verse is explained by the following tradition: It will be announced to the dwellers of the Gardens: Now you will remain hale and hearty forever and shall never fall ill, now you will enjoy eternal life and shall never die, now you will remain young forever and never grow old, and now you will remain forever in Paradise and shall never have to move away from it. There are other traditions that further elucidate life in Paradise to this effect: The dwellers shall have no toil to perform for their livelihood and necessities of life. They will get everything without any labor whatsoever.

48. No fatigue shall touch them therein, nor shall they be driven out of it.

لَا يَمَسُّهُمْ فِيهَا نَصَبٌ وَمَا هُمْ
مِنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

49. Inform (O Muhammad) to My slaves that I am the Oft Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

﴿ نَبِيٌّ عِبَادِي أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ
الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٤٩﴾

50. And that My punishment, it is the painful

وَأَنَّ عَذَابِي هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الْأَلِيمُ

punishment.



51. And inform them about Abraham's guests.*30

وَنَبِّئُهُمْ عَنِ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

*30 The story of Prophets Abraham and Lot (peace be upon them) has been related to tell the disbelievers of Makkah how angels come down with truth. This was in response to their demand: Why do you not bring angels before us, if what you say is true? (Ayat 7). Then, only this brief answer was given: We do not send down angels in this way. When they come down, they come down with truth (Ayat 8). Now these two events are cited as two concrete forms of truth with which the angels came, as if to ask the disbelievers: Now decide for yourselves which of these two forms of truth would you want angels to bring to you. It is obvious that you do not deserve that truth which was sent to Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). Do you then desire that truth which the angels brought to the people of Prophet Lot (peace be upon him)?

52. When they entered upon him and said: "Peace." He said: "Indeed we are afraid of you."*31

إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا
قَالَ إِنَّا مِنْكُمْ وَجِلُونَ

*31 Please compare this story of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) with that contained in Surah Houd, Ayats 69-76.

53. They said: "Do not be afraid, indeed we give you

قَالُوا لَا تَوْجَلْ إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ

good tidings of a boy possessing knowledge.”*32

بُغْلَمٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٥٣﴾

*32 “A boy possessing knowledge”, Prophet Isaac (peace be upon him). His name has been mentioned in connection with this good news in Surah Houd, Ayat 71.

54. He said: Do you give me good tidings of (a son) when old age has overtaken me. Of what then do you give good tidings.”

قَالَ أَبَشَّرْتُمُونِي عَلَىٰ أَنْ مَسَّنِيَ
الْكِبَرُ فِيمَا تَبَشِّرُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

55. They said: “We bring you good tidings in truth. So do not be of the despairing.”

قَالُوا بَشِّرْنَا بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا تَكُن
مِنَ الْقَانِطِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

56. He said: “And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord, except those who are astray.”

قَالَ وَمَنْ يَقْنَطُ مِن رَّحْمَةِ
رَبِّهِ إِلَّا الضَّالُّونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

57. He said: “What is then your business, O messengers.”*33

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا
الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

*33 It appears from the question of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) that angels are sent down in human shape only on extraordinary occasions and on some important expedition.

58. They said: “Indeed, we have been sent to a

قَالُوا إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ

criminal people.”*34

مَجْرِمِينَ
٥٨

*34 The fact that the angels did not name the people of Lot (peace be upon him) but merely referred to them as the wicked people, shows that these people had become so notorious for their wicked deeds that there was no need to mention them by name before Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), who was well acquainted with the moral condition of all the people around him.

59. “Except the family of Lot. Indeed, we will save them all.

إِلَّا عَالَ لُوطٍ إِنَّا لَمُنَجُّوهُمْ
أَجْمَعِينَ
٥٩

60. “Except his wife. We have decreed that she shall be of those who remain behind.”

إِلَّا أُمَّرَأَتَهُ قَدَرْنَا^٧ إِنَّهَا لَمِنَ
الْغَابِرِينَ
٦٠

61. Then when the messengers came to the family of Lot.*35

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ عَالَ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلُونَ
٦١

*35 Please compare this with Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 80-84 and Surah Houd, Ayats 77-83.

62. He said: “Indeed, you are people unknown (to me).”*36

قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ مِّنْكُمْ
٦٢

*36 Here the story has been related in brief. But we learn from Surah Houd, Ayats 77-83 that Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) was greatly perturbed and distressed at the visit

of the angels. He said to himself, “This is a day of woe.” The reason why he was distressed, as implied in the Quran and explicitly expressed in the traditions, was that the angels had come to Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) in the form of beautiful boys, and he knew how perverse and wicked his people were. He was distressed for he could not send them away because they were his guests, and because he did not know how to protect them from those villains.

63. They said: “But, we have brought to you that about which they have been in doubt.”

قَالُوا بَلْ جِئْنَاكَ بِمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ
يَمْتُرُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

64. “And we have come to you with truth, and indeed we are truthful.”

وَأَتَيْنَكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّا
لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

65. “So travel with your family in a part of the night, and you follow behind them.^{*37} And let not anyone among you look back,^{*38} and go on to where you are commanded.”

فَاسْرِبْ بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ
وَاتَّبِعْ أَدْبَارَهُمْ وَلَا يَلْتَفِتْ
مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ وَأَمْضُوا حَيْثُ
تُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

*37 That is, you should walk behind your people lest anyone of them should stay behind.

*38 It did not mean: “look not behind thee, lest thou be consumed,” as stated in the Bible. But it merely meant to warn them: None of you should turn round to see what was

happening behind them lest you should stop to see when you heard the cries of the smitten people. For it is neither the time nor the place viewing the destruction nor shedding tears of regret. If you stop even for a minute in the territory of the smitten people you also might get hurt from the rain of stones.

66. And We conveyed to him this decree that the root of those (sinners) was to be cut off in the early morning.

وَقَضَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ ذَلِكَ الْأَمْرَ أَنَّ
دَابِرَهُمْ هَتُولاَءِ مَقْطُوعٌ مُّصْبِحِينَ



67. And the people of the city came rejoicing.*39

وَجَاءَ أَهْلُ الْمَدِينَةِ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ



*39 This shows that those People had gone to the lowest depths of immorality. No sooner did they hear the news of the arrival of handsome strangers in their town than they rushed rejoicing to the house of Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) and impudently demanded that he should hand over his guests to them for the gratification of their lust. The pity is that there had remained not a single person among them to make a protest against such a heinous sin. Moreover, this shows that all of them, as a community, had totally lost every sense of decency, and they felt no shame at all to make such a wicked demand on him openly. The very fact, that they felt no hesitation in making such a wicked demand brazen facedly from a pious and holy man like

Prophet Lot (peace be upon him), shows that the heinous crime was so common among them that they would not spare anyone.

The Talmud records many instances of the all round moral degradation of the people of Lot. Once a stranger was passing through their territory. As the darkness approached, he was forced to pass the night near Sodom. As he had his own provisions with him, he did not stand in any need of help from the town's folks, so he lay under a tree to pass the night. But a Sodomite entreated him to accompany him to his house. During the night he did away with the donkey and merchandise of the stranger. When he began to cry for help in the morning, the town's folk came there not to help him but to rob him of what had been left with him.

On one occasion Sarah sent her slave to Sodom to inquire after Prophet Lot's household. When the slave entered the town, he saw that a Sodomite was beating a stranger. Naturally the slave of Sarah tried to rouse his sense of decency, saying, why do you ill treat helpless strangers like this? In answer to this appeal, his head was broken in public.

On another occasion a poor man happened to come to Sodom but no one gave him anything to eat. When he was half dead with starvation, he fell to the ground in a helpless plight. A daughter of Prophet Lot saw him and sent some food for him. At this the Sodomites reproached Prophet Lot and his daughter and threatened to expel them from there if they would not refrain from such deeds.

After citing several similar incidents, the Talmud says that those people had become so cruel, so deceitful and so dishonest in their dealings that no traveler could pass safe through their territory nor could a poor person expect any food or help from them. Many a time it so happened that a poor stranger came there, and died from hunger. Then they would strip the clothes from his body and bury him naked. If a foreigner committed the blunder of visiting their territory, they would publicly rob him of everything, and make fool of him if he appealed to them to redress the wrong. Then they would openly commit shameless deeds in the gardens which they had grown in their valley because there was none to rebuke them except Prophet Lot (peace be upon him). The Quran has summed up the whole of their wicked story in two concise sentences: (1) They had already been committing very wicked deeds, Surah Houd, Ayat 78, and (2) You gratify your lust with males: you rob travelers, and you commit wicked deeds publicly in your assemblies.

68. He (Lot) said: “Indeed, they are my guests. So do not humiliate me.”

قَالَ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ ضَيْفِي فَلَا تَفْضَحُونِ ﴿٦٨﴾

69. “And fear Allah and do not disgrace me.”

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تَخْزُونِ ﴿٦٩﴾

70. They said: “Have we not forbidden you from (guarding) people.”

قَالُوا أَوْلَمْ نَنْهَكَ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾

71. He said: “These are my daughters,^{*40} if you must be doing (so).”

قَالَ هَؤُلَاءِ بَنَاتِي إِنْ كُنْتُمْ

فَاعِلِينَ ﴿٧١﴾

***40** In E.N. 87 of Surah Houd, it has been explained what Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) meant by this. It may also be added that such words as these were uttered by an honorable man like him in the last resort, when all his entreaties and earnest requests had failed to prevent those people from their evil designs towards his guests.

Here it will be worthwhile to clear the significance of the words which were uttered by Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) as they occur in Surah Houd (Ayat 78). When he entreated those wicked people not to molest his guests, saying, “Here are my daughters”, he was unaware that his guests were angels in the disguise of handsome boys. The angels revealed their identity only when the wicked crowd gathered at the residence of his guests and began to threaten them with their wicked designs, and Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) began to lament, “I wish I had the power to set you right or I could find some strong support for refuge.” It was then that the angels revealed themselves, saying, “We are envoys sent by your Lord.” This sequence of events shows that Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) had made that offer only when he had felt to be utterly helpless. It is very important to keep this in view because the sequence of events in this Surah is different from that in Surah Houd. One is liable to have a misunderstanding as to why Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) wailed and lamented

when he knew all the while that his guests were angels and could defend themselves against those wicked people. As regards the apparent difference between the two sequences, it may be pointed out that here the important thing to be stated is that the angels come with the truth. Therefore that part of the story (Ayats 61-66) has been related first in order to make the point more prominent.

72. By your life (O Muhammad), indeed, they were in their wild intoxication, wandering blindly.

لَعْمُرِكَ إِنَّهُمْ لَفِي سَكْرَتِهِمْ
يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

73. Then the awful cry seized them at the time of sunrise.

فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ مُشْرِقِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾

74. So We turned the highest (part) of it (city) to its lowest, and rained upon them stones of baked clay.^{*41}

فَجَعَلْنَا عَلِيَّهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّن سِجِّيلٍ ﴿٧٤﴾

***41** These “stones of baked clay” might have been meteoric showers or volcanic eruptions that flew and rained upon them, or these might have been blown by a strong wind.

75. Indeed, in that are sure signs for those who, by signs, do understand.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّمَتَوَسِّمِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

76. And indeed, they (the towns) are (situated) on an established road.^{*42}

وَإِنَّهَا لَبِسَبِيلٍ مُّقِيمٍ ﴿٧٦﴾

***42** That is, that smitten territory lies on the high road from Hijaz (Arabia) to Syria and Egypt. Travelers come across these signs of destruction which are very prominent in the territory that lies to the southeast of the Dead Sea. The geographers are of the opinion that there is no other land on the surface of the Earth which looks desolate as this territory, especially its southern part.

77. Indeed, in that is a sure sign for those who believe.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

78. And indeed the dwellers in the wood^{*43} were wrongdoers.

وَإِن كَانَ أَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ لَظَالِمِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾

***43** The people of *Al-Aikah* were the community of Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) and were called Midianites after the name of their capital city and their territory. As regards *Al-Aikah*, it was the ancient name of Tabuk and literally means a thick forest.

79. So We took vengeance on them. And indeed, both (towns) are (located) on a clear highway.^{*44}

فَأَنْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُم وَإِنَّهُمَا لَبِإِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٧٩﴾

***44** Midian lay on the route from Hijaz to Palestine and Syria.

80. And certainly, did the companions of Al-Hijr^{*45} (Thamud) deny the messengers.

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أَصْحَابُ الْحِجْرِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

*45 Al-Hijr was the capital city of the people of Thamud, and its ruins are found near the modern city of Al-Ula which is to the north west of Al-Madinah, and lies on the route from Al-Madinah to Tabuk. Though the caravans had to pass through the valley of Al-Hijr, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had forbidden the Muslims to stay in the valley on their journey.

When Ibn Batutah reached there in the eighth century of Hijrah on his way to Makkah, he wrote: I have seen the buildings of Thamud hewed into red mountains; the paintings look so bright as if they have been put on only recently, and rotten bones of human beings are found in them even today." (See E.N. 57 of Surah Al-Aaraf).

81. And we gave them Our signs, but they turned away from them.

وَأَاتَيْنَاهُمْ ءَايَاتِنَا فَكَانُوا عَنْهَا
مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٨١﴾

82. And they used to carve dwellings from the mountains, feeling secure.

وَكَانُوا يَنْحِتُونَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ
بُيُوتًا ءَامِنِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾

83. So the awful cry seized them at the morning hour.

فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ مُصْبِحِينَ
﴿٨٣﴾

84. So did not avail them that which they used to earn.*46

فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا
يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

***46** That is, their strong and secure buildings, which they had hewed into the mountains, could not protect them from the blast.

85. And We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them except with truth.*47

And indeed, the Hour is surely coming, so forgive (O Muhammad), with a gracious forgiveness.

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ
السَّاعَةَ لَأْتِيَةٌ فَاصْفَحِ
الصَّفْحَ الْجَمِيلَ



***47** This was to reassure the Prophet (peace be upon him) that ultimately he would come out successful because he was propagating the truth, and the entire universe was based on truth. Such an assurance was urgently needed because at that time falsehood appeared to be triumphant over the truth. This implies: O Prophet, do not worry at all at the apparent success of falsehood for this is temporary. Likewise the difficulties, the obstacles and the troubles in the way of truth are not permanent. Take courage, and have confidence in the cause of the truth and you will triumph over falsehood because the whole system of the universe is akin to truth and averse to falsehood. Therefore, truth is permanent and falsehood is perishable (Refer to E.Ns 25-26, 35-39 of Surah Ibrahim).

86. Indeed, your Lord, He is the Creator, All Knowing.*48

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْخَلْقُ الْعَلِيمُ



***48** These attributes of Allah have been mentioned to reassure the Prophet (peace be upon him) as if to say: As

Allah is the Creator, He has complete power over all his creatures, and no one is able to escape His punishment. Moreover, He is All-Knowing. He is fully aware that you are exerting your utmost for their reform, and He knows also their evil machinations against your efforts for reform. Therefore, you need not worry on this account, but you should wait patiently and with confidence that at the appropriate time they will be dealt with justly.

87. And indeed, We have given you seven of the oft-repeated (verses)^{*49} and the great Quran.^{*50}

وَلَقَدْ
ءَاتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ
الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ

***49** These seven verses which are recited over and over again in every prescribed salat are the verses of Surah Al-Fatihah. Though some of the commentators are of the view that this *Al-Mathani*, refers to the seven Surahs which contain two hundred or more verses, that is, Surahs 2-7 and (8-9) or 10. But the majority of the early commentators opine that it refers to Al-Fatihah. Imam Bukhari has cited two authentic traditions in support of the view that it refers to Al-Fatihah.

***50** The mention of the precious gift of the glorious Quran has been made also to console the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers that they should not even look at the worldly wealth of their opponents because that was nothing as compared with this precious wealth. In order to grasp the full significance of this, one should keep in view the fact that at that time the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions were suffering badly from poverty. The

trading activities of the Prophet (peace be upon him) had almost come to an end during the period in which he had been engaged in his mission. Besides this, he had almost used up the entire wealth of Khaijah (may Allah be pleased with her). As regards to his companions, some of the young men had been turned out of their homes and reduced to poverty. The economic boycott had mined the business of those who were engaged in trade. There were others who were mere slaves or proteges of the Quraish and had no economic position whatsoever. In addition to their sad economic plight, all the Muslims, along with the Prophet (peace be upon him), were suffering persecution from the people of Makkah and its surroundings. In short, they were so much persecuted, ridiculed and insulted that no one of them was safe from physical and mental torture. On the other side, the Quraish, their opponents and persecutors, enjoyed all the good things of this world, and lived lives of happiness and luxury. This is the background of the reassurance given to the believers, as if to say: Why should you feel disheartened at this? We have given you wealth which surpasses all kinds of worldly riches. Therefore, your opponents should envy your knowledge and high morals; you need not envy their ill earned wealth and their wicked enjoyments, for when they will go before their Lord, they themselves will find that they had not brought such wealth as carries any value there.

88. Do not extend your eyes ambitiously towards that which We have bestowed on

لَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا

different kinds of people of them (the disbelievers), nor grieve over them,^{*51} and lower your wings (in kindness) for the believers.

بِهِمْ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ
لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ



***51** That is, do not grieve that they consider you as their enemy, though you are their sincere well wisher; that they regard their vices as their virtues; that they are not only themselves following but leading their followers on that way which inevitably leads to destruction. Nay, they are doing their best to oppose the reformative efforts of the one who is showing them the way of peace.

89. And say: “Indeed, I am most certainly a clear warner.”

وَقُلْ إِنِّي - أَنَا النَّذِيرُ الْمُبِينُ



90. Just as We had sent down on those who divided (scripture into fragments).

كَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الْمُقْتَسِمِينَ



91. Those who have made the Quran into pieces.^{*52}

الَّذِينَ جَعَلُوا الْقُرْآنَ عِضِينَ



***52** The schismatic were the Jews for they had split their religion into many parts and caused division in it. They believed in certain parts and rejected the other parts, and detracted some things from it and added others to it. Thus they had been divided into many sectarian groups, which

were opposed to one another.

“They have made the Quran (Torah) into pieces” means that they believe in certain parts of it and reject other parts. The same thing has been stated in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 85 like this: Do you then believe in one part of the Scriptures and disbelieve in the other parts.

This warning is like the warning We sent to the schismatic Jews. This is meant to warn the disbelievers that they should learn a lesson from the plight of the Jews who neglected the warning that was given to them by God, and persisted in their wrong ways, as if to say: You are beholding the degradation of the Jews. Do you like to meet with the same end by neglecting this warning?

92. So, by your Lord, We shall certainly question them all.

فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَسْأَلَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾

93. About what they used to do.

عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾

94. So proclaim that which you are commanded, and withdraw from the idolaters.

فَأَصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾

95. Indeed, We will suffice you against those who scoff.

إِنَّا كَفَيْنَاكَ الْمُسْتَهْزِئِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

96. Those who adopt, along with Allah, another god. Then soon they will come to know.

الَّذِينَ يَجْعَلُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا ءَاخَرَ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

97. And indeed, We know that your breast is straitened of what they say.

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ
بِمَا يَقُولُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

98. So glorify the praises of your Lord and be of those who prostrate themselves (to Him).

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُن مِّنَ
السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾

99. And worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty (death).^{*53}

وَأَعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ
الْيَقِينُ ﴿٩٩﴾

***53** That is Salat and worship of your Lord are the only means which can generate in you that power of sustenance which is required to stand resolutely against the troubles and afflictions you will inevitably encounter in the propagation of the message of the truth and reform of humanity. This will comfort you, fill you with courage and enable you to perform that divine mission for which you have been sent in the face of abuse, derision and obstacles.





النَّحْلُ An-Nahal

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The name, *An-Nahal*, of this Surah has been taken from Ayat 68. This is merely to distinguish it from other Surahs.

Period of Revelation

The following internal evidence shows that this Surah was revealed during the last Makkan stage of Prophethood:

1. Ayat 41 clearly shows that persecution had forced some Muslims to emigrate to Habash before the revelation of this Surah.
2. It is evident from Ayat 106 that at that time the persecution of the Muslims was at its height. Therefore a problem had arisen in regard to the utterance of a blasphemous word, without actual disbelief, under unbearable conditions. The problem was that if one did so how he should be treated.
3. Ayats 112-114 clearly refer to the end of seven year famine that had struck Makkah some years after the appointment of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as Allah's Messenger.
4. There is a reference to Ayat 116 of this Surah in Surah

Al-Anaam, Ayat 145. And Ayat 118 of this Surah contains a reference to Surah Al-Anaam, 146. This is a proof that both these Surahs (Al-Anaam and An-Nahal) were sent down in the same period.

The general style of the Surah also supports the view that this was revealed during the last stage at Makkah.

Central Theme

All the topics of the Surah revolve round different aspects of the message, that is, refutation of shirk, proof of Tauhid, and warning of the consequences of the rejection of and opposition and antagonism to the message.

Topics of Discussion

The very first verse gives direct and strict warning to those who were rejecting the message outright, as if to say, Allah's decision has already been made concerning your rejection of the message, why are you then clamoring for hastening it? Why don't you make use of the respite that is being given to you. And this was exactly what the disbelievers of Makkah needed at the time of the revelation of this Surah. For they challenged the Prophet (peace be upon him) over and over again: Why don't you bring that scourge with which you have been threatening us. For we have not only rejected your message but have been openly opposing it for a long time. Such a challenge had become a byword with them, which they frequently repeated as a clear proof that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was not a true Prophet.

Immediately after this warning, they have been admonished to give up shirk, for this false creed was the

main obstacle in the way of the message. Then the following topics come over and over again, one after the other:

1. Very convincing proofs of Tauhid and refutation of shirk have been based on the plain signs in the universe and in man's own self.
2. The objections of the disbelievers have been answered, their arguments refuted, their doubts removed and their false pretexts exposed.
3. Warnings have given of the consequences of persistence in false ways and antagonism to the message.
4. The moral changes which the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him) aims to bring practically in human life have been presented briefly in an appealing manner. The mushriks have been told that belief in Allah, which they also professed, demanded that it should not be confined merely to lip service, but this creed should take a definite shape in moral and practical life.
5. The Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions have been comforted and told about the attitude they should adopt in the face of antagonism and persecution by the disbelievers.

1. The command of Allah will come to pass,^{*1} so do not seek to hasten it. Glorified be He and Exalted above what they associate (with Him).^{*2}

أَتَىٰ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوهُ
سُبْحٰنَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

*1 That is, the time for final judgment has come near. As regards to the use of the past tense in the original, this may

be to show certainty of its occurrence in the near future or to emphasize the fact that the rebellion and the wrong deeds of the Quraish had become so unbearable that they warranted that the time for decisive action had come.

Here question arises as to what that judgment was and how it came. We are of the opinion (and true knowledge is with Allah alone) that that judgment was *hijra* (the migration) of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from Makkah. For a short time after this revelation, he was bidden to emigrate from there. And according to the Quran, a Prophet (peace be upon him) is bidden to leave his place only at that time when the rebellion and antagonism of his people reaches the extreme limit. Then their doom is sealed, for after this Allah's punishment comes on them either as a direct scourge from Him, or they are destroyed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers. And this did actually take place. At the occasion of the migration, the people of Makkah regarded it as a victory for themselves, but in fact it turned out to be a defeat for shirk and disbelief which were totally uprooted within a decade or so after the migration, not only from Makkah but from the rest of Arabia as well.

*2 In order to understand the interconnection between the first and the second sentences, one should keep in view the background. The challenge of the disbelievers to the Prophet (peace be upon him), to hasten divine judgment, was really based on their assumption that their own religion of shirk was true and the religion of Tauhid presented by Muhammad (peace be upon him) was false.

Otherwise, they argued, the divine scourge with which he threatened them would have come upon them long before because of their disbelief and rebellion, if there had been the authority of Allah behind it. That is why after the declaration of the judgment, their misunderstanding about the cause of delay in the punishment was removed, as if to say: You are absolutely wrong to assume that punishment has not been inflicted on you because your creed of shirk is true, for Allah is free from and far above shirk and has no partner.

2. He sends down the angels, with the Spirit^{*3} of His command, upon whom He wills of His slaves,^{*4} (saying) that: “Warn that there is no god except Me, so fear Me.”^{*5}

يُنزِلُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ بِالرُّوحِ مِنْ
 اَمْرِهِ عَلٰى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ
 عِبَادِهِ اَنْ اُنذِرُوْا اَنْهٗ لَا اِلٰهَ
 اِلَّا اَنَا فَاتَّقُوْنَ

^{*3} This means the Spirit of Prophethood with which a Prophet is imbued in order to fulfill his mission by word and deed. The Quran has called this the Spirit in several places, for this has the same relation to the mission of a Prophet and his moral life, which the soul has to the physical human life.

^{*4} As one of the things, which prompted the disbelievers to challenge the Prophet (peace be upon him) for scourge, was their presumption that he was not a true Prophet. Allah told them categorically that he was a true Prophet who had been imbued with the Spirit which We had sent down on

him.

“Spirit of His command, upon whom He wills.” This is the answer to the objections which the chiefs of the Quraish used to raise against the Prophet (peace be upon him): Had Allah wanted to send a Messenger to them, was there no one better than Muhammad (peace be upon him), son of Abdullah, for this mission. Why did He not choose one of the big chiefs of Makkah or Taif for the purpose? Such absurd objections needed no other answer than this that is why such an answer has been given in several places of the Quran as if to say: Allah knows best how to do His work, and does not stand in need of any advice from you. He chooses for His mission anyone whom He considers fit for it.

*5 This verse declares the essence of the Spirit of Prophethood, which is this: Godhead belongs to one Allah alone, so only He is worthy of fear. Therefore, there is no other anchor that might make fast and hold together human moral system than His fear. For it is the fear of His displeasure and His punishment, and the fear of the consequences of His disobedience which alone can act as a strong deterrent to restrain one from deviation. That is why mankind has been admonished: Fear Me.

3. He created the heavens and the earth with truth. Exalted is He above what they associate (with Him).^{*6}

خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
بِالْحَقِّ تَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ



*6 That is to say, the entire system of the earth and the heavens is a witness to the truth of the doctrine of Tauhid and to the negation of shirk. You may look at anything in the universe and consider the system from any point of view you like, you will find proof of this fact that it is being run by one God and not by many gods. Then how is it that you believe in shirk when there is no proof whatsoever of this in the universe

As a fitting sequence of this, proofs of Tauhid and refutation of shirk have been given from man himself and from other signs in the universe, and it has also been shown that Prophethood is based on truth.

4. He created man from a drop of fluid, then behold, he is an open disputer.*7

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ

*7 This has two meanings and both are meant here.

(1) Though Allah created man from an insignificant sperm-drop, he is capable of arguing and giving reasons in support of his claim.

(2) Man who has such an insignificant origin, has become so vain that he does not hesitate to dispute even with his Creator.

If considered in its first sense, it is a chain in the series of arguments given in many succeeding verses to prove the truth of the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him). (Please refer to E.N. 15). If taken in the second sense, it is meant to warn man that he should not forget the insignificant origin of his existence while engaged in his

rebellious arguments against his Creator. If he remembered the different stages of his humiliating birth and growth, he would consider many times before he assumed a haughty and rebellious attitude towards his Creator.

5. And the cattle, He has created them, for you, in them there is warmth (clothing), and (other) benefits, and from them you eat.

وَالْأَنْعَمَ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا
دِفْءٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ



6. And for you in them is beauty, when you bring them (home in the evening), and when you take them out (to pasture).

وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ
تُرْتَحُونَ وَحِينَ تَسْرَحُونَ



7. And they carry your loads to a land you could not reach except with great difficulty to yourselves. Truly, your Lord is indeed Kind, Most Merciful.

وَتَحْمِلُ أَثْقَالَكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ لَّمْ
تَكُونُوا بَلِغِيهِ إِلَّا بِشِقِّ الْأَنْفُسِ
إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ



8. And (He created) horses and mules and donkeys that you may ride them, and as adornment. And He creates that which you have no knowledge.*8

وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ
لِتَرْكَبُوهَا وَزِينَةً وَتَخْلُقُ مَا لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ



*8 That is, there are many agencies which are working for

the good of man but he is quite unaware of such servants and the services rendered by them.

9. And upon Allah is the straight path. And among them (side ways) are those deviating.*9 And if He had willed, He could have guided you, all together.*10

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا
جَائِرٌ ۚ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَيْكُمْ
أَجْمَعِينَ



*9 This contains an argument for Prophethood along with a proof of Tauhid and of Allah's compassion and providence.

The argument is this:

There are many divergent ways of thought and action open for man to choose from. Obviously all these divergent ways cannot be straight ways, because there can be only one straight way; therefore, there can be only one right theory of life which is based on that way, and only one right way of life which is based on that right theory. Thus it is clear that the choice of the right way of life is man's most important and basic need, for its wrong choice would inevitably lead to his ruin. This is because all other things fulfill his animal needs only, but this is the greatest necessity of his life as a human being and without its fulfillment his life would be an utter failure.

Now, it cannot be expected that Allah Who made so many provisions, and on such a large scale, for the fulfillment of the animal life of man, did not make any arrangement for the fulfillment of this real and greatest necessity of man. Just as He has provided for all the necessities of his life, so He has also provided for this greatest need of his through

Prophethood. If Prophethood is denied then it should be pointed out in what way Allah has fulfilled this basic need of man. Experience of centuries has shown that mankind has always blundered whenever it has chosen a way of life by itself. This is because man's wisdom and intelligence are limited, and he cannot depend on these for the choice of the right way of life. Above all, one cannot say that Allah has made no arrangement for this basic need of man, for this will be the greatest misconception of Allah that He may make most elaborate arrangements for man's animal life but should leave him in the lurch to search out a way for himself for the fulfillment of this most important and basic need.

***10** Here a question arises: Why didn't Allah will to guide all the people aright inherently when He had taken upon Himself to show the right way? It is true that Allah could have imbued man, like other creatures, with the inborn instinct and enabled him to choose the right way without conscious thought, experience or teaching. But this would have been against His will which was to create a being, having will and power and freedom to follow the right way or the wrong way, whichever he chose for himself. This is why he has been endowed with different means of knowledge and power of conscious thought, deliberation and will, and has been empowered with the authority to make use of all powers in him and all things around him. Moreover, He has placed in him and all around him such factors as might lead him to guidance or deviation. All these things would have become meaningless, had he been

created righteous by birth, and he could never have attained the heights of progress, which can be achieved only by the right use of freedom. That is why Allah has chosen Prophethood for man's guidance, and left him free to follow or reject a Prophet. This is a test by means of which Allah judges whether man accepts the guidance that is presented to him in a rational way.

10. He it is who sends down water from the sky, from it is drink for you, and from it (grows) foliage on which you pasture (your cattle).

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
مَاءً لَكُمْ مِنْهُ شَرَابٌ وَمِنْهُ شَجَرٌ
فِيهِ تُسِيمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. He causes to grow for you with it (water) the crops, and the olives, and the date palms, and the grapevines, and of all kinds of fruits. Indeed, in that is a sure sign for a people who reflect.

يُنْبِتُ لَكُمْ بِهِ الزَّرْعَ
وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالنَّخِيلَ
وَالْأَعْنَابَ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١١﴾

12. And He has subjected for you the night, and the day, and the sun, and the moon. And the stars are made subservient by His command. Indeed, in that are sure

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ
وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ
مُسَخَّرَاتٌ بِأَمْرِهِ إِنَّ فِي
ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يُعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

signs for a people who understand.

ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ



13. And that which He has scattered for you on the earth of diverse colors. Indeed, in that is a sure sign for a people who remember.

وَمَا ذَرَأًا لَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ
لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ



14. And He it is who has subjected the sea that you may eat from it tender meat, and bring forth from it ornaments which you wear. And you see the ships plowing through it, and that you may seek of His bounty,^{*11} and that you may be grateful.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ
لِتَأْكُلُوا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا
وَتَسْتَخْرِجُوا مِنْهُ حِلْيَةً
تَلْبَسُونَهَا وَتَرَى الْفُلَّك
مَوَاحِرَ فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ
فَضْلِهِ وَلِعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ



***11** That is, try to get your sustenance in lawful ways.

15. And He has placed on the earth firm mountains lest it should shake with you,^{*12} and streams and

وَأَلْقَى فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ
تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ وَأَنْهَارًا وَسُبُلًا

roads^{*13} that you may be guided.

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

***12** This shows that the real function of mountains is to regulate the motion and speed of the earth. We have come to this conclusion, for the Quran has made this benefit of mountains very prominent in many places. Therefore, their other benefits should be regarded as incidental.

***13** Natural ways are those routes which are formed along the banks of streams, ravines and rivers. Though the importance of these ways is great even in the plains, one feels their sore need, especially in the mountainous regions.

16. And landmarks,^{*14} and by the stars they are guided.^{*15}

وَعَلَّمَتِ^ج وَبِالنَّجْمِ هُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ



***14** This is a sign of Allah that He has broken the monotony of land by placing conspicuous landmarks on it to distinguish different regions from one another. These have many benefits and one of these is to help guide travelers and navigators to their destinations. One also realizes the importance and value of these landmarks, when one is traveling through a sandy desert where there are hardly any objects to guide on the way, and one is liable to lose the way any time. One feels the lack of landmarks much more in the sea voyage. It is in the deserts and the seas that people realize the true significance of stars by which they are directed aright to their destinations.

This verse contains arguments for Tauhid. Providence, and Compassion of Allah, and also a proof of Prophethood. For

the mind is instinctively turned towards this question: Can it be possible that Allah who has made so elaborate arrangements for man's guidance to fulfill his physical needs has neglected to provide for his moral and spiritual needs? It cannot be so, for it is obvious that even the greatest loss of some physical necessity due to the adoption of a wrong way is nothing as compared with the loss of spiritual and moral values due to deviation from the right way. It would be nothing less than having doubt in Allah's Compassion and Providence to think that He, Who had made so elaborate provision for man's guidance on land and sea by creating mountains, rivers, stars and other objects, would have neglected to make provision for his moral and spiritual guidance. And it stands to reason that He must have provided prominent beacons of light to guide man to that right way of life which is indispensable to his true success.

*15 In Ayats 4-16, some signs have been mentioned in succession in order to focus people's attention on the creation of man himself and of the earth and the heavens. They will thus find that everything supports the truth of the doctrines taught by the Prophet (peace be upon him). A critical study of all these signs shows that these must have been designed and created by an All-Wise Being, and One Being alone, and there could not have been any partner or associate to help Him. Let us consider this theme from the point of view of man, the central figure in the creation. This wonderful being, who is able to speak with his tongue and is capable of arguing his case with it, has been created from

an insignificant sperm drop. Then many animals have been created to satisfy the necessities of his life. They provide food, clothing and conveyance for him and help satisfy his aesthetic taste as well. Then there is a remarkable system of rain water from the sky to produce crops, fruits and verdure, etc. on the earth to fulfill man's needs. Then there is the creation of regular days and nights and seasons, which are closely connected with all kinds of production of the earth, and also with man's general well being. Then there are oceans, which help fulfill many of his physical and aesthetic demands and provide water ways for traffic. Likewise, mountains have been created to provide man with many benefits. Then there are landmarks on the earth and stars in the heavens to guide travelers and navigators to the destinations. In short, there are innumerable signs in the earth and the heavens which are closely interconnected and are also indispensable to man's welfare, nay, to his very existence. All these are clear proofs that only One Being has designed the entire universe and created it in accordance with that design. It is He Who is all the time creating new things to fit in that scheme, and working this wonderful universe that spreads from the earth to boundless heavens. Who can then claim, except a foolish or obdurate person, that all this has come into existence by a mere accident? Or, who can say that these different aspects, which are working under a perfect system and are intimately connected with one another and are well balanced, have been created by different gods and are under the control of different guardians?

17. Is He then who creates like him who does not create.*¹⁶ Will you then not be reminded.

أَفَمَنْ يَخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَا يَخْلُقُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ



*¹⁶ That is, if you, people of Makkah, acknowledge (and they acknowledged this just as other mushriks did) that Allah alone is the Creator of all of you and everything, and no one of the partners, you have set up with Him, has created anything in the universe. How is it, then, that you ascribe from among the creation, a status equal to or like that of the Creator in the system of universe created by Him? How can it be possible that the power and the rights of the creation should be equal to the power and the rights of the Creator in the universe created by Himself? How can it be believed that the Creator and the creation possess the same qualities and characteristics, or can have such relationship as of father and son?

18. And if you should count the favors of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving, Compassionate.*¹⁷

وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ



*¹⁷ Here the connection of Allah's attributes, "Forgiving and Compassionate", with the preceding verse is so obvious that it has been left unmentioned. It is this: Though Allah goes on showering countless blessings upon people, they behave in an ungrateful, faithless and rebellious manner towards Him. He does not punish them immediately, but

gives them respite, for He is Forgiving and Compassionate. This is true of both individuals and communities. There are people, who deny even the existence of God, yet He goes on bestowing His favors on them for years. There are others who set up partners with Him in his attributes, power and rights, and show their gratitude to others than Him for His blessings, yet He does not withhold His favors from them. There are still others who profess to acknowledge Him as their Creator and Benefactor, yet rebel against Him and are disobedient to Him and consider freedom from Him to be their birth right, but in spite of all this He continues to shower His countless blessings on them as long as they live.

19. And Allah knows what you conceal and what you proclaim.*18

وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُسْرُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ



*18 A grave misunderstanding might arise as to why Allah's blessings should continue to be showered even on those who deny Him and set up partners with Him and are disobedient to Him. The foolish people are liable to conclude from this that He does not withhold His favors from such people because He has no knowledge of their wicked deeds, The Quran declares: Even though He has full knowledge of all the deeds of the people, whether these are done secretly or openly, He does not discontinue His blessings on the sinners, for He is Forgiving, Compassionate and Merciful. Therefore: O people, get rid of this misunderstanding and reform yourselves.

20. And those whom they call upon other than Allah, they have not created anything, and they (themselves) are created.

وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ

21. (They are) dead, not living. And they do not perceive when they will be raised.*19

أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَاءٍ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ

*19 The words employed here to refute man made deities clearly indicate that these deities were deceased prophets, saints, martyrs and pious and other extraordinary beings buried in their graves and not angels, jinns, devils or idols. For the angels and devils are alive: therefore, the words, “They are dead, not living” cannot apply to them, and it is out of the question to say about idols of stone or wood that “They do not know at all when they shall again be raised to life” in the Hereafter. As regards the objection to this version that there were no such deities in Arabia, this is based on the lack of knowledge of the history of the pre-Islamic period. It is well known that there was a large number of Jews and Christians living among many clans of Arabia, who used to invoke and worship their Prophets, saints, etc. It is also a fact that many gods of the mushriks of Arabia were human beings, whose idols they had set up for worship after their death. According to a tradition cited in Bukhari on the authority of Ibn Abbas: “Wadd, Sua, Yaghuth, Yauq, and Nasr were pious human beings, whom

the succeeding generations had made gods.” In another tradition, related by Aishah: “Asaf and Nailah were human beings.” There are also traditions to the same effect about Lat, Munat and Uzza. So much so that according to some traditions of the mushriks, Lat and Uzza were the beloved ones of Allah who used to pass His winter with Lat and summer with Uzza. But Allah is absolutely free from such absurd things they attribute to Him.

22. Your god is One God. Then those who do not believe in the Hereafter, their hearts refuse (to know), and they are arrogant.*²⁰

إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ فَالَّذِينَ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ
مُنْكَرَةٌ وَهُمْ مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ

*²⁰ That is, those who do not believe in the life in the Hereafter, have become so irresponsible, carefree and intoxicated with the life of this world, that they feel no hesitation or pang in denying any reality, and they put no value on or attach no worth to truth. That is why, they are not prepared to impose any moral restraint on themselves and feel no need to investigate as to whether the way, they are following is right or wrong.

23. Undoubtedly, that Allah knows what they conceal and what they proclaim. Indeed, He does not love the arrogant.

لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا
يُسْرُونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ إِنَّهُ
لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْتَكْبِرِينَ

24. And ^{*21} when it is said to them: “What is it that your Lord has sent down.” They say: “Legends of the former people.”^{*22}

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ مَآذًا أَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ
قَالُوا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

***21** In the preceding Ayat 23 those arrogant people who were rejecting the message were warned that Allah has full knowledge of all their deeds. Now from Ayat 24 the Quran takes up those deeds one by one and deals with the arguments they presented against the Messenger (peace be upon him), the objections they raised and the lame excuses they invented for their rejection, and reproaches and admonishes them.

***22** One of their cunning devices was to create doubts about the Quran. Whenever outsiders came to visit Makkah, they would naturally make inquiries about the Quran, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) declared, was being sent down to him by Allah. The disbelievers would answer that it contained merely fairy tales of the ancients. They would say such things in order to create doubts in the minds of the inquirers so that they should not take any interest in the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

25. That they may bear their burdens (of their sins) in full on the Day of Resurrection, and of the burdens of those whom they mislead without knowledge.

لِيَحْمِلُوا أَوْزَارَهُمْ كَامِلَةً يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ وَمِنْ أَوْزَارِ الَّذِينَ
يُضِلُّونَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا سَاءَ مَا

Behold, evil is that which they bear.

يَزْرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. Certainly, those before them plotted, so Allah came at their building from the foundations, then the roof fell upon them from above them, and the punishment came to them from where they did not perceive.

قَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
فَأَتَى اللَّهُ بُنْيَانَهُمْ مِنَ
الْقَوَاعِدِ فَخَرَّ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّقْفُ
مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَأَتَتْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ
حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

27. Then on the Day of Resurrection, He will disgrace them and will say: “Where are My those (so called) partners, you used to oppose (guidance) for whose sake.”*²³ Those who were given knowledge will say: “Indeed, disgrace, this day, and evil are upon the disbelievers.”

ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُخْزِيهِمْ وَيَقُولُ
أَيْنَ شُرَكَائِيَ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ
تُشَاقِقُونَ فِيهِمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ
أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ إِنَّ الْخِزْيَ الْيَوْمَ
وَالسُّوءَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

***23** There is a gap between this answer and the preceding question which has been left for the reader to fill. When Allah will ask: Now where are My partners, there will be dead silence in the plain where the entire mankind shall have to gather on the occasion of Resurrection. The disbelievers and the mushriks will be dumb founded for they will be at a loss to find an answer to this. Then those

who had been given knowledge will make the assertion, “Indeed, disgrace, this day, and evil are upon the disbelievers.”

28. Those ^{*24} whom the angels take in death, (while) they are doing wrong to themselves. Then, they will make full submission (saying): ^{*25} “We were not doing any evil.” Yes, indeed, Allah is Knower of what you used to do.

الَّذِينَ تَتَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
ظَالِمِينَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ فَأَلْقَوْا السَّلَامَ
مَا كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ مِنْ سُوءٍ بَلَىٰ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ



***24** This is Allah’s addition to the previous assertion, and not its continuation. Those commentators, who have wrongly considered this as continuation of the preceding sentence, are unable to offer any satisfactory explanation for their opinion.

***25** That is, when the angels take possession of their souls at the time of death.

29. So enter the gates of Hell, to abide forever therein. ^{*26} Then evil indeed is the lodging of the arrogant.

فَادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَلَبِئْسَ مَثْوَىٰ
الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ



***26** The Ayats 28 and 32, and several other verses in the Quran, clearly and definitely assert that immediately after death, souls suffer torment or enjoy peace in the world of

Barzakh. The traditions use the word *qabar* (grave) metaphorically for this existence of the souls. This is the world in which souls enter immediately after death and will remain therein up to the Day of Resurrection. Yet the disbelievers of the traditions declare that after death souls will remain in a dormant state up to the time of Resurrection, and will neither feel any pain nor joy, nor will be conscious of anything at all. Obviously, this is a wrong opinion. For, according to Ayat 28, just after death when the disbelievers will be conscious of the fact that they had been leading an evil life, they will try to make the angels believe that they had not done any evil deed. The angels will rebuke them at this boldness and will tell them that they shall have to go into Hell. On the other hand, according to verse 32, just after their death, the pious believers are welcomed by the angels and given the good news that they will enter into Paradise. Besides these verses, there is the mention of a dialogue between the angels and those Muslims, who did not migrate to Al-Madinah, after their souls were seized by the angels in Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 97. Above all, according to Surah Al-momin, Ayats 45-46, the people of Pharaoh have been encircled by a torment and are exposed before the fire of Hell every morning and every evening. This will go on till the Day of Resurrection when they shall be sentenced to eternal torment.

In fact, both the Quran and the traditions present the same kind of picture of the condition of the soul after death till Resurrection. Death causes merely the separation of the

soul from the body but does not annihilate it. The soul lives with the same personality that was formed by the different experiences and the mental exercises and moral activities it had in its worldly life in cooperation with the body. This nature of the consciousness, feelings, observations and experiences of the soul, during the waiting period, is similar to that in a dream. Just as a criminal sentenced to death suffers from mental torture on the eve of his crucifixion, in the same way the angels take to task the guilty as in a dream, torture it and take it to the horrible Hell in order to make it foretaste the impending torture. In contrast to this, the pure soul is welcomed by the angels and is given the good news of entry into paradise and is made to enjoy its pleasant breeze and smell, and to feel happy like the faithful servant who is invited to the headquarters to receive his reward. But this life in the world of *Barzakh* will suddenly come to an end on the second blowing of the Trumpet of Resurrection. When the guilty souls will again enter into their former bodies and muster in the Plain, they will cry in horror: Oh! woe to us! Who has roused us from our sleeping places? But the true believers will say with perfect peace of mind: This is exactly what the Beneficent had promised, and the Messengers had told the truth. (Surah Yaseen, Ayat 52).

As the guilty ones will be under the delusion that they had been lying in their death bed for an hour or so and had been roused from sleep. Those who were given knowledge and faith will say: According to the Record of Allah, you have remained after death till this Day of Resurrection and

this is the same Day of Resurrection, but you did not know this. (Surah Ar-Room, Ayats 55-56).

30. And (when) it is said to those who fear (Allah): “What is it that your Lord has sent down.” They say: “Good.”*27 For those who do good in this world there is a good (reward), and the home of the Hereafter is better. And excellent indeed is the abode of the righteous.

﴿ وَقِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا مَاذَا أَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ ۗ قَالُوا خَيْرًا ۗ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ ۗ وَلَدَارُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ وَلَنِعْمَ دَارُ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴾

*27 In contrast to the disbelievers (Ayat 24), the righteous people spoke highly of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and of the teachings of the Quran to the people coming from the suburbs of Makkah. Unlike the former they did not delude the people nor created misunderstandings in the minds. They were full of praise for them and told the truth about the Prophet (peace be upon him).

31. Gardens of Eden which they will enter, beneath which rivers flow, they will have therein whatever they wish.*28 Thus does Allah reward the righteous.

﴿ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ۗ لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُونَ ۗ كَذَلِكَ يَجْزِي اللَّهُ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴾

*28 This is the best blessing of Paradise. The dweller will get there whatever he will desire and wish and there will be

nothing at all to offend him. This is the blessing that has never been attained even by the richest and the most powerful people in this world. On the contrary, every dweller of Paradise will enjoy this blessing to his fill because he will always have everything to his desire and liking, and will have each and every wish and desire fulfilled.

32. Those whom the angels take in death, (while) in a state of purity. They say: "Peace be upon you. Enter the Garden because of what you used to do."

الَّذِينَ تَتَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ طَيِّبِينَ
يَقُولُونَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ
أَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَعْمَلُونَ

33. Do they (the disbelievers) await except that the angels should come to them, or your Lord's command should come to pass.^{*29} Thus did those before them. And Allah wronged them not, but they used to wrong themselves.

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ
الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ
كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

***29** This is to admonish the unbelievers to this effect: Why are they still hesitating to accept the message which is very simple and clear? We have tried every method to present each aspect of the truth clearly with arguments and brought witnesses thereof from the whole system of the

universe, and have left no room for any man of understanding to stick to shirk. Now what are they waiting for is nothing more than this that the angel of death should come before them and then they will accept the message at the last moment of their lives. Or, do they wait for the scourge of God to overtake them and make them accept the Message?

34. So that the evils, of what they did, overtook them, and surrounded them that which they used to ridicule.

فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا عَمِلُوا
وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ
يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. And those who associate (others with Allah) say: “If Allah had willed, we would not have worshipped other than Him any thing. (Neither) we, nor our fathers. Nor would we have forbidden without His (command) any thing.”^{*30} Thus did those before them. So is there (anything) upon the messengers except clear conveyance.^{*31}

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ
اللَّهُ مَا عَبَدْنَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ
شَيْءٍ نَحْنُ وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا
حَرَمْنَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ فَهَلْ عَلَى الرُّسُلِ إِلَّا
الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٣٥﴾

***30** In order to understand the significance of this argument the reader should keep in view Ayats 148-150

and E.N.s 124-126 of Surah Al-Anaam, for this has been cited and answered there.

***31** That is, your argument is not a new one but the same old one which had always been offered by erroneous people who went before you. Today you are, like them, excusing yourselves for your deviation and evil conduct, saying that it is the will of God. You know that this is a lame excuse that has been invented to delude yourselves, and to escape from admonition.

This answer also contains a subtle retort to the objection of the disbelievers that the Quran consisted merely of old stories of the ancients (Ayat 24). They meant to imply that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had nothing new to offer. So he was repeating the same old stories that had been repeated over and over again since the time of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him). The retort is this: If the Prophet (peace be upon him) was not presenting anything new but was reciting the old stories of the ancients, you yourselves are not putting forward any new excuse in defense of your evil deeds, but the same old excuse that was put forward by the people who went before you.

36. And certainly, We raised in every nation a messenger, (saying) that: “Worship Allah and avoid the Evil One.”^{*32} Then among them were those whom Allah guided, and among them were those

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنْ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَأَجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ حَقَّتْ

upon whom the straying was justified.*³³ So travel in the land, then see how was the end of those who denied.*³⁴

عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ فَسِيرُوا فِي
الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ
عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكذِبِينَ



***32** That is, you are not justified in excusing yourselves for these sins, saying that it is the will of God for We sent Messengers to every *ummat*, who told the people in plain words that they should worship Us and none else, and should not follow and obey *taghut*. Besides this, We have already warned you that We do not approve of your deviations. Why should you then put forward this excuse for your deviations? Do you mean to say that We ought to have sent such Messengers as would have forced you to follow the right way instead of bringing you to it by preaching? (Please refer to E.N. 80 of Surah Al-Anaam for the distinction between God's will and God's approval).

***33** That is, Whenever a Messenger came to a people, they were divided into two groups.

(1) Those who accepted the message (and that, too, could not have been possible except with the will of Allah).

(2) Those who rejected it and stuck to their deviation (For explanation see E.N. 28 of Surah Al-Anaam).

***34** That is, you can see for yourselves the lesson of human history. It is this that the people, who rejected the message, incurred the scourge of Allah like Pharaoh and the people of Pharaoh, while Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) received the blessings of Allah.

37. (Even) if you (Muhammad) are eager for their guidance, still Allah assuredly does not guide those whom He sends astray. And for them there are not any helpers.

إِنْ تَحَرَّصَ عَلَىٰ هُدٰهُمۡ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَن يُضِلُّ وَمَا لَهُم مِّن نَّٰصِرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

38. And they swear by Allah their most binding oaths (that) Allah will not resurrect him who dies. Yes, it is a promise (binding) upon Him in truth, but most of mankind do not know.

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَا يَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ مَن يَمُوتُ ۗ بَلَىٰ وَعَدًّا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا وَلٰكِنَّا أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. That He may make clear to them that wherein they differ, and that those who disbelieved may know that indeed they were liars.*³⁵

لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كٰذِبِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

***35** In Ayat 39 those two things have been stated which rationally and morally require that there must be Resurrection and life after death, that is:

- (1) To reveal what the reality was, and
- (2) To reward or punish people in accordance with the right or wrong stand they took about it in this world. It is common knowledge that since the creation of man on the earth there have been many differences regarding the

reality which have been sowing dissension between families, nations and races. These have also led to the formation of many different societies, cultures and creeds on different theories. In every age millions of the torch bearers of each of these theories have been putting at stake all their life, property and honor to propagate and defend their favorite theory. Nay, there has always been such a bitter conflict between them that each group tried to annihilate the other, who, in his turn, stuck to it to the last. This being the case, common sense demands that such far reaching and serious differences should be cleared some time or other, so as to decide with certainty what was right and what was wrong, who was in the right and who was in the wrong. Obviously, it is not possible to lift the curtain from the reality in this world so as to reveal things in their true perspective. This is because the system on which this world has been created does not allow this. Therefore, there should be another world to fulfill this demand of common sense.

This is not the demand of common sense alone but also of the moral sense, which requires that the partners in this conflict should be rewarded or punished according to right or wrong, just or unjust part they played in it. For, some of these committed cruelties on the others, who had to make sacrifices for their cause. Then each one should also bear the responsibility for formulating and practicing a moral or immoral philosophy which influenced millions and billions of others for better or worse. Moral sense demands that there should be a time for the moral consequences to take their due course. As this is not possible in this world there

should be another world for the purpose.

40. Indeed, Our word unto a thing, when We intend it, is only that We say unto it: "Be" And it is.^{*36}

إِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ إِذَا أَرَدْنَاهُ أَنْ
نَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٤٠﴾

*36 This is the answer to those who imagined that it was the most difficult thing to raise the dead, and that, too, to raise together at once all the people who had died at any time. They have been told that it is an easy thing for Allah, Who has the power to bring into existence anything He desires, merely by His command, "Be," for He does not stand in need of any provisions, any means and any favorable environment for this. His mere command produces necessary provisions, means and environment. This world was brought into existence by His mere command, "Be," and likewise the next world will at once come into existence by His single command.

41. And those who emigrated for (the cause of) Allah after what they had been wronged, We will surely settle them in this world in a good (place). And surely the reward of the Hereafter is greater, if (only) they could know.^{*37}

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ
مَا ظَلَمُوا لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا
حَسَنَةً ۖ وَلَا جُرْأَلَاءُ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ
كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

*37 This is to comfort the Muslim emigrants from Makkah to Habash, who were forced to leave their homes because of the unbearable persecution they suffered at the hands of

the disbelievers. The change of the scene from the disbelievers to the emigrants to Habash contains a subtle warning to the disbelievers that they should not remain under any delusion that they would get off free from punishment for their cruel behavior towards those Muslims, so as to say: O cruel people! There shall be Resurrection to reward the oppressed believers and to punish you for your persecution of them.

42. Those who remain steadfast, and put their trust in their Lord.

الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

43. And We did not send (as Our messengers) before you except men to whom We inspired.^{*38} So ask those who possess knowledge if you do not know.^{*39}

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا
رِجَالًا نُّوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ
الذِّكْرِ إِن كُنتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

***38** This is the answer to the objection of the mushriks of Makkah (which has not been cited here) that they could not believe that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a Prophet of God because he was a human being like them. They have been told that the same objection had been raised against all the Prophets who came before him.

***39** “Those who possess knowledge” are the scholars of the people of the Books and others, who, though not scholars in the strict sense had sufficient knowledge of the teachings of the revealed Books and were acquainted with the stories of the former Prophets.

44. With clear proofs and Books. And We have sent down unto you (O Muhammad) the reminder (the Quran) that you may make clear to mankind what is sent down to them,^{*40} and that they might reflect.

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ
الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ
إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

***40** In this connection, it is worthwhile to note that this duty of making plain and explaining the teachings of the Book was to be performed by Prophet not only by word of mouth but also practically. It was required that he should organize, under his own guidance, a Muslim community and establish it in accordance with the principles of the Book. This duty of the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been stated here especially to show the wisdom of sending a man as a Messenger, for, otherwise the Book could have been sent through the angels or could have been printed and sent directly to each man. But in this way; that purpose for which Allah in His Wisdom and Bounty and Providence designed to send the Book could not have been served. For, that purpose demanded that the Book should be brought by a perfect man, who should present it piece by piece, explain its meaning, remove the difficulties and doubts, answer objections etc. and above all, he should show towards those who rejected and opposed it that kind of attitude which is worthy of the bearer of this Book. On the other hand, he should guide those who believed in it in every aspect of life and set before them his own excellent pattern of life. Then

he should train them individually and collectively on the principles of the Book; so as to make them a model society for the rest of mankind.

Let us now consider this verse (43) from another point of view. Just as it cuts at the root of the argumentation of those who rejected the creed that a human Prophet could bring the Book, in the same way, it repudiates the view of those who plead that the Book should be accepted without any exposition of it from the Prophet. This latter view is contradictory to this verse, whatever be the position taken by its exponents. They might either be of the opinion that (a) the Prophet did not give any explanation of the Book he presented or that (b) the only acceptable thing is the Book and not any exposition thereof by the Prophet, or that (c) now the Book alone suffices us, for its exposition by the Prophet has lost its utility or that (d) now the Book alone is authentic for the exposition by the Prophet has ceased to exist, or if it does exist, it cannot be relied upon.

If they take the position (a), it will mean that the Prophet did not fulfill the purpose for which he was chosen to be the bearer of the Book: otherwise Allah could send it through an angel or directly to each person.

If they take the position (b) or (c), (God forbid) they will be accusing Allah of doing a useless thing by sending His Book through a Prophet, when He could have printed copies of the Quran and sent those directly to the people.

In case, they take the position (d), they, in fact, repudiate both the Quran and its exposition by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Then the only rational course left for them

would be to accept the view of those who believe in the necessity of a new Prophet and a new revelation; whereas Allah Himself considers the exposition of the Book by the Prophet as an essential thing, and puts it forward as an argument for the necessity of a Prophet. Now if the view of those who reject tradition that the explanation of the Prophet (peace be upon him) has disappeared from the world is to be accepted, then two conclusions are inevitable; First, the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a pattern for us has ceased to exist, and the only relation we have with him is the same that we have with the other former Prophets, e.g. Houd, Salih, Shuaib, etc. (peace be upon them). That is, we have only to testify that they were Prophets but we have no obligation to follow their patterns, for we have none with us. This position obviously leads to the need of a new Prophet, for it automatically refutes the doctrine of the finality of Prophethood. The second inevitable conclusion will be that a new Book is needed because in that case the Quran alone could not, according to its author, suffice. Thus in the face of this verse, there is no argument left to prove that the Quran is self sufficient to explain itself, for it itself says that there is no need of a Prophet to explain it. Thus it is absolutely necessary that a new Book must be sent down. May Allah destroy such people. In their enthusiasm to repudiate tradition, they are really cutting at the very root of Islam itself.

45. Then, do those who plot evil deeds feel secure that Allah will (not) cause

أَفَأَمِنَ الَّذِينَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ
تَحْسِفَ اللَّهُ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضَ أَوْ

the earth to swallow them, or the punishment will (not) come upon them from where they do not perceive.

يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

46. Or that He would (not) seize them in the midst of their going to and fro, so there can be no escape for them.

أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ فِي تَقْلِبِهِمْ فَمَا هُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

47. Or that He would (not) seize them with a gradual wasting (of life and wealth). But indeed, your Lord is Kind, Merciful.

أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ عَلَى تَخَوُّفٍ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٤٧﴾

48. And have they not seen at what Allah has created among things, (how) their shadows incline to the right and (to) the left, making prostration to Allah,^{*41} and they are in utter submission.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ يَتَفَيَّؤُا ظِلَّهٗ عَنِ الِّيمِينِ وَالشَّمَايِلِ سُجَّدًا لِلَّهِ وَهُمْ دَاخِرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

***41** The argument is this: The fact that everything a man, an animal, a tree or a mountain casts its shadow, is a clear proof of its material nature, and everything which is made of matter, is a creation of Allah and is subject to a universal law. In this case the law is that every material thing casts its shadow, which is symbolical of its servitude, and it cannot have any share whatsoever in Godhead.

49. And to Allah makes prostration whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, of living creatures, and the angels,*42 and they are not arrogant.

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ



*42 That is, not only all things on the earth alone but also all things in the heavens, including all those whom people have been regarding as gods and goddesses, and considering to be closely related to Allah are subservient to God, and have no share whatsoever in His Godhead. Incidentally, it implies the existence of living creatures not only on the earth but in the planets, too.

50. They fear their Lord from above them, and they do what they are commanded.

يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ
وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

AsSajda

51. And Allah said: “Do not take for yourselves two gods.*43 He (Allah) is only One God. So you fear only Me.”

❖ وَقَالَ اللَّهُ لَا تَتَّخِذُوا إِلَهَيْنِ
أَتْنَيْنِ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ
فَإِيَّيَ فَارْهَبُونَ

*43 Negation of two gods by itself negates the existence of more than two gods.

52. And to Him belongs what is in the heavens and

وَلَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

the earth, and religion is His for ever.*44 Will you then fear other than Allah.*45

وَلَهُ الدِّينُ وَاصِبًا أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَتَّقُونَ

*44 In other words it means that the entire system of the universe exists on its obedience to Him.

*45 That is, when it is so, will you then make the fear of any other than God the basis of the system of your life?

53. And whatever of blessings you have, it is from Allah. Then, when harm touches you, so unto Him you cry for help.*46

وَمَا بِكُمْ مِّنْ نِّعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فَإِلَيْهِ تَجْرُونَ

*46 That is, the fact, that you run to Allah for help in your distress and not to anyone else, is a clear proof of the Oneness of Allah, which has been embedded in your own hearts. At the time of your affliction, your true nature, which had been suppressed by the gods you had forged, involuntarily comes to the surface and invokes Allah, for it knows no other god or lord or master, having any real power. (For further details please refer to E.Ns 29 and 41 of Surah Al-Anaam).

54. Then, when He removed the harm from you, behold, a group among you attribute partners with their Lord.*47

ثُمَّ إِذَا كُشِفَ الضُّرُّ عَنْكُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْكُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُونَ

*47 That is, at the time of showing gratitude to Allah for removing his affliction, he begins to make offerings also to

some god, goddess or saint to show that Allah's kindness to him was due to the intercession of his patron, for he imagines that otherwise Allah would not have removed his distress.

55. So they deny that which We have bestowed on them. So enjoy yourselves for a while, then soon you will know.

لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَهُمْ^ج فَتَمَتَّعُوا
فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

56. And they assign, to what they do not know (false deities), a portion of that which We have provided them.^{*48} By Allah,^{*49} you will indeed be asked about what you used to invent.

وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ نَصِيبًا
مِّمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ^ك تَاللَّهِ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ
عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَفْتُرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

***48** They assign shares to those patrons about whom they have no authentic knowledge that God has made them His partners and allotted some duties of Godhead to them and made them governors of some territories in His Kingdom.

***49** That is, they set apart a portion of their incomes and land products to make offerings of this to their patron.

57. And they assign daughters for Allah.^{*50} Be He glorified. And for themselves what they desire.^{*51}

وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ الْبَنَاتِ سُبْحَانَهُ
وَلَهُمْ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

***50** This refers to a tradition of the ancient Arabs. They regarded their goddesses and angels as daughters of God.

***51** That is, "sons."

58. And when news is brought to one of them (of the birth) of a female, his face becomes dark, and he is filled with grief.

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ
وَجْهَهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that which he has been informed. (Asking himself), shall he keep her with dishonor, or bury her in the ground. Certainly, evil is whatever they decide. ^{*52}

يَتَوَارَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ سُوءِ مَا
بُشِّرَ بِهِ ۚ أَيُمْسِكُهُ عَلَىٰ
هُونٍ أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ فِي التُّرَابِ ۗ
أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

***52** This attitude of contempt towards daughters has been mentioned to bring home to them the height of their folly, ignorance and impudence in regard to God. This is why they did not hesitate to assign daughters to Allah, though they themselves felt that to have daughters was a matter of disgrace for them. Besides this, it shows that they had a very low estimation of Allah, which had resulted from their ways of shirk. So they felt nothing wrong in ascribing such foolish and absurd things to Allah Who is above such things.

60. For those who do not believe in the Hereafter is an evil similitude. And for Allah is the highest similitude. And He is the All Mighty, the All Wise.

لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ مَثَلُ
السُّوءِ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَىٰ ۗ وَهُوَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦٠﴾

61. And if Allah were to seize mankind for their wrong doing, He would not leave on it (the earth) any living creature, but He reprieves them to an appointed term. Then when their term comes, neither can they delay an hour nor can they advance.

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ
مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَلَكِنْ
يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَإِذَا
جَاءَ أَجَلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ
سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

62. And they assign to Allah that which they dislike (for themselves), and their tongues assert the lie that the better things will be theirs. Assuredly that, theirs will be the Fire, and that they will be abandoned to it.

وَجَعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ مَا يَكْرَهُونَ
وَتَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُهُمُ الْكَذِبَ
أَنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ الْحُسْنَىٰ لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّ
لَهُمُ النَّارَ وَأَنَّهُمْ مُّفْرَطُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

63. By Allah, We did indeed send (messengers) to the nations before you, but Satan made their deeds fair seeming to them. So he is their patron this day, and theirs will be a painful punishment.

تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّنْ
قَبْلِكَ فَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ
أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾

64. And We have not sent down the Book (the Quran) to you except that you may

وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا
لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ

make clear unto them that in which they differ, and (as) a guidance, and a mercy for a people who believe. ^{*53}

وَهْدَىٰ وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ



***53** That is, this Book has afforded them an excellent opportunity to resolve their differences which have been caused by the superstitious creeds of their forefathers, and which have divided, them into warring factions. They can then unite on the permanent basis of the truth presented by the Quran, but those foolish people preferring their former condition even after the coming of this blessing, shall meet with disgrace and torment. On the other hand, only those, who believe in this Book, will find the right way and blessed with mercy and favors from Allah.

65. And Allah sends down from the sky water, then He revives therewith the earth after its death. Indeed, in this is a sure sign for a people who listen. ^{53a}

وَاللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ



***53a** That is, had you listened to the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and observed those signs carefully, you would have cried from the core of your heart. These signs support his message. Year after year you witness these signs. There is the land, all barren before you, without any sign of life, no blade of grass, no bud or flower, and no insect. Then comes rain. All of a sudden, the same land is covered with life. There crop upon numerous kinds

of insects of which no vestige had been left. You witness this process of life and death, and death and life, repeated year after year. Yet you doubt this when the Prophet (peace be upon him) tells you that Allah will again bring to life all human beings after their death. This is because you see these signs as animals do, who do not see the wisdom of the Creator underlying this phenomenon; otherwise you would have discovered that these signs support the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

66. And indeed, for you in the cattle there is a lesson. We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies, between excretions and the blood, pure milk,^{*54} palatable to the drinkers.

ط
وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً
نُسْقِيكُمْ مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهِ مِنْ بَيْنِ
فَرْثٍ وَدَمٍ لَبْنَا خَالِصًا سَائِغًا
لِّلشَّارِبِينَ

***54** “Between excretions and the blood”. This refers to the most wonderful process of the formation of pure milk in the bellies of the cattle. For, the fodder they eat turns into blood, filth and pure milk, which is altogether different from the first two in its nature, color and usefulness. Some cattle produce milk in such abundance that after suckling their young ones a large quantity of it is left to make excellent human food.

67. And from the fruits of date palm and grapevines, you take intoxicants out of

وَمِنْ ثَمَرَاتِ النَّخِيلِ وَالْأَعْنَابِ
تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْهُ سَكَرًا وَرِزْقًا

them, and a good provision.^{*55} Certainly, in that is a sure sign for a people who have wisdom.

حَسَنًا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ
يَعْقِلُونَ



***55** Incidentally it implies that the juice of the fruits of date palms and vines contains two things. One is that which is pure and wholesome food for man and the other is that which turns into alcohol after it becomes rotten. But it has been left to the choice of man to obtain pure healthy food from this providence or to drink it as intoxicant wine to excite him and make him lose his self control. This also contains a hint as to the prohibition of wine.

68. And your Lord inspired to the bee,^{*56} (saying) that: “Set up hives in the mountains, and in the trees, and in that which they erect (the trellises).”

وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنْ
اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ
الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ



***56** The lexical meaning of the Arabic word *wahi* is secret inspiration which is felt only by the one who inspires and the other who is inspired with. The Quran has used this word both for the instinctive inspiration by Allah to His creation in general and for the revelation towards His Prophets in particular. Allah sends His *wahi* to the heavens with His command and they begin functioning in accordance with it (Surah Al-Momin, Ayat 12). He will send this to the earth with His command and it will relate the story of all that had happened on and in it. He sends *wahi* to the bee and inspires it with faculties to perform the

all of its wonderful work instinctively (Ayat 68). The same is true of the bird that learns to fly, the fish that learns to swim, the newly born child that learns to suck milk, etc. Then, it is also *wahi* with which Allah inspires a human being with a spontaneous idea (Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 7). The same is the case with all the great discoveries, inventions, works of literature and art, etc. which would not have been possible without the benefit of *wahi*. As a matter of fact, every human being at one time or the other feels its mental or spiritual influence in the form of an idea or thought or plan or dream, which is confirmed by a subsequent experience to be the right guidance from the unseen *wahi*.

Then there is the *wahi* (revelation) which is the privilege of the Prophets. This form of *wahi* has its own special features and is quite distinct from all other forms. The Prophet, who is inspired with it, is fully conscious and has his firm conviction that it is being sent down from Allah. Such a revelation contains doctrines of creed, commandments, laws, regulations and instructions for the guidance of mankind.

69. “Then eat of all the fruits, and follow the ways of your Lord, made smooth (for you).”^{*57} There comes forth from their bellies a drink of varying colors, wherein is healing for mankind.^{*58} Certainly, in this is a sure

ثُمَّ كُلِي مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ
فَأَسْلِكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلَالًا يَخْرُجُ
مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ
أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ إِنَّ فِي

sign for a people who give
thought.*59

ذٰلِكَ لآٰيَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ

*57 “Follow the ways of your Lord” means work in accordance with the methods which have been taught to thee by Allah’s *wahi* for the smooth running of hive life. It is Allah’s *wahi* (instinctive inspiration) that has taught the bees how to build their wonderful factory with separate combs to rear brood, combs to turn nectar into honey, combs to store food, in short, separate combs to fulfill every aspect of hive life. It is *wahi* that has taught the bees how to organize themselves into a cooperative society for collective effort to run the factory with the queen and thousands of workers to perform a variety of specific tasks. All these things have been made so smooth for them by *wahi* that the bees never feel the necessity of ever thinking about it. They have been running smoothly their factory with their collective effort for thousands of years with perfect accuracy.

*58 Though honey is a wholesome food with a sweet taste and has medicinal power as well, its latter quality has been mentioned only because the former is too obvious. It is used as a medicine to cure several diseases because it contains the juice and glucose of flowers and fruits in the best form. Besides this, it is also used in preparing and preserving other medicines because it does not rot. It also preserves other things from decay. That is why it has been used for centuries as a substitute for alcohol. And if the beehive is built at a place, which abounds in certain medicinal herbs, its honey does not remain mere honey, but becomes also the

essence of that herb. It is expected that if bees are used methodically for extracting essence from herbs, that essence will prove to be much better than the one obtained in the laboratories.

***59** This passage (Ayats 48-69) contains proofs of Tauhid and life after death. These were necessitated, for the disbelievers and the mushriks were bitterly opposed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) mainly because of these two doctrines. The acceptance of the first doctrine demolished the whole system of life based on shirk or atheism because to acknowledge Allah to be the sole Provider, the Helper and the Protector left no room for the worship of any god or goddess. The proof of Tauhid is based on the observance of the structure of the cattle, the bees, the date palms and vineyards and their usefulness to mankind. Naturally the question arises: Who has designed these in the manner and for the purpose they have been created? The only obvious answer is that it is the All-Wise and All-Beneficent Allah Who has designed all these things for the benefit of mankind to produce such varieties of food that are so wholesome and so tasty. The Prophet, therefore, rightly demanded: When you yourselves admit, and you cannot but admit, that it is Allah alone Who has provided milk, honey, dates, grapes and the like, He and none but He is worthy of your worship, praise, gratitude and allegiance. Why do you then insist on making offerings to your self-made gods and goddesses?

The second doctrine to which the disbelievers took strong objection was that there is surely the life after death. They

were against this doctrine for its acceptance changed the whole moral system and they were not prepared to change their immoral ways. Their objection was based on the presumption that it was impossible to bring to life anyone after death.

They have been asked to observe that the barren land, which once had been covered with vegetable life, was again covered with it after rainfall and they have been watching such repetition of life year after year. That Allah, Who could so easily bring to life the dead vegetable, could do the same and bring to life all the dead without any difficulty at all.

70. And Allah has created you, then He causes you to die,^{*60} and among you is he who is brought back to a feeble age, so that he will not know a thing after having known (much).^{*61} Indeed, Allah is All Knowing, All Powerful.

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ
وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ أَرْدَلِ الْعُمْرِ
لَكِي لَا يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا ۚ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ



***60** It is to emphasize this: Allah not only provides you with the necessities and good things of life (as stated in the preceding verses), but also has full power over your life and death. None else has any power to give life or cause death.

***61** This fact has been mentioned to bring home to the disbelievers and the mushriks that knowledge, which gives superiority to man over all creatures on this earth, has been given by Allah, as if to say: You yourselves have seen that

when a man, who once possessed much knowledge, becomes very old, he is reduced to a mere lump of flesh. Then that man who once taught knowledge to others loses all his senses and cannot look even after his own self.

71. And Allah has preferred some of you above others in provision. Then, those who are preferred do not hand over their provision to those (slaves) whom their right hands possess, so they become equal (partners) in it. Is it then the bounty of Allah that they deny.*62

وَاللَّهُ فَضَّلَ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ
فِي الرِّزْقِ ۚ فَمَا الَّذِينَ فُضِّلُوا
بِرَادِي رِزْقِهِمْ عَلَىٰ مَا مَلَكَتْ
أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِيهِ سَوَاءٌ ۚ
أَفَبِعِزَّةِ اللَّهِ تَجْحَدُونَ

*62 It will be worthwhile to give deep thought to the meanings of this verse, for some modern commentators of the Quran have founded strange economic theories and systems on it. Their interpretation is an instance of perverting the meaning of the Quran by isolating verses from their context and treating it as a separate whole in order to formulate a new philosophy and law of Islamic Economics. In their opinion the verse implies this: Those people to whom Allah has given more provisions than others, should share these equally with their servants and slaves: otherwise they shall be guilty of ingratitude to Allah in regard to the wealth with which He had blessed them. This commentary on the verse is obviously wrong and far-fetched because in the context it occurs there is no mention at all of any law of economics. The whole passage in which

this verse occurs deals with the refutation of shirk and proof of Tauhid. The same themes are continued in the subsequent verses. There seems to be no reason why an economic law should have been inserted here, which would have been absolutely irrelevant, to say the least. On the contrary, when the verse is considered in its context, it becomes quite obvious that it is no more than the statement of a fact to prove the same theme that is contained in this passage. It argues like this: When you yourselves do not make your servants and slaves equal partners in your wealth, which in fact is given to you by Allah, how is it that you join other gods with God in your gratitude to Him for the favors with which He has blessed you. You know that these gods have no powers to bestow anything on anyone, and, therefore, have no right in your worship of Allah, for they are after all His slaves and servants.

This interpretation of the verse under discussion is corroborated by Surah Ar-Room, Ayat 28: "Allah sets forth to you an instance from your own selves. Do your slaves share with you the wealth We have bestowed on you so that you and they become equals in this? And do you fear them as you fear one another? Thus We make clear Our signs to those who use their common sense." A comparison of the two verses makes it quite clear that these have been cited to bring home to the mushriks that they themselves do not associate their slaves with themselves in their wealth and status, but they have the impudence and folly to set up His own creature as partner with God.

It appears that the erroneous interpretation has been

strengthened by the succeeding sentence: What! do they then deny to acknowledge Allah's favor? As this sentence immediately follows the similitude of the rich people and their slaves, they conclude that it will be ingratitude on the part of those, who possess more wealth not to share it equally with those who have less. As a matter of fact, everyone who has studied the Quran critically knows that ingratitude to Allah is to show gratitude to others than Allah for His blessings. This interpretation is so patently wrong that those who are well versed in the teachings of the Quran can have no misconception about it. And such verses as these can mislead only those who have a cursory knowledge of the Quran.

Now that the significance of the ingratitude towards Allah's blessing has become plain, the meaning of the verse will be quite clear, and it is this: When the Mushriks understand the implication of the difference between the master and his slave and observe this distinction in their own lives, why do they then persist in ignoring the immense difference between the Creator and His creatures and set up the latter as His partners and pay homage of gratitude to them for the blessings bestowed on them by Allah.

72. And Allah has made for you from among yourselves wives, and has made for you, from your wives, sons and grandsons, and has made provision for you of good

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ
 أَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ
 أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً
 وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ

things. Is then in falsehood that they believe,^{*63} and in the bounty of Allah that they disbelieve.^{*64}

أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِنِعْمَتِ
اللَّهِ هُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ



***63** “Is then in falsehood that they believe”: they have this false and baseless belief that there are certain gods and goddesses, jinns and saints, dead and alive, who possess the power to make or mar their fates, fulfill their desires and answer their prayers, give them children, cure their diseases and help them win law suits.

***64** “In the bounty of Allah that they disbelieve”: by associating others with Allah in offering gratitude to Him for His favors, though they did not have any proof or authority that their false gods had played any part in regard to those favors. The Quran considers such an association to be the denial of Allah’s favors. It puts forward the fundamental principle: It is the denial of the favor of the real benefactor to offer gratitude for his favor to anyone who has not done that favor, or to presume without any proof or reason that the real benefactor has nor granted that favor of his own accord but because of the mediation or regard or recommendation or intercession of this or that person.

73. And they worship other than Allah that which has no control over provision for them, (with) anything from the heavens and the earth, nor are they able.

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا
يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ رِزْقًا مِّنَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ

74. So do not make up any similitude for Allah.*65
Indeed, Allah knows and you do not know.

فَلَا تَضْرِبُوا لِلَّهِ الْأَمْثَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

***65** “So do not make up any similitude for Allah”: You should not compare Allah with others nor consider Him to be unapproachable like worldly kings and rulers, to whom none can have access without the mediation and intercession of their courtiers and servants. As Allah is not surrounded by angels, saints, favorites, etc. everyone can have direct access to Him without mediation by anyone.

75. Allah sets forth a parable*66 (of two men), a slave owned (by another), he has no power over anything, and him (the other one) on whom we have bestowed from Us a good provision, so he spends thereof secretly and openly. Can they be equal. Praise be to Allah.*67
But most of them do not know.*68

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا مَمْلُوكًا
لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَمَنْ رَزَقْنَاهُ
مِنَّا رِزْقًا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ يُنْفِقُ مِنْهُ
سِرًّا وَجَهْرًا هَلْ يَسْتَوُونَ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ

***66** In the preceding verse, the mushriks were told not to make comparisons between Allah and His creatures, for there is nothing like Him. As the bases of their comparison were wrong, their conclusions were also misleading. In this

verse appropriate similitude have been cited and right comparisons have been made to lead them to reality.

***67** Between the last question and “Praise be to Allah” there is a gap which is to be filled with the help of the latter. When the question was posed, obviously the mushriks could not say that the two men were equal. So some of them would have admitted that they were not equal, while the others would have kept quiet for fear that in case of admission, they would have to abide by its logical conclusion, that is, the admission of refutation of the doctrine of shirk. Therefore, the words, “Praise be to Allah” have been put in the mouth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in answer to both kinds of the response to the question. In the first case, it would mean: “Praise be to Allah” you have admitted at least so much. In the second case, it would mean: “Praise be to Allah” you have kept quiet in spite of all your obduracy and have not had the audacity to say that both were equal.

***68** “But most of them do not know” this simple thing that while they feel and carefully observe the distinction between those who have powers and those who are powerless, they neither feel nor observe the clear distinction between the Creator and His creation. That is why they associate the creatures with the Creator in His Attributes and Powers and show the kind of allegiance to them as is the exclusive right of the Creator. The pity is that in their everyday life, they would beg for some thing from the master of the house and not from the servants but in contrast to this, they would beg for their needs from the

servants of Allah and not from Him.

76. And Allah sets forth a parable of two men, one of them dumb, he has no power over anything, and he is a burden to his master. Whichever way he (master) directs him, he brings no good. Is he equal with him, and who enjoins justice, and he (himself) is on a straight path.*69

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ
أَحَدُهُمَا أَبْكَمٌ لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَى
شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ كَلٌّ عَلَى مَوْلَاهُ
أَيْنَمَا يُوَجِّههُ لَا يَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ هَلْ
يَسْتَوِي هُوَ وَمَنْ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ
وَهُوَ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٧٦﴾

*69 In the first similitude, distinction between Allah and false gods has been made clear in regard to the possession of powers and the lack of these. In the second one, the emphasis is on the use of those powers. Allah is not only All-Powerful, but also hears all the prayers and fulfills all the needs, while the slave is utterly powerless. He does not and cannot hear prayers, nor can make a response to them nor has the power to do anything at all. He is totally dependent on the Master and quite incapable of doing anything by himself. On the other hand, the Master is All-Powerful and All-Wise. He enjoins justice on the world: whatever He does is right and accurate. Ask them: Is it then a point of wisdom to regard such Master and such a slave as equal?

77. And to Allah belongs the unseen of the heavens and the earth.*70 And the matter of the Hour is not

وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَمَا أَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ إِلَّا كَلَمْحِ

but as a twinkling of the eye, or it is nearer.^{*71} Indeed, Allah has Power over all things.

الْبَصْرِ أَوْ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

***70** The subsequent sentence shows that this is the answer to a question which was frequently put to the Prophet (peace be upon him) by the disbelievers of Makkah. The question which has not been cited was this: If the Resurrection so often you talk of is really coming, let us know the date of its coming.

***71** That is, don't be under the delusion that the Resurrection will come gradually and take a long time: you will neither be able to see it coming at a distance nor guard against it and make preparations to meet it. For it will come suddenly without any previous notice, in the twinkling of an eye or even will take less time than this. Therefore, now is the time to consider this matter seriously and to decide about your attitude towards it. You should not depend upon this false hope that there is still a long time in the coming of the Resurrection and you will set matters right with Allah when you will see it coming. It may be pointed out that the Resurrection has been mentioned here during the discussion on Tauhid in order to warn the people that the choice between the doctrines of Tauhid and shirk is not merely a theoretical question. For that choice determines different courses of life for which they will be called to account on the Day of Resurrection. They have also been warned that it will come all of a sudden at some unknown time. Therefore, they should be

very careful to make that choice which will determine their success or failure on that Day.

78. And Allah has brought you out from the wombs of your mothers, (while) not knowing anything, and He made for you hearing, and sight, and hearts^{*72} that you might give thanks.^{*73}

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ
أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا
وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ
وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ



***72** This is to remind them that when they were born they were more helpless and ignorant than the young one of an animal, but Allah gave them ears to hear, eyes to see and minds to think and reflect. These have enabled them to acquire every kind of information and knowledge to carry on their worldly affairs efficiently. So much so that these sensory faculties are the only means which help man attain so much progress as to rule over everything on the earth.

***73** That is, you should be grateful to that Allah Who has bestowed upon you such blessings as these. It will be ingratitude on your part if you hear everything with your ears except the word of God, and see everything with your eyes except the signs of Allah and consider seriously about all the matters except your Benefactor Who has blessed you with these favors.

79. Do they not see at the birds held (flying) in the

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ

midst of the sky. None holds them except Allah. Indeed, in that are sure signs for a people who believe.

فِي جَوِّ السَّمَاءِ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ
إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

80. And Allah has made for you in your homes an abode, and has made for you from the skins of the cattle dwelling (tents),^{*74} which you find light (to carry) on the day when you travel, and on the day when you camp.^{*75} And of their wool, and their fur, and their hair, (are) furnishings and commodities for a while.

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ
سَكَنًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ جُلُودِ
الْأَنْعَامِ بُيُوتًا تَسْتَخِفُّونَهَا يَوْمَ
ظَعْنِكُمْ وَيَوْمَ إِقَامَتِكُمْ وَمِنْ
أَصْوَابِهَا وَأَوْبَارِهَا وَأَشْعَارِهَا
أَثْنَا وَمَتَاعًا إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٨٠﴾

***74** Tents of skin which are in common use in Arabia.

***75** That is, when you want to start on a journey, you can easily fold your tents and carry them, and when you want to make a short halt, you can easily unfold them and pitch them for shelter and rest.

81. And Allah has made for you, of that which He has created, shade (from the sun). And He has made for you resorts in the mountains. And He has made for you

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِمَّا خَلَقَ
ظِلَالًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ
أَكْنَانًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ سَرَابِيلَ

garments to protect you from the heat,^{*76} and coats (of armor) to protect you from your (mutual) battle.^{*77} Thus does He perfect His favor upon you,^{*78} that you might submit (to Him).

تَقِيكُمْ الْحَرَّ وَسَرَابِيلَ تَقِيكُمْ
بَأْسِكُمْ كَذَلِكَ يُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ
عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسَلِمُونَ



***76** The Quran has not mentioned protection from cold for either of the two reasons:

(1) Because the use of garments in the summer season is a symbol of cultural perfection and obviously there is no need to mention the lower stages of culture. Or

(2) the use of garments in hot countries has specially been mentioned because the main use of garments there is for protection from the hot pestilential furious wind. Therefore, one has to cover one's head, neck, ears, and the whole of his body to protect it from the hot wind which would otherwise scorch him to death.

***77** That is, Armors.

***78** "Thus does He perfect His favor upon you": Allah makes provision for the minutest needs and necessities of every aspect of human life. For example, let us take the instance of the protection of the human body from external influences. We find that Allah has made such elaborate arrangements as require a complete book to relate them. These arrangements reach their perfection in the case of clothing and housing arrangement. Or, if we consider the food requirements, we realize that it is of many varieties

which fulfill every need. More than this: the means Allah has provided for food requirements of man are so numerous that the list of the varieties and the names of different kinds of food require a big volume. This is the perfection of the blessing of food. Likewise, one would see perfection of the blessings of Allah in the fulfillment of each and every human need and necessity.

82. So if they turn away (O Muhammad), then upon you is only to convey (the message) in a clear way.

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَّغُ
الْمُبِينُ

83. They recognize the favor of Allah, then they deny it.^{*79} And most of them are disbelievers.

يَعْرِفُونَ نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ
يُنْكِرُونَهَا وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ
الْكَافِرُونَ

***79** Here the denial of the blessings of Allah refers to practical denial by the disbelievers of Makkah. For they did not deny that all these blessings were from Allah but along with this they believed that their saints and gods also had contributed towards them. This is why they associated their intercessors in their gratitude to Allah for these blessings. Nay, they were even more grateful to them than to Allah. Allah regards this association as denial of His blessings, ingratitude and forgetfulness of His favors.

84. And the Day when We shall raise from each nation a witness,^{*80} then permission

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا

will not be granted (to put forward excuses)^{*81} to those who disbelieved, nor will they be allowed to repent.^{*82}

ثُمَّ لَا يُؤْذَنُ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ

***80** The witness will be the Prophet of that community or his follower who invited that community to Tauhid and God worship and warned it of the consequences of shirk and superstitious rites and customs and cautioned it against the accountability on the Day of Resurrection. He will bear witness of the fact that he had conveyed the true message to those people, and that they committed evils deliberately and not in ignorance.

***81** This does not mean that the criminals will not be given any opportunity to clear themselves but it means that their crimes will be proved to the hilt by means of irrefutable evidence which will leave no room for excuses.

***82** That is, they will not be given the opportunity to beg pardon of their Lord for their crimes. For that will be the time of judgment as the time of begging pardon would have ended long before this. The Quran and the traditions are explicit on this point that the place for penitence is this world and not the next world. Even in this world the opportunity is lost as soon as signs of death begin to appear, for the penitence at that time will be of no avail when a person knows that the time of his death has come. Respite for deeds expires as soon as one enters into the boundary of death, and the only thing that remains after that is the award of reward and punishment.

85. And when those who did wrong will see the punishment, then it will not be lightened for them, nor will they be reprieved.

وَإِذَا رَأَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الْعَذَابَ
فَلَا يَخَفُوا عَنْهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يُنظَرُونَ



86. And when those who associated partners (with Allah) will see those partners of theirs, they will say: “Our Lord, these are our partners whom we used to call besides you.” But they will throw back at them (their) word (and say): “Surely, you indeed are liars.”*83

وَإِذَا رَأَى الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا
شُرَكَاءَهُمْ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ
شُرَكَائُنَا الَّذِينَ كُنَّا نَدْعُوا
مِن دُونِكَ فَأَلْقَوْا إِلَيْهِمُ
الْقَوْلَ إِنَّكُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ



***83** It does not mean that they would deny the fact that the mushriks used to invoke their help. They will call them liars in the sense that they had made them deities without their knowledge, information and permission, as if to say: We never told you to leave Allah aside and pray to us for help. As a matter of fact, we never approved of this. Nay, we were utterly unaware of this that you were invoking us. It was an utter lie that you considered us to be able to hear your prayers, answer them and help you out of your difficulties. As you yourselves were responsible for this shirk, why are you involving us in its consequences?

87. And they will offer unto Allah submission that day, and will have vanished from them what they used to invent.*84

وَأَلْقَوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ السَّلَامَ
وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ



*84 That is, all those things on which they had relied will prove to be false, for they will not find anyone to hear their supplication nor anyone to remove their hardships. Nay, there will be none who will come forward and say: These are my dependents, so no action should be taken against them.

88. Those who disbelieved and hindered (others) from the path of Allah, for them We will increase punishment over punishment,*85 for that they used to spread corruption.

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنِ
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ زِدْنَاهُمْ عَذَابًا فَوْقَ
الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا
يُفْسِدُونَ



*85 “We will increase punishment over punishment”: one for their own disbelief and the other for hindering others from the Way of Allah.

89. And the Day when We shall raise from each nation a witness against them from amongst themselves, and We shall bring you (O Muhammad) as a witness

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا
عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَجِئْنَا
بِكَ شَهِيدًا عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ

against these. And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things,^{*86} and a guidance, and a mercy, and good tidings for those who have submitted (to Allah).^{*87}

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيِينًا
لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً
وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ



***86** The Quran makes manifest everything on which depends guidance or deviation, success or failure. Whose knowledge is essential for following the right way. What clearly distinguishes truth from falsehood.

In this connection one should guard against that meaning of this sentence and the like in the Quran according to which some people interpret “everything” to mean the knowledge of all sciences, arts, etc. and in order to prove the correctness of their interpretation, they have to pervert the real meaning of the Quran.

***87** This Book is a guidance for those who surrender to it as a divine Book and follow it in every aspect of life. Then it will bring Allah’s blessings upon them, and will give them the good news that they will come out successful in the court of Allah on the Day of Judgment. Or, the contrary, those people who reject it shall not only be deprived of guidance and blessing but will also find it as a testimony against themselves on the Day of Resurrection when Allah’s Messenger will stand up to testify against them. This Book will prove to be a strong argument against them. For Allah’s Messenger will say that he had conveyed its message which made manifest the distinction between truth

and falsehood.

90. Indeed, Allah enjoins justice and kindness, and giving (their due) to near relatives,^{*88} and forbids from lewdness, and abomination, and rebellion.^{*89} He admonishes you that you may take heed.

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ
وَالْإِحْسَنِ وَإِيتَايَ ذِي
الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ
وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴾

***88** In this brief sentence Allah has enjoined three most important things on which alone depends the establishment of a sound and healthy society:

The first of these is justice which has two aspects.

To make such arrangements as may enable everyone to get one's due rights without stint. Justice does not, however, mean equal distribution of rights, for that would be absolutely unnatural. In fact, justice means equitable dispensation of rights which in certain cases may mean equality. For example, all citizens should have equal rights of citizenship but in other cases equality in rights would be injustice. For instance, equality in social status and rights between parents and their children will obviously be wrong. Likewise those who render services of superior and inferior types cannot be equal in regard to wages and salaries. What Allah enjoins is that the full rights of everyone should be honestly rendered whether those be moral, social, economic legal or political in accordance with

what one justly deserves.

The second thing enjoined is *ihsan* which has no equivalent in English. This means to be good, generous, sympathetic, tolerant, forgiving, polite, cooperative, selfless, etc. In collective life this is even more important than justice; for justice is the foundation of a sound society but *ihsan* is its perfection. On the one hand, justice protects society from bitterness and violation of rights. On the other hand, *ihsan* makes it sweet and joyful and worth living. It is obvious that no society can flourish if every individual insists on exacting his pound of flesh. At best such a society might be free from conflict but there cannot be love, gratitude, generosity, sacrifice, sincerity, sympathy and such humane qualities as produce sweetness in life and develop high values.

The third thing which has been enjoined is good treatment towards one's relatives which in fact is a specific form of *ihsan*. It means that one should not only treat his relatives well, share their sorrows and pleasures and help them within lawful limits but should also share his wealth with them according to his means and the need of each relative. This enjoins on everyone who possesses ample means to acknowledge the share of his deserving relatives along with the rights of his own person and family. The divine law holds every well to do person in a family to be responsible for fulfilling the needs of all his needy kith and kin. The law considers it a great evil that one person should enjoy the pleasures of life while his own kith and kin are starving. As it considers the family to be an important part of society, it

lays down that the first right of needy individuals is on its well to do members and then on the others. Likewise it is the first duty of the well to do members of the family to fulfill the needs of their own near relatives and then those of others. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has emphasized this fact in many traditions, according to which a person owes rights to his parents, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, other relatives, etc. in accordance with the nearness of their relationships. On the basis of this fundamental principle, Umar made it obligatory on the first cousins of an orphan to support him. In the case of another orphan he declared that if he had no first cousins he would have made it obligatory on distant cousins to support him. Just imagine the happy condition of the society every unit of which supports its every needy individual in this way. Most surely that society will become high and pure economically, socially and morally.

***89** In contrast to the above mentioned three virtues, Allah prohibits three vices which ruin individuals and the society as a whole:

(1) The Arabic word *fahsha* applies to all those things that are immodest, immoral or obscene or nasty or dirty or vulgar, not fit to be seen or heard, because they offend against recognized standards of propriety or good taste, e.g. adultery, fornication, homosexuality, nakedness, nudity, theft, robbery, drinking, gambling, begging, abusive language and the like. Likewise it is indecent to indulge in giving publicity to any of these evils and to spread them, e.g. false propaganda, calumny, publicity of crimes,

indecent stories, dramas, films, naked pictures, public appearance of womenfolk with indecent makeup, free mixing of sexes, dancing and the like.

(2) *Munkar* applies to all those evils which have always been universally regarded as evils and have been forbidden by all divine systems of law.

(3) *Baghy* applies to those vices that transgress the proper limits of decency and violate the rights of others, whether those of the Creator or His creation.

91. And fulfill the covenant of Allah when you have covenanted, and do not break the oaths after you have confirmed them, and indeed you have appointed Allah as a surety for yourselves. Indeed, Allah knows what you do. ^{*90}

وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدْتُمْ
وَلَا تَنْقُضُوا الْأَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ
تَوْكِيدِهَا وَقَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ
عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ
مَا تَفْعَلُونَ



***90** In this verse, Allah has enjoined three kinds of covenants which have been mentioned in the order of their importance. The first of these covenants is the one between man and his Allah which is the most important of all. The second in importance is the covenant between one man or one group of men and another man or another group of men, which is taken with Allah as a witness or in which the name of God has been used. The third covenant is that which has been made without using Allah's name. Though this is third in importance, its fulfillment is as important as

that of the first two and the violation of any of these has been prohibited.

92. And do not be like her who unravels her yarn, after it has become strong, into pieces. You take your oaths as (means of) deception among yourselves, lest a nation may be more numerous than (another) nation. Allah only tries you thereby.^{*91} And He will certainly make clear to you, on the Day of Resurrection,^{*92} that wherein you used to differ.

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّتِي نَقَضَتْ
غَزْلَهَا مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ أَنْكَاثًا
تَتَّخِذُونَ أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا
بَيْنَكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ أُمَّةٌ هِيَ
أَرْبَىٰ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ ۗ إِنَّمَا يَبُلُوكُمْ
اللَّهُ بِهِ ۗ وَلِيَبَيِّنَنَّ لَكُمْ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ مَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ



***91** In this connection it should be noted that Allah has rebuked the people for the worst form of violation of treaties which has been creating the greatest disorder in the world. It is a pity that even big people consider it to be a virtue to violate treaties in order to gain advantages for their people in political, economic and religious conflicts. At one time the leader of one nation enters into a treaty with another nation for the interest of his own people but at another time the same leader publicly breaks the very same treaty for the interest of his people, or secretly violates it. It is an irony that such violations are made even by those

people who are honest in their private lives. Moreover, it is regrettable that their own people do not protest against them; nay, they eulogize them for such shameful feats of diplomacy. Therefore, Allah warns that every such treaty is a test of the character of those who enter into it, and of their nations. They might gain some apparent advantage for their people in this way, but they will not escape their consequences on the Day of Judgment.

***92** This is to warn that decision about differences and disputes that lead to conflict will be made on the Day of Judgment. Therefore, these should not be made an excuse to break agreements and treaties. Even if one is wholly in the right and the opponent is wholly in the wrong. It is not right for the former to break treaties or make false propaganda or employ other deceitful methods to defeat the other. If one does so, it will go against him on that Day because righteousness demands that one should not only be right in his theories and aims but should also use right methods and employ right means. This warning has especially been given to those religious groups and sects who always suffer from this misunderstanding that they have a right to defeat their opponents because they are on the side of God and their opponents are rebels against Allah. Therefore, there is no obligation on them to stick to their treaties with their opponents. This was what the Arab Jews practiced, declaring: There is no moral obligation on us in regard to the pagan Arabs, and we are rightly entitled to practice dishonesty and deceit that might be of advantage to us and harmful to the disbelievers.

93. And if Allah had willed, He could have made you (all) one nation,^{*93} but He sends astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills.^{*94} And you shall certainly be asked of what you used to do.

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً
وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَلَتُسْأَلُنَّ
عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ



***93** This further supports the previous warning. It means that it would be wrong for any champion of Allah's religion to arrogate to himself the use of every sort of method and means irrespective of whether they are right or wrong to propagate his own religion (considering it to be Allah's religion) and try to destroy opposite religions. For this would be utterly against the will of Allah. If Allah had willed that there should be no religious differences, He could have deprived mankind of the freedom of choice. In that case, there would have been no need for Allah to get help of any such upholder of His religion, who uses disgraceful means for this purpose. Allah could have created all mankind to be inherent believers and obedient servants by depriving them of the power and option of disbelief and sin. Then there would have been none who could have dared to deviate from belief and obedience.

***94** This is to show that Allah Himself has given man the power and freedom to follow any out of the many ways. That is why Allah makes arrangements for the guidance of the one who intends to follow the right way, and let go astray the one who desires to deviate.

94. And do not make your oaths as (means of) deception among yourselves, lest a foot may slip after having been firm,^{*95} and you may have to taste the evil (consequences) because of hindering (others) from the path of Allah. And yours should be a great punishment (in Hereafter).

وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا
بَيْنَكُمْ فَتَرِلَّ قَدَمٌ بَعْدَ ثُبُوتِهَا
وَتَذُوقُوا أَلْسُوَاءَ بِمَا صَدَدْتُمْ
عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ط وَلَكُمْ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيمٌ

*95 That is, someone who might have been convinced of Islam, seeing your dishonest conduct should become disgusted and hold back from joining the believers. For he might argue like this: As these Muslims are not much different from the disbelievers in their morals and dealings, there is no reason why I should join them.

95. And do not barter the covenant^{*96} of Allah for a small gain.^{*97} Indeed, that which is with Allah is better for you, if you only knew.

وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا
إِنَّمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن
كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

*96 That is, the covenant that you may make in the name of Allah as a representative of His religion.

*97 It does not mean that they should barter away Allah's covenant for some big gain. What it implies is that any worldly gain howsoever great is insignificant as compared with the worth of Allah's covenant. Therefore, it will be a losing bargain to barter that away for any worldly gain,

which is after all paltry.

96. Whatever is with you, will be exhausted, and whatever is with Allah will remain. And We will certainly reward those, who are steadfast,^{*98} their recompense according to the best of what they used to do.

مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ^ط وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
بَاقٍ^ق وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ^ق الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا
أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ



***98** Those who practice fortitude are the people who will always stand firm in the struggle between right and truth on one side and greed and lust on the other. They bear every loss for the sake of righteousness and spurn away every gain that they might obtain by adopting unlawful means. They patiently wait for the rewards of their good deeds in the Hereafter.

97. Whoever acts righteously, among male or female, while he (or she) is a believer. Then indeed, We will give to him (or her) a good life.^{*99} And We will certainly reward them their recompense to the best of what they used to do.^{*100}

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ
أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ
حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً^ط وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ
أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ



***99** This verse removes the wrong notions of both the Muslims and the disbelievers who are of the opinion that those who adopt a just honest and pious attitude, are most

surely losers in this world, though they might be gainers in the Hereafter. Allah removes this misunderstanding, as if to say: This presumption of yours is wrong. The righteous attitude not only leads to a happy life in the Hereafter, but it also guarantees, by Allah's grace, a pure and happy life even in this world. And this is a fact that those people who are sincerely righteous, honest, pure and fair in their dealings enjoy a much better life in this world. For they enjoy that confidence and real honor and respect because of their spotless character, which is not enjoyed by those who lack these virtues. They obtain such pure and outstanding success as are denied to those who employ dirty and disgusting ways to win success. Above all, they enjoy, even though they might be living in poor houses, that peace of mind and satisfaction of conscience which is denied to the wicked dwellers of mansions and palaces.

***100** That is, their rank in the Hereafter shall be determined according to their best deeds. In other words, if a person has done both small and great virtues, he will be awarded that high rank which he would merit according to his greatest virtues.

98. So when you recite the Quran, seek refuge with Allah from Satan the outcast.^{*101}

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ
بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

***101** This does not mean that one should merely repeat the Arabic words: I seek Allah's refuge against the accursed Satan. It means that one should have a sincere desire and do his utmost to guard against Satan's evil suggestions

when one is reciting the Holy Quran and should not allow wrong and irrelevant doubts and suspicions to enter his mind. One should try to see everything contained in the Quran in its true light, and refrain from mixing it up with his self invented theories or ideas foreign to the Quran so as to construe its meaning against the will of Allah. Moreover, one should feel that the most sinister and avowed design of Satan is that the reader should not obtain any guidance from the Quran. This is why Satan tries his utmost to delude the reader and pervert him from getting guidance from it, and mislead him into wrong ways of thinking. Therefore, the reader should be fully on his guard against Satan and seek Allah's refuge for help so that Satan should not be able to deprive him of the benefits froth this source of guidance, for one who fails to get guidance from this source, will never be able to get guidance from anywhere else. Above all, the one who seeks to obtain deviation from this Book is so entangled in deviation that he can never get out of this vicious circle.

The context in which this verse occurs here is to serve as an introduction to the answers to the questions which the mushriks of Makkah were raising against the Quran. They have been warned that they could appreciate the blessing of the Quran only if they would try to see it in its true light by seeking Allah's protection against Satan's misleading suggestions, and not by raising objections against it. Otherwise Satan does not let a man understand the Quran and its teachings.

99. Indeed, there is for him no authority over those who believe and put trust in their Lord.

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ
يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

100. His authority is only over those who make a friend of him, and those who ascribe partners to Him (Allah).

إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِهِ
مُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

101. And when We change a revelation in place of (another) revelation, and Allah knows best what He sends down, they say: “You (O Muhammad) are only a fabricator.”*¹⁰² But most of them do not know.

وَإِذَا بَدَّلْنَا آيَةً مَّكَانَ آيَةٍ
وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُنَزِّلُ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا
أَنْتَ مُفْتَرٍ ۚ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾

***102** This may also mean: To send down one commandment to elaborate upon the other, for the commandments were sent down piecemeal in the Quran. For instance, the commandments about prohibition and fornication were sent down gradually one after the other during several years. But We hesitate to accept this interpretation because An-Nahl is a Makki Surah and to the best of our information there is no instance to show that commandments were sent down piecemeal at Makkah.

Therefore, we prefer the other interpretation. The Quran has added details of one theme and explained the same with different kinds of illustrations at different places. Likewise it has related a story in different words at different places and presented its different aspects and details at other places. It has put forward one argument at one place to prove a theme and another at another place to prove the same theme. It has related one theme concisely at one place and in detail at the other. That is what the disbelievers of Makkah put forward as proof that Muhammad (peace be upon him) forged the Quran himself. They argued like this: Had the Quran been the Word of Allah, it would have related one thing in full at one place, for Allah's knowledge is not defective that He should have to think out gradually the details of a theme and to give different versions to explain the same thing. In contrast to this, the knowledge of a human being is defective. A man has to think out gradually as has been done in the case of the Quran which is a clear proof that you have forged it yourself.

102. Say: "The Holy Spirit (Gabriel) has brought it down from your Lord with truth,^{*103} that it may make firm (the faith of) those who believe,^{*104} and a guidance^{*105} and good tidings for those who submitted (to Allah)."^{*106}

قُلْ نَزَّلَهُ رُوحُ الْقُدُسِ مِنْ
رَبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيُثَبِّتَ الَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَى
لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ

***103** The Holy Spirit: Gibril. Instead of using the name of the angel who brought revelation, his title has been

deliberately mentioned to warn the disbelievers that the Holy Spirit who brought revelation is free from human frailties. He is neither dishonest that he should add something to or take away something from the message he brought, nor is he a liar and forger that he should invent and state something in the name of Allah. Nor does he suffer from any human lust that he should practice a deceit. He is wholly pure and holy and conveys the Word of Allah intact.

***104** That is, the fact that Allah sends down His message piecemeal does not mean that Allah's knowledge and wisdom are defective as you consider because of your folly. Allah sends His revelations gradually because human intelligence and capacity to grasp are limited and defective which do not let him understand the whole theme at one and the same time and make it firm in his mind. Therefore, Allah in His wisdom conveyed His revelation piecemeal through the Holy Spirit. He sends a theme gradually and gives its details by and by and uses different methods and ways to make it plain to human beings so that they might grasp it according to their abilities and capabilities and become firm in their faith and knowledge.

***105** The second practical wisdom of sending down the Quran piecemeal was that those believers who obediently followed it, should get necessary instructions for the propagation of Islam and the solution of other problems of life at the time when they were actually needed. It is obvious that if those instructions had been sent down before time and at one and the same time they would not

have been useful.

***106** The third practical wisdom of not sending down the Quran as a whole at one and the same time was to give good tidings and encouragement to the obedient servants who were suffering from persecution and encountering great obstacles because they needed it over and over again. That is why they were assured of ultimate success time and again to fill them with hope to carry on their mission.

103. And certainly, We know that they say: “It is only a human being who teaches him.”^{*107} The tongue of him at whom they falsely hint is foreign, and this (the Quran) is clear Arabic tongue.

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ
إِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ لِّسَانُ
الَّذِي يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ
أَعْجَمِيٌّ وَهَذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ
مُبِينٌ



***107** In this connection, traditions mention the names of several persons, one of whom is Jabar. According to the disbelievers of Makkah he taught the Prophet (peace be upon him). However, one thing particularly noteworthy about all these persons is that they were non Arab slaves. Whosoever he might be, the fact that he used to recite the Torah and the Gospel and had an acquaintance with the Prophet (peace be upon him). This gave an opportunity to the disbelievers for spreading this false report that it was the particular slave who was the real author of the Holy Quran, but Muhammad (peace be upon him) presented it

as the Word of God. This not only shows that his opponents were very impudent in spreading false accusations against the Prophet (peace be upon him) but also that, in general, people are not just in judging the worth of their contemporaries. They were ill treating like this that great personality who has had no parallel in history. Nevertheless, these people who had become blind in their opposition, preferred to attribute the authorship of the matchless Arabic Quran to a non Arab slave who had a smattering of the Torah and the Gospel. Instead of accepting the claim of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who was an embodiment of truth, they attributed its authorship to an insignificant foreign slave.

104. Indeed, those who do not believe in the revelations of Allah, Allah will not guide them, and for them will be a painful punishment.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِعَايَاتِ
 اللَّهِ لَا يَهْدِيهِمُ اللَّهُ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
 أَلِيمٌ

105. Only they invent falsehood, who do not believe in Allah's revelations. ^{*108} And it is they who are the liars.

إِنَّمَا يَفْتَرِي الْكَذِبَ الَّذِينَ لَا
 يُؤْمِنُونَ بِعَايَاتِ اللَّهِ
 وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ

***108** This verse can also be rendered like this: A Prophet does not forge any false thing but those, who do not believe

in the revelations of Allah, invent falsehoods.

106. Whoever disbelieves in Allah after his belief, except him who is forced thereto and whose heart is still content with faith. But as for those who open their breasts to disbelief, upon them is wrath from Allah. And for them will be a great punishment.*109

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ
إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ
مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ
شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ
غَضَبٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ



*109 This verse deals with the case of those Muslims who were being persecuted with cruelty and were being subjected to unbearable torments to force them to give up their faith. They are being told that if at any time they are forced to utter words of disbelief to save their lives, when in fact in their hearts they are secure against disbelief, they will be pardoned. On the other hand, if they accepted unbelief from the core of their hearts, they shall not escape the torment of Allah even if they succeed in saving their lives.

It does not, however, mean that one should utter words of disbelief to save his life. This is merely a permission but not the ideal thing for a believer. According to this permission if one utters such a thing, he shall not be taken to account. In fact, the ideal for a believer is to utter words of truth in any case whether his body is cut into pieces. There are

instances which show that during the period of the Prophet (peace be upon him) some acted upon the ideal while others took advantage of the permission. There was Khabbab bin Art (may Allah be pleased with him) who was made to lie on embers of fire until the fire was extinguished by the melting of his fat, but he remained firm in his faith. Then there was Bilal Habashi who was made to put on an armor and stand in the scorching heat. Then he was dragged on the burning sand but he went on saying, Allah is one. There was another believer, Habib bin Zaid bin Asim, whose limbs were cut one by one by the order of Musailimah, the Liar. Each time his limb was severed it was demanded of him that he should acknowledge the Liar as a prophet but each time he refused to bear witness to his claim of prophethood until he breathed his last. On the other hand, there was the instance of Ammar bin Yasir whose parents were mercilessly butchered before his eyes. After this he himself was put to such unbearable torture that, in order to save his life, he had to utter the same words of unbelief that were demanded of him. Afterwards when he came crying to the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said: O Messenger of Allah, they did not let me go until I spoke evil of you and praised their deities. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him: How do you feel about this, in your heart? He replied humbly: My heart is fully convinced of the faith. At this the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: If they put you to the same torture again, you may utter the same words. May Allah be pleased with them all.

107. That is because they love the life of the world over the Hereafter, and that Allah does not guide the people who disbelieve.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْحَيَاةَ
الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ



108. They are those, Allah has set a seal upon their hearts, and their hearing (ears), and their sight (eyes). And it is they who are the heedless.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ
عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَسَمْعِهِمْ
وَأَبْصَرِهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْغَافِلُونَ



109. Assuredly, it is they, in the Hereafter, they will be the losers.*110

لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ هُمُ
الْخَاسِرُونَ



*110 These words apply to those people who gave up their faith, when they felt that they could not bear hardships of the right way and so they again joined their unbelieving, mushrik people.

110. Then indeed, your Lord, for those who emigrated after that they had been persecuted, and then fought and were

ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِينَ
هَاجَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا فُتِنُوا ثُمَّ

steadfast,^{*111} indeed, your Lord after that is (for them) Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

جَاهِدُوا وَصَبِرُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
مِنْ بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

***111 They were those believers who migrated to Habashah.**

111. On the Day when every soul will come pleading for itself, and every soul will be repaid in full for what it did, and they will not be wronged.

﴿ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي كُلُّ نَفْسٍ تُجَادِلُ
عَنْ نَفْسِهَا وَتُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ
مَا عَمِلَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴾

112. And Allah sets forth a parable, a township that was secure, well content, its provision coming to it in abundance from every side, but it denied the bounties of Allah, so Allah made it taste the extreme of hunger and fear because of what they used to do.

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ
ءَامِنَةً مُطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا
رَغَدًا مِّن كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ
بِأَنْعَمِ اللَّهِ فَأَذَاقَهَا اللَّهُ لِبَاسَ
الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَصْنَعُونَ

113. And indeed, there had come to them a messenger from among themselves, but they had denied him, so

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْهُمْ
فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ

the punishment seized them while they were wrong doers.*112

وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾

*112 That habitation has not been specified here nor have the commentators definitely pointed out which that habitation was. However, there is a saying of Ibn Abbas (which seems to be correct) that the place referred to is Makkah itself. In that case, hunger and fear will mean the famine which prevailed over the people of Makkah for several years during the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him).

114. Then eat of what Allah has provided you, lawful (and) good. And thank the bounty*113 of Allah if it is He whom you worship.*114

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلٰلًا
طَيِّبًا وَاشْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١١٤﴾

*113 This shows that the above mentioned famine had come to an end at the time of the revelation of this Surah.

*114 Here the observation of the lawful and the unlawful has been made the test of worship of Allah. Those who claim to be the servants of Allah will eat what is lawful and pure and show gratitude to Him and will scrupulously refrain from what is forbidden and impure.

115. He has only forbidden to you carrion, and blood, and swine flesh, and that over which has been invoked (a name) other than Allah.

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ
وَالدَّمَ وَالْخَنِزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ

Then him who is obliged (to do so), without disobedience, and not going to excess, then indeed, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.*115

لَغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ
بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ

رَحِيمٌ

*115 Please refer also to Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 173, Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 3 and Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 145.

116. And do not say, about what your own tongues put forth falsely. "This is lawful, and this is forbidden,"*116 so that you invent against Allah a lie. Indeed, those who invent against Allah a lie will not prosper.

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَا تَصِفُ
أَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ هَذَا
حَلَلٌ وَهَذَا حَرَامٌ لَتَفْتَرُوا عَلَى
اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ
عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُونَ

116

*116 This verse clearly shows that none but Allah has the right to declare a thing to be lawful or unlawful. Or, in other words, the right of making laws exclusively rests with Allah. Therefore, any person who will dare to decide about the lawful and the unlawful will transgress his powers. Of course, a person, who acknowledges the divine law as the final authority, may deduce from it whether a certain thing or action is lawful or unlawful.

The arrogation of the right of determining the lawful and

the unlawful has been declared to be a falsehood on Allah for two reasons:

(1) Such a person, so to say, claims that what he declares to be lawful or unlawful, disregarding the authority of the divine Book, has been made lawful or unlawful by God.

(2) He means to claim that Allah has given up the authority of making lawful and unlawful and has thus left man free to make his own laws for the conduct of life.

It is obvious that each of these claims will be a falsehood and a false imputation to Allah.

117. A brief enjoyment (will be theirs), and they will have a painful punishment.

مَتَّعٌ قَلِيلٌ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ



118. And to those who are Jews, We have forbidden that which ^{*117} We have mentioned to you (O Muhammad) before. ^{*118} And We did not wrong them, but they used to wrong themselves.

وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا مَا قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ



***117** In this paragraph (Ayats 118-124), answers to the objections raised by the disbelievers of Makkah concerning the commandments contained in Ayats 114-117 have been given. Their first objection was: Besides the above mentioned unlawful things, there are other unlawful things in the Jewish law which have been made lawful by you. If that law was from Allah and yours is also from Allah, why

do they then contradict each other? Their second objection was: You have abrogated the sanctity of the Sabbath of the Israelites. Have you done this of your own accord or by Allah's command? In the latter case then will be an obvious contradiction in the two laws. Or has Allah Himself given two contradictory commandments?

***118** This refers to: "And We prohibited all animals with claws to those people who had adopted Judaism." (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 146). In this verse (118) Allah has stated that certain things were made unlawful because of the disobedience of the Jews.

Here a question arises. Which of the two Surahs, Al-Anaam or An-Nahl, was first revealed? This is because in verse 118, a reference has been made to verse 146 of Al-Anaam. Also in verse 119 of Al-Anaam: "And why should you not eat that thing over which Allah's name has been mentioned, when He has already given you a detail of those things that have been declared to be unlawful for you except in case of extremity?" a reference has been made to verse 115 of An-Nahl.

This is because these are the only two Makki Surahs in which details of unlawful things have been given. As regards to the question, we are of the opinion that An-Nahl was revealed earlier than Al-Anaam, for verse 119 of the latter contains a reference to verse 115 of the former. It appears that after the revelation of Surah Al-Anaam, the disbelievers raised objections in regard to these verses of An-Nahl. So they were referred to verse 146 of Al-Anaam in which a few things were made unlawful, especially for

the Jews. As this answer concerned An-Nahl, so verse 118, though it was revealed after the revelation of Al-Anaam, was inserted as a parenthetical clause in An-Nahl.

119. Then indeed, your Lord, for those who do evil in ignorance, then repent after that and do righteous deeds, indeed your Lord, thereafter, is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا
الْسُّوءَ بِجَهْلَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ
ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْ
بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١١٩﴾

120. Indeed, Abraham was a whole community (by himself),^{*119} obedient to Allah, exclusively devoted. And he was not of those who associated (others with Allah).

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ
حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾

***119** “Abraham was a whole community by himself” for at that time he was the only Muslim in the whole world who was upholding the banner of Islam, while the rest of the world was upholding the banner of unbelief. As that servant of Allah performed the mission which is ordinarily carried out by a whole community, he was not one person but an institution in himself.

121. Thankful for His bounties. He (Allah) chose him, and He guided him to a straight path.

شَاكِرًا لِأَنْعَمِهِ ۚ أَجْتَبَهُ
وَهَدَاهُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٢١﴾

122. And We gave him good in the world. And certainly, in the Hereafter, he shall be among the righteous.

وَأَتَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَإِنَّهُ
فِي الآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

123. Then, We inspired you (O Muhammad, saying) that: “Follow the religion of Abraham, exclusively devoted. And he was not of those who associated (others with Allah).^{*120}

ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ أَنْ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ

***120** This is the complete answer to the first objection (E.N. 117) raised by the disbelievers. This has two parts.

(1) There is no contradiction in the divine law as you seem to presume on the apparent variance in the Jewish and the Islamic Law. As a matter of fact a few things had been made unlawful especially for the Jews as punishment to them because of their disobedience; therefore, there was no reason why others should be deprived of those good things.

(2) Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was commanded to follow the way of Abraham and not the way of the Jews, and they themselves knew that these things were not unlawful in the law of Abraham. For instance, the Jews did not eat the flesh of camel but this was lawful according to Abraham. Likewise, ostrich, hare, duck, etc. were unlawful in the Jewish law, but they were lawful according to Abraham. Incidentally the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned that neither they nor the Jews had any relationship with Prophet Abraham for he was not

a mushrik while both of them were practicing shirk. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his followers were the only true followers of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) for there was no tinge of shirk in their creed or in their practice.

124. The Sabbath was only prescribed for those who differed in it.*¹²¹ And indeed, your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection about that wherein they used to differ.

إِنَّمَا جُعِلَ السَّبْتُ عَلَى
الَّذِينَ اٰخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ ۗ وَإِنَّ
رَبَّكَ لَيَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ
يَخْتَلِفُونَ



***121** This is the answer to their second objection. Obviously, there was no need to state that the restrictions about the Sabbath applied only to the Jews and had nothing to do with the law of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), because they themselves knew it. The restrictions were imposed upon the Jews because of their mischief and violations of the law. In order to understand fully the significance of this reference one is requested to read those passages of the Bible in which commandments about the Sabbath have been stated, e.g., Exodus 20: 8-11, 23: 12-13, 31: 1-17, 35: 23, and Numbers 15: 32-36. Besides this, one should also be acquainted with the impudent violations of the Sabbath. See Jeremiah: 17: 21-27 and Ezekiel. 10: 18-24.

125. Call (O Muhammad) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction,^{*122} and argue with them in a way that is better.^{*123} Indeed your Lord, He knows best of him who has gone astray from His way, and He is best Aware of those who are guided.

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ
وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَدِلْهُمْ
بِأَتَى هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ
أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ
وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ



***122** This instruction is very important for those who are engaged in the propagation of Islam. They should always keep in view two things, wisdom and excellent admonition. Wisdom implies that one should use discretion in the work of propagation and should not do this blindly like foolish people. Wisdom demands that one should keep in view the intelligence, capability and circumstances of the addressees and convey the message in accordance with the requirements of the occasion. Moreover, one should refrain from applying one and the same method to each and every person or group but should first diagnose the real disease of the addressee and then cure it by appealing to his mind and intellect.

Excellent admonition implies two things:

(1) One should not be content with convincing the addressee with arguments alone but should also appeal to his feelings. Likewise one should not confine himself merely to arguments in condemning evils and deviations but should try to convince the other of their repugnance that

lies embedded in the human nature. One should also warn of the worst consequences of those evils. Besides, one should not only try to convince the addressee rationally of the soundness and excellence of guidance and righteous deeds but should also create in him interest and love for them.

(2) Admonition should be administered in such a manner as to show sincere concern for and the welfare of the addressee. Nothing should be said or done to create the impression that the admonisher is looking down upon him and taking pleasure in his own feeling of superiority. On the contrary, he should feel that the admonisher is filled with the strong desire for his reform and welfare.

*123 “In a way that is better” implies that one should have a sweet tongue, show noble character and give reasonable and appealing arguments, and refrain from indulging in polemics, argumentation and controversies. The one who discusses things with people in the best manner, does not resort to accusations, crooked arguments, taunts, nor makes fun of the opponent in order to defeat him and to win applause for his own superiority in argument. For these things will produce obduracy and obstinacy. In contrast to this, he will try to convince the other in a simple and humble way, and when he feels that the other person has come down to crooked arguments, he will leave him alone lest the other should go further and further astray in his deviation.

126. And if you punish, then punish with the like of that wherewith you were afflicted.

وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا
عُوقِبْتُمْ بِهِ ۖ وَإِنَّ صَبْرَكُمْ لَهْوَ

And if you endure patiently, that is indeed the best for those who are patient.

خَيْرٌ لِلصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٢٦﴾

127. And endure you patiently (O Muhammad), and your patience is not but from Allah. And do not grieve over them, and be not in distress because of what they plot.

وَأَصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِي ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾

128. Indeed, Allah is with those who fear (Him) and those who do good.^{*124}

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ ﴿١٢٨﴾

***124** “Allah is with those who fear Him” because they scrupulously refrain from evil ways and always adopt the righteous attitude, for they know that their actions and deeds are not determined by the evils others do to them but by their own sense of righteousness; so they return good for evil.



Al-Isra الأَسْرَى

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah takes its name *Isra* from Ayat 1. The Surah is also known as *Bani-Israel*. But the name is merely a distinctive appellation like the names of many other surahs and not a descriptive title.

Period of Revelation

The very first verse indicates that this Surah was revealed on the occasion of Miraj (Ascension). According to the traditions and books on the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him), this event took place one year before Hijrah. Thus, this Surah is one of those which were revealed in the last stage of Prophethood at Makkah.

Background

The Prophet (peace be upon him) had been propagating *Tauhid* for the previous twelve years and his opponents had been doing all they could to make his mission a failure, but in spite of all their opposition, Islam had spread to every corner of Arabia and there was hardly any clan which had not been influenced by his invitation. In Makkah itself the true believers had formed themselves into a small

community and were ready and willing to face every danger to make Islam a success. Besides them, a very large number of the people of Aus and Khazraj (two influential clans of Al-Madinah) had accepted Islam. Thus the time had come for the Prophet (peace be upon him) to emigrate from Makkah to Al-Madinah and there gather together the scattered Muslims and establish a state based on the principles of Islam.

These were the conditions when Miraj took place and on his return the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought down the message contained in this Surah.

Theme and Topics

This Surah is a wonderful combination of warning, admonition and instruction, which have been blended together in a balanced proportion.

The disbelievers of Makkah had been admonished to take a lesson from the miserable end of the Israelites and other communities and mend their ways within the period of respite given by Allah, which was about to expire. They should, therefore, accept the invitation that was being extended by Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Quran. Otherwise they shall be annihilated and replaced by other people. Incidentally, the Israelites, with whom Islam was going to come in direct contact in the near future at Al-Madinah, have also been warned that they should learn a lesson from the chastisements that have already been inflicted on them. They were warned: Take advantage of the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) because that is the last opportunity which is being given to

you. If even now you behave as you have been behaving, you shall meet with a painful torment.

As regards to the education of mankind, it has been impressed that human success or failure, gain or loss, depends upon the right understanding of Tauhid, life after death and Prophethood. Accordingly, convincing arguments have been put forward to prove that the Quran is the Book of Allah and its teachings are true and genuine. The doubts of the disbelievers about these basic realities have been removed and on suitable occasions they have been admonished and rebuked in regard to their ways of ignorance.

In this connection, those fundamental principles of morality and civilization on which the Islamic system of life is meant to be established have been put forward. Thus this was a sort of the manifesto of the intended Islamic state which had been proclaimed a year before its actual establishment. It has been explicitly stated that that was the sketch of the system on which Muhammad (peace be upon him) intended to build human life first in his own country and then in the outside world.

Besides these, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been instructed to hold firmly to his stand without minding the opposition and difficulties which he was encountering and should never think of making a compromise with unbelief. The Muslims who sometimes showed signs of impatience, when they met with persecution, calumny, and crooked arguments, have also been instructed to face adverse circumstances with patience and fortitude and keep full

control over their feelings and passions. Moreover, salat was prescribed in order to reform and purify their souls, as if to say: This is the thing which will produce in you those high qualities of character which are essential for everyone who intends to struggle in the righteous way. Incidentally, we learn from traditions that Miraj was the first occasion on which the five daily prayers were prescribed to be offered at fixed times.

1. Glorified be He who took for a journey His servant (Muhammad) by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, that the surroundings whereof We have blessed, that We might show him of Our signs.*1
Indeed, He (Allah) is the All Hearer, the All Seer.

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ
لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي
بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا
إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿١﴾

*1 The event referred to in this verse is known Miraj and Isra. According to authentic traditions, this took place a year before Hijrah. In the traditional and biographical literature, its details have been related by a large number (25) of the companions. Anas bin Malik, Malik bin Saasaah, Abuzar Ghifari, and Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with them all) have related details of the event. Besides them, Umar, Ali, Abdullah bin Masud (Allah be pleased with them) have also related some parts of this event.

In this verse, the Quran mentions only a part of the

Journey, i.e. from Masjid-i-Haram to the Temple at Jerusalem. The object of this journey as stated here was that Allah willed to show His servant some of His signs. The Quran does not give any details other than this but we find further details in the traditions, which are to this effect:

One night the Angel Jibril took Prophet (peace be upon him) on al-Buraq from Masjid-i-Haram to Masjid-i-Aqsa (the Temple). There the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered his prayers along with the other Prophets. Then he took him towards the higher spheres, where he met some of the great Prophets in different spheres. At last he reached the Highest Place in the Heavens, and was received in audience by Allah. It was there that, besides other important instructions, five daily Prayers were prescribed. Then he returned to the Temple and from there came back to Masjid-i-Haram. During this Journey, according to many traditions, Paradise and Hell were shown to him. We also learn from authentic traditions that on the following day when he mentioned this event, the disbelievers of Makkah scoffed at him, and some of the Muslims also were skeptical about this.

The above additional details based on the traditions cannot be said to be against the Quran, for these are additions to the details given in the Quran; therefore, the details related in the traditions cannot be rejected on the plea that they are against the Quran. Nevertheless, if one rejects any part of those details which are given in the traditions, one cannot be declared a renegade. On the other hand, if one rejects the details given in the Quran, one does become a

renegade.

There are different versions of this journey. Some say that this happened in a dream, while others are of the opinion that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was fully awake and went on the journey with his own physical body. Some others say that it was merely a mystic vision which was shown to him. The opening words of this verse: “Glorified be He who took for a journey His servant” however, clearly show that it was a supernatural event which was brought about by the unlimited power of Allah. It is quite obvious that if the event had been merely a mystic vision, it would not have been introduced by the words which imply that the Being Who brought about this event is free from each and every kind of weakness and defect. Again the words “took His servant by night” also show that this was not a dream or a vision but a physical journey in which Allah arranged that the Prophet (peace be upon him) should make observation of His signs with his physical eyes. Therefore, one is bound to admit that this was not a mere spiritual experience but a physical journey and visual observation which Allah arranged for His Prophet (peace be upon him).

It is strange that some people are of the opinion that this extraordinary journey could not be possible, but now when man with his very limited power has been able to reach the moon, it is absurd to deny that Allah with His limitless power could enable His Messenger (peace be upon him) to make this journey in the extraordinary short time it took.

Above all, the question whether a thing is possible or not,

can arise only in the case of human beings whose powers are after all limited, but such questions cannot be raised where the All-Powerful Allah is concerned. Only such a person who does not believe that Allah is able to do everything can raise objections against this wonderful journey about which Allah Himself says that He took His servant one night from Masjid-i-Haram to Masjid-i-Aqsa. Likewise all the objections raised against the various details which are given in the traditions are frivolous, except two, which are plausible:

First, if we accept these details, then we shall have to admit that Allah is confined to a certain place: otherwise there was no need that His servant should be taken for this purpose to a certain place. Secondly, according to traditions, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was enabled to observe Paradise and Hell where he saw some people suffering from torment. The objection is: why should some people be awarded punishments or rewards before the final judgment after Resurrection?

As regards to the first objection, it is true that Allah is Infinite by Himself, but in dealing with His creation, He employs those means which suit His creation not because of any limitation of His, but because of the limitations of His creation. For instance, when He speaks to any of His creature, He adopts the same limited mode of conversation as the addressee can understand, though He has limitless modes of speech. Likewise, when He desires to show some of the wonderful signs of His kingdom to a servant. He takes him to the place where the signs are to be shown. It is

obvious that the servant cannot see at one and the same time the entire universe as Allah does, for Allah has no need to go to any place at all for this purpose but the servant has. The same applies to the appearance of the servant before the Creator. Though Allah is not confined to any locality, it is necessary for the servant to go to the place where His manifestations have been concentrated for his observation because it is not possible for the servant with his limited powers to go in His Presence in His Infinite capacity.

As regards to the second objection, it is based on the lack of understanding the thing: many of the signs which were shown to the Prophet (peace be upon him) were symbolic. For instance, a small hole from which a fat ox came out but could not go back into it, represented mischief personified. In the same way the adulterers were shown as if they had fresh meat before them but instead of that they were eating rotten flesh. Similarly punishments for evil deeds shown to him were only symbolic observations of the punishments in the Hereafter so that he might see in advance the things which would take place in the Hereafter.

In regard to the Miraj it should be kept in view that all the Prophets were enabled by Allah to see His signs in the heavens and the earth according to their ranks. And for this purpose all the material curtains were lifted so that they could see with their naked eyes the unseen realities, to which they were required to invite the people.

This was done so that the Prophets could say with full conviction what they had seen with their own eyes. For this

experience would distinguish them from a philosopher who bases all his theories on guesswork and cannot say that he bears witness to what he claims. In contrast to philosophers, Prophets could say that they bore witness to the things which they presented because they had seen them with their own eyes.

2. And We gave Moses the Scripture, and We made it a guidance for the Children of Israel,*² (saying): “That do not take other than Me as a guardian.”*³

وَأَتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ
هُدًى لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَلَّا
تَتَّخِذُوا مِن دُونِي وَكِيلاً

*² As this verse has no apparent connection with the event of Miraj, it may appear to a cursory reader that either of the two verses has been misplaced here. But if we try to understand the matter in the context of the theme of the whole Surah, we can easily understand the connection between the two. The main object of this Surah is to give a warning to the disbelievers of Makkah. That is why the mention of Miraj has been made in the very first verse, as if to say: The person whom you dub as an impostor and reject the Book sent down to him, has just now seen with his naked eyes great signs of Allah. So you should learn a lesson from the history of the Israelites who discarded the Book of Allah and therefore, were given painful punishment.

*³ The Arabic word *vakil* (guardian) denotes a person who is trustworthy and can be depended upon in regard to his affairs and may be turned to for guidance and help.

3. (They were) the descendants of those whom We carried (in the ship) with Noah.*⁴ Indeed, he was a grateful servant.

ذُرِّيَّةَ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ إِنَّهُ
كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا

*⁴ That is, you are the descendants of Noah (peace be upon him) and his companions; therefore, you should behave in a manner as behooves such people. You should make Allah alone as your Guardian, for your ancestors escaped death from the flood only because they had made Allah their Guardian.

4. And We decreed for the Children of Israel in the Scripture*⁵ that indeed you would cause corruption on the earth twice, and you would surely be elated with mighty arrogance.*⁶

وَقَضَيْنَا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ فِي
الْكِتَابِ لَتُفْسِدُنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ
مَرَّتَيْنِ وَلَتَعْلُنَّ عُلُوجًا كَبِيرًا

*⁵ The original Arabic word *Al-kitab* does not stand here for the Torah but for all the divine Books.

*⁶ Such warnings have been given in different Books of the Bible. As regards to their first mischief and its evil consequences, the Israelites were warned in the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel and the warnings about their second mischief and its severe punishments are found in Matthew and Luke. Given below are some extracts to confirm this statement of the Quran.

Prophet David was the first to warn the Israelites in his Psalms of their first mischief:

They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the Lord commanded them. But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters. Therefore, was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; Psalms: Chapter 106, vv. 34-38, 40, 41. The above events have been described in the past tense as if they had already actually happened. The Scriptures employ this mode of expression to emphasize the importance of the prophecies.

When this mischief actually came to pass, Prophet Isaiah warned them of its ruinous consequences: Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken anymore? Ye will revolt more and more: How is the faithful city become an harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: everyone loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. Therefore, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel. Ah I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: they be replenished from the east, and are

soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers. Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made: Moreover the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore, the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts. Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. And her gates shall lament and mourn: and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground. Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits: Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: Therefore, this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall. And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a shred to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit. (Isaiah, Chapter 1: verses 4-5, 21-24; Chapter 2: verses 6,8; Chapter 3: verses 16-17, 25-26; Chapter 8: verse 7; Chapter

30: verses 9-10, 12-14).

After this Prophet Jeremiah raised his voice when the flood of corruption swept away everything before it.

Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity and are become vain?

And I brought you into a plentiful country to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made my heritage an abomination. For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy hands: and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot. As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed: they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets, Saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned their back unto me, and not their face but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us. But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? Let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble; for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah. The Lord said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? She is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah

feared not, but went and played the harlot also. And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with sticks. Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgments that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it. How shall I pardon thee for this? Thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbor's wife. Shall I not visit for these things? Saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord: it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understand what they say. Their quiver is an open sepulchre, they are all mighty men. And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, which thy sons and thy daughters should eat: they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds; they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees: they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword. And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away. Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice

of the bride: for the land shall be desolate.

And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the Lord; Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy. (Jeremiah, Chapter 2: verses 5-7, 20, 26-28; Chapter 3: verses 6-9; Chapter 5: verses 1, 7-9 15-17; Chapter 7: verses 33, 34; Chapter 15: verses 2, 3).

Then Prophet Ezekiel was raised to warn them in time. Addressing Jerusalem he said:

The city sheddeth blood in the midst of it, that her time may come, and maketh idols against herself to defile herself. Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood. In thee they have set light by father and mother: in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow. Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my Sabbaths. In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness. In thee have they discovered their fathers' nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution. And one hath committed abomination with his neighbor's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter in law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's

daughter. In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbors by extortion and hast forgotten me, can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? And I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries, and will consume thy filthiness out of thee. And thou shalt take thine inheritance in thyself in the sight of the heathen, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." (Ezekiel, Chapter 22: verses 3, 6-12, 14-16).

Besides the above mentioned warnings which were given to Israelites at the time of their first mischief, Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) warned them of the consequences of their second great mischief. In a forceful address he criticized their morel degeneration like this:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gatherth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. (Matthew, Chapter 23: verses 37, 38; Chapter 24: verse 2).

Then, when the Roman officials were taking Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) out for crucifixion, and a great company of people including women were following him bewailing and lamenting, he addressed them and gave his final warnings:

But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem,

weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say; Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, fall on us; and to the hills, cover us. (Luke, Chapter 23: verses 28-30).

5. Then when the (time of) promise came for the first of the two, We sent against you servants of Ours, of great might. So they entered the very innermost parts of your homes. And it was a promise fulfilled.*7

فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ أُولَاهُمَا بَعَثْنَا
عَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادًا لَنَا أُولِي بَأْسٍ
شَدِيدٍ فَجَاسُوا خِلَالَ الدِّيَارِ
وَكَانَ وَعْدًا مَّفْعُولًا

*7 This refers to the terrible destruction that the Israelites suffered at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians. One cannot fully appreciate the historical background of this merely from the extracts that have been reproduced above from the Books of the Prophets. A brief history of the Israelites is also needed so that a student may become acquainted with all the causes and circumstances on account of which Allah removed this nation, that professed to believe in a revealed Book, from the leadership of mankind and turned it into a humiliated, condemned and backward community.

After the death of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) when the Israelites entered Palestine, it was inhabited by the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, the Philistines, etc. These communities had

adopted the worst kind of idolatry, their supreme deity being Ayl whom they regarded as the father of gods and who was usually represented by the bull images. His consort was called Asherah from whom had descended a whole line of gods and goddesses, about 70 in number. The most powerful god among them was Baal who was regarded as the god of rain and growth and the lord of the earth and heavens. In the northern regions his consort was called Anathoth and in Palestine Ashtaroth. These two were the goddesses of love and procreation. Besides them, there was a god of death, a god of disease and famine, and a goddess of health, and thus all the worldly powers and agencies stood divided among a large number of deities. The people had ascribed such dirty and base qualities and acts to these deities that even a worst offender against morality would shun being known by them. Obviously the people who have adopted such mean deities for worship and devotion cannot remain secure from the worst kind of moral degeneration and the modern excavations have shown this conclusively.

Child sacrifice was a common thing among them. Their places of worship had turned into brothels, where women were kept as religious prostitutes and illicit relations with them were regarded as a part of worship and devotion.

The Israelites had clearly been told in the instructions given in the Torah that they should destroy those communities and wrest the land of Palestine from them, and that they should avoid mixing up with those people and ward off their moral and ideological weaknesses.

But when the Israelites entered Palestine they set this guidance aside. They not only did not establish a united kingdom of their own but fell a prey to tribal parochialism. Each of their tribes was content to take a part of the captured land and become a separate and independent state. This disunity among them did not leave any of the tribes strong enough to purge its territory completely of the idolaters, and therefore they had to allow them to live side by side with them in the same land. Not only this, but there had remained in the conquered territories a number of small cities of these idolatrous communities which the Israelites had not been able to subjugate. It is this very thing which has been complained against in the extract of the Psalms reproduced above in the beginning of E.N. 6.

The first consequence of intermixing with those communities was that the Israelites also became idolatrous, and gradually began to adopt other moral evils also. This has been complained about in the Book of Judges as below: And the children of Israel did evil, in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim. And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. (Judges, 2: 11-13).

The second consequence suffered by the Israelites was that the communities whose cities they had left unconquered and the Philistines whose land they had not at all touched set up a united front against them and drove them out of a

major part of Palestine by incessant attacks, so much so that they deprived them of the Holy Ark of their Lord. At last, the Israelites felt the need of establishing a united kingdom of their own under one ruler, and on their request Prophet Samuel appointed Saul as their king in 1020 B.C. (For details see Ayats 246-248 and E.Ns. 268-270 of Surah Al-Baqarah.)

This united kingdom was ruled by three kings: Saul (1020 B.C. to 1004 B.C.), Prophet David (1004 to 965 B.C.) and Prophet Solomon (365 to 926 B.C.). These kings brought to completion the mission that had been left incomplete by the Israelites after the death of Prophet Moses (Peace be upon the all). They annexed all the territories except the Phoenician state on the northern and the Philistine state on the southern coast, which of course became tributaries.

After the death of Prophet Solomon the Israelites again adopted the ways of the world and fought among themselves and split into two independent kingdoms, the kingdom of Israel in the northern Palestine and Jordan with Samaria as its capital, and the kingdom of Judah in the southern Palestine and Edom with Jerusalem as its capital. These kingdoms were strife ridden from the very beginning and this state of affairs persisted till the end.

The rulers and people of the kingdom of Israel were the first to be affected grievously by the ideological and moral weaknesses of the neighboring communities. Specially, after the marriage of its ruler Ahab with the idolatrous princess Jezebel of Zidon, idolatry and other evils began to spread unchecked among the Israelites under the official

patronage. Prophets Elias and Elisha tried their very best to check this deluge but the Israelites, who were rapidly degenerating, did not heed their warning. At last the wrath of Allah overtook the kingdom of Israel in the shape of the Assyrians who started subjecting Palestine to incessant attacks from 900 B.C. downward. During this period, Prophet Amos (787-747 B.C.) and then Prophet Hosea (747-735 B.C.) rose and warned the Israelites again and again, but the wretched depraved people did not heed their warnings at all and transgressed all limits. Prophet Amos was banished by the king of Israel from the realm of Samaria and warned not to preach his mission in the country. Not very long after this the wrath of Allah burst upon the kingdom of Israel and its people. The Assyrian king Sargon took Samaria in 721 B.C. and put an end to this northern kingdom. Thousands of Israelites were put to the sword and twenty seven thousand of their leading men were driven out of their homeland and scattered in the eastern districts of the Assyrian empire and replaced by settlers from other parts of the empire. When the remaining Israelites intermixed with the settlers, they also lost gradually their national and cultural identity.

The other kingdom of the Israelites, called the kingdom of Judah, which was set up in southern Palestine also began to adopt godless ways soon after the death of Prophet Solomon, though its moral degeneration took place at a slower pace than that of Israel. Therefore, it was allowed to exist for a longer period. Then, like the kingdom of Israel, it also began to be subjected to continual attacks, its cities

ruined and its capital besieged, but this kingdom could not be wholly destroyed by the Assyrians, it only became a tributary. Afterwards, when in spite of the best reformatory efforts of Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah the people of Judah did not give up idol worship and other moral evils, king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked and captured the whole of Judah in 598 B.C. including Jerusalem and took the king of Judah as prisoner. Even then the Israelites did not mend their ways and paid no heed to the warnings and guidance of Prophet Jeremiah. Instead of reforming their ways, they started making plans to change their fate by revolting against Babylon. At last in 587 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar punished them heavily by invading Judah and destroyed all its important cities. He razed Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple to the ground and did not leave a wall of it standing in place. He drove a large part of the Israelite population out of their land and scattered them into the adjoining countries. The people who were left behind were cursed and subjected to all kinds of humiliations by the neighboring communities.

This was the first calamity that came as a warning to the Israelites and the first chastisement that they suffered as a result thereof.

6. Then We gave back to you a return (victory) over them, and We helped you with wealth and sons and We made you more numerous in manpower.*8

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّةَ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَأَمَدَدْنَاكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ
وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ أَكْثَرَ نَفِيرًا

***8** This refers to the lease of time that the Israelites (That is the people of Judah) got after their release from the captivity of Babylon. As for the people of Israel and Samaria, they did not rise again after their moral and spiritual degeneration. But among the people of Judah there still were some people who practiced the truth and invited others also to follow it. They carried on their work of invitation to the truth among the remaining Israelites in Judah and also exhorted those who had been driven out into Babylon and other lands to repent and follow the truth. At last the mercy of Allah came to their help. The downfall of Babylon started. The Persian king, Cyrus, took Babylon in 539 B.C. and in the following year issued a decree allowing the Israelites to return to and resettle in their homeland. The Israelites began to return home in caravan after caravan, and this continued for a long time. Cyrus also allowed the Israelites to rebuild the Temple of Solomon but the neighboring communities who had settled in this land resisted it. At last Darfius appointed Zerubbabel, a grandson of the last king of Judah as the governor of Judah in 522 B.C., who got the Temple rebuilt under the care of Prophet Haggai, Prophet Zechariah and Joshua. In 458 B.C. Ezra arrived in Judah along with an exiled group and the Persian king Artaxerxes made the following decree:

And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not.

And whosoever will not do the law of thy God and the law of the king let judgment be executed speedily upon him whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment. (Ezra, 7:25-26).

Taking advantage of this decree, Ezra carried out the revival of the religion of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). He gathered together all the righteous and good people from the Israelites and set up a strong organization. He compiled and spread the Pentateuch which contained the Torah, made arrangements for the religious education of the Israelites, enforced the law and started purging the people of moral and ideological weaknesses which they had adopted by intermixing with the other communities. He compelled the Jews to divorce the idolatrous wives they had married, and took a covenant from them that they would worship God alone and follow His law only.

In 455 B.C. an exiled group came back to Judah under Nehemiah whom the Persian king appointed as the ruler of Jerusalem and ordered him to build the wall round the city. Thus, after 150 years the Holy city was fully restored and became the center of Jewish religion and culture, But the Israelites of northern Palestine, and Samaria did not benefit from the work of revival done by Ezra. They built a rival sanctuary on Mount Gerizim and tried to make it the religious center for the people of the Book. This caused a further, and perhaps the final, split between the Jews and the Samaritans.

The Jews suffered a setback for a while with the fall of the Persian Empire and the conquests of Alexander the Great

and the rise of the Greeks. After the death of Alexander, his kingdom was subdivided into three empires. Syria fell to the lot of the Seleucide empire, with Antioch as its capital, whose ruler Antiochus III incorporated Palestine into his dominions in 198 B.C. These Greek conquerors who were idolatrous by precept and freelance morally felt greatly ill at ease with the Jewish religion and culture. So, they began to propagate the rival Greek way of life and culture by political and economic pressure, and were able to win over a strong section of the Israelites who became their helpers. This external interference caused a split in the Jewish nation. One group among them readily adopted the Greek dress, the Greek language, the Greek way of life and the Greek sports, while the other persistently stuck to their own culture and way of life.

In 175 B.C. when Antiochus IV (who was called Epiphanes, that is, the manifestation of God) came to the throne, he used all his power and authority to stamp out the Jewish religion and culture. He got idols installed in the Holy Temple at Jerusalem and forced the Jews to prostrate themselves before them. He strictly forbade the rite of offering the sacrifices at the altar, and commanded the Jews to offer sacrifices to idolatrous deities instead. He proposed death penalty for those who would keep the Torah in their houses, or observe the Sabbath or perform circumcision of their children. But the Jews did not yield to this coercion, and started a powerful resistance movement, known in history as the revolt of the Maccabees. Though in this struggle the sympathies of the Greeck oriented Jews

were with the Greeks, and they fully cooperated with the despots of Antioch to crush the Maccabean revolt, the common Jews who still retained the religious fervor of the days of Ezra sided with the Maccabees, who were ultimately able to drive out the Greeks and establish a free religious state which remained in power till 67 B.C This state prospered and in time extended to all those territories which had once been under the control the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. It was able to annex a part of the land of the Philistines which had remained unconquered even in the days of Prophets David and Solomon (Peace be upon them).

This is the historical background of the verse of the Quran under commentary.

7. (Saying): “If you do good, you do good for yourselves, and if you do evil, so it is for them (who do it).” Then, when the final (second) promise came, (We raised against you other enemies) to disfigure your faces, and to enter the temple as they entered it the first time, and to destroy what they took over, with (utter) destruction.*9

إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ
وَأِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا فَإِذَا جَاءَ
وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ لِيَسْئَلُوا
وُجُوهَكُمْ وَلِيَدْخُلُوا
الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوهُ أَوَّلَ
مَرَّةٍ وَلِيُتَبِّرُوا مَا عَلَوْا تَتْبِيرًا



*9 The historical background of the second degeneration and its chastisement is as follows:

The moral and religious fervor with which the Maccabees had started their movement gradually cooled down and was replaced by love of the world and empty external form. A split appeared among them and they themselves invited the Roman General, Pompey, to come to Palestine. Pompey turned his attention to this land in 63 B.C. By taking Jerusalem he put an end to the political freedom of the Jews. But the Roman conquerors preferred to rule their dominions through the agency of the local chiefs rather than by direct control. Therefore, a local government was set up in Palestine which eventually passed into the hand of Herod, a clever Jew, in 40 B.C. This ruler is well known as Herod the Great. He ruled over the entire Palestine and Jordan from 40 to 4 B.C. On the one hand, Herod patronized the religious leaders to please the Jews, and on the other, he propagated the Roman culture and won the goodwill of Caesar by showing his loyalty and faithfulness to the Roman Empire. During, his reign, the Jews degenerated and fell to the lowest ebb of moral and religious life.

On the death of Herod his kingdom was subdivided into three parts. His son, Archelaus, became the ruler of Samaria, Judea and northern Edom. In A.D. 6, however, Caesar Augustus deprived him of his authority and put the state under his Roman governor, and this arrangement continued up till A.D. 41. This was precisely the time when Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) appeared to reform the Israelites whose religious leaders opposed him tooth and nail and even tried to get him the death sentence by the

Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

The second son of Herod, Herod Antipas, became the ruler of Galilee and Jordan in northern Palestine, and he was the person who got Prophet Yahya (John) (Peace be upon him) beheaded at the request and desire of a dancing girl.

Herod's third son, Philip, succeeded to the territories bounded on one side by river Yermuk and on the other by Mount Hermon. Philip had been much more deeply influenced by the Roman and Greek cultures than his father and brothers. Therefore the preaching of the truth could not have even so much effect in his land as it had in the other parts of Palestine.

In A.D. 41, the Romans appointed Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, ruler of the territories that had once been under Herod himself. Coming into power this man did whatever he could to persecute the followers of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) and used all the forces at his disposal to crush the movement that was functioning under the guidance of the disciples to inculcate fear of God in the people and reform their morals.

In order to have a correct estimate of the condition of the common Jews and their religious leaders, one should study the criticisms leveled by Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) on them in his sermons contained in the four Gospels. Even a religious man like Prophet John (peace be upon him) was beheaded before their eyes and not a voice was raised in protest against this barbarity. Then all the religious leaders of the community unanimously demanded death sentence for Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), and none but a few

righteous men were there to mourn this depravity. Above all, when Pontius Pilate asked these depraved people, which condemned prisoner he should release, according to the custom, at Passover, Jesus or Barabbas the robber, they all cried with one voice Barabbas. This was indeed the last chance Allah gave to the Jews, and then their fate was sealed.

Not long after this, a serious conflict started between the Jews and the Romans, which developed into an open revolt by the former between A.D. 64 and 66. Both Herod Agrippa II and the Roman procurator Floris failed to put down the rebellion. At last, the Romans crushed it by a strong military action and in A.D. 70 Titus took Jerusalem by force. About 133000 people were put to the sword. Sixty seven thousand made slaves, and thousands sent to work in the Egyptian mines and to other cities so that they could be used in amphitheaters for being torn by wild beasts or become the practice target for the sword fighters. All the tall and beautiful girls were picked out for the army of conquest and the Holy City of Jerusalem and the Temple were pulled down to the ground. After this the Jewish influence so disappeared from Palestine that the Jews could not regain power for two thousand years and the Holy Temple could never be rebuilt. Afterwards the Roman Emperor, Hadrian, restored Jerusalem but renamed it Aelia. The Jews, however, were not allowed to enter it for centuries. This was the calamity that the Jews suffered on account of their degeneration for the second time.

8. It may be that your Lord will have mercy upon you. And if you revert (to sin), We shall revert (to punishment). And We have made Hell a prison for the disbelievers.*10

عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يَرْحَمَكُمْ وَإِنْ
عُدْتُمْ عُدْنَا وَجَعَلْنَا جَهَنَّمَ
لِلْكَافِرِينَ حَصِيرًا

*10 Though this admonition has been given as a parenthesis at the end of the address to the children of Israel, it does not mean that this and the address itself are solely meant for them. As a matter of fact, the whole address is really directed towards the disbelievers of Makkah but, instead of addressing them directly, some important historical events from the history of the children of Israel have been cited in order to serve as admonition for them.

9. Indeed, this Quran guides to that which is most just, and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that theirs will be a great reward.

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي
هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ
لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا

10. And that those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have prepared for them a painful punishment.*11

وَأَنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ
أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

*11 This means to warn those persons or people or nations who do not take a lesson from the admonitions of the

Quran to be ready to undergo that chastisement which Israelites had to suffer.

11. And man supplicates for evil as he supplicates for good. And man is ever hasty.*12

وَيَدْعُ الْإِنْسَانُ بِالشَّرِّ دُعَاءَهُ
بِالْخَيْرِ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ عَجُولًا



*12 This is in answer to the foolish demands of the disbelievers of Makkah who repeatedly demanded from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to bring about that torment with which he threatened them. It is closely connected with the preceding verse, as if to say: O foolish people instead of asking goodness you demand the torment. Can't you realize the sufferings of the community which was visited by God's torment?

It also contains a subtle warning to those Muslims who prayed for punishment for those disbelievers who persecuted them and rejected the message obdurately; there were still among those disbelievers many such people who afterwards embraced Islam and became its standard bearers in the world. That is why Allah says: Man does so because he is very hasty and impatient. He prays to Allah for all such things as are the immediate need of the time, though often subsequent experience shows that if Allah had granted his prayer, it would have been very harmful to him.

12. And We have made the night and the day as two

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ آيَاتَيْنِ

signs. Then We have obscured the sign of the night, and made the sign of the day radiant that you may seek the bounty of your Lord, and that you may know the numbers of the years, and the account (of time). And every thing We explained in details.*13

فَمَحَوْنَا آيَةَ اللَّيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَا آيَةَ
النَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً لِّتَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِّن
رَّبِّكُمْ وَلِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ
وَالْحِسَابَ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ

تَفْصِيلًا



*13 Allah invites man to study the wisdom that underlies variety in the world and not get confused and long for monotonous uniformity. In fact, the whole system is based on variety, distinctiveness and diversity in things. For the sake of illustration let us take the case of the signs of day and night: You see these opposite things daily in your life. If you just consider the underlying wisdom, you will find that without this variety there would have been hardly any activity in the world. Likewise great wisdom lies in the creation of the people with different temperaments, thoughts and inclinations. If Allah had made all men righteous by birth or annihilated disbelievers and wicked people and left only believers and submissive people in the world, the purpose of men's creation could not have been realized. Therefore, it is wrong to desire that there should only be day and no night. The righteous thing is that these people, who have the light of guidance, should exert their utmost to remove the darkness of deviation. It is their duty that if they find darkness like that of night, they should

pursue it like the sun so that the light of guidance should reappear.

13. And to every man, We have fastened his fate to his neck.*¹⁴ And We shall bring forth for him on the Day of Resurrection a book which he will find spread open.

وَكُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَبْعَهُ فِي
عُنُقِهِ ۖ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنشُورًا

***14** “We have fastened his fate to his neck”: therefore one does not need to take omens from a bird. This is to remove the superstition of the disbelievers who used to take omens from birds etc. as if to say: The causes and consequences of good fortune or bad fate exist in man’s own person. He merits good fortune because of his own good conduct and good judgment, and likewise, suffers the consequences of evil fate by the lack of these. This was necessitated because foolish people always try to attribute their misfortunes to external causes, when in fact our fate depends on our own deeds, good or bad. If they probe into the causes, they will find that their fate was decided by their own good or bad qualities and judgments.

14. (It will be said): “Read your book. Sufficient is your own self this Day against you as a reckoner.”

أَقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ
عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا

15. Whoever is guided, so he is guided only for his own self. And whoever goes astray, so he goes astray

مَنْ أَهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي
لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا

only against it (his own self).^{*15} And no bearer of burdens will bear another's burden.^{*16} And We would never punish until We have sent a messenger.^{*17}

يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ
أُخْرَىٰ ۗ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ
نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا



***15** This is to impress that if a person adopts the right way, he does not do any favor to God or His Messenger or a reformer but he himself gets its benefits. On the other hand, if a person deviates from the right way, he can do no harm to God or His Messenger or a reformer, for they desire only to protect men from wrong ways and guide him on to the right way, and not for any selfish ends. Therefore, the right course for a wise man is to adopt the righteous way when it becomes distinct to him what is truth and what is falsehood. On the other hand, if he rejects truth because of his prejudices and self interest, he will be his own enemy and not a well wisher.

***16** The Quran has laid great stress on the doctrine of personal responsibility at several places, for one cannot follow the right way scrupulously without understanding fully its implication. It means that, everyone is solely responsible for his moral conduct and is accountable to God as an individual in his own person and no other person can share the burden of responsibility with him. As an instance, we take the case of a particular action or a particular way of conduct in which a generation or a community of a large number of people had collaborated. When the people will assemble before Allah on the Day of

Judgment, their collective action will be analyzed so as to lay the burden of its responsibility on each and every person who had been conducive to it, and rewarded or punished in accordance with it. Neither will a person be punished for the part another had played in its performance nor shall the burden of the sin of one individual be laid on the shoulders of another. This doctrine has been emphasized over and over again so that a wise man should not act in imitation of another or justify his own conduct by similar deeds of others. If a particular person feels the sense of his own responsibility, he will act in such a way as to come out successful on the Day of Judgment, regardless of what the others do.

*17 This is another doctrine which has been impressed on the minds by the Quran in different ways. This is to emphasize the basic importance that a Messenger has in the dispensation of divine justice because this is determined in the light of the message brought by him. This will be employed as an argument in favor of or against the concerned people. Otherwise the infliction of punishment on the people would be unjust for in that case they could argue that they should not be punished as the knowledge of the righteous way had not been conveyed to them. But after the message had been conveyed to a particular people, and they had rejected it, there would be left no excuse for them. It is an irony that instead of accepting the message some people are misled by reading verses like this and they ask such absurd questions: What will be the position of those, who might not have received the message of any Prophet?

The wise course for such persons would have been to ask themselves what their own position will be on the Day of Judgment, because they themselves had received the message. As regards to other people, Allah knows best who has received the message, and when, how and to what extent and what attitude a certain person adopted towards it. In short, Allah alone is aware of whether a particular person received the message in such a way as to fulfill the required condition for punishment.

16. And when We intend to destroy a town, We command its affluent, so they commit abomination therein, then the word (decree) is justified against it, then We destroy it, a (complete) destruction.*18

وَإِذَا أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نُهْلِكَ قَرْيَةً أَمَرْنَا
مُتْرَفِيهَا فَفَسَقُوا فِيهَا فَحَقَّ عَلَيْهَا
الْقَوْلُ فَدَمَّرْنَاهَا تَدْمِيرًا

*18 Here a definite form of divine procedure for the destruction of a people has been stated. When the affluent people of a habitation become disobedient, it is a portent that it is doomed to destruction. After their persistent and continuous transgression, the affluent people become so obdurate in their disobedience that they begin to discard the instinctive dictates of their conscience. The same thing has been stated in this Ayat: And when We intend to destroy a town, We give commands to its affluent people and they show disobedience. This is because Allah has created conscience for the guidance of man. Therefore, the dictates of conscience are really the commands of Allah. Thus it has become quite obvious that by “And when We

intend to destroy a town” is not meant that Allah intends to destroy it without any reason. It is destroyed because after their disobedience that habitation incurs Our just wrath and We totally exterminate it. The habitation deserves such a punishment because its common people follow the affluent people who are the factual leaders of a community and are mainly responsible for the corruption of the community. At first the affluent people commit acts of disobedience, wickedness, mischief, cruelty and tyranny and then the common people follow them and incur the torment of Allah. Incidentally, this is a warning for every community that it should be very discreet and prudent in choosing and electing its leaders and rulers, for if the latter are mean and wicked, they will inevitably lead the community to destruction.

17. And how many have We destroyed from the generations after Noah. And Sufficient is your Lord of the sins of His servants as Knower, All Seer.

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِنْ
بَعْدِ نُوحٍ وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ بِذُنُوبِ
عِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا بَصِيرًا ﴿١٧﴾

18. Whoever should desire what hastens away (worldly life),^{*19} We hasten for him therein what We will, for whom We intend. Then We have appointed for him Hell. He will (enter to) burn therein, condemned,

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلْنَا
لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَاءُ لِمَنْ نُرِيدُ ثُمَّ
جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ يَصَلُّهَا
مَذْمُومًا مَّدْحُورًا ﴿١٨﴾

rejected.*20

***19** The Arabic word *ajilah* literally means something which can be had immediately, but the Quran employs it as a term for “this world” which yields its advantages and results in this worldly life. Its antonym is *Akhirat* (Hereafter) which will yield its advantages and results after death in the life of the next world.

***20** The person who does not believe in the life of the Hereafter deserves Hell, because he strives only for the successes and good things of this world and his endeavors are confined to material objects. Consequently, such a person becomes a mere worshiper of this world and adopts wrong conduct, for he has no sense of personal responsibility and accountability to God and ultimately deserves the torment of Hell.

19. And whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it with the effort due to it, while he is a believer, then it is those whose effort shall be appreciated.*21

وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا
سَعِيهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
كَانَ سَعِيهِمْ مَشْكُورًا

***21** Whose effort shall be appreciated, he will be rewarded for the efforts he had made for success in the Hereafter.

20. To each We bestow, these and (as well as) those, from the bounty of your Lord. And the bounty of your Lord can not be restricted.*22

كُلًّا نُّمِدُّ هَهُنَا وَهَهُنَا مِنْ
عَطَاءِ رَبِّكَ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَاءُ
رَبِّكَ مَحْظُورًا

***22** Allah gives the provisions of this world both to those who strive for this world and to those who strive for the Hereafter, but it is the gift of Allah alone and not of anyone else. It does not lie in the power of the worshipers of the world to deprive the seekers after the Hereafter of these provisions, nor have the seekers after the Hereafter any power to withhold these provisions from the worshipers of the world.

21. Look how We have exalted some of them above others, and the Hereafter will be greater in degrees and greater in preference. ^{*23}

أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى
بَعْضٍ ۗ وَلِلْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجَاتٍ
وَأَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيلًا

***23** This is to show that the seekers of the Hereafter have been exalted over the worshipers of the world even in this worldly life. However, this exaltation is not in regards to the good things of this world, rich food and dresses, palatial dwellings, luxurious means of travelling and other grand things. They enjoy that true honor, love and goodwill which is denied to the tyrants and the rich people in spite of the fact that they may be indigent. This is because whatever the seekers of the Hereafter get in this world, it is earned in righteous and honest ways, while the worshipers of the world amass wealth by employing dishonest and cruel ways. Then the former spend what they get with prudence and righteousness. They fulfill the obligations they owe to others. They spend their money in the way of Allah and to please Allah on the needy and the indigent. In contrast to

them, the worshipers of this world spend their money in the enjoyment of luxuries, wicked works, corruption and spreading other evil things. This makes the former models of God worship and purity in every respect and distinguishes them so clearly from the worshipers of the world that they shine in exaltation over the latter. These things clearly indicate that in the next world the rewards of the seekers of the Hereafter will be far greater and their superiority far higher than those of the worshipers of the world.

22. Do not make with Allah any other god,^{*24} lest you will sit in humiliated, forsaken.

لَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا ءَاخَرَ
فَتَقْعُدَ مَذْمُومًا مَّخْذُولًا

***24** Or it can be rendered like this: Do not invent another deity besides Allah, or do not set up another as a deity beside Allah.

23. And your Lord has decreed^{*25} that you worship none except Him,^{*26} and (show) kindness to parents. If they attain old age (while) with you, one of them or both of them, do not say to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them, and speak to them a gracious word.

﴿ وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا
إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۚ
إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا
أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا
أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا
كَرِيمًا

***25** In the succeeding verses, those main basic principles have been put forward on which Islam desires to build the entire structure of human life. These form the manifesto of the invitation of the Prophet (peace be upon him) declared by him at the end of the Makki stage of his mission, and the eve of the new stage at Al-Madinah so that it should be known to all that the new Islamic society and state were going to be built on such and such ideological, moral, cultural economic and legal principles. (Please also refer to Ayats 151-153 and E.Ns thereof of Surah Al-Anaam).

***26** This commandment is very comprehensive. It prohibits not only the worship of anyone except Allah but also implies that one should obey and serve and submit to Allah alone without question. One should accept His commandments and law alone to be worthy of obedience and His authority to be supreme above all. This was not merely an instruction confined to a religious creed and individual practice but it served as the foundation of the moral, cultural, and political system which was practically established in Al-Madinah by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Its first and foremost principle was that Allah alone is the Master, Sovereign and Law-giver.

24. And lower unto them the wing of submission through mercy, and say: “My Lord, have mercy on them both as they did care for me (when I was) little.” ***27**

وَأَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ
الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا
رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا



***27** This verse enjoins that after Allah’s right, the greatest

of all the human rights is the right of parents. Therefore, the children should obey and serve and respect their parents. The collective morality of society should make it incumbent on children to be grateful and respectful to their parents, they should serve them as they nursed and brought them up in their childhood. Above all, this verse is not merely a moral recommendation but is the basis of the rights and powers of parents the details of which we find in the Books of Hadith and Fiqh. Moreover, respectful behavior and obedience to and observance of the rights of parents comprise the most important element of the material education and moral training in the Islamic society and civilization. Incidentally, all these things have determined forever the principle that the Islamic state shall make the family life sound and secure by laws, administrative regulations and educational policy and prevent its disintegration.

25. Your Lord is best aware of what is within yourselves. If you should be righteous, then indeed He is ever Forgiving to those who turn (to Him).

رَّبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي نُفُوسِكُمْ إِن تَكُونُوا صَالِحِينَ فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ لِلأَوَّابِينَ غَفُورًا

26. And give to the near of kin his right, and the needy, and the wayfarer, and do not squander (your wealth) extravagantly.

وَأَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْسَّبِيلِ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا

27. Indeed, the squanderers are brothers of Satan, and Satan is ever ungrateful to his Lord.

إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا

28. And if you have to turn away from them (needy), awaiting mercy from your Lord, which you expect, then speak to them a word of kindness. *28

وَأِمَّا تَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ فَتَنْصَرِفْ وَأَنْتَ غَافٍ رَحِيمٌ
مِّن رَّبِّكَ تَرْجُوهَا فَقُلْ لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَّيْسُورًا

*28 These three articles are meant to impress that a man should not reserve his earnings and his wealth exclusively for his own person. He should do his utmost to fulfill his own necessities of life in a moderate way and render the rights of his relatives, neighbors and other needy persons as well. This attitude will help create the spirit of cooperation, sympathy and justice in the collective Islamic life. Thus every relative will cooperate with the other and every rich person will help the needy in his neighborhood and a wayfarer would find himself an honorable guest among generous hosts. The conception of rights should be so extensive that every person should consider that all other human beings have rights on his person and his property so that he should serve them with the idea that he is rendering their rights and is not doing any favor to them. In that case one would beg pardon of the other if he was unable to serve him and would pray to God to send his blessings upon him

to enable him to serve His servants.

These articles of the Islamic manifesto were not merely confined to moral teachings but these formed the basis of the commandments of Zakat and voluntary charity. The laws of inheritance and of making will and endowments were based on these articles. The rights of the orphans were determined by these and it was made obligatory on every habitation to entertain a wayfarer gratis for at least three days. Subsequently the whole moral system was formed so as to create the feelings of generosity, sympathy and cooperation. So much so that the people began to realize the importance of and observe voluntarily the moral rights which could neither be demanded legally nor enforced by law.

29. And do not keep your hand fastened to your neck, nor outspread it altogether widespread, for you will then be sitting rebuked, destitute.*29

وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ
عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ
فَتَقْعَدَ مَلُومًا مَّحْسُورًا



*29 “And do not keep your hand fastened to your neck”, means: Do not be parsimonious. “Nor outspread it altogether widespread” means: Do not be extravagant. The Quran desires the people to follow the golden mean, i.e. they should neither be so parsimonious as to prevent the circulation of wealth nor so extravagant as to destroy their own economy. On the contrary, they should learn to behave in a balanced manner so that they should spend money wherever it should be spent and refrain from becoming

spendthrifts so as to involve themselves into trouble. As a matter of fact, it is ingratitude towards Allah's favor to spend money for the sake of show, luxury and sinful acts and similar things which are neither man's real necessities nor useful. Therefore, those people who spend money lavishly on such things as these are the brethren of Satan.

These clauses too, are not merely meant to be moral instructions for individuals. They are intended to safeguard the Islamic society against extravagance by moral instruction, collective pressure and legal restrictions. Accordingly, in the Islamic state of Al-Madinah, practical steps were taken to safeguard the community against extravagance. First, many forms of extravagance and luxury were forbidden by law. Secondly, legal measures were taken against it. Thirdly, social reforms were introduced to put an end to those customs which involved extravagance. The government was empowered to prevent people from the obvious forms of extravagance. Above all, Zakat and voluntary charity helped to break parsimony and the lust of hoarding money. Besides these measures, a public opinion was created that enabled the people to discriminate between generosity and extravagance and thrift and parsimony: so much so that parsimonious people were looked down upon as ignominious and the thrifty people were regarded as honorable. This moral and mental attitude became a part and parcel of the Muslim society, and even today the parsimonious people and hoarders are looked down upon in the Muslim society, while the generous people are respected everywhere.

30. Indeed, your Lord enlarges the provision for whom He wills, and straitens (it for whom He wills). Indeed, He is All Knower, All Seer of His servants. ^{*30}

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن
يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ
خَبِيرًا بَصِيرًا



***30** That is, man cannot realize the wisdom of the disparity of wealth among the people. Therefore, man should not try to interfere by artificial means with the natural distribution of wealth. It is wrong to level down natural inequality or to aggravate it by artificial means so as to make it unjust. Both the extremes are wrong. The best economic system is that which is established on the divine Way of the division of wealth.

As a result of the realization of the wisdom of economic disparity, no such problems arose which might have made that disparity an evil in itself so as to demand the creation of a classless society. On the contrary, in the righteous society established at Al-Madinah on these divine principles which are akin to human nature, the economic differences were not artificially disturbed. But by means of moral and legal reforms these became the means of many moral, spiritual and cultural blessings and benefits instead of becoming the means of injustice. Thus, the wisdom of the disparity created by the Creator of the Universe was practically demonstrated at Al-Madinah.

31. And do not kill your children for fear of poverty.

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ

We provide for them and for you. Indeed, the killing of them is a great sin.*³¹

إِمْلَقِي نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطْئًا كَبِيرًا



***31** This verse cuts at the very root of the movement of birth control, which has been going on from ancient times to our present age. It was the fear of want that induced people to kill their children or resort to abortion. In our age another plan has been added to these, i.e. contraception. This article of the Islamic manifesto prohibits the people from reducing the number of mouths by artificial means but exhorts them to increase the means of production according to the natural methods enjoined by Allah. According to this article, it is one of the biggest mistakes of man to check birth rate as a solution to the want and scarcity of provisions. Therefore, it warns him, as if to say: O man, it is not you who make arrangement for food, but Allah, Who settled you in the land and has been providing for you and will provide for those who will come after you. History tells us that the food resources have always expanded in proportion to the number of inhabitants of a country. Nay, often they have exceeded far more than the needs of the inhabitants. Thus it is a folly on the part of man to interfere with the arrangements of Allah. It is very significant that as a result of this teaching, no movement has ever been started to control birth nor has there been any inclination to infanticide among the Muslims ever since the revelation of the Quran.

32. And do not come near to adultery. Indeed, it is an abomination and an evil way.*32

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّانِيَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ
فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا

*32 “And do not come near to adultery”. This commandment is meant both for individuals and society as a whole. It warns each individual not only to guard against adultery or fornication itself but against all those things that lead to or stimulate it. As regards to society as a whole the commandment enjoins it to make such arrangements as prevent adultery and eradicate the means and stimulants that lead to adultery. Therefore, the society should employ all those legal and educative means that help develop such an environment as prevents and eradicates indecency. Finally, this article formed the basis of laws and regulations of the Islamic system of life. In order to fulfill its implications adultery and false accusation of adultery were made criminal offenses. Regulations about *hijab* were promulgated. The publication of indecent materials was banned and drinking of intoxicants was made unlawful. Restrictions on music, dancing and pictures which are conducive to adultery were imposed. Such laws were enacted and marriage was made easy to and cut at the root of adultery.

33. And do not kill a person, whom Allah has forbidden,*33 except by right.*34 And him who is

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ
اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ

killed wrongfully, We indeed have granted his heir the authority (of retribution),^{*35} so let him not exceed limits in taking life.^{*36} He shall be surely helped (by the law).^{*37}

مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوْلِيَّهِ
سُلْطٰنًا فَلَا يُسْرِفُ فِي الْقَتْلِ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنصُورًا

***33** “And do not kill a person” includes not only the prohibition of the killing of other souls but also his own soul as well for it is also included in the prohibition that immediately follows this command. Thus suicide is regarded as heinous a sin as murder. Some foolish people object to the prohibition of suicide saying that they themselves are the masters of their souls. Therefore, there is nothing wrong in killing one’s own self or in destroying one’s own property. They forget that every soul belongs to Allah, and none has any right to destroy it, nay, even to abuse it. For this world is a place of trial, where we should undergo the test up to the end of our lives in accordance with the will of Allah. It does not matter whether our circumstances are favorable or adverse for trial. Therefore, it would be wrong to run away from the place of test, not to speak of committing such a heinous crime as suicide (which Allah has prohibited) to escape it. For it means that the one who commits suicide tries to run away from small troubles and ignominies towards greater affliction and eternal torment and ignominy.

***34** When the Islamic state was established, “killing by right” was confined to five cases only, namely to punish, (1) A willful murderer for retribution.

(2) Opponents of the true religion during war.

(3) Those who attempt to overthrow the Islamic system of government.

(4) A man or woman guilty of adultery.

(5) An apostate.

*35 We have translated the Arabic word *sultan* as “the authority of retribution”. Here it stands for “a ground for legal action”. This also lays down the legal principle that in a case of murder, the real plaintiff is not the government but the guardian or the guardians of the murdered person who are authorized to pardon the murderer or receive blood money instead of taking his life.

*36 Exceed limits in killing would be to kill more persons than the murderer or to kill the criminal by degrees with torment or to disfigure his dead body or to kill him after receiving blood money, etc. All these things have been forbidden.

*37 It has not been defined how succor will be given because at the time of its revelation the Islamic state had not yet been established. After its establishment it was made clear that a guardian was not authorized to enforce retribution by murdering the criminal. The Islamic government alone is legally authorized to take retribution; therefore, succor for justice should be demanded only from it.

34. And do not go near the wealth of the orphan, except in a way that is the best until he comes to his

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي
هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ^ج

strength (maturity).^{*38} And fulfill the covenant. Indeed, the covenant, will be questioned about.^{*39}

وَأَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ
كَانَ مَسْئُولًا



***38** This too, was not merely a moral instruction. When the Islamic state was established, legal and administrative methods were adopted to safeguard the rights of orphans, the details of which are found in the literature of Hadith and Fiqh. Then this principle was extended to cover the cases of all those citizens who were unable to safeguard their own rights. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself declared: I am the guardian of the one who has no guardian. And this is the basis of many rules and regulations of the Islamic law.

***39** Fulfillment of pledges was not meant to be merely a moral instruction for individuals but afterwards when the Islamic state was established, this became the guiding principle for the conduct of all internal; and external affairs by the Muslim community and the Islamic government.

35. And give full measure when you measure, and weigh with a balance that is straight.^{*40} That is fair, and better in consequence.^{*41}

وَأَوْفُوا أَلْكَيْلَ إِذَا كَلَّمْتُمْ وَزِنُوا
بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ ذَلِكَ
خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا



***40** This instruction was not confined to individuals only but it has been made a part of the duties of an Islamic government to supervise transactions in the markets and

streets to see that exact measures and weights are being observed, and prevent their breach and violation by the force of law. Afterwards it was made one of the duties of the government to eradicate dishonesty in all commercial dealings and economic transactions.

*41 That is, its end will be best in this world and it will be best in the Hereafter. It is best in this world because it produces mutual trust between sellers and buyers. As a result of this, commerce prospers and there is a general prosperity. As regards the Hereafter, there the end depends entirely on honesty, piety and fear of God.

36. And do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, and the sight, and the heart, each of these shall be called to account.*42

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ
إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ
أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا

*42 The meanings of “Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge” are very comprehensive. It demands that both in individual and collective life, one should not follow mere guess work and presumption instead of knowledge. This instruction covers all aspects of Islamic life, moral, legal, political, administrative and applies to science, arts and education. It has thus saved the society from numerous evils which are produced in human life by following guesswork instead of knowledge. The Islamic moral code demands: Guard against suspicion and do not accuse any individual or group without proper investigation. In law, it has been made a permanent principle that no action should

be taken against anyone without proper investigation. It has been made unlawful to arrest, beat or imprison anyone on mere suspicion during investigation. In regards to foreign relations, the definite policy has been laid down that no action should be taken without investigation, nor should rumors be set afloat. Likewise in education the so called sciences based on mere guess work, presumptions and irrational theories have been disapproved. Above all, it cuts at the very root of superstitions, for this instruction teaches the believers to accept only that which is based on the knowledge imparted by Allah and His Messenger.

37. And do not walk upon the earth in arrogance. Indeed, you can never tear the earth (apart), and never can you reach to the mountains in height.*43

وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا
إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَخْرِقَ الْأَرْضَ وَلَنْ
تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طُولًا

*43 This instruction warns against the ways of tyrants and vain people and is not merely meant for the individual but also for the collective conduct of the Muslim community. It was because of this guidance that the rulers, governors and commanders of the Islamic state which was established on the basis of this manifesto, were free from every tinge of tyranny, arrogance, haughtiness, pride and vanity, so much so that even in the battlefield they never uttered a word which had the slightest indication of any of these vain things. Their gait, dress, dwelling and conveyance showed humility. In short, their ways of conduct were not those of big ones but those of humble persons. That is why they

never tried to overawe the people of a conquered city by show of pomp and pride.

38. All such (things), its evil is hateful in the sight of your Lord.*44

كُلُّ ذَٰلِكَ كَانَ سَيِّئُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ
مَكْرُوهًا

*44 That is, Allah disapproves of the commission of anything that has been prohibited or, in other words, He disapproves of disobedience to any of these commandments.

39. That is from what your Lord has revealed to you (O Muhammad) from the wisdom. And do not take with Allah any other god, lest you are thrown into Hell, blameworthy, abandoned.*45

ذَٰلِكَ مِمَّا أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ رَبُّكَ مِنَ
الْحِكْمَةِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا
ءَاخَرَ فَتُلْقَىٰ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَلُومًا
مَدْحُورًا

*45 Though this has been addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), the real addressee is every human being as in the case of many such verses.

40. Has your Lord then chosen you for (having) sons, and has taken (for Himself) daughters from among the angels.*46 Indeed, you utter a dreadful saying.

أَفَأَصْفَنكُمْ رَبُّكُم بِالْبَنِينَ
وَاتَّخَذَ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنْسَانًا
لَتَقُولُونَ قَوْلًا عَظِيمًا

*46 Please refer to Ayats 57-59 and their E.Ns.

41. And indeed, We have fully explained in this Quran that they may take admonition, but it does not increase them except in aversion.

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ
لِيَذَكَّرُوا وَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا نُفُورًا



42. Say (O Muhammad): “If there had been (other) gods along with Him, as they say, then they would have sought a way to the Lord of the Throne.”*47

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ مَعَهُ آٰهَةٌ كَمَا
يَقُولُونَ إِذَا لَّابَتَغَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِي
الْعَرْشِ سَبِيلًا



*47 That is, they would have themselves tried their best to become masters of the Throne. This is because if there had been more than one partners in Godhead, it would produce one of the two results:

(1) If they were all independent gods, it was not conceivable that they would agree and cooperate with one another in the management of the boundless universe and there could never have been unanimity, uniformity and balanced proportion in its functioning. There would have been conflict at every step and everyone would have tried to dominate others in order to become its sole master. or

(2) if one of them had been the supreme god and the others his obedient servants whom he had delegated some of his powers, then, according to the maxim “power corrupts”, they would never have been content with remaining obedient servants of the supreme god and would have conspired to become the supreme god themselves.

Whereas the fact is that in this universe not even a grain of wheat or a blade of grass can grow unless and until everything in the earth and the heavens cooperate with one another for its production. Therefore, only an utterly ignorant and block headed person can conceive that there are more than one independent or semi independent rulers, who carry on the management of this universe. Anyone who has tried to understand the nature and functioning of the universe will most surely arrive at the conclusion that there is One and only One Sovereign ruling over this universe, and there is absolutely no likelihood of anyone else to be a partner in this at any stage.

43. Glory be to Him, and He is high above what they say, Exalted, Great.

سُبْحٰنَهُ وَتَعَالٰى عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ
عُلُوًّا كَبِيرًا



44. Glorify Him the seven heavens and the earth and whatever is therein.*⁴⁸ And there is not any thing but glorifies His praise,*⁴⁹ but you do not understand their glorification. Indeed, He is ever Clement, Forgiving.*⁵⁰

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَوَاتُ السَّبْعُ
وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِنْ مِنْ
شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ
لَّا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ إِنَّهُ
كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا



*⁴⁸ That is, the entire universe and everything in it bear witness to the fact that their Creator and Guardian is free from each and every fault, defect and weakness, and that

He is far above this that there should be any partner or associate in His Godhead.

*49 Everything is not only singing hymns of the glory of its Creator but is affording the proof that He is perfect in every respect and worthy of all praise. Everything is an embodiment of the proof that its Creator and Administrator is the one in whom there is perfection of every quality. Therefore, He alone is worthy of praise.

*50 That is, it is due to His forbearance and forgiveness that though you are persistently insolent to Him and go on inventing one false thing or the other against Him, He forbears and forgives you. He neither withholds provisions from you nor deprives you of His favors nor strikes an insolent person instantly dead with a thunderbolt. Above all, He is so forbearing and forgiving that He gives long enough respite to the individuals and communities to mend their ways, sends His prophets and reformers for their admonition and guidance and forgives all the past mistakes and errors, if one sincerely repents and adopts the right way.

45. And when you recite the Quran, we place between you and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, a hidden barrier.

وَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ جَعَلْنَا
بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِالْآخِرَةِ حِجَابًا مَّسْتُورًا

46. And We have placed upon their hearts coverings, lest they should understand it, and in their ears a

وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ
يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِذَا

deafness.^{*51} And when you make mention of your Lord alone in the Quran, they turn on their backs in aversion.^{*52}

ذَكَرْتَ رَبَّكَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ وَحْدَهُ
وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَدْبُرِهِمْ نُفُورًا



***51** This refers to the divine law according to which those people, who do not believe in the Hereafter, cannot benefit from the Quran. Allah has attributed this law to Himself, as if to say: The natural result of disbelief in the Hereafter is that the heart of such a man becomes dull and his ears become deaf to the message of the Quran, for Quran bases its invitation on the belief in the Hereafter. So it warns the people that they should not be deluded by this apparent aspect of the worldly life if there appears to be none to call them to account here; for it does not mean they are not at all accountable and answerable to anyone. Likewise if Allah allows freedom of belief to practice shirk, atheism, disbelief or Tauhid with impunity in this world, and their practice does not appear to make any practical difference in this world, it does not mean that these things do not produce any results at all. For, in fact, everyone shall be accountable and answerable after death in the next world. Then everyone will realize that the doctrine of Tauhid alone is true and all other doctrines are false. For, if at present the consequences of deeds do not appear after death, they shall inevitably appear, but the reality has now been hidden behind an invisible curtain. There is an inevitable moral law according to which submission to it will bear its fruit and disobedience shall incur its losses. As decisions according to this moral law will be made in the Hereafter.

You should not be enticed by the charms of this transitory life. You should, therefore, keep in view that ultimately you shall have to render an account of all your deeds in this world before your Lord, and adopt that true creed and moral attitude which may be conducive to your success in the Hereafter.

From this it must have become obvious that if a man does not believe in the Hereafter, he will never consider the message of the Quran worth his while but will hanker after this world and its joys which he can feel and experience. Naturally his ears will not listen to the message and it will never reach the depths of his heart. Allah has stated this psychological fact in this verse.

In this connection, it should be remembered that the words contained in this verse were uttered by the disbelievers of Makkah as quoted in Ayat 5 of Surah Hamim Sajdah: "They say, O Muhammad, a covering has fallen over our hearts, and our ears are deaf for the message you give and there is a curtain between you and us. You may go on with your work and we will do whatever we desire." Here the same words have been cited, as if to say: You consider this state of yours to be a virtue, whereas this is a curse which has fallen on you according to the divine law because of your disbelief of the Hereafter.

*52 That is, they do not like it at all that you should consider Allah alone as your Lord and not mention the Lords they have set up. They seem to think it strange that one should go on praising Allah and never mention the miracles of their elders and saints nor praise them for their

favours. For, according to them, Allah has delegated the powers of His Godhead to their great ones. Therefore, they say: What a strange fellow he is! He believes that the knowledge of the unknown, and all the power and authority belong to One Allah alone. Why does he not pay tribute to those who give us children, cure us of diseases, and help make our commerce flourish, in short, fulfill all our wishes and desires.

47. We know best of what they listen to, when they listen to you and when they take secret counsel. When the wrong doers say: "You follow none but a man bewitched."^{*53}

نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَسْتَمِعُونَ بِهِ إِذْ
يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِذْ هُمْ نَجْوَى
إِذْ يَقُولُ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ
إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَّسْحُورًا



*53 This refers to those devices which they conspired against the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They would secretly listen to him, and then hold consultations in order to counteract this. Sometimes it so happened that they suspected that someone had been influenced by the Quran. Then they would sit together and try to dissuade him, saying: How is it that you have been influenced by a person who himself is bewitched by some enemy and talks like this?

48. Look how they put forward for you similitudes. So they have gone astray, then they can not find a

أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ
فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا

way.*54



***54** This is to say that they expressed different opinions at different times which contradicted each other. Sometimes they said: You are a sorcerer. And at other times: You have been bewitched by someone, or you are a poet or you are possessed of some evil spirit. These contradictory things were a proof that they did not know the reality. Otherwise, they would not have invented a different name to suit each occasion. This also shows that they themselves were not sure of the charge they leveled against him. If they called him by one epithet one day, they themselves felt afterwards that it did not fit in. Then they would invent the second epithet and then the third and so on. Thus every new epithet contradicted the previous ones and showed that there was no truth in them, but in their enmity they were inventing one falsehood after the other.

49. And they say: “When we are bones and fragments, shall we really be resurrected (to be) a new creation.”

وَقَالُوا أَإِذَا كُنَّا عِظْمًا وَرُفَاتًا
أَيْنَا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ خَلْقًا جَدِيدًا



50. Say (O Muhammad): “Be you stones or iron.”

﴿ قُلْ كُونُوا حِجَارَةً أَوْ حَدِيدًا



51. “Or some created thing that is yet greater

أَوْ خَلْقًا مِّمَّا يَكْبُرُ فِي

in your breasts.” Then they will say: “Who shall bring us back (to life).” Say: “He who created you in the first instance.” Then they will shake their heads at you, and say: ^{*55} “When will it be.” Say: “perhaps that it is near.”

صُدُّورِكُمْ ۖ فَسَيَقُولُونَ مَنْ
يُعِيدُنَا قُلِ الَّذِي فَطَرَكُمْ أَوَّلَ
مَرَّةٍ ۖ فَسَيُنْغِضُونَ إِلَيْكَ رُءُوسَهُمْ
وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هُوَ قُلْ عَسَى
أَنْ يَكُونَ قَرِيبًا

***55** “They will shake their heads at you” in astonishment or to express doubt or disapproval or to scoff at you.

52. On the day (when) He will call you, then you will answer with His praise, and you will think that you had not stayed (in the world) except for a little. ^{*56}

يَوْمَ يَدْعُوكُمْ فَتَسْتَجِيبُونَ
بِحَمْدِهِ ۖ وَتَظُنُّونَ إِن لَّبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا
قَلِيلًا

***56** That is, you will feel as if the intervening period between death and coming again to life on the Day of Resurrection was only a few hours or so, for you will think that you had just woken up after a short sleep by the sudden noise produced on the Day.

As regards to you will rise up praising Him, it is a subtle hint towards a great reality. At the time of rising up from death, both the believer and the unbeliever will be uttering the praise of Allah. The believer will do so because in the worldly life also he believed in this creed and practiced it. As regards the unbeliever, he will have the urge to do so

because of the inherent and ingrained tendency in him which he had been suppressing by his folly. In the new life all those deliberate suppressions will vanish away and he will involuntarily utter the praise of Allah.

53. And say to My servants^{*57} to speak that which is best.^{*58} Indeed, Satan sows discord among them. Indeed, Satan is to mankind a clear enemy.^{*59}

وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ
أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْزِعُ
بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ
لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا

***57** The believers.

***58** The believers have been enjoined to say only the best things even in their discussion with the disbelievers and other opponents of their faith. They should neither use harsh words nor make exaggerated statements. They should be cool in their conversation and say only what is true and dignified in spite of the provoking behavior of the opponents.

***59** The believers have been forewarned to guard against the provocations of Satan, as if to say: While answering your opponents, if you feel that you are being aroused to anger, you should at once understand that it is Satan who is exciting you in order to do harm to your dispute, in which he wants to engage human beings for sowing discord between them.

54. Your Lord knows you best. If He wills, He will

رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِنَّ يَشَاءُ

have mercy upon you, or if He wills, He will punish you.*⁶⁰ And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) over them as a guardian.*⁶¹

يَرْحَمَكُمُ أَوْ إِن يَشَأْ يُعَذِّبِكُمْ
وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيلاً



***60** This is to warn the believers to refrain from making claims of piety so as to assign Paradise to themselves and Hell to their opponents. It is Allah alone Who has the power to decide these things because He is fully aware of the known and secret and the present and future things about all human beings. It is He Who will decide whether to show mercy to anyone or give chastisement. However, a man may say in the light of the divine Book that a certain kind of human beings deserve mercy and another kind of people incur chastisement but none has any right to say specifically that a particular man will be given chastisement and another will get salvation.

***61** This is to declare that a Prophet is sent to convey the message and not to decide whether a person will receive mercy or get chastisement. It does not, however, mean that, God forbid, the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself did such a thing and Allah had to warn him. In fact, this is to warn the Muslims that when the Prophet himself is not in a position as to decide the fates of the people, they should never think of such a thing as to assign Paradise and Hell to anyone.

55. And your Lord knows best of whoever is in the

وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ

heavens and the earth. And indeed, We have preferred some of the prophets above others,^{*62} and to David We gave the Psalms.^{*63}

وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَلَقَدْ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَ
النَّبِيِّينَ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ ۖ وَآتَيْنَا
دَاوُدَ زَبُورًا



***62** Though this has apparently been addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), in fact the real addressees are the disbelievers of Makkah. This is to rebuke them for the low opinion they held in regard to the Prophet (peace be upon him). As it commonly happens, contemporaries in general and opponents in particular do not see anything great and noble in a person of their own time. The same was the case with the contemporaries of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who could not see anything extraordinary or great in him. He appeared to be merely a common man of their habitation. On the other hand, they were full of praise in regard to the famous personalities who had lived in the past few centuries and imagined them to be the perfection of greatness. That is why, they raised frivolous objections against his claim to Prophethood, as if to say: Look at this man who considers himself to be a Prophet whereas he cannot stand in comparison with the former great Prophets who are held in high esteem by all. Allah has answered their objection, as if to say: We are fully aware of all Our creatures in the heavens and the earth, and We know their ranks but you do not know. We know whom to favor with Prophethood, as We have been favoring the former Prophets and exalting some Prophets above others in rank.

***63** It appears that Prophet David (peace be upon him) has

been particularly mentioned to show that Prophethood does not mean that one should have nothing to do with the life of this world. This was the answer to the objection they were raising against the claim to Prophethood by Muhammad (peace be upon him), that he was a man of the world. It means to say: Though David was a king who had to engage himself in worldly affairs more than a common man, he was favored by Allah with Prophethood, and given the Book, the Psalms. Likewise Muhammad (peace be upon him) could be favored with Prophethood in spite of the fact that he had wives and children and passed his life like other common people and was engaged in buying and selling in the market. In short, in performing all those duties that a man of the world has to perform to meet his necessities of life. This was necessitated because according to the disbelievers of Makkah, such a man of the world could not be considered to be even a pious man, much less a Prophet. For pious people should have nothing to do with the worldly affairs but should sit in seclusion and remember God whereas the Prophet (peace be upon him) had to work to fulfill the necessities of life.

56. Say: “Call unto those whom you claim (to be gods) other than Him. For they have no power to remove the adversity from you, nor to shift it.”*64

قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِّنْ
دُونِهِ فَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ كَشْفَ
الضَّرِّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا تَحْوِيلًا

*64 This warning helps to elaborate the doctrine of Tauhid and negate shirk. According to this, shirk is not confined

merely to falling prostrate before any other than Allah but it is also shirk to pray to or invoke the help of any other than Allah. For praying to or calling for help any other than Allah is in reality a kind of worship. Therefore, the one who invokes for help any other than Allah is as much guilty of shirk as the worshiper of an idol. This verse also shows clearly that, none other than Allah, has any power to attend to prayers and relieve any one of trouble or alter any one's bad condition. Hence, if one believes that someone other than Allah has any power, he shall be guilty of shirk.

57. Those unto whom they call upon, are themselves seeking to their Lord the means of access, as to which of them should be the nearest, and they hope for His mercy and they fear His punishment.*65 Surely, punishment of your Lord is to be feared.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ
يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ
أَيْمُمًا أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ
وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ إِنَّ عَذَابَ
رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا

*65 The words of the text are a clear proof that the deities and the helpers referred to in this verse were not idols of stone but were either angels or dead saints. It is clearly implied in this that no prophet, no saint and no angel, whom the people invoke for help, has the power to hear prayers and help anyone. They themselves hope for mercy from Allah and dread His punishment and vie with one another in seeking means for nearness to Him.

58. And there is not any township but that We shall destroy it before the Day of Resurrection, or punish it with a severe punishment.*66 This is written down in the Book (of our decrees).

وَإِنْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا نَحْنُ
مُهْلِكُوهَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ أَوْ
مُعَذِّبُوهَا عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا كَانَ
ذَلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا



***66** This is to remove the delusion of the disbelievers that their habitations were immune from danger or chastisement. This verse warns that every habitation will be destroyed as a matter of course or by Allah's chastisement.

59. And nothing prevented Us from sending signs*67 but that the people of old denied them. And We gave Thamud the she-camel, a clear sign, but they wronged her.*68 And We do not send the signs except to cause (people to) fear.*69

وَمَا مَنَعَنَا أَنْ نُرْسِلَ بِالْآيَاتِ
إِلَّا أَنْ كَذَّبَ بِهَا الْأَوَّلُونَ
وَأَتَيْنَا ثَمُودَ النَّاقَةَ مُبْصِرَةً
فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالْآيَاتِ
إِلَّا تَخْوِيفًا



***67** Here signs mean those visible miracles which are presented as a proof of Prophethood. The disbelievers from among the Quraish were demanding such signs over and over again.

***68** This is to warn the disbelievers, as if to say: It is the mercy of Allah that He is not showing such a sign so that you might mend your ways but in your folly you presume

that such a sign cannot be presented. You should know that a sign is not being sent because its denial inevitably brings chastisement and the community is annihilated. You can learn from the past history that those communities which disbelieved in the open signs were utterly destroyed, such as the people of Thamud.

*69 That is, miracles are not shown for fun. These are meant to warn the people that the Prophet is being helped by the Almighty and that they should realize the terrible consequences of disobedience.

60. And (O Muhammad) when We said to you: “Indeed, your Lord has encompassed mankind.”*70

And We did not make the vision which We have shown you*71 except as a trial for mankind, and the tree accursed in the Quran.*72

And We warn them, but it does not increase them except in greater transgression.*73

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لَكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ أَحَاطَ
بِالنَّاسِ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّءْيَا الَّتِي
أَرَيْنَكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ
وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ
وَنُحُوفُهُمْ فَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا
طُغْيَانًا كَبِيرًا



*70 That is, at the very beginning of your Prophethood, when the disbelievers of the Quraish had started opposition to your message, We declared that We are encircling them. They might try their best to obstruct your message, but they will inevitably fail in this and your mission will succeed regardless of opposition. Can't they see that this

declaration has come out true as a miracle, for their opposition has failed to hinder your message, and they have not been able to do any harm to you at all. This was a clear sign of the fact that the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was being supported by the Almighty God.

As regards to the declaration that Allah is encircling the disbelievers and helping the mission of the Prophet, it occurs in several Surahs of the first stage of Prophethood at Makkah. For instance, in Ayats 17-20 of Surah Al-Burooj, Allah says: These disbelievers do not learn a lesson from the stories of the people of the Pharaoh and Thamud but are rejecting the message here as Allah is encircling them on all sides.

***71** This refers to Miraj (Ascension) for here word *ruya* does not mean “seeing things in a dream” but seeing things actually with physical eyes. It is quite obvious that if it had been a mere dream and the Prophet (peace be upon him) had presented it as a dream to the disbelievers, there was no reason why it should have become a trial for them. Everyday people see strange dreams and relate them to the people but these dreams never become such a curious thing as to make people scoff at the dreamer and accuse him of making a false claim or of being a mad person.

***72** This cursed tree, *Az-zaqqum* which has been mentioned in Ayat 43-44 of Surah Ad-Dukhan, grows at the bottom of Hell and its dwellers shall have to eat from it. This has been called a cursed tree because it is not given to people to eat as a mercy from Allah but as a symbol of His curse so that the accursed people should eat it and get more sore, for this

will, so to speak, burn in their bellies like the boiling water.
***73** That is, We showed you such things during the Miraj so that they should have the first hand knowledge of the reality from a truthful and honest man like you and be warned by it to the right way. They, however, began to make fun of you, though We had already warned them through you that their evil ways would force them to eat of the *Az-zaqqum*. Instead of this they began to scoff at you, saying, just consider the logic of this man. On the one hand, he says that there is an awful fire burning in Hell and, on the other, he says that trees are growing in it.

61. And when We said to the angels: “Prostrate unto Adam,” so they fell prostrate except Iblis.^{*74} He said: “Shall I prostrate to one whom You created from clay.”

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اسْجُدُوْا
 لِاٰدَمَ فَسَجَدُوْا اِلَّاۤ اِبْلِيسَ قَالَ
 ءَاَسْجُدُ لِمَنْ خَلَقْتَ طِيْۤنًا



***74** Please also refer to Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 30-39; Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 117-122; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 11-25; Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 22; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 26-43. This story has been cited here to impress upon the disbelievers that their attitude of arrogance and indifference towards Allah is exactly the same as was adopted by Satan. As a matter of fact, they were following Satan who is the avowed enemy of man, and were being entangled in the snare spread by him who had challenged the progeny of Adam at the very beginning of human history that he would allure and ruin them.

62. He (Iblis) said: “See You, this one whom You have honored above me, if You give me respite until the Day of Resurrection, I will surely seize his offspring,^{*75} (all) except a few.”

قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَكَ هَذَا الَّذِي
كَرَّمْتَنَا عَلَىٰ لَيْنٍ أَخَّرْتَنَا إِلَىٰ
يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لِأُحْتَنِكَنَّ
ذُرِّيَّتَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

***75** That is, I will uproot them from the high position of divine vicegerency which demands steadfastness in obedience. Their removal from that high position is just like the tearing of a tree from its roots.

63. He (Allah) said: “Go, so whoever of them follows you, then indeed Hell will be your recompense, an ample recompense.”

قَالَ أَذْهَبُ فَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ
فَأِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَاءُكُمْ جَزَاءً
مُّوفُورًا

64. “And entice whoever you can among them, with your voice,^{*76} and make assaults on them with your cavalry and your infantry,^{*77} and be a partner with them in wealth and children,^{*78} and promise them.” And Satan does not promise them except deceit.^{*79}

وَأَسْتَفْزِرُ مِنْ أَسْتَطَعْتَ مِنْهُمْ
بِصَوْتِكَ وَأَجْلِبُ عَلَيْهِمُ بِخَيْلِكَ
وَرَجْلِكَ وَشَارِكُهُمْ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ
وَالْأَوْلَادِ وَعِدَّهُمْ^ج وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ
الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا

***76** The literal meaning of the Arabic text is: You may sweep away those whom you find superficial and weak minded.

***77** Here, Satan has been likened to that robber who assaults a habitation with cavalry and infantry and orders them to rob. The cavalry and the infantry of Satan are those jinns and human beings who are engaged in numerous forms and positions in carrying out his mission.

***78** This is a very meaningful sentence which depicts a true and perfect picture of the relationship between Satan and his followers. On the one hand, Satan becomes a partner with the one who follows him in the earning and spending of his money without putting in any labor in it. On the other hand, he does not become a partner in bearing the consequences of his error, crime and sin. But his foolish dupe follows his instructions as if he were a partner, nay, a stronger party. Again in regard to the children of such a man, the father himself bears the whole burden of bringing them up, but under the misguidance of Satan he trains them in wrong and unmoral ways as if he alone was not their father but Satan as well was a partner in it.

***79** Satan entices them with false promises of success and entangles them in the snare of false expectations.

65. “Indeed, My servants, you have no authority over them.^{*80} And sufficient is your Lord as a Guardian.”^{*81}

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ
سُلْطَانٌ وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيلًا

***80** It has two meanings:

(1) You will have no power over human beings to force them to follow your way. What you are allowed to do is that you may delude them by false counsel and entice them by false promises, but they will have the option to follow or not to follow your counsel. You will not have the power over them to force them to follow your way against their will.

(2) You will not succeed in alluring My righteous people. Though the weak minded will be enticed by you. My righteous people who are steadfast in My obedience will not succumb to you.

***81** That is, those who will trust in Allah and believe in His guidance and help, will not stand in need of any other support in their trial by Satan for Allah will guide them, protect them and help them to be safe from his allurements. On the other hand, those people, who will place their trust in their own power or that of any other than Allah, will not come out successful in their trial by Satan.

66. (O mankind),^{*82} your Lord is He who drives for you the ship upon the sea that you may seek of His bounty.^{*83} Indeed, He is ever Merciful towards you.

رَبُّكُمْ الَّذِي يُزْجِي لَكُمْ
الْفُلْكَ فِي الْبَحْرِ لِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ
فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِكُمْ
رَحِيمًا



***82** This passage (Ayats 66-72) is closely connected with the previous one. It tells man that if he wants to protect himself from the allurements, temptations and false promises of

Satan who has been his avowed enemy from the day of his creation, he should recognize his real Lord and be steadfast in His obedience. Satan intends to prove that man is not worthy of the honor with which Allah has blessed him. Therefore if he follows any other way he cannot escape the snares of Satan.

In this passage, arguments of Tauhid have been put forward in order to make man steadfast in his faith and refrain from shirk.

*83 That is, try to avail of the economic, social, educational and intellectual benefits which are provided by the sea voyages.

67. And when distress touches you at sea, those whom you call upon vanish except Him.*84 But when He brings you safe to land, you turn away. And man is ever ungrateful.

وَإِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِي الْبَحْرِ
ضَلَّ مَنْ تَدْعُونَ إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا
نَجَّكُمُ إِلَى الْبَرِّ أَعْرَضْتُمْ وَكَانَ
الْإِنْسَانُ كَفُورًا



*84 That is, this is a proof of the fact that your real nature knows no other Lord than Allah, and you feel in the depths of your hearts that He alone possesses the real power of every gain or loss. Had it not been so, man would never have invoked Allah at the time when he realized that no other helper could remove his misfortune.

68. Then do you feel secure that He will not cause a part of the land to swallow you, or

أَفَأَمِنْتُمْ أَنْ تَخْصِفَ بِكُمْ جَانِبَ
الْبَرِّ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا

send upon you a sand-storm, then you will not find a protector for you.

ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوا لَكُمْ وَكِيلًا ﴿٦٨﴾

69. Or do you feel secure that He will (not) return you into that (the sea) a second time, and send upon you a hurricane of wind, then drown you for your ingratitude. Then you will not find for yourselves any avenger therein against Us.

أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ أَنْ يُعِيدَكُمْ فِيهِ تَارَةً
أُخْرَىٰ فَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ قَاصِفًا
مِّنَ الرِّيحِ فَيُغْرِقَكُم بِمَا كَفَرْتُمْ
ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوا لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا بِهِ
تَبِيعًا ﴿٦٩﴾

70. And indeed, We have honored the children of Adam, and We have carried them on the land and the sea, and We have provided them with good things, and We have preferred them above many of those whom We created, (a sure) preference. *85

﴿٧٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ
وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْوُجُوهِ وَالْبَحْرِ
وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ
وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ
خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا ﴿٧٠﴾

***85** That is, it is an obvious fact that the superiority man enjoys over all other beings on the earth and all that is in it, has not been bestowed upon him by a jinn or an angel or a prophet. Most surely that is Allah's blessing and favor. Is it not then the height of folly and ignorance that after having achieved such a high rank, man should bow down before any creature of Allah instead of Him?

71. The day (when) We shall summon all mankind with their leaders (or their record of deeds). Then whoever is given his book in his right hand, such will read their book*⁸⁶ and they will not be wronged a shred.

يَوْمَ نَدْعُوا كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ
بِإِمَامِهِمْ فَمَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ
بِيَمِينِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ يَقْرَءُونَ
كِتَابَهُمْ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا



***86** We learn from the Quran that on the Day of Resurrection, the righteous people will be given their records in their right hands and they will be overjoyed to have a look at it and will show it to others. As regards to the wicked people, they will get their records in their left hands and in their shame will try to hide it behind their backs. (Please refer to Surah Al-Haaqqa, Ayats 19-28, Surah Al-Inshiqaq, Ayats 7-13).

72. And whoever is blind (to see the truth) in this (life), he will be blind in the Hereafter, and even farther astray from the path.

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَى
فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَى وَأَضَلُّ
سَبِيلًا



73. And indeed, they were about to tempt you away from that which We have revealed (the Quran) to you, that you should invent against Us*⁸⁷ other than it,

وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُونَكَ عَنِ
الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِيَ
عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَهُ وَإِذَا لَا تَأْخُذُوكَ

and then they would surely have taken you a friend.

خَلِيلاً
٧٣

***87** In order to understand the significance of this verse, we should keep in view the circumstances through which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been passing at Makkah during the preceding decade or so. The disbelievers of Makkah were exerting their utmost to turn the Prophet (peace be upon him) away, somehow or other, from his message of Tauhid, which he was presenting, and to force him to make a compromise with shirk and the customs of ignorance. In order to achieve this end, they tempted him in several ways. They practiced deception upon him, and tempted him with greed, held out threats, and raised a storm of false propaganda against him, and persecuted him and applied economic pressure and social boycott against him. In short, they did all that could be done to defeat his resolve.

74. And if that We had not strengthened you, indeed, you might have inclined to them a little.

وَلَوْلَا أَنْ ثَبَّتْنَاكَ لَقَدْ كِدَّتْ
تَرَكُنْ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا
٧٤

75. Then, We should have made you taste a double (punishment) in this life and a double (punishment) after death, then you would have found none to help you against Us.^{*88}

إِذَا لَأَذَقْنَاكَ ضِعْفَ الْحَيَاةِ
وَضِعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ
لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيرًا
٧٥

***88** This review implies two things:

(1) If you had compromised with falsehood after recognizing the truth, you might have pleased your degenerate people but would have incurred the wrath of Allah and would have received double chastisement both in this world and in the Hereafter.

(2) No man, not even a Messenger of Allah, can fight single-handed against the deceitful methods of falsehood, unless he receives the succor of Allah. It was the fortitude which Allah had bestowed upon the Prophet (peace be upon him), which helped him to retrain steadfast on the right position he had taken, so that no persecution, howsoever great, could turn him away in the least from that position.

76. And indeed, they were about to scare you off the land that they might drive you out from there. And then they would not have stayed (there) after you but a little.*89

وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَسْتَفِزُّوكَ مِنَ
الْأَرْضِ لِيُخْرِجُوكَ مِنْهَا وَإِذَا
لَا يَلْبَثُونَ خِلْفَكَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا



*89 This was a clear prophecy which was made at the time when it appeared to be no more than a mere threat, but it was fulfilled literally in a decade or so. A year after the revelation of this Surah, the disbelievers of Makkah compelled the Prophet (peace be upon him) to leave his home. Then within eight years he entered Makkah as a conqueror, and within two years after this, the entire Arabia was totally freed from mushriks. Then whosoever stayed in that country, he remained there as a Muslim and not as a mushrik.

77. (Such was Our) way for those whom We had sent before you (O Muhammad) among the messengers.*90 And you will not find any change in Our way.

سُنَّةَ مَنْ قَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا وَلَا تَجِدُ لِسُنَّتِنَا تَحْوِيلًا



***90** That is, this is how Allah has always dealt with the people who killed or exiled His Messengers. They never survived in the land after this. They were either annihilated by the scourge of Allah or were brought under the sway of an enemy or were subdued by the followers of the Messenger.

78. Establish prayer*91 from the decline of the sun*92 to the darkness of the night,*93 and (recite) the Quran*94 at dawn. Indeed, (reciting) the Quran at dawn is ever witnessed.*95

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ



***91** The Muslims have been commanded to establish Salat immediately after the mention of obstacles and adversities. This implies that the perseverance required to face adverse circumstances is obtained by the establishment of Salat.

***92** We have translated the words of the Arabic text into “the declining of the sun.” Though some of the companions and their followers are of the opinion that it means “the sunset”, the majority of them are of the opinion that it means “the declining of the sun from its zenith.” Umar,

Ibn Umar, Anas bin Malik, Abu Barza-tal-Aslami, Hasan Basri, Shaabi, Ata, Mujahid and, according to a tradition, Ibn Abbas (May Allah be pleased with them all) are of this opinion and Imam Muhammad Baqir and Imam Jaafar Sadiq also are of the same opinion. Besides this, there are some traditions from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the same effect, though they are not so authentic.

***93** According to some, the original words of the Arabic text mean “darkness of the night”, while others take it to mean “midnight”. If the first opinion is accepted, it will imply “the beginning of the time of the *salatul-isha*, the *isha* prayer” and according to the other it will mean “the last limit of the time of *salatul-isha*.”

***94** The literal meaning of the word *fajr* is dawn, that is, “the beginning of the morning after the darkness of night.” Here the “recital of the Quran in the morning” stands for the *salatul-fajr*, the morning prayer. At some places the Quran has used the word *salat* for prayer and at other places a particular part of *salat* for prayer as a whole, e.g. *tasbih*, *hamd*, *zikr*, *qayam*, *ruku*, *sajud* etc. Likewise, here “recital of the Quran at dawn” does not mean the mere recital of the Quran but its recital during the *salatul-fajr*. Thus, the Quran has also incidentally referred to the different parts of which *salat* is composed and these guided the Prophet (peace be upon him) to prescribe the definite form of *salat* in which it is performed by the Muslims.

***95** The recital of the Quran at dawn is witnessed by the angels of Allah to testify it as has been explained in the traditions. Though the angels witness each prayer and each

good deed, the special mention of their being witnesses at the time of the recital of the Quran during the *salatul-fajr* gives it a particular importance. That is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite long passages from the Quran during the *salatul-fajr*. His example was followed by the companions, and the succeeding Muslim scholars held it to be a desirable thing.

In this verse, it has been briefly stated how to establish salat which was made obligatory at the prescribed timings on the occasion of Miraj. It has been ordained that the first prayer is to be offered before the sunrise and the remaining four after the declining of the sun till the darkness of the night. Afterwards Angel Jibril was sent to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to define the limits of the timings of each prayer. According to a tradition of Abu Daud and Tirmizi related by Ibn Abbas, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Jibril led me in the five prayers twice near the Kaabah. On the first day, he offered the Duhur prayer just after the declining of the sun, when the shadow of everything was the shortest. Then he offered the Asr prayer when the shadow of each thing was equal to its own length, then the Maghrib prayer at the time when one breaks his fast, and the Isha prayer was offered just at the time when twilight had disappeared, and Fajr prayer at the time when it becomes unlawful to eat and drink anything for the one who intends to observe a fast. The next day he offered the Dhuhr prayer at the time when the shadow of each thing became equal to its own length and the Asr prayer when the shadow had doubled. The Maghrib prayer was offered as on the

previous day and the Isha prayer when one third of the night had passed away, and the Fajr prayer when light had spread all over. After this Jibril turned towards me and said: O Muhammad, these are the timings of salat of the Prophets and the right tunings are between these two extreme limits.

The Quran has also pointed to these five times of Salat on different occasions:

(1) And listen; establish salat at the two ends of the day and in the early parts of the night (Surah At-Tauba, Ayat 114).

(2) And glorify your Lord with His praise before the sunrise (Fajr) and before sunset (Asr) and then glorify Him during the night (Isha) and then at the ends of the day (Fajr, Dhuhur and Maghrib). (Surah Taaha, Ayat 130).

(3) So glorify Allah when it is evening for you (Maghrib), and when it is morning (Fajr). Praise is only for Him in the heavens and the earth and glorify him in the later part of the afternoon (Asr) and in the afternoon (Dhuhur). (Surah Ar-Room, Ayats 17-18).

There is great wisdom in this system of the timings of salat. One of these is to avoid the timings of the worship of the sun worshipers. This is because the sun has always been in every age one of the greatest deities of the mushriks, who worshiped it especially at the time of sunrise and sunset. Therefore, these two times have totally been forbidden for salat. Besides this, they worshiped the sun at the time of its zenith. That is why Islam has ordained that the Muslims should offer their two prayers during the day time after the sun has declined and the Fajr prayer before the sunrise.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself has stated this wisdom of the timings of prayer in several traditions. For instance, in the tradition related by Amar bin Abasah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have replied to a question to this effect: Offer your morning prayer, but refrain from it when the sun is about to rise until it has risen high. For the sun rises between the horns of Satan and the unbelievers fall prostrate before it at that time.

Then after mentioning the Asr prayer, he said: After Asr prayer, refrain from any prayer until the sunset, for during that time the sun sets between the horns of Satan and the unbelievers fall prostrate before it.

The rising and the setting of the sun between the horns of Satan is a symbolic expression that has been used in this tradition. This implies that both these times are used by Satan as temptations for the people. This is, as if to say: that Satan is so pleased with the worship of the unbelievers at the time of sunrise and sunset that he appears to carry the sun on his head as a mark of approval. This interpretation of the tradition is based on this remark of the Prophet (peace be upon him): The unbelievers fall prostrate before it.

79. And at night, wake up and pray^{*96} with (Quran) it, an additional prayer for you.^{*97} It may be that your Lord will raise you to an honored position.^{*98}

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً
لَّكَ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ
مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا



*96 The literal meaning of *tahajjud* is to rise up by breaking

sleep. Therefore, it means: Rise up from sleep after the passing of a part of night and then offer your prayer.

*97 *Nafl* literally means: Something done in addition to an obligatory duty. This shows that the *tahajjud* prayer is in addition to the five prescribed prayers.

*98 “Will raise you to an honored position”. You may attain such a high position in this world and in the next world that people from everywhere may be full of praise for you, and you may become a praiseworthy personality. This is, as if to say: Now your opponents are engaged in calling you names and are trying to defame you throughout the country, and have raised a storm of false accusations against you but that time is not far when the world will ring with the echoes of your praise and in the Hereafter you will become worthy of praise by all creatures. The exaltation of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the high position of intercession on the Day of Resurrection is also a part of that honored position.

80. And say: “My Lord, cause to enter me with a true entrance, and to exit me with a true exit.*99 And grant me from Your presence a supporting authority.”*100

وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَدْخِلْنِي مُدْخَلَ
صِدْقٍ وَأَخْرِجْنِي مَخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ
وَأَجْعَلْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ سُلْطٰنًا
نَّصِيرًا



*99 This prayer clearly shows that the time of Hijrah (Migration) had come near. That is why Allah has instructed the Prophet (peace be upon him) to this effect:

You should follow the truth wherever and in whatever condition you be. If you migrate from a place, you should migrate for the sake of the truth, and wherever you go, you should go for the sake of the truth.

*100 That is, either grant me power and authority or make some government my helper so that I may use its power to reform the corrupt world. This is because power is required to check indecency and sin and to enforce the law of justice.

Hasan Basri and Qatadah have made the same interpretation of this verse, and the great commentators like Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir have adopted the same. This is supported by a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him): Allah eradicates by the power of government those evils, which are not eradicated by the teachings of the Quran. This is a clear proof that according to Islam, political power is also required to introduce reform, for admonition alone is not enough for this. Besides this, when Allah Himself has taught this prayer to His Prophet (peace be upon him) for the establishment of His way and enforcement of His law, it is not only lawful but desirable to acquire power and those, who consider this to be a worldly thing, are obviously in the wrong. What is really worldliness is that one should desire and acquire power for his own interest. On the contrary, the desire of power for the sake of Allah's way is not the worship of the world but the worship of God.

81. And say: "Truth has come and falsehood has

وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ

vanished away. Indeed, falsehood is ever bound to vanish.”*101

إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا

*101 At the time of this declaration, the persecution of the Muslims was at its height. A large number of them had emigrated to Habash, and those who had remained behind were suffering from untold hardships at Makkah and its suburbs: so much so that the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself was always in danger. Therefore, to all appearances, falsehood was prevailing everywhere and there was no sign to show that the truth would ever overpower falsehood. That is why the disbelievers took it for a boastful talk and scoffed at it when this declaration was made. But this prophecy of victory did come out true in less than a decade when the Prophet (peace be upon him) entered the same city of Makkah as a conqueror, and entered the Kabah where he made the same declaration while he was breaking the three hundred and sixty idols. According to a tradition of Bukhari, related by Abdullah bin Masud: On the day of the conquest of Makkah the Prophet (peace be upon him) went on striking idols and uttering these words: The truth has come and falsehood has vanished; for falsehood is a thing that must by its nature vanish. The truth has come and falsehood will never reappear nor return.

82. And We send down of the Quran that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe. And it does not

وَنُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ
وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ

increase but loss to the wrong
doers. *102



الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

*102 That is, those people who make the Quran their guide and their book of law, are favored with the blessing of Allah and are cured of all their mental, psychological, moral and cultural diseases. On the other hand, those wicked people who reject this and turn their back on its guidance, in fact, are unjust to themselves. Therefore, the Quran does not allow them to remain even in that bad condition in which they were before its revelation or its knowledge but involves them in a greater loss than before. This is because before the revelation of the Quran or their acquaintance with it, they suffered from ignorance alone but when the Quran came before them and made distinct the difference between truth and falsehood, no excuse was left with them to remain in their previous condition of ignorance. After this, if they reject its guidance and persist in their deviation, it is a clear proof that they are not ignorant but workers of iniquity and worshipers of falsehood, which are averse to the truth. For then their position is of the one who, when presented both poison and elixir, makes a choice of poison. Therefore, they themselves are in that cast fully responsible for their deviation and whatever crimes they commit after that, shall incur their full punishment. It is obvious that the consequent loss of wickedness must be far greater than the loss of ignorance. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has summed this up in this concise and comprehensive sentence: The Quran is either an argument in your favor or against you.

83. And when We bestow favor upon man, he turns away and drifts off to one side. And when evil touches him, he is in despair.

وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ
أَعْرَضَ وَنَجَّ بِنَجَابِهِ ۖ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ
الْشَّرُّ كَانَ يَئُوسًا

84. Say: “Each one does according to his rule of conduct. And your Lord knows best him who is best guided on the way.”

قُلْ كُلٌّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَاكِلَتِهِ ۗ
فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَى
سَبِيلًا

85. And they ask you about the soul.^{*103} Say: “The soul is by the command of my Lord. And you have not been given of the knowledge except a little.”

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ ۗ قُلِ
الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ
مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

***103** It is generally understood that the Arabic word *RooH* stands here for soul as if the people asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the soul of man in regard to its nature, and the answer was that it came by the command of Allah. But we have great hesitation in accepting this meaning for it could be taken only if the verse be isolated from its context; otherwise these words would become quite incoherent for there is no reason why the question about soul should have intervened between the preceding three verses and following verses which deal with the theme of the Quran.

If we read the verse in its context, it becomes quite obvious that here the word Rooh (The Spirit) stands for the angel who brings revelation. This was in answer to the question of the mushriks: Where from do you bring the Quran? as if to say: O Muhammad, these people ask you about the Spirit, that is, the source of the Quran or the means of acquiring it, so tell them: This Spirit comes to me by the command of my Lord but your knowledge is so little that you cannot distinguish between the nature of human words and the divinely revealed words. That is why you suspect that this has been fabricated by some man.

The above interpretation is to be preferred, because it fits in excellently between the preceding and the succeeding verses. This is also supported by the Quran itself: He sends down by His command "The Spirit" to any of His servants He wills so that they should warn the people of the Day, when they shall be assembled together. (Surah Al-Momin, Ayat 15). And likewise, We have sent down "The Spirit" to you by Our command: You did not know what the Book was and what the faith. (Surah AshShurah, Ayat 52).

Besides this, Ibn Abbas, Qatadah and Hasan Basri (may Allah bestow His mercy upon them all) have also adopted the same interpretation. Ibn Jarir has attributed the same thing to Ibn Abbas on the authority of Qatadah, but at the same time he tells a strange thing that Ibn Abbas stated this thing only in secret. Again the author of Ruh-ul-Maani cites these words of Hasan and Qatadah: By Rooh is meant Jibril: the question was about the nature of his coming down and inspiring the heart of the Prophet (peace be upon

him) with Revelation.

86. And if We willed, We could surely take away that which We have revealed to you, then you would not find for you in that respect a defender against Us.

وَلَيْنَ شَيْئًا لَّنْذَهَبَنَّ بِالَّذِي
أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ
بِهِ عَلَيْنَا وَكِيلاً ﴿٨٦﴾

87. Except as a mercy from your Lord. Indeed, His kindness upon you is ever great. ^{*104}

إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ إِنَّ
فَضْلَهُ كَانَ عَلَيْكَ كَبِيرًا ﴿٨٧﴾

***104** Though these words are apparently addressed by the Prophet (peace be upon him), they are in fact meant for the disbelievers who considered the Quran to be either the invention of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself or of some other man, who secretly taught him the Quran. They are being told that this is the Word of Allah, as if to say: Our Prophet has not fabricated the Quran but We have bestowed this on him, and if We take it back from him, the Prophet has no power to invent such a thing nor has any other man the power to help the Prophet to present such a miraculous Book.

88. Say: "Surely, if men and jinn were to get together in order to produce the like of this Quran, they will not (be

قُلْ لَّيْنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ
وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ
هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ

able to) produce the like of it, even if some of them were helpers to others.”*105

وَلَوْ كَانَتْ
بَعْضُهُمْ
لِبَعْضٍ
ظَهِيْرًا



*105 This challenge occurs at several other places in the Quran: (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 23; Surah Yunus, Ayats 38-39; Surah Al-Momin, Ayats 13-14; Surah At-Toor, Ayats 33-34). At all these places, this has been cited as an answer to the charge of the disbelievers that Muhammad (peace be upon him) has himself invented the Quran but is presenting it as Allah's Word. Besides this, the same has also been refuted in Surah Yunus, Ayat 16: "Say also, had not Allah willed that I should recite the Quran to you, I could not have recited it to you, nor could I have been able to give you any information about it: already have I lived a lifetime among you before its revelation. Do you not use your common sense?"

Now let us turn to the three arguments contained in these verses as a proof that the Quran is the Word of Allah.

(1) The Quran is such a miracle in regard to its language, style, arguments, themes, topics, teachings and prophecies that it is beyond any human power to produce the like of it, as if to say, "You say that a man has invented this but We challenge that even the whole of mankind combined cannot produce a Book like this: nay, even if the jinns, whom the mushriks worship as deities and whom this Book openly attacks, should come to the help of the disbelievers, they cannot produce a Book like this to refute this challenge.

(2) As regards to the charge that Muhammad (peace be

upon him) has himself invented this Book, the Quran refutes their claim, as if to say” Muhammad is one of you and not a foreigner. He has lived among you for forty years before the revelation of the Quran. Did you ever hear words like those of the Quran from him even a day before his claim of Prophethood, or did you ever hear him discussing themes and problems contained in the Quran? If you consider the matter from this point of view, it will become obvious to you that the sudden change which has come about in the language, ideas, information, style and the way of thinking of Muhammad, could not take place without divine guidance.

(3) Can you not see that after the recital of the Quran, he does not disappear but lives among you? You hear other things than the Quran from him. Do you not notice that the distinction between the two different styles of expression is so obvious that no man can successfully adopt the two styles at one and the same time. The distinction can also be noticed, even today, between the language of the Quran and that of the traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Anyone well versed in the Arabic language and literature notices the difference which is so marked that one can categorically say that these modes of expression cannot belong to one and the same person. (For further reference please also see E.N. 21 of Surah Yunus, Ayat 16).

89. And indeed, We have fully explained for mankind in this Quran of every (kind of) similitude, but most

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا
الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ فَأَبَى أَكْثَرُ

mankind refuse (anything) except disbelief.

النَّاسِ إِلَّا كُفُورًا ﴿٨٩﴾

90. And they say: “We shall never believe you until you cause to gush forth for us from the earth a spring.”

وَقَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبُوعًا

﴿٩٠﴾

91. “Or that there be for you a garden of date-palms and grapes, and cause to gush forth rivers in their midst, abundantly.”

أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَعِنَبٍ فَتُفَجِّرَ الْأَنْهَارَ خِلَالَهَا تَفْجِيرًا ﴿٩١﴾

92. “Or you cause the heaven to fall, as you have claimed, upon us in pieces, or you bring Allah and the angels before (us) face to face.”

أَوْ تُسْقِطَ السَّمَاءَ كَمَا زَعَمْتَ عَلَيْنَا كِسْفًا أَوْ تَأْتِي بِلَهِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ قَبِيلًا ﴿٩٢﴾

93. “Or that there come to be for you a house of gold, or you ascend up into heaven, and (even then) we will never believe in your ascension until you bring down to us a book that we can read.” Say (O Muhammad): “Glory be

أَوْ يَكُونَ لَكَ بَيْتٌ مِّنْ زُخْرٍ أَوْ تَرْقَىٰ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لِرُقِيِّكَ حَتَّىٰ تُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا كِتَابًا نَّقْرُؤُهُ ۗ قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّي هَلْ

to my Lord. Am I (anything)
but a man, (sent as) a
Messenger.”*106

كُنْتُ إِلَّا بَشَرًا رَّسُولًا
۱۳

*106 This is the second answer to the demand of the disbelievers for a miracle. The first answer is contained in Ayat 59. The eloquence of this concise answer is above praise: You demand from me that I should cause a spring to gush forth, or in the twinkling of an eye should bring into being a garden in full bloom with canals flowing in it: or I should cause the heaven to fall into pieces on those of you who are rejecting the message: or I should cause to build a furnished palace of gold: or I should call Allah and the angels to stand before you and testify to this effect: We Ourselves have sent down Muhammad as Our Messenger: or I should go up to the sky in your presence and bring down, addressed to you, the letter of authority of my appointment duly signed by Allah so that you may touch it with your hands and read it with your own eyes. The concise answer to these big demands was this: My Lord be glorified! Have I ever claimed to be anything more than a human Messenger? It may be expanded like this: O people, have I claimed to be God that you are demanding such things from me? Did I ever say that I am all powerful and am ruling over the earth and the Heavens? From the very first day my claim has been that I am a human being who is bringing the Message from God. Therefore, if you want to judge the authenticity of my claim, you may judge it from my message. If you are convinced that it is based on the truth and is absolutely rational, then you should believe in

it without making foolish demands. On the other hand, if you find any defect in it, you may reject it. If you want to test whether my claim is based on truth, you should judge it by the standard of my conduct and morals as a human being and my mission. Is it not a folly that, instead of this, you are demanding from me to cleave the earth and cause the sky to fall? Is there any connection whatsoever of Prophethood with things like that.

94. And nothing prevented mankind from believing when the guidance came to them except that they said: “Has Allah sent a human being as messenger.”*107

وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ
جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا
أَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ بَشَرًا رَسُولًا

*107 It implies that this misunderstanding has always been common among the ignorant people of every age that a human being could not be a Messenger of Allah: They rejected a Messenger just because he was a human being and took his meals and had wife and children like themselves. In contrast to this, after the passage of the time the credulous followers of a Messenger began to claim that he was not a human being at all because he was a Messenger. That is why some people made their Messenger their God, others the son of God and still others the incarnation of God. In short, the ignorant people had never been able to understand that a human being could be a Messenger of Allah.

95. Say: “If there were in the earth angels

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَتْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

walking in peace, We would surely have sent down to them from the heavens an angel as messenger.”*108

مَلَايِكَةً يَمْشُونَ مُطْمَئِنِّينَ
لَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
مَلَكًا رَسُولًا

*108 This is to say that Messenger does not merely convey the message but is sent to reform human life in accordance with it. He has to apply the principles of the message to the circumstances of human beings and has himself to demonstrate practically those principles. Moreover, he has to remove the misunderstandings of those people who try to listen to and understand his message. Besides this, he has to organize and train the believers to create a society based on the teachings of his message. He has to struggle against those who reject and oppose his message in order to subdue those powers that are bent upon corruption, and bring about that reformation for which Allah has sent His Messenger. As all these things have to be done in a society of human beings only a human Messenger can perform the mission. If an angel had been sent as a Messenger, the most he could have done was to convey the message, for he could not live among human beings and share their life and problems in order to reform them. It is thus clear that a human Messenger only could be suitable for this purpose.

96. Say: “Sufficient is Allah as a witness between me and you. Indeed He is, of His servants, the

قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي
وَبَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ

Knower, the Seer.”*109

خَيْرًا بَصِيرًا

*109 That is, Allah is fully aware of all my efforts which I am sending in order to reform you, and He is fully aware of the efforts you are making against my mission. His witness is sufficient because He will pass the final judgment.

97. And he whom Allah guides, so he is rightly guided. And he whom He sends astray, you will never then find for them protectors other than Him.*110 And We shall assemble them on the Day of Resurrection on their faces, blind, and dumb, and deaf.*111 Their refuge is Hell. Whenever it abates, We shall increase them in blazing fire.

وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَنْ
يُضِلِّ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ
دُونِهِ ۗ وَنَحْشُرُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ عُمِيَٰ وَكُمَا
وَصُمًّا ۗ مَا أُنْفِئُهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ كَلَّمَا
خَبَّتْ زِدْنَاهُمْ سَعِيرًا

*110 In this verse, the Quran has enunciated a divine principle. Allah guides to the right way only that person who intends to follow His guidance, and lets go astray that person who intends to go astray. Thereafter none is able to bring back to the right way the one against whom Allah has closed the door of guidance because of his own persistent deviation and obduracy. It is obvious that if a man turns his back against the truth and rests content with falsehoods, there is no power in the world to make him turn away from falsehood and come to the truth.

This is because after this depravity Allah provides for that

wicked person such means as increase his aversion to truth and his love for falsehood.

*111 On the Day of Resurrection, they will be raised up blind, dumb and deaf because they behaved like such people in this world and would not see the truth nor listen to the truth nor speak the truth.

98. That is their recompense because they disbelieved in Our verses and said: "Is it, when we are bones and fragments, shall we be raised up as a new creation."

ذَٰلِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا
بِآيَاتِنَا وَقَالُوا أَإِذَا كُنَّا عِظْمًا
وَرُفَاتًا أَإِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ خَلْقًا
جَدِيدًا

99. Have they not seen that Allah, who created the heavens and the earth has Power over that He can create the like of them. And He has decreed for them an appointed term, whereof there is no doubt. But wrong doers refuse except disbelief.

﴿ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ قَادِرٌ عَلَىٰ
أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَهُمْ
أَجَلًا لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ فَأَبَى
الظَّالِمُونَ إِلَّا كُفُورًا ﴾

100. Say: "If you owned the treasures of the mercy of my Lord, behold, you would surely hold them back for fear of spending." And man

قُلْ لَوْ أَنْتُمْ تَمْلِكُونَ خَزَائِنَ
رَحْمَةِ رَبِّي إِذًا لَأَمْسَكْتُمْ خَشْيَةَ
الْإِنْفَاقِ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ قَتُورًا

is ever grudging.*112



*112 This verse also suggests the same thing that has already been mentioned in Ayat 55. This hints at the real psychological reason why the disbelievers of Makkah were not inclined to accept Muhammad (peace be upon him), their contemporary, as a Prophet. For thus they would have to acknowledge his superiority and one does not easily acknowledge the superiority of his contemporary. This verse may be expanded like this: Those people who are so narrow minded that they are unwilling even to acknowledge the real superiority of another, cannot be expected to be generous in spending on others, if they possessed the keys of the treasures of Allah's blessings.

101. And indeed, We gave to Moses nine clear signs.*113 Ask then the Children of Israel, when he came to them, then Pharaoh said to him: "Indeed, I consider you, O Moses, one bewitched."*114

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ تِسْعَ ءَايَاتٍ
بَيِّنَاتٍ فَسَأَلَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِذْ
جَاءَهُمْ فَقَالَ لَهُ فِرْعَوْنُ إِنِّي
لَأَظُنُّكَ يَمُوسَىٰ مَسْحُورًا



*113 It should be noted that this is the third answer to the demand of the disbelievers of Makkah for signs. They said: We will not believe in you until you do this and do that before our eyes. In answer to this demand, they are being warned: Nine clear signs, like the ones you are demanding,

were shown one after the other to Pharaoh before you and you also know well what he said, simply because he did not want to believe in Moses (peace be upon him); you also know that when he rejected the Prophet, even after seeing the signs, We drowned him.

The nine signs mentioned here have also been mentioned in Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 133. These were:

- (1) The staff which turned into a monster snake.
- (2) Moses' bright hand which shone like the sun.
- (3) The public defeat of the sorcery of the magicians.
- (4) Universal famine.
- (5) Storm.
- (6) Locusts.
- (7) Lice.
- (8) Frogs.
- (9) Rain of blood.

***114** This has been particularly mentioned here because the mushriks of Makkah attributed the same epithet to the Prophet (peace be upon him) as contained in Ayat 47. These wrong-doers say to each other: The man, you are following, is a bewitched person. Here they are being warned that they were following the attitude of Pharaoh, who gave the same epithet to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him).

In this connection, we want to make a brief reference to an objection which has been raised by the modernists against a tradition according to which the Prophet (peace be upon him) once came under the influence of sorcery. They say that this tradition confirms that the epithet "bewitched"

applied to the Prophet by the Quraish was correct, whereas the Quran refutes this as false. They forget that the same argument could be applied to the case of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) whom Pharaoh accused of being bewitched. For the Quran says, in Surah Taaha, Ayats 66-67: When the magicians threw down their cords and rods (instruments of their sorcery), it seemed to Moses as if they were running, as a result of which Moses (peace be upon him) conceived in his mind a sort of fear. If the words of the tradition were to be considered against the Quran, do not these words of the Quran contradict its own words that the charge of Moses (peace be upon him) being bewitched was false? Do these modernists consider this verse to confirm Pharaoh's charge?

As a matter of fact, these objectors do not know the sense in which the disbelievers of Makkah and Pharaoh called the Prophet and Prophet Moses (peace be upon them) bewitched. What they meant was that some enemy had so bewitched them that they had lost their senses and so in their insanity claimed to be prophets and delivered a curious message. The Quran refutes this charge as false. As regards the temporary influence of magic on same person or a part of him has not been denied, for the influence of magic is like the effect produced on a person who is hit with a stone. The fact that some prophet was temporarily influenced by magic, does not in any way affect his prophethood adversely. Just as poison produced its effect on a prophet, or a prophet was wounded, so a prophet could also temporarily come under the influence of magic.

Such a temporary magic could not cause any defect in his prophethood. God forbid, had magic produced any adverse effect on his reasoning and thinking faculties, one might have been skeptical about the authenticity of the message. And when Pharaoh and the disbelievers of Makkah said that Prophet Moses and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them) were bewitched, they meant that they had lost their senses under the influence of magic. The Quran refutes this charge brought against the Prophets.

102. He (Moses) said: “Certainly, you know that no one has sent down these (signs) except the Lord of the heavens and the earth as evidence.^{*115} And indeed I think of you, O Pharaoh, as doomed.”^{*116}

قَالَ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا أَنْزَلَ هَؤُلَاءِ
إِلَّا رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
بَصَائِرَ وَإِنِّي لَأُظُنُّكَ
يَفْرَعُونَ مُتَّبِعًا



***115** Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) could say these words categorically that the signs were from the Lord of the Universe because the calamities which visited Egypt could not be brought about by magic or by any human device. For it is not possible for any human power to bring about frogs over vast areas or to cause all granaries in the land to be eaten up by weevils. Then it should also be kept in view that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) warned beforehand of an impending sign, warning Pharaoh to give up his obduracy, and the calamity did come exactly as he had predicted. In these circumstances only a mad or obdurate person could say that those calamities were sent

by any other than the Lord of the Heavens and the earth.

***116** That is, I am not a bewitched man but you are indeed a doomed person. As you have been persistent in your disbelief even after seeing such obvious divine signs, you are surely doomed to destruction.

103. So he intended to scare them away from the land,^{*117} then We drowned him and those with him, all together.

فَأَرَادَ أَنْ يَسْتَفِزَّهُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ
فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ جَمِيعًا



***117** This part of the story of Pharaoh has been related here because it applied exactly to the mushriks of Makkah who were doing their best to uproot the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the believers from the land of Arabia. This story, so to say, tells them: Pharaoh resolved to uproot Moses (peace be upon him) and the Israelites but was himself completely annihilated along with his followers. But Moses (peace be upon him) and his followers settled down in the land. Likewise, if you persist on the same way, you will surely meet with the same end.

104. And We said, after him, to the Children of Israel: “Dwell in the land, then when the promise of the Hereafter comes to pass, We shall bring you forth as one gathering.

وَقُلْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ
أَسْكُنُوا الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ
الْآخِرَةِ جِئْنَا بِكُمْ لَفِيفًا



105. And with truth have We sent it (Quran) down, and

وَبِالْحَقِّ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ وَبِالْحَقِّ نَزَلَ وَمَا

with truth has it descended.
And We have not sent you
but a bearer of good tidings
and a warner.*118

أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا



*118 That is, it is not your responsibility to cause, in a supernatural manner, springs to gush forth or gardens to grow or pieces of the sky to fall down in order to convince those people who do not judge the Quran by its teachings nor decide between the truth and falsehood on merit. As the Quran has been sent down with truth, you should present it before the people and tell them plainly that the one, who believes, does so for his own good and the one who rejects it, does it at his own peril.

106. And (it is) a Quran that
We have divided (into parts),
that you may recite it to
mankind at intervals. And
We have sent it down as a
successive revelation.*119

وَقُرْءَانًا فَرَقْنَاهُ لِتَقْرَأَهُ عَلَى
النَّاسِ عَلَى مَكْثٍ وَنَزَّلْنَاهُ
تَنْزِيلًا



*119 This is an answer to this objection: Why has not Allah sent down His message as a whole? Why is He sending it piecemeal? Has Allah any need to think deliberately what to send down? As the answer to this objection has been given in Surah An-Nahal, Ayats 101-102 and in the Explanatory Notes 104-106 added to them.

107. Say: "Believe in it, or
do not believe." Indeed,
those who were given
knowledge before it,*120 when

قُلْ ءَامِنُوا بِهِمْ أَوْ لَا تُوْمِنُوا إِنَّ
الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ إِذَا

it is recited to them, they fall down upon their faces in prostration.

يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ يَحْرُونَ لِلأَذْقَانِ
سُجْدًا ﴿١٠٧﴾

***120** This refers to those people of the Book who were well versed in the Scriptures and could judge them from their themes and wording.

108. And they say: “Glory be to our Lord. Surely, the promise of our Lord must be fulfilled.”

وَيَقُولُونَ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنْ كَانَ
وَعْدُ رَبِّنَا لَمَفْعُولًا ﴿١٠٨﴾

109. And they fall down upon their faces, weeping, and it increases^{*121} them in humility.^{*122} **AsSajda**

وَيَحْرُونَ لِلأَذْقَانِ يَبْكُونَ
وَيَزِيدُهُمْ خُشُوعًا ﴿١٠٩﴾

***121** That is, when they listen to the Quran, they at once recognize that its bearer is the promised Prophet mentioned in the Books of the former Prophets.

***122** This attitude of the righteous people of the Book has been mentioned at several places in the Quran, e.g., Surah Aal-Imran, Ayats 113-114, 199, Surah Al-Maidah, Ayats: 83-84.

110. Say: “Call upon Allah, or call upon the Beneficent. By whichever (name) you call upon. To Him belong the best names.^{*123} And (O Muhammad), do not recite (too) loudly in your prayer,

قُلْ أَدْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ أَدْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ
أَيًّا مَّا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الأَسْمَاءُ
الْحُسْنَىٰ وَلَا تَجْهَرُ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا
تُخَافُ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ

and be not (too) quiet in it,
but seek between it a
way.”*124



*123 This is the answer to another objection of the disbelievers. They said: We have heard the name Allah for the Creator but where from have you brought the name Rahman? This was because the name "Rahman" was not used for Allah and they did not like it.

*124 This instruction was given at Makkah. Ibn Abbas relates that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) or his companions offered their prayers, they recited the Quran in a loud voice. At this the disbelievers would raise a hue and cry and often called them names. Therefore, they were enjoined that they should neither say their prayers in such a loud voice as might incite the disbelievers nor should they say it in such a low voice that their own companions might not hear it. This instruction was discontinued under the changed conditions at Al-Madinah. However, if the Muslims have to face the same conditions, at any place or at any time, they should observe the same instruction.

111. And say: "Praise be to Allah, who has not taken to Himself a son, and He has no partner in the sovereignty, and He has no (need of a) protector out of weakness.*125
And magnify Him with all magnificence."

وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ
وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي
الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وِليٌّ مِّنَ
الَّذِينَ كَبَرُوا تَكْبِيرًا



*125 A subtle sarcasm is implied in the sentence. The

mushriks believed that Allah had appointed assistants and deputies for the administration of His kingdom. Obviously this meant that Allah was helpless and powerless to carry out the administration of His kingdom. Therefore, He needed supporters to help Him in the work of His Godhead. This sentence negates their false creeds, saying: He does not stand in need of any gods and saints in order to delegate to them the different departments of His Godhead or make them governors in different parts of His kingdom.





Al-Kahf

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah takes its name from Ayat 9 in which the word *Al-Kahf* means “The Cave” occurs.

Period of Revelation

This is the first of those Surahs which were revealed in the third stage of Prophethood at Makkah. We have already divided the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) at Makkah into four stages in the introduction to Chapter 6. According to that division the third stage lasted from the fifth to the tenth year of Prophethood. What distinguishes this stage from the second and the fourth stages is this. During the second stage, the Quraish mainly resorted to ridiculing, scoffing, threatening, tempting, raising objections and making false propaganda against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers in order to suppress the Islamic movement. But during the third stage they employed the weapons of persecution, man-handling and economic pressure for the same purpose. So much so that a large number of the Muslims had to emigrate from Arabia to Habash, and those who remained behind were besieged in Shiib Abi Talib along with the Prophet (peace

be upon him) and his family. To add to their misery, a complete social and economic boycott was applied against them. The only redeeming feature was that there were two personalities, Abu Talib and Khadijah, whose personal influence had been conducive to the support of two great families of the Quraish. However, when in the tenth year of Prophethood these two persons died, the fourth stage began with such severe persecutions that forced the Prophet (peace be upon him) and all his companions to emigrate from Makkah.

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

Subject and Topics

This Surah was sent down in answer to the three questions which the mushriks of Makkah, in consultation with the people of the Book, had put to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in order to test him. These were:

- (1) Who were the sleepers of the cave.
- (2) What is the real story of Khidr.
- (3) What do you know about Zul-Qarnain.

As these three questions and the stories involved concerned the history of the Christians and the Jews, and were unknown in Hijaz, a choice of these was made to test

whether the Prophet (peace be upon him) possessed any source of the knowledge of the hidden and unseen things. Allah, however, not only gave a complete answer to their questions but also employed the three stories to the disadvantage of the opponents of Islam in the conflict that was going on at that time at Makkah between Islam and unbelief.

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

2. The story of the sleepers of the cave has also been used to warn the chiefs of Makkah who were persecuting the small newly formed Muslim community. At the same time, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been instructed that he should in no case make a compromise with their persecutors nor should he consider them to be more

important than his poor followers. On the other hand, those chiefs have been admonished that they should not be arrogant by the pleasure of transitory life they were then enjoying but should seek after those excellences which are permanent and eternal.

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

4. The same is true of the story of Zul-Qarnain for it also admonishes the questioners, as if to say: O you chiefs of Makkah, you should learn a lesson from Zul-Qarnain. Though he was a great ruler, a great conqueror and the owner of great resources, yet he always surrendered to his Creator, whereas you are rebelling against Him even though you are insignificant chieftains in comparison with him. Besides this, though Zul-Qarnain built one of the strongest walls for protection, yet his real trust was in Allah

and not in the wall. He believed that the wall could protect a people against their enemies as long as it was the will of Allah and that there would be crack and holes in it when it would be His will. Whereas, you who possess only insignificant fortified abodes and dwellings in comparison with him, you consider yourselves to be permanently safe and secure against all sorts of calamities. The Quran turned the tables on the questioners who had tried to expose the Prophet (peace be upon him).

In the end of the Surah the same things have been reiterated that were stated at its beginning. Tauhid and the Hereafter are absolutely true and real and, for your own good, you should accept these doctrines and mend your ways in accordance with them and live in this world with this conviction that you are accountable to Allah. Otherwise, you shall ruin your life and all your doings shall be set at naught.

1. All the praises be to Allah, who has sent down upon His slave the Book, and has not placed therein any deviance.*1

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيَّ
عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ
عِوَجًا

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

2. (He has made it) straight in order that He may warn (the disbelievers) of a severe punishment from Him, and that He may give good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that theirs will be a fair reward.

قِيمًا لِيُنذِرَ بَأْسًا شَدِيدًا مِّن لَّدُنْهُ وَيُبَشِّرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا ﴿٢﴾

3. They shall remain therein forever.

مَكِينٍ فِيهِ أَبَدًا ﴿٣﴾

4. And He may warn those who say: “Allah has taken a son.”*2

وَيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا ﴿٤﴾

*2 “Those who say” includes the Christians, the Jews and the mushrik Arabs who assigned offspring to Allah.

5. They do not have any knowledge*3 of it, nor (had) their forefathers. Dreadful is the word that comes out of their mouths. They do not speak except a lie.

مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا لِآبَائِهِمْ كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ إِنْ يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا كَذِبًا ﴿٥﴾

*3 “Dreadful is the word” That one is the son of God, or Allah has adopted that one as a son. This has been declared to be dreadful because it was not based on any knowledge that Allah has a son or has adopted a son. They had merely exaggerated their love for someone and invented such a

relationship. And they do not realize that it is a dreadful blasphemy, impudence and fabrication that they are uttering in regards to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

6. Then perhaps you (Muhammad) would torment yourself to death, following after them, in grief, if they do not believe in this message.*4

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَدِخُعُ نَفْسِكَ عَلَى
ءَاثَرِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا
الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا

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

into it. (Bukhari, Muslim).

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

7. Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth an adornment for it, that We may test them, (as to) which of them are best in deeds.

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً
لَهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا



8. And indeed, We shall make that which is upon it (earth) a barren dry soil.^{*5}

وَإِنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيدًا



*5 Ayat 6 was addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), but Ayats 7-8 have been directed to the disbelievers indirectly, as if to say: You must understand it clearly that all the things that you see in the world and which allure you, are a transitory adornment which has been arranged merely to test you, but it is a pity that you have been involved in the misunderstanding that all these things have been created to cater for your pleasure and enjoyment.

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

9. Or do you think that the companions of the cave^{*6} and the inscription^{*7} were a wonder among Our signs.^{*8}

أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ
الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ
آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا



*6 The Arabic word *Kahf* literally means a vast cave.

*7 There is a difference of opinion about the meaning of *arraqim*. Some companions and their followers opined that it was the name of that habitation where this event took place and that it was situated somewhere between Aylah and Palestine. There are other commentators who take it to mean the inscription that had been set up at the cave as a memorial to the sleepers of the cave. Abul Kalam Azad, in his commentary, *Tarjmanul-Quran*, has preferred the first meaning and opined that it is the same place which has been called *Rekem* in the Bible (Joshua, 18: 27). Then he

identifies it with the ancient historical city of Petra. But he has not considered the fact that Rekem, as mentioned in the Bible, belonged to the children of Benjamin and according to the Book of Joshua, the territory of this clan was situated to the west of river Jordan and the Dead Sea and that the ruins of Petra are situated to the south of Jordan. That is why the modern archaeologists do not believe that Petra and Rekem are one and the same place. (Please refer to Encyclopedia Britannica, 1946, Vol XVII, page 658). We are also of the opinion that by Arraqim is meant the inscription.

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

10. When the youths retreated to the cave and they said: “Our Lord, bestow on us mercy from Yourself, and facilitate for us from our affair right guidance.”

إِذْ أَوْىءَ الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ
فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ
رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا



11. So We cast (a cover of sleep) over their ears in the cave (for) a number of years.

فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَىٰ ءَاذَانِهِمْ فِي
الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا ﴿١١﴾

12. Then We raised them up that We might know which of the two factions would best calculate what (extent) of time they had tarried.

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِنَعْلَمَ أَيُّ الْحِزْبَيْنِ
أَحْصَىٰ لِمَا لَبِثُوا أَمَدًا ﴿١٢﴾

13. We narrate unto you (O Muhammad) their story with truth.*⁹ Indeed, they were youths who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance.*¹⁰

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ نَبَأَهُم بِالْحَقِّ
إِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ ءَامَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ
وَزِدَّانَهُمْ هُدًى ﴿١٣﴾

*⁹ The oldest evidence of this story is found in a homily written in Syriac by Jacob of Sarug, a Christian priest of Syria, who was born in A.D. 452, a few years after the death of the companions of the cave. The homily which describes the legend in great detail was composed by him in or about A.D. 474. On the one hand, this same Syriac version came into the hands of our early commentators, and Ibn Jarir Tabari cited it in his commentary with various authorities. And on the other hand, it reached Europe where its translations and abridged versions were published in Greek and Latin. The abridged story as told by Gibbon in Chapter 33 of his *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* under the heading, "The Seven Sleepers", so closely resembles the story told by our commentators

that both the versions seem to have been drawn from the same source. For instance, the name of the king, whose persecutions made the Seven Christian youths of Ephesus take refuge in the cave, was Emperor Decius according to Gibbon. He ruled the Roman Empire from A.D. 249 to 251 and whose reign is very notorious because of his persecution of the followers of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), while our commentators call him Decanus or Decaus, etc. The city, where this event happened was Aphesus or Aphesos according to our commentators, while according to Gibbon it was Ephesus, which was the biggest Roman city and seaport on the west coast of Asia Minor. The ruins of this city can still be seen 20 to 25 miles south of the modern Turkish city of Izmir. Again the name of the king, during whose reign the companions of the cave awoke, was Tezusius according to the Muslim commentators and Theodosius II according to Gibbon. He ruled over Rome from A.D. 408 to 450, after the Roman Empire had accepted Christianity.

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

When during the reign of the Emperor Decius, the followers of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) were being mercilessly persecuted, the seven Christian youths hid themselves in a cave and fell into a sleep. Then in the 38th

year of the reign of the Emperor Theodosius II (approximately in A.D. 445 or 446) they awoke when the entire Roman Empire had become Christian. Thus, they slept in the cave for nearly 196 years.

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

There are a few minor differences between the Quranic and Syriac versions, on the basis of which Gibbon has charged the Prophet (peace be upon him) with ignorance. However, the Syriac version, on the basis of whose authenticity he has committed this gross insolence, was even according to him written thirty to forty years after the event by a Syrian. He has not taken the trouble to consider the fact that verbal versions of events do change a bit during such a long time while they are communicated from one country to the other. Therefore it is wrong to take such a version of the story for granted and literally true and to charge the Quran with discrepancy for any main difference with it. Such an attitude is worthy only of those people who are so blinded by religious prejudices that they discard even the most ordinary demands of reason.

The city of Ephesus where the event of the sleepers of the cave took place, was built about 11th century B.C. and became a great center of idol worship, its chief deity being the moon goddess, Diana, whose temple was regarded as a wonder of the ancient world. Most of her devotees belonged

to Asia Minor and the Roman Empire also had accepted her as one of its deities.

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

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

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

Empire had embraced Christianity and the Ephesians had given up idolatry.

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

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

Then they sent Jean, a companion, to the city with a few silver coins to buy food, and warned him to be on his guard lest the people should recognize him, for they feared that if they were discovered the Ephesians would force them to bow before Diana. But when Jean came to the city he was astonished to see that the world had changed. The entire population had embraced Christianity, and there was nobody in the city to worship Diana. He came to a shop and wanted to buy a few loaves of bread. When he paid in a coin bearing the image of Emperor Decius, the shopkeeper could not believe his eyes and asked the stranger from where he had obtained that coin. When the young man said that it was his own, a dispute began between them and soon a crowd gathered around them, and the matter reached the

chief officer of the city. The officer himself was puzzled and wanted to know the whereabouts of the treasure house from where the young man had taken the coin, but the latter insisted that it belonged to him. The officer did not believe him because he thought that a young man like him could not possibly possess a centuries old coin which had not even been seen by the elders in the city. When Jean came to know that the Emperor Decius had died, he was pleasantly surprised. He told the crowd that he and his six companions had fled the city only the other day and taken refuge in a cave to escape Decius' persecution. The officer was greatly surprised and followed the young man to see the cave where his companions lay in hiding. And a great crowd followed behind them. When they came to the cave, it was fully established that the youths really belonged to the Emperor Decius' period. Consequently, Emperor Theodosius was informed and he also visited the cave to receive grace. Then the seven youths went back into the cave and lay down and breathed their last. Seeing this clear sign the people's belief in the life after death was restored, and a monument was ordered to be built over the cave by the Emperor.

The story of the sleepers of the cave as narrated above, corresponds so closely with that mentioned in the Quran that the seven youths can easily be regarded as Ashab-i-Kahf (the companions of the cave). Some people, however, have raised the objection that this story concerns a city of Asia Minor, and the Quran does not discuss or refer to any event that might have taken place outside Arabia, therefore

it would be against the Quranic style and spirit to label this Christian story as the story of Ashab-i-Kahf. In our opinion this objection is not correct. The Quran means to impress and warn the Arabs by relating stories concerning the various ancient tribes who had transgressed from the right path and with whom they were familiar, whether they lived and flourished inside Arabia or outside it. It is for this very reason that a mention has been made of the ancient history of Egypt in the Quran, whereas Egypt has never been a part of Arabia. The question is that when the history of Egypt can be mentioned in the Quran, why cannot Rome and the Roman history with which the Arabs were as familiar as with the Egyptian history? The Roman frontiers adjoined the northern Hijaz and the Arab caravans traded with the Romans almost throughout the year. Then there were a number of Arab tribes who were directly under Roman domination and the Roman Empire was in no way unknown to the Arabs, a fact which is fully borne out by Surah Ar-Room. Another thing which should be borne in mind is that the story of the sleepers of the cave has been related in the Quran in response to a query raised by the disbelievers of Makkah, who had been prompted by the Jews and Christians to question the Prophet (peace be upon him) on such matters as were wholly unknown to the Arabs in order to test his Prophethood.

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

falsehood.

14. And We gave strength to their hearts when they stood and said: “Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. Never shall we call upon any god other than Him. Certainly, we would then have uttered an enormity.”

وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا
فَقَالُوا رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ لَنْ نَدْعُوَ مِنْ دُونِهِ
إِلَهًا لَقَدْ قُلْنَا إِذَا شَطَطًا ﴿١٤﴾

15. “These our people, have taken gods other than Him. Why do they not bring for them a clear authority. So who does greater wrong than he who invents against Allah a lie.”

هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمًا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ
ءَالِهَةً لَوْلَا يَأْتُونَ عَلَيْهِم
بِسُلْطَانٍ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِمْ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ
أَفْتَرَىٰ عَلَىٰ اللَّهِ كَذِبًا ﴿١٥﴾

16. “And when you have withdrawn from them, and that which they worship except Allah, then retreat to the cave,^{*11} your Lord will spread out for you of His mercy, and will make easy for you of your affair.”

وَإِذِ اعْتَرَلْتُمُوهُمْ وَمَا
يَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَأَوْرَأْنَا إِلَىٰ
الْكَهْفِ يَنْشُرْ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ
رَحْمَتِهِ وَيُهَيِّئْ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ
مَرْفَقًا ﴿١٦﴾

***11** When these God worshipping youths fled the habitations

to take refuge in the hills, the city of Ephesus was the principal center of idol worship and sorcery in Asia Minor. There was a great temple dedicated to the goddess Diana, which was well known in the whole world and attracted devotees from far places. The sorcerers, workers of magic and occult arts, soothsayers and amulet writers of Ephesus were well known and their black business had spread throughout Syria and Palestine, even as far as Egypt. The Jews also had a big share in it, who attributed this art to Prophet Solomon. (Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature under Ephesus). The predicament in which the righteous people living in an environment of idolatry and superstition were involved can well be imagined from the remark of the companions of the cave that occurs in Ayat 20: If they succeed in over powering us, they will surely stone us to death or force us back into their faith.

17. And^{*12} (if you were there) you would see the sun when it rose, moving away from their cave on the right, and when it set, passing away from them on the left, while they were (laying) in the midst of it.^{*13} That was from the signs of Allah. He whom Allah guides, so he is (rightly) guided. And he whom He sends astray, then for him you will never find

وَتَرَى الشَّمْسَ إِذَا طَلَعَتْ
تَزَوَّرُ عَنْ كَهْفِهِمْ ذَاتَ
الْيَمِينِ وَإِذَا غَرَبَتْ تَقَرَّبُ مِنْهُمْ
ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَهُمْ فِي فَجْوَةٍ
مِنْهُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مَنْ
يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَنْ
يُضِلِّ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُرْشِدًا

a guiding friend.



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

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

18. And you would have thought them awake while they were asleep. And We turned them to the right and to the left.^{*14} And their dog stretched out his forelegs at the entrance. If you had looked at them, you would have turned back from them in flight, and would certainly have been filled with awe of them.^{*15}

وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ
وَنُقَلِّبُهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ
الشِّمَالِ ۖ وَكَلَبُهُمْ بِسِطْرٍ
ذِرَاعِيهِ بِالْوَصِيدِ لَوِ اطَّلَعْتَ
عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا
وَلَمُلِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُعبًا



***14** That is, if someone could have looked at the seven persons from outside and seen them turning from one side to the other at intervals, he would have thought that they were not asleep but were relaxing themselves.

***15** Allah had so arranged their refuge that none dared go inside the cave and know about them for it was pitch dark in the cave and the dog was keeping watch at the entrance.

If someone ever looked into the cave and saw the sleepers, he took them for some robbers and at once turned on his heels. This was the reason why their refuge remained a secret to the outer world for such a long period.

19. And in like manner, We awakened them^{*16} that they might question one another. A speaker from among them said: “How long have you stayed.” They said: “We have stayed a day or some part of a day. (Others) said: “Your Lord best knows how long you have stayed. So send one of you with this your silver coin to the city, then let him see what food is purest there and bring you a provision from it. And let him be careful, and let no one know of you.”

وَكَذَلِكَ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِيَتَسَاءَلُوا
بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ كَمْ
لَبِثْتُمْ قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ
يَوْمٍ ۗ قَالُوا رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا
لَبِثْتُمْ فَابْعَثُوا أَحَدَكُمْ
بِوَرِقِكُمْ هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ
فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَيُّهَا أَزْكَى طَعَامًا
فَلْيَأْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِّنْهُ وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ
وَلَا يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ أَحَدًا

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

20. Indeed, if they come to know of you, they will stone you or they will turn you back to their religion,

إِنَّهُمْ إِن يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ
يَرْجُمُوكُمْ أَوْ يُعِيدُوكُمْ فِي

and you will never then be successful, ever.

مِلَّتِهِمْ وَلَنْ تُفْلِحُوا إِذَا أَبَدًا ﴿٢٠﴾

21. And similarly, We made their case known to them (the people)^{*17} that they might know that the promise of Allah is true. And that, the Hour, there is no doubt about it.^{*18} When they disputed among themselves of their affair, they said: “Build over them a building. Their Lord knows best about them.”^{*19}

وَكَذَلِكَ أَعْرَضْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا إِذْ يَتَنَزَّعُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ فَقَالُوا ابْنُوا عَلَيْهِم بُنْيَانًا رَبُّهُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ غَلَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِم مَّسْجِدًا ﴿٢١﴾

Those who prevailed in their matter^{*20} said, “We surely shall make over them a place of worship.”^{*21}

***17** The secret of their sleep was revealed when one of them went to Ephesus to buy food for them and offered a coin of the period of Emperor Decius. As it was a changed world, he naturally attracted attention for he was wearing a costume of 300 year old fashion and spoke a language different from that in vogue. This was because during those two centuries the language, culture, dress etc. had undergone a marked change. So the shopkeeper looked askance at him and, according to a Syriac tradition, he suspected that he had dug up some ancient treasure. Accordingly, he gathered some people of his neighborhood and they took him before the ruler. On questioning, it was

discovered that he was one of those followers of Christ, who had fled the city 300 years ago to save their faith. As most of the population had embraced Christianity, the news immediately spread throughout the city and a big crowd of the people along with the Christian Roman Ruler, arrived at the cave. It was then that the sleepers of the cave came to know that they had slept for about three hundred years. So after making salutations to their Christian brothers they lay down and their souls left their bodies.

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

that time that the sleepers of the cave were raised up and furnished an absolute proof of the life after death and turned the scales in favor of the believers in this dispute.

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

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

were the people who were the upholders of shirk and who decided that a mausoleum should be built over the cave of the sleepers to make it a place of worship.

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

One fails to understand how anyone can deduce from this verse an argument for the legality of building mosques over the tombs of the righteous people, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) has categorically prohibited this.

(1) Allah has cursed those women who visit tombs and those people who build mosques over them and burn lights over them (Ahmad, Tirmizi, Abu Dawud, Nasai, Ibn Majah).

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

(3) Allah has cursed the Jews and the Christians, for they made the tombs of their Prophets the places of their worship. (Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai).

(4) The behavior of those people was strange: if a righteous person from among them, died they would build a mosque

over his grave and draw his pictures. They will be treated as worst criminals on the Day on Resurrection. (Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai).

Thus, it is clear from the above sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that building of the places of worship over the tombs is utterly unlawful. The Quran has merely stated as a historical fact the sinful act of the Christian priests and the Roman rulers and has not sanctioned such a thing. Therefore no God fearing person can turn this into an argument for building mosques over the tombs.

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

22. They will say: “(They were) three, their dog the fourth of them.” And (others) will say: “Five, their dog the sixth of them.” Guessing at the unseen. And (others) will say: “Seven, and their dog the eighth of them.”*²² Say (O Muhammad): “My Lord is best aware of their number. None knows them but a few.” So debate not about them except with the clear proof. And do not inquire, about

سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةً رَّابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ
وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةً سَادِسُهُمْ
كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ
وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةً وَثَامِنُهُمْ
كَلْبُهُمْ قُل رَّبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعَدَّتِهِمْ
مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ فَلَا تُمَارِ
فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِرَاءً ظَهْرًا وَلَا

them, anyone of these.*²³

تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا

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

***23** This is meant to impress that the real thing in this story is not the number of the sleepers but the lessons it teaches.

(1) A true believer should not on any account turn away from the truth and bow before falsehood.

(2) A believer should not merely rely on the material means but on Allah. He should trust in God and follow the right way, even though the outward adverse circumstances might appear to be unfavorable.

(3) It is wrong to suppose that Allah is bound by any so called law of nature, for He is able to do anything He wills even though that might seem to be against some common experience. He has the power to change any so called law of nature, whenever and wherever He wills and bring about any extraordinary supernatural thing. So much so that He can raise up anyone who might have been asleep for two hundred years, as if he had slept only for a few hours, without letting any change take place in his appearance,

dress, health, indeed in anything, during the passage of time.

(4) This teaches us that Allah has the power to bring to life all the generations past, present and future all together as asserted by the Prophets and divine Scriptures.

(5) It teaches us that ignorant people have always been perverting the signs of Allah which are sent for the right guidance of the people. That is how the miracle of the sleepers of the cave, which had been shown as a proof of the Hereafter, had been turned into a means of shirk, as if they were some saints who had been sent only for this purpose.

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

23. And do not say of anything: "I shall surely do that tomorrow."

وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَيْءٍ إِنِّي فَاعِلٌ
ذَلِكَ غَدًا



24. Except if Allah wills. And remember your Lord when you forget, and say: "It may be that my Lord will guide me^{*24} unto a nearer way of truth than this."

إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَادُّرُّ رَبِّكَ
إِذَا نَسِيتَ وَقُلْ عَسَى أَنْ
يَهْدِيَنِّي رَبِّي لِأَقْرَبَ مِنْ هَذَا
رَشْدًا



*24 This is a parenthetical clause which has been inserted here because of its relevancy to the preceding verse, in which it was asserted that the correct number of the sleepers of the cave is known only to Allah and a research into it is a useless task. Therefore one should refrain from investigating into unimportant things, nor enter into discussions about them. This has led to the instruction contained in the parenthetical clause for the benefit of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the believers who have been told never to make a positive assertion like this: I will do this thing tomorrow, for you do not know whether you will be able to do that thing or not: you have neither the knowledge of the unknown nor have full powers to do what you like. If ever inadvertently you utter anything like this, you should at once remember your Lord and say, *InshaAllah*. Besides this you do not know whether there will be any good for you in the thing about which you say: I will do this. It is possible that you may do another thing better than that. Therefore you should trust in God and say: I hope that my Lord will guide me in this matter with that thing which is nearer to the right way for me.

25. And they stayed in their cave three hundred years and add nine. *25

وَلَبِثُوا فِي كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلَاثَ مِائَةٍ
سِنِينَ وَازْدَادُوا تِسْعًا

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

26. Say: “Allah knows best how long they stayed. With Him is (the knowledge of) the unseen of the heavens and the earth. How well Seeing is He, and how well Hearing. They do not have other than Him any protecting friend, and He does not share in His authority anyone.”

قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُوا لَهُ
غَيْبُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
أَبْصَرُ بِهِ وَأَسْمِعُ مَا لَهُمْ
دُونَهُ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا يُشْرِكُ فِي
حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا

27. And^{*26} recite that which has been revealed to you of the Book of your Lord. There is none who can change His words, and never will you find in other than Him a refuge.^{*27}

وَأَتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ
كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ لَا مُبَدَّلَ
لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ
مُلْتَحَدًا



*26 After relating the story of the sleepers of the cave, the Quran begins to review the condition of the Muslims of Makkah at the time of the revelation of the Surah.

*27 This does not mean at all that, God forbid, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was inclined to make any changes in the Quran to please the disbelievers of Makkah and was thinking of some formula of compromise with the chiefs of the Quraish which necessitated a warning that he was not authorized to do so. As a matter of tact, though this was apparently addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), it was really meant for the disbelievers that they should not entertain any hope whatsoever for anything like this, as if to say: You must understand it once and for all that Our Messenger is not authorized to make any changes in Our revelation, for he has to precisely convey it just as it is sent down to him. If you want to accept it, you will have to accept it in its entirety as it is being sent by the Lord of the Universe. And if you want to reject it, you may do so but you must understand it well that no modification, even in the least, will be made in it to please you. This was the answer to the repeated demand of the disbelievers: If you

do insist, O Muhammad (peace be upon him), that we should accept your message in its entirety, then make certain modifications in it to accommodate some creeds and customs of our forefathers, and we will accept your message. This is our offer for a compromise and this will save our people from division. This demand of the disbelievers has been cited in the Quran at several places and the same answer has been given, e.g. When Our clear revelations are recited to them, those who do not expect to meet Us, say: Bring another Quran in its stead or make some amendments in it. (Surah Younus, Ayat 15).

28. And keep yourself patient with those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His countenance. And let not your eyes overlook them, desiring adornments of the life of the world.*²⁸ And do not obey him*²⁹ whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, and who follows his own desire and whose affair has been abandoned.*³⁰

وَأَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ
يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ
وَالْعِشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا
تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تَطِعْ مَنْ
أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ
هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا



***28** Though these words have also been addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), they are really meant for the chiefs of the Quraish. According to a tradition related by

Ibn Abbas, the chiefs of the Quraish would say to the Prophet (peace be upon him) that they considered it below their dignity to sit with such people as Bilal, Suhaib, Ammar, Khabbab, Ibn-Masud and the like who generally remained in his company, and that if he should send them away, they would be willing to attend his meetings in order to learn about his message. At this Allah revealed this verse: And keep yourself whole heartedly content with those who pray to their Lord morning and evening in order to win His approval and do not turn your attention away from them: Do you desire to discard these sincere but poor people so that the chiefs of the Quraish, the well to do people, should come and sit near you? This was meant to warn the chiefs of the Quraish to this effect: Your wealth, your pomp and show of which you are so proud has no value at all in the sight of Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him). Nay, those poor people are really more worthy in their sight, for they are sincere and always remember Allah. The same was the attitude of the chiefs of Prophet Noah's (peace be upon him) people, who said: And we also see that none but the meanest and the most shallow of our people have become your followers. Upon this, Noah (peace be upon him) replied: I am not going to drive away those who have believed in me, nor can I say about those whom you disdain that Allah has not bestowed any good on them. (Surah Al-Anbia Ayats 27, 29, 31).

***29** That is, do not yield to what he says, nor submit to him, nor fulfill his desire, nor follow his bidding.

***30** The original Arabic text may also mean: Who discards

the truth, breaks all moral limits and rushes on headlong. But in both cases it comes to this: The one, who is neglectful of Allah and becomes a slave of his lust, inevitably transgresses all limits and becomes a victim of immoderation. Therefore the one who will submit to him, will also follow the same way and wander about in deviation after him.

29. And say: “The truth is from your Lord. Then whoever wills, let him believe, and whoever wills, let him disbelieve.”*³¹ Indeed, We have prepared for the wrongdoers a fire, its walls will be surrounding them.*³²

And if they ask for water, they will be showered with water like molten lead*³³ which will burn the faces.

Dreadful is the drink and evil is the resting place.

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ شَاءَ
فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ إِنَّا
أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا أَحَاطَ
بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا وَإِنْ يَسْتَغِيثُوا
يُغَاثُوا بِمَاءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي
الْوُجُوهَ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ
وَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا



*³¹ This verse makes it quite plain that the story of the sleepers of the cave has been related to tell the opponents of Islam: This is the truth from your Lord. Now whosoever wills, he may accept it and whosoever wills, he may reject it. But people must understand that no compromise will be made in regard to the truth just as the sleepers of the cave did not make any compromise with regard to their creed. They did not make any compromise in regard to the

doctrine of Tauhid after they had believed in it and categorically declared: Our Lord is the One Who alone is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. After this declaration they did not in any way accede to the making of any compromise with their people, who had gone astray. But they firmly declared: We will not give Him up and pray to other deities, because it will be the most improper thing, if we did so. After making this declaration they left their people and deities and took refuge in the cave without taking any provisions with them. After this when they woke up, the only thing about which they showed any anxiety, was that their people might not succeed in forcing them back to their own faith. After relating these things, the Quran addresses the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the effect (though these words are really meant for the opponents of Islam): It is absolutely out of question whether any compromise can be made with mushriks and disbelievers. Present the truth intact to them whether they accept it or not. If they do not accept it, they themselves will meet with an evil end. As regards to those, who have accepted the truth, (whether they be youngsters or poor, indigent people or slaves or laborers) they are really those people who have a worth with Allah, and they alone will be honored. Therefore you should not discard them and prefer the chiefs and the rich people who may be neglectful of Allah and be slaves of their own desires, even though they might be possessors of worldly grandeur.

*32 The Arabic word *Suradiq* literally means sides of a tent but, as used in the case of Hell, it may mean its external

boundaries to which its flames and heat may reach. According to some commentators, it applies to the future tense “its walls will be surrounding them” so as to refer to the flames of Hell in the Hereafter. But we are of the opinion that its flames have already encircled, in this very world, these workers of iniquity, who have turned away from the truth and that they cannot escape them.

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

30. Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds, certainly We shall not cause to be lost the reward of those who did good in deeds.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ
مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا ﴿٣٠﴾

31. (For) such, theirs will be Gardens of Eden, beneath of them rivers will flow. They will be adorned therein with bracelets^{*34} of gold and they will wear green garments of fine silk and gold embroidery, reclining therein upon thrones.^{*35} Excellent is the reward, and good is the

أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي
مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ
أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَيَلْبَسُونَ ثِيَابًا
خُضْرًا مِّنْ سُندُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ
مُتَّكِنِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَآئِكِ نِعْمَ

resting place.

الثَّوَابُ وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا ﴿٣٦﴾

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

***35** The Arabic word *araaik* is plural of *arika* which is that kind of throne that is covered with an umbrella. This is also to show that in Paradise the believers will sit on thrones like the kings of this world.

32. And set forth to them the parable^{*36} of two men. We had provided, to one of them, two gardens of grapes, and We had surrounded both with date palms and had placed between them green crops.

﴿٣٢﴾ وَأَضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ
جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ
أَعْنَبٍ وَحَفَفْنَاهَا
بِنَخْلٍ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زُرْعًا

***36** In order to understand the significance of this parable we should keep in view Ayat 28 in which arrogant chiefs of Makkah were told that the poor companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) would not be discarded to please them.

33. Each of the gardens brought forth its produce, and did not fall short thereof in anything. And We caused to gush forth in the midst of them a river.

كَلَّمَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ آتَتْ أُكُلَهَا وَلَمْ
تَظْلِمِ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا ۚ وَفَجَّرْنَا
خِلْفَهُمَا نَهْرًا ﴿٣٣﴾

34. And he had fruit. So he said to his companion, while he was conversing with him: “I am more than you in wealth, and stronger in (number of) men.”

وَكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ فَقَالَ
لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَا أَكْثَرُ
مِنْكَ مَالًا وَأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا ﴿٣٤﴾

35. And he entered his garden^{*37} while he was unjust to himself. He said: “I do not think that (all) this will ever perish.”

وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ
لِنَفْسِهِ قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ أَنْ تَبِيدَ
هَذِهِ أَبَدًا ﴿٣٥﴾

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

36. “And I do not think that the Hour will ever come. And if I am brought back to my Lord, I surely shall find better than this as a return.”^{*38}

وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِنْ
رُدِدْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا
مِّنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا ﴿٣٦﴾

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

37. His companion said to him, while he was conversing

قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ

with him: “Have you disbelieved in Him who created you from dust, then from a sperm drop, then proportioned you (as) a man.”*39

أَكْفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ
تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ
رَجُلًا



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

38. But He is Allah, my Lord, and I do not associate anyone (as partner) with my Lord.

لَيْكِنَّا هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ
بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا



39. And why did you not say, when you entered your garden: “What Allah wills (comes to pass). There is no power except with Allah.*40 If you see me less than you in wealth and children.”

وَلَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ تَرْنًا أَنَا أَقَلُّ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا



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

40. “So it may be that my Lord will give me better than your garden, and He will send on it a bolt from heaven so it will become a barren dusty ground.”

فَعَسَىٰ رَبِّي أَن يُؤْتِيَنِي خَيْرًا مِّنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيدًا زَلَقًا



41. “Or the water of it (garden) will be drained deep (into the ground) so you would never be able to seek it.”

أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَأْوَهَا غُورًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُدْ طَلَبًا



42. And his fruit were encircled (with destruction). Then began he turning his hands over what he had spent on it, and which had (now) tumbled to pieces upon its

وَأُحِيطَ بِثَمَرِهِ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنفَقَ فِيهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا وَيَقُولُ

foundations. And he could only say, “Would that I had not associated anyone (as partners) with my Lord.”

يَلِيَّتِي لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا



43. And he had no troop of men to help him other than Allah, nor could he defend himself.

وَلَمْ تَكُن لَّهُ فِئَةٌ يَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنتَصِرًا



44. There, the authority is with Allah, the True One. He is the Best for reward, and the Best for the final end.

هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا



45. And set forth to them the similitude of the life of the world, as water which We send down from the sky, so the vegetation of the earth mingles with it, then it becomes dry stubble that the winds scatter. And Allah is Perfect in Ability over all things.*41

وَأَضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيحُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا



*41 Allah has power over everything. He gives life and also death, He causes the rise and the downfall. It is by His command that the seasons change. Therefore, O disbelievers, if you are enjoying prosperity today, you should be under no delusion that this condition will remain forever. That God, by Whose command these things have

been bestowed on you, has the power to snatch away all this by another command.

46. Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world. And the righteous deeds which endure are better with your Lord for reward, and better in respect of hope.

الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ
خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا



47. And the Day We shall cause the mountains to pass away (like clouds of dust),^{*42} and you will see the earth as a leveled plain,^{*43} and we shall gather them, and shall not leave out from them anyone.^{*44}

وَيَوْمَ نَسِيرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى
الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَاهُمْ فَلَمْ
نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا



***42** The mountains will begin to move about like clouds when the gravitation of the earth shall be brought to an end. The Quran has described the same thing in Surah An-Namal, Ayat 88 in this way: When you see the mountains, you consider them to be firmly fixed, but they shall be floating about like clouds at that time.

***43** “You will see the earth as a leveled plain”: You will find no vegetation and no building on it and it will become a barren plain. It is the same thing that has been stated in Ayat 8 of this chapter.

***44** That is, We will muster together every human being

from the first man, Adam, to the last one born in the last moment of the Day of Resurrection: even that child which had breathed the first breath after its birth, shall be resurrected and all shall be mustered at one and the same tune.

48. And they will be presented before your Lord in ranks, (it will be said): “Indeed, you have come to Us just as We created you the first time.*45 But you claimed that We would never make for you an appointment.”

وَعَرِضُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ صَفًّا لَّقَدْ
جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ
مَرَّةٍ ۗ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَلَّنْ نَجْعَلَ لَكُمْ
مُّوعِدًا



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

49. And the book (of deeds) will be placed, and you will see the criminals fearful of that which is (recorded) therein, and they will say: “Woe to us, what is this book that leaves neither a small thing nor a big thing, except

وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَى
الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ
وَيَقُولُونَ يَتَوَيَّلْنَا مَا لِ هَذَا
الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا

takes account thereof.” And they will find what they did, presented (before them). And your Lord does not do injustice to anyone.*46

كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا وَوَجَدُوا مَا
عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ

أَحَدًا

***46** “And your Lord does not do injustice to anyone”: Neither will an evil deed, not committed by someone, have been recorded in his conduct register, nor shall anyone be punished more than one deserved for his crime, nor shall an innocent person be punished at all.

50. And when We said to the angels: “Prostrate before Adam,” so they fell prostrate, except Iblis.*47 He was of the jinns, so he departed from the command of his Lord.*48

Will you then take him and his offspring as your protecting friends other than Me, and they are an enemy to you. Evil would be the exchange for the wrongdoers.

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا
لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ

مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ
أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ
دُونِي وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ بِئْسَ

لِلظَّالِمِينَ بَدَلًا

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

became accursed.

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

(1) They do not show arrogance; they fear their Lord Who is above them, and do whatever they are bidden. (Surah An-Nahal, Ayat 50).

(2) They do not disobey the command that is given to them by their Lord and do whatever they are bidden to do. (Surah At-Tahrim, Ayat 6).

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

51. I did not make them witness to the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor their own creation,^{*49} nor was I to take the misleaders as helpers.

مَا أَشْهَدْتُهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَا خَلْقَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا
كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلِّينَ عَضُدًا



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

52. And the Day (when) He will say: “Call those (so called) partners of Mine whom you pretended.”^{*50} Then they will cry unto them, but they will not answer them, and We shall put a barrier (enmity) between them.^{*51}

وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ نَادُوا شُرَكَاءِيَ
الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ
يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ
مَوْبِقًا



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

the same time following their orders instead of divine commandments, even then that one shall be guilty of shirk. For instance, we see that everyone in this world curses satans but still follows them. According to the Quran, in spite of cursing them, if people follow satans, they shall be guilty of setting up satans as partners with Allah. Though this will not be shirk in so many words, it will be tantamount to the practice of shirk and the Quran denounces this as shirk.

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

53. And the criminals shall see the Fire and apprehend that they have to fall therein. And they will find no way of escape from there.

وَرَاءَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مُوَاقِعُوهَا وَلَمْ يَجِدُوا عَنْهَا مَصْرِفًا



54. And indeed We have put forth, in this Quran, for mankind, example of every kind. And man is ever more quarrelsome than anything.

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا



55. And nothing prevents the people from believing

وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ

when guidance has come to them, and from asking forgiveness of their Lord, except that there should befall them precedent of the former people, or that the punishment should come to them face to face.*52

جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةُ الْأَوَّلِينَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ قُبُلًا



*52 This is to warn the people that the Quran has left no stone unturned in making the truth plain. It has employed all kinds of arguments, parables, similitude and used all the possible effective ways to appeal to the heart and the mind of man, and adopted the best possible style. If, in spite of this, they do not accept the truth, it is obvious that they are waiting for God's scourge like the one that visited the former communities to make them realize their error.

56. And We do not send the messengers except as giver of good tidings and warners.*53 And those who disbelieve dispute with false argument in order to refute the truth thereby. And they take My revelations and that with which they are warned as mockery.

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَتُجَادِلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَمَا أُنذِرُوا هُزُوًا



*53 This verse has two meanings.

(1) We send Our Messengers to forewarn the people before the coming of the judgment of the good results of obedience

and the evil consequences of disobedience. But these foolish people are not taking advantage of these forewarnings and insist on seeing the same evil end from which the Messengers desire to save them.

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

57. And who does greater wrong than he who has been reminded of the revelations of his Lord, yet turns away from them and forgets what his hands have sent forth. Indeed, We have placed coverings over their hearts lest they should understand this (Quran), and in their ears a deafness. And if you call them to guidance, they will never be guided, then

ever. *54

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ
رَبِّهِ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا
قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلَى
قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي
ءَاذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى
الْهُدَىٰ فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا

*54 Allah puts a covering over the heart of a person and makes his ears hard of hearing the truth when he adopts the attitude of contention, dispute, wrangling and argumentation towards the admonition of a well wisher and tries to defeat the truth with the weapons of falsehood and cunning. Naturally this attitude produces in him obduracy and obstinacy so that he turns a deaf ear towards guidance,

and is unwilling to realize his error before seeing his evil end. For such people pay no heed to admonition and warning and insist on falling into the abyss of perdition: then and then alone they are convinced that it was perdition towards which they were rushing headlong.

58. And your Lord is Most Forgiving, Owner of Mercy. If He were to call them to account for what they have earned, surely He would have hastened for them the punishment. But for them is an appointed time, they will never find beyond which an escape.^{*55}

وَرَبُّكَ الْغَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ لَوْ
يُؤَاخِذُهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَعَجَّلَ
لَهُمُ الْعَذَابَ بَلْ لَهُمْ مَوْعِدٌ
لَنْ يَجِدُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ مَوْيلاً

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

59. And (all) those townships, We destroyed them^{*56} when they did wrong, and We appointed a fixed time for their destruction.

وَتِلْكَ الْقُرَىٰ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ لَمَّا
ظَلَمُوا وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَهْلِكِهِمْ
مَّوْعِدًا

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

60. And when Moses said to his servant: "I will not give up until I reach where the two seas meet, or I march on for ages."*57

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِفَتَاهُ لَا أَبْرَحُ
حَتَّىٰ أَتَّبُلُّغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ
أَوْ أَمْضِيَ حُقُبًا

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

accountable. On the other hand, when the believers see those things, they become so frustrated and disheartened that sometimes their faiths are put to a very hard trial. It was to unravel the wisdom behind this mystery that Allah slightly lifted the curtain from the reality governing His factory, so that Moses (peace be upon him) might see the wisdom behind the events that are happening day and night and how their seeming aspect is quite different from the reality.

Now let us consider the question: When and where did this event take place? The Quran says nothing about this. There is a tradition related by Aafi in which he cites a saying of Ibn Abbas to this effect: This event happened after the destruction of Pharaoh when Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had settled his people in Egypt. But this is not supported by other more authentic traditions from Ibn Abbas which have been cited in the collection of Bukhari and other books of traditions, nor is there any other source which may prove that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) ever settled in Egypt after the destruction of Pharaoh. On the contrary, the Quran says explicitly that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) passed his entire life after exodus from Egypt in the desert (Sinai and At-Tih). Therefore the tradition from Aafi cannot be accepted. However, if we consider the details of this story, two things are quite obvious.

(1) These things would have been demonstrated to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) in the earlier period of his Prophethood because such things are needed in the

beginning of Prophethood for the teaching and training of the Prophets.

(2) As this story has been cited to comfort the believers of Makkah, it can be reasonably concluded that these demonstrations would have been shown to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), when the Israelites were encountering the same conditions as the Muslims of Makkah did at the time of the revelation of this Surah. On the basis of these two things, we are of the opinion (and correct knowledge is with Allah alone) that this event relates to the period when the persecution of the Israelites by Pharaoh was at its height and, like the chiefs of the Quraish, Pharaoh and his courtiers were deluded by delay in the scourge that there was no power above them to take them to task, and like the persecuted Muslims of Makkah, the persecuted Muslims of Egypt were crying in their agony, as if to say: Our Lord, how long will the prosperity of these tyrants and our adversity continue. So much so that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) himself cried out: Our Lord, Thou hast bestowed on Pharaoh and his nobles splendor and possessions in the worldly life; O our Lord, hast Thou done this that they might lead astray the people from Thy Way. (Surah Yunus, Ayat 88).

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

The Bible does not say anything about this event but the Talmud does relate this though it assigns it to Rabbi Jochanan, the son of Levi, instead of to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), and according to it the other person was Elijah who had been taken up alive to heaven and joined with the angels for the purpose of the administration of the world. (The Talmud Selections by H. Polano, pp. 313-16).

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

The Orientalists have, as usual, tried to make a research into the sources of this story and have pointed out that The Quranic story may be traced back to three main sources.

(1) The Gilgamesh Epic.

(2) The Alexander Romance.

(3) The Jewish Legend of Elijah and Rabbi Joshua ben Levi (Encyclopaedia of Islam new edition and Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam under the heading Al Khadir). This is because these malicious scholars decide beforehand that their scientific research must lead to the conclusion that the Quran is not a revealed book: therefore they have, anyhow or other, to produce a proof that whatever Muhammad (peace be upon him) has presented as revelation, has been plagiarized from such and such sources. In this these people brazen facedly use facts and quotations so cunningly and cleverly as to achieve their mean end and one begins to have nausea at their research. If that is research what these bigoted forgers make, then one is compelled to curse their knowledge and research.

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

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

(2) Do they possess any knowledge that at the time of the revelation of the Quran there was a library at Makkah from which the Prophet (peace be upon him) collected material for the Quran? This question is pertinent because if a list were to be made of the numerous books in different languages, which they allege were sources of the stories and

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

(3) How is it then that the contemporary disbelievers of Makkah and the Jews and the Christians, who like them, were always in search of such a proof, could not put forward even a single instance of plagiarism? They had a good reason to produce an instance of this because they were being challenged over and over again to refute the claim that the Quran was a revealed book and it had no other source than divine knowledge and that if they said that it was a human work, they were to prove this by bringing the like of it. Though this challenge had broken the back of the contemporary opponents of Islam, they could not point out even a single plausible source that might prove reasonably that the Quran was based on it. In the light of these facts one may ask: Why had the contemporaries of the Prophet (peace be upon him) failed in their research and how have the opponents of Islam

succeeded in their attempt today after the passage of more than a thousand years?

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

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

61. Then when they reached the junction between them (two seas), they forgot their fish, and it took its way into the sea as in a tunnel.

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنَهُمَا نَسِيَا
حُوتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي
الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا

62. So when they had gone further, he said to his servant: "Bring us our morning meal. Certainly we

فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا قَالَ لِفَتَاهُ ءَاتِنَا
غَدَاءَنَا لَقَدْ لَقِينَا مِنْ سَفَرِنَا

have suffered fatigue in this, our journey.”

هَذَا نَصَبًا ﴿٦٢﴾

63. He said: “Did you see, when we took refuge on the rock, so indeed I forgot the fish. And none made me forget but Satan, that I should mention it. And it took its way into the sea amazingly.”

قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أُوِينَا إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَإِنِّي نَسِيتُ الْحُوتَ وَمَا أَنسِنِيهِ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ أَذْكُرَهُ وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا ﴿٦٣﴾

64. He said: “That is what we have been seeking.”*58 So they went back on their footsteps following (the path).

قَالَ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْغِ فَارْتَدَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمَا قَصَصًا ﴿٦٤﴾

*58 That is, the same was the sign of the place of our destination. This shows that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had taken this journey at Allah’s behest to meet His servant. He had been told that he would meet the servant at the place where the fish would disappear.

65. Then they found a servant among Our servants, unto whom We had bestowed mercy from Us, and We had taught him knowledge from Us.*59

فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا ءَاتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِمَّا لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا ﴿٦٥﴾

*59 The name of this servant has been stated to be Khidr in

all the authentic books of traditions. Thus there is no reason why it should be considered at all that his name was Elijah, as some people have asserted under the influence of the Israelite traditions. Their assertion is incorrect not only because it contradicts the assertion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) but it is also absurd because Prophet Elijah (peace be upon him) was born several hundred years after Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). Though the Quran does not mention the name of the attendant of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), according to some traditions he was Joshua, the son of Nun, who succeeded him.

66. Moses said to him: “May I follow you on that you teach me from what you have been taught of wisdom.”

قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَىٰ هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَيَّ
أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِي مِمَّا عُلِّمْتَ رُشْدًا



67. He said: “Indeed, you will never be able to have patience with me.”

قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ
صَبْرًا



68. “And how can you have patience with that whereof you can not encompass in knowledge.”

وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ
بِهِ خُبْرًا



69. He (Moses) said: “You shall find me, if Allah wills, patient and I shall not disobey you in (any) order.”

قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا



70. He said: “So if you follow me, then do not ask me about anything until I myself make mention to you about it.”

قَالَ فَإِنْ أَتَّبَعْتَنِي فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي
عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ أُحَدِّثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ

ذِكْرًا ﴿٧٠﴾

71. So they both proceeded, until, when they embarked on the ship, he made a hole in it. He (Moses) said: “Have you made a hole therein so as to drown its people. Certainly, you have done a grave thing.”

فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَكِبَا فِي
السَّفِينَةِ خَرَقَهَا قَالَ أَخْرَقْتُهَا
لِتُغْرِقَ أَهْلَهَا لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا

إِمْرًا ﴿٧١﴾

72. He said: “Did I not say that you would never be able to have patience with me.”

قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَنْ

تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٢﴾

73. He (Moses) said: “Call me not to account for what I forgot, and do not be hard upon me for my affair.”

قَالَ لَا تُوَاخِذْنِي بِمَا نَسِيتُ
وَلَا تُرْهِقْنِي مِنْ أَمْرِي عُسْرًا

﴿٧٣﴾

74. So they both proceeded until, when they met a boy, so he killed him. He (Moses) said: “Have you

فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا لَقِيََا غُلَمًا
فَقَتَلَهُ قَالَ أَقْتَلْتَنِي نَفْسًا زَكِيَّةً

killed an innocent soul without (him killing another) soul. Certainly, you have done a horrible thing.”

بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ لَّقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا
نُّكْرًا ﴿٧٤﴾

75. He said: “Did I not say to you that you would never be able to have patience with me.”

﴿٧٥﴾ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَّكَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ
تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا

76. He (Moses) said: “If I ask you about anything after this, then do not keep me in your company. Indeed, You have received from me an excuse.”

﴿٧٦﴾ قَالَ إِنْ سَأَلْتُكَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ
بَعْدَهَا فَلَا تُصَحِّبْنِي قَدْ
بَلَغْتَ مِن لَّدُنِّي عُذْرًا

77. So they both proceeded until, when they came to the people of a town, they asked its people for food, but they refused to make them guests. And they found therein a wall that was about to collapse, so he set it up straight. He (Moses) said: “If you had wished, you could have taken payment for it.”

فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَيَا أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ
أَسْتَطْعَمَآ أَهْلَهَا فَأَبَوْا أَن
يُضَيِّفُوهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَارًا
يُرِيدُ أَن يَنْقَضَ فَأَقَامَهُ قَالَ
لَوْ شِئْتَ لَتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا ﴿٧٧﴾

78. He said: “This is the parting between me and you. I will inform you of the interpretation of that over

﴿٧٨﴾ قَالَ هَذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنِكَ
سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ

which you were not able to have patience.”

عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٨﴾

79. “As for the ship, it belonged to poor people working at the sea, so I intended to cause a defect in it, for there was a king behind them who was taking every ship by force.”

أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسْكِينٍ
يَعْمَلُونَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ
أَعْيِبَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَاءَهُمْ مَلِكٌ
يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْبًا ﴿٧٩﴾

80. “And as for the boy, so his parents were believers and we feared lest he would oppress them by rebellion and disbelief.”

وَأَمَّا الْغُلَامُ فَكَانَ أَبَوَاهُ مُؤْمِنِينَ
فَخَشِينَا أَنْ يُرْهِقَهُمَا طُغْيَانًا
وَكَفْرًا ﴿٨٠﴾

81. “So we intended that their Lord should change for them one better than him in purity and nearer to mercy.”

فَأَرَدْنَا أَنْ يُبَدِّلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْرًا
مِّنْهُ زَكَاةً وَأَقْرَبَ رُحْمًا ﴿٨١﴾

82. “And as for the wall, so it belonged to two youths, orphans in the city, and there was beneath it a treasure for them, and their father had been righteous. So your Lord intended that they should reach to their full strength and should take out

وَأَمَّا الْجِدَارُ فَكَانَ لِغُلَامَيْنِ
يَتِيمَيْنِ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ وَكَانَ
تَحْتَهُ كَنْزٌ لَهُمَا وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا
صَالِحًا فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا
أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا

their treasure, as a mercy from your Lord. And I did not do this upon my own command. That is the interpretation of that for which you could not keep patience.”*60

رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُ
عَنْ أَمْرِي ذَٰلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ
تَسْطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا



*60 In connection with this story, a very hard problem arises to which an answer must be found. Two of the three things done by Khidr are obviously against those commandments of the law which have always been in force since the creation of man. No law allows anyone the right to damage the property of another and kill an innocent person. So much so that if a man were to know by inspiration that some usurper would illegally seize a certain boat, and that a certain boy would be involved in a rebellion and unbelief, even then no law, sent down by Allah, makes it lawful that one should bore a hole in the boat and kill the innocent boy by virtue of his inspiration. If in answer to this, one were to say that Khidr committed these two acts by the commands of Allah, this does not solve the problem, for the question is not this: “By whose command did Khidr commit these acts”, but it is this: “What was the nature of these commands”? This is important because Khidr did these acts in accordance with divine command, for he himself says that these acts of his were not done by his own authority, but were moved by the mercy of Allah, and Allah Himself has testified this by saying: “We gave him a special knowledge from

Ourselves". Thus it is beyond any doubt that these acts were done by the command of Allah, but the question about the nature of the command remains there, for it is obvious that these commands were not legal because it is not allowed by any divine law, and the fundamental principles of the Quran also do not allow that a person should kill another person without any proof of his guilt. Therefore we shall have to admit that these commands belonged to one of those decrees of Allah in accordance with which one sick person recovers, while another dies: one becomes prosperous and the other is ruined. If the commands given to Khidr were of this nature, then one must come to the conclusion that Khidr was an angel (or some other kind of Allah's creation) who is not bound by the divine law prescribed for human beings, for such commands as have no legal aspect, can be addressed to angels only. This is because the question of the lawful or the unlawful cannot arise about them: they obey the commands of Allah without having any personal power. In contrast to them, a man shall be guilty of a sin whether he does any such thing inadvertently by intuition or by some inspiration, if his act goes against some divine commandment. This is because a man is bound to abide by divine commandments as a man, and there is no room whatsoever in the divine law that an act may become lawful for a man merely because he had received an instruction by inspiration and had been informed in a secret way of the wisdom of that unlawful act.

The above mentioned principle has been unanimously

accepted by scholars of the divine law and the leaders of Sufism, Allamah Alusi has cited in detail the sayings of Abdul Wahhab Shiirani, Muhy-ud-Din ibn-Arabi, Mujaddid Alf Thani, Shaikh Abdul-Qadir Jilani, Junaid Baghdadi, Sirri Saqti, Abul-Hussain An-nuri, Abu Said-al-Kharraz, Ahmad ud-Dainauri and Imam Ghazzali to this effect that it is not lawful even for a sufi to act in accordance with that inspiration of his own which goes against a fundamental of law. (Ruh-ul-Maani, Vol. XVI, pp. 16-18). That is why we have come to the conclusion that Khidr must be an angel, or some other kind of Allah's creation, exempted from human law, for he could not be the only exception to the above mentioned formula. Therefore we inevitably come to the conclusion that he was one of those servants of Allah who act in accordance with the will of Allah and not in accordance with the divine law prescribed for human beings.

We would have accepted the theory that Khidr was a human being, if the Quran had plainly asserted that the servant to whom Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was sent for training, was a man. But the Quran does not specifically say that he was a human being but says that he was one of Our servants which does not show that he was necessarily a human being. Besides this, there is no tradition which specifically says that Khidr was a human being. In the authentic traditions related by Said bin Jubair, Ibn Abbas, Ubayy bin Kaab from the Prophet (peace be upon him), the Arabic word *rajul* has been used for Khidr, which though generally used for human beings,

is not exclusively used for human beings. In the Quran itself, this word has been used for Jinns also (Surah Al-Jin, Ayat 6). It is also obvious that when a jinn or an angel or an invisible being will come before a human being, he will surely come in human shape and, in that form; he will be called a bashar (man), just like the angel who came before Mary in the shape of a human being (Surah Maryam, Ayat 17). Thus the word *rajul*, used for Khidr in the above mentioned tradition by the Prophet (peace be upon him), does not necessarily mean that he was a human being. Therefore we are quite justified in the light of the above discussion to believe that Khidr was one of the angels or some other kind of Allah's creation who is not bound by the divine law prescribed for human beings. Some of the former scholars of the Quran have also expressed the same opinion which has been cited by Ibn Kathir in his commentary on the authority of Mawardi.

83. And they ask you about Dhul-Qarneyn.*61 Say: "I shall recite to you story about him."*62

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الَّذِينَ
قُلْ سَأَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا

*61 It is quite obvious that the conjunction *wao* joins this story with the previous story of Khidr. Thus it is a self-evident proof that the previous two stories of the sleepers of the cave and Moses and Khidr were also related in answer to the queries of the disbelievers of Makkah who, in consultation with the people of the Book, had put these

questions to Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a test of his Prophethood.

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

Now let us consider the characteristics of Zul-Qarnain in the light of his story as given in the Quran.

(1) The title Zul-Qarnain (the two-horned) should have been quite familiar to the Jews, for it was at their instigation that the disbelievers of Makkah put this question to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Therefore we must turn to the Jewish literature in order to learn who was the person known as the two-horned or which was the kingdom known as the two-horned.

(2) Zul-Qarnain must have been a great ruler and a great conqueror whose conquests might have spread from the east to the west and on the third side to the north or to the south. Before the revelation of the Quran there had been several persons who were such great conquerors. So we must confine our research for the other characteristics of Zul-Qarnain to one of these persons.

(3) This title should be applicable to such a ruler who might

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

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

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

The second characteristic is applicable to him to a great extent but not completely. Though his conquests spread to Syria and Asia Minor in the West and to Bakhtar (Balkh) in the East, there is no trace of any of his great expeditions to the North or to the South, whereas the Quran makes an explicit mention of his third expedition. Nevertheless, this third expedition is not wholly out of question for history tells us that his kingdom extended to Caucasia in the North. As regards to Gog and Magog, it has been nearly established that they were the wild tribes of Central Asia

who were known by different names: Tartars, Mongols, Huns and Scythians, who had been making inroads on settled kingdoms and empires from very ancient times. It is also known that strong bulwarks had been built in southern regions of Caucasia, though it has not been as yet historically established that these were built by Cyrus.

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

In the light of the above, we admit that of all the conquerors, who had passed away before the revelation of the Quran, Cyrus alone is the one to whom the characteristics of Zul-Qarnain are most applicable, but we need more evidence to determine specifically that Cyrus is definitely Zul-Qarnain. Anyhow, there is no other conqueror to whom the characteristics stated in the Quran are as much applicable as to Cyrus.

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

Macedonia and to Caucasias and Khawarzam in the North. In fact, the whole civilized world was under his sway.

84. Indeed, We established him upon the earth, and We gave him the means of every thing.

إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَءَاتَيْنَاهُ
مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا

85. So he followed a way.

فَاتَّبَعَ سَبَبًا

86. Until, when he reached the setting place of the sun,^{*63} he found it setting in a muddy spring,^{*64} and he found near it a people. We said: “O Dhul-Qarneyn, either that you punish (them) or that adopt among them (a way of) kindness.”^{*65}

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ
وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ
حَمِئَةٍ وَوَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا قَوْمًا
قُلْنَا يَا ذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِمَّا أَنْ تُعَذِّبَ
وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ حُسْنًا

*63 “The setting place of the sun” does not mean the place of the setting of the sun. According to Ibn Kathir, it means that he marched to the west conquering one country after the other till he reached the last boundary of the land, beyond which there was ocean.

*64 “He found it setting in a muddy spring”: If Zul Qarnain was Cyrus, then that place would be the western limit of Asia Minor and the black waters would be the Aegean Sea. This interpretation is supported by the use of the word *ain* instead of *bahr* in the Quran.

*65 “We said” does not necessarily mean that Allah

directly revealed to him these words, and that Zul-Qarnain was a Prophet or was the one who received inspiration from Allah, and the same is the reasonable conjecture. This concerns the time when Zul-Qarnain had taken possession of the land as a conqueror and the conquered people were utterly at your mercy. Then Allah posed a question before his conscience, as if to say: Now is the time of your trial. These people are utterly at your mercy, and you have the option either to behave unjustly towards them or to treat them generously.

87. He said: “As for him who does wrong, we shall punish him. Then he will be brought back to his Lord, so He will punish him with an awful punishment.”

قَالَ أَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ
نُعَذِّبُهُ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ
فَيُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا نُّكَرًا

88. “And as for him who believes and does righteously, so his will be a goodly reward. And we shall speak to him gently about our command.”

وَأَمَّا مَنْ ءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا
فَلَهُ جَزَاءٌ أَحْسَنُ وَسَنَقُولُ
لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا

89. Then he followed a way.

ثُمَّ أَتْبَعَ سَبِيلًا

90. Until, when he reached the rising place of the sun, he found it rising on a people for whom We had not

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ الشَّمْسِ
وَجَدَهَا تَطْلُعُ عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ لَمْ

provided any shelter from it.*66

نَجْعَلْ لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُونِهَا سِتْرًا ﴿٩٠﴾

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

91. Thus (it was). And indeed, We had encompassed what he had in knowledge.

كَذَلِكَ وَقَدْ أَحَطْنَا بِمَا لَدَيْهِ خُبْرًا ﴿٩١﴾

92. Then he followed a way.

ثُمَّ اتَّبَعَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩٢﴾

93. Until, when he reached between the two mountains,*67 he found beside them a people who could scarcely understand a word.*68

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمَا قَوْمًا لَّا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلًا ﴿٩٣﴾

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

*68 That is, it was difficult to communicate with them: their language was almost foreign to Zul-Qarnain and his companions, and, as they were quite barbaric, none could understand their language, nor were they acquainted with any foreign language.

94. They said: “O Dhul-Qarneyn, indeed Gog and Magog*69 are causing mischief in the land. Shall we then pay you a tribute in order that you might set between us and them a barrier.”

قَالُوا يٰذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ اِنَّ يٰجُوجَ
وَمَآجُوجَ مُفْسِدُونَ فِى الْاَرْضِ
فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجًا عَلٰى اَنْ
تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ سَدًّا



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

95. He said: “That in which my Lord has established me is better. So help me with strength (of men), I will set between you and them a strong barrier.”*70

قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّى فِىهِ رَبِّىْ خَيْرٌ
فَاعِينُونِى بِقُوَّةٍ اَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ
وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا



*70 That is, as a ruler it is my duty to protect you from the

ravages of your enemies: therefore it is not lawful for me to levy any extra taxes on you for this purpose. The treasury that Allah has placed in my custody suffices for this purpose. You shall, however, have to help me with your manual labor.

96. "Bring me sheets of iron." Until, when he had filled up (the gap) between the cliffs, he said: "Blow." Until, when he had made it a fire, he said: "Bring me that I may pour over it molten copper."

عَاتُونِي زُبَرَ الْحَدِيدِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا
سَاوَىٰ بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ قَالَ
أَنْفُخُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَعَلَهُ نَارًا
قَالَ عَاتُونِي أُفْرِغْ عَلَيْهِ قِطْرًا ﴿٩٦﴾

97. So they (Gog and Magog) were not able to surmount it, nor were they able to pierce it.

فَمَا اسْتَطَعُوا أَنْ يَظْهَرُوهُ وَمَا
اسْتَطَعُوا لَهُ نَقْبًا ﴿٩٧﴾

98. He said: "This is a mercy from my Lord. Then when the promise of my Lord shall come to pass, He shall make it into dust.^{*71} And the promise of my Lord is true."^{*72}

قَالَ هَذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّي فَإِذَا
جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ
وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي حَقًّا ﴿٩٨﴾

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

As regards to the time of Allah's promise, it has two meanings.

- (1) It may mean the time of the destruction of the wall.
- (2) It may also mean the time of the death and destruction of everything destined by Allah at the end of the world i.e. the Hour of Resurrection.

Some people have entertained the misunderstanding that the wall attributed here to Zul-Qarnain refers to the famous wall of China, whereas this wall was built between Derbent and Daryal, two cities of Daghestan in the Caucasus, the land that lies between the Black Sea and the Caspian. There are high mountains between the Black Sea and Daryal having deep gorges which cannot allow large armies to pass through them. Between Derbent and Daryal, however, there are no such mountains and the passes also are wide and passable. In ancient times savage hordes from the north invaded and ravaged southern lands through these passes and the Persian rulers who were scared of them had to build a strong wall, 50 miles long, 29 feet high and 10 feet wide, for fortification purposes, ruins of which can still be seen. Though it has not yet been established historically who built this wall in the beginning, the Muslim historians and geographers assign it to Zul-Qarnain because its remains correspond with the description of it given in the Quran. Ibn Jarir Tabari and Ibn Kathir have recorded the event, and Yaqut has mentioned it in his Mu jam-ul-Buldan that when after the conquest of Azerbaijan, Umar sent Suraqah bin Amr, in 22 A.H. on an expedition to Derbent, the latter appointed Abdur Rehman bin Rabiah

as the chief of his vanguard. When Abdur Rehman entered Armenia, the ruler Shehrbraz surrendered without fighting. Then when Abdur Rehman wanted to advance towards Derbent, Shehrbraz informed him that he had already gathered full information about the wall built by Zul-Qarnain, through a man, who could supply all the necessary details and then the man was actually presented before Abdur Rehman. (Tabari, Vol. III, pp. 235-239; Al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah, Vol. VII, pp. 122-125, and Mujam-ul-Buldan, under Bab-ul-Abwab: Derbent).

Two hundred years later, the Abbasid Caliph Wathiq (227-233 A.H.) dispatched a party of 50 men under Sallam-ul-Tarjuman to study the wall of Zul-Qarnain, whose observations have been recorded in great detail by Yaqut in Mujam-ul-Buldan and by Ibn Kathir in Al-Bidayah. They write that this expedition reached Samarra from where they reached Tiflis (the present Tbilisi) and then through As-Sarir and Al-Lan, they reached Filanshah, from where they entered the Caspian territory. From there they arrived at Derbent and saw the wall. (Al-Bidayah Vol. II, p. 111, Vol. VII, pp. 122-125; Mujam-ul-Buldan: under Bab-ul-Abwab). This clearly shows that even up till the third century of Hijrah the Muslim scholars regarded this wall of the Caucasus as the wall of Zul-Qarnain.

Yaqut in his Mujam-ul-Buldan has further confirmed the same view at a number of places. For instance, under Khazar (Caspian) he writes:

This territory belongs to the Turks, which adjoins the wall of Zul Qarnain just behind Bab-ul-Abwab, which is also

called Derbent. In the same connection, he records a report by Ahmad bin Fadlan, the ambassador of Caliph Al-Muqtadar-billah, who has given a full description of the Caspian land, saying that Caspian is the name of a country whose capital is Itil (near the present Astrakhan) right through which flows River Itil, which joins the Caspian from Russia and Bulghar.

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

*72 Here the story of Zul-Qarnain comes to an end. Though this story has been related in answer to the questions put by the disbelievers of Makkah as a test along with the stories of the sleepers of the cave and Moses and Khidr, the Quran has utilized this story, too, for its own aim and object, as if to say: Zul Qarnain, about whose glory you have heard from the people of the Book, was not merely a conqueror, but also a believer of the doctrines of Tauhid and the life after death and acted upon the principles of justice and generosity. He was not a mean person like you who have been puffed up by the possession of petty estates, and give yourselves airs of superiority.

99. And We shall leave some of them, that day,^{*73} to surge like waves on others,

﴿ وَتَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَمُوجُ فِي بَعْضٍ وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ ﴾

and the Trumpet will be blown. Then We shall gather them all together.

فَجْمَعْنَاهُمْ جَمْعًا ﴿٩٩﴾

***73** “That Day”: “The Day of Resurrection”. As if to continue the theme of life after death to which Zul-Qarnain referred as the time of my Lord’s promise, the Quran has added verses 99-101 to it.

100. And we shall present Hell that day to the disbelievers, plain to view.

وَعَرَضْنَا جَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْكَافِرِينَ
عَرَضًا ﴿١٠٠﴾

101. Those whose eyes had been within a cover from remembrance of Me, and who had not been able (even) to hear.

الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِي غِطَاءٍ
عَنْ ذِكْرِي وَكَانُوا لَا
يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَمْعًا ﴿١٠١﴾

102. Do ^{*74} then those who disbelieve think that they can take My slaves instead of Me as protecting friends. ^{*75} Indeed, We have prepared Hell for the disbelievers as a lodging.

أَفَحَسِبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ
يَتَّخِذُوا عِبَادِي مِنْ
أَوْلِيَاءَ ۗ إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا
لِلْكَافِرِينَ نُزُلًا ﴿١٠٢﴾

***74** This is the conclusion of the whole Surah and is not connected with the story of Zul-Qarnain only but with the subject matter of this Surah as a whole. That theme was enunciated at the beginning of the Surah (Ayats 1-8): The

Prophet (peace be upon him) invited his people.

(1) To give up shirk and adopt the doctrine of Tauhid instead.

(2) To give up the worship of the world and to believe in the life of the Hereafter. But the chiefs of his people, who were puffed up with their wealth and grandeur, not only rejected his invitation but also persecuted and insulted those righteous people who had accepted his invitation. The discourse deals with the same themes and utilizes in an excellent manner the three stories which were related in answer to the questions put by the opponents of Islam as a test of his Prophethood.

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

103. Say: “Shall We inform you of the greatest losers in respect of (their) deeds.”

قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ
أَعْمَلًا



104. Those whose efforts have been wasted in the life of the world,^{*76} and they think that they are doing good in work.

الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ
يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا



*76 This verse has two meanings. The one is the same that we have adopted in the translation. The other meaning is this: Those who confined all their endeavors to the worldly life. That is, whatever they did, they did for this world

without paying any regard to God and the Hereafter. As they considered the worldly life to be the real life, they made the success and prosperity in this world their sole aim and object. Even if they professed the existence of Allah, they never paid any heed to the two implications of this profession: to lead their lives in a way to please Allah and to come out successful on the Day they shall have to render an account of what they did in this world. This was because they considered themselves to be mere rational animals who were absolutely independent and free from every kind of responsibility and had nothing else to do but to enjoy the good things of the world like animals in a meadow.

105. Those are they who disbelieve in the revelations of their Lord and in the meeting with Him. So worthless will be their deeds. Then We shall not assign to them any weight on the Day of Judgment.*77

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِعَايَتِ
رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَائِهِ، فَحَبِطَتْ أَعْمَلُهُمْ
فَلَا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَزَنًا



*77 “So worthless will be their deeds” in the sense that they will be of no avail to them in the life after death, even though they might have considered them as their great achievements but the fact is that they will lose all their value as soon as the world shall come to an end. When they will go before their Lord, and all their deeds shall be placed in the scales, they will have no weight at all whether they had built great palaces, established great universities and libraries, set up great factories and laboratories,

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

106. That is their recompense, Hell, because they disbelieved, and took My revelations and My messengers in ridicule.

ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُهُمْ بِمَا كَفَرُوا
وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَرُسُلِي هُزُوعًا



107. Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds, theirs will be the Gardens of Paradise as a lodging.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ
الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا



108. Wherein they will abide (forever), no desire will they have to be removed there from.*78

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يَبْغُونَ عَنْهَا
حِوَلًا ﴿١٠٨﴾

***78** “No desire will they have to be removed there from” because they will find no place and no condition better than those in Paradise.

109. Say: “If the sea were ink for (writing) the words*79 of my Lord, surely, the sea would be exhausted before that the words of my Lord would be finished, even if we brought (another sea) like it as aid.”

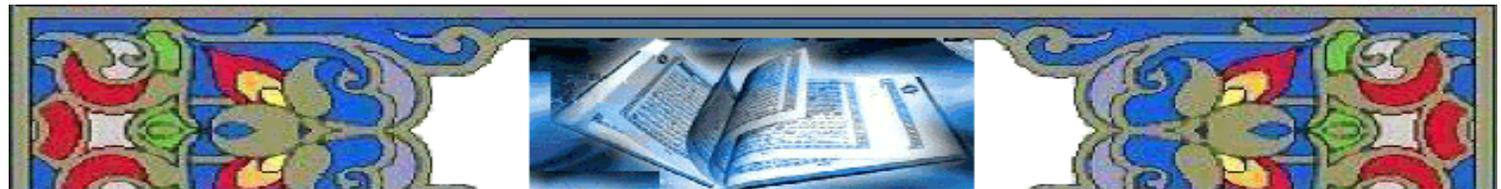
قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا
لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ
أَنْ تَنْفَدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا
بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا ﴿١٠٩﴾

***79** By “words” are meant the marvelous works, the excellences and the wonders of His Power and Wisdom.

110. Say: “I am only a man like you. It has been inspired to me that your god is only One God. So whoever is expecting for the meeting with his Lord, let him do righteous deed, and not associate anyone as a partner in the worship of his Lord.”

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ
إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ
فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ
فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا
يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا ﴿١١٠﴾





مَرْيَمَ Maryam

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name *Maryam* from Ayat 16.

Period of Revelation

It was revealed before the migration to Habash. We learn from authentic traditions that Jaafar recited Ayats 1-40 of this Surah in the court of Negus when he called the migrants to his court.

Historical Background

We have already briefly referred to the conditions of that period in the introduction to Surah Al-Kahf. Here we shall give full details of the same conditions, which will be helpful in grasping the meaning of this Surah and the other Surahs of this period. When the chiefs of the Quraish felt that they had failed to suppress the Islamic movement by ridicule, sarcasm, and by holding out promises and threats and by making false accusations, they resorted to persecution, beating and economic pressure. They would get hold of the new Muslims of their clans and persecute them, starve them and would even inflict physical torture on them in order to coerce them to give up Islam. The most

pitiful victims of their persecution were the poor people and the slaves and the proteges of the Quraish. They were beaten black and blue, were imprisoned and kept thirsty and hungry and were dragged on the burning sands of Makkah. The people would get work done from the professional laborers but would not pay them their wages. As an instance we give below the story of Khabbab bin Arat, which is given in Bukhari and Muslim: I used to work as a blacksmith in Makkah. Once I did some work for Aas bin Wail. When I went to ask for my wages, he said: I will not pay your wages unless you disown Muhammad.

In the same connection, Khabbab says: One day the Prophet (peace be upon him) was sitting in the shadow of the Kabah. I went to him and said, O Messenger of Allah, now persecution has gone to its extreme; why do you not pray to Allah (for relief)? At this the Prophet (peace be upon him) was greatly moved. He said: The believers before you were persecuted much more than you. Their bones were scraped with combs of iron and their heads were cut with saws, but still they did not give up their faith. I assure you that Allah will fulfill this mission, and there will come a period of such peace that one would travel from Sanna to Hadramaut, and he will have no fear from anyone, save Allah. But you people have already become impatient. (Bukhari).

When the conditions became unbearable, the Prophet (peace be upon him), in the month of Rajab of the fifth year of Prophethood, gave advice to his companions to this effect: You may well migrate to Habash, for there is a king,

who does not allow any kind of injustice to anyone, and there is good in his land. You should remain there till the time that Allah provides a remedy for your affliction.

Accordingly, at first, eleven men and four women left for Habash. The Quraish pursued them up to the coast but fortunately they got a timely boat for Habash at the seaport of Shuaibah, and they escaped arrest. Then after a few months, other people migrated to Habash and their number rose to eighty three men and eleven women of the Quraish and seven non Quraish. After this, only forty persons were left with the Prophet (peace be upon him) at Makkah.

There was a great hue and cry in Makkah after this migration, for every family of the Quraish was adversely affected by this. There was hardly a family of the Quraish which did not lose a son, a son in law, a daughter, a brother or a sister. For instance, there were among the migrants the near relatives of Abu Jahl, Abu Sufyan and other chiefs of the Quraish who were notorious for their persecution of the Muslims. As a result of this, some of them became even bitter in their enmity of Islam. While there were others who were so moved by this that they embraced Islam. For instance, this migration left a deep mark on Umar. One of his relatives, Laila, daughter of Hathmah, says: I was packing my luggage for migration while my husband Amr bin Rabiya had gone out. In the meantime Umar came there and began to watch me, while I was engaged in preparation for the journey. He said: Are you also going to migrate? I answered: Yes by God, you people have

persecuted us much. But the wide earth of Allah is open for us. Now we are going to a place where Allah will grant us peace. At this, I noticed such signs of emotion on the face of Umar as I had never seen before. He simply said: May God be with you and he went away.

After the migration, the Quraish held consultations, and decided to send Abdullah bin Abi Rabiya, half brother of Abu Jahl, and Amr bin Aas to Habash with precious gifts so as to persuade Negus to send the migrants back to Makkah. Umm Salmah (a wife of the Prophet), who was among the migrants, has related this part of the story in details. She says: When these two clever statesmen of the Quraish reached Habash, they distributed the gifts among the courtiers of the king and persuaded them to recommend strongly to him to send the migrants back. Then they saw Negus himself and, presenting rich gifts to him, said: Some headstrong brats of our city have come to your land and our chiefs have sent us to you with the request that you may kindly send them back. These brats have forsaken our faith and have not embraced your faith either, but have invented a new faith. As soon as they had finished their speech, all the courtiers recommended their case saying: We should send such people back to their city for their people know them better. It is not proper for us to keep them here. At this the king was annoyed and said: I am not going to give them back without proper inquiry. As these people have put their trust in my country rather than in any other country and have come here to take shelter, I will not betray them. At first I will send for them and

investigate into the allegations these people have made against them. Then I will make my final decision. Accordingly, the king sent for the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and asked them to come to his court.

When the migrants received the message of the king, they assembled and held consultations as to what they should say to the king. At last they came to this unanimous decision: We will present before the king the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) without adding anything to or withholding anything from them and leave it to him whether he lets us remain here or turns us out of his country. When they came to the court, the king put this problem abruptly before them: I understand that you have given up the faith of your own people and have neither embraced my faith nor any other existing faith. I would like to know what your new faith is. At this, Jafar bin Abi Talib, on behalf of the migrants, made an extempore speech to this effect: O King, we were sunk deep in ignorance and had become very corrupt; then Muhammad (peace be upon him) came to us as a Messenger of God, and did his best to reform us. But the Quraish began to persecute his followers, so we have come to your country in the hope that here we will be free from persecution. After his speech, the king said: Please recite a piece of the revelation which has been sent down by God to your Prophet. In response, Jafar recited that portion of Surah Maryam which relates the story of Prophets John and Jesus (peace be upon them). The king listened to it and wept, so much so that his beard

became wet with tears. When Jafar finished the recital, he said: Most surely this revelation and the message of Jesus (peace be upon him) have come from the same source. By God I will not give you up into the hands of these people. Next day, Amr bin Aas went to Negus and said: Please send for them again and ask them concerning the creed they hold about Jesus (peace be upon him), the son of Mary, for they say a horrible thing about him. The king again sent for the migrants, who had already learned about the scheme of Amr. They again sat together and held consultations in regard to the answer they should give to the king, if he asked about the belief they held about Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). Though this was a very critical situation and all of them were uneasy about it, they decided that they would say the same thing that Allah and His Messenger had taught them. Accordingly, when they went to the court, the king put to them the question that had been suggested by Amr bin Aas. So Jafar bin Abi Talib stood up and answered without the least hesitation: He was a Servant of Allah and His Messenger. He was a Spirit and a Word of Allah which had been sent to virgin Mary. At this the king picked up a straw from the ground and said, Bye God, Jesus was not worth this straw more than what you have said about him. After this the king returned the gifts sent by the Quraish, saying: I do not take any bribe. Then he said to the migrants, you are allowed to stay here in perfect peace."

Theme and Subject

Keeping in view this historical background, it becomes

quite obvious that this Surah was revealed to serve the migrants as a provision for their journey to Habash, as if to say: Though you are leaving your country as persecuted emigrants to a Christian country, you should not in the least hide anything from the teachings you have received. Therefore, you should plainly say to the Christians that Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was not the son of God. After relating the story of Prophets John and Jesus in Ayats 1-40, the story of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon them) has been related (Ayats 41-50) also for the benefit of the migrants for he also had been forced like them to leave his country by the persecution of his father, his family and his countrymen. On the one hand, this meant to console the emigrants that they were following the footsteps of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and would attain the same good end as that Prophet did. On the other hand, it meant to warn the disbeliever of Makkah that they should note it well that they were in the position of the cruel people who had persecuted their forefather and leader, Abraham, while the Muslim emigrants were in the position of Prophet Abraham himself.

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

In the concluding passage (Ayats 66-98), a strong criticism has been made of the evil ways of the disbelievers of Makkah, while the Believers have been given the good news

that they would come out successful and become the beloved of the people, in spite of the worst efforts of the enemies of the truth.

1. Kaf. Ha. Ya. A'in. Sad.

كَهَيْعَصَ ﴿١﴾

2. (This is) a mention^{*1} of the mercy of your Lord to His slave Zachariah.^{*2}

ذِكْرُ رَحْمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبْدَهُ زَكَرِيَّا ﴿٢﴾

^{*1} For comparison please see the story of Zachariah as given in Ayats 34-57 of Surah Aal-Imran and the E.Ns thereof.

^{*2} In order to understand the position held by Zachariah, a descendant of Prophet Aaron, one should be acquainted with the system of priesthood among the children of Israel. After the conquest of Palestine, the entire land was divided among the 12 tribes of the descendants of Prophet Jacob as inheritance, and the 13th tribe, the Levites, was entrusted with religious services and duties. Even among the Levites, the house that was separated to sanctify the most holy things, to burn incense before the Lord, to minister unto him, and to bless in his name forever was the house of Prophet Aaron. The other Levites were not allowed to enter the Temple. Their duty was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the Lord, in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, and to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the Lord in the Sabbaths, in the new moon, and on the set festivals. The descendants of Aaron were divided into 24 families, who came to serve the

house of the Lord by turns. One of these families was of Abiah whose chief was Zachariah. Thus it was Zachariah's duty to go into the house on his family's turn and burn incense before the Lord. (For details, see 1 Chronicles, chapters 23, 24).

3. When he called to his Lord, a call (supplication) in secret.

إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ رِدْءًا خَفِيًّا

4. He said: "My Lord, indeed my bones have grown feeble and grey hair has spread on my head, and I have never been in my supplication to You, my Lord, unblest."

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّي
وَأَسْتَعَلُ الرَّأْسُ شَيْبًا وَلَمْ
أَكُنْ بِدُعَائِكَ رَبِّ شَقِيًّا

5. "And indeed, I fear my relatives after me.^{*3} And my wife is barren. So give me from Yourself an heir."

وَإِنِّي خِفْتُ الْمَوَالِيَ مِنْ وَرَائِي
وَكَانَتِ امْرَأَتِي عَاقِرًا فَهَبْ لِي
مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا

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

6. "Who shall inherit me and inherit from the family of Jacob.^{*4} And make him, my Lord, pleasing (to You)."

يَرِثُنِي وَيَرِثُ مِنْ آلِ يَعْقُوبَ
وَأَجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا

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

7. “O Zachariah, indeed We give you the good tidings of a son whose name will be John. We have not given to any (this) name before.”*5

يَزَكِّرِيَا إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَامٍ
أَسْمُهُ يَحْيَى لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ
قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا ﴿٧﴾

***5 In Luke the words are: There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. (1: 61).**

8. He said: “My Lord, how will I have a son, and my wife has been barren, and I have reached extreme old age.”

قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ
وَكَانَتْ أَمْرَاتِي عَاقِرًا وَقَدْ
بَلَغْتُ مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عِتِيًّا ﴿٨﴾

9. He said: “So shall it be.” Said Your Lord: “That is easy for Me, and indeed I did create you before, and you were not anything.”*6

قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ
عَلَىٰ هَيْنٍ وَقَدْ خَلَقْتُكَ مِنْ
قَبْلُ وَلَمْ تَكُ شَيْئًا ﴿٩﴾

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

10. He said: “My Lord, appoint for me a sign.” He

قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً ۚ قَالَ

said: “Your sign is that you shall not speak to people for three nights, (having) no bodily defect.”

ءَايَتِكَ إِلَّا تَكَلَّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَ
لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا ﴿١٠﴾

11. So he came out to his people from the sanctuary*⁷ and directed by gestures to them to glorify (Allah’s) praises (in) the morning and the evening.*⁸

فَخَرَجَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ مِنْ
الْمِحْرَابِ فَأَوْحَى إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْ
سَبِّحُوا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا ﴿١١﴾

*⁷ For the explanation of *mihrab* (sanctuary), see E.N. 36 of Aal-Imran.

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

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, (see Surah Bani-Israil, E.N.9) a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abiah: and his wife was of the daughter of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest’s office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest’s office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared

unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; (there is no mention of Zacharias' prayer anywhere in the Bible) and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John (that is, Yahya). And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord (*Sayyidun*: a great leader according to the Quran, Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 39), and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink (the Quranic version: *Taqiyyun*, pious and pure); and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb (the Quran says: We blessed him with judgment while he was yet a child). And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit of the power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. (This is different from the Quran, which gives it as a sign, whereas according to Luke, it was a punishment.

Moreover, the Quran mentions it as the silence for three consecutive days, but Luke says that Zacharias remained dumb till the birth of John). And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. (Luke 1: 5-22).

12. “O John, take the Book with might.”^{*9} And We gave him wisdom^{*10} (while yet) a child.

يٰٓيَحْيٰى خُذِ الْكِتٰبَ بِقُوَّةٍ
وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ الْحِكْمَ صَبِيًّا

^{*9} The details regarding the birth of Prophet John (peace be upon him), according to the divine will, and his coming of age, have been left out. Here, in one sentence, the mission of Prophethood entrusted to him on attaining maturity has been stated, which was to observe and follow the Torah in letter and spirit, and to exhort the Israelites as well to do the same.

^{*10} The Arabic word *hukm* implies ability (1) to make decisions, (2) to form right opinions, (3) to interpret the divine law, (4) to solve problems, and (5) it also means authority from Allah to decide affairs.

13. And compassion^{*11} from Us, and purity. And he was righteous.

وَحَنٰنًا مِّنْ لَّدُنَّا وَزَكٰوَةً
وَكَانَ تَقِيًّا

^{*11} The Arabic word *hanan* is almost synonymous with mother’s love. In other words, Prophet John bore in his

heart the same kind of intense love for Allah's servants as a mother has for her child.

14. And dutiful to his parents. And he was not arrogant, disobedient.

وَرَأً بَوَالِدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ جَبَّارًا
عَصِيًّا

15. And peace be upon him the day he was born, and the day he dies, and the day he shall be raised up to life.*12

وَسَلَّمَ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ وُلِدَ وَيَوْمَ
يَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ حَيًّا

*12 In order to have a full understanding of the mission and the pure character of Prophet John, about which brief references have been made in this Surah and Surah Aal-Imran, it will be useful to study this story as given in different Books of the New Testament in the following order:

According to Luke, Prophet John was older than Prophet Jesus (peace be upon them) by six months and their mothers were cousins. He was appointed a Prophet at the age of 30 years, and according to the Gospel of John, he started his mission of inviting the people toward God in Jordan. He would say: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord. (John, I: 23) According to Mark: John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. (Mark, I: 45). He thus came to be known as John the Baptist, and the Israelites

held him as a prophet. (Mat. 21: 26). Prophet Jesus said about John: Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a man greater than John the Baptist." (Mat. 11 : 11).

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

He urged the people to observe the Fast and Prayers. (Mat. 9: 14, Luke, 5: 33, I1: 1). He would also tell them: He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. (Luke 3: 11). When the tax-collectors asked: Master, what shall we do? He said unto them: Exact no more than that what is appointed you. (12-13). And when the soldiers sought his guidance, he said: Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages. (Luke, 3: 14).

When the corrupt scholars, Pharisees and Sadducees of the Israelites, came to be baptized by him, he rebuked them, saying: O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Think not to say within yourselves: We have Abraham to our father, now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree

which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. (Mat-3 :7-10).

The Jewish ruler of his time, Herod Antipas, in whose government he was performing his mission of inviting the people to the truth, had been so deeply influenced by the Roman civilization that he was causing sin and evil to spread freely in the land. He had kept Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, unlawfully in his house; when Prophet John reproved him for this and raised his voice against other evils being committed by him, Herod got him arrested and sent to jail. However, he held him in high esteem for his piety and righteousness and even feared him on account of the great respect he enjoyed among the people. On the contrary, Herodias thought that the moral consciousness that Prophet John was producing among the people was directly aimed at women like herself and pulling them down in the public eye. Thus she nursed a grudge against him and would have him killed but could not. Soon an opportunity came her way. On the birthday banquet of Herod, her daughter danced and so delighted Herod and others that the king said to her: Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. The girl asked her mother what she should ask for. The mother said: Ask for the head of John the Baptist. The girl went back to the king and requested to have there and then the head of John the Baptist on a dish. Herod felt sorry to hear this, but could not reject the demand of the daughter of his beloved. He at once got Prophet John killed in the prison and presented his head on a dish to the dancing girl. (Mat. 14: 3-12, Mark,

6: 17-29, Luke, 3: 19-20).

16. And mention in the Book, Mary.*¹³ When she had withdrawn from her family to a place toward east.

وَأَذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَرْيَمَ إِذِ
انْتَبَذَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا



*13 For comparison, see Surah Aal-Imran, Ayats 34-57, and Surah An-Nina, Ayat 156 and E.Ns thereof.

17. So she had chosen seclusion from them.*¹⁴ Then We sent to her Our Spirit. So he appeared before her as a perfect man.

فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ حِجَابًا
فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ
لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا



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

18. She said: “Indeed, I seek refuge in the Beneficent from you, if you should be fearing (Allah).”

قَالَتْ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ مِنْكَ
إِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا



19. He said: “I am only a messenger from your Lord that I may bestow on you a pure son.”

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ
لَأَهَبَ لَكَ غُلَامًا زَكِيًّا



20. She said: “How can I have a son, and no man has touched me, and I have not been unchaste.”

قَالَتْ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَلَمْ
يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ وَلَمْ أَكُ بَغِيًّا

21. He said: “Thus shall it be.” Your Lord says: “It is easy for Me. And that We may make of him a sign for mankind^{*15} and a mercy from Us. And it is a matter decreed.”

قَالَ كَذَٰلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَيَّ
هَيِّنٌ ۖ وَلَنَجْعَلَنَّ لَهُ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ
وَرَحْمَةً مِنَّا ۚ وَكَانَ أَمْرًا
مَّقْضِيًّا

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

22. So she conceived him,

فَحَمَلَتْهُ فَانْتَبَذَتْ بِهِ

then she withdrew with
him to a far place.*16

مَكَانًا قَصِيًّا

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

23. Then the pains of
childbirth drove her to the
trunk of the palm tree. She
said: “Oh, would that I had
died before this and had
become (a thing) forgotten,
out of sight.”*17

فَأَجَاءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ إِلَى جِذْعِ
النَّخْلَةِ قَالَتْ يَلَيْتَنِي مِتُّ قَبْلَ
هَذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسِيًّا مَنْسِيًّا

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

24. Then he (baby or angel) called her from below her, “That do not grieve, your Lord has placed a brook beneath you.”

فَنَادَاهَا مِنْ تَحْتِهَا أَلَّا تَحْزَنِي قَدْ
جَعَلَ رَبُّكَ تَحْتِكَ سَرِيًّا ﴿٢٤﴾

25. “And shake toward you the trunk of the palm tree, it will drop on you fresh dates.”

وَهَزِيْٓ إِلَىٰكَ بِجِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ
تَسْقِطُ عَلَيْكَ رَطْبًا جَنِيًّا ﴿٢٥﴾

26. So eat and drink and keep cool (your) eyes. Then if you see of any person, say: “Indeed, I have vowed a fast to the Beneficent, so I shall not speak today to (any) man.”*18

فَكُلِيْ وَأَشْرَبِيْ وَقَرِّيْ عَيْنًا فَإِمَّا
تَرِيْنَ مِنَ الْبَشَرِ أَحَدًا فَقُولِيْٓ إِنِّي
نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ
أُكَلِّمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٦﴾

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

27. Then she brought him to her people, carrying him. They said: “O Mary, indeed you have brought something hard to believe.”

فَأَتَتْ بِهِ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهُ رَ قَالُوا
يَمْرِيْٓمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا ﴿٢٧﴾

28. "O sister of Aaron,^{*19}
your father was not a man
of evil, nor was your mother
unchaste."^{*19a}

يَتَّخِذَ هَارُونَ مَا كَانَ أَبُوكِ
أَمْرًا سَوِيًّا وَمَا كَانَتْ أُمُّكَ بَغِيًّا



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

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

29. So she pointed to him. They said: “How can we talk to him who is in the cradle, a child.”*20

فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ ط قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ
مَنْ كَانَتْ فِي الْأَمْهَدِ صَبِيًّا

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

30. He (the child) said: “Indeed, I am a slave of Allah. He has given me the Book and has made me a prophet.”

قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ ءَاتَنِي
الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا

31. “And He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and He has enjoined upon me prayers and charity as long as I am alive.”

وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ
وَأَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ
مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا

32. “And dutiful to my mother,^{*20a} and He has not made me arrogant, unblest.”

وَبِرًّا بِوَالِدَتِي وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَّارًا
شَقِيًّا

***20a** The words used are: “dutiful to my mother” instead of “dutiful to my parents”. This is another proof of the fact that Jesus (peace be upon him) had no father, and for the same reason he has been called Jesus son of Mary everywhere in the Quran.

33. “And peace be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive.”^{*21}

وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدْتُ وَيَوْمَ
أَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ أُبْعَثُ حَيًّا

***21** This speech in the cradle by Jesus was the sign to which the angel referred in Ayat 21. As Allah intended to punish the children of Israel for their continuous wicked ways and evil deeds, He made a pious virgin girl of the family of Prophet Aaron, who had devoted herself to worship in the Temple under the patronage of Zachariah, bear a child and bring it before her people in order to concentrate the whole attention of the thousands of people assembled there on this extraordinary event. Then He made this new born child speak out even in the cradle that he had been appointed a

Prophet. Though they had seen this wonderful sign of Allah, they rejected the Prophethood of Jesus and brought him to the court for crucifixion, and thus incurred the wrath of Allah. (For further details, please see Surah Aal-Imran E.Ns 44 and 53, and Surah An-Nisa E.Ns 212, 213).

34. Such is Jesus, son of Mary. (This is) a statement of truth, that in which they doubt.

ذَٰلِكَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۚ قَوْلَ
الْحَقِّ الَّذِي فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. It befits not for Allah that He should take anyone as a son. Glory be to Him. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, “Be” And it is.*²²

مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ مِنْ وَلَدٍ
سُبْحٰنَهُ ۗ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا
يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٣٥﴾

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

36. “And indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him.*²³ That is the straight path.”

وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَأَعْبُدُوهُ
هَٰذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾

***23** This declaration by Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) has been cited to tell the Christians that Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) also taught the same doctrine of Tauhid as was taught by all other Prophets. And it was they who had invented the doctrine of shirk by making him the son of God. (Please also refer to Aal-Imran E.N. 68, and Al-Maidah E.Ns 100, 101 and 130).

37. Then the factions have differed among themselves. ^{*24} So a dreadful woe for those who disbelieved, from the meeting of a tremendous Day.

فَاخْتَلَفَ الْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ
فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ مَّشْهَدِ
يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

***24** That is, the sects of the Christians.

38. (How well) they will hear and see on the Day they come to Us. But today the wrong doers are in error manifest.

أَسْمِعُ بِهِمْ وَأَبْصِرُ يَوْمَ يَأْتُونَنَا
لَكِنِ الظَّالِمُونَ الْيَوْمَ فِي ضَلَالٍ
مُبِينٍ

39. And (O Muhammad) warn them of the Day of anguish when the matter will be decided. And (now) they are in heedlessness, and they do not believe.

وَأَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْحَسْرَةِ إِذْ قُضِيَ
الْأَمْرُ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ وَهُمْ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ

40. Indeed, it is We who will inherit the earth and

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَرِثُ الْأَرْضَ وَمَنْ عَلَيْهَا

whatever is upon it. And to
Us they shall be returned.*25

وَالْيَنَّا يُرْجَعُونَ

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

(a) This address was sent down at the time when the persecuted Muslims of Makkah were going to migrate to a Christian kingdom so that they may present before the Christians the true Islamic creed about Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). This shows that the Muslims under no circumstances should conceal the truth,

(b) It shows a most wonderful moral courage of the Muslim migrants to Habash that they recited this address in the royal court at the critical moment, when the courtiers who had been bribed were bent on handing them over to their enemies. They indeed were faced with the real threat that this frank Islamic criticism of the basic articles of the Christian faith might turn the king against them and he might hand them over to the Quraish. But in spite of this, they presented the whole truth before the king without the least hesitation.

41. And mention in the Book,
Abraham.*26 Indeed, he was a
man of truth, a prophet.

وَأَذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّهُ

كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا

*26 From here the address is directed towards the people of Makkah, who had forced their own near and dear relatives

to emigrate from their homes, just as Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had been exiled by his own father and brethren. The story of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) has been selected for this purpose because the Quraish professed to accept him as their religious leader and were proud of being his descendants.

42. When he said to his father: “O my father, why do you worship that which does not hear and does not see, and cannot avail you in anything.”

إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ يَتَّبِعِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا
لَا يَسْمَعُ وَلَا يُبْصِرُ وَلَا يُغْنِي
عَنكَ شَيْئًا ﴿٤٢﴾

43. “O my father, indeed there has come to me of the knowledge that which has not come to you. So follow me, I will guide you to a straight path.”

يَتَّبِعِ إِنِّي قَدْ جَاءَنِي مِنَ
الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِكَ فَاتَّبِعْنِي
أَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا ﴿٤٣﴾

44. “O my father, do not worship Satan.*27 Indeed, Satan is disobedient to the Beneficent.”

يَتَّبِعِ لَّا تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّ
الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ عَصِيًّا ﴿٤٤﴾

*27 It should be noted that the literal translation of the Arabic text is: “Do not worship Satan”, though Abraham’s father and the other people did not worship Satan in the same sense as they worshiped idols. But as they followed and obeyed Satan, he accused them of worshipping Satan.

Thus it is clear that if somebody follows and obeys Satan, he virtually worships him. For Satan has never been a deity in the sense that people have made him an object of worship; nay, they have always been cursing him and following him at the same time. (For further details see Surah Al-Kahf E.Ns 49-50).

45. “O my father, indeed I fear that there would touch you a punishment from the Beneficent, so that you would become a companion of Satan.”

يَتَّابِتْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يَمَسَّكَ
عَذَابٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ فَتَكُونَ
لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيًّا ﴿٤٥﴾

46. He said: “Have you turned away from my gods, O Abraham. If you do not desist, I will surely stone you. And leave me a long while.”

قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ أَنْتَ عَنِ إِلَهِتِي
يَتَابِرَهِيمُ لَئِن لَّمْ تَنْتَهُ لَأَرْجُمَنَّكَ
وَأَهْجُرَنِي مَلِيًّا ﴿٤٦﴾

47. He (Abraham) said: “Peace be upon you. I shall ask forgiveness of my Lord for you.*27a Indeed, He is gracious to me.”

قَالَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ سَأَسْتَغْفِرُ
لَكَ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِي حَفِيًّا ﴿٤٧﴾

*27a For explanation, see Surah At-Taubah E.N. 112.

48. “And I shall withdraw from you and what you call upon other than Allah. And I shall call upon my Lord. It

وَأَعْتَزُّكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِن
دُونِ اللَّهِ وَأَدْعُوا رَبِّي عَسَىٰ أَلَّا

may be that I shall not be unblest, in calling unto my Lord.”

أَكُونُ بِدُعَاءِ رَبِّي شَقِيًّا ﴿٤٨﴾

49. So when he had withdrawn from them and that which they worshipped other than Allah, We gave him Isaac and Jacob. And each We made a prophet.

فَلَمَّا أَعْتَرَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ ۖ وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا نَبِيًّا ﴿٤٩﴾

50. And We bestowed on them of Our mercy, and We made for them a sublime tongue (for telling) truth.*28

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِنَا وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ عَلِيًّا ﴿٥٠﴾

*28 This is to give comfort to the migrants who had been forced to migrate from their homes. They were told that they would be honored and blessed with true renown just as Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had been blessed with true renown after his migration.

51. And mention in the Book, Moses. Indeed, he was chosen,*29 and he was a messenger, a prophet.*30

وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ مُوسَىٰ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مُخْلَصًا وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا ﴿٥١﴾

*29 The word used is *mukhlasan*, which means purified. In other words, Allah had specially chosen Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) for the mission of Prophethood.

*30 *Rasul* literally means the one who is sent; therefore it is used for an ambassador, envoy, messenger and

representative. The Quran has used this title for angels, who are sent by Allah on a special mission, or for the human beings who brought His Message to mankind.

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

The Quran does not necessarily differentiate between the use of the two titles, for sometimes it uses the title *Rasul* for one person at one place and the title *Nabi* for the same person at another place, and sometimes uses both the titles together for one and the same person. However, at some places each title has been used in a way as to show that there is some technical distinction between the two, though that has not been precisely marked out, except that every *Rasul* (Messenger) is a *Nabi* (Prophet) as well, but every *Nabi* may not be a *Rasul*, and that a *Rasul* has a special and more important mission to perform. This is supported by a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which has been reported by Imam Ahmad from Abu Umamah and by Hakim from Abu Zarr. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked how many Messengers and Prophets had been sent to the world, he said that the number of the Messengers was 313 or 315 and of the Prophets 124,000

52. And We called him from the right side^{*31} of the mount, and We brought him

وَنَدَيْنَاهُ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ

near to confide in.*³²

الْأَيْمَنَ وَقَرَّبْنَاهُ نَجِيًّا

***31** “The right side of the Mount” means the eastern side of the mountain. As Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), on his way from Midian to Egypt, was passing from the southern side of Mount Toor, the eastern side would lie on his right and the western on his left if he faced the mountain, otherwise a mountain by itself cannot have a right or a left side.

***32** See E.N. 206 of Surah An-Nisa.

53. And We bestowed on him out of Our mercy his brother Aaron, a prophet.

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ مِنْ رَحْمَتِنَا أَخَاهُ
هَارُونَ نَبِيًّا

54. And mention in the Book, Ishmael. Indeed, he was true to (his) promise, and he was a messenger, a prophet.

وَأذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ إِنَّهُ
كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُولًا
نَبِيًّا

55. And he used to enjoin on his family prayers and charity, and he was pleasing to his Lord.

وَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ أَهْلَهُ بِالصَّلَاةِ
وَالزَّكَاةِ وَكَانَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ مَرْضِيًّا

56. And mention in the Book, Idris.*³³ Indeed, he was a man of truth, a prophet.

وَأذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِدْرِيسَ إِنَّهُ
كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا

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

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

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

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

Receiving this Divine Command, Enoch left his seclusion and gathered the people together and preached to them what he had been commanded, with the result that they listened to him and adopted the worship of God. Enoch ruled over mankind for 353 years: his rule was based on

justice and truth, and consequently God favored mankind with all kinds of blessings." (H. Polano: The Talmud Selections, pp. 18-21)

57. And We raised him to high station.*34

وَرَفَعْنَاهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا ﴿٥٧﴾

*34 The plain meaning is that God had favored Idris with a high rank, but according to the Israelite traditions, God took up Idris (Enoch) to heavens. The Bible says: And he was not; for God took him, but the Talmud has a long story to tell, which ends with the words: Enoch ascended to heaven in a whirlwind, with chariot and horses of fire.

58. Those were they upon whom Allah bestowed favor from among the prophets, of the offspring of Adam, and of those whom We carried (on the ship) with Noah, and of the offspring of Abraham and Israel, and from among those whom We guided and chose. When the revelations of the Beneficent were recited unto them, they fell down prostrating and weeping.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ
مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَةِ آدَمَ
وَمِمَّنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ وَمِنْ
ذُرِّيَةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْرَائِيلَ وَمِمَّنْ
هَدَيْنَا وَأَجْتَبَيْنَا إِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ
آيَاتُ الرَّحْمَنِ خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا
وَبُكْيًا ﴿٥٨﴾

AsSajda

59. Then after them there followed a posterity, who have ruined the prayers*35 and have followed lusts.*36 So

﴿ فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ
أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا

they shall meet with the doom.

الشَّهَوَاتِ فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غَيًّا



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

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

60. Except those who repent and believe and do righteousness. So such shall enter Paradise, and they shall not be wronged in the least.

إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَأُولَئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا

61. Gardens of Eden, which the Beneficent has promised to His slaves in the unseen.^{*37} Indeed, His promise must come to pass.

جَنَّتِ عَدْنِ الَّتِي وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ عِبَادَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ وَعْدُهُ مَأْتِيًا

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

62. They shall not hear therein idle talk, except (greeting of) peace.^{*38} And they will have their sustenance therein, morning and evening.

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا إِلَّا سَلَامًا
وَهُمْ رِزْقُهُمْ فِيهَا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا



***38** The word used is *salam*, which means free from defect and fault. It implies to mean that the greatest blessing that man will enjoy in Paradise will be that there he will hear no idle, vile or indecent talk. All the dwellers of Paradise will be neat and clean and pure people and every individual will be gentle and right minded by nature. Everybody will be secure against backbiting, slander and indecent songs and other ugly sounds. Whatever men will hear will be good, sensible and right.

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

63. That is the Paradise which We give as an inheritance to those of Our slaves who are fearing (Allah).

تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي نُورِثُ مِنْ
عِبَادِنَا مَنْ كَانَ تَقِيًّا

64. And^{*39} We (angels) do not descend except by the

وَمَا نَنْزِلُ إِلَّا بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ لَهُ مَا

command of your Lord. To Him belongs what is before us and what is behind us and what is between those two, and your Lord is never forgetful.

بَيْنَ أَيْدِينَا وَمَا خَلْفَنَا وَمَا
بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ^ج وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ
نَسِيًّا



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

65. Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. So worship Him, and be steadfast in His worship.^{*40}
Do you know (any of)

رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا
بَيْنَهُمَا فَاعْبُدْهُ وَاصْطَبِرْ
لِعِبَادَتِهِ^ج هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُ سَمِيًّا

same name as He.^{*41}



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

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

66. And man says: “When I am dead, shall I be brought forth alive.”

وَيَقُولُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَإِذَا مَا مِتُّ
لَسَوْفَ أُخْرَجُ حَيًّا



67. Does not man remember that We created him before, and he was not a thing.

أَوَلَا يَذْكُرُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا
خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَمْ يَكُ شَيْئًا



68. So by your Lord, surely We shall gather them and the devils,^{*42} then We shall bring them around Hell upon their knees.

فَوَرَبِّكَ
وَالشَّيَاطِينِ ثُمَّ لَنُحْضِرَنَّهُمْ
حَوْلَ جَهَنَّمَ جِثِيًّا



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

69. Then indeed, We shall drag out from every sect all those who were worst against the Beneficent in rebellion. ^{*43}

ثُمَّ لَنَنْزِعَنَّ مِنْ كُلِّ شِيعَةٍ
أُيُومًا أَشَدُّ عَلَى الرَّحْمَنِ عِتِيًّا



***43** The leader of every rebel band.

70. Then certainly We know best of those who are most worthy of being burned therein.

ثُمَّ لَنَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِالَّذِينَ هُمْ أَوْلَى
بِهَا صِلِيًّا



71. And there is none among you except he will pass over it (Hell). ^{*44} That is upon your Lord, a decree which must be accomplished.

وَإِنْ مِّنكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا كَانَ
عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَّقْضِيًّا



***44** According to some traditions, “pass over it (Hell)” means to enter Hell, but none of these traditions is authentic. Then this interpretation goes against the Quran and a great many authentic traditions, which clearly state that the true believers will never be cast into Hell. Lexically also, *variduha* (being presented unto) is not synonymous with *dukhul* (causing to enter). Therefore, the correct meaning would be that every human being will be presented before Hell, but then, as the next verse clarifies,

the pious people will be rescued and the transgressors left therein on their knees.

72. Then We shall save those who used to fear (Allah). And We shall leave the wrongdoers therein on their knees.

ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَنَذَرُ
الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا جثيًا ﴿٧٢﴾

73. And when Our clear revelations are recited to them, those who disbelieve say to those who believe: “Which of the two groups has a better status and grander in assemblies.”*45

وَإِذَا تُلِيٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايٰتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ
قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
أَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ خَيْرٌ مَّقَامًا
وَأَحْسَنُ نَدِيًّا ﴿٧٣﴾

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

74. And how many a generation before them have We destroyed, who were better in wealth and

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ هُمْ
أَحْسَنُ أَثْنَآ وَرِءِيًّا ﴿٧٤﴾

(outward) appearance.

75. Say: “Whoever is in error, the Beneficent will surely prolong span (of his life) for him, until when they behold that which they were promised, either a punishment (this world), or the Hour (of Resurrection). Then they will know who it is, worst in position and weaker in forces.”

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الضَّلَالَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ
لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ مَدًّا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا
مَا يُوعَدُونَ إِمَّا الْعَذَابَ وَإِمَّا
السَّاعَةَ فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ
شَرُّ مَكَانًا وَأَضْعَفُ جُنْدًا



76. And Allah increases those who were guided, in guidance.*46 And the enduring righteous deeds are better with your Lord for reward, and better for resort.

وَيَزِيدُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا
هُدًى وَالْبَقِيَّةُ الصَّالِحَاتُ
خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ مَّرَدًّا



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

77. Then, have you seen him who disbelieved in Our verses and he said: “Assuredly I shall be given

أَفْرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ بِآيَاتِنَا
وَقَالَ لَأُوتِينَ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا

wealth and children.”*47



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

78. Has he obtained knowledge of the unseen, or has he taken a covenant with the Beneficent.

أَطَّلَعَ الْغَيْبِ أَمْ آتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ
الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا

79. Nay, We shall record what he says*48 and We shall increase for him a span of punishment.

كَلَّا سَنَكْتُبُ مَا يَقُولُ
وَنَمُدُّ لَهُ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ مَدًّا

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

80. And We shall inherit from him what he talks, and he shall come to Us alone.

وَنَرِيهِ مَا يَقُولُ وَيَأْتِينَا فَرْدًا

81. And they have taken other than Allah (false) gods that they may be a

وَأَتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ءَالِهَةً

strength for them.*49

لِيَكُونُوا لَهُمْ عِزًّا

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

82. Nay, they will deny their worship of them*50 and will become opponents against them.

كَلَّا سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضِدًّا

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

83. Do you not see that We have sent the devils upon the disbelievers who incite them (with great) incitement.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ تَؤُزُّهُمْ أَزًّا

84. So make no haste over them. We only count out to them a (limited) number (of days).*51

فَلَا تَعْجَلْ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّمَا نَعُدُّ لَهُمْ عَدًّا

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

85. The day We shall gather the righteous to the

يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ الْمُتَّقِينَ إِلَى الرَّحْمَنِ

Beneficent, like a delegate.

وَفَدًّا ٨٥

86. And We shall drive the criminals to Hell, like thirsty cattle.

وَنَسُوقُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ

وَرَدًّا ٨٦

87. They will have no power of intercession, except him who has made a covenant with the Beneficent.*52

لَا يَمْلِكُونَ الشَّفَعَةَ إِلَّا مَنِ

أَتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا ٨٧

*52 This implies two things:

(1) Intercession will be allowed only for the one who might have received permission for it from the Merciful, that is, the one who believed in Allah in the world and made himself deserving of His pardon.

(2) Only that one will be able to plead intercession who might have received permission for this from the Merciful, and not those ones whom people themselves had made their intercessors without any reason.

88. And they say: “The Beneficent has taken a son.”

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا ٨٨

89. Indeed, you have brought forth an atrocious thing.

لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِدًّا ٨٩

90. The heavens are almost torn therefrom, and the earth is split asunder, and the mountains fall in ruins.

تَكَادُ السَّمَوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ

وَتَنشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ

هَدًّا ٩٠

91. That they ascribe to the Beneficent a son.

أَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدًا ﴿٩١﴾

92. And it is not appropriate for (the Majesty of) the Beneficent that He should take a son.

وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ
وَلَدًا ﴿٩٢﴾

93. Every one who is in the heavens and the earth shall not come to the Beneficent, except as a slave.

إِنْ كُلٌّ مِّنَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتَى الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا ﴿٩٣﴾

94. Certainly. He encompasses them and has counted them a (full) counting.

لَقَدْ أَحْصَاهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا ﴿٩٤﴾

95. And each one of them will come to Him on the Day of Resurrection, alone.

وَكُلُّهُمْ آتِيهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَرْدًا ﴿٩٥﴾

96. Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds,^{*53} the Beneficent will bestow love for them.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ
الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا ﴿٩٦﴾

***53** This is to comfort the righteous people who were being persecuted and insulted in the streets of Makkah. They are being assured that the time is coming near when the people

will honor and love them because of their righteous deeds and good conduct. Hearts will be attracted towards them and the world will hold them in high esteem. And this will happen according to a universal principle. Those who are wicked, proud and haughty and try to rule over the people with falsehood and hypocrisy can never captivate the hearts of the people. On the other hand, those who invite the people to the right way with truth, honesty, sincerity and good conduct succeed in winning their hearts in the end, even though at first they might have to face the indifference and opposition of the dishonest people.

97. So, We have only made this (Quran) easy in your tongue that you may give good tidings therewith to those who are righteous, and warn with it a contentious people.

فَإِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنَاهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لِتُبَشِّرَ
بِهِ الْمُتَّقِينَ وَتُنذِرَ بِهِ قَوْمًا
لُدًّا



98. And how many of generations have We destroyed before them. Do you perceive any one of them, or you hear a whisper of them.

وَكَمَ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُم مِّن قَرْنٍ هَلْ
تُحِسُّ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَوْ تَسْمَعُ
لَهُمْ رِكْرًا





ظه Taaha

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah takes its name from its first word *TaaHa*. This name, like the names of many other Surahs, is merely symbolic.

Period of Revelation

The period of its revelation is the same as of Surah Maryam. It is just possible that it was revealed during the migration to Habash or just after it. Anyhow, it is certain that this Surah was revealed before Umar embraced Islam. According to a well known and authentic tradition when Umar set out to kill the Prophet (peace be upon him), he met a certain person, who said: Before you do anything else, you should know that your own sister and brother-in-law have embraced Islam. Hearing this, he directly went to the house of his sister. There he found his sister, Fatimah, and his brother-in-law, Said bin Zaid, learning the contents of a scroll from Khabbab bin Art. When Fatimah saw him coming she hid the scroll at once, but Umar had heard the recital, so he began to interrogate them about it. Then he began to thrash his brother-in-law, and wounded his sister, who tried to protect him. At last both of them confessed,

“We have become Muslims; you may do whatever you like.” As Umar was moved to see blood running down from her head, he said: Show me the thing you were reading. The sister asked him to promise on oath that he would not tear it, and added: You cannot touch it unless you have a bath. Accordingly, Umar took his bath and when he began to read the scroll, which contained this Surah, he spontaneously spoke out: What an excellent thing! At this Khabbab, who had hidden himself at the sound of his footsteps, came out of his hiding and said: By God, I have high expectations that Allah will get great service from you to propagate the message of His Prophet (peace be upon him), for just yesterday I heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) praying to Allah: My Lord, make Abul Hakam bin Hisham (Abu Jahl) or Umar bin Khattab a supporter of Islam. So O Umar, turn to Allah, turn to Allah. These words proved to be so persuasive that he at once accompanied Khabbab and went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to embrace Islam. This happened a short time after the migration to Habash.

Theme and Topics of Discussion

This Surah begins with the enunciation of the object of the revelation of the Quran to this effect: O Muhammad, this Quran has not been sent down to you to put you unnecessarily through some great affliction. It does not demand from you to perform the impossible task of imbuing the hearts of the obdurate disbelievers with faith. It is merely an admonition meant to guide on to the right path those who fear God and want to save themselves from

His punishment. This Quran is the Word of the Master of the earth and the heavens and Godhead belongs to Him alone. These two facts are eternal whether one believes them or not.

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

1. Allah does not appoint a Prophet by the beat of drums or by celebrating the occasion in a regular and formal ceremony, as if to say: We are appointing such and such a person as Our Prophet from today. On the contrary, He bestows Prophethood in a confidential manner just as He did in the case of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). Therefore you should not consider it strange if Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been appointed as a Prophet all of a sudden and without any public proclamation.

2. The fundamental principles presented by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Tauhid and the

Hereafter are just the same as were taught to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) at the time of his appointment.

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

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

5. An incident from the story of the Israelites has been cited to show in what ridiculous manner the idolization of false gods and goddesses starts and that the Prophets of God do not tolerate even the slightest tinge of this preposterous practice. Likewise, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is following the former Prophets in opposing shirk and idol worship today.

Thus, the story of Moses (peace be upon him) has been used to shed light on all those matters which were connected with the conflict between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Quraish. Then at the end of the story, the Quraish have been briefly admonished, as if to say: The Quran has been sent down in your tongue for your own good. If you listen to it and follow its admonition, you will be doing so for your own good but if you reject it, you will meet with an evil end.

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

In the end, the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Muslims have been advised not to be impatient in regard to the punishment to the disbelievers, as if to say: Allah has

His Own scheme concerning them. He does not seize them at once but gives them sufficient respite. Therefore you should not grow impatient but bear the persecutions with fortitude and go on conveying the message.

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

1. Ta. Ha.

طه

2. We have not sent down to you (Muhammad) the Quran that you should be distressed.

مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَىٰ

٢

3. But as a reminder for those who fear (Allah).^{*1}

إِلَّا تَذَكِرَةٌ لِّمَن يَخْشَىٰ

^{*1} This verse makes plain the meaning of the previous one. The object of the revelation of the Quran is not to make the Prophet (peace be upon him) do something impossible and to put him to unnecessary distress by demanding from him to imbue the hearts of the obdurate people with faith, but to admonish those people who have fear of Allah. Therefore the Prophet (peace be upon him) should not waste his efforts on those people who have no fear of God left in them, and who do not bother at all about what is truth and what is falsehood.

4. A revelation from Him who created the earth and

تَنْزِيلًا مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ

the high heavens.

وَالسَّمَوَاتِ الْعُلَى ﴿٤﴾

5. The Beneficent, (He is) on the Throne, established.*2

الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى



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

6. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens, and whatever is on the earth, and whatever is between them, and whatever is beneath the soil.

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمَا تَحْتَ الثَّرَى ﴿٦﴾

7. And if you speak out aloud, then indeed He knows the secret and (what is yet) more hidden.*3

وَإِنْ تَجَهَّرَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَإِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ وَأَخْفَى ﴿٧﴾

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

8. Allah, there is no god except Him. His are the most beautiful names.*4

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى ﴿٨﴾

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

9. And has there come to you the story of Moses.

وَهَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى

10. When he saw a fire,^{*5} so he said to his family: “Wait, indeed, I see a fire, perhaps I may bring to you from it some burning brand, or I may find guidance at the fire.”^{*6}

إِذْ رَأَى نَارًا فَقَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا
إِنِّي ءَأَنْتُمْ نَارًا لَعَلِّي ءَأْتِيكُمْ
مِنْهَا بِقَبَسٍ أَوْ أَجْدُ عَلَى النَّارِ
هُدًى

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

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

11. Then when he came to it, he was called: "O Moses"

فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا نُودِيَ يَمُوسَىٰ

12. "Indeed, I am your Lord, so take off your shoes.*7 Indeed, you are in a sacred valley of Tuwa."*8

إِنِّي أَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ
إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى

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

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

*8 In general, the commentators are of the opinion that Tuwa was the name of the valley, but according to some, it is the valley that had been made sacred for the time being.

13. “And I have chosen you, so listen to that which is inspired.”

وَأَنَا آخَرْتُكَ فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا

يُوحَىٰ

14. “Indeed, I am Allah, there is no god except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance.”*9

إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا

فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ

لِدِكْرِي

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

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

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

asleep. The sin is that one should neglect his prayer intentionally while awake. Therefore if one forgets to offer a prayer or remained asleep, he should offer that prayer on remembering it or on awaking. (Tirmizi, Nasai, Abu Daud).

15. “Indeed, the Hour is coming. I will keep it hidden, so that every soul may be recompensed for what it strives.”*10

إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ أَكَادُ أَخْفِيهَا
لَتُجْزَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا تَسْعَى



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

16. “So do not let him turn you away from it who does not believe in it, and follows his desire, lest you then perish.”

فَلَا يَصُدَّنَّكَ عَنْهَا مَنْ لَا يُؤْمِنُ
بِهَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَتَرْدَى



17. “And what is that in your right hand, O Moses.”*11

وَمَا تِلْكَ بِيَمِينِكَ يَمْوَسَىٰ



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

18. He (Moses) said: “This is my staff, I lean upon it, and I shake down leaves with it for my sheep, and for me there are other uses with it.”*12

قَالَ هِيَ عَصَايَ أَتَوَكَّؤُا
عَلَيْهَا وَأَهْبُشُ بِهَا عَلَىٰ غَنَمِي
وَلِي فِيهَا مَعَارِبُ أُخْرَىٰ



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

19. He (Allah) said: “Throw it down, O Moses.”

قَالَ أَلْقَهَا يَمْوَسَىٰ



20. So he threw it down, then behold, it was a serpent, moving swiftly.

فَأَلْقَهَا فَإِذَا هِيَ حَيَّةٌ تَسْعَىٰ



21. He (Allah) said: “Seize it and do not fear. We

قَالَ خُذْهَا وَلَا تَخَفْ

ص

shall return it to its former state.”

سُنِعِيدُهَا سِيرَتَهَا الْأُولَى ﴿٢١﴾

22. “And draw in your hand to your side, it will come out white without disease,^{*13} another sign.”

وَأَضْمُمُ يَدَكَ إِلَى جَنَاحِكَ
تَخْرُجُ بَيَضَاءً مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ ءَايَةً
أُخْرَى ﴿٢٢﴾

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

23. “That We may show you of Our greater signs.”

لِنُرِيكَ مِنْ ءَايَاتِنَا الْأَكْبَرَى ﴿٢٣﴾

24. “Go to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed.”

أَذْهَبْ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى ﴿٢٤﴾

25. He said: “My Lord, open up for me my chest.”^{*14}

قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي ﴿٢٥﴾

***14** That is, fill my heart with the courage that may enable me to perform the obligations connected with the great mission of a Messenger, and give me the confidence for its fulfillment. Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) prayed for this because he realized the grave responsibilities of the great mission.

26. “And ease for me my task.”

وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي ﴿٢٦﴾

27. “And untie the knot from my tongue.”

وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّن لِّسَانِي ﴿٢٧﴾

28. “That they may understand my speech.”^{*15}

يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي ﴿٢٨﴾

***15** Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) prayed to Allah for this because he was conscious that he was not a fluent speaker but was slow of speech. He also knew that as a Messenger he would have to be fluent in order to impress Pharaoh and his courtiers. This is confirmed by the Bible (Exodus 4: 10) but the Talmud gives a strange explanation for this impediment in his speech. According to it, when he was a child he burnt his tongue with a live coal to escape punishment from Pharaoh whose crown he had taken off from his head and put it on his own head. The same story has been adopted by many of our commentators though it is absurd on the face of it. Our interpretation is also confirmed by the Quran. The fact is, that at first he was not a fluent speaker and Pharaoh had also taunted him on this impediment. (Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayat 52). Prophet Moses realized the same for he said: My brother Aaron is more

fluent than me, so send him with me as a helper, so that he may support me (with his fluent speech). (Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 34). Afterwards this impediment in his speech was removed and he was able to deliver very fluent speeches. This may be testified by his speeches which have been cited both in the Bible and in the Quran for they are masterpieces of eloquence and rhetoric.

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

29. “And appoint for me an assistant from my family.”

وَأَجْعَلْ لِي وَزِيرًا مِّنْ أَهْلِي ﴿٢٩﴾

30. “Aaron, my brother.”*16

هَارُونَ أَخِي ﴿٣٠﴾

*16 Prophet Aaron was three years older than Prophet Moses (peace be upon them). (Exodus7:7).

31. “Increase through him my strength.”

أَشْدِدْ بِهِ أَمْرِي ﴿٣١﴾

32. “And let him share in my task.”

وَأَشْرِكْهُ فِي أَمْرِي ﴿٣٢﴾

33. “That we may glorify You much.”

كَيْ نُسَبِّحَكَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾

34. “And remember You much.”

وَنذُكْرَكَ كَثِيرًا

35. “Indeed, You are ever seeing at us.”

إِنَّكَ كُنْتَ بِنَا بَصِيرًا

36. He (Allah) said: “Indeed, you have been granted your request, O Moses.”

قَالَ قَدْ أُوتِيتَ سُؤْلَكَ يَا مُوسَىٰ

37. “And indeed, We have done favor upon you another time.”*17

وَلَقَدْ مَنَّا عَلَيْكَ مَرَّةً أُخْرَىٰ

*17 Allah recounts the favors He had shown to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) since his birth in order to impress upon him the fact that he had been brought up under divine care right from his birth for the purpose of appointing him as a Messenger. Here mere references have been made but in Surah Al-Qasas details of the favors have been given.

38. “When We inspired to your mother that which is inspired.”

إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّكَ مَا يُوحَىٰ

39. (Saying): “That put him into the chest, then put it into the river, then the river shall cast it onto the bank. There shall take him an enemy to Me and an enemy to him.

أَنْ أَقْدِفِيهِ فِي التَّابُوتِ فَاقْدِفِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ فَلْيُلْقِهِ الْيَمُّ بِالسَّاحِلِ يَأْخُذْهُ عَدُوٌّ لِّي وَعَدُوٌّ لَهُ

And I bestowed upon you love from Me, and that you would be brought up under My sight.”

وَأَلْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مِّنِّي
وَلِتُصْنَعَ عَلَى عَيْنِي ﴿٣٦﴾

40. “When your sister went and she said: ‘Shall I direct you to someone who will be responsible for him.’ So We restored you to your mother, that she might cool her eyes and she might not grieve. And you did kill a man, then We saved you from great distress, and We tried you with a trial. Then you stayed (some) years among the people of Midian. Then you came (now) at (the time) ordained, O Moses.”

إِذْ تَمْشِي أُخْتُكَ فَتَقُولُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ مَن يَكْفُلُهُ
فَرَجَعْنَاكَ إِلَىٰ أُمِّكَ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ ۗ وَقَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا فَنَجَّيْنَاكَ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَفَتَنَّاكَ فُتُونًا ۚ فَلَبِثْتَ سِنِينَ فِي أَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ ثُمَّ جِئْتَ عَلَىٰ قَدَرٍ يَمْوسَىٰ ﴿٤٠﴾

41. “And I have chosen you for Myself.”

وَأَصْطَفَيْتُكَ لِنَفْسِي ﴿٤١﴾

42. “Go, you and your brother, with My signs, and do not slacken in My remembrance.”

أَذْهَبَ أَنْتَ وَأَخُوكَ بِآيَاتِي وَلَا تِنْيَا فِي ذِكْرِي ﴿٤٢﴾

43. “Go both of you to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed.”

أَذْهَبَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَىٰ ﴿٤٣﴾

44. “Then speak to him a gentle speech, that perhaps he may take heed or fear (Allah).”^{*18}

فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ
يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَىٰ

***18** The only two ways of bringing a man to the right way are:

- (1) To convince him by argument and admonition, or
- (2) To warn him of the consequences of deviation.

45. They^{*18a} (Moses and Aaron) said: “Our Lord, indeed, we fear that he may commit excesses against us, or that he may transgress all bounds.”

قَالَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا نَخَافُ أَنْ يُفْرِطَ
عَلَيْنَا أَوْ أَنْ يَطْغَىٰ

***18a** It appears that they implored Allah thus before going before Pharaoh when Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had reached Egypt and Aaron had joined him in the propagation of the mission.

46. He (Allah) said: “Do not fear, indeed, I am with you both, I hear and I see.”

قَالَ لَا تَخَافَا ۖ إِنِّي مَعَكُمَا
أَسْمَعُ وَأَرَىٰ

47. So go you both to him and say: “Indeed, we are messengers of your Lord, so send with us the Children of Israel, and do not punish them. We have indeed come to you with a sign from

فَأْتِيَاهُ فَقُولَا إِنَّا رَسُولَا رَبِّكَ
فَارْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلَا
تُعَذِّبْهُمْ ۖ قَدْ جِئْنَاكَ بِآيَةٍ مِّن

your Lord. And peace will be upon him who follows the guidance.”

رَّبِّكَ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ مِنْ أَتَّبَع
أَهْدَى ٤٧

48. “Indeed, it has been revealed to us that the punishment will be upon him who denies and turns away.”*19

إِنَّا قَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْنَا أَنَّ الْعَذَابَ
عَلَيَّ مَنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى ٤٨

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

priesthood and bestowed it on the descendants of Aaron (peace be upon him). These two versions depict Allah to be suffering from human weaknesses and Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) from inferiority complex.

49. He (Pharaoh)^{*20} said:
“Who then is your Lord, O
Moses.”^{*21}

قَالَ فَمَنْ رَبُّكُمْ يَا مُوسَىٰ

***20** Here the details have been omitted. These have been given in Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats: 103-108; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 10-33; Surah Al-Qasas, Ayats 28-40; Surah An-Naziat, Ayats 15-25.

As regards to the necessary information about Pharaoh, see E.N. 85 of Surah Al-Aaraf.

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

As regards to the implication of this question of Pharaoh, he meant to say: You say that you have brought a message from my Lord to me. Who is that Lord? You should know that I am the Lord of Egypt and the people of Egypt. In regards to this claim of his, see Surah An-Naziat, Ayat 24; Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayat 51; Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 38 and Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayat 29.

It may also be noted that by this claim Pharaoh did not mean to say that he was the sole deity of his people nor did it mean that none other was worshiped in Egypt. As a

matter of fact, he himself based his right of sovereignty on his claim of being the incarnation of the sun god. And we also learn from the history of Egypt that there were many other gods and goddesses. In fact, what he claimed was that he was politically the Lord of not only Egypt but also of the whole of mankind theoretically. Therefore, he would not acknowledge that there was any supreme sovereign over him whose delegate might bring an order to him and demand its obedience from him.

50. He said: “Our Lord is He^{*22} who gave to every thing its nature, then guided (it).”^{*23}

قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى



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

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

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

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

(3) Then He has guided everything aright to function

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

Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) employed this concise and meaningful sentence to convey the message to Pharaoh and his people. He not only gave a suitable reply to Pharaoh as to who his Lord was, but also told him why He was his Lord, and how there was no other lord but God. The argument implied in it was this: As Pharaoh and every one of his subjects was obliged to Allah for his human form and could not live even for a moment without the functioning of the different parts of his body which were performing their functions in accordance with the guidance of Allah, so Pharaoh's claim that he was the lord of the people was absurd, and its acknowledgment by his people that he was their lord, a folly.

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

51. He said: "What then is the state of the generations

قَالَ فَمَا بَالُ الْقُرُونِ الْأُولَىٰ

of old.”*24



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

52. He said: “The knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a Record. My Lord does not err, nor does He forget.”*25

قَالَ عَلَّمَهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي فِي كِتَابٍ
لَّا يَضِلُّ رَبِّي وَلَا يَنْسَى

*25 This answer is full of wisdom. If Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had said: Yes, they all lacked common sense and had gone astray and would become the fuel of Hell, this answer, though true, would have served the very purpose Pharaoh had in mind in putting the question. But the answer given by the Prophet was true and it frustrated the

trick of Pharaoh as well. His answer was to this effect: Well, those people have now gone before their Lord, and I have no means of judging their deeds and intentions. However, their whole record is safe and secure with Allah, and nothing can escape Him. Allah alone knows how to deal with them. What concerns you and me is our own position and attitude to life. We should be more concerned about our own end than of those who have already passed away into Allah's presence.

53. “(He it is)^{*26} who has made for you the earth as a bed (spread), and made for you in it roadways, and sent down water from the sky.” Then We brought forth through it species of diverse plants.

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا
وَسَلَكَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا وَأَنْزَلَ
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ
أَزْوَاجًا مِّنْ نَّبَاتٍ شَتَّى



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

54. Eat you and pasture your cattle. Indeed, in that there are certainly signs for those of understanding.^{*27}

كُلُوا وَارْعَوْا أَنْعَامَكُمْ إِنَّ فِي
ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ



*27 That is, those who use their common sense in their

search for the truth, find a way to the reality by the help of these signs, which clearly show that the universe has One Lord Who alone is sustaining it, and there is no room here for any other lord.

55. From it We created you, and into it We shall return you, and from it We shall bring you out another time.*28

﴿ مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ
﴿ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَى ﴾

*28 That is, every man has to pass through three stages:

(1) From birth to death.

(2) From death to Resurrection, and

(3) From the Day of Resurrection to Eternity. According to this verse, all the three stages will take place on this earth.

56. And indeed, We showed him (Pharaoh) Our signs,*29 all of them, but he denied and refused.

﴿ وَقَدْ أَرَيْنَاهُ ءَايَاتِنَا كُلَّهَا
﴿ فَكَذَّبَ وَأَبَى ﴾

*29 “Signs” comprised those arguments which were based on natural phenomena and human life and those miracles which were given to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). These arguments are contained in the speeches of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) which he delivered before Pharaoh, and the miracles which he showed and are mentioned at several places in the Quran.

57. He said: “Have you come to us that you drive us out of our land with your magic, O Moses.”*30

﴿ قَالَ أَجِئْتَنَا لِتُخْرِجَنَا مِنْ
﴿ أَرْضِنَا بِسِحْرِكَ يَا مُوسَى ﴾

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

please see E.Ns 87-89 of Surah Al-Aaraf; E.N. 75 of Surah Younus).

58. “Then we will surely bring you magic the like thereof. So make between us and you an appointment, which we shall not fail to keep, (neither) we, nor you, in an open wide place.”

فَلَنَأْتِيَنَّكَ
بِسِحْرٍ مِّثْلِهِ
فَأَجْعَلْ بَيْنَنَا
وَبَيْنَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَّا
مُخْلِفُهُ رَحْنٌ
وَلَا أَنْتَ مَكَانًا
سُوَّى

59. He (Moses) said: “Your appointment shall be the day of the festival, and let the people be assembled at mid morning.”*31

قَالَ مَوْعِدُكُمْ
يَوْمُ الزَّيْنَةِ
وَأَنْ يُحْشَرَ
النَّاسُ ضُحَى

*31 The object of Pharaoh was this: Once the sorcerers are able to transform the staffs and ropes into serpents, the entire effect of the miracle performed by Moses (peace be upon him) would disappear from the people’s minds. That was exactly to Moses’ (peace be upon him) advantage, who suggested that it was no good fixing an ordinary day or place for the purpose. The Day of the Feast was at hand. People would flock on that occasion from all corners of the empire. Therefore, the encounter should be held in the open so that all might witness it, and in the day time so that everyone should be able to see it clearly.

60. So Pharaoh withdrew, then he devised his plot, then came.*32

فَتَوَلَّى فِرْعَوْنُ
فَجَمَعَ كَيْدَهُ
ثُمَّ أَتَى

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

Here one should bear in mind the fact that the religion of the royal family and the elite of Egypt was much different from that of the common people. They had separate gods and temples and different creeds and concepts about the life after death. They also differed in the practice of religion as well as in the ideologies. (Toynbee: A Study of History: Somervell's Abridgment Vols. I-VI, pp. 31-32). Moreover, there were sufficiently strong pockets of the population, who under the influence of various religious upheavals, were prone to prefer Monotheism to a creed of polytheism. Besides this, there was also a fairly large element of the worshipers of One God for the Israelites and their fellow believers were at least ten per cent of the total population. Pharaoh also remembered that about 150 years earlier a religious revolution had been brought about by Pharaoh Amenophis IV or Akhenaton (1377-1360 B.C.) by military

force, which had abolished all deities except Aton, a single, universal god, which was worshiped by the king and his family. Though this religious revolution had been reversed later by another king, yet its influence retrained, and Pharaoh dreaded that Moses (peace be upon him) might bring about yet another revolution.

61. Moses said to them (magicians):^{*33} “Woe unto you, do not invent a lie against Allah,^{*34} lest He should destroy you by a punishment. And surely, he will fail who invents a lie.”

قَالَ لَهُمْ مُوسَىٰ وَيْلَكُمْ لَا
تَفْتَرُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا
فَيُسْحِتَكُم بِعَذَابٍ وَقَدْ خَابَ
مَنْ أَفْتَرَىٰ

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

***34** The inventing of lie was that they had dubbed Allah’s Messenger as a sorcerer and his miracles as a piece of sorcery.

62. So they disputed their affair among themselves, and they kept secret the private counsel.^{*35}

فَتَنَزَعُوا أَمْرَهُم بَيْنَهُمْ وَأَسْرُوا
النَّجْوَىٰ

***35** This shows that those people felt in their hearts that their position was weak and knew that the miracle shown by Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was not a piece of magic. Therefore, they had come for the encounter with

hesitation and fear. But when the timely, sudden warning of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) shook them to the core, they began to debate the wisdom of holding the encounter on the Feast Day in an open place in the broad day light. For they thought that if they were defeated in the presence of the common people, all would come to know of the difference between magic and a miracle and they would lose the battle once for all.

63. They said:^{*36} “Indeed, these are two magicians, they intend that they drive you out from your land with their magic, and do away with your exemplary traditions.”^{*37}

قَالُوا إِنَّ هَٰذَيْنِ لَسَٰحِرَانِ
يُرِيدَانِ أَنْ يُخْرِجَاكَ مِنْ
أَرْضِكَ بِسِحْرِهِمَا وَيَذْهَبَا
بِطَرِيقَتِكُمُ الْمُثَلَّىٰ



***36** Those who were of this view must have been a few fanatics of Pharaoh’s party who were prepared to go to any extent to oppose Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). Those people must have been preparing the public for a determined encounter, while the reasonable people among them must have been advising caution and restraint.

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

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

(2) If, on the other hand, Moses (peace be upon him) won, the rulers would lose their country, and their ideal way of

life, which reflected their culture, their arts, their civilization, their recreations, etc. would automatically come to an end. Therefore they should do all they could to defeat Moses (peace be upon him).

64. “So resolve upon your plot, then come in rank.^{*38} And certainly he will succeed this day who is uppermost.”^{*39}

فَأَجْمِعُوا كَيْدَكُمْ ثُمَّ آتُوا صَفًّا وَقَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْيَوْمَ مَنْ أَسْتَعَلَى



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

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

65. They said: “O Moses, either that you throw, or that we will be the first who throw.”

قَالُوا يَمْوَسَىٰ إِمَّا أَنْ تُلْقَىٰ وَإِمَّا أَنْ نَكُونَ أَوْلَ مَنْ أَلْقَىٰ



66. He said: “Rather, you throw.” Then behold, their ropes and their staffs appeared to him, from their magic, as though they moved (like snakes).^{*40}

قَالَ بَلْ أَلْقُوا ۚ فَإِذَا حِبَالُهُمْ وَعِصِيُّهُمْ يُخَيَّلُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ سِحْرِهِمْ أَنَّهَا تَسْعَىٰ



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

67. So Moses conceived a fear within himself.*41

فَأَوْجَسَ فِي نَفْسِهِ خِيفَةً

مُوسَى

***41** It appears that no sooner did Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) say: Cast down, the magicians immediately cast their staffs and cords and it seemed as if hundreds of serpents were running towards him, and he instinctively felt a dread of them. And there is nothing strange in this because a Prophet is after all a human being. Besides this, it is also possible that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) apprehended that the demonstration of the magic might create a misunderstanding among the people about his miracle.

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

temporarily from the effect of magic.

68. We said: “Do not fear, indeed, it is you who will prevail.”

قُلْنَا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
الْأَعْلَى

69. “And throw what is in your right hand, it will swallow up what they have crafted.*42 What they have crafted is only a trick of a magician. And the magician will not succeed wherever he is.”

وَأَلْقِ مَا فِي يَمِينِكَ تَلْقَفْ مَا
صَنَعُوا إِنَّمَا صَنَعُوا كَيْدٌ
سَاحِرٌ وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُ
حَيْثُ أَتَى

*42 This is capable of two interpretations:

(1) The staff, which was turned into a dragon by a miracle, actually swallowed up all the staffs and cords which had been made to appear as serpents.

(2) The dragon of the staff did not actually swallow up the serpents of the magicians but wiped out the effect of their magic from these things and they again became ordinary cords and staffs.

We prefer the second interpretation because the wording of Surahs Al-Aaraf, Ayat 117 and Ash-Shuara, Ayat 45 is this: It swallowed up their false magic. And here the wording is: It will swallow up what they have crafted. Obviously, the staffs and cords were not their creation but the magic which had made them appear like serpents.

70. So the magicians fell down in prostration.*43 They

فَأَلْقَى السَّحْرَةَ سُجَّدًا قَالُوا

said: “We have believed in the Lord of Aaron and Moses.”*44

ءَامَنَّا بِرَبِّ هَارُونَ وَمُوسَى

*43 When they saw the power of the staff of Moses (peace be upon him), they involuntarily fell prostrate as if someone had made them do so, because they were convinced that it was a miracle and not a feat of magic.

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

It is obvious that the defeat turned the tables on Pharaoh who had himself arranged the encounter to expose Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). He had mustered all his magicians with a view to demonstrating before the public

that there was nothing extraordinary in turning a staff into a serpent for this could be done by any magician. But the defeat of the magicians and their acknowledgment testified that Moses (peace be upon him) was really a Messenger of Allah and the transformation of the staff was not a feat of magic but a miracle.

71. He (Pharaoh) said: “Believe you in him before that I give permission to you. Indeed, He is your chief who taught you magic.^{*45} So surely, I shall cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides,^{*46} and I shall surely crucify you on the trunks of palm trees,^{*47} and you shall know for certain which of us is more severe in (giving) punishment and more enduring.”^{*48}

قَالَ ءَامَنْتُمْ لَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ ءَاذَنَ
لَكُمْ إِنَّهُ لَكَبِيرُكُمُ الَّذِي
عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ فَلَأُقَطِّعَنَّ
أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِّنْ خَلْفٍ
وَلَأُصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ فِي جُذُوعِ النَّخْلِ
وَلَتَعْلَمُنَّ أَيُّنَا أَشَدُّ عَذَابًا وَأَبْقَى



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

revolution in the country.

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

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

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

72. They said: “We shall never prefer you above what has come to us of the clear proofs,^{*49} and (above) Him who created us. So decree whatever you will decree. You can only decree (regarding) this life of the world.”

قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْتِرَكَ عَلَىٰ مَا جَاءَنَا
مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالَّذِي فَطَرَنَا
فَاقْضِ مَا أَنْتَ قَاضٍ إِنَّمَا
تَقْضِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا



*49 It may also be interpreted like this: It cannot be that we

should prefer you to these plain signs which have come before us and to that Being Who has created us.

73. “Indeed, We have believed in our Lord, that He may forgive us our faults, and that upon which you have compelled us, of the magic. And Allah is better and more enduring.”

إِنَّا ءَامَنَّا بِرَبِّنَا لِيَغْفِرَ لَنَا
خَطِيئَتَنَا وَمَا أَكْرَهْتَنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنْ
السِّحْرِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ

74. Indeed,^{*50} he who comes to his Lord as a criminal, then surely, for him is Hell. He will neither die therein nor live.^{*51}

إِنَّهُ مِنْ يَأْتِ رَبَّهُ مُجْرِمًا فَإِنَّ
لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا
يَحْيَىٰ

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

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

75. And he who comes to Him as a believer, who has indeed done righteous deeds. Then for such there will be the high ranks (in the Hereafter).

وَمَنْ يَأْتِهِ مُؤْمِنًا قَدْ عَمِلَ
الصَّالِحَاتِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ
الدَّرَجَاتُ الْعُلَىٰ

76. Gardens of Eden, beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. And that is the reward for those who purify themselves.

جَنَّتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ
جَزَاءُ مَنْ تَزَكَّى ﴿٧٦﴾

77. And indeed,^{*52} We inspired to Moses, (saying): “That travel by night with My slaves, then strike for them a dry path through the sea,^{*53} you will not fear being overtaken (by Pharaoh), nor be afraid (of drowning).”

وَلَقَدْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَسْرِ
بِعِبَادِي فَأَضْرِبْ لَهُمْ طَرِيقًا فِي
الْبَحْرِ يَبَسًا لَا تَخَفُ دَرَكًا وَلَا
تَخْشَىٰ ﴿٧٧﴾

***52** Here the details of the events which happened during the long period of Prophet Moses' (peace be upon him) stay in Egypt have been omitted. For these please see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 130-147, Surah Yunus, Ayats 83-92; Surah Al-Momin, Ayats 23-50 and Surah Az-Zukhuruf 46-56.

***53** This happened when God at last appointed a night for the exodus of the Israelites and the other Muslims from Egypt. They were asked to gather at a fixed place and set forth as a caravan. Just at the time when they reached the coast of the Red Sea from where they had to cross to the Sinai Peninsula, Pharaoh arrived there with a large army in their pursuit. We learn from Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 61-63 that when they were literally between the army and the deep sea, Allah commanded Moses (peace be upon him)

to smite the sea with his staff and according to this verse the sea split and stood like two high walls on both sides, leaving a dry path between them for the caravan to pass. Thus, it is quite clear and plain that it was a miracle, and not the result of a wind storm or tide, for when the water rises in this way it does not remain standing like two high walls, leaving a dry path between them. (For details see E.N. 47 of Surah Ash-Shuara).

78. So Pharaoh pursued them with his forces, then covered them of the sea water that which did cover them. ^{*54}

فَاتَّبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ
بِجُنُودِهِ
فَغَشِيَهُمْ مِّنَ الْيَمِّ مَا غَشِيَهُمْ

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

79. And Pharaoh led his people astray, and he did not guide. ^{*55}

وَأَضَلَّ فِرْعَوْنُ قَوْمَهُ
وَمَا هَدَىٰ

***55** This was a subtle warning to the disbelievers of Makkah, as if to say: Your chiefs and leaders are leading you on the same way on which Pharaoh led his people. Now

you can see yourselves that he did not guide them aright. In conclusion, it will be worthwhile to consider the version as given in the Bible, for this will make it plain that it is absolutely false and ridiculous to say that the Quran has copied these stories from the Israelite traditions. We learn from Exodus the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground. And the waters were a wall unto them, on their right hand, and on their left. It is not clear whether the sea was divided by a miracle or by a strong east wind which incidentally has never been known to divide the sea into two parts leaving a dry path between them.

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

80. O Children of Israel,^{*56} indeed, We delivered you from your enemy, and We made a covenant with you on the right side of the mount,^{*57} and^{*58} We sent down to you the manna and the quails.^{*59}

يَبْنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ قَدْ أَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ
عَدُوِّكُمْ وَوَعَدْنَاكُمْ جَانِبَ
الْطُّورِ الْأَيْمَنِ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ
الْمَنَّاءَ وَالسَّلْوَى



***56** The part of the story relating to their journey from the Red Sea to the foot of Mount Toor has been omitted. This has already been given in Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 138-147. It has also been stated there that the Israelites said to Moses:

O Moses, make a god for us like the gods these people have. (See Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 138 and its E.N. 98).

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

*58 According to Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 51 and Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 142, Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and the chiefs of the Israelites were summoned to Mount Toor for receiving the divine commandments on stone tablets for the guidance of the people. (See E.N. 71 of Surah Al-Baqarah).

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

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

In Numbers, the following details have been given:

And the people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and

made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil. And when the dew fell upon the camp in the bight, the manna fell upon it. (11: 8-9).

81. (Saying): “Eat from the good things with which We have provided you, and do not transgress therein, lest My anger should descend upon you. And he upon whom My anger descends has then indeed fallen.”

كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَلَا
تَطْغَوْا فِيهِ فَيَحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبِي
وَمَنْ يَحِلَّ عَلَيْهِ غَضَبِي فَقَدْ
هُوِيَ

82. “And indeed, I am Most Forgiving towards him who repents and believes and does righteous deeds, then keeps to the right way.”*60

وَإِنِّي لَغَفَّارٌ لِّمَنْ تَابَ وَءَامَنَ
وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ اهْتَدَى

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

- (1) **Repentance:** to refrain from rebellion, disobedience, shirk or disbelief.
- (2) **Faith:** sincere belief in Allah and the Messenger and the Book and the Hereafter.
- (3) **Righteous works:** to do good deeds according to the instructions of Allah and His Messenger.
- (4) **Guidance:** to follow the right way steadfastly and to refrain from straying into any wrong path.

83. (It was said):*61 “And what has made you hasten

وَمَا أَعْجَلَكَ عَنْ قَوْمِكَ

from your people, O
Moses.”*62

يَمُوسَى
٨٢

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

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

84. He said: “They are those (close) upon my footsteps. And I hastened to You, my Lord, that You might be pleased.”

قَالَ هُمْ أَوْلَاءِ عَلَىٰ أَثَرِي
وَعَجَلْتُ إِلَيْكَ رَبِّ لِتَرْضَىٰ
٨٤

85. He said: “Then indeed, We have tried your people in your absence, and AsSamiri*63 has misled them.”

قَالَ فَإِنَّا قَدْ فَتَنَّا قَوْمَكَ مِن
بَعْدِكَ وَأَضَلَّهُمُ السَّامِرِيُّ
٨٥

*63 It is obvious from the last Arabic letter ‘ya’ that Samiri was not the proper name of the person, for this Arabic letter is always added to show a person’s connection with his race or clan or place. Moreover, the prefix *al* (definite

article 'the') in the original Arabic text clearly denotes that the Samiri was a particular man from among many other persons of the same race or clan or place, who had propagated the worship of the golden calf. In fact, this does not require any further explanation than this, but this has been necessitated because many Christian missionaries and the Western Orientalists have tried to criticize the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Quran on this account. They say, (God forbid,) "This is a proof of the grievous ignorance of history on the part of Muhammad (peace be upon him), the author of the Quran, and is one of the anachronisms of the Quran. They base this absurd criticism on the assumption that this Samiri was the inhabitant of Samaria, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Israel, which was built in 925 B.C. long after this happening; then centuries after this, a generation of the Samaritans came into existence as a result of inter-marriage between the Israelites and the non-Israelites. As the Samaritans worshiped the golden calf, the critics accuse the Prophet (peace be upon him) of inventing this story on the basis of mere hearsay. They say that the Prophet (peace be upon him) might have heard something like this from the neighboring Jews and inserted it in the Quran. That is not all. They also criticize that Haman who was a courtier of Cyrus has been mentioned in the Quran as a minister of Pharaoh. It is a pity that these so called scholars seem to think that in the ancient times there used to be only one person bearing one name in a clan or a place, and there was absolutely no possibility of another person or persons having the same name. They do not

know, or pretend they do not know, that during the time of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), a famous people known as the Sumerians inhabited Iraq and the neighboring regions, and it is just possible that during the time of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) there were some people known as the Samiris who might have migrated to Egypt from Iraq. Besides this, according to the Bible (1 Kings, 16: 24), Samaria itself was built on a hill which was bought from Shemer and named Samaria after him. This is a clear proof that there were people named Shemer (or Sumer) even before Samaria came into existence and it is also just possible that some clans might have been called Samiri

86. So Moses returned to his people, angry (and) sad. He said: “O my people, did your Lord not promise you a fair promise.^{*64} Did then the promise seem too long to you (in fulfillment),^{*65} or did you desire that wrath from your Lord should descend upon you, so you broke your promise to me.”^{*66}

فَرَجَعَ مُوسَىٰ إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ
غَضِبِينَ أَسِفًا ۚ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ أَلَمْ
يَعِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ وَعَدًّا حَسَنًا
أَفَطَالَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْعَهْدُ أَمْ
أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ يَحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبٌ
مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُم مَّوْعِدِي

***64** That is, did not Allah fulfill the promises He made with you of showing His favors to you? For instance, He safely brought you out of Egypt and not only freed you from the

slavery of your enemy but also destroyed him totally. He provided you with provisions in the desert and in the mountainous regions. It may also be translated like this: Did not Allah make a good promise with you? In that case, it will mean: He made a promise that he will give you the law and guidance. Was this not a good promise for your well being and betterment?

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

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

87. They said: "We did not break the promise to you by our own will, but we were laden with burdens of ornaments of the people, so we threw them (in the fire),^{*67} and that was what AsSamiri suggested."

قَالُوا مَا أَخْلَفْنَا مَوْعِدَكَ
بِمَلِكِنَا وَلَكِنَّا حَمِلْنَا أَوْزَارًا مِّنْ
زِينَةِ الْقَوْمِ فَقَذَفْنَاهَا فَكَذَلِكَ
أَلْقَى السَّامِرِيُّ



***67** This excuse was put forward by those people who were involved in the shirk fabricated by the Samiri. They meant to say: We did not throw down the ornaments with the intention of setting up a calf nor did we know what was going to be made of these, but when the calf was brought before us, we involuntarily got involved in shirk. The Arabic text which we have translated into: “We were laden with burdens of ornaments of the people”, simply means this: The heavy ornaments which our men and women were wearing like the Egyptians proved very burdensome to us in our wanderings in the desert and we did not know how to get rid of them for it appeared very difficult for us to travel in the desert with them. But according to the Bible these ornaments had been borrowed by every family of the Israelites from their Egyptian neighbors with this intention, “...and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters and ye shall spoil the Egyptians...and let every man borrow of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold...And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians...so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.” And that, too, on the advice of Prophet Moses, whom God Himself had instructed to do this noble deed. (Exodus, 3: 14-22, 11: 2-3, and I 2: 35-36).

It is a pity that some of our commentators have interpreted this verse in the light of the above traditions of the Bible. They say that the Israelites felt burdened with the weight of those ornaments which they had borrowed from their

Egyptian neighbors, with the intention of carrying them away as a spoil bestowed by God.

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

88. Then he^{*68} brought out (of the fire) for them, a statue of a calf, which had a lowing (sound). So they said: “This is your god and the god of Moses, but he (Moses) has forgotten.”

فَأَخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَهُ
خُورٌ فَقَالُوا هَذَا إِلَهُكُمْ
وَأِلَهُ مُوسَىٰ فَنَسِيَ



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

itself for I had simply thrown the gold in the fire.

89. Did they not see that it could not return to them a word (for answer), and it had no power for them to harm, nor to benefit.

أَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ إِلَّا يَرْجِعُ إِلَيْهِمْ
قَوْلًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا
نَفْعًا

90. And Aaron indeed had said to them before: “O my people, you are only being tried by this. And indeed, your Lord is the Beneficent, so follow me and obey my order.”

وَلَقَدْ قَالَ لَهُمْ هَارُونُ مِنْ قَبْلُ
يَقَوْمِ إِنَّمَا فُتِنْتُمْ بِهِ وَإِنَّ
رَبَّكُمْ الرَّحْمَنُ فَاتَّبِعُونِي
وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرِي

91. They said: “We shall never cease being devoted to it (the calf) until Moses returns to us.”*69

قَالُوا لَنْ نَبْرَحَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفِينَ
حَتَّىٰ يَرْجِعَ إِلَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ

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

And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is

become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at his hand, and fashioned it with a graying tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord. (1,32: 1-5).

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

Now the question arises: Why was Prophet Aaron not killed, if he was the inventor of the calf-worship? Why

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

92. He (Moses) said: "O Aaron, what prevented you when you saw them going astray."

قَالَ يَهْرُونَ مَا مَنَعَكَ إِذْ
رَأَيْتَهُمْ ضَلُّوا

93. "That you did not follow me. Have you then disobeyed my command."*70

أَلَا تَتَّبِعَنِ أَفَعَصَيْتَ أَمْرِي

*70 The "command" refers to the instructions which Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) gave to his brother Prophet Aaron (peace be upon him) when he made him his deputy in his absence when he went up to Mount Toor: After me take my place and do the right and follow not the way of the mischief-makers. (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 142).

94. He (Aaron) said: “O son of my mother, Seize (me) not by my beard nor by my head.*71 Indeed, I feared that you would say, you caused division among the Children of Israel, and you have not respected my word.”*72

قَالَ يَبْنَؤُمَّ لَا تَأْخُذْ بِلِحْيَتِي وَلَا
بِرَأْسِي إِنَّي خَشِيتُ أَنْ تَقُولَ
فَرَّقْتَ بَيْنَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلَمْ
تَرْقُبْ قَوْلِي



*71 See Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 150.

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

95. He (Moses) said: “Then what have you to say, O Samiri.”

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكَ يَسْمِرِيُّ



96. He said: “I saw that what they did not see. So I took a handful (dust) from the footprint of the messenger, then I threw it (in the fire). And thus did my soul suggest to me.”*73

قَالَ بَصُرْتُ بِمَا لَمْ يَبْصُرُوا بِهِ
فَقَبَضْتُ قَبْضَةً مِّنْ أَثَرِ الرَّسُولِ
فَنَبَذْتُهَا وَكَذَلِكَ سَوَّلَتْ
لِي نَفْسِي



*73 Here it has been a good deal of divergence of opinion in regard to the interpretation of this verse. According to the majority of the early commentators and their followers, it means: The Samiri saw the Messenger (Angel Gabriel) when he was passing and took a handful of dust from his footprints. Then he sprinkled this upon the idol of the golden calf. This created life in it and it began to low like a living calf. The Quran, in fact, does not say that this actually happened but merely cites the reply given by the Samiri to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) when the latter took him to task for the great sin he had committed. There are others who interpret the words of the Samiri like this: I saw a weakness in the Messenger (Prophet Moses) or in his creed, which others did not see. Therefore I followed in his footsteps to a certain limit but afterwards I left his way. This interpretation was most probably put forward first of all by Abu Muslim Isfahani. Then Imam Razi not

only cited it in his own commentary but also approved of it. And now it is being followed by some modernistic commentators, who try to prove their own favorite theories by giving far-fetched interpretations to the obvious meaning of the words of the Quran. Such people forget that the Quran has not been sent down in the terminology of enigmas, riddles and puzzles but in clear, plain and intelligible Arabic. Therefore the Quran would have never employed the words it has used in the text to convey the meaning given by them because their usage cannot support that far-fetched interpretation. What such interpreters really mean to imply is that Allah has failed to express Himself clearly and plainly; therefore, they wish to come to His rescue by their interpretations in order to save Him from the ridicule of the learned people.

If we study the verse in the context in which it occurs, we shall be able to understand easily that the Samiri was a mischief-monger who had contrived his deceitful scheme after a good deal of consideration. As he appears to have been a good craftsman, he caused the golden calf he had made to produce a lowing sound, and successfully deluded the ignorant and simple people. He did not rest content with this but impudently invented the story that he had seen what the common people could not see and that he had taken a handful of the dust from the footprints of the Messenger and sprinkled it on the calf which made it low like a living calf. It is possible that by the Messenger, he meant Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) himself and might have cunningly tried to flatter him, saying, that the

dust of his footprints was miraculous. By saying so, he was playing the most subtle trick. He wanted to offer an intellectual bait to Moses (peace be upon him) so that he might feel elated about the miraculous effect of the dust trodden by his feet and utilize his services for propagating his own miraculous acts. Anyhow, the fact is that the Quran has presented the whole thing as a trick of the Samiri and has not given the account as if it were a real event by itself. The subsequent reaction of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) to the statement of the Samiri clearly shows that he considered it as a deceitful story, and so laid the curse on him.

97. He (Moses) said: “So go away. Then indeed, for you in this life it is to say, touch me not.*74 And indeed, there is for you a promise which will not be broken. And look at your god, that to which you have been devoted. We will certainly burn it, then we will surely scatter its dust in the sea.”

قَالَ فَاذْهَبْ فَإِنَّ لَكَ فِي
 الْحَيَاةِ أَنْ تَقُولَ لَا مِسَاسَ
 وَإِنَّ لَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَنْ يُخْلَفَهُ
 وَانظُرْ إِلَى إِلٰهِكَ الَّذِي ظَلْتَ
 عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفًا لَنُحَرِّقَنَّهُ ثُمَّ
 لَنَنْسِفَنَّهُ فِي الْيَمِّ نَسْفًا



*74 The words show that he was not only made an outcast for life but was made to inform the people himself that he was an outcast, as given in Leviticus:
 And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon

his upper lip, and shall cry, unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be. (13: 45-46).

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

98. Your god is only Allah, Whom, there is no deity except Him. He has encompassed all things in knowledge.

إِنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَسِعَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا



99. Thus do We relate to you (Muhammad)^{*75} from the news of what has preceded of old. And indeed, We have given you from Us a reminder.^{*76}

كَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ مَا قَدْ سَبَقَ وَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ مِنْ لَدُنَّا ذِكْرًا



***75** Now that the story of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) comes to an end, the same theme, that was interrupted by this story, has been resumed.

***76** That is, the Quran about which it was said at the beginning of the Surah that it had not been sent down to put the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) in distress, and that it was an admonition for the God-fearing.

100. Whoever turns away from it, then indeed he will bear on the Day of Resurrection a burden.

مَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَحْمِلُ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ وِزْرًا ﴿١٠٠﴾

101. Abiding in it. And evil will be the load for them on the Day of Resurrection.*77

خَالِدِينَ فِيهِ وَسَاءَ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَمَةِ حِمْلًا ﴿١٠١﴾

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

102. The day when the Trumpet will be blown.*78 And We shall gather criminals that day, their eyes turned blue with terror.*79

يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ وَنَحْشُرُ
الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ زُرْقًا ﴿١٠٢﴾

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

bugles and trumpets of this world.

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

103. They shall whisper among themselves: "You stayed not except ten (days in the world)."*80

يَتَخَفَتُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنْ لَبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا عَشْرًا



*80 The original text may also be interpreted to mean: After your death, you may have passed hardly ten days till now. As regards to the interpretation adopted in the translation, it is supported by Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 112-113: When Allah will ask them, for how many years did you stay on the earth? They will say: We stayed there for a day or part of a day. You may ask those who have kept the record. The second interpretation is supported by Surah Ar-Room, Ayats 55-56: And on the day when Resurrection will take place, the criminals will declare under oaths: We have not remained in the state of death for more than an hour. And likewise they were deluded on the earth. On the other hand, those who have been given knowledge and faith will say: According to the Book of Allah, you have remained in this state up to the Day of Resurrection, and this is the very Day of Resurrection, but you did not know of it. Both the interpretations are supported by other verses of the Quran. It is clear from these that they will consider both the life on the earth and the life in the interval between death and Resurrection to be very short. They will consider the earthly life to be very

short because, against all their expectations, they will have to face the eternal life in the Hereafter which they denied in their earthly life. As they had made no preparation for this life, they will regret that they had ruined their eternal life for the sake of a few transitory pleasures of the short life they had been given on the earth. As regards to the duration of the interval between death and Resurrection, they will consider it to be very short, for they will imagine that they had been suddenly awakened by the Trumpet from their last sleep or unconsciousness in their earthly life. Thus, they will not at first realize that the Trumpet was the signal for the Day of Resurrection because they had no expectation whatever that the Day of Resurrection would ever come. As a matter of fact, they used to make fun of this Day as a nonsensical thing.

104. We know well what they will say, when the best among them in conduct will say: “You stayed not except a day.”*81

نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ إِذْ يَقُولُ
أَمْثَلُهُمْ طَرِيقَةً إِنْ لَبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا
يَوْمًا



*81 This is a parenthesis that has been inserted to remove this doubt of the hearers: How has it been known today what the people will be talking in whispers on the Day of Resurrection?

105. And they ask you about the mountains. Say: “My Lord will blow them away with a blast.”*82

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْجِبَالِ فَقُلْ
يَنْسِفُهَا رَبِّي نَسْفًا



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

106. “Then He shall leave them as plains, smooth.”

فَيَذَرُهَا قَاعًا صَفْصَفًا ﴿١٠٦﴾

107. “Wherein you will see neither curve nor ruggedness.”^{*83}

لَا تَرَى فِيهَا عِوَجًا وَلَا أَمْتًا ﴿١٠٧﴾

***83** According to the Quran, the earth will take a new shape in the Hereafter:

- The earth will be spread. (Surah Al-Inshiqaq, Ayat 3).
- The bottoms of the oceans will be split (and the whole water will sink down in the earth). (Surah Al-Infitar, Ayat 3).
- The oceans will be filled up. (Surah At-Takweer, Ayat 6).
- The mountains will be reduced to fine dust and scattered away and there will be left no curve or crease in the earth. (Surah Taaha, Ayats 105-107).
- On that day the earth will be totally changed. (Surah

Ibrahim, Ayat 48).

And it will be turned into a garden and given to the pious people to dwell therein forever. (Surah Az-Zumur, Ayat 74).

This shows that ultimately this earth will be turned into Paradise which will be inherited by the pious and righteous servants of Allah. The whole earth will become one country, and there will be no mountains, oceans, rivers and deserts which today divide it into countless countries and homelands and divide mankind as well into as many tribes, races and classes. Ibn Abbas and Qatadah have the same view that Paradise will be established on this very earth.

108. That Day, they shall follow the summoner, no crookedness (can they show) to him. And the voices shall humble before the Beneficent so you will hear nothing but a faint murmur. *84

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَّبِعُونَ الدَّاعِيَ لَا
عِوَجَ لَهُ وَخَشَعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ
لِلرَّحْمَنِ فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا



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

109. That Day, no intercession shall benefit, except the one for whom the Beneficent has given

يَوْمَئِذٍ لَا تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ إِلَّا مَنْ
أُذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَرَضِيَ لَهُ قَوْلًا

permission, and whose word is acceptable to Him. *85



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

Who is there that can intercede with Him except by His own permission? (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 255).

On that Day when the spirit and the angels will stand with folded hands, they will not be able to say anything except what the Merciful will permit, and they will say the right thing. (Surah An-Naba, Ayat 38).

They do not intercede for anyone except for whom the Merciful may be pleased to listen to, and they are always fearful of Him. (Surah Al-Anbia, Ayat 28).

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

110. He (Allah) knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot encompass it with (their) knowledge. *86

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ
وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِ عِلْمًا



*86 Here the reasons for the restrictions on intercession have been stated. On the one hand, no angel, no prophet, no saint, nor anyone else knows, nor can know, the full details about the records of others. On the other hand, Allah has

full knowledge of all the deeds and misdeeds of everyone and He knows who deserves pardon or punishment, and how much. If, therefore, there had been full freedom for intercession, the whole purpose of the creation of man would have become meaningless. According to this verse, the door against intercession has not been entirely closed. The righteous people will be allowed to show their sympathy for other human beings as they did in the world, but they will have to get permission for this beforehand and even then make only a right sort of recommendation.

111. And faces shall be humbled before the Ever Living, the Eternal. And indeed, he will be a failure who carries (a burden of) wrongdoings.

وَعَنْتِ الْوُجُوهُ لِلْحَيِّ الْقَيُّومِ
 وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ حَمَلَ ظُلْمًا

112. And he who does any righteous deeds, and he is a believer then he will have no fear of injustice, nor curtailment (of his reward).^{*87}

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ
 مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا يَخَافُ ظُلْمًا وَلَا
 هَضْمًا

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

punished even though they were innocent.

113. And thus have We sent it down as a Quran in Arabic,^{*88} and We have explained in details therein of the warnings, that perhaps they may fear (Allah), or that it may cause them to remember.^{*89}

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا
وَصَرَّفْنَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْوَعِيدِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَتَّقُونَ أَوْ يُحَدِّثُ لَهُمْ ذِكْرًا

***88** This means that the Quran is full of such high themes, wise teachings and admonitions as are contained in the preceding portion of this Surah as well as in the other Surahs of the Book.

***89** That is, the Arabic Quran might awaken them from their heedlessness and they might recollect the forgotten lessons and feel that they are going astray and might realize the consequences thereof.

114. So exalted be Allah, the Sovereign,^{*90} the Truth. And do not hasten (O Muhammad) with the Quran before that its revelation has been completed to you, and say: “My Lord, increase me in knowledge.”^{*91}

فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ وَلَا
تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ
يُقْضَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ وَقُلْ رَبِّ
زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

***90** Such sentences as this are usually found in the Quran at the end of a discourse so that it may end with the praise of Allah. It is plain from the context that the discourse ends

with “the Sovereign.”

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

This sentence shows that this portion of Surah TaaHa is one of the earliest revelations, for we learn from the other early Surahs that the Prophet (peace be upon him) tried to commit to memory the Quranic revelation and Allah cautioned him against it. For instance in Surah Al-Qiamah, Ayats 16-19, he was told: Do not move your tongue over and over again in order to learn the revelation, for it is Our responsibility to cause you to remember it by heart and recite it. Therefore when it is being recited to you, listen to it carefully. Then it is also Our responsibility to make its meanings clear to you.

Again in Surah Al-Aala, Ayat 6, he was assured: We will teach you how to recite it and you will not forget it. It appears that afterwards when the Prophet (peace be upon him) had learnt how to receive the messages of revelation,

this did not occur. That is why there is no such caution in the Surahs of the later period.

115. And indeed, We^{*92} made a covenant with Adam before,^{*93} but he forgot, and We did not find in him determination.^{*94}

وَلَقَدْ عَاهَدْنَا إِلَىٰ آدَمَ مِنْ قَبْلُ
فَنَسِيَ وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهُ عَزْمًا



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

- (1) Both the discourses remind mankind of the forgotten lesson, the admonition, which Allah had taught man on the occasion of his creation.
- (2) Both teach that it is Satan who seduces man to forget that lesson. He succeeded in this by causing his first parents to forget it. Since then he has been forgetting it over and over again and, therefore, has been cautioned against this.
- (3) Both warn man that his ultimate success or failure depends upon his attitude towards this admonition.
- (4) Both warn mankind to discriminate between an inadvertent error and an intentional rebellion and their consequences. If man (like Prophet Adam and his offspring and the magicians of Pharaoh) realizes that he has been seduced by Satan, his eternal enemy, and then repents of his error, he is forgiven. But there is no forgiveness for intentional rebellion as was the case with Satan, Pharaoh and the Samiri.

***93** The story of Prophet Adam has already been stated in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 30-39; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 11-27, 189; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 28-42; Surah Al-Isra, Ayats 61-65 and Surah Al-Kahaf, Ayats 51-52. But at every place only that part of the story which was relevant to the context has been cited. Therefore, in order to understand the entire story well, one should read it in all the Surahs along with the relevant E.N's.

***94** This means that he disobeyed the command because he lacked the firmness of purpose and not because of intentional rebellion. He did not say: I don't care for Allah. If it is His command, let it be. I will do whatever I like. Who is Allah to intervene in my private affairs? On the contrary, he disobeyed because he forgot Allah's command, and did not show firmness of purpose and determination against the temptations presented by Satan. This is shown by his subsequent repentance.

116. And when We said to the angels: "Fall prostrate before Adam." So they fell prostrate (all) except Iblis. He refused.

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا
لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ
أَبَى

117. So We said: "O Adam, indeed,^{*95} this is an enemy to you and to your wife.^{*96} So let him not drive you out from the Paradise,^{*97} so you would suffer."

فَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ إِنَّ هَذَا عَدُوٌّ لَكَ
وَلِزَوْجِكَ فَلَا يُخْرِجَنَّكَ مِنَ
الْجَنَّةِ فَتَشْقَى

***95** Here the command, which was given to Prophet Adam, has not been mentioned, which was: You must not eat the fruit of this tree. This has been mentioned at other places but has been omitted here because the emphasis here is on this weakness of man that he is easily seduced by Satan in spite of the forewarnings and admonitions to this effect.

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

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

118. “Indeed, there is (enough provision) for you, that you will not be hungry therein, nor you will be unclothed.”

إِنَّ لَكَ أَلَّا تَجُوعَ فِيهَا وَلَا تَعْرَى



119. “And indeed, you will not suffer from thirst therein,

وَأَنَّكَ لَا تَظْمَأُ فِيهَا وَلَا

nor from the sun's heat.”*98

تُضْحَىٰ
١١٩

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

120. Then Satan whispered to him,*99 he said: “O Adam, shall I lead you to the tree of eternal life and a kingdom that will not waste away.”*100

فَوَسْوَسَ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطَانُ قَالَ
يَتَّعِدُمْ هَلْ أَدُلُّكَ عَلَىٰ شَجَرَةٍ
الْحُلْدِ وَمُلْكٍ لَّا يَبْلَىٰ
١٢٠

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

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

121. Then they both ate of that (tree), so their shameful parts became apparent to them, and they began to cover themselves with the leaves of the Paradise.^{*101}
And Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he went astray.^{*102}

فَأَكَلَا مِنْهَا فَبَدَتَ لَهُمَا
سَوَاءُ تَهُمَا وَطَفِقَا مَخْصِفَانِ
عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَصَى
ءَادَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَى



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

***102** It is worth while to understand the nature of human weakness which helped Satan to seduce Adam and Eve. They succumbed to seduction because Satan tempted them in the garb of a true friend and well-wisher even though they knew well that he was their enemy. For, Adam had a direct knowledge of the envy and enmity of Satan, who had challenged to seduce and ruin him in his very presence. Allah had also warned them to guard against the envy of and the temptations by Satan and had informed them of the consequences of disobedience. Above all, Adam and Eve

still believed in Allah and never thought of intentional disobedience. But in spite of this, when Satan tempted them in the garb of a friend, they disobeyed their Lord: they forgot the command for the time being for lack of fineness of purpose. And since then this human weakness has persisted in their descendants during all ages.

122. Then his Lord chose him,^{*103} and turned to him in forgiveness and guided (him).

ثُمَّ أَجْتَبَهُ رَبُّهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ
وَهَدَى

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

123. He said:^{*104} “Go down, both of you, from it (Paradise), all together, some of you will be an enemy to others. Then if there comes to you from Me a guidance, then whoever follows My

قَالَ أَهْبِطَا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا
بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ فَإِمَّا
يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنِ

guidance, he will then not go astray, nor fall into misery.”

أَتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا

يَشْقَى

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

124. And whoever turns away from My remembrance, indeed then for him is a life of hardship,^{*105} and We shall gather him on the Day of Resurrection blind.”^{*106}

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ

الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى

***105** “A life of hardship” does not mean a life of poverty. It means that such a one shall be deprived of the peace of mind, even though he may be a millionaire or the ruler of a vast empire. For, the one who will turn away from the admonition will win all the worldly successes by unlawful means and, therefore, will always be suffering from pangs of a guilty conscience and deprived of the peace of mind and real happiness.

***106** Here the story of Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) ends. In the light of this part of the story which has been related here and at other places in the Quran, I have come to the conclusion (and correct knowledge is with Allah alone) that the vicegerency of the earth was the same as was initially bestowed on Adam in the Garden, which might have been created in the heavens or on this earth. Anyhow the vicegerent of Allah was supplied gratis with all the necessities of life and the angels were placed under his

command for service. This was to enable him to discharge the high and noble obligations of vicegerency, without any worry about the procurement of the necessities of life. But in order to make him permanent in this office, it was necessary to put him to a test so that all his capabilities, excellences and weaknesses might be known. Accordingly, he had to take his test in which some of his weaknesses came to the surface. He was prone to be seduced by greed and temptation. He did not remain firm in obedience. He was capable of forgetfulness. That is why he was given the vicegerency as a trial on the earth for a fixed term up to the Day of Judgment. During this period of trial, he had himself to make arrangements for the necessities of life though he was allowed to exploit all the resources of the earth and to rule over other creatures. The trial is this: does he or does he not obey his Lord in spite of having the power to obey or not to obey. And if he forgets or is seduced by greed, does he or does he not repent through warning and admonition, when he realizes his error. At the same time, his Lord has warned him that a full and perfect record of all his deeds and misdeeds is being kept, and that he shall be judged on the Day of Reckoning in accordance with it. Those who will come out successful will be given permanent vicegerency and that eternal life and everlasting kingdom by which Satan seduced him. The righteous servants will become the heirs to the Garden, if they had obeyed their Lord or repented after forgetfulness. It should also be noted well that life in the Garden will not merely be to eat, drink and be merry, but there will be such higher

things to achieve as no human being can conceive in this world. That is why only those blessings of the Garden have been mentioned in the Quran which can be comprehended by human beings in this world.

It will be worthwhile to make a comparative study of the account of Adam and Eve as given in the Quran with that given in the Bible. According to Genesis:

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying: Of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. (2:725). Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her and he did eat. And the eyes of them both

were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And He said, who told thee that thou west naked? Hast thou eaten, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gayest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every blast of the field. Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception, in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of

skins, and clothed them. And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. (3 :1-23).

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

125. He will say: “My Lord, why have you raised me blind, and indeed I was seeing (in the world).”

قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِي أَعْمَى
وَقَدْ كُنْتُ بَصِيرًا

126. He (Allah) will say: “Thus did Our revelations come to you, but you did forget them. And thus, this Day you will be forgotten.”*107

قَالَ كَذَلِكَ أَتَتْكَ آيَاتُنَا
فَنَسِيَهَا وَكَذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ تُنسى

*107 The Quran has described the different conditions and experiences through which the criminals will pass from the Day of Resurrection to the time of their entry into Hell: You were neglectful of this, now We have removed the curtain from before you and your sight has become very sharp. (Surah Qaaf, Ayat 22). He is only deferring them to

the Day when all eyes shall stare with consternation. They will be running in terror with heads uplifted and eyes fixed upwards and hearts void. (Surah Ibrahim, Ayats 42-43). We have fastened the augury of every man to his own neck and on the Day of Resurrection We will bring forth a writing which he will find like an open book. (It will be said to him:) Here is your record: read it. Today you can yourself reckon your account. (Surah Al-Isra, Ayats 13-14). In the light of the above and this verse (126), it appears that in the Hereafter, the criminals shall be enabled to see the horrible sights and to realize the consequences of their evil deeds, but in other respects they will be like the blind man who cannot see his way and is deprived of even a staff to feel his way, nor is there anyone to guide him. So he stumbles and is knocked about and does not know where to go and how to satisfy his needs. This very state has been expressed thus: You forgot Our Revelations when they came to you, so you are being forgotten today, as if, you were blind and had no one to look after you.

127. And thus do We recompense^{*108} him who transgresses and does not believe in the signs of his Lord. And the punishment of the Hereafter is far more severe and more enduring.

وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي مَنْ أَسْرَفَ وَلَمْ
يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ ۚ وَلَعَذَابُ
الْآخِرَةِ أَشَدُّ وَأَبْقَى



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

128. Is it not then a guidance for them^{*109} (to know) how many of the generations, before them, We have destroyed, in whose dwellings they walk. Surely, in that are indeed signs for those of understanding.^{*110}

أَفَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ
مِّنَ الْقُرُونِ يَمْشُونَ فِي مَسْكِنِهِمْ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي
الْأَبْصَارِ



***109** “For them”: means people of Makkah.

***110** That is, in this lesson of history and in the observation of the archaeological remains and in this experience of mankind.

129. And if it was not for a word that went forth before from your Lord, the judgment would have come to pass, and (if not) a term already fixed.

وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
لَكَانَ لِرِزَامًا وَأَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى



130. So bear patiently (O Muhammad), over what they say, and glorify the praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting. And some hours of the night glorify Him, and at the two ends of the day,^{*111} that you may find acceptance.^{*112}

فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ
وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ
الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوبِهَا وَمِنْ
ءَانَائِ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْ وَأَطْرَافَ
النَّهَارِ لَعَلَّكَ تَرْضَىٰ



***111** This is to comfort and console the Prophet (peace be

upon him), as if to say: Allah does not intend to destroy them yet, for He has appointed for them a term of respite, so you should endure with patience whatever they do against you and hear their harsh talk and go on performing the obligations of your mission. For this purpose you should offer Salat in accordance with the prescribed times because it will create in you necessary forbearance and fortitude.

“Glorify Him” means: Offer your prescribed Prayers, as is clear from Ayat 132.

Incidentally in this verse (130) the times of Salat have been prescribed:

- (1) Fajr Prayer before sunrise.
- (2) Asr Prayer before sunset.
- (3) Isha and Tahajjud Prayers during the hours of night. Morning and Afternoon (Dhuhr) and Evening (Maghrib) Prayers at the extremes of the day. (See also E.Ns. 91 to 97 of Surah Al-Isra).

*112 The original Arabic Text admits of two meanings.

- (1) Rest content with your present condition in which you have to hear many unpleasant things for the sake of your mission, and submit to this decree that they are not being punished for the time being, for they will continue to persecute you and at the same time lead prosperous lives.
- (2) Go on performing your mission, for as a result of this, you will be fully satisfied.

This second meaning is supported by (a) Surah AL-Isra, Ayat 79: That time is not far when your Lord may exalt you to a laudable position, which follows the commandment

about Salat, (b) Surah Ad-Duha, Ayats 4-5: Surely the later period of life will be better for you than the former, and in the near future your Lord will give you so much that you will be fully satisfied.

131. And do not strain your eyes towards that by which We have given enjoyment to various groups of them, the splendor of the life of this world, that We may test them thereby. And the provision^{*113} of your Lord is better and more enduring.

وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا
بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ ۚ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ
خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ



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

132. And enjoin upon your household prayers,^{*114} and be steadfast therein. We do not ask of you a provision. We provide for you. And the (best) outcome is for righteousness.^{*115}

وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ
عَلَيْهَا ۖ لَا نَسْأَلُكَ رِزْقًا ۗ نَحْنُ
نَرْزُقُكَ ۗ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ



***114** That is, also teach your children that lawful provision is much better than the unlawful riches of the wicked

people. For this purpose, enjoin them to say their prescribed Prayers, for this will change their attitude, their standard of values, and make them contented with pure provisions and virtuous life in preference to the life of sin and luxury.

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

133. And they say: “Why does he not bring to us a sign from his Lord.” Has there not come to them the proof of what is in the former scriptures.”*116

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا يَأْتِينَا بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ ؕ أَوَلَمْ تَأْتِهِم بَيِّنَةٌ مَّا فِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَىٰ



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

134. And if indeed, We had destroyed them with a punishment before this, they would assuredly have said: “Our Lord, why did You not send to us a messenger, so we could have certainly

وَلَوْ أَنَّا أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِهِ لَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا لَوْلَا أَرْسَلْتَ إِلَيْنَا رَسُولًا فَنَتَّبِعَ آيَاتِكَ مِن

followed Your revelations,
before that we were
humiliated and we were
disgraced.”

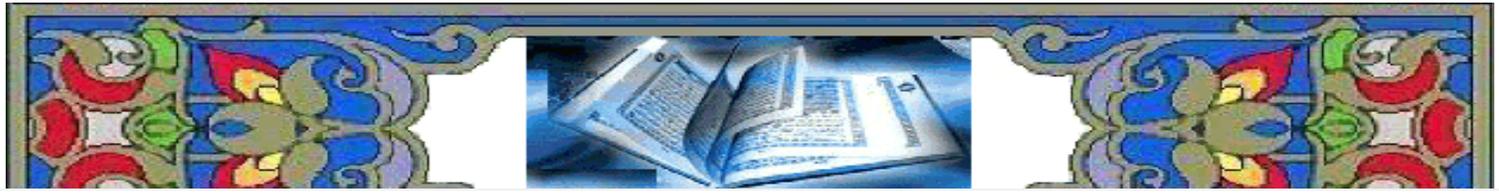
قَبْلِ أَنْ نَنْزِلَ وَنَخْزِيْ
۱۳۴

135. Say: “Each one is
waiting,^{*117} so wait you (too).
Then soon you shall know
who are the people on the
straight path, and who are
guided.”

قُلْ كُلٌّ مُّتَرَبِّصٌ فَتَرَبَّصُوا
فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ أَصْحَابُ
الصِّرَاطِ السَّوِيِّ وَمَنِ اهْتَدَى
۱۳۵

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





Al-Anbia

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

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

Period of Revelation

Both the subject matter and the style of the Surah indicate that it was revealed in the third stage of the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) at Makkah. (See introduction to Surah Al-Anaam).

Subject and Topics

This Surah discusses the conflict between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the chiefs of Makkah, which was rampant at the time of its revelation and answers those objections and doubts which were being put forward concerning his Prophethood and the doctrines of Tauhid and the Hereafter. The chiefs of Makkah have also been rebuked for their machinations against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and warned of the evil consequences of their wicked activities. They have been admonished to give up their indifference and heedlessness that they were showing

about the message. At the end of the Surah, they have been told that the person whom they considered to be a distress and affliction had in reality come to them as a blessing.

Main Themes

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

1. The objection of the disbelievers that a human being could not be a Messenger and therefore they could not accept Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a Prophet, has been refuted.
2. They have been taken to task for raising multifarious and contradictory objections against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Quran.
3. Their wrong conception of life has been proved to be false because it was responsible for their indifferent and heedless attitude towards the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They believed that life was merely a sport and pastime and had no purpose behind or before it and there was no accountability or reward or punishment.
4. The main cause of the conflict between the disbelievers and the Prophet (peace be upon him) was their insistence on the doctrine of shirk and antagonism to the doctrine of Tauhid. So the doctrine of shirk has been refuted and the doctrine of Tauhid reinforced by weighty and impressive though brief arguments.
5. Arguments and admonitions have been used to remove another misunderstanding of theirs. They presumed that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a false prophet and his warnings of a scourge from God were empty threats,

just because no scourge was visiting them in spite of their persistent rejection of the Prophet.

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

Along with these two other things have also been mentioned.

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

2. All the Prophets had one and the same way of life, the same as was being presented by Muhammad (peace be upon him), and that was the only right way of life and all other ways invented and introduced by mischievous people were utterly wrong.

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

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

1. Draws near for mankind their reckoning,^{*1} while they in heedlessness turn away.^{*2}

أَقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿١﴾

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

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

2. There does not come to them any admonition from their Lord as a new (revelation)^{*3} except they listen to it while they play.^{*4}

مَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ مُّحَدَّثٍ إِلَّا اسْتَمَعُوهُ وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿٢﴾

***3** “New revelation”: A new Surah of the Quran.

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

a joke.

3. Their hearts distracted.
And they confer in secret.
Those who do wrong (say):
“Is this (Muhammad) other
than a man like you. Will you
then submit to magic while
you see (it).”^{*5}

لَا هِيَ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَأَسْرُوا النَّجْوَى
الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا هَلْ هَذَا إِلَّا بَشْرٌ
مِثْلُكُمْ أَفَتَأْتُونَ السِّحْرَ
وَأَنْتُمْ تَبْصِرُونَ



^{*5} This may also be translated as: What, are you then being ensnared by his magic?

The disbelievers, who were the chiefs of Makkah, whispered to one another to this effect: Anyhow this man cannot be a Prophet because he is a human being like us and eats and drinks and has wife and children like us. We see nothing unusual about him that might distinguish him from us and make him worthy of the office of Prophethood. We, however, admit that there is some magic in his talk and personality. That is why anyone who listens to him or goes near Him is charmed. Therefore, the best thing for you is not to listen to him at all, nor go near him, for listening to him or going near him will only be involving yourselves intentionally in his snare.

The reason why they accused the Prophet (peace be upon him) of practicing magic was that even his antagonists were charmed by his personality when they met him. Muhammad bin Ishaq (152 A.H.) says: Once Utbah bin Rabiah, the father-in-law of Abu Sufyan, said to the chiefs that he wanted to see Muhammad and give him counsel.

They said: We have full confidence in you. You may go and have a talk with him. Accordingly, he went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: Dear nephew, you know that you were held in great honor here before this and you belong to a noble family. Why have you then brought this affliction to your people? You have caused discard among them. You consider your people to be fools. You speak ill of their religion and deities, and you declare their deceased forefathers to be disbelievers. My dear nephew, if your object is to become a rich man, we can give you so much wealth that you will become the richest man among us. If you are seeking a high rank, we will make you our chief, even our king, if you so like. But if you are suffering from a mental illness which makes you see illusions, we will have you treated by the best physicians. He went on talking in this strain and the Prophet (peace be upon him) remained silent. When he was done talking, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Abul Walid, have you had your say or do you want to say anything more? He replied that he had said what he had to say. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Now listen to me. And he began to recite Surah Ha-Mim-Sajdah after Bismillah and Utbah listened to him as if he had been charmed. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to Ayat 38, he fell down in prostration. Then raising his head, he said: O Abul Walid, I have said whatever I had to say, and you have heard it. Now I have nothing more to say. After this Utbah walked back towards the chiefs who perceived him to be a changed man and remarked: By God, his face shows that he is not the same

man that he was when he went from here. When he came to them, they asked: What has been the result of your mission? He answered: By God, today I have heard a thing the like of which I had never heard before. By Allah! It is not poetry nor sorcery nor divination. O people of Quraish, I advise you to leave him to himself. From what I have heard from him, I conclude that his message is going to bring about a great revolution here. If the Arabs overcome him, you will stand absolved from the charge of murdering your own brother, and if he overpowers the Arabs, his sovereignty will be your own sovereignty and his honor your own honor. The people answered: By God, you too, O Abul Walid, have been charmed by him. To this he replied: I have expressed my opinion. Now it is for you to accept or reject it. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 313-314). Baihaqi, in his narration of the above event, makes this addition: When the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited Ayat 13: If they turn away from your message, say to them, I have warned you of the coming of a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt that visited the Aad and the Thamud, Utbah placed his hand on the mouth of the Prophet (peace be upon him), saying: For God's sake, have mercy on your own people.

In this connection, ibn Ishaq has cited another event. Once a man from the clan of Arash came to Makkah with some camels and Abu Jahl bought them. When he demanded their price, he put him off by lame excuses. At last the man came to the Sanctuary of the Kabah and began to bewail publicly the dishonesty of Abu Jahl. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was also sitting in a corner of the Sanctuary. The

chiefs of the Quraish said to the man: We cannot help you in any way in this matter; look, there is a man sitting: go to him and he will get you your money. Accordingly, the Arashi went towards the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the chiefs began to whisper jokingly: Today there will be great fun. When the man expressed his complaint before the Prophet (peace be upon him), he at once stood up and accompanied him to the house of Abu Jahl, followed by an informer of the chiefs. The Prophet (peace be upon him) knocked at Abu Jahl's door, who asked from inside: Who is there? He answered: Muhammad. Hearing this, he at once came out and the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: Pay this man his dues. Abu Jahl went in without uttering a word, brought the price of the camels and paid the man. At this the informer ran back to the Quraish and told them the whole story and said: By God, today I have seen something which I had never seen before. When Abu Jahl came out, Muhammad asked him to pay the dues, and he obeyed him as if he were spell bound. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 29-30). It was this charm of the personality, character and words of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which these people considered to be the effects of charm and warned the people not to go near him for fear of his magic.

4. He (Muhammad) said: "My Lord knows whatever is said in the heavens and the earth. And He is the All Hearer, the All Knower."*6

قَالَ رَبِّي يَعْلَمُ الْقَوْلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ



*6 This was the answer of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to their false propaganda and whispering campaign. Instead of giving a tit for tat answer, he said: My Lord will deal with you for He hears everything and knows everything.

5. But they say: “(The revelations are but) mixed up dreams. Rather, he has invented it. Rather, he is a poet.*7 Let him then bring to us a sign like the ones that were sent to (the prophets) of old.”

بَلْ قَالُوا أَضْغَتْ أَحْلَمَ بَلِ
أَفْتَرَهُ بَلْ هُوَ شَاعِرٌ فَلْيَأْتِنَا
بِآيَةٍ كَمَا أُرْسِلَ الْأَوَّلُونَ



*7 The background of this verse is this: When the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him) started gaining adherents, the chiefs of Makkah decided among themselves to start a propaganda campaign to counteract it. For this purpose they decided that every visitor to Makkah for pilgrimage should be approached and his mind so poisoned against the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he does not even go near and listen to him. Though this campaign continued throughout the year, in the pilgrimage season specially a large number of men were deputed to go to the tents of the pilgrims to warn them to beware of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Different sorts of things were said against the Prophet (peace be upon him) during these talks. Sometimes it was said that he was a sorcerer or that he had fabricated the Quran by himself but attributed it to Allah. Some would say that his revelations were the words

of an insane person and a bundle of incoherent ideas. Others would say that these were ordinary poetic ideas which were being dubbed as the words of Allah. All they wanted to do was to poison the minds of the visitors irrespective of the correctness of their own versions. They had no considered and definite opinion in the matter.

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

For instance, Ibn Ishaq has related in detail the story of Tufail-bin-Amr Dausi in his own words: I was a poet of the clan of Daus. Once I went to Makkah and was, on my arrival there, surrounded by some people of the Quraish who told me all sorts of things against the Prophet (peace be upon him). So I grew suspicious and tried to avoid him as much as possible. The very next day, when I went to visit the Sanctuary, I saw him saying his prayer. I heard a few sentences and felt that what he was reciting were excellent words. I said to myself: I am a poet and a sensible young

man and no child who cannot discriminate between the right and the wrong. Why should I not therefore meet him and inquire what he is reciting? Accordingly, I followed him to his house and said: The people had so much poisoned me against you that I had actually put cotton into my ears lest I should hear your voice, but what I have heard today from you was so appealing that I feel urged to inquire into your message rather in detail. At this the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited a passage of the Quran. As a result of which I embraced Islam there and then. On my return home I induced my father and wife to become Muslims, which they did, and then invited the people of my clan to embrace Islam with the result that by time of the battle of the Trench, as many as eighty families from my clan had entered the fold of Islam. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 22-24).

According to another tradition cited by Ibn Ishaq, the chiefs of the Quraish confessed in their private meetings that all their charges against the Prophet (peace be upon him) were false. According to him, addressing a meeting, Nadr bin Harith once said: You cannot overcome Muhammad by the methods you are adopting against him. When he was a young man you regarded him as your best-mannered person and looked upon him as your most truthful and honest man. Now that he has attained advanced age, you say, he is a sorcerer, he is a soothsayer, he is a poet, he is insane. By God, he is not a sorcerer, for we very well know what kind of people the sorcerers are and what kind of tricks they resort to. By God, he is not a

soothsayer, for we are fully aware of the guess works of the soothsayers. By God, he is not a poet for we know what poetry is and can judge that his words cannot be classified under poetry in any sense. By God, he is not insane, for we all know what nonsensical things the insane people utter. Therefore, O chiefs of the Quraish, let us think of some other plan to defeat him. After this, he himself proposed that stories from Persia like those of Rustam and Asfandyar should be given publicity to divert the people's attention from the Quran. Accordingly, they put this scheme into practice and Nadr himself began to relate such stories before the people. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. 1, pp. 320-321).

6. Not any township which We destroyed believed before them. Will they then believe.*8

مَا ءَامَنْتَ قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا أَفَهُمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ

*8 This contains a concise answer to the demand for a sign in the previous verse.

- (1) You ask for signs like the ones which were shown by the former Messengers but you forget that those obdurate people did not believe in spite of the signs shown to them.
- (2) While demanding a sign, you fail to realize that the people, who disbelieved even after seeing a sign, were inevitably destroyed.
- (3) It is indeed a favor of Allah that He is not showing the sign as demanded by you. Therefore, the best course for you would be to believe without seeing a sign. Otherwise, you will meet the same doom that the former communities met, when they did not believe even after seeing the signs.

7. And We did not send before you (O Muhammad) except men, to whom We revealed (the message).^{*9} So ask the people of the reminder if you do not know.^{*10}

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا
نُوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ
الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ



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

***10** That is, you may have it testified by the Jews, who are the enemies of Islam like you, and are teaching you the ways to oppose it, that all the Messengers including Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) were human beings.

8. And We did not give them bodies that would not eat food, nor were they immortals.

وَمَا جَعَلْنَاهُمْ جَسَدًا لَا
يَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَمَا كَانُوا
خَالِدِينَ



9. Then We fulfilled the promise to them. So We saved them and those whom We willed, and We destroyed those who transgressed beyond bounds.^{*11}

ثُمَّ صَدَقْنَاهُمُ الْوَعْدَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُمْ
وَمَنْ نَشَاءُ وَأَهْلَكْنَا الْمُسْرِفِينَ



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

10. Indeed, We have sent down to you the Book (the Quran), wherein is your reminder. Will you not then understand.^{*12}

لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ كِتَابًا فِيهِ
ذِكْرُكُمْ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

***12** This is a comprehensive answer to the various objections which were being raised in desperation by the disbelievers of Makkah against the Quran and the Prophet (peace be upon him), as if to say: What is there in this Book that you cannot understand? Why don't you consider it in the right spirit? There is nothing contradictory in it. It discusses you and your own problems and affairs of life. It describes your own nature, origin and end. It discriminates between good and evil and presents high moral qualities which your own consciences endorse and confirm. Why don't you, then, use your minds to understand this simple and easy thing?

11. And how many among township have We destroyed that were wrong doers, and We raised up after them another people.

وَكَمَ قَصَمْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ كَانَتْ
ظَالِمَةً وَأَنْشَأْنَا بَعْدَهَا قَوْمًا
ءَاخِرِينَ

12. Then, when they perceived Our punishment,^{*13} behold, they (tried to) flee from it.

فَلَمَّا أَحْسَوْا بِأَسْنَاءِ إِذَا هُمْ مِنْهَا
يَرْكُضُونَ

***13** That is, when they realized that Allah's scourge was actually coming.

13. "Flee not, and return to that wherein you lived a luxurious life, and (to) your dwellings, perhaps you will be questioned."^{*14}

لَا تَرْكُضُوا وَأَرْجِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَا
أُتْرِفْتُمْ فِيهِ وَمَسْكِنِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُسْأَلُونَ

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

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

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

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

14. They said: "O woe to us, indeed we were wrongdoers."

قَالُوا يَوَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ

15. So that crying of theirs did not cease, until We made them as a field

فَمَا زَالَتْ تِلْكَ دَعْوَتُهُمْ حَتَّىٰ
جَعَلْنَاهُمْ حَصِيدًا خَامِدِينَ

that is reaped, extinct.



16. And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them for a play.^{*15}

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَعِبِينَ

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

17. If We had intended that We take a pastime, We could surely have taken it in Our presence, if We were going to do (that).^{*16}

لَوْ أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَ هَوًا
لَأَتَّخِذْنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا إِنْ كُنَّا
فَاعِلِينَ

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

18. But We fling the truth against the falsehood, so it

بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ

crushes it, then behold, it is vanished. And woe to you for that (lie) which you ascribe.*17

فَيَدْمَغُهُ فَإِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ وَلَكُمْ
الْوَيْلُ مِمَّا تَصِفُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

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

19. And to Him belongs whoever is in the heavens and the earth.*18 And those who are with Him (angels)*19 are not too proud to worship Him, nor are they weary (of His worship).*20

وَلَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ
عِبَادَتِهِ وَلَا يَسْتَحْسِرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

*18 From here begins the discourse on the confirmation of Tauhid and the refutation of shirk for these were the actual bases of the conflict between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the disbelievers of Makkah. The line of argument is this: The whole system of the universe is a clear proof

that there is One Allah Who is its Creator, Sovereign, Ruler, and Lord and it is a falsehood that there are many gods who are partners in His Kingdom and Sovereignty, or that there is a Supreme God Who has under Him some minor gods to conduct the affairs of His Kingdom. This proof is also based on the preceding verses in which it has been stated that the universe has not been created as a pastime or a plaything, but for a serious purpose and that there has always been a conflict between the truth and falsehood, and falsehood has always been defeated and destroyed.

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

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

20. They glorify His praises night and day, they do not slacken (to do so).

يُسَبِّحُونَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَا يَفْتُرُونَ

21. Or have they taken gods from the earth who can resurrect (the dead).^{*21}

أَمْ آتَّخَذُوا ءِالِهَةً مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ هُمْ يُنْشِرُونَ

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

22. If there were therein gods besides Allah, then they both (the heavens and earth) would have been ruined.*²² So glorified be Allah, the Lord of the Throne,*²³ from what they ascribe (to Him).

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهَا إِلَهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
لَفَسَدَتَا ۗ فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ
الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

***22** This concise sentence contains two arguments:

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

(2) The deeper argument is that the system of the whole universe, including that of the earth, is functioning according to a universal law. It could not work so even for a moment, if there had been no proper proportion, balance, harmony and coordination between the different powers and countless things. This is a clear proof that there is a universal and all powerful law and system which binds and forces these powers and things to cooperate and coordinate between themselves with a perfect proportion and harmony and this could not have happened if there had been different independent rulers. The existence of such a system is itself a clear proof that there must be One All Powerful Manager and Administrator governing and ruling the entire universe. For further details, please see E. N. 47 of Surah Bani-Israil.

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

23. He will not be questioned as to what He does, and they will be questioned.

لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ



24. Or have they taken besides Him gods. Say (O Muhammad): “Bring your proof. This (Quran) is the admonition for those with me and admonition (in scriptures) for those before me.”^{*24} But most of them do not know the truth, so they have turned away.^{*25}

أَمْ آتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ ءِآلِهَةً قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ هَذَا ذِكْرٌ مَن مَّعِيَ وَذِكْرٌ مِّن قَبْلِي بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْحَقَّ فَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ



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

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

25. And We did not send before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that, “There is no god

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا

except Me, so worship Me.”

إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. And they say: “The Beneficent has taken a son.” Be He glorified. But they are honored slaves. *26

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا
سُبْحٰنَهُ ۗ بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

*26 Here it refers to the angels as is clear from Ayat 28. The disbelievers of Arabia believed that the angels were the daughters of God.

27. They do not precede Him in speech, and they act by His command.

لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ
بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

28. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot intercede except for him whom He is pleased with. And they, for fear of Him stand in awe. *27

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ
وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ
أَرْتَضَىٰ وَهُمْ مِّنْ خَشْيَتِهِ
مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

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

- (1) They took them for the offspring of Allah.
- (2) They thought that if they worshiped the angels, they would be so pleased that they would intercede with Allah on their behalf. (See Surah Yunus, Ayat 18; Surah Az-

Zumur, Ayat 3).

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

29. And whoever of them should say: "Indeed I am a god other than Him." Then such a one We shall recompense with Hell. Thus do We recompense the wrongdoers.

وَمَنْ يَقُلْ مِنْهُمْ إِنِّي إِلَهٌ مِّنْ دُونِهِ فَذَلِكَ نَجْزِيهِ جَهَنَّمَ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

30. And have those, who disbelieved, not seen that the heavens and the earth were joined together, then We parted them.^{*28} And We made from water every living thing.^{*29} Will they not then believe.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا^ط وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ^ط أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

***28** From the wording of the text, it appears that at first the whole universe was a single mass of matter; then it was split into different parts and the earth and the other heavenly bodies were formed. For more details, please see Surah HaMim, E.Ns 13-15.

***29** From the wording of the text, it appears that Allah made water the cause and origin of life. See also Surah An-Nur, Ayat 45.

31. And We have placed in the earth firm mountains lest it should shake with them,^{*30} and We have made therein broad highways to pass through,^{*31} that they may be guided.^{*32}

وَجَعَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ
تَمِيدَ بِهِمْ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا فِجَاجًا
سُبُلًا لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ

***30** For explanation, see E. N. 12 of Surah An-Nahl.

***31** “Broad highways” are the passes between high mountains and the valleys and ravines made by the rivers in the mountainous regions and other natural ways that connect different regions on the earth.

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

32. And We have made the heaven a secure canopy,^{*33} and yet they turn away from its signs.^{*34}

وَجَعَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ سَقْفًا مَّحْفُوظًا
وَهُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهَا مُعْرِضُونَ

***33** For explanation, see Surah Al-Hijr, E. Ns 8 and 10-12.

***34** That is, those signs which are in the sky.

33. And He it is who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Each in an orbit floating.^{*35}

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ
وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ
يَسْبَحُونَ

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

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

34. And^{*36} We did not grant to any human being immortality before you (O Muhammad), then if you

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لِبَشَرٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ
الْخُلْدَ أَفَإِنَّ مَتَّ فَهُمْ

die, would they live forever.

الْحٰلِدُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

***36** From here the same theme of the conflict between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the disbelievers, that was interrupted by verses 19-33, has been resumed.

35. Every soul must taste death.^{*37} And We test you by evil and by good as a trial.^{*38} And unto Us you will be returned.

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ
وَنَبْلُوكُم بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً
وَالَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

***37** This is a brief answer to all those warnings and curses with which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was being threatened and the conspiracies which the Quraish were hatching against him day and night. On the one hand, the women of the Quraish cursed him because according to them he had ruined their home life by enticing away their kith and kits. While on the other hand, the chiefs of the Quraish threatened him with horrible consequences for the propagation of Islam. After the emigration to Habash especially, which almost affected every home of Makkah, these curses and threats increased all the more. This verse is meant to comfort and console the Prophet (peace be upon him) as well so that he should continue his mission without any fear of their threats.

***38** That is, Allah is always putting human beings to test and trial both through adversity and affluence. This is to judge whether prosperity makes them proud, cruel and slaves of their lusts or they become grateful to Allah. On

the other hand, He inflicts adversity upon them in order to see whether they remain within the prescribed and lawful limits or become low-spirited and down-hearted. A sensible person therefore should not be deluded by prosperity and adversity, but should keep their trial element in view and try to pass through it gracefully.

36. And when those who disbelieve see you (Muhammad), they take you not except for mockery (saying): “Is this he who talks about your gods.”^{*39} While they, at the mention of the Beneficent, they disbelieve.^{*40}

وَإِذَا رَأَىكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ
يَتَّخِذُونَكَ إِلَّا هُزُوءًا أَهْدَا
الَّذِي يَذْكُرُ ءَالِهَتَكُمْ وَهُمْ
بِذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ هُمْ
كَافِرُونَ



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

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

37. Man is created of haste.^{*41} I shall soon show

خُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ

you My signs, so ask Me
not to hasten.*42

سَأُورِيكُمْ
آيَاتِي فَلَا
تَسْتَعْجِلُونِ

*41 This is not the literal translation of the text; its purport according to the Arabic usage is: Man is a hasty and impatient creature by his very nature. The same thing has been stated in Surah Al-Isra, Ayat 11: Man is very hasty and impatient.

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

38. And they say: “When
will this promise be
(fulfilled), if you are
truthful.”

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

39. If those who
disbelieved only knew the
time when they will not
be able to drive off the
fire from their faces, nor
from their backs, nor will
they be helped.

لَوْ يَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا حِينَ لَا
يَكْفُونَهُمْ عَن وُجُوهِهِمُ النَّارَ
وَلَا عَن ظُهُورِهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يُنصَرُونَ

40. But it will come upon them unexpectedly and will perplex them, then they will not be able to repel it, neither will they be reprieved.

بَلْ تَأْتِيهِمْ بَغْتَةً فَتَبْهَتُهُمْ فَلَا
يَسْتَطِيعُونَ رَدَّهَا وَلَا هُمْ
يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

41. And indeed, messengers were ridiculed before you, so those who mocked them (the messengers) were surrounded by that (punishment) which they used to ridicule.

وَلَقَدْ اسْتَهْزِئُ بِرُسُلٍ مِّن
قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا
مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

42. Say: “Who can protect you at the night and the day from the Beneficent.”*43 But they are turning away from the remembrance of their Lord.

قُلْ مَنْ يَكْلُؤُكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ
وَالنَّهَارِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ بَلْ هُمْ
عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

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

43. Or do they have gods who can guard them against Us. They have no power to help themselves,

أَمْ لَهُمْ ءَالِهَةٌ تَمْنَعُهُمْ مِّنْ دُونِنَا
لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَ

nor can they be protected from Us.

أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ مِّنَّا
يُصْحَبُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

44. But We gave the luxuries of this life to these and their fathers until life prolonged for them.^{*44} Then do they not see that We gradually reduce the land from its outlying borders.^{*45} Is it then they who will overcome.^{*46}

بَلْ مَتَّعْنَا هَؤُلَاءِ وِءَابَاءَهُمْ
حَتَّىٰ طَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْعُمُرُ أَفَلَا
يَرَوْنَ أَنَّا نَأْتِي الْأَرْضَ
نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا أَفَهُمْ
الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

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

***45** In this connection, see Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 41 and E.N. 60 thereof. Here it bears an additional meaning also: Do they not see that an All-Powerful Being is showing His signs every now and then everywhere on the earth in the form of famines, epidemics, floods, earthquakes and other calamities. Millions of people are killed, habitations and harvests are destroyed and other damages are caused, which frustrate all human designs?

***46** It means: When they know that all the resources and

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

45. Say (O Muhammad): “I warn you only by the revelation.” And the deaf do not hear the call whenever they are warned.

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أُنذِرُكُمْ بِالْوَحْيِ
وَلَا يَسْمَعُ الصُّمُّ الدُّعَاءَ إِذَا مَا
يُنذَرُونَ

46. And if a breath of your Lord’s punishment were to touch them,^{*47} they assuredly would say: “O woe to us, indeed we have been wrongdoers.”

وَلِئِنْ مَسَّتْهُمُ نَفْحَةٌ مِّنْ عَذَابِ
رَبِّكَ لَيَقُولُنَّ يَوَيْلَنَا إِنَّا
كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ

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

47. And We shall set up balances of justice on the Day of Resurrection, so not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in anything. And if there be the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it forth. And sufficient are We as Reckoners.^{*48}

وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ
الْقِيَامَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا
وَإِنْ كَانَ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِّنْ
خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا وَكَفَىٰ بِنَا
حَاسِبِينَ

***48** See also verses 8-9 and E.Ns 8-9 of Surah Al-Aaraf. It is difficult for us to understand the exact nature of the balance. Anyhow, it is clear that the balance will weigh accurately all the human moral deeds instead of material things, and will help judge whether a man is virtuous or wicked and how much. The Quran has used this word to make mankind understand that every deed, good or bad, will be weighed and judged according to merit.

48. And surely,^{*49} We gave Moses and Aaron the criterion and a light and a reminder^{*50} for the righteous.^{*51}

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ
الْفُرْقَانَ وَضِيَاءً وَذِكْرًا
لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ



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

(1) All the former Prophets were human beings. Therefore there is nothing strange or unusual that a human being like Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been sent as a Messenger.

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

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

enemies and persecutors.

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

***50** All the three words have been used in praise of the Torah:

(1) *Alfurqan*: A criterion which distinguished the truth from falsehood.

(2) *Dhiaun*: A light which showed the right way of life.

(3) *Zikrun*: An admonition, which reminded the erring descendants of Adam to remember the lesson they had forgotten.

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

49. Those who fear their Lord in unseen, and they are afraid of the Hour. ^{*52}

الَّذِينَ تَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ
وَهُمْ مِنْ
مُشْفِقُونَ

***52** The Hour of Resurrection.

50. And this is a blessed reminder (the Quran) which We have sent down. Will you then reject it.

وَهَذَا ذِكْرٌ مُبَارَكٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ أَفَأَنْتُمْ
لَهُ مُنْكَرُونَ

51. And indeed, We gave Abraham his guidance before, and We were well acquainted with him.*53

﴿ وَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا اِبْرٰهِيْمَ رُشْدَهٗ
مِّنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا بِهٖ عَلٰمِيْنَ ﴾

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

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

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

In this connection, please also see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 124-141, 258-260: Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 74-84: Surah At-Tauba, Ayat 114: Surah Houd, Ayats 69-76: Surah Ibrahim, Ayats 35-41: Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 51-58 and Surah An-Nahal, Ayats 120-122 and the E.Ns thereof.

52. When^{*54} he said to his father and his

﴿ اِذْ قَالَ لِاٰبِيْهٖ وَقَوْمِهٖ مَا هٰذِهٖ ﴾

people: “What are these images, those to which you are devoted.”

الْتَّمَاثِيلُ الَّتِي أَنْتُمْ هَاهَا
عَبِكُفُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

***54** Before proceeding further, it should be kept in mind that the incident from the history of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) has been cited here to refute the erroneous creeds of the Quraish. This was meant to hit them hard for they were the descendants of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and were proud of their relationship with him. It was he who had built the Kabah which had become the center of the entire Arabia and they, being its keepers, were its most important clan. Therefore, they could not remain indifferent to this answer.

53. They said: “We found our fathers worshipping of them.”

قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا ءَابَاءَنَا هَاهَا
عَبِدِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

54. He said: “Indeed you have been, you and your fathers, in manifest error.”

قَالَ لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ
وَءَابَاؤُكُمْ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

55. They said: “Have you brought us the truth, or are you of those who jest.”^{*55}

قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا بِالْحَقِّ أَمْ أَنْتَ مِنَ
الِّلَّعِينِ ﴿٥٥﴾

***55** The literal translation will be: Are you presenting the truth before us, or just playing with us? They were so sure of the truth of their creed that they could never imagine

that anyone could be serious in declaring it to be false.

56. He said: “But your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, He who created them. And I am, to that, among those who testify.”

قَالَ بَلْ رَبُّكُمْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ الَّذِي فَطَرَهُنَّ وَأَنَا
عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ



57. “And by Allah, I certainly have a plan (against) your idols after that you have turned (and) gone away.”^{*56}

وَتَاللَّهِ لَأَكِيدَنَّ أَصْنَامَكُمْ
بَعْدَ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا مُدْبِرِينَ



***56** That is, if you do not understand this by argument, I will present a practical proof that these idols are helpless and have no powers. Therefore, it is wrong to make them your deities.

58. So he reduced them into pieces,^{*57} except the biggest of them, that they might turn to it.^{*58}

فَجَعَلَهُمْ جُذَاذًا إِلَّا كَبِيرًا
لَّهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ يَرْجِعُونَ



***57** This was that practical proof. In the absence of the priests and attendants, Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) entered their central Temple and broke all the idols to pieces.

***58** The pronoun in the original text may be translated into

it or him. In the former case, it will refer to the chief idol and in the latter to Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). In the first case, it will imply a subtle sarcasm in order to make them realize that their creed of idol worship was foolish, for obviously the chief idol could not break the minor idols. In the second case, it will refer to Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), who thought that they might turn to him about the incident and he might get an opportunity to have a frank talk with them about their absurd creed.

59. They said: “Who has done this to our gods. Indeed, he is surely of the wrongdoers.”

قَالُوا مَنْ فَعَلَ هَذَا بِإِلٰهِنَا
 إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

60. They said: “We heard a young man mentioning of them, who is called Abraham.”

قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا فَتًى يَذُكُرُهُمْ يُقَالُ
 لَهُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ

61. They said: “Then bring him before the eyes of the people that they may testify.”^{*59}

قَالُوا فَآتُوا بِهِ عَلَىٰ أَعْيُنِ
 النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْهَدُونَ

***59** This was exactly what Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) expected to happen. He wished that the matter should not remain confined to the priests and the attendants but the common people also should be present there to witness that their deities were helpless and their priests were deluding them about their powers. The priests committed the same folly as was later committed by

Pharaoh when he arranged an encounter between Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and the magicians in the open in front of the multitudes of the common people, and the former got an opportunity to show publicly the miracle of the staff which shattered the illusory, magical tricks of the magicians.

62. They said: “Is it you who has done this to our gods, O Abraham.”

قَالُوا ءَأَنْتَ فَعَلْتَ هَذَا بِءِآلِهَتِنَا

يَتَّبِرْهِيمُ

63. He said: “But this has done it, biggest of them, this one. So ask them, if they can speak.”^{*60}

قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهُ كَبِيرُهُمْ هَذَا
فَسْأَلُوهُمْ إِنْ كَانُوا

يَنْطِقُونَ

^{*60} The very sentence, “So ask them, if they can speak”, is a clear proof that it was not a lie when Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) said: “But this has done it, biggest of them, this one”. What he intended by this was to make them realize and confess that their idols were helpless because they could do nothing to protect themselves and could not even speak. It is clear that when a person poses an unreal question for the sake of argument in order to bring home the fact that the position taken by the other party is untenable, it cannot be considered as a lie; firstly, because the speaker himself never intended it to be a lie, and secondly, because the addressees also knew that it was not a lie.

The foregoing remarks have been necessitated because of a tradition that Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) told three lies in his life, of which one is the above mentioned event. The second lie is contained in SURah As-Saffaat, Ayat 89: I am indisposed, and the third lie is not contained in the Quran but in the Bible that he declared his wife to be his sister. (Gen. 12:12,13, 18;19). It is a pity that this tradition has given rise to two divergent opinions. The orthodox traditionalists actually believe that Prophet Abraham told these lies just because an authentic tradition says so. They do not consider that it is far better to discard the tradition according to which a Prophet is accused of being a liar. On the other hand, those who are against the traditions, discard all of them just because this solitary tradition, which has been reported as authentic by Bukhari and Muslim, is unreliable on the very face of it. Obviously it needs no elaborate arguments to prove that all the traditions cannot be discarded just because one or a few of them are unreliable. As regards the upholders of the first opinion, they have gone to the other extreme and think that a tradition can be discarded in spite of the authenticity of its reporters for cogent reasons. They do this without reference to the contents of the tradition itself. But if the text of the tradition itself clearly shows that such a thing could not have been said by the Prophet (peace be upon him), there is no reason to insist that it should be accepted as authentic merely because its reporters are authentic.

This, tradition is unreliable for other reasons also. As has already been shown, the first lie is no lie at all. As regards

the second lie, “I am indisposed”; it cannot be considered as a lie unless it is proved beyond doubt that Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) was perfectly healthy at that time, and the text does not testify this. As regards the third lie, the event stated in the Bible in chapter 12 of Genesis is absurd on the face of it. When Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) went to Egypt with his wife Sarah, he was, according to the Bible itself, 75 years old and his wife was 65. Therefore the very age of Sarah is a clear proof that she could not be a fair woman to look upon to force Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) to pose that she was his sister in order to save his life. The tradition under discussion, which accuses Prophet Abraham to be guilty of telling a lie, has accordingly no basis at all and cannot be taken as reliable in spite of its authentic reporters.

64. So they turned to themselves and said: “Indeed you, yourselves are the wrongdoers.”

فَرَجَعُوا إِلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ فَقَالُوا
إِنَّكُمْ أَنْتُمْ الظَّالِمُونَ

65. Then their minds tuned upside down,^{*61} (and they said): “Indeed, you know well that these do not speak.”

ثُمَّ نَكَسُوا عَلَىٰ رُءُوسِهِمْ لَقَدْ
عَلِمْتَ مَا هَؤُلَاءِ يَنْطِقُونَ

*61 Literally the original text means: They were turned down upon their heads. Some commentators have interpreted it to mean: They hung down their heads with shame. But this does not fit in the context and the wording

of the text. The right interpretation would be: When they considered the answer of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), they realized that they themselves were in the wrong, because they had set up helpless idols as deities, which could not even speak a word as to who had broken them. But soon after this, they were overpowered by obduracy and ignorance which perverted their minds and they again relapsed into crookedness.

66. He said: “Do you then worship other than Allah that which does not benefit you at all, nor harm you.”

قَالَ أَفَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ
اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا
يَضُرُّكُمْ

67. “Fie upon you, and to what you worship other than Allah. Have you then no sense.”

أَفِ لَكُمْ وَلِمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن
دُونِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

68. They said: “Burn him and help your gods, if you will be doing.”

قَالُوا حَرِّقُوهُ وَانصُرُوا
ءَالِهَتَكُمْ
إِن كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ

69. We (Allah) said: “O fire, be coolness and peace upon Abraham.”*62

قُلْنَا يَنَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا
عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

*62 Though this is one of those miracles which have been clearly stated in the Quran, there are people who try to prove that there was no such miracle at all. According to

this passage (Ayats 68-70), Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) was actually threatened to be burnt alive and he was accordingly thrown into the burning fire, but Allah ordered the fire to become cool and harmless for him. In the face of the clear words of the Quran, these people deny this miracle because according to them it is impossible even for Allah to go beyond the routine of the physical laws. They say that miracles cannot appeal to the rationalists of the modern age, and therefore these should be interpreted in accordance with physical laws. They forget that according to the Quran, Allah is able to do everything, and He does extraordinary and unusual things which cannot be explained by science. Therefore they should accept the Quran as it is or discard it, but they should not twist it to suit their so called rationalism.

70. And they intended for him a plan, so We made them the worst losers.

وَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ
الْأَخْسَرِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾

71. And We delivered him and Lot to the land,^{*63} that whereupon We had bestowed blessing for the nations.^{*64}

وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَلُوطًا إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي
بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧١﴾

***63** According to the Bible, Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had two brothers, Nahor and Haran; Prophet Lot was the son of Haran (Gen. 11:26), and he was the only person to believe in Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). (Surah Al-Ankaboot, Ayat 26).

***64** The blessed land refers to Syria and Palestine, which

contains both material and spiritual blessings. It is one of the most fertile regions in the world. Moreover, it was blessed for two thousand years with more Prophets than any other region of the world.

72. And We bestowed upon him Isaac, and Jacob in addition.*65 And each We made righteous.

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ
نَافِلَةً ۗ وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا صَالِحِينَ



*65 That is, We made his son a Prophet and his grandson too.

73. And We made them leaders, guiding by Our command, and We inspired to them to do good deeds, and to establish prayers, and to give charity. And they were worshippers of Us.*66

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أئِمَّةً يَهْتَدُونَ
بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ
الْخَيْرَاتِ وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءَ
الزَّكَاةِ وَكَانُوا لَنَا عَابِدِينَ



*66 This important event of the life of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) has found no mention whatever in the Bible. In fact nothing about his life in Iraq, his conflict with Nimrod, his father and the community at large, his efforts to eradicate idolatry, the incident of his being cast into the fire, which ultimately led to his forced exile from the country, is mentioned anywhere in the Bible. The Bible merely mentions his migration, and that too, in a manner as

if a family was migrating from one country to another in search of livelihood. There is another interesting difference between the Quran and the Bible. According to the Quran, the father of Abraham, who was a mushrik, was foremost in tyrannizing over his son, but the Bible gives a different account, which is as follows.

Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. But Sarai was barren; she had no child. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and settled there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran. (Gen. 11:27-32).

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. (Gen. 12: 1-3).

The Talmud, however, gives quite a few details about the life of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) about the

period of his stay in Iraq, which are generally the same as given in the Quran, but there is a glaring discrepancy in some of the important events. In fact, one can clearly feel that the account given in the Talmud is full of heterogeneous and hypothetical things while the one given in the Quran is most clear and contains nothing unworthy of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). We reproduce below the account as given in the Talmud so that the reader may know the difference between the Quranic and Jewish versions. This will also remove the misunderstanding of those who think that the Quran has borrowed stories from the Bible or Jewish literature.

According to the Talmud: The wise men saw a large star in the sky on the night Abram was born and they advised Nimrod to kill the child born in the house of Terah. The King decided to kill the child but Terah hid his child and had a servant's son killed in exchange. Terah thereupon hid his wife and child in a cave where they lived for ten years. In the 11th year Abram was taken by Terah to Noah, where he lived under the guidance of Noah and his son Shem for 39 years. During the same period Abram married his niece Sarai, who was 42 years his junior. (The Bible does not mention that Sarai was the niece of Abram; moreover, the difference in their ages is mentioned as ten years). (Gen. 11: 29, 17: 17).

The Talmud then says: Abram left Noah at the age of 50 and came back to his father. Here he found that his father was an idolatry and had twelve idols in the house according to the twelve months of the year. He tried to preach to his

father against idolatry but when the latter did not listen to him, Abram one day broke all the idols in the house. Seeing this Terah went straight to Nimrod and complained that the son who was born in his house 50 years ago had misbehaved and broken the idols. He wanted the King's verdict on this. Nimrod summoned Abram for interrogation, but the replies given by Abram were straight, terse and clear. Nimrod sent him to jail and then referred the matter to the council for a decision. The council decided that Abram should be burnt to death. A fire was accordingly prepared and Abram was cast into it. His brother and father-in-law Haran was also similarly cast into the fire. Haran was punished because Nimrod enquired of Terah as to why he had another child killed in place of Abram when he wanted to kill Abram on the day of his birth. Terah replied that this was done at the instigation of Haran. Nimrod accordingly let off Terah but threw Haran into the fire along with Abram. Haran was burnt to death instantly but people saw that Abram was walking unhurt through the flames. When Nimrod was informed of it, he witnessed it with his own eyes and cried out: O man of the God of Heaven, come out of the fire and stand before me. Thereupon, Abram came out and Nimrod became one of his believers and gave him many costly presents. After this, according to the Talmud, Abram stayed in Iraq for two more years when Nimrod saw a dreadful dream and the astrologers told him that the destruction of his empire would come through Abram and that he should, therefore, put him to death. Nimrod sent

people to kill Abram but Abram came to know of the plot before hand through Eleazar, a slave presented to him by Nimrod himself. Abram accordingly fled and took refuge with Noah where Terah also met him off and on secretly. The father and the son at last decided to leave the country and Noah and his son Shem also approved of their plan. Accordingly, Terah along with his son Abram and his grandson Lot and his granddaughter and son's wife Sarai, left Ur and went to Haran. (H. Polano: The Talmud Selections, London, pp. 30-42).

Can a reasonable person after reading this account of the Talmud ever imagine that this could be a source book for the story as given in the Quran?

74. And Lot, We gave him judgment and knowledge,^{*67} and We saved him from the town which was committing abominations. Indeed, they were a wicked people, exceedingly disobedient.

وَلُوطًا ءَاتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا
وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي
كَانَتْ تَعْمَلُ الْخَبَائِثَ إِنَّهُمْ
كَانُوا قَوْمَ سَوِّءٍ فَسِيقِينَ

*67 The original Arabic word *hukm* is very comprehensive. It means judgment, wisdom and discretion, and authority from Allah. *Ilm* stands for the revealed knowledge of the truth. Thus, We bestowed hukm and ilm on Lot. We appointed Lot as a Prophet. (For the story of Lot, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 80-84; Suran Yunus, Ayats 70-83; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 57-74 and the E.Ns there of).

75. And We admitted him into Our mercy. Indeed, he was of the righteous.

وَأَدْخَلْنَاهُ فِي رَحْمَتِنَا إِنَّهُ مِنَ
الصَّالِحِينَ

76. And Noah, when he called upon (Us) before.*68 So We responded to him. Then We saved him and his household from the great affliction.*69

وَنُوحًا إِذْ نَادَىٰ مِن قَبْلُ
فَأَسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ
مِنَ الْكُرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ

*68 This refers to Prophet Noah's (peace be upon him) prayer which he at last made after having tried his utmost to reform his people: Lord, help me for I have been overpowered. (Surah Al-Qamar, Ayat 10), and Lord, do not leave even a single disbeliever on the earth. (Surah Nooh, Ayat 26).

*69 "Great affliction" may either refer to living a miserable life among the wicked people, or to the flood. (For the story of Prophet Noah, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats: 59-64; Surah Yunus, Ayats 72-74; Surah Houd, Ayats 25-48, and Surah Al-Isra, Ayat 3 and the E.N.s thereof).

77. And We helped him against the people, those who denied Our revelations. Indeed, they were an evil people, So We drowned them, all together.

وَنَصَرْنَاهُ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ
كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا
قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

78. And David and Solomon, when they judged regarding the field. When (at night) the sheep of certain people had pastured in it. And We were witnesses to their judgment.

وَدَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ إِذْ يَحْكُمَانِ
فِي الْحَرْثِ إِذْ نَفَسَتْ فِيهِ غَنَمُ
الْقَوْمِ وَكُنَّا لِحُكْمِهِمْ
شَاهِدِينَ



79. And We gave understanding of it to Solomon, and to each (of them) We gave judgment and knowledge.^{*70} And We subjected along with David the mountains to praise (Us), and (also) the birds.^{*71} And We were the doers.

فَفَهَّمْنَاهَا سُلَيْمَانَ وَكُلًّا
ءَاتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَسَخَّرْنَا
مَعَ دَاوُدَ آلِجَبَالِ يُسَبِّحْنَ
وَالطَّيْرِ وَكُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ



***70** There is no mention of this event in the Bible, nor in the Jewish literature. According to the Muslim commentators, it happened like this: The goats of one person entered into the field of another person at night. The latter brought his complaint to Prophet David who decided that the strayed goats should be given to the owner of the field. Prophet Solomon, however, differed with this and opined that the goats should remain with the owner of the field up to the time that the former tilled and prepared the field as before. In regard to this Allah says: We led Solomon to the right decision. As regards the legal aspect of the matter, we cannot say with certainty what is the Islamic law in such a

case nor is there any tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to explain or support it. That is why the jurists have differed about it.

It should, however, be noted that in this context, the incident has been cited to show that the Prophets were after all human beings in spite of their God given powers and abilities. In this case, Prophet David committed an error of judgment because he was not guided by Allah as was Prophet Solomon, though both of them were Prophets. In the succeeding passage the wonderful powers of both have been mentioned to show that they were God given and did not make anyone a god.

Incidentally, we learn from this verse that if two judges give different decisions about one and the same case, both of them will be regarded as righteous, though the decision of only one of them will be correct, provided that both are duly qualified for sitting in judgment on the case. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has stated the same principle more elaborately. In a tradition of Bukhari, he is reported by Amar bin Aas to have said: If a judge does his very best to arrive at the right decision, he will get a double reward in case of a right judgment and a single reward if his judgment is wrong. According to another tradition, cited by Abu Daud and Ibn Majah, on the authority of Buraidah, he is reported to have said: Judges are of three kinds and only one of them will go to Paradise: the one who recognizes the truth and decides according to it. On the other hand, the one who recognizes the truth but gives his decision against it, will go to Hell, and he too, who sits in judgment on a case

without the necessary knowledge (and competence).

***71** From the wording of the text, it is clear that the mountains and the birds were subjected to join Prophet David (peace be upon him) with him in glorifying Allah. This is also supported by Surah Suad, Ayat 19: We had subdued the mountains by Our command so that they praised Us with him (David) in the morning and evening, and the birds too, which gathered together and repeated Our praise with him. And, according to Surah Saba, Ayat 10: We commanded the mountains to repeat Our praise with him and also the birds to do the same. We are of the opinion that it means this: When Prophet David (peace be upon him) sang hymns of Allah's praise and glory, in his rich and sweet voice, the mountains echoed back his melodies and the birds gathered round him and the whole scene became charming. Our interpretation is supported by this tradition.

Once when Abu Musa Ashari, who had an extremely sweet voice, was reciting the Quran, the Prophet (peace be upon him) who was passing by, stood and listened to him for a long time. When he finished the recital, the Prophet (peace be upon him) remarked: This man has been granted a portion of the melody of David.

80. And We taught him the art of making the coats of armor for you to protect you in your fighting (against your enemy).^{*72} Will you then be grateful.^{*73}

وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ صَنْعَةَ لَبُوسٍ لَّكُمْ
لِتَحْصِنَكُمْ مِنْ بَأْسِكُمْ فَهَلْ
أَنْتُمْ شَاكِرُونَ



***72** According to Surah Saba, Ayats 10-11, it was like this: And We made the iron soft for him (and commanded him): Make coats of mail complete in every way, and arrange the plates properly. This shows that Allah had made Prophet David an expert in the use of iron, and had especially taught him the art of an armorer for defense purposes. This fact is confirmed by archaeological and historical researches, for according to these the iron age in the world started between 1200 and 1000 BC and this was precisely the period of Prophet David. At first the Hittites in Syria and Asia Minor, who flourished between 2000 and 1200 BC, discovered a method of melting and molding iron, but they guarded it as a close secret from the world, and it could not be put to common use. Later on, the Philistines came to know of it, but they too guarded it as a secret. The incessant defeats suffered by the Israelites at the hands of the Hittites and the Philistines before King Saul, were due mainly to the use of chariots of iron in their wars by the latter. (Joshua, 17:16; Judges, 1: 19, 4: 2-3). In 1020 BC when Saul became ruler over the Israelites by Allah's command, he subdued the Canaanites and recaptured most of Palestine. After him Prophet David (1004-965 BC) not only annexed the whole of Palestine and Jordan to the Israeli kingdom but a major portion of Syria as well. This was the time when the secret of armor making closely guarded by the Hittites and the Philistines, became well known and cheaper articles of daily use began to be made. The recent archaeological excavations conducted in Edom, to the south of Palestine, which is rich in iron ore, have

brought to light furnaces for melting and molding iron. The furnace excavated near Ezion-geber, a port on the Gulf of Aqabah, in the time of Prophet Solomon, seems to have been built on the principles which are used in the modern blast furnaces. It is therefore natural that Prophet David must have first of all utilized this discovery for war purposes, because a little earlier the hostile Canaanites around his kingdom had made life really difficult for his people. The Bible also says that Prophet David was an expert in the art of melting and using iron for war purposes. (See Joshua, 17: 16; Judges, 1:19 and 4: 2-3).

***73** For further details about Prophet David, please see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 251 and Sura Al-Isra, Ayat 55 and the E.Ns thereof.

81. And (We subjected) for Solomon the raging wind, which blew at his command towards the land, that whereupon We had bestowed blessing.^{*74} And We are All Knower of every thing.

وَلَسَلِّمَنَّ الَّرِّيحَ عَاصِفَةً تَجْرِي
بِأَمْرِهِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا
فِيهَا وَكُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَالِمِينَ



***74** This is also explained in Surah Saba, Ayat 12: And for Solomon We had subjected the wind which covered a month's journey in the morning and a month's journey in the evening, and in Surah Suad, Ayat 36: So We subjected the wind to him. It blew softly at his bidding wherever he wanted it to blow. Thus it is clear that the wind was so subjected to Prophet Solomon that the voyages to places at

one month's sea journey could be performed conveniently, because a favorable wind was always blowing for his ships to and from those places.

It is confirmed by the Bible that Prophet Solomon had developed sea trade on a large scale. (I Kings, 10: 22). On the one side, his trade ships sailed from Ezion-geber, through the Red Sea, towards Yaman and other southern and eastern lands, and on the other, his naval fleet called Thar-shish, sailed on the Mediterranean to the western countries. The great furnace which he had built at Ezion-geber for melting and molding ores extracted from the copper and iron mines in the Arabah in Edom, has been confirmed by modern archaeological researches as well. This molten iron and copper was used in building ships besides being put to other uses. The Quran refers to this when it says: And We made a fountain of molten copper to flow for him (Solomon). (Surah Saba, Ayat 12).

As regards to the subjection of the wind, it may mean that Allah, by His special favor, had so arranged that the wind, and sea voyages in those days depended entirely on wind, was always favorable for Prophet Solomon's fleet. But if we take the literal meaning of verse 81: It blew at his command, there will be no harm, for Allah is able to give such powers to any of His servants He pleases.

82. And of the devils were those who dived (into the sea) for him, and carried out (other) jobs besides that. And We were

وَمِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ
يَغُوصُونَ لَهُ وَيَعْمَلُونَ
عَمَلًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَكُنَّا لَهُمْ

guardian over them.*75

حَفِظِينَ

*75 The subjection of satans has been explained in Surah Saba, Ayats 12-13. Incidentally, these verses of the Quran clearly show that the satans and jinns who worked for Prophet Solomon belonged to quite a different genus from human beings. Therefore, it is wrong to pervert the Quran to prove that they were human beings as some modernist commentators have tried to do. It is obvious from the wording of the Quran and the context in which the story of the jinns has been related, that they were not human beings. Had they been so this would have been no special favor to Solomon, because human beings had already built the gigantic monuments like the pyramids of Egypt.

83. And Job,*76 when he called to his Lord, (saying): “Indeed adversity has afflicted me, and You are the Most Merciful of those who are merciful.”*77

وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

*76 There is a wide divergence of opinion concerning the personality, period and nationality of Prophet Job. Some commentators opine that he was an Israelite, while others think that he was an Egyptian or an Arab who lived before Prophet Moses, or during the time of Prophets David and Solomon (peace be upon them all). As all these conjectures are based on the Book of Job, which is self-contradictory and against the Quran. Nothing can be said about him with certainty, but in the light of the Book of Isaiah (8th century

BC) and the Book of Ezekiel (6th century BC), which are more trustworthy works, he lived in the 9th century BC or even earlier. As regards to his nationality, the context in which his name occurs in Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 163 and Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 84, it may be assumed that he was an Israelite. According to a saying of Wahb bin Munabbih, he might have been from the offspring of Esau, a son of Prophet Isaac.

*77 The words of the prayer are note-worthy. Prophet Job mentions his distress but does not say anything more to his Lord except: You are the most Merciful. This is a great proof of his fortitude, noble and contented nature.

84. So We responded to him, and We removed what was on him, of the adversity.*78 And We gave him (back) his household and the like thereof along with them, a mercy from Us, and a reminder for the worshippers.*79

فَأَسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِ
 مِنْ ضُرٍّ^ط وَأَتَيْنَاهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُمْ
 مَعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِنْدِنَا
 وَذِكْرَى لِلْعَابِدِينَ



*78 How his disease was cured has been explained in Surah Suad, Ayat 42: Stamp the ground with your foot: here is cool water for you to wash with and to drink. From this it appears that no sooner did he stamp the ground than a spring gushed forth. He took bath and drank the water and was cured of his disease. The nature of the treatment hints that he was suffering from a skin disease. This is confirmed by the Bible as well. Satan smote Job with sore boils from

the sole of his foot unto his crown. (Job, 2:7).

***79** It will be worthwhile to compare the high character of Prophet Job as given in the Quran with that in the Book of Job in the Bible. The Quran presents him as a veritable picture of patience and fortitude and an excellent model for the worshippers of Allah, but his general picture presented in the Book of Job is that of a man who is full of grievance against God: Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. Let them curse (the night) that curse the day. Because it shut not the doors of my mother's womb, nor did sorrow from mine eyes. Why died I not from the womb? (Chapter 3). Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balance together, the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me. (Chapter 6) I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? And why dost thou not pardon my transgressions, and take away my iniquity? (Chapter 7: 20-21).

His three friends try to console him and counsel patience, but in vain. He says: My soul is weary of my life. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul (10:1). I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all. (16:2). So these three men ceased to answer Job. Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu against Job, because he justified himself rather than God." (32:1-3), but he also failed to console him. Then the Lord himself came down and condemned the

three friends and Elihu and rebuked Job and then forgave him, accepted him and blessed him. (Chapters 41, 42). It should be noted that in the first two chapters of this Book, Prophet Job is presented as a perfect and upright man who feared God, but in the following chapters he becomes an embodiment of grievance against God, as though the estimate of Satan about him was correct and that of God incorrect. Thus this Book itself is a clear evidence that it is neither the word of God nor of Prophet Job but had been written afterwards by some literary man and incorporated in the Bible as a scripture.

85. And Ishmael, and Idris,^{*80} and Dhul Kifl.^{*81}
All were of the steadfast.

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ
كُلٌّ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ

***80** For explanation, see Surah Maryam E. N. 33.
***81** Zul-Kifl is not the name but the title of a righteous man, which literally means a man of luck. Here it does not refer to worldly prosperity but to his high character and ranks in the Hereafter. He has also been mentioned by this title in Surah Suad, Ayat 48. There are different opinions about his identity and nationality. Some have regarded him as Zacharias (but this is not correct because Zacharias has been mentioned separately in verse 89). Others say that he was Elias, or Joshua, son of Nun, or Elisha, but this again is incorrect, because in Surah Suad, Ayat 49 Elisha and Zul-Kifl have been mentioned as separate personalities. Some others say that he was Prophet Job's son, named Bishr, who succeeded him as Prophet.

Allamah Alusi says: The Jews claim that he was Ezekiel who was appointed to Prophethood during the captivity (597 BC) of the Israelites and he performed his mission in a habitation by the side of the Chebar canal.

These conflicting opinions indeed confirm nothing. The modern commentators, however, are inclined to believe that he was Ezekiel, though there is no convincing argument about it. This opinion is sound because his description in this verse that he was a patient and righteous man and was blessed by God is fully confirmed by the Book of Ezekiel. He was one of those people who had been taken prisoner by Nebuchadnezzar at the downfall of Jerusalem, who settled the Israeli exiles at Tel-abib by the river Chebar in Iraq. Here, in 594 BC, Ezekiel was raised to Prophethood when he was hardly 30, and he continued preaching the message of God to the exiled Israelites as well as to the iniquitous people and rulers of Jerusalem for full 22 years. In the 9th year of his mission, his wife whom he called the desire of his eyes died, but when the people came to mourn her death, he warned them of the wrath of God and the impending disaster. (Chapter 24: 15-21). The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel in the Bible is one of those scriptures which appear to be genuine and divinely inspired.

86. And We admitted them into Our mercy. Indeed, they were among the righteous.

وَأَدْخَلْنَاهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِنَا إِنَّهُمْ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

87. And Dhun Nun (Jonah),*82 when he went

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغْضِبًا

off in anger,^{*83} then he thought that We had no power over him.^{*84} Then he called out in the darkness,^{*85} (saying) that: “There is no god except You. Be You glorified. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.”

فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى
فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ
سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ
الظَّالِمِينَ



***82** That is, Jonah, literally Dhun-Nun means the man of the fish. He was called so because he was devoured by a fish by the command of Allah. (Also See Surah As-Saffaat, Ayat 142 and Surah Yunus, Ayat 98 and its E.Ns 98-100).

***83** Prophet Jonah left his people before he received Allah’s command for migration.

***84** He presumed that he should leave, the place which was going to be visited by the scourge of Allah. This was not by itself an offence but it was an offence for a Prophet to leave the place of his mission without the permission of Allah.

***85** “Darkness”: the darkness in the belly of the fish and the darkness of the sea over and above it.

88. So We responded to him, and We saved him from the anguish. And thus do We save the believers.

فَأَسْتَجِبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الغَمِّ
وَكَذَلِكَ نُجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ



89. And Zachariah, when he called to his Lord: “My Lord, do not leave me

وَزَكَرِيَّا إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ رَبِّ
لَا تَذَرْنِي فَرْدًا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ

alone (without heir), and You are the best of the inheritors.”

الْوَارِثِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

90. So We responded to him, and We bestowed upon him John, and We cured his wife for him.*86

فَأَسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ
يَحْيَىٰ وَأَصْلَحْنَا لَهُ زَوْجَهُ^ج

Indeed, they used to hasten in doing good deeds, and they used to call on Us with hope and fear. And they used to humble themselves before Us.*87

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسْرِعُونَ فِي
الْخَيْرَاتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا
وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَاشِعِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾

***86** “Cured his wife”: We cured his wife of sterility. As “You are the best of the Inheritors”, I shall have no grief even if You do not give me any child. (For further details, please see Surah Aal-Imran, Ayats 37-41 and Surah Maryam, Ayats 2-14 and the E.Ns thereof).

***87** It will be worthwhile to reiterate the reasons why the stories of the Prophets have been cited in this Surah.

(1) The story of Prophet Zacharias has been cited to impress on the minds that all the Prophets were human beings and servants of Allah and had no tinge of Godhead in them. They had no power to bestow children upon others because they themselves had to pray to Allah for children for themselves.

(2) The story of Prophet Jonah has been cited to show that even a great Prophet like him did not go unnoticed when he committed an error in regard to Allah’s message. But when

he repented, Allah, by His grace, delivered him alive from the belly of the fish.

(3) The mention of Prophet Job has been made to show that even Prophets were put to hard trials and afflictions and even they had to beg Allah to restore them to health, not to speak of curing others of diseases.

Along with these, the other important thing which is meant to be impressed is that all the Prophets believed in the doctrine of Tauhid. That is why they begged and prayed to One Allah alone to fulfill their needs and requirements. Though they met with trials, Allah helped them and granted their prayers in supernatural and miraculous ways.

91. And she (Mary) who guarded her chastity,^{*88} so We breathed into her through Our Spirit (angel),^{*89} and We made her and her son a sign for peoples.^{*90}

وَالَّتِي أَحْصَتَ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا
فِيهَا مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَجَعَلْنَاهَا
وَأَبْنَاهَا آيَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ

*88 That is, Mary (peace be upon her).

*89 It should be noted that the incident of the birth of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was not different from that of Prophet Adam, because the wording of the Arabic text in the two cases is almost identical: (See Surah Suad, Ayats 71-72). Besides this in verse 91, almost similar words have been used in regard to the birth of Jesus (peace be upon him). (See also Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 171 and Surah At-Tahrim, Ayat 12). Allah Himself has stated that the birth of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was just like the

birth of Prophet Adam: In the sight of Allah, the case of the birth of Jesus is like that of Adam, whom He created out of dust and said, Be, and he was. (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 59). In the light of these verses, we may conclude that Allah uses words like: We breathed into him or her of Our spirit for miraculous births. (For details please see Suran An-Nisa E.Ns 212-213).

*90 That is, The mother and the son were not partners of God nor had any share whatsoever in Godhead, but were a sign from among the signs of God. (See Surah Maryam, E.N. 21).

92. Indeed, this your religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so worship Me.

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً
وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ

93. And they have divided their affair (religion, into factions) among themselves.*91 They shall all return to Us.

وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ كُلٌّ
إِلَيْنَا رَاجِعُونَ

*91 In this verse, the addressees are the entire mankind. It means: O mankind, in reality all of you belonged to one community and had one and the same religion and all the Prophets brought one and the same creed which was this: Allah alone is the Lord of all mankind, therefore they should worship Him alone. But afterwards the people corrupted this creed and invented and adopted the things they liked and mixed their own theories, whims and practices in it. This brought into being countless

communities and religions. Thus it is absolutely wrong to say that a particular Prophet was the founder of a particular religion and another of another, and so on. The very fact that different religions came into being at different periods of time, does not prove that the Prophets created these differences. It is obvious that the Prophets of God could not found different religions nor could they teach their followers to worship any beings other than Allah.

94. So whoever does of righteous deeds and he is a believer, then there will be no rejection of his effort. And indeed, We record (it) for him.

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ
وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا كُفْرَانَ
لِسَعْيِهِ وَإِنَّا لَهُ كَاتِبُونَ



95. And there is a prohibition upon (people of) a town, which We have destroyed. Certainly, they shall not return. (to this world).^{*92}

وَحَرَامٌ عَلَىٰ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا أَنَّهُمْ
لَا يَرْجِعُونَ



*92 The Arabic text of verse 95 may be interpreted in three ways.

- (1) The community which is once destroyed by the scourge of Allah can never have a second or new life.
- (2) After its destruction, its people are not given a second chance for their test, then they shall be presented in the

court of Allah for final judgment.

(3) When a community transgresses the last limits in its wickedness, injustices and disobedience, and Allah ordains to destroy it, no other chance of repentance is given to it because it becomes incapable of turning back to right guidance.

96. Until, when Gog and Magog are let loose, and they descend from every mound.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُتِحَتْ يَأْجُوجُ
وَمَاْجُوجُ وَهُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ
حَدَبٍ يَنْسِلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

97. And the true promise shall draw near.^{*93}

Then behold, these eyes of those who disbelieved will stare in horror. (They will say): “O woe to us, indeed we were in heedlessness of this, but we were wrongdoers.”^{*94}

وَاقْتَرَبَ الْوَعْدُ الْحَقُّ فَإِذَا
هِيَ شَخِصَةٌ أَبْصَرُ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا يَوِيلَ لَنَا قَدْ كُنَّا فِي
غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا بَلْ كُنَّا
ظَالِمِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

***93** For the details about Gog and Magog, see E.Ns 62 and 69 of Surah Al-Kahf. They will be let loose in the sense that they will swoop down on the regions of the earth like a beast of prey which is set free from its cage suddenly. The time of the fulfillment of the true promise will come on the eve of Resurrection and the appearance of Gog and Magog will be a sign of it. In a tradition related in Muslim, by Huzaifah bin Asid Ghifari, the Prophet (peace be upon

him) said: Resurrection will not take place until ten signs appear:

- (1) The smoke.
- (2) Dajjal.
- (3) Daabat-ul-Ard.
- (4) Rising of the sun from the west.
- (5) Coming down of Jesus, son of Mary.
- (6) Sudden attack of Gog and Magog.
- (7-9) Three land slides, one in the east, the second in the west and the third in Arabia.
- (10) The flare up of a great fire from Yaman which will drive the people to the Plain of Resurrection.

In another tradition the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that after the swoop of Gog and Magog, Resurrection will be so near that it may take place at any moment just as a pregnant woman might deliver the child at any moment, in the day or night, after her term has expired. But the reference to the appearance of Gog and Magog in the Quran and Hadith does not indicate that they will swoop on mankind jointly. It may be that they will clash against each other near the time of Resurrection and their mutual conflict might result in a universal catastrophe and destruction.

*94 “We were in heedlessness” contains a kind of excuse in it, as if to say: The Prophets warned us of the Day of Resurrection but we were wrongdoers and paid no heed to their warning.

98. Indeed, you (disbelievers)
and that which you

إِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ

worship other than Allah
are fuel for Hell. You will
(surely) come to it.*95

ذُوبِ اللَّهِ حَصْبُ جَهَنَّمَ
أَنْتُمْ لَهَا وَارِدُونَ

*95 We learn from traditions that Abdullah bin Azzaara raised an objection in this connection, saying: According to this not only our deities but Prophets Jesus and Uzair (peace be upon them) and the Angels also will become fuel for Hell because they are also worshiped. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Yes, everyone who would approve of his own worship instead of Allah's will go to Hell along with those who worshiped him. He meant to say: There is no reason why Prophets Jesus and Uzair (peace be upon them) and the Angels should go to Hell because they never approved that they should be worshiped instead of Allah, and were not responsible for this. On the other hand, they taught people to worship Allah alone. Of course, those who tried to become deities and became partners in the shirk of others will certainly go to Hell along with their worshipers. Likewise those, who induced others to take deities other than Allah, will go to Hell. Satan comes under this category for he induces others to make deities. Thus it is Satan who is made the real deity whom they obey and commit shirk. Besides this, idols of stone and wood and other accessories of shirk will also be thrown into Hell along with the mushriks so that the latter should see that their deities were becoming a cause of the intensity of their torture of fire instead of becoming their intercessors.

99. If these (idols) had been gods, they would not have come there, and all will abide therein.

لَوْ كَانَتْ هَتُؤَلَاءِ ءِالِهَةً مَّا
وَرَدُّوهَا وَكُلٌّ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ



100. For them, therein, will be wailing.*⁹⁶ And they, therein, will not hear (anything else).

لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا
يَسْمَعُونَ



***96** The Arabic word *zafeer* means hard breathing because of excessive heat, hard work and weariness.

101. Indeed, those to whom kindness has gone forth before from Us, they will be far removed from it (Hell).^{*97}

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِنَّا
الْحُسْنَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ



***97** These will be the people who practiced virtue and righteousness in this world. Allah has already promised that they will be kept safe from the torture and will be granted salvation.

102. They will not hear the slightest sound of it (Hell). And they will be in that which their selves desire, abiding forever.

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ حَسِيسَهَا وَهُمْ
فِي مَا أَشْتَهَتْ أَنفُسُهُمْ
خَالِدُونَ



103. They will not be grieved by the greatest

لَا تَحْزَنُهُمُ الَّلَفْزُ الْأَكْبَرُ

horror,^{*98} and the angels will meet them, (saying): “This is your Day which you have been promised.”

وَتَتَلَقَّهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ هَذَا
يَوْمِكُمْ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ
تُوعَدُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

***98** That is, the time of mustering and going before Allah will be very dreadful for the common people but the righteous people will have full peace of mind because everything will be happening according to their expectations. Their faith and the righteous deeds they did in the world, will help console them by the grace of Allah and, instead of grief and sorrow, they will be filled with the hope that they are going to get their promised rewards.

104. The Day when We shall fold the heaven as a recorder folds up a written scroll. As We began the first creation, We shall repeat it. (That is) a promise (binding) upon Us. Indeed, We shall do it.

يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ كَطَيِّ
السِّجْلِ لِلْكِتَابِ كَمَا بَدَأْنَا
أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُعِيدُهُ وَعَدَّا عَلَيْنَا
إِنَّا كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

105. And indeed, We have written in the Scripture, after the Reminder, that the earth shall be inherited by My righteous slaves.^{*99}

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ
بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا
عِبَادِي الصَّالِحُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

***99** The interpretation of this verse has given rise to a great

misunderstanding. Some people have tried to interpret it in a way, which is entirely opposed to the ideology of the Quran. They interpret it to mean: The inheritance of the kingdom and the resources of the earth are given to the righteous people alone in this worldly life, and upon them alone Allah showers His favors and blessings. Then they apply this formula conversely and conclude that the gift of this inheritance of the earth is the sole criterion between the righteous and the unrighteous men. The righteous is the one who inherits the sovereignty of the earth and the unrighteous the one who is deprived of this inheritance. But when they apply their formula in the historical perspective, they find that most of those nations which have inherited the earth in the past and are inheriting it today, have been and are mostly disbelieving, mushriks, atheists and immoral, and that these are not the characteristics of the righteous people when judged by the criterion put forward by the Quran. From Nimrod and Pharaoh to the present day communist despots, who have been inheriting the earth, were and are unbelievers and the enemies of God and therefore could not be considered righteous, according to the Quranic formula. Faced with this situation, they start arguing that there must be some error in the conception of the righteous which should be such as would fit all the inheritors of the earth whether they were Caliphs like Abu Bakr Siddiq and Umar Farooq or Chingez and Halaku. This research leads them to the Darwinian theory of the survival of the fittest and they assume fitness to be a synonym of righteousness.

According to this new conception or definition of righteousness, the proposition would plainly mean: Any person, or a group of persons, who is capable of conquering and subduing countries by military force and has the ability to exploit the resources of the earth successfully is a righteous servant of Allah and his achievement is a criterion and message of righteousness and worship for other human beings to follow. Consequently, if they fail to achieve the inheritance of the earth, they will neither be regarded among the righteous nor among the servants of Allah. As a result of this interpretation of the verse, and this conception of righteousness and service, they were confronted with the interpretation of some basic and fundamental articles of the Islamic faith. For instance, according to the Quran, no deed, howsoever good, could be regarded as righteous without belief in Allah, the Hereafter, the Prophets and the Books. Moreover, the invitation of the Prophet to accept the moral and legal systems of Islam would become meaningless. Then these people could not reconcile their interpretation with the teachings of the Quran that obedience to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the commandments of Allah was absolutely essential for a righteous man and that the lack of this would make a person a disbeliever and a transgressor who deserved the wrath of Allah. If they had faced this problem boldly and honestly, they would have realized that their interpretation was wrong, but instead of this, they very impudently changed the universally accepted conception of faith, Islam, Tauhid, Prophethood and the

Hereafter in order to make these basic articles of the faith fit in with their interpretation of this verse. Thus, they turned all the teachings of the Quran upside down and tampered with its meaning without the least hesitation. Now let us consider their interpretation and point out its errors.

(1) Their interpretation contradicts the teachings of the Quran as a whole, for according to these virtue, piety and goodness do not comprise material progress and ability to rule over the land. Moreover, if the Quranic word *Salih* (virtuous, good) is regarded as synonymous with *Sahib Salahiyyat* (i.e. possessor of fitness and competence), this one verse will clash with the whole of the Quran.

(2) They isolate this verse from its context and ascribe to it whatever meaning they like; otherwise, they would have seen that the inheritance referred to in the context is the promise to the believers which is to be fulfilled in the Hereafter, and thus has nothing to do with inheritance in this world.

If this verse is interpreted in the context in which it occurs, it becomes very plain from the preceding verses that this promise to the righteous people holds good for the life in the Hereafter. This thing has been made more explicit in Surah Az-Zumur, Ayats 73-74. According to this passage (which is definitely about life in the Hereafter), when the pious people will enter into Paradise, they will say: God be praised, Who has fulfilled His promise and made us heirs to the land.

Now let us consider this matter in the light of the Psalms

(whether the Book of Psalms in the Bible is genuine or tampered with, because the real Psalms of Prophet David are nowhere available) to which this verse refers. According to 37:9-29: Evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace...and their inheritance shall be forever...The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever. Thus the Psalms also confirm word for word verse 105. It is obvious that (They shall) dwell therein forever refers to the life in the Hereafter.

As regards to the inheritance of the earth in this worldly life, Allah gives it as a heritage to those of His servants whom He pleases (Surah Al-Anfaal, Ayat 128), irrespective of whether they are believers or disbelievers, righteous or wicked, not as a reward but for their trial. Your Lord will make you rulers on the earth, and then He will see how you conduct yourselves. (Surah Al-Anfaal, Ayat 129). The heritage of the earth in this worldly life is neither permanent nor everlasting. It is merely bestowed as a trial for different communities. On the other hand, the heritage of the land referred to in verse 105 is permanent and forever and, according to the Quran, it will be bestowed on the basis of this formula: The land belongs to Allah and He will make only His righteous servants heirs to it not for their test but as a permanent reward for the righteous

attitude they adopted in this worldly life.

106. Indeed, in this (Quran) there is a plain message for a people who worship (Allah).

إِنَّ فِي هَذَا لَبَلَاغًا لِّقَوْمٍ
عَبِيدِينَ

107. And We have not sent you except as a mercy for all the worlds.^{*100}

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

***100** This verse can also be translated as: We have sent you only as a blessing for the people of the world. In both cases it will mean that the appointment of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is indeed a blessing and mercy of Allah to the whole world. This is because he aroused the neglectful world from its heedlessness and gave it the knowledge of the criterion between truth and falsehood, and warned it very clearly of both the ways of salvation and ruin. This fact has been stated here to tell the disbelievers of Makkah that they were quite wrong in their estimate of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he was an affliction and distress for them because they said: This man has sown seeds of discord among our clans and separated near relatives from each other. They have been told here: O people, you are wrong to presume that he is an affliction for you; but he is in reality a blessing and mercy of Allah for you.

108. Say: "It is only revealed to me that your god is only one God. Will

قُلْ إِنَّمَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ إِلَهٌُ وَاحِدٌ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ

you then surrender.”

مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

109. So, if they turn away, then say: “I have announced to you all alike. And I do not know, whether it is near or far that which you are promised.”*101

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ ءَاذَنْتُكُمْ عَلَىٰ
سَوَاءٍ وَإِنْ أَدْرِي أَقْرِبُ أَمْ
بَعِيدٌ مَا تُوعَدُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

*101 That is, I do not know the time and the form of the punishment of Allah for your rejection of the message. It may come at any time in any shape.

110. Indeed, He knows of that which is said loudly, and He knows what you conceal.*102

إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ
وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾

*102 This refers to their secret schemes, plots and their whispering campaign which have been mentioned in verse 3. There, too, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had said: My Lord has the knowledge of everything that is said in the heavens or the earth for He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (verse 4). This was to warn them that they would be taken to task for these things, too.

111. “And I do not know, perhaps this may be a trial for you*103 and an enjoyment for a fixed time.”

وَإِنْ أَدْرِي لَعَلَّهُ فِتْنَةٌ لَكُمْ
وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١١١﴾

*103 This was a trial because the delay in the punishment was deluding them into believing: All the things put forward by the Prophet are false. Had he been a true

Prophet of Allah, we would have been punished long before this for our disbelief. They did not realize that the reason for the delay was that Allah willed to give them respite for mending their ways.

112. He (Muhammad) said: “My Lord, judge with truth. And our Lord is the Beneficent, whose help is sought against that which you ascribe.”

قَالَ رَبِّ أَحْكُم بِالْحَقِّ وَرَبُّنَا
الرَّحْمَنُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَى مَا
تَصِفُونَ





Al-Hajj الْحَجِّ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah takes its name *Al-Hajj* from Ayat 27.

Period of Revelation

As this Surah contains the characteristics of both the Makki and the Madani Surahs, the commentators have differed as to its period of revelation, but in the light of its style and themes we are of the opinion that a part of it (verses 1-24) was revealed in the last stage of the Makki life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) a little before migration and the rest (verses 25-78) during the first stage of his Madani life. That is why this Surah combines the characteristics of both the Makki and the Madani Surahs.

The sudden change of the style from verse 25 shows that verses 25-78 were probably revealed in the month of Zul-Hijjah in the very first year after Hijrah. This is indicated by verses 25-41 and confirmed by the occasion of the revelation of verses 39-40. It appears that the month of Zul-Hijjah must have brought to the immigrants nostalgic memories of their homes in Makkah and naturally they must have thought of their sacred city and of their Hajj

congregation there, and grieved to think that the mushrik Quraish had debarred them from visiting the sacred mosque. Therefore, they might even have been praying for and expecting divine permission to wage war against those tyrants who had expelled them from their homes and deprived them of visiting the House of Allah and made it difficult for them to follow the way of Islam. It was at this psychological occasion that these verses were revealed. That is why the purpose for which Masjid-al-Haram was built has been specifically mentioned. It has been made plain that Hajj (pilgrimage) had been enjoined for the worship of One Allah. But it is an irony, that afterwards, it had been dedicated to the rituals of shirk and the worshipers of One Allah had been debarred from visiting it. Therefore, permission for waging war against those tyrants has been given to oust them from there and to establish the righteous way of life for establishing virtue and eradicating evil. According to Ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Urwah bin Zubair, Zaid bin Aslam, Muqatil bin Hayyan, Qatadah and other great commentators, verse 39 is the first verse that grants the Muslims permission to wage war. Collections of Hadith and books on the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) confirm that after this permission actual preparations for war were started and the first expedition was sent to the coast of the Red Sea in Safar A.H. 2, which is known as the expedition of Waddan or Al-Abwa.

Subject Matter and Theme

This Surah is addressed to.

(1) The mushriks of Makkah.

(2) The wavering Muslims.

(3) The true believers.

The mushriks have been warned in a forceful manner to this effect: You have obdurately and impudently persisted in your ideas of ignorance and trusted in your deities instead of Allah, though they possess no power at all and you have repudiated the divine Messenger. Now you will meet the same end as has been the doom of those like you before. You have only harmed yourselves by rejecting Our Prophet and by persecuting the best element of your own community. Now your false deities shall not be able to save you from the wrath of God. At the same time, they have been admonished time and again for their creed of shirk and sound arguments have been given in favor of Tauhid and the Hereafter.

The wavering Muslims, who had embraced Islam but were not prepared to endure any hardship in its way, have been admonished to this effect: What is this faith of yours? On the one hand, you are ready to believe in Allah and become His servants provided you are given peace and prosperity but, on the other, if you meet with afflictions and hardships in His Way, you discard your Allah and cease to remain His servant. You should bear in mind that this wavering attitude of yours cannot avert those misfortunes and losses which Allah has ordained for you.

As regards the true Believers, they have been addressed in two ways:

(1) In a general way so as to include the common people of

Arabia also.

(2) In an exclusive way:

1. The Believers have been told that the mushriks of Makkah had no right to debar them from visiting the Holy Mosque. They had no right to prevent anyone from performing Hajj because the Holy Mosque was not their private property. This objection was not only justified but it also acted as an effective political weapon against the Quraish. For it posed this question to the other clans of Arabia: Were the Quraish mere attendants of the Holy Mosque or its owners? It implied that if they succeeded in debarring the Muslims from Hajj without any protest from others, they would feel encouraged in future to debar from Hajj and Umrah the people of any other clan, who happened to have strained relations with the Quraish. In order to emphasize this point, the history of the construction of the Holy Mosque has been cited to show that it was built by Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) by the command of Allah and he had invited all the peoples to perform Hajj there. That is why those coming from outside had enjoyed equal rights by the local people from the very beginning. It has also been made clear that that House had not been built for the rituals of shirk but for the worship of One Allah. Thus it was sheer tyranny that the worship of Allah was being forbidden there while the worship of idols enjoyed full license.

2. In order to counteract the tyranny of the Quraish, the Muslims were allowed to fight with them. They were also given instructions to adopt the right and just attitude as

and when they acquired power to rule in the land. Moreover, the believers have been officially given the name of Muslims, saying: You are the real heirs to Abraham and you have been chosen to become witnesses of the truth before mankind. Therefore you should establish Salat and pay the Zakat dues in order to become the best models of righteous life and perform Jihad for propagating the Word of Allah. (verses 41, 77, 78).

It will be worthwhile to keep in view the introductions to Surah Al-Baqarah and Surah Al-Anfaal.

1. O mankind, fear your Lord. Indeed, the earthquake of the Hour (of Judgment) is a tremendous thing.*¹

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمْ
إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ
عَظِيمٌ

*1 According to the early commentators, this earthquake will be a prelude to Resurrection. This will probably take place when the earth will begin to rotate in the reverse order, and the sun will rise in the west. In a lengthy tradition reported by Ibn Jarir, Tabarani and Ibn Abi Hatim from Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has stated that when the first Trumpet will be blown, there will be a general confusion. At the second all people will die and at the third they will be brought back to life and presented before Allah. At the first blowing of the Trumpet, the earth will begin to rock like a boat which is beaten about by huge waves, or like a hanging lamp which is moved from side to side by a strong wind.

This condition has been depicted in the Quran at several other places. For instance Surah Al-Waqiah, Ayat 6; Surah Al-Haqqa, Ayats 13-14; Surah Al-Muzzammil, Ayats 14, 17-18; Surah An-Naziat, Ayats 6-9 and Surah Al-Zalzal, Ayats 1-3.

According to other commentators, this earthquake will occur when the dead will be brought back to life and presented before their Lord. Though this is supported by some traditions, we prefer the first interpretation (in spite of the fact that the tradition reported by Abu Hurairah is weak) because that is supported by clear verses of the Quran.

2. On the day you see it, every nursing mother will be distracted from that (child) she was nursing,^{*2} and every pregnant female will drop her burden, and you shall see mankind as drunken, yet they will not be drunken, but the punishment of Allah is severe.^{*3}

يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ
مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ
كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمَلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى
النَّاسَ سُكَرَىٰ وَمَا هُمْ
بِسُكَرَىٰ وَلَٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ
شَدِيدٌ



*2 This is to show the intensity and horror of the earthquake. At that time there will be so much confusion and terror that mothers will forsake their dear children at the very time they will be suckling them.

*3 It should be noted that it is not meant to depict here the

condition of the Resurrection but to impress upon the people the dreadful torment of the Hour in order to admonish them to mend their ways. This is supported by the subsequent passage.

3. And among mankind is he who disputes about Allah without knowledge,*4 and follows every rebellious devil.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ
بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَيَتَّبِعُ كُلَّ شَيْطَانٍ
مَّرِيدٍ

*4 They do not indulge in discussions or disputes about the being or existence of Allah but about His rights and powers and His Revelations, as is evident from the succeeding passage. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) tried to convince them of Tauhid and Resurrection, inevitably the dispute arose whether there is One Allah, the sole Sovereign or there were other partners as well in His Godhead and whether He has the power to bring about Resurrection, etc.

4. It is decreed for him that whoever takes him for friend, he will then indeed misguide him and will lead him to the punishment of the Flame.

كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ مَن تَوَلَّاهُ فَأَنَّهُ
يُضِلُّهُ وَيَهْدِيهِ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ
السَّعِيرِ

5. O mankind, if you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then indeed We have created you from dust,

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ
مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن

then from a drop of sperm,^{*5} then from a clot, then from a lump of flesh, formed and unformed,^{*6} that We may make (it) clear for you. And We cause to remain in the wombs, what We will, for an appointed term, then We bring you forth as infants, then (give you growth) that you reach your full strength. And among you there is he who dies (young), and among you there is he who is brought back to the miserable old age, so that after knowledge, he does not know anything.^{*7} And you see the earth barren, but when We send down water on it, it does thrill and swell and puts forth of every lovely kind (of growth).

تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نَاطِقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ
ثُمَّ مِنْ مُضْغَةٍ مُخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ
مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ ۚ وَنُقَرُّ فِي
الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ
مُّسَيِّئٍ ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ
لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ وَمِنْكُمْ
مَنْ يُتَوَفَّىٰ وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرَدُّ
إِلَىٰ أَرْدَلِ الْعُمْرِ لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ
مِنْ بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا ۚ وَتَرَىٰ
الْأَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا
عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ أَهْتَرَّتْ وَرَبَّتْ
وَأُنْبِتَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ



***5** “We have created you from dust, then from a drop of sperm”: The first man Adam was created directly from clay and after him the process of procreation started by means of sperm-drop. This has been stated in Surah As-

Sajda, Ayats 7-8 as well. It may also mean that man is created from sperm-drop but his body is made of those elements which are all available in the earth.

*6 This refers to the different stages of development of the child in the womb of its mother. This description is based on observation and not on scientific research, and there was no need for it for the purpose for which reference to this has been made here.

*7 That is, in old age man is again reverted to the same condition in which he was in childhood. He loses his senses and knows little or nothing like a child.

6. That is because Allah, He is the Truth,^{*8} and it is He who gives life to the dead, and it is He who has Power over all things.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّهُ
يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى وَأَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ

*8 The Arabic text may mean three things:

(1) Allah is telling the truth and you are wrong in presuming that there is no possibility of life-after-death.

(2) Allah's existence is not merely a supposition but it is a reality. He is not only the first cause but has supreme authority, and is conducting every affair in the universe according to His Will, Knowledge and Wisdom.

(3) All His designs and works are based on truth and are, therefore, serious, meaningful and full of wisdom.

7. And certainly, the Hour is coming, there is no doubt about it. And certainly, Allah

وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيهَا
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْعَثُ مَنْ فِي الْقُبُورِ

will resurrect those who
are in the graves.*9



***9** In Ayats 5-7, the effects of rain on the earth and the growth of vegetation and different stages of the life of man have been cited as pointers to five realities.

- (1) Allah alone is the truth.
- (2) He brings the dead to life.
- (3) He has power over everything.
- (4) The Day of Resurrection and the end of the world is inevitable.
- (5) Most surely Allah will bring back to life all the people who have died.

Let us now consider how these signs point to the above five realities.

(1) Allah is the truth: In order to prove this, let us first take the case of man. All the stages of his development are a clear proof that Allah has designed them with wisdom. He takes his birth from a sperm-drop which itself is produced in a wonderful manner. The food, which a man takes, turns into hair, flesh, bones and a part of it is turned into semen, which is potentially capable of producing millions of human beings. It is the Wise and True God Who decides which of these millions of seeds from the semen should be utilized to make a woman pregnant by mixing the seed with the egg-cell. This insignificant thing turns into a living child in nine months in the womb of the mother. If we consider the different stages of the child's birth, we come to the inevitable conclusion that all these have been designed by the True, Ever Living Designer. For it is He Who decides

whether it should be a male or a female, seeing or blind, etc. Then it is He Who decides how long a child is destined to live. All these things are a clear proof that Allah alone is the Truth.

(2) He brings the dead to life: Even a little thinking on the right lines will convince every sensible and honest man that this process of bringing the dead to life is continuously going on before our eyes. Every human being has been created from a dead sperm-drop. Then he gets life from dead things like food containing dead matter like coal, iron, lime, salts, gases, which help make him a living human being. Then let us consider our surroundings. Seeds of different things which had been scattered here and there by the wind and birds, and the roots of different kinds of vegetation which lay rotten and dead in the soil, spring up to life as soon as there occurs a sprinkling of rain water. This process of the dead coming to life is observed during every rainy season year after year.

(3) Allah has power over everything: There are people who believe that no doubt Allah created everything and is governing the universe, but He cannot do anything in the future in addition to or apart from this. This is because they do not observe the phenomena of His powers which have been and are appearing every moment. They do not realize that if man, His creation can perform wonderful feats of science which could not even be dreamed of in the former ages, why should Allah alone be held as having only limited powers?

(4-5) “The Day of Resurrection is inevitable” and “Most

surely Allah will bring back to life all the people who have died”: These two are the rational corollaries of the preceding three premises. Allah is All-Powerful and therefore can bring about Resurrection at any moment He wills. He can also bring back to life all the dead people just as He brought to life human beings out of nothing in the first instance. As He is All-Wise, He has not created human beings without any object and purpose. He will judge their worldly lives in accordance with the object and purpose for which He created them. He will call them to account for everything He entrusted to them. This is very simple, even human beings ask one another to render an account of the property etc. they entrust to others. Likewise, Allah’s wisdom requires calling every human being to account for the things entrusted to him. Then human nature also demands that there should be a differentiation between good and bad, and it expects the reward of good works and dreads the punishment of bad deeds. That is why the people have set up judicial courts. Thus man cannot imagine that the Creator will not call him to account for the things, powers and faculties, etc. which He has entrusted to him. Therefore common sense confirms that Allah will hold the Last Judgment so that everyone should get his due reward and his due punishment.

8. And among mankind is he who disputes^{*10} about Allah without knowledge,^{*11} and without guidance,^{*12} and without a Book with light.^{*13}

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ
بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ
مُّنِيرٍ



*10 That is, they are so proud, arrogant, obdurate and obstinate that they do not pay any heed to admonition.

*11 Knowledge: That personal information which is gained directly through observation and experience.

*12 Guidance: That information which is gained by reasoning or through another person who has knowledge.

*13 Book with light: Source of information gained from divine revelation.

9. Turning away his neck (in arrogance) to lead (men) astray from the way of Allah.*14 For him in this world is disgrace, and We shall make him taste, on the Day of Resurrection, the punishment of burning.

ثَانِي عِطْفِهِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ لَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ
وَنُذِيقُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَذَابَ
الْحَرِيقِ

*14 Verse 3 mentioned those people who have themselves gone astray, but verse 9 mentions those who have not only deviated from the right way themselves but are also bent upon misleading others from it.

10. That is because of what your hands have sent before, and indeed Allah is not oppressor of His slaves.

ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتَ يَدَاكَ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ

11. And among mankind is he who worships Allah upon a narrow edge,*15 so if good befalls him, he is

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَى
حَرْفٍ ۖ فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرٌ

content therewith. And if a trial befalls him, he turns back on his face.*¹⁶ He has lost (both) the world and the Hereafter. That is what the manifest loss is.*¹⁷

أَطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ
أَنْقَلَبَ عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ خَسِرَ
الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ
الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ



***15** This type of man is a time server, who stands on the boundary line between Islam and kufr so that he may join the winning side whether it be Islam or kufr.

***16** As this type of man has a weak character and wavers between kufr and Islam he becomes the slave of his self. He accepts Islam for the sake of self interest. He is faithful to it if all his wishes are fulfilled and he has a life of ease and comfort, he is well-pleased with his Allah and is firm in his faith. On the contrary, if his faith demands some sacrifice from him, or he is visited by some affliction, or encounters some hardship and loss in the way of Allah, or he does not have his way, he begins to waver about the Godhead of Allah and the Prophethood of the Messenger and becomes skeptical about everything of the faith. Then he is ready to bow down before any power from which he expects some benefit and security from loss.

***17** This is a great moral proposition that has been stated concisely. The fact is that the wavering man remains a loser in this world as well as in the next world, and fares worse even than an unbeliever. The unbeliever applies himself exclusively to the benefits of this world and becomes more

or less successful in his object because he is not handicapped by the fear of Allah, accountability of the Hereafter and restrictions of divine law. Likewise, a true believer follows the way of Allah with fortitude and perseverance and may as well become successful in this world, but even if he loses it altogether, he is assured of success in the next world. But the wavering Muslim becomes a loser both in this world and in the next world because he is handicapped by doubt and indecision and cannot make his choice between the two worlds. As he cannot decide whether there is Allah and the Hereafter, he cannot apply himself exclusively to the worldly affairs with that single-mindedness which the unbeliever enjoys. And when he thinks of Allah and the Hereafter, the allurements of this world and the fear of the disadvantages here and the abhorrence of observing the divine restrictions do not let him apply himself exclusively to the demands of the Hereafter. This conflict between God worship and world worship makes him a loser in this world as well as in the next.

12. He calls upon other than Allah that which does not hurt him, and that which does not profit him. That is what is the straying far away.

يَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُ وَمَا لَا يَنْفَعُهُ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلَالُ الْبَعِيدُ ﴿١٢﴾

13. He calls unto him whose harm is nearer than his benefit. ^{*18} Certainly an evil

يَدْعُوا لِمَنْ ضَرُّهُ أَقْرَبُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِ لَبِئْسَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَلَبِئْسَ

patron and certainly an evil associate.*19

الْعَشِيرُ
١٣

*18 Verses 12-13 clarify two things about the deities whom the mushriks invoke. Firstly, they can do a person neither any good nor any harm. Nay, it is more probable that they do harm rather than good. For when the mushrik invokes other deities than Allah, he loses his faith forthwith. Secondly, the mushrik himself knows that there is no guarantee or probability of any good from his god who is utterly helpless and powerless. As regards to the occasional grant of his request through his god, this is done by Allah merely to test his faith.

*19 That is, the one, who leads a person to the way of shirk is the worst guardian and the worst comrade, whether he be a human being or a satan.

14. Indeed, Allah will admit those who believed and did righteous deeds*20 into gardens beneath which rivers flow. Indeed, Allah does what He intends.*21

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ
١٤

*20 “Those who believed and did righteous deeds” are quite different from the wavering Muslims, for they have a firm belief in Allah, His Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Hereafter. Therefore they follow the way of truth both in prosperity and in adversity.

*21 That is, Allah's powers are unlimited. He may bestow

anything on anyone He wills in this world or in the Hereafter or in both, and bar anything from anyone. None has the power to interfere with what He wills and does.

15. Whoever should think that Allah will not help him (Muhammad) in this world and the Hereafter, so let him stretch a rope up to the sky, then cut it off. Then let him see if his strategy will take away that which enrages (him).^{*22}

مَنْ كَانَتْ يَظُنُّ أَنْ لَنْ يَنْصُرَهُ
اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ
بِسَبَبٍ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ لِيَقْطَعْ
فَلْيَنْظُرْ هَلْ يُذْهِبَنَّ كَيْدَهُ مَا
يَغِيظُ



***22** There is a great divergence of opinion about the exact meaning of this verse. Some of the interpretations are:

- (1) One who presumes that Allah will not help him (Muhammad: peace be upon him), he should hang himself by a rope from the ceiling.
- (2) One who presumes that Allah will not help him (Muhammad: peace be upon him), he should ascend to the sky by a rope and try to stop Allah's help.
- (3) One who presumes that Allah will not help him (Muhammad: peace be upon him), he should ascend to the sky and stop the process of revelations.
- (4) One who presumes that Allah will not help him (Muhammad: peace be upon him), he should ascend to the sky and stop his provisions.
- (5) The one who presumes that Allah will not help him (the presumer himself), he should hang himself by a rope from

the ceiling of his house.

(6) The one who presumes that Allah will not help him (the presumer himself), he should try to ascend to the sky to seek help.

The first four interpretations are obviously irrelevant to the context, and the last two, though they might fit in with the context, do not explain the real meaning of the verse. If we consider this in the context, it becomes obvious that the one who presumes is the one who serves Allah standing on the border line. This is to rebuke him, as if to say: You may do whatever you can to change the decrees of Allah, but you will see that no device of yours can succeed, whether these decrees are favorable to your designs or unfavorable to them. Obviously, “so let him stretch a rope up to the sky, then cut it off” has not been used in the literal but in the figurative sense.

16. And thus have We sent it down as clear signs, and surely, Allah guides whom He intends.

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَن يُرِيدُ

17. Indeed, those who believe (this revelation),^{*23} and those who are Jews,^{*24} and the Sabaeans,^{*25} and the Christians,^{*26} and the Magians,^{*27} and those who associate (others besides Allah),^{*28} indeed Allah will judge between them on the

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا
وَالصَّابِئِينَ وَالنَّصْرِي
وَالْمَجُوسَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

Day of Resurrection.*29
Indeed, Allah is Witness over
all things.



***23** This means the Muslims of every age who believed in the Prophets of Allah and His Books up to the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): they included both the sincere Muslims and the wavering Muslims.

***24** See E.N. 72 of Surah An-Nisa.

***25** Sabaeans: In ancient times two sects were known by this title:

(1) The followers of Prophet John, who were found in upper Iraq in large numbers and practiced baptism.

(2) The worshipers of stars, who ascribed their creed to Prophets Shith and Idris (peace be upon them) and believed that the elements were governed by the planets and the planets by the angels. Their center was at Harran with branches spread all over Iraq. These people have been well known for their knowledge of philosophy and science and their achievements in medicine.

Probably here the first sect is referred to, because the second sect was not known by this name at the time the Quran was revealed.

***26** See E. N. 36 of Surah Al-Maidah.

***27** That is, the fire worshipers of Iran, who believed in two gods, one of light and the other of darkneses, and regarded themselves as the followers of Zoroaster. Their creed and morals were so corrupted by Mazdak that a brother could easily enter into matrimony with his sister.

***28** That is, the mushriks of Arabia and of other countries,

who had no special name like those mentioned above.

***29** That is, Allah will pass His judgment on the Day of Resurrection in regard to all the differences and disputes which take place between different people and different religions and will decide which of them was right and which was wrong.

18. Do you not see that to Allah prostrates whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth,^{*30} and^{*31} the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the mountains, and the trees, and the beasts, and many of mankind.^{*32} And there are many on whom the punishment is justified.^{*33} And he whom Allah disgraces, so for him there is not any bestower of honor.^{*34} Indeed, Allah does what He wills.^{*35}

AsSajda

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَسْجُدُ لَهُ مَنْ
فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُومُ
وَالْجِبَالُ وَالشَّجَرُ وَالْأَنْبَاءُ
وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ وَكَثِيرٌ حَقَّ
عَلَيْهِ الْعَذَابُ وَمَنْ يُنِ اللَّهُ فَمَا
لَهُ مِنْ مُّكْرِمٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا



يَشَاءُ

***30** See E.N. 25, Surah Ar-Raad and E.N. 41 of Surah (An-Nahl).

***31** That is, Angels, stars, planets, etc. and all the creation that exists in other parts of the universe, whether it is rational and possesses freedom of will and choice like man, or irrational like animals, vegetation, solid matter, air and light.

*32 That is, a large number of the people bow down before Allah not by compulsion but willingly. On the other hand, there are many other people who bow down before Him under compulsion along with everything else in the universe, but they deserve punishment because they refuse to obey Allah in those spheres of life in which they have the choice to obey or not to obey.

*33 That is, though the final judgment will be passed on the Day of Resurrection, a discerning eye can see even today those who have already deserved the torment. For instance, the man who rejects the message of the open book of nature and the message of the Prophets and adopts self-made false creeds and then disputes about them with the believers, proves himself to be in manifest error in this world as well.

*34 In this verse honor and disgrace mean the acceptance of the truth and its rejection. It is obvious that the one who does not see manifest realities is doomed to disgrace. For Allah lets him attain what he desires and works for. And when Allah does not bestow on anyone the honor of following the truth, there is none else who can bestow it on him.

*35 Here it is obligatory to perform a *sajdah* (prostration), which is agreed upon by all jurists. For further details please See E.N. 157 of Surah Al-Aaraf.

19. These twain (believers and disbelievers) are two adversaries who dispute with each other about their Lord.*³⁶ Then as for those

هَذَانِ خَصْمَانِ أَخْتَصَمُوا
فِي رَبِّهِمْ فَأَلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
قُطِعَتْ لَهُمْ ثِيَابٌ مِّنْ نَّارٍ يُصَبُّ

who disbelieve, garments of fire will be cut out for them.*37 Boiling fluid will be poured upon their heads.

مِن فَوْقِ رُءُوسِهِمُ الْحَمِيمُ ﴿١٦﴾

*36 Here all the disputants about Allah have been divided into two main categories in spite of their large numbers.

(1) Those who believe in the message of the Prophets and adopt the righteous way of life.

(2) Those who reject their message and follow different ways of disbelief, though they may have countless differences and disputes among themselves.

*37 See Ayat 50 and E.N. 58 of Surah Ibrahim for explanation.

20. With it will melt away what is within their bellies, and the skins.

يُصَهَّرُ بِهِ مَا فِي بُطُونِهِمْ
وَالْجُلُودُ ﴿٢٠﴾

21. And for them are hooked rods of iron.

وَهُمْ مَقْمَعٌ مِنْ حَدِيدٍ ﴿٢١﴾

22. Whenever they would want that they get out of it, from anguish, they will be driven back therein. (It will be said): "And taste the punishment of burning."

كُلَّمَا أَرَادُوا أَنْ تَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا
مِنْ غَمٍّ أُعِيدُوا فِيهَا وَذُوقُوا
عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿٢٢﴾

23. Indeed, Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds to gardens underneath

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

which rivers flow. They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and pearls,^{*38} and their garments therein will be silk.

جَنَّتِ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ
ذَهَبٍ وَّلُؤْلُؤًا وَّلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا
حَرِيرٌ

***38** This is to show that they will be honored like the kings and chiefs who used to wear ornaments of gold and jewelry in the period the Quran was revealed.

24. And they are guided (in this world) unto purest of the speeches,^{*39} and they are guided to the path of the Praiseworthy.^{*40}

وَهُدُوا إِلَى الطَّيِّبِ مِنَ
الْقَوْلِ وَهَدُوا إِلَى صِرَاطِ
الْحَمِيدِ

***39** “Purest of the speeches”: though it may imply every pure thing, here it refers to the basic articles of the faith.

***40** As already stated in the introduction, the portion of the Surah, which was revealed at Makkah, comes to an end here. Though its style is clearly that of the Makki Surahs and there is nothing to indicate that any part (or the whole) of it was revealed at Al-Madinah, yet the words, “these are the two parties”, have given rise to the misunderstanding that this verse was revealed at Al-Madinah. Some commentators are of the opinion that the two parties referred to were the parties who met in the Battle of Badr, but there is nothing in the context to support this opinion. On the other hand, from the context in which these words

occur, it becomes obvious that the two parties referred to were the believers and the disbelievers. For the conflict between belief and disbelief has always been going on ever since the creation of man and will go on upto the Day of Resurrection.

Incidentally, this latter view helps prove that the Quran is a continuous whole and every part of it is closely connected with the other: whereas the comments mentioned earlier would imply that there is no continuous theme in the Quran but different parts of it have been put together without rhyme or reason.

25. Indeed, those who disbelieve^{*41} and hinder (others) from the way of Allah and al-Masjid al-Haram,^{*42} which We have appointed for the mankind, equally for those who dwell therein and for those who come from outside.^{*43} And whoever intends therein evil wrongfully,^{*44} We shall make him taste of a painful punishment.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَيَصُدُّونَ
عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ
الْحَرَامِ الَّذِي جَعَلْنَاهُ لِلنَّاسِ
سَوَاءً الْعِكِفُ فِيهِ وَالْبَادِ وَمَنْ
يُرِدْ فِيهِ بِالْحَادِ بِظُلْمٍ نُدِقَهُ مِنْ
عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ

***41** “Those who disbelieved” were the people who rejected the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The subsequent theme clearly shows that they were the disbelievers of Makkah.

***42** That is, they debarred the Prophet (peace be upon him)

and his followers from performing Hajj and Umrah.

***43** That is, this is not exclusively the property of any person or family or clan but is meant for all mankind alike. Therefore none has any right to debar others from it.

In this connection, two questions have arisen among the Jurists of Islam:

(1) What is meant by the Sacred Mosque? Does it mean the mosque itself or includes the whole Inviolable Place of Makkah?

(2) What is meant by equal rights of its dwellers and the outsiders?

According to some jurists it means the Sacred Mosque itself and not the whole of Inviolable Makkah. They base this opinion on the apparent wording of the Quran, and say that by equal rights is meant equal rights only in regard to worship in it. They cite a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to support their opinion. He said: O children of Abd Manaf, those of you who will have authority over the affairs of the people, should not stop anybody from moving round the Kabah or from offering prayers in it at any time of the day or night.

Imam Shafai and others who support this view are of the opinion that it is wrong to conclude from this verse that the rights of the dwellers and the outsiders are equal in every respect, but they are equal only in regard to the right of worship and in nothing else, for the people of Makkah owned the lands and the houses of Makkah before Islam and also after it. So much so that during the time of Caliph Umar, the house of Safwan bin Umayyah was actually

purchased from him for the purpose of making a prison in Makkah.

The others who hold that the Sacred Mosque refers to the whole of the Inviolable Place of Makkah derive their authority from verses 196 and 217 of Surah Al-Baqarah. They argue that Hajj is not performed only in the Kabah (the Sacred Mosque), but the pilgrim has to visit Mina, Muzdalifah, Arafat, etc. for the performance of Hajj rites. Thus, they hold that equality is not merely in regard to worship in the Sacred Mosque, but in regard to all other rights in Makkah. As this place has been appointed for Hajj by Allah for all alike, none has any right of ownership in it. Anyone can stay anywhere he likes and none can prohibit him from doing so. They cite many traditions in support of their opinion.

(1) Abdullah bin Umar reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Makkah is the place where travelers have to stay: therefore its lands cannot be sold nor can anyone charge rent for its houses.

(2) According to Ibrahim Nakhai, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Makkah has been made an Inviolable Place by Allah: therefore selling its land and charging of rent for its houses is unlawful. Mujahid has also reported a tradition almost in similar words.

(3) Alqamah says: During the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and of the first three Caliphs, the lands of Makkah were regarded as common property and one could live there or allow others to live therein.

(4) Abdullah bin Umar says: Caliph Umar had ordered

that no resident of Makkah should close the door of his house during the Hajj season. According to Mujahid; Caliph Umar had ordered that the people of Makkah should not put doors to enclose their courtyards but keep them open so that anyone who liked might come in and stay there. The same has been related by Ata with the addition that Suhail bin Amr was the only exception to this rule, who was allowed to put a door in his courtyard in order to safeguard his camels in connection with his trade.

(5) Abdullah bin Umar also says that the one who receives rent for his house in Makkah fills his belly with fire.

(6) Abdullah bin Abbas says that Allah has made the whole of Makkah the Sacred Mosque where all have equal rights. Therefore the people of Makkah have no right to charge rent.

(7) Umar bin Abdul Aziz sent an order to the governor of Makkah to this effect: No rent should be charged for the houses of Makkah because it is unlawful.

On the basis of the above traditions, quite a few of the followers of the companions and also, Imams Malik, Abu Hanifah, Sufyan Thauri, Ahmad bin Hanbal and Ishaq bin Rahawayah from among the Jurists, are of the opinion that it is unlawful to sell a piece of land and to charge rent, at least during the Hajj season, in Makkah. However, the majority of the Jurists are of the opinion that people can own houses in Makkah and can sell them as buildings but not as land. In my opinion, this last view seems to be the right one because it conforms with the Quran and the Sunnah and the practice of the rightly guided Caliphs. It is

obvious that Allah has not made Hajj obligatory for the Muslims of the whole world in order to provide a means of income for the people of Makkah. As Allah has set apart the Inviolable Place for the benefit of all the believers, that land is not the property of anyone and every pilgrim has the right to stay anywhere he can find room for himself.

***44** It does not imply any specific act, but means every act that deviates from righteousness and falls under the definition of iniquity. Though all such acts are sins at all times and places; their commission in the Inviolable Place makes them all the more heinous; so much so that the commentators are of the opinion that even taking of an unnecessary oath brings it under the same category.

Besides common sins, there are certain other things whose commission in the Inviolable Place brings them under the same category. For instance.

(1) It is prohibited to take legal action even against a murderer, etc. who takes shelter within the Inviolable Place: so much so that he cannot be arrested as long as he retracts therein. This sanctity of the Inviolable Place is being observed since the time of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). The Quran says: Whoso even enters it, he becomes safe and secure. (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 97).

(2) The consensus of opinion is that there can be no retribution within the Inviolable Place for the crimes committed outside it. Hadrat Umar, Abdullah bin Umar and Abdullah bin Abbas declared: We will not take any action in it even against the murderer of our fathers.

(3) It is unlawful to wage war or shed blood within it. On

the second day of the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) declared: O people, Allah has made Makkah a Sanctuary since the very creation of this world, and it will remain so by Allah's ordinance up to the Day of Resurrection; therefore, it is not lawful for any man, who believes in Allah and the Day of Resurrection, to shed blood here. Then he added: Suppose a man legalizes bloodshed here on the basis of the precedent that I waged war here, tell him, Allah made it lawful for His Messenger and not for you. It was made lawful for me for a short interval of the day. Then it was again made Inviolable as before.

(4) It is unlawful to cut naturally growing trees or uproot the grass which has grown there. It is also prohibited to hunt birds and animals within the boundary or to drive them out from the Inviolable Place for hunting. It is, however, lawful to kill a serpent, a scorpion and other harmful animals and to uproot dry grass and izkhir which is a kind of grass.

(5) It is prohibited to pick up anything that has fallen to the ground. In a tradition, reported by Abu Dawud, the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited people to pick up, anything belonging to a pilgrim that had fallen to the ground.

(6) It is unlawful for a pilgrim who comes with the intention of performing Hajj or Umrah to enter therein without Ihram. However, there is a divergence of opinion in regard to the entry of others than the pilgrims without Ihram. According to Abdullah bin Abbas, no one is allowed to enter therein without Ihram in any case, and this has been

supported by a saying each of Imam Ahmad and Imam Shafai. According to other sayings of Imams Ahmad and Shafai, those people who have to visit the Inviolable Place frequently in connection with trade and business, are excepted. Imam Abu Hanifah, however, holds the view that the person who lives within the limits of the appointed Miqats can visit Makkah without Ihram but the outsiders cannot enter it without Ihram.

26. And when We designated for Abraham the site of the House (saying) that: “Do not associate with Me anything, and purify My House (Kabah)^{*45} for those who walk around it and those who stand and those who bow (and) make prostration.”

وَإِذْ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ
الْبَيْتِ أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِي شَيْئًا
وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ
وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ
السُّجُودِ

***45** Some commentators opine that the address to Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) ends with verse 26 and say that the command contained in verse 27 was addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him); but this opinion does not fit in with the context. For it is obvious that this command was also addressed to Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) when he had built the Kabah. Moreover, the command implies that the House of Allah had been built for the worship of One Allah and there was general permission from the very first day for all worshipers to visit it for performing Hajj.

27. “And proclaim to mankind the pilgrimage. They will come to you on foot and on every lean^{*46} camel,^{*47} they will come from every deep ravine.”

وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ
رِجَالًا وَعَلَى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ
يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ

***46** The expression lean camels has been deliberately used to depict the picture of the camels of pilgrims coming from far off places to perform Hajj.

***47** In my opinion the address to Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) comes to an end with verse 27, and verses 28-29 have been added to emphasize and give further instructions for the performance of Hajj. We have based this opinion on the use of the epithet Ancient House of the Kabah. It could not have been used at the time when Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) built it. (For further details about the construction of the Kabah see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 125-129; Surah Aal-Imran, Ayats, 96-97; and Surah Ibrahim, Ayats 35-41).

28. That they may witness things that are of benefit to them,^{*48} and mention the name of Allah in appointed days over what He has provided for them^{*49} of the beast of cattle. Then eat of them and feed the distressed (and) the needy.^{*50}

لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَفِعَ لَهُمْ
وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ
مَّعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِنْ
بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا
وَأَطْعِمُوا الْبَائِسَ الْفَقِيرَ

***48** “The benefits” include both religious and worldly benefits. It was due mainly to the Kabah that during the period of 2500 years between the times of Prophet Abraham and the Prophet (peace be upon them), the Arabs, in spite of their tribal life, remained attached to one central place and continued to visit it from all parts of Arabia for performing Hajj year after year. This in turn preserved their language, their culture and their Arab identity. Then during the course of the year they were afforded at least four months of perfect peace when anybody and everybody could safely travel alone or in trade caravans; thus the ritual of Hajj was directly beneficial to economic life of the country as well. For details see Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 97 and E.Ns 80, 81 thereof, and Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 97 and E.N. 113 thereof.

***49** “The cattle” here imply the camel, cow, sheep and goat as has been clearly mentioned in Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 142-144, “they should mention the name of Allah over the cattle”, implies that they should slaughter the cattle for Allah’s sake and in His name, as is clear from the subsequent sentences. Allah’s name should be recited at the time the cattle are slaughtered to show that the Muslims are to slaughter and sacrifice animals in Allah’s name alone so as to distinguish them from the disbelievers who slaughtered animals without mentioning Allah’s name or by mentioning other names than that of Allah.

As regards to “the appointed days”, there is a difference of opinion as to their exact identity. Some of the opinions as to what the appointed days mean are.

(1) The first ten days of Zil-Hajj. This view is supported by Ibn Abbas, Hasan Basri, Ibrahim Nakhai, Qatadah and several other companions and their followers. Imams Abu Hanifah, Shafai and Ahmad bin Hanbal have also favored this view.

(2) The tenth of Zil-Hajj and the three days following it. This view is supported by Ibn Abbas, Ibn Umar, Ibrahim Nakhai, Hasan and Ata. Imams Shafai and Ahmad are also reported to have favored this in a saying each.

(3) The tenth day of Zil-Hajj and the two following days. This view has been supported by Umar, Ali, Ibn Umar, Ibn Abbas, Anas bin Malik, Abu Hurairah, Said bin Musayyab and Said bin Jubair. Sufyan Thauri, Imam Malik, Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad from among the jurists have also adopted it, and the Hanafites and the Malikites are also generally agreed on this.

*50 The imperative mood of the verb has given rise to the misunderstanding that it is obligatory to eat their flesh and also to give of it to the needy people, Imams Shafai and Malik opine that it is good to eat of it and it is obligatory to give of it to others. According to Imam Abu Hanifah, both these things are permitted but are not obligatory. It is good to eat of it, for the people in the days of ignorance considered it unlawful to eat sacrificial meat of their own animals, and it is good to give of it to the poor by way of help. Ibn Jarir has cited instances from Hasan Basri, Ata, Mujahid and Ibrahim Nakhai to prove that the imperative mood does not always imply a command, as for example in Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 2, Thus, “give of it to the indigent”

does not mean that the flesh cannot be given to a rich person for the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to give of it to their friends, neighbors, relatives whether they were rich or poor. According to Ibn Umar, one third of the flesh may be consumed at home, one third may be given to the neighbors and the remaining one third distributed among the needy.

29. Then let them complete the prescribed duties for them,^{*51} and fulfill their vows,^{*52} and go around the ancient House.^{*53}

ثُمَّ لِيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ وَلِيُوفُوا
نُدُورَهُمْ وَلِيَطَّوَّفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ
الْعَتِيقِ

***51** It means that after performing the essential Hajj rites, one should put off Ihram, have a shave, bath, etc. for one is free from the restrictions of Ihram after Hajj. However, one is not allowed to have sexual relations with his wife till one has performed the Tawaf of Ziyarah or Ifadah.

***52** That is, the vow one has made for that occasion.

***53** The Arabic word *Atiq*, which has been used for the Kabah, is very meaningful for it implies.

(1) Ancient.

(2) Free from the sovereignty and ownership of anyone.

(3) Honored and revered.

I am of the opinion that here the word *Tawaf* refers to the circumambulation performed on the tenth day of Zil-Hajj after setting aside Ihram, as the last ritual of Hajj, and is called Tawaf of Ifadah or Ziyarah (visit).

30. Thus (it is), and whoever honors the sacred ordinance of Allah, then that is better for him with his Lord.^{*54} And cattle have been made lawful for you^{*55} except those recited to you (as unlawful).^{*56} So avoid the un-cleanliness of idols,^{*57} and avoid false speech.^{*58}

ذَلِكَ وَمَنْ يُعْظِمَ حُرْمَتِ اللَّهِ
فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَأُحِلَّتْ
لَكُمْ الْأَنْعَامُ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَى
عَلَيْكُمْ فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ
مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ
الزُّورِ



***54** Though the command is of a general nature, here it refers particularly to the prohibitions which are connected with the Sacred Mosque, Hajj, Umrah and Makkah. Incidentally, there is a subtle hint in it to the Quraish; who had driven out the Muslims from Makkah and debarred them from Hajj and violated the sanctity of the Ancient House by associating indecent, filthy, and ungodly rites with Hajj and the House in contradiction to the ways of Abraham.

***55** “And the cattle have been made lawful for you” has been cited here for two objects.

(1) It is to refute the custom of the Quraish under which certain cattle, bahirah, saibah, wasilah and ham, were considered unlawful. They are being told that these are also lawful like other cattle.

(2) It is not unlawful as was held by the Quraish to eat the flesh of the cattle even in the state of Ihram.

***56** This refers to Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 145 and Surah

An-Nahal, Ayat 115 in which Allah has forbidden the Muslims to eat what dies of itself, blood, flesh of swine or what has been slaughtered in any name other than Allah's.

*57 That is, refrain from and guard against the worship of idols just as you avoid filthy and dirty things.

*58 Though the expression "false speech" is general and implies lies, false evidence, calumny, etc., here it particularly refers to those false creeds, rites, and rituals and superstitious things on which kufr and shirk have been founded. It is obvious that there is no greater lie than associating others with Allah in His Being, Attributes, Powers and Rights. It was a falsehood to make bahirah, etc. unlawful. See also Surah An-Nahal, Ayat 116.

To take a false oath and give a false evidence also come under this commandment. A tradition from the Prophet (peace be upon him) says: A false evidence is equal to shirk with Allah. That is why according to the Islamic Law, a false witness should be punished and disgraced. Imams Abu Yusuf and Muhammad have expressed the opinion that a person who brings a false witness in the court should be publicly exposed and sentenced to a long imprisonment. This was the actual practice in the time of Umar. According to Makhul, he said: Such a person should be whipped, his head shaved and face blackened and he should be sentenced to a long imprisonment.

Abdullah bin Amir has reported from his father that a person's false evidence was established in Umar's court, whereupon the Caliph kept him exposed to public for a day, saying that he was so and so and a false witness so that

people might recognize him, and then he imprisoned him. These days this can be done by publishing the culprit's name in the newspapers, etc.

31. Turning unto Allah (only), not associating (partners) with Him. And whoever associates (partners) with Allah, it is then as if he had fallen from the sky, then he was snatched by the birds, or the wind had blown him to a far off place.^{*59}

حُنَفَاءَ لِلَّهِ غَيْرَ مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِ
وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتَخَطَفَهُ الطَّيْرُ
أَوْ تَهْوَى بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ
سَحِيقٍ

***59** In this parable heaven means the original human nature. Man by nature is the servant of none else but Allah and inherently accepts the doctrine of Tauhid. That is why the one who follows the guidance of the Prophets becomes firm in these dictates of his nature and soars higher and higher. On the other hand, the one who rejects Allah or associates a partner with Him falls down from the heaven of his nature. Then he either becomes a victim of satans and evil leaders like the birds of the parable, which snatch away the fallen man, or he becomes a slave of his lusts, passions, whims, etc., which have been likened to the wind in the parable. They lower him down from one wrong position to the other till he falls into the deepest abyss of degradation.

32. Thus (it is), and whoever honors the symbols (rites)^{*60} of Allah, then indeed it is

ذَٰلِكَ وَمَنْ يُعَظِّمْ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ

from the piety of the hearts.*61

فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ

*60 “Symbols of Allah”: the performance of Salat, Hajj, Fasting, etc., or things like a Mosque or sacrificial offerings, etc. (See Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 2 and E.Ns 5-7 thereof).

*61 That is, the observance of the sanctity of the symbols by a man is a proof that there is piety in his heart. On the other hand, the man who violates their sanctity proves himself to be void of piety and fear of God. It shows that he either does not believe at all in Allah or adopts a rebellious attitude against Him.

33. For you therein are benefits for an appointed term,*62 and afterwards their place of sacrifice is at the ancient House.*63

لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى
ثُمَّ مَحَلُّهَا إِلَىٰ الْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ

*62 This is to remove the misunderstanding about getting any benefit from the animals dedicated for sacrifice as they were also included in the symbols of Allah. This was necessitated because the Arabs believed that it was unlawful to get any benefit from them. One could neither ride on them nor carry any load on them nor consume their milk, after they had been dedicated for sacrifice during Hajj. In this verse that misunderstanding has been removed. Abu Hurairah and Anas have reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a man walking in a miserable condition on foot leading his camel by the nose-string. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him

to ride on it, he replied that it was his sacrificial offering. The Prophet (peace be upon him) again urged him to ride on his camel.

There is a divergence of opinion in regard to the interpretation “of an appointed term”. Some commentators, particularly Ibn Abbas, Qatadah, Mujahid, Dahhak and Ata are of the view that it refers to the time of the dedication of the animals for sacrifice. Obviously this is not the correct view, because in that case the permission to get benefit from them becomes meaningless. There are other commentators including Urwah bin Zubair and Ala bin Abi Rabah, who are of the view that “appointed term” means the time of sacrifice and one can get benefit from them up till then. One may ride on them, drink their milk, take their young ones for use and shear their hair, wool, etc. Imam Shafai has adopted this view. The Hanafites are of the opinion that one can get benefit from them, if need be, though it is preferable not to do so.

*63 It does not mean that the sacrifice is to be made in the precincts of the Ancient House of the Kaah. The Quran uses the House of Allah or Masjid-i-Haram for the whole of the Inviolable Place of Makkah and not for that particular building. (Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 95).

34. And for every nation have We appointed a ritual, that they may mention the name of Allah over what He has provided them of the beast of cattle.*64 For your god is one

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنَسَكًا
لِّيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ مَا
رَزَقَهُمْ مِّنْ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ

God, so surrender unto Him. And give good tidings (O Muhammad) to those who humble themselves (to Allah).^{*65}

فَالِهٰكُمۡ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ فَلَهُۥٓ رَسَلِمُوۡا
وَبَشِّرِ الْمُخَبِتِيۡنَ



***64** This verse implies two things.

(1) Sacrifice has been an essential part of the worship of One Allah in all the revealed religions. In order to inculcate Tauhid, Allah prohibited sacrifice for anyone other than Himself. This was in keeping with the other prohibitions which were made for others than Allah. For instance, prostration before anyone other than Allah, making vows for others than Allah, visiting holy places others than those prescribed by Allah, fasting in the name of others than of Allah, etc., were all prohibited.

(2) The other thing which has been common in all the revealed religions was the object of the sacrifice in the name of Allah though its details have been different in different religions, times and countries.

***65** The Arabic word *mukhbitin* has no equivalent in English. It includes those who;

(1) Give up pride, arrogance and adopt humility before Allah.

(2) Surrender themselves to His service and slavery.

(3) Accept His decrees sincerely.

35. Those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts are filled with fear, and who are patient over what

الَّذِيۡنَ اِذَا ذُكِرَ اللّٰهُ وَجِلَّتْ
قُلُوۡبُهُمۡ وَالصّٰبِرِيۡنَ عَلٰۤى مَا

may afflict them, and who establish prayer, and of what We have provided them, they spend.*66

أَصَابِهِمْ وَالْمُقِيمِي الصَّلَاةِ
وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

*66 It means that righteous people spend their lawful provisions in the way of Allah to meet their own and their dependents' lawful needs, to help their relatives, neighbors and other needy people, on public works and propagation of the word of Allah. It does not include expenditure in unlawful ways for unlawful purposes. The Quranic term *Infaq* implies neither over spending nor being miserly and stingy, but spending one's wealth on himself and others according to his means and status in society.

36. And the camels,*67 We have appointed them for you among the symbols (rites) of Allah, in them is much good for you.*68 So mention the name of Allah over them*69 when they are lined up (for sacrifice).*70 Then, when they are down on their sides (after slaughter),*71 then eat from them, and feed those that are content and those that mention their needs. Thus have We made them (animals) subject to you, that you may give thanks.*72

وَالْبُدْنَ جَعَلْنَاهَا لَكُمْ مِنْ
شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ
فَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا صَوَافٍ
فَإِذَا وَجَبَتْ جُنُوبُهَا فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا
وَأَطْعِمُوا الْقَانِعَ وَالْمُعْتَرَّ
كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرْنَاهَا لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَشْكُرُونَ

*67 Seven persons can become partners in the sacrifice of one camel and likewise in the sacrifice of one cow and the like, as enjoined by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a tradition reported by Jabir bin Abdullah in the collection of Hadith by Muslim.

*68 That is, you should sacrifice animals because you get many benefits from them to show your gratitude to Allah, the Giver, and also to acknowledge His Supremacy and Sovereignty.

*69 “Mention the name of Allah over them” implies that animals should be slaughtered by pronouncing the name of Allah over them, because without that their flesh would be unlawful to eat. This shows that in the Islamic Law there is no conception of slaughtering an animal without pronouncing the name of Allah over it. According to traditions, there are different wordings for pronouncing the name of Allah over the animals at the time of their slaughter. Some of these are:

(1) *Bismillahi Allahu Akbar; Allahumma minka wa laka*: In the name of Allah, Allah is most Great! O Allah, this is Thine and is presented to Thee.

(2) *Allahu Akbar- La ilaha ill-Allahu; Allahumma minka wa laka*: Allah is most Great: There is no god but Allah: O Allah, this is Thine and is presented to Thee.

(3) *Inni wajjahtu wajhiya lillazi fatar-as-sama wati wal-arda, hanif-an-wa ma ana min-al-mushrikin. Inns Salati wa nusuki wa mahyaya wa mamati lillahi Rabb-il-alamin. La sharika lahu wa bi-zalika umirtu wa ana min-al-Muslimin. Allahumma minks wa laka*. I have turned my face sincerely

towards the Being Who created the heavens and the earth, and I am not from among the idolatrous people. My Salat and my rites of worship and my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the universe, Who has no partner with Him. This is what I have been enjoined and I am the first to surrender to Him. O Allah! This is Thine, and is presented to Thee.

***70** It should be noted that a camel is sacrificed while it is standing. This was enjoined by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and is supported by Ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Dahhak, etc. Muslim and Bukhari have reported a tradition from Ibn Umar, who saw a man slaughtering his camel in the sitting position. He said to him: Tie one foot of your camel and make it stand, because that is the way of Abu Qasim (peace be upon him). According to a tradition reported by Jabir bin Abdullah, in Abu Dawud, the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions would tie a left foot of the camel and would make it stand on three feet, then they would slaughter it.

***71** “Then, when they are down on their sides (after slaughter)” means till they die completely, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited to cut off a piece of flesh if there is still any sign of life in the slaughtered animal. If this is done, the piece of flesh would be unlawful.

***72** This is another reason why animals should be sacrificed: “Thus have We made them (animals) subject to you, that you may give thanks”.

37. Neither their meat that reaches Allah nor their blood,

لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهَ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا

but what reaches Him is the piety from you.^{*73} Thus have We made them subject to you that you may glorify Allah for that (to) which He has guided you.^{*74} And give good tidings to those who do good.

دِمَاؤُهَا وَلٰكِنْ يٰنَالُهُ التَّقْوٰى
مِنْكُمْ ۚ كَذٰلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ
لِتُكَبِّرُوْا اللّٰهَ عَلٰى مَا هَدٰكُمْ
وَتَشِيْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ



***73** This prescribes a very important condition for the sacrifice made in the worship of Allah. A sacrifice is acceptable to Allah only if it is accompanied by piety and sincerity. Though sacrifice is a symbol of Allah, yet it has been made plain that it is accepted only if it is accompanied by piety, saying: “Neither their meat that reaches Allah nor their blood, but what reaches Him is the piety from you”. This was also meant to condemn the ritual of the days of ignorance, when the Arabs took the flesh to the Kabah and smeared its walls with the blood of the sacrificed animal.

***74** “That you may glorify Allah” at the time of sacrifice verbally also in order to acknowledge that the animals really belong to Allah and to no one else. One of the sentences uttered at the time of sacrifice is *Allahumma minka wa laka* (O Allah, this animal is Thine and is presented to Thee).

It should be noted that the command of sacrifice as contained in verses 36 and 37 is not for the pilgrims alone and that the performance of sacrifice is not confined to Makkah on the occasion of Hajj. It is a general command for all those Muslims who are well off. They have been

enjoined to be grateful to Allah because He has subjected these animals for the good of all human beings. Therefore they are required to sacrifice the animals during these days so that they may spiritually join those who go to Makkah to perform Hajj.

There are many authentic traditions to the effect that the Prophet (peace be upon him) made sacrifice on this occasion, while he was personally at Al-Madinah.

(1) The one who does not perform sacrifice even though he can, should not join us in the Eid Prayer. (Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Majah).

(2) According to a tradition reported by Ibn Umar, the Prophet (peace be upon him) dwelt at Al-Madinah for ten years and performed sacrifice every year. (Tirmizi).

(3) According to Anas, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The one who sacrificed an animal before the Eid Prayer, should offer another sacrifice; but the one who sacrificed his animal after the Eid Prayer, did the right thing and followed the way of the Muslims. (Bukhari).

In this connection, it is note-worthy that no Eid Prayer is held on the tenth of Zil-Hajj in Makkah: therefore the injunction was meant for all Muslims and not only for those performing Hajj at Makkah.

Thus, it is clear that the sacrifice on the occasion of Eid which is observed in the entire Muslim world is a Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and has been enjoined by him. The only dispute is whether it is obligatory in nature or only a Sunnah. Ibrahim Nakhai, Imams Abu Hanifah, Malik, Muhammad and, according to a tradition,

Imam Abu Yusuf too, are of the opinion that it is obligatory in nature. On the other hand, Imams Shafai and Ahmad bin Hanbal regard it only as a Sunnah of the Muslims, and Sufyan Thauri has also agreed with them, saying that there will be no harm if a person does not offer a sacrifice. It is, however, an irony that some of the learned Muslims of our time, who follow neither the Quran nor the Sunnah, and are only guided by personal whims, have declared that if there is a consensus of opinion of the Muslims, they can give up the practice of sacrifice on the occasion of Eid.

38. Indeed,^{*75} Allah defends those who believe.^{*76} Indeed, Allah does not like each treacherous ingrate.^{*77}

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدَافِعُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ
خَوَّانٍ كَفُورٍ



***75** From here the address for the first time prepares the Muslims for Jihad. In order to understand this, we should keep in view the preceding portion (verses 19-24) in which the ideological conflict between the two parties (believers and disbelievers) and the result thereof have been described. This naturally serves as a prelude to the armed conflict between the two parties. That is why in verses 26-37 the immediate causes which necessitated war have been stated to serve as an introduction and justification for war with the disbelievers of Makkah.

After the migration to Al-Madinah, when the first Hajj season approached, it naturally brought along with it anguish and anger both for the Muhajirs and the Ansar, who had been debarred froth visiting Makkah and

performing Hajj, That is why, in this passage (verse 26-37), the rituals and the objects of Hajj have been described to bring home to the disbelievers that they had no right to debar anyone from Hajj. On the other hand, the Muslims are being prepared to fight not with the intention of wreaking vengeance but for the sake of reform. At the same time sacrifice on the occasion of Hajj has been prescribed as a permanent rite to enable them (and the Muslims of the whole world) to commemorate Hajj and the rites connected with it, so that they might refrain from wreaking vengeance on the people of Makkah for the persecution to which they had been subjected. They have, therefore, been enjoined to fight to bring about better conditions and not to take revenge on their persecutors.

***76** The Arabic word *mudafiat* implies two things.

(1) To fight with the enemy to ward off his aggressive attack.

(2) To fight with the enemy not just once but whenever the need arises. Allah has assured the believers that He will defend them against the enemy every time there is a conflict between Islam and kufr. This is to encourage the believers that they will not be left alone in their defense, but Allah Himself will be a party with them and will help them to frustrate the cunning designs of the enemy and to ward off their attacks. Indeed this verse is a great encouragement for the believers, for it imbues their hearts with spirit and strength which nothing else can.

***77** Allah becomes a party with the believers because they are justified in waging war against the disbelievers who are

treacherous and ungrateful to Allah in spite of His many blessings and favors to them.

39. Permission is given to those who fight because they have been wronged.*78 And indeed, Allah surely has Power over giving them victory.*79

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ
ظَلِمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ
لَقَدِيرٌ



*78 This (verse 39) is the first verse of the Quran in which permission to fight was given in the month of Zil-Hajj in the first year after Hijrah according to our research. Then the command to fight was given in verse 190, 191, 193, 216 and 244 of Surah Al-Baqarah in Rajab or Shaban of A.H. 2.

*79 “Allah surely has Power over giving them victory”: this assurance was urgently needed by the persecuted Muslims whose fighting strength at that time was very meager, not even a thousand including all the migrants and the Muslims of Al-Madinah. On the other hand, the fighting strength of the Quraish by themselves was much greater. Besides, they had all the other mushrik clans of Arabia at their back and were joined later by the Jews as well. Therefore, this assurance was most opportune and the challenge to the disbelievers was very significant, for it meant to say that they were not fighting against a small number of the Muslims but against Allah. Therefore, “You are welcome to fight if you dare”.

40. Those who have been expelled from their homes

الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ

unjustly^{*80} only because they said: "Our Lord is Allah."^{*81}

And if it was not for Allah's repelling of people, some of them by means of others, assuredly would have been demolished monasteries, and churches, and synagogues,^{*82} and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is much mentioned.^{*83} And Allah surely helps those who help Him.^{*84} Indeed, Allah is All Strong, All Almighty.

حَقِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ
وَلَوْلَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ
بِبَعْضٍ هَدَمْتُ صَوَامِعَ وَبِيَعٍ
وَصَلَوَاتٍ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا
أَسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ
اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

***80** The mention of their expulsion from their homes in verse 40 is a clear proof that this portion of Surah Al-Hajj was revealed at Al-Madinah.

***81** In order to have an idea of the severe persecution of the Muslims, a few instances of this are cited.

(1) Suhaib Rumi was deprived of everything, when he was about to migrate to Al-Madinah. When he reached there, he had nothing with him except the clothes he was wearing. Though he had earned all that through his own labors, he was deprived of everything by the disbelievers of Makkah.

(2) When Abu Salmah was about to leave Makkah with his wife and a suckling child, his in laws forcibly separated his wife from him, and then the people of his own family took away the child from them. Thus the poor woman had to pass one whole year in sorrow and grief. After a year, she

secured the child somehow and journeyed from Makkah to Al-Madinah with it all alone on a dangerous route.

(3) Ayyash bin Rabiah was a half brother of Abu Jahl. When he migrated to Al-Madinah, he was followed by Abu Jahl and another brother of his, and they told him the lie: Your mother has taken the oath that she will not move from the sun to the shade nor comb her hair until she should see you (Ayyash). You should therefore go back with us to Makkah, show her your face and then come back. He was taken in by this trick. When they were journeying back the two brothers made him a prisoner, took him to Makkah with his hands and feet tied, and proclaimed: O people of Makkah, this is how these lads should be treated and set right. He remained in that state for a long time and was at last rescued by a brave Muslim.

*82 *Saumah* (pl. Swami), *Biya* and *Salawat* in the original text are the places of worship of the monks who have left the world, the Christians and the Jews respectively. *Salawat* was *Salauta* in Aramaic, which might be the origin of the English words salute and salutation.

*83 In this sentence, a divine principle has been stated: Allah does not let a group of people or a community have authority forever. Every now and then He repels one group by means of another.

If this had not been the case, the permanent dominator would have created chaos not only in the political and economic spheres, but would have encroached upon the places of worship as well. This principle has also been stated in Ayat 251 of Surah Al-Baqarah.

***84** Those who help Allah are the people who invite mankind to Tauhid and exert their utmost to establish the true faith and righteousness. For further explanation see E.N. 50 of Surah Aal-Imran.

41. Those who, if We give them authority in the land, establish prayer and give charity and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong.^{*85} And to Allah belongs the outcome of (all) matters.^{*86}

الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ
وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ ﴿٤١﴾

***85** “If We give them authority”: In this one sentence, the real aim of the Islamic State and the characteristics of those who conduct its affairs have been stated concisely but comprehensively. Those who help Allah and deserve His succor behave righteously, establish Salat, make arrangements for the collection of Zakat and use their power and authority to propagate good and eradicate evil.

***86** That is, it is Allah Who decides whom to give power in the land and when. This is meant to remove the misunderstanding of the proud and arrogant people who think that the destiny of the land and its dwellers is in their hands, and there is none to depose them from power. But Allah dethrones the most haughty ruler in supernatural ways and gives power to the most humble in order to show that He is All-Powerful, All-Mighty.

42. And if they deny you (O Muhammad),^{*87} so surely

وَإِنْ يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ

have denied before them the people of Noah, and (the tribes of) Aad and Thamud.

قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَعَادٌ وَثَمُودٌ



*87 The disbelievers of Makkah.

43. And the people of Abraham and the people of Lot.

وَقَوْمُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَقَوْمُ لُوطٍ

44. And the dwellers of Midian. And Moses was denied, so I gave respite to the disbelievers, then I seized them.^{*88} So how (terrible) was My rejection (of them).^{*89}

وَأَصْحَابُ مَدْيَنَ وَكُذِّبَ
مُوسَىٰ فَأَمَلَيْتُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ثُمَّ
أَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ



*88 The instances of some peoples who rejected their Prophets have been cited to impress that they were given respite to reform themselves before they were punished. Therefore: O people of Makkah, you should not be deluded by the delay in your punishment. When the term of respite comes to an end, you shall also be punished like the former people, if you do not mend your ways in the meantime.

*89 The Arabic word *nakeer* is very comprehensive and implies two meanings:

- (1) Displeasure at the evil conduct of the other.
- (2) A terrible punishment which disfigures the culprit so badly that he cannot even be recognized. The sentence therefore will mean: Just see when I seized them for this

evil conduct, how terrible was My chastisement.

45. Then how many of the township have We destroyed while they were wrong doers. So they tumbled down on their roofs. And (How many) wells (lie) abandoned^{*90} and (how many) lofty palaces (lie in ruins).

فَكَأَيِّن مِّن قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا وَهِيَ
ظَالِمَةٌ فَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى
عُرُوشِهَا وَيَبْرُؤُا مُّعْطَلَةٌ وَقَصْرٍ
مَّشِيدٍ

***90** In Arabic a well is synonymous with a habitation. Thus “many a wells” means “many a habitation has been destroyed”.

46. So have they not traveled in the land, so they have their hearts by which they might understand, or ears by which they might listen. For indeed, it is not the eyes that are blinded, rather blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts.^{*91}

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ
لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ
يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى
الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِن تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ
الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ

***91** The words “blinded are the hearts” have been used in the metaphorical and not in the literal sense. Since the heart is regarded as the center of emotions, feelings and of mental and moral qualities, these words have been used to imply that their obduracy has inhibited them from feeling and acting rationally.

47. And they ask you to hasten on the punishment,^{*92} and Allah will never fail in His promise. And indeed, a day with your Lord is like a thousand years of that which you count.^{*93}

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ وَإِنَّ يَوْمًا عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ كَأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعُدُّونَ



***92** This refers to the oft-repeated challenge by the disbelievers: Well, if you are a true prophet, why does not that chastisement come with which you have been threatening us, for we have been rejecting your claim of being a true Prophet of Allah.

***93** That is, the decisions of Allah do not follow your time and calendar, nor do the consequences of your wrong attitudes appear immediately after the deeds. Therefore it will be very foolish for the part of a people to argue that the threat of punishment was empty just because a decade or a century had passed since they had adopted a wicked attitude and conduct with impurity.

48. And how many of the township did I give respite to, while they were wrong doers, then I seized them. And to Me is the return.

وَكَأَيِّنْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَمَلَيْتُ لَهَا وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهَا وَإِلَى الْمَصِيرِ



49. Say: "O mankind, I am only a clear warner to you."^{*94}

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا أَنَا لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ



***94** That is, I am merely a warner and not the maker of your destinies. It is Allah Who passes judgment and decides about the punishment.

50. So those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them is forgiveness and a noble provision.*95

فَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ
وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

***95** The believers shall have forgiveness' means that Allah will overlook their faults, weaknesses, and acts of omission and commission. They will have honorable provisions means that they will have excellent supplies which will be given to them in an honorable way.

51. And those who strive against Our revelations to frustrate them, they are companions of the Fire.

وَالَّذِينَ سَعَوْا فِي
ءَايَاتِنَا مُعْجِزِينَ
أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ
الْجَحِيمِ

52. And We did not send before you any messenger, nor a prophet*96 except that when he recited,*97 Satan threw (falsehood) into that which he recited thereof.*98 But Allah abolishes that which Satan throws in, then Allah establishes His

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُولٍ
وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّى أَلْقَى
الشَّيْطَانُ فِي أُمْنِيَّتِهِ فَيَنْسَخُ
اللَّهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ
يُحْكِمُ اللَّهُ ءَايَاتِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ

revelations. ^{*99} And Allah is
All Knower, All Wise. ^{*100}



***96** For the distinction between *Nabi* and *Rasul*, refer to E. N. 30 of Surah Maryam.

***97** The Arabic word *tamanna* has two meanings: “desire” and “to recite” something.

***98** If the first meaning is taken, it will imply: Satan tried to prevent the fulfillment of his desire. If the second meaning is taken, it will imply: When the Prophet recited the Revelations, Satan created different sorts of doubts about its truth and meanings in the minds of the people.

***99** If the first meaning is adopted, it will imply: Allah fulfills the Prophet’s desire and makes his mission successful in spite of the obstacles of Satan and confirms the truth of His revelations by fulfilling His promises to the Prophet. In case of the second meaning, it will imply: Allah eradicates all the doubts and objections inspired by Satan in the hearts of the people and clarifies the confusion created about any verse of the Quran in subsequent revelations.

***100** “Allah is All-Knower” and has full knowledge of the mischief worked by Satan and of its effects, and being All-Wise, He counteracts every mischief of Satan.

53. That He (Allah) may make that which the Satan throws in a trial for those in whose hearts there is a disease, and those whose hearts are hardened. And

لِيَجْعَلَ مَا يُلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِتْنَةً
لِّلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ
وَالْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ

certainly, the wrong doers are too far in their dissension.

الظَّالِمِينَ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٥٣﴾

54. And that those who have been given knowledge may know that it is the truth from your Lord, so that they may believe in it, and their hearts may submit humbly to Him. And certainly Allah is the Guide of those who believe to the straight path. *101

وَلْيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ
الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ
فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
لَهَادِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِلَى صِرَاطٍ
مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

*101 That is, Allah lets Satan work such mischief to put to the test both the righteous and the wicked people. The people with a perverted mentality deduce wrong conclusions from these and deviate from the right way, while those, who think on the right lines, realize that all these things are the mischief of Satan and that the message of the Prophet is based on the truth. They conclude that the very fact that Satan has been so much agitated and become active against it is a clear proof of its being the truth. It is very important to understand the real significance of this passage (verses 52-54) for this has given rise to a grave misunderstanding.

If we consider it in the context in which it occurs, it becomes obvious that it was sent down to refute the wrong appraisal of the casual observers that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had failed to achieve his desired object. This was because he had striven for thirteen long years to persuade

his people to accept his message but the apparent result was that he had not only failed in this, but he and the small band of his followers had been forced to leave their homes. As this exile contradicted his claim that he was a Prophet of Allah and had His approval and succor with him, some people became skeptical about it. Moreover, they became doubtful about the truth of the Quran, because they were not being visited by the scourge, which was inflicted on those who treated the Prophet as false. His antagonists scoffed at him, saying: Where is that succor of Allah and the scourge with which we were threatened? The answer to these doubts of the disbelievers was given in the preceding passage, and in this passage the addressees were those who were influenced by this propaganda. Briefly the whole answer was to this effect.

It is not a new thing that the people of a Messenger have treated him as an impostor for it has always been happening like this. You can see from the remnants of those peoples who treated their Messengers as impostors how they were punished for their mischief. You can learn a lesson from them, if you will. As regards to the delay in the coming of scourge, the Quran never threatened the disbelievers with immediate punishment, nor is it the job of the Messenger to inflict punishments. The scourge is sent by Allah, but He is not hasty in sending His torment. He gives respite to the people to mend their ways as He is giving you now. Therefore, you should not be under any delusion that the threats of scourge are empty threats.

It is also not a new thing that the desires and wishes of a

Prophet meet with obstacles or that false propoganda is made against his message for the same has already happened with regard to the messages of the former Prophets. But ultimately Allah eradicated the mischief worked by Satan and made the message successful. Therefore you should take a warning from the past history of Satan's mischief and its ultimate failure. You should note it well that the obstacles and the mischief of Satan are a trial and means that help attract the righteous people towards Islam and winnow the dishonest people away from it.

It is a pity that in spite of the above clear and simple meaning of the passage which fits in well with the context, a grave misunderstanding has arisen because of a tradition which has not only changed its meaning entirely and rendered it irrelevant in the context but has helped make doubtful the very basic articles of the faith. Therefore we are making a critical appraisal of the tradition in order to show how to make the right use of traditions for the correct interpretation of the Quran.

According to this tradition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had a strong longing and desire to this effect: I wish some revelations were sent down to tone down the abhorrence of the mushrik Quraish against Islam so as to bring them nearer to it, or at least the criticism against their creed may not be so severe as to arouse their enmity.

While he was cherishing this desire, it so happened that one day when he was sitting in a big gathering of the Quraish, Surah An-Najm was revealed and he began to recite it.

When he came to verses 19, 20: Have you ever considered about this Lat and this Uzza, and a third (goddess) Manat, all of a sudden he recited, “These are exalted goddesses; indeed their intercession may be expected”. After this he continued to recite Surah An-Najm up to the last verse and then fell down in prostration and all the Muslims and the mushriks of the Quraish also did the same, for the latter said: Now we have no difference with Muhammad. We also profess that Allah is the Creator and the Provider and that these deities of ours are merely our intercessors with Him. After this, when in the evening Angel Gabriel came, he said: What have you done? I did not bring these two sentences. At this the Prophet (peace be upon him) became very sad and Allah sent down verse 73-75 of Surah Bani Israil: O Muhammad, these people have left no stone unturned to tempt you away from that which We have revealed to you so that you might fabricate something in Our name. Had you done that, they would have made you their friend. It was just possible that you might have inclined a little towards them, if We had not given you strength. But if you had done so, We would have made you taste double chastisement in this world as well as in the Hereafter, then you would have found no helper against Us. But in spite of this, he continued to be grieved till Allah sent down verse 52 of this Surah (Al-Hajj) in which Allah consoled him, saying that the same had been happening to the former Prophets.

Another thing that happened in the meantime was that the story reached the migrants to Habash that there had been a

reconciliation between the Prophet and the disbelievers of Makkah. Accordingly, many of them returned to Makkah only to learn that the news of reconciliation was wrong and the conflict between Islam and kufr was raging as furiously as before.

Now let us make a critical study of this story which has been cited by Ibn Jarir and many other commentators and is even contained in many collections of traditions.

- (1) None of its reporters, except Ibn Abbas, is a companion.
- (2) There are many major discrepancies and variations in its details.
- (3) The wording ascribed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in praise of the idols in each tradition is different from that of others.

Moreover, these words have been attributed to different sources according to different traditions: (a) These words were put in by Satan during the revelation and the Prophet (peace be upon him) imagined that they were revealed by Gabriel. (b) He himself uttered these words inadvertently, being urged by his own desire. (c) He was dozing when he uttered these words. (d) He intentionally uttered these words but in a manner as to question their veracity. (e) Satan interpolated these words into the revelation, giving an impression that the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself had recited them. (f) It was one of the mushriks who had recited these words.

Yet scholars of tradition like Hafiz Ibn Hajar and jurists like Abu Bakr alJassas and rationalists like Zamakhshari and commentators like Ibn Jarir accept this story as true

and consider it as a commentary on verse 52 of this Surah. Ibn Hajar argues like this:

"Even though the links by which this tradition has been related are either weak or broken, except in one case, the very fact that it has been related through so many links is a proof that there is some truth about it. The one which has strong links is by Said bin Jubair who has related it from Ibn Abbas and the reporters of two more traditions (which have been cited by Tabari) have been declared authentic by Bukhari and Muslim.

On the other side, there are other eminent scholars who declare this story to be utterly baseless. Ibn Kathir says: All the links of this tradition are unauthentic and I have found no correct version of this with continuous links. Baihaqi says: This story has not been proved to be correct by the rules of reporting. When Ibn Khuzaimah was asked about it, he said: This story has been invented by heretics. Qazi Ayad says: The very fact that this tradition is neither contained in any of the six authentic collections of Hadith nor has it been related in an authentic way by authentic reporters shows its weakness. Besides them, Imam Razi, Qazi Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi, Alusi etc. have rejected it altogether.

It is a pity that even those who reject this story have not done full justice to their cases. There are some who reject it because its links are weak. In other words, they would have accepted it, if its links were strong. Then there are others who reject it because its acceptance makes the whole faith doubtful. This kind of reasoning may satisfy the believers

but it cannot satisfy those who are already skeptical or intend to make a research into it with a view to making a correct appraisal of Islam. They will rather say: When a story is related by an eminent companion and is contained in the collections of traditions, there is no reason why we should reject it just because it makes your faith doubtful.

Now let us consider the story critically and rationally to prove that it is unacceptable.

(1) Its internal evidence proves it to be wrong: (a) According to the story the incident happened after the first migration to Habash, for according to it some of the migrants returned to Makkah after hearing the story. Now the fact is that the migration took place in the month of Rajab of the fifth year of Prophethood and some of the migrants returned to Makkah three months later, i.e. in Shawwal of the same year. (b) Verses 73-75 of Surah Al-Isra in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was reproved for this incident were revealed in the eleventh or twelfth year of Prophethood. In other words, he was reproved by Allah five or six years after the incident. (c) This verse (52) in which the interpolation by Satan was abrogated was sent down in the first year of Hijrah, i.e. about two years after the reproof. Can a person in his senses believe that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was reproved for the interpolation after six years, and it was abrogated after nine years?

(2) According to the story, this interpolation was made in Surah An-Najm. When the Prophet was reciting the words, "And a third (goddess) Manat"; he also recited the

interpolated sentence, and then continued the recital up to the end of the Surah. It is said that the disbelievers of Makkah were so pleased with the interpolation that they declared: The differences between us and Muhammad (peace be upon him) have now come to an end.

Let us now read verses 19-23 of An-Najm along with the alleged interpolation (*in italics*): Have you ever considered about the reality of this Lat and Uzza and a third (goddess) Manat? *These are exalted goddesses; indeed their intercession may be expected.* What, do you have sons for yourselves and daughters for Him (Allah)? This is indeed an unfair division. They are nothing but mere names which you and your forefathers have invented. Allah has sent down no authority in regard to them. They follow only conjectures and the whims of their own minds, although right guidance has come from their Lord.

Even a casual reader will detect an obvious contradiction in the passage. Immediately after praising the goddesses there is a hard hit on their worshipers, as if to say: O foolish people! How is it that you have ascribed daughters to Allah and sons to yourselves? All this is your own invention which has no authority from Allah. On the face of it, the interpolation makes the passage absurd which cannot be assigned even to a rational person not to speak of Allah. Then the story presumes that all the Quraish who were listening to it must have lost their senses; otherwise they could not have declared that their differences with Muhammad (peace be upon him) had been made up from thence.

From this internal evidence it has become clear that this story is absurd and meaningless.

(3) Now let us consider whether the occasions, ascribed by the commentators to the revelation of the verses under discussion, fit in with the chronological order of the Quran. According to the story, the interpolation in Surah An-Najm was made in the fifth year of Prophethood. The reproof was made in verses 73-75 of Bani Israil and then the interpolation was annulled and the incident explained in verses 52-54 of Surah Al-Hajj. Now there could be only two possibilities about the time of their revelation. Either the verses containing the reproof and the abrogation were sent down in the period in which the interpolation took place, or the verse containing the reproof was sent down along with Surah Al-Hajj. In the first case, the question arises: Why were these verses (Surah Bani-Israil, 73-75) not inserted in Surah An-Najm? Why were they held in abeyance for six long years and then inserted in Surah Bani Israil, when it was revealed, and verses 52-54 (containing the abrogation) inserted in Surah Al-Hajj after a further delay of more than two years? Does it mean that the verses were sent down on one occasion and inserted years later haphazardly in one Surah or the other? In the second case, the question would arise: Does it stand to reason that the verses containing the reproof (Surah Bani-Israil, 73-75) were sent down six years after the interpolation, and the verse of abrogation (Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 52) nine years after the incident? Still another question arises: What was the occasion of the revelation of the verses of reproof and

abrogation in Surahs Surah Bani-Israil and Al-Hajj in the context in which they occur?

(4) Now let us turn to the third principle of correct appraisal of the Quran.

For a correct appreciation of the Quran it is essential to consider whether a particular commentary fits in with the relevant context of the Quran or not. If we make even a cursory study of Surah Bani Israil, verses 71-73, it will become obvious that there was no occasion for the alleged reproof in verse 73 and that there is no tinge of reproof in it, for the words of the verse refute the allegation that the Prophet was taken in by the mischief of the disbelievers. Then in Surah Al-Hajj, if we make a critical study of the verses that precede verses 52-54 and follow them, it will become obvious that there was no occasion to console the Prophet for the interpolation and to annul it after nine years.

(5) We reiterate that no tradition, however strong links it might have, can be accepted when the text itself is a clear evidence against it, and when it does not fit in with the wording, the context, the order etc. of the Quran. When the incident is considered in this background, even a skeptical research scholar would be convinced that the tradition is absolutely wrong. As regards to a believer, he can never accept it, when he knows that it contradicts not only one verse but a large number of other verses of the Quran. He would rather believe that the reporters of the tradition might have been deluded by Satan and not the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). He would never believe that

the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) could interpolate even a single word in the Quran under the influence of a desire of his own: or that there could ever occur such a desire in his mind that he should make a compromise with the disbelievers by associating shirk with Tauhid: or that he could ever wish that Allah might not say anything to displease the disbelievers: or that the revelation was made in such an unsafe and doubtful manner as to enable Satan to mix with it even a word in a manner as if it was also brought by Gabriel. Each of these things is contradictory to the clear revelation of the Quran and the basic articles of the faith which we have learned from the Quran and the Prophet (peace be upon him). God forbid that we should accept any such tradition that might lead to the above mentioned presumptions just because the tradition seems to be authentic in every way.

It will be worth-while to consider the question: How is it that so many reporters of traditions have related this story? Does it not show that there must have been some reality about it? Otherwise, so many reporters, who included many authentic and eminent scholars, could not have made such an heinous slander against the Quran and the Prophet (peace be upon him). Its answer is contained in the authentic collections of traditions by Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Nasai and Musnad Ahmad. The reality of the incident is this.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) recited Surah An-Najm and performed prostration at the end of it. At this, all the hearers, both the Muslims and the mushriks, fell down in

prostration. This was what really happened and there is nothing strange about it. Let us depict the occasion: The Prophet (peace be upon him) was reciting a forceful piece of the eloquent Quran in a very impressive manner. Naturally the occasion produced an emotional effect and all the listeners instinctively fell down in prostration along with him. It was because of such ecstasies produced by the Prophet's (peace be upon him) recital of the Quran as this that the disbelievers dubbed him a sorcerer. As regards the story that the Prophet (peace be upon him) praised the deities of the disbelievers, it appears that the Quraish concocted the story to hide their defeat. Probably someone or other of them explained away their defeat, saying: We ourselves heard Muhammad praising our deities. Therefore we also fell down in prostration along with him. As regards to the migrants to Habash, they returned to Makkah when they heard the concocted story that there had been a compromise between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Quraish. It appears that some of those people who had seen the Muslims and the mushriks falling down together in prostration, presumed that peace had been made between them, so the story traveled to the migrants in Habash who had no means to verify it and thus thirty three of them returned to Makkah.

Naturally these three things, prostration by the Quraish, their explanation of it, and the return of the migrants from Habash, combined to evolve that story. So much so that some authentic people were also deluded by it, for to err is human, and the pious and intelligent people are no

exception to it. However, the error of the latter proves to be more harmful, because their credulous followers accept with closed eyes their misconceptions along with their right conclusions. On the other hand, mischief mongers collect all such errors of the righteous people and exploit them to prove that all the collections of traditions are false and should be rejected forthwith.

55. And those who disbelieve will not cease to be in doubt about it (Quran) until the Hour comes to them unexpectedly, or there comes to them the punishment of a barren (disastrous) day.^{*102}

وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي
مَرِيَةٍ مِّنْهُ حَتَّىٰ تَأْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ
بَغْتَةً أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ يَوْمٍ
عَقِيمٍ



***102** The epithet “barren” has been applied to the day in its metaphorical and not literal sense. :A day is barren if all the plans, hopes and devices remain unproductive in it, or it does not bring forth its night. For instance, the days on which the people of Prophet Noah, the tribes of Aad and Thamud, the people of Lot and of Midian met with their destruction by scourge from Allah, were barren days in this sense, because those days did not bring forth any tomorrow for them, and no device of theirs could avert their doom.

56. The Sovereignty that day will be for Allah. He will judge between them. Then those who believed and did righteous deeds

الْمَلِكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ يَحْكُمُ
بَيْنَهُمْ ۚ فَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي جَنَّاتِ

will be in Gardens of Delight.

النَّعِيمِ ﴿٥٦﴾

57. And those who disbelieved and denied Our revelations, so they, for them will be a humiliating punishment.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿٥٧﴾

58. And those who emigrated in the way of Allah and then were slain or died, Allah will certainly grant them a goodly provision. And indeed, it is Allah who surely is the best of those who provide.

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ قُتِلُوا أَوْ مَاتُوا لَيَرْزُقَنَّهُمُ اللَّهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. Surely, He will admit them to a resort with which they shall be well pleased. And indeed, Allah is All Knowing, Most Forbearing.*103

لَيَدْخِلْنَهُمْ مُّدْخَلًَٰ يَرْضَوْنَهُ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٩﴾

*103 As Allah is All-Knowing, He knows well those who left their homes for His sake and what reward they deserve. He is Clement, and forgives minor errors and weaknesses of the people; therefore these things will not hinder Him from rewarding the believers for their services and sacrifices.

60. That (is so). And whoever retaliated with the

ذَٰلِكَ وَمَنْ عَاقَبَ بِمِثْلِ مَا

equivalent of that he was made to suffer with, and thereafter wrong was done to him, Allah will surely help him.^{*104} Indeed, Allah is Oft Pardoning, Oft Forgiving.^{*105}

عُوقِبَ بِهِ ثُمَّ بُغِيَ عَلَيْهِ
لَيَنْصُرَنَّهُ اللَّهُ ^ق إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُورٌ
غَفُورٌ



***104** The preceding verses referred to those persecuted people who could not retaliate and here the reference is to those victims of persecution who could fight back.

From this verse, Imam Shafai has concluded that retaliation will be effected in the way as life was taken in the original act. If a person is killed by immersion in water, the killer also should be put to death by immersion in water; or if a person is burnt to death, the killer also will be burnt to death. The Hanafites dispute this. According to them, retaliation against a murderer will be incurred in one and the same established way no matter how life was taken by the culprit in the original act.

***105** This verse (60) may imply two things:

- (1) Allah forgives that killing which is done in self-defense, though killing of people is not a good thing in itself.
- (2) As Allah, Whose slaves the believers are, is Forgiving and Forbearing, they should also forgive and forbear as much as possible. Though they have the right of retaliation, they should not resort to carnage and massacre.

61. That is ^{*106} because Allah causes the night to enter into the day, and causes the day to enter into the night^{*107}. And

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يُوَلِّجُ اللَّيْلَ
فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُوَلِّجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ

because Allah is All Hearer,
All-Seer.*108

وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٦١﴾

*106 “That is” (as stated in the preceding paragraph) because Allah is the Ruler of the universe and has the power to give punishments and rewards to those who deserve them.

*107 The fact that “Allah causes.....night” is a proof that He is the Master, Sovereign and Ruler of the universe. But the deeper meaning of the verse is that Allah, Who is able to bring forth the light of the day out of the darkness of the night, has the power to bring out the light of the truth out of the darkness of disbelief and ignorance, and the light of justice out of the darkness of tyranny.

*108 He hears everything and sees everything and is not unaware of anything.

62. That is because Allah, He is the Truth, and that what they call other than Him, it is the false,*109 and because Allah, He is the Most High, the Most Great.

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ
وَأَنَّ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِن
دُونِهِ هُوَ الْبَاطِلُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٦٢﴾

*109 As Allah is in fact the Sovereign of the universe, His worshipers will surely attain true success and the worshipers of false gods will meet with utter failure.

63. Do you not see that Allah sends down water from the sky and then the

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ
السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَتُصْبِحُ الْأَرْضُ

earth becomes green.*110
Indeed, Allah is Subtle, All
Aware.*111

مُحَضَّرَةٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ



*110 This verse has a deeper meaning also, though apparently it merely declares that Allah alone has the power to send down rain which makes the land green. The deeper meaning is that the rainfall of the blessed revelation will, in the near future, turn the barren land of Arabia into a garden of knowledge, morality and bring forth a high and righteous civilization.

*111 *Latif* implies that Allah fulfills His designs in such fine ways that it is difficult to understand them till they become real and apparent.

As He is fully aware of everything, He knows how to conduct the affairs of His Kingdom.

64. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And indeed Allah, He certainly is the All-Sufficient, the All-Praiseworthy.*112

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُوَ
الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ



*112 He alone is All-Sufficient and is not in need of anyone in any way. He is All-praiseworthy because all praise belongs to Him alone whether anyone praises Him or not.

65. Do you not see that Allah has subjected to you (mankind) whatever is on the earth, and the ships that

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَالْفُلْكَ تَجْرِي فِي

sail through the sea by His command. And He withholds the heaven from falling on the earth, except by His permission.*113 Indeed Allah, for mankind, is full of Kindness, Most Merciful.

الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَيُمْسِكُ السَّمَاءَ
أَنْ تَقَعَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ



*113 Here “the heaven” implies the whole of the universe above and below the earth where everything is held in its own place and sphere.

66. And He it is who gave you life, then He will cause you to die, then He will give you life (again). Indeed, mankind is certainly an ingrate.*114

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ
يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ
إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ



*114 That is, though man sees every reality presented by the Prophets, yet he denies it.

67. For every nation*115 We have appointed religious rites*116 which they perform. So let them not dispute with you on the matter,*117 but invite to your Lord. Indeed you, certainly are on the right guidance.*118

لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا هُمْ
نَاسِكُوهُ فَلَا يُنْزِعُكَ فِي
الْأَمْرِ وَادْعُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ إِنَّكَ
لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى مُسْتَقِيمٍ



*115 That is, the community of every Prophet.

*116 Here the Arabic word *mansak* has been used in its

most comprehensive sense which also includes sacrifice (verse 34). It means service, worship, in short, the entire way of life. The same theme has been expressed in Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 48: We prescribed a law and a way of life for each of you.

***117** That is, now you have brought a way of life just as the former Prophets brought ways of life for their people. Therefore the people have no right to dispute with you concerning the law you have brought.

***118** This confirms the explanation given in E.N. 117 above.

68. And if they argue with you, then say: "Allah is Best Aware of what you do."

وَإِنْ جَدَلُوكَ فَقُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

69. Allah will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection about that wherein you used to differ.

اللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

70. Do you not know that Allah knows whatever is there in the heavens and the earth. Indeed, that is in a Record. Indeed, that is easy for Allah. ^{*119}

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي
السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي
كِتَابٍ ج إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ
﴿٧٠﴾

***119** In order to understand the significance of this paragraph, we should keep in view verse 55- 57 with which this is connected.

71. And they worship other than Allah that for which He has not sent down authority. And that of which they have no knowledge.*120
And for wrong doers there is not any helper.*121

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ
يُنزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَا لَيْسَ لَهُمْ
بِهِ عِلْمٌ ۗ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ
نَصِيرٍ



***120** That is, neither there is any mention of their deities in any revealed Book nor do they have any other source of knowledge about them nor any authority to worship them. Therefore, it is sheer ignorance that they have associated their self invented deities with Allah and worship them, make vows and offer sacrifices to them and supplicate them for their needs etc.

***121** This is to warn the foolish people that they are absolutely wrong in expecting that their deities would help them in this world and in the Hereafter because they have no power to help them. Thus, they will find no helper, for Allah alone could help them and they have already displeased Him by their rebellious behavior.

72. And when Our clear revelations are recited to them, you will recognize in the faces of those who disbelieve, a denial. They are almost ready to attack with violence those who recite to them Our verses. Say: “Then

وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ
تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا الْمُنْكَرَ يَكَادُونَ
يَسْطُونَ بِالَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ

certainly, shall I inform you worse than that.*122 The Fire, which Allah has promised those who disbelieve. And worst indeed is that destination.”

عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتِنَا ۗ قُلْ أَفَأَنْتُمْ
بِشَرِّ مِّنْ ذَٰلِكُمُ النَّارُ وَعَدَّهَا
اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۗ وَبِئْسَ
الْمَصِيرُ



*122 That is, you will meet with a far worse state of anguish than that which you display against those who recite divine revelations to you.

73. O mankind, a parable is set forth, so listen to it. Indeed, those whom you call other than Allah cannot create a fly though they gather together for it. And if the fly snatched away a thing from them, they would have no power to release it from him (the fly). Weak are (both) the seeker and the sought.*123

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ ضُرِبَ مَثَلٌ
فَأَسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَنْ
يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ
وَإِنْ يَسْلُبْهُمُ الذُّبَابُ شَيْئًا لَا
يَسْتَنْقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ۗ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ
وَالْمَطْلُوبُ



*123 This parable has been cited to impress upon the idol-worshippers that their deities are absolutely powerless, for even if they all collaborated to create an insignificant thing like a fly, they could not; nay, even if a fly snatched away anything from them they could not prevent it. This shows

how weak they themselves are and how powerless are the idols they supplicate.

74. They have not appraised Allah His rightful appraisal. Indeed, Allah is All Strong, All Mighty.

مَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٧٤﴾

75. Allah chooses messengers from the angels and from men.^{*124} Indeed, Allah is All Hearer, All Seer.

اللَّهُ يَصْطَفِي مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٧٥﴾

***124** In continuation of the refutation of shirk, Allah has taken two kinds of the most revered of deities to show their real status, as if to say: The angels and the Prophets whom you have set up as deities are mere Messengers of Allah. Allah has chosen them to convey His messages to human beings and this does not make them God or partners in His Godhead.

76. He knows what is before them and what is behind them.^{*125} And to Allah return all matters.^{*126}

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٧٦﴾

***125** The Quran employs this sentence to refute the creed of the mushriks in regard to intercession, as if to say: You imagine that angels, prophets, saints and the like can intercede with Allah on your behalf and therefore you

worship them. You are absolutely wrong. For none of your deities knows what is good for you and what is not. Allah alone hears everything, sees everything and knows everything. Therefore He has not given the right of intercession and recommendation to anyone except when He Himself is pleased to give such permission.

***126** This is to impress upon them that every affair and every matter, big or small, is presented before Allah for a decision. Therefore you should not invoke anyone else other than Allah, for all others are utterly helpless and powerless and cannot even fulfill their own desires and needs.

77. O those of you who believe, Bow down and prostrate yourselves, and worship your Lord, and do good, that you may succeed. ^{*127}

AsSajda

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا
رَبَّكُمْ وَأَفْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُفْلِحُونَ



***127** This is the right way of attaining the success, but even after adopting these ways of worship and performing good deeds one should not rest content or be proud that he would surely attain success because he is worshiping Allah and is doing good deeds. He should only expect that Allah will by His grace accept his services and bless him with the success.

Imam Shafai, Ahmad bin Hanbal, Abdullah bin Mubarak and Ishaq bin Rahawayah hold the view that this verse of Surah Al-Hajj requires a prostration. But Imam Abu

Hanifah, Imam Malik, Hasan Basri, Said bin al-Musayyab, Said bin Jubair, Ibrahim Nakhai and Sufyan Thauri dispute this. The arguments of the two sides are briefly as follows:

The former group of commentators base their opinion on the following:

- (1) The verb in the verse is in the imperative mood.
- (2) The tradition of Uqbah bin Amir which has been reported by Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Tirmizi, Ibn Marduyah and Baihaqi, says: I asked, O Messenger of Allah! Does the merit of Surah Al-Hajj consist in the fact that it contains two verses requiring prostration? He replied: Yes, the one who does not prostrate on these two verses, should not recite them.
- (3) The tradition of Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah in which Amr bin Aas says that he was told by the Prophet (peace be upon him) that there were two verses requiring prostration in Surah Al-Hajj.
- (4) Sayings of Umar, Ali, Uthman, Ibn Umar, Ibn Abbas, Abul Darda, Abu Musa Ashari and Ammar bin Yasir to the effect that Surah AlHajj contains two prostrations.

The latter group of commentators argue as follows;

The verse contains a command both for Sajdah (prostration) and for Ruku (bowing in prayer), which implies the whole Islamic Prayer according to the Quranic usage, and not prostration alone.

- (2) The tradition reported by Uqbah bin Amir is unauthentic as it has weak links.
- (3) The tradition of Amr bin Aas is also unreliable, because

its reporters are not well known.

(4) As for the sayings of the companions, Ibn Abbas has clearly explained that prostration in respect of the first verse (in Surah Al-Hajj) is obligatory, whereas in regard to the second, it is only suggestive.

78. And strive in (the cause of) Allah with the striving due to Him.^{*128} It is He who has chosen you^{*129} and has not placed upon you in religion any hardship.^{*130} (It is) the faith of your father Abraham.^{*131} It is He (Allah) who has named you Muslims, of old time^{*132} and in this (Scripture) so that the messenger may be a witness against you, and that you may be witnesses against mankind.^{*133} So establish prayer, and give charity, and hold fast to Allah.^{*134} He is your Protecting friend. An excellent Patron and an excellent Helper.

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ ۗ
هُوَ أَلْبَسَكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ
فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ ۗ مِلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۗ هُوَ سَمَّكُمْ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا
لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ
وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ ۗ
فَأَقِمْوَا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ
وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ
فَإِنَّمَا الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ

***128** The Arabic word *jihad* is very comprehensive. It includes every kind of effort, exertion, conflict and war. Jihad for the cause of Allah means that it should be performed for His service and for His approval against

those who prevent others from following His Way. The performance of jihad also requires that one should first of all fight against his own self in order to subdue it. For there can be no true jihad unless one fights against his evil self and subdues his desires and lusts to the obedience of Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself has emphasized the need for this jihad. Once when the warriors for the cause of Allah returned from jihad, he said: You have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad. They asked: What is that greater Jihad. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: It is the jihad against his own desires and lusts.

Moreover, the battlefield for jihad is, in fact, the whole world, and Islam demands that one should exert his utmost against all the rebels of Allah and the wicked powers with all of his heart and mind and body and wealth.

***129** The direct addressees of this were the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), for they were the first who had the honor to be chosen for this service; others have been addressed only indirectly being their followers. This thing has been mentioned in the Quran in other ways as well. For reference, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 143 and Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 110.

***130** “(Allah) has not placed upon you in religion any hardship”. That is, the creed you have been given is very simple and straightforward and the laws and regulations you have to obey are practicable. You are free within its bounds to make as much progress as you can. This was to impress that the lives of the Muslims were free from all

those useless and unnatural restrictions which had been imposed upon the former communities by their priests and law givers. The negative aspect of the same thing has been mentioned in Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 157: He enjoins them to follow virtue and forbids them from evil: He makes pure things lawful for them and impure things unlawful. He relieves them of their burdens and frees them from the shackles that bound them.

*131 Though Islam may be called the religion of Prophets Noah, Moses, Jesus, etc. yet the Quran emphasizes over and over again that it is the religion of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon them all). Therefore, you should follow it. This is for three reasons.

(1) The first addressees of the Quran were the Arabs who were more familiar with Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) than with any other Prophet and acknowledged him to be a holy personage and their leader.

(2) Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) alone was the person whom the Jews, the Christians, the Muslims and the mushriks of Arabia and of the adjoining countries unanimously acknowledged as a great Prophet.

(3) When the Quran invites all these communities to follow the way of Abraham, it in fact, admonishes them that all their religions had been invented long after Prophet Abraham and, therefore, were not trustworthy because they contradicted many things taught by him. As for the mushriks of Arabia, they also acknowledged that idol-worship among them had been started by Amr bin Luhayy, who was a leader of Bani Khuzaah, and had brought an

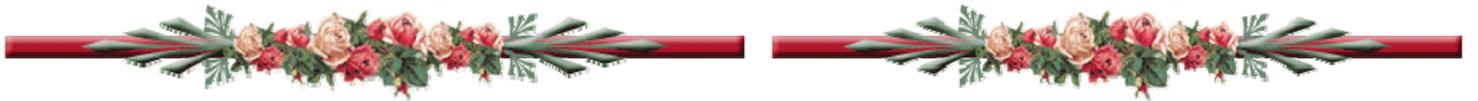
idol, called Hubal, from Moab in about 600 B.C. So the religion to which Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) invited them was the same pure, un-adulterated religion which was taught by Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him).

For further details, see E.Ns 134, 135 of Surah Al-Baqarah and E.Ns 58, 79 of Surah Aal-Imran and E.Ns 119, 120 of Surah An-Nahal.

***132** Here the word “you” has not been addressed exclusively to those believers who lived at the time of the revelation of this verse, or those who believed after its revelation. It includes all those human beings, who, from the beginning of human history, believed in Tauhid, the Hereafter, Prophethood and the divine Books. They were not Jews, Christians, etc. but Muslims in the sense that they had surrendered themselves to Allah. Likewise the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are not Muhammadans but Muslims.

***133** For explanation see E. N. 144 of Surah Al-Baqarah.

***134** “Hold fast to Allah”: Follow exclusively the guidance and the law of Allah: obey Him alone: fear Him and have all your hopes and expectations in Him: invoke Him alone for help: trust in Him and pray to Him for all your needs.





Al-Mominoon **اَلْمُؤْمِنُونَ**

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The surah takes its name, *Al-Mominoon*, from the first verse.

Period of Revelation.

Both its style and theme indicate that it was revealed during the middle stage of Prophethood at Makkah. Reading between the lines, one feels that a bitter conflict had begun between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the disbelievers of Makkah, though the persecution by them had not yet become tyrannical. It appears that the Surah was sent down during the climax of the famine in Makkah (verses 75-76), which according to authentic traditions occurred during the middle stage of Prophethood. Moreover, according to a tradition related by Urwah bin Zubair, Umar who had embraced Islam by that time, said: This Surah was revealed in my presence and I myself observed the state of the Prophet (peace be upon him) during its revelation. When the revelation ended, the Prophet (peace be upon him) remarked: On this occasion ten such verses have been sent down to me that the

one who measures up to them, will most surely go to Paradise. Then he recited the initial verses of the Surah. (Ahmad, Tirmizi, Nasai, Hakim).

Theme Topics

The central theme of the Surah is to invite the people to accept and follow the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the whole Surah revolves around this theme.

Summary

Ayats 1-11. The fact that the people who have accepted the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him) have started acquiring such and such noble qualities of character is a practical proof of the truth of the message.

Ayats 12 – 22. In this passage, attention has been drawn to the creation of man and the universe to impress that the whole universe, including man's own self, is a clear proof of the truth of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) message, which invites the people to accept Tauhid and life in the Hereafter.

Ayats 23 – 54. Then the stories of the former Prophets and their communities have been cited as historical evidences of the truth of the message. They prove the following things:

1. The objections and the doubts that the antagonists are raising against the message of Muhammad (peace be upon him) are not new. These were also raised against the former Prophets whom they themselves acknowledged as Messengers of Allah. Therefore they should learn a lesson from their history and judge for themselves whether the Prophets were in the right or their objectors.

2. The message of Tauhid and the Hereafter that

Muhammad (peace be upon him) is conveying is the same as was brought by the former Prophets; therefore they should accept it.

3. They should take a warning from the consequences met by those communities who rejected the message of their Prophets.

4. All the Prophets brought one and the same religion from Allah and they all belonged to one and the same community. All other religions were invented by the people themselves and none of them is from Allah.

Ayats 55 – 67. After relating the stories of the Prophets, a fundamental principle has been enunciated. Success and prosperity in the worldly life is not a criterion of success in the sight of Allah. If some persons (or a person) are enjoying prosperity, wealth, power and the like in this world, it does not mean that they are favorites of Allah. Likewise, the poverty and adversity of other people is not a proof that Allah is displeased with them. The real criterion is faith (or lack of it). This declaration was needed because the antagonists of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were the great chiefs of Makkah, who (and their followers) were deluded by their own prosperity that God and their deities were well pleased with them. On the other hand, they argued, the fact that Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his followers were indigent and in a state of helplessness, was a clear proof that Allah was not pleased with them, and they were under the curse of their deities.

Ayats 68 – 77. In this passage different arguments have been used to convince them that Muhammad (peace be

upon him) was a true Prophet of Allah. Then they have been told that the famine (verses 75-76) was merely a warning and therefore it is better for you to mend your ways, otherwise you will be visited by a terrible scourge.

Ayats 78 – 95. Again they have been invited to observe the signs in the universe and in their own selves because these are clear proofs of the truth of the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Ayats: 96 – 97. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has been told not to adopt any wrong way in retaliation to counteract the evil ways of the enemies, and to guard against the incitement of Satan.

Ayats: 98 – 118. In this concluding passage, the enemies of the truth have been warned that they shall have to render an account in the Hereafter and bear the consequences of their persecution of the believers; therefore they should mend their ways.

1. Certainly, successful are the believers.*¹

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

*1 “Believers”, who have attained true success, are those who have accepted the message of Muhammad (peace be upon him), and have acknowledged him as their guide and followed the way of life taught by him.

This assertion cannot be fully appreciated unless one keeps in view the background in which it was made. On the one hand, there were the well-to-do and prosperous chiefs of Makkah, the opponents of Islam, whose business was thriving and who were enjoying every good thing of life, and on the other hand, there were the followers of Islam,

majority of whom were either poor from the beginning, or had been reduced to poverty by ruthless antagonism to Islam. Therefore, the assertion: Most certainly the believers have attained true success, with which the discourse begins, was meant to tell the disbelievers that the criterion of success and failure that they had in mind was not correct. It was based on misconceptions besides being transitory and limited in nature: it led to failure and not true success. On the contrary, the followers of Muhammad (peace be upon him), whom they regarded as failures, were truly successful, because by accepting the invitation to the right guidance given by the Messenger of Allah, they had struck a bargain which would lead them to true success and everlasting bliss in this world as well as in the Hereafter, whereas by rejecting the message the opponents had incurred loss and would meet with the evil consequences both in this world and in the next.

This is the main theme of the Surah and the whole discourse, from the beginning to the end, is meant to impress the same.

2. Those who^{*2} are humble in their prayers.^{*3}

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ



*2 The noble characteristics of the believers pointed out in verses 2-9 are the arguments to prove the above assertion. In other words, it has been stated that people with such and such traits and qualities only can attain true success in this world and in the Hereafter.

*3 *Khashiun* in the text is from *khushu* (to bow down, to express humility) which is a condition of the heart as well as of the body. *Khushu* of the heart is to fear and stand in awe of a powerful person and *khushu* of the body is to bow his head and lower his gaze and voice in his presence. In Salat one is required to show *khushu* both of the heart and of the body, and this is the essence of the Prayer. It has been reported that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) once saw a person offering his Prayer as well as playing with his beard, he remarked: If he had *khushu* in his heart, his body would have manifested it.

Though *khushu* is actually a condition of the heart, as stated by the above tradition, it is manifested by the body as a matter of course. The *Shariah* has enjoined certain etiquette which, on the one hand, helps produce *khushu* in the heart, and on the other, helps sustain the physical act of the Prayer in spite of the fluctuating condition of the heart. According to this etiquette, one should neither turn to the right or left, nor raise his head to look up, One may, however, look around from the corner of the eye, but as far as possible, he must fix the gaze on the place where the forehead would rest in prostration. One is also forbidden to shift about, incline sideways, fold the garments or shake off dust from them. It is also forbidden that while going down for prostration, one should clean the place where he would sit or perform prostration. Similarly it is disrespectful that one should stand stuffy erect, recite the verses of the Quran in a loud resounding voice, or sing them, or belch or yawn repeatedly and noisily. It has also not been approved that

one should offer the Prayer in a hurry. The injunction is that each article of the Prayer should be performed in perfect peace and tranquility, and unless one article has been completely performed, the next should not be begun. If one feels hurt by something during the Prayer, he may cast it aside by one hand, but moving the hand repeatedly or using both the hands for the purpose is prohibited.

Along with this etiquette of the body, it is also important that one should avoid thinking irrelevant things during the Prayer. If thoughts come to the mind without one's intention, it is a natural human weakness, but one should try his utmost that the mind and heart are wholly turned towards Allah, and the mind is in full harmony and tune with the tongue, and as soon as one becomes conscious of irrelevant thoughts, he should immediately turn the attention to the Prayer.

3. And those who turn away from vain conversation.*4

وَالَّذِينَ
هَمَّ عَنْ
اللَّغْوِ
مُعْرِضُونَ



*4 Literally, *laghv* is anything nonsensical, meaningless and vain, which is in no way conducive to achieving one's goal and purpose in life. The believers pay no heed to such useless things and they show no inclination or interest for them. If by chance they see such things being indulged in, they keep away and avoid them scrupulously, or treat them with utmost indifference. This attitude has been described in Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 72, thus: If they have to pass by what is vain, they pass by like dignified people.

This is indeed one of the outstanding characteristics of the believer. He is a person who feels the burden of responsibility at all times. He regards the world as a place of test, and the life as the limited time allowed for the test. This feeling makes him behave seriously and responsibly throughout life just like the student who is taking an exam with his whole mind and body and soul absorbed in it. Just as the student knows and feels that each moment of the limited time at his disposal is important and decisive for his future life, and is not inclined to waste it, so the believer also spends each moment of his life on works which are useful and productive in their ultimate results. So much so that even in matters of recreation and sport, he makes a choice of only those things which prepare him for higher ends in life and do not result in mere wastage of time. For him time is not something to be killed but used profitably and productively.

Besides this, the believer is a person who possesses a right thinking mind, pure nature and fine taste. He has no inclination to indecent things. He can talk useful and healthy things but cannot indulge in idle talk. He has a fine taste of humor, but is not given to jesting, joking, ridicule, etc. nor can he endure dirty jokes and fun. For him a society in which the ears are never immune from abusive language, back-biting, slander; lying, dirty songs and indecent talk is a source of torture and agony. A characteristic of the promised Paradise is: Therein you will not hear anything vain or useless.

4. And those who pay poor due.^{*5}

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ

***5** The word Zakat literally means purification and development, to help something grow up smoothly and develop without obstruction. As an Islamic term, it implies both the portion of wealth taken out for the purpose of purifying the rest of wealth and the act of purification itself. The words of the original text mean that the believer constantly practices purification. Thus the meaning is not confined to the paying off of Zakat dues only but it is extended to self purification which includes purification of morals as well as wealth, property and life in general. Then it does not mean purification of one's own self, but includes the purification of the lives of other people as well. So the verse means: The believers are the people who purify themselves as well as others. This thing has also been stated at other places in the Quran, for instance: Successful is he who practiced purification and remembered his Lord and prayed. (Surah Al-Aala, Ayats 14-15). And: Successful is he who purified himself and failure is he who corrupted it. (Surah Ash-Shams, Ayats 9-10). But this verse is more comprehensive in meaning because it stresses the purification of both society and one's own person.

5. And those who guard their private parts.^{*6}

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَفْوَاجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ

***6** They are modest in every sense of the word. They are free from sex abuse and sex perversion. They are so modest

that they even conceal those parts of their bodies which the law forbids to expose before others. For explanation, see E.Ns 30 and 32 of Surah An-Noor.

6. Except from their wives or that their right hands possess, then indeed, they are not blameworthy.

إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ
أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ



7. Then whoever seeks beyond that, so it is they who are the transgressors.*7

فَمَنْ أَبْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الْعَادُونَ



*7 This is a parenthesis which is meant to remove the common misunderstanding that sex desire is an evil thing in itself and satisfying it even in lawful ways is not desirable, particularly for the righteous and godly people. This misunderstanding would have been strengthened, had it been only said that the believers guard their private parts scrupulously, because it would have implied that they live unmarried lives, away from the world, like monks and hermits. Therefore a parenthesis has been added to say that there is nothing wrong in satisfying the sex desire in lawful ways. What is evil is that one should transgress the prescribed limits for satisfying the sex desire.

Here are briefly a few injunctions which are based on this parenthetical clause.

(1) Two categories of women have been excluded from the general command of guarding the private parts: (a) wives,

(b) women who are legally in one's possession, i.e. slave-girls. Thus the verse clearly lays down the law that one is allowed to have sexual relations with his slave-girl as with his wife. The basis being possession and not marriage. If marriage had been the condition, the slave-girl also would have been included among the wives, and there was no need to mention them separately. Some modern commentators, who dispute the permissibility of having sexual relations with the slave-girl, argue from Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 25 to prove that one can have sexual relations with a slave-girl only after entering wedlock with her, because that verse enjoins that if a person cannot afford to marry a free Muslim woman, he may marry a Muslim slave-girl. But these commentators have a strange characteristic. They accept a part of a verse if it suits them, but conveniently ignore another part of the same verse if it goes against their wish and whim. The law about marrying the slave-girls as enunciated in Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 25 reads: You may marry them with the permission of their guardians and give them their fair dowries. Obviously the person under reference here is not the master of the slave-girl himself but the person who cannot afford to marry a free Muslim woman, and therefore, wants to marry a slave-girl, who is in the possession of another person. For if the question had been of marrying his own slave-girl, who would then be the guardian whose permission would have to be sought? Then, the interpretation they give of this verse contradicts other verses dealing with the same subject in the Quran. A sincere person who wants to understand the Quranic law in

this regard should study Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 3, 25; Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayats 50, 52, and Surah Al-Maarij Ayat 30 together with this verse of Al-Mominoon. (For further explanation, see E.N. 44 of Surah An-Nisa).

(2) The law prescribed in the parenthesis is only applicable to men as is clear from the text. A woman in the time of Umar did not understand this fine point of the language and indulged in sexual gratification with her slave. When her case was brought before the consultative body of the companions, they gave the unanimous decision: She misinterpreted the Book of Allah. Nobody should entertain the doubt that if this exception is meant for the men only, how could then the husbands become lawful for the wives? This doubt is unjustified because when the husbands are exempted from the command of guarding their private parts in regard to their wives, the wives automatically stand exempted from the command with regard to their husbands, and there is no need to grant them exemption separately. Thus the command of exemption remains applicable and effective only in respect of the man and the woman legally in his possession, and the slave becomes unlawful for the woman possessing him. The wisdom of why the slave has been forbidden to the woman is that he can only satisfy her sexual desire but cannot become guardian and governor of herself and her household, which leaves a serious flaw in the family life.

(3) The sentence “Then whoever seeks beyond that, so it is they who are the transgressors” has made satisfaction of sex desire in other ways unlawful, whether it be through

fornication, homosexuality, sex gratification with animals, or some other means. The jurists differ only with regard to masturbation. Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal regards it as lawful, but Imams Malik and Shafai regard it as absolutely unlawful: and though the Hanafites also regard it as unlawful, they give the opinion that if a person indulges sometimes in masturbation under the fit of passion, it is expected that he will be forgiven the error.

(4) Some commentators have proved the prohibition of *mutah* (temporary marriage) from this verse. They argue that the woman with whom one has entered into wedlock temporarily, can neither be regarded as a wife nor a slave-girl. She is obviously not a slave-girl, and she is also not a wife, because the legal injunctions normally applicable to the wife are not applicable to her. She cannot inherit the wealth of the man. Likewise, the man cannot inherit her wealth. She is neither governed by the law pertaining to Iddah (waiting period after divorce or death of husband), divorce, subsistence, nor by that pertaining to the vow by man that he will not have conjugal relations with her, false accusation, etc. She is also excluded from the prescribed limit of four wives. Thus, when she is neither a wife nor a slave-girl in any sense, she will naturally be included among those “beyond this”, whose seeker has been declared as a “transgressor” by the Quran.

This is a strong argument but due to a weakness in it, it is difficult to say that this verse is decisive with regard to the prohibition of *mutah*. The fact is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) enjoined the final and absolute prohibition of

mutah in the year of the conquest of Makkah, but before it *mutah* was allowed according to several authentic traditions. If *mutah* had been prohibited in this verse, which was admittedly revealed at Makkah, several years before the migration, how can it be imagined that the Prophet (peace be upon him) kept the prohibition in abeyance till the conquest of Makkah? The correct position therefore is that prohibition of *mutah* is not based on any express law of the Quran but is based on the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Had it not been prohibited by the Sunnah, it would have been difficult to declare it as prohibited only on the authority of this verse.

It would be worth-while to clarify two other points in connection with *mutah*: (a) Its prohibition is based on the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and therefore it is wrong to say that it was prohibited by Umar. As a matter of fact, Umar only enforced it as a law of Islam and publicised it among the people. This had not been done earlier because the Prophet (peace be upon him) had forbidden *mutah* only during the latter part of his worldly life.

(b) The Shiite view that *mutah* is absolutely lawful and permissible has no sanction and support in the Quran or Sunnah. The fact is that a few of the companions, their followers and jurists who regarded it permissible in the early days of Islam, did so only in case of extreme necessity and need. None of them held the view that it was absolutely lawful like marriage and could be practised in normal circumstances. Abdullah bin Abbas, who is generally cited

as a prominent supporter of the view of permissibility, has himself explained his position thus: It is just like carrion which is lawful for a person only in extreme necessity. Even Ibn Abbas had to revise his opinion when he saw that people were abusing permissibility and had started practising *mutah* freely regardless of genuine need and necessity. Again, even if the question, whether Ibn Abbas and the few likeminded jurists had revised their opinion or not, is ignored, the fact is that the supporters of *mutah* allow it only in case of extreme necessity. Holding *mutah* as absolutely permissible, practising it without any real necessity, or resorting to it even when one has a legally wedded wife or wives is a kind of licence which is abhorred by good taste, much less it be attributed to the Shariah of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and imputed to the learned jurists of his family. I think that among the Shiite Muslims themselves no respectable person would like that somebody should ask for the hand of his daughter or sister not in marriage but for the purpose of *mutah*. For, if *mutah* is held as absolutely permissible, it would imply that there should exist in society a low class of women, like the prostitutes, who should be available for the purpose as and when required, or if not that, *mutah* be restricted to the daughters and sisters of the poor stratum of society and the well-to-do be given the freedom and right to exploit them as and when they like. Can such an injustice and discrimination be expected of the divine law? And will Allah and His Messenger permit an act which every respectable woman would regard not only disgraceful for

herself but shameful, too?

8. And those who, to their trusts and their covenants, are faithfully true.*8

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ
رَاعُونَ



*8 The believers fulfill the terms of the trusts which are placed in their charge. In this connection it should be noted that the Arabic word *amanat* is very comprehensive and includes all those trusts which are placed in their charge by Allah or society or individuals. Likewise *aahd* includes all those compacts, pledges, and promises which are made between Allah and man, and man and man. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself used to impress the importance of the fulfillment of pledges in his addresses: The one, who does not fulfil the terms of his trust, has no faith, and the one, who does not keep promises and pledges has no Islam. (Baihaqi). According to a tradition reported both by Bukhari and Muslim, he said: Four characteristics are such that if a person has all four in him, he is beyond any doubt a hypocrite, and the one who has one of these, is a hypocrite to that extent till he gives it up:

- (a) When something is placed in his trust, he commits breach of the trust.
- (b) When he speaks, he tells a lie.
- (c) When he makes a promise, he breaks it.
- (d) When he has a quarrel with somebody, he exceeds all limits (of decency and morality).

9. And those who guard over their prayers.*9

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ

***9** *Salawat* is plural of *Salat*. In verse 2 the act of *Salat* itself was implied, but here the plural number implies the individual Prayers offered in their own times. They strictly guard their Prayers: they strictly adhere to the prescribed times of the Prayers: they perform them with due regard for their pre-requisites, conditions and articles with clean body and dress and necessary ablutions: they do not regard their Prayers as an unnecessary burden, which has to be cast off somehow: they do not recite mechanically but understand what they recite and are conscious that they are supplicating to their Lord like humble servants.

10. It is those who are the inheritors.

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. Who shall inherit paradise.^{*10} They shall abide therein forever.^{*11}

الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١١﴾

***10** *Firdaus* (Paradise) is a common word found in almost all human languages in very nearly similar forms. It means a vast garden adjoining the dwelling of a person and enclosed by defence walls and containing all kinds of fruit trees, especially vines. In some languages, the word has the sense of containing pet birds and animals, too. *Firdaus* was in common use in pre-Islamic Arabic literature. The Quran, however, has used it for a plurality of gardens as in Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 107. This gives the idea that *Firdaus* is a vast place containing a great number of gardens,

vineyards, etc.

The inheritance of Paradise by believers has been explained in detail in E.N. 83 of Surah TaHa and E.N. 99 of Surah Al-Anbiya.

*11 The substance of this passage may be summed up in four parts for further understanding of the Surah:

(1) The above mentioned excellent qualities of the believers are not confined to any race, nation or country.

(2) These excellences can be attained only by sincere faith and excellent moral qualities, and by the observance of prescribed laws in all the aspects of life.

(3) True success is not confined to transitory worldly and material prosperity but it comprises both success in this life and in the life after death in the Hereafter, and is attained by sincere faith and righteous deeds. This is a fundamental principle which cannot be falsified either by the worldly success of the evil-doers or by the temporary failure of the righteous people.

(4) Let us reiterate that these excellent characteristics of the believers have been presented as a practical proof of the truth of the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him), for these were the result of its acceptance. This should be kept in mind in the study of the succeeding passages, wherein the same subject has been pursued from different angles. This will also help to show the connection between this and the succeeding passages.

12. And certainly, We created man from an extract of clay.

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ
مِنْ طِينٍ



13. Then We placed him as a (sperm) drop in a firm lodging.

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ



14. Then We fashioned the drop into a clot, then We fashioned the clot into a lump (of flesh), then We fashioned the lump into bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh,^{*12} then We brought it forth as another creation.^{*13} So blessed be Allah, the best of creators.^{*14}

ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً

فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا

الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا

الْعِظْمَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا

ءَاخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ

الْخَالِقِينَ



*12 For explanation see E.Ns 5, 6 and 9 of Surah Al-Hajj.

*13 Now let the disbelievers consider the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him) by observing their own creation, for this will convince them of its truth by proving its doctrine of Tauhid. The origin of man is from a mere inanimate sperm-drop, which undergoes several changes in the womb of the mother. But after this, when it sees the light of the day, it is quite a different creation from the embryo in the womb. Now it can hear, it can see, and in due course of time it can talk and think. Then, when he reaches adulthood and maturity, he is capable of performing wonderful deeds. It is obvious that Allah alone could create all these characteristics in an inanimate sperm-drop.

*14 The various stages of the creation of man have been

cited to prove that Allah is All-Blessed and there is no human language which can describe the praise of which He is worthy, as if to say: That Allah Who is able to develop an essence of clay into a perfect man, does not have any partner in His Godhead. Moreover, He has the power to raise him up again after his death, and is capable of working even greater wonders.

15. Then indeed you, after that, will surely die.

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لَمَيِّتُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

16. Then indeed you, on the Day of Judgment, will be raised.

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تَبْعُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

17. And certainly, We have created above you seven heavens,^{*15} and We are not unaware of the creation.^{*16}

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعَ طَرَائِقَ وَمَا كُنَّا عَنِ الْخَلْقِ غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

*15 The original Arabic word *taraiq* has more than one meaning. It may refer to the paths of the seven planets, with which the man of the time of the revelation of the Quran was familiar, or to the seven heavens. It should be noted that this word has not been used as a modern scientific term, but as a common word according to the Arabic usage of the period in order to invite the people's attention to the wonders of the heavens, whose creation is certainly a greater thing than the creation of men. (Surah

Al-Hijr, Ayat 57).

*16 This may also be translated as: We were not nor are heedless of Our creation. According to the first translation, it will mean that the whole of the creation has been brought about in a perfect manner with a definite design and purpose. For Allah, their Creator, is perfect in every respect. The creation itself a proof that it is not the work of a novice or an inexperienced. All the physical laws of the entire system of the universe are so closely interconnected as to prove that it is the creation of the All-Wise Allah. If we take the second translation, it will mean that Allah has not been heedless in making provisions for every thing according to its nature from the most insignificant to the greatest of all.

18. And We sent down from the sky water in a measured amount, then We gave it lodging in the earth.*17 And indeed, We certainly have Power over taking it away.*18

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ
فَأَسْكَنَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ

ذَهَابٍ بِهِ لَقَادِرُونَ

*17 The water may refer to the rainfall, which comes down every now and then. It may also refer to the great store of water which Allah sent down at the time of the creation of the earth to fulfill its various needs till the Last Day, and which still exists in the shape of seas, lakes, sub-soil water, etc. It is the same water which evaporates in summer and freezes in winter and is carried by winds from place to place and spread over the earth by rivers, springs and wells to cause the growth of multitudes of things, and then is again restored to the seas, lakes, etc. Neither has this store

of water been decreased by a drop nor was there any need to increase it by a drop since its creation. Today it is too well known how water comes about by the combination of oxygen and hydrogen in a certain ratio. The question is why can't more water be produced when oxygen and hydrogen still exist in abundance in the world? Who caused them to combine in the proper ratio in the beginning to produce oceans of water and who now stops them from coming together to produce an extra drop? Then when water evaporates, who causes oxygen and hydrogen to remain combined in water vapors even in the gaseous state. Do the atheists and polytheists, who believe in independent deities for water, air, summer and winter, have any answer to this question?

***18** This is to warn that Allah is able to take away the water if He so wills, and deprive the world of its most important means of life. Thus, this verse is more comprehensive in meaning than verse 30 of Surah Al-Mulk: Ask them, have you ever considered that if the water of your wells should sink down into the earth, who would then restore to you running springs of water?

19. Then We brought forth for you therewith gardens of date-palms and grapevines, wherein is much fruit^{*19} for you, and from which you eat.^{*20}

فَأَنْشَأْنَا لَكُمْ بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ لَّكُمْ فِيهَا فَوَاقِهِ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

***19** That is, other kinds of fruits than dates and grapes.
***20** That is, you sustain yourselves by the produce that you

get from these gardens in the shape of fruit, corn, wood, etc.

20. And a tree that springs forth from Mount Sinai,^{*21} that grows oil and relish for those who eat.

وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ طُورِ سَيْنَاءَ
تَنْبُتُ بِالذَّهْنِ وَصَبْغٍ
لِّلَّذَّالِكِينَ



***21** That is, the olive-tree, which is the most important product of the lands around the Mediterranean Sea. The olive-tree can last for 2,000 years or so, so much so that some trees in Palestine are said to be existing since the time of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). It has been attributed to Mount Sinai probably for the reason that the area whose well known and prominent place is Mount Sinai is its original habitat.

21. And indeed, in the cattle there is surely a lesson for you. We give you to drink (milk) of what is in their bellies.^{*22} And for you in them there are many benefits, and of them you eat.

وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً
نُسْقِيكُمْ مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهَا وَلَكُمْ
فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ



***22** That is, milk. Refer to Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 66 and E.N. 54 thereof.

22. And on them and on the ship you are carried.*23

وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلِّ تُحْمَلُونَ



*23 The benefits of cattle as means of conveyance have been mentioned here along with the ships, because in Arabia, camel was used mainly for this purpose, and has been called the ship of the desert for the same reason.

23. And certainly, We sent Noah to his people,*24 so he said: “O my people, worship Allah. You do not have any god other than Him. Will you then not fear (Him).” *25

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ
فَقَالَ يَاقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ
مِّنْ إِلَهِ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ

*24 See also Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 59-64; Surah Yunus, Ayats 71-73; Surah Houd, Ayats 25-48; Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 3 and Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 76-77.

*25 That is, are you not afraid that if you set up partners and associates with Allah, Who is the real Sovereign, and worship and submit to them, you shall incur His wrath and punishment?

24. But the chiefs of those who disbelieved among his people said: “This is not but a human being like you,*26 he seeks that he could make himself superior to you.*27 And if Allah had willed, He surely would have sent down

فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ
قَوْمِهِ مَا هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ
يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتَفَضَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَوْ
شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَأَنْزَلَ مَلَائِكَةً مَّا

angels.^{*27a} We have not heard of this among our fathers of old.”

سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي ءَابَائِنَا الْأَوَّلِينَ



***26** There has been a common deviation that a human being cannot be a Prophet, and a Prophet cannot be a human being. That is why the Quran has refuted this wrong conception over and over again, and has stated forcefully that all the Prophets were human beings and that a human being only could be sent as a Prophet to human beings. For details, see Suras Al-Aaraf Ayats 63, 69; Yuonus, Ayat 2; Houd, Ayats 27-31; Yousuf, Ayat 109; Ar-Raad, Ayat 38; Ibrahim, Ayats 10-11; An-Nahl, Ayat 43, Bani Israil, Ayats 94-95; Al-Kahf, Ayat 110; Al-Anbiya, Ayats 3, 34; Al-Mominoon, Ayats 33-34, 47; Al-Furqan, Ayats 7, 20; Ash-Shuara, Ayats 154, 186; Ya-Sin, Ayat 15, Ha Mim Sajdah, Ayat 6 along with the relevant E.Ns.

***27** This accusation is another old objection, which has always been raised against those who tried to reform their people. Their opponents always accused them of exploiting religion to gain domination in the land. Prophets Moses, Aaron and Jesus were accused of the same and so was Muhammad (peace be upon them all). So much so that the disbelievers of Makkah offered to make the Prophet (peace be upon him) their king, if he gave up his message.

As a matter of fact, the people who exhaust themselves in pursuit of worldly benefits and gains cannot believe that somebody in this world could also exert himself sincerely and selflessly for the sake of human welfare. They regard

deceptive slogans, which they raise to capture power, and false promises, which they make day and night to bring about reforms as natural. They think that sincerity and selflessness can be employed only to deceive people and these cannot be put to any better use. That is why the epithet of power hungry for the reformers in all ages has been used by those already in power as if their own power and domination in the land was their birth right, and they were in no way blame worthy for struggling for it and achieving it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 36 below)

In this connection, it should also be noted that all those, who try to reform the prevalent corrupt system of life, have inevitably to fight against those in power in order to establish the righteous system. That is why those with powers have always been against the Prophets and their followers, who had to dislodge the corrupt rulers. It is, however, obvious that here is a vast difference between those who want power to gain their own selfish ends and those who want it to reform their people.

***27a** This is a clear proof of the fact that Noah's people were not disbelievers in the existence of God nor did they reject Him as Lord of the universe and the angels as His obedient servants. They were only guilty of shirk: they had set up other deities as partners in God's attributes and powers and rights.

25. He is not but a man in whom is a madness, so wait regarding him for a while.

إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ
فَتَرَبَّصُوا بِهِ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ



26. He said: “My Lord, help me because they have denied me.”*28

قَالَ رَبِّ أَنْصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونِ



*28 “Help me because they have denied me”: Take Thy vengeance on these people for they have denied me. Verse 10 of Surah Al-Qamar says: Then cried Noah to his Lord, I am overcome, so take Thy vengeance on these people, and verses 26-27 of Noah say: And Noah said, O my Lord, do not leave of these disbelievers any dweller upon the earth, for if Thou sparest them, they will mislead Thy servants and will beget none but sinners and disbelievers.

27. So We inspired him that: “Make the ship within Our sight and Our inspiration. Then, when Our command comes and the oven*29 boils over, then take on board of every (kind) two spouses, and your household, except those against whom the word has already gone forth, of them. And do not address Me for those who have done wrong. Indeed, they will be drowned.”

فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ أَنْ اصْنَعِ الْفُلَكَ
بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَّوَحَيْنَا فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا
وَفَارَ التَّنُورُ فَاسْلُكْ فِيهَا مِنْ
كُلِّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ
إِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ مِنْهُمْ
وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
إِنَّهُمْ مُغْرَقُونَ



*29 Some commentators think that *tannur* means the earth; others take it for the highest part of the earth; and still others think that the words *far-at-tannur* in the text have

been used for the break of dawn. There are some who express the opinion that the words have been used metaphorically for the creation of turmoil. But in view of the context, we see no reason why one should take a far fetched figurative meaning of a clear word of the Quran. It appears that a particular oven (tannur) had been earmarked for the deluge to start from, which was to all appearances an unexpected origin of the doom of the wretched people.

28. “Then when you are firmly seated, you and whoever is with you, in the ship, then say, praise be to Allah who has saved us from the wrong doing people”^{*30}

فَإِذَا اسْتَوَيْتَ أَنْتَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ
عَلَى الْفُلِّ فَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
الَّذِي نَجَّانَا مِنَ الْقَوْمِ
الظَّالِمِينَ



***30** The fact that Allah should be praised and thanked for the annihilation of those people, is a clear proof that they were the most wicked and villainous people in the world.

29. And say: “My Lord, cause me to land at a blessed landing place, and You are the best of those who bring to landing.”^{*31}

وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَنْزِلْنِي مُنْزَلًا مُبَارَكًا
وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِينَ



***31** “Landing” here does not simply mean touching and resting on the land, but it also implies the sense of hospitality, as if to say: O God, now we are Thy guests and Thou alone art our Host.

30. Indeed, in that are sure signs.^{*32} And indeed, We are ever putting (mankind) to the test.^{*33}

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ وَإِنْ كُنَّا لَمُبْتَلِينَ



***32** At the conclusion of the story of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him), particular attention has been drawn to the many signs in the story from which one can learn many lessons. For instance, the Prophet who invited the people to Tauhid was in the right and those who practiced and insisted on shirk and disbelief were in the wrong and were destroyed. That the same kind of conflict, which took place between Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) and his people, was going on in Makkah. Therefore, ultimately the Prophet (peace be upon him) will come out victorious over his antagonists just like Prophet Noah (peace be upon him).

***33** This can also be translated as: We had to or have to put people to the test. In each case the purpose is to warn the people that they will not be left alone after they have been granted power in the land and over good things of life, but Allah will put them to the test to see how they used their power. Whatever happened with the people of Noah was in accordance with this law, and the same will happen in future with any community which is raised to power.

31. Then We raised after them another generation.^{*34}

ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا
ءَاخِرِينَ



***34** The people of Aad, who were raised to power after the people of Noah. (Refer to Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 69).

32. And We sent among them a messenger of their own, (saying) that: “Worship Allah, you do not have any god other than Him. Will you then not fear (Him)”

فَأَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ أَنْ
اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ
غَيْرُهُ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ

33. And the chiefs of his people said, those (chiefs) who had disbelieved and denied the meeting of the Hereafter and to whom We had given the luxuries in the worldly life: ^{*35} “This is not but a human being like you. He eats of that from which you eat, and drinks of what you drink.”

وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ
وَأَتْرَفْنَاهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مَا
هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يَأْكُلُ مِمَّا
تَأْكُلُونَ مِنْهُ وَيَشْرَبُ مِمَّا
تَشْرَبُونَ

***35** It should be noted that all those people who opposed the Messengers had three common characteristics:

- (1) They were the chiefs of their people.
- (2) They denied life in the Hereafter.
- (3) They were prosperous in the worldly life. Obviously, they loved the life of this world and could never conceive that their way of life, which had made them chiefs and brought prosperity, could ever be wrong. Therefore they opposed their Messengers, who took away their peace of mind, by preaching that there was a life-after-death and they shall have to render an account to Allah of what they

did in this world. And this was exactly what was happening at Makkah.

34. “And if you should obey a man like yourselves, indeed, you would then be sure losers.”*36

وَلَيْنَ أَطَعْتُمْ بَشَرًا مِّثْلَكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا لَخَسِرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

*36 Some commentators have wrongly opined that the chiefs exchanged these remarks against the Messenger between themselves. These remarks in fact were addressed to the common people. When the chiefs felt that the message was spreading among the common people and there was a real danger that they would be influenced by the pure character of the Messenger and that their superiority then would automatically come to an end, they began to delude them by raising such objections against him. It is worth while to note that both the chiefs of the people of Noah and the chiefs of the people of Aad accused their Messengers of the lust for power but as regards to themselves, they thought that power and prosperity were their inherent rights and they were in every respect entitled to be the chiefs of their people.

35. “Does he promise you that when you are dead and you have become dust and bones that you shall be brought forth.”

أَيَعِدُّكُمْ أَنْكُمْ إِذَا مِتُّمْ وَكُنْتُمْ تُرَابًا وَعِظْمًا أَنْكُمْ تُحْرَجُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

36. “How far, how far is that which you are

﴿ هَيْهَاتَ هَيْهَاتَ لِمَا تُوعَدُونَ ﴾

promised.”



37. “It is not but our life of the world, we die and we live, and we shall not be raised.”

إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا
نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ



38. “He is not but a man who has invented against Allah a lie.*^{36a} And we will not believe in him.”

إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ
كَذِبًا وَمَا نَحْنُ لَهُ



بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

*36a These words show that the people of Aad were also not disbelievers in the existence of God. They too were involved in the sin of shirk. Refer to Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 70; Surah Houd, Ayats 53-54; Surah HaMim Sajdah, Ayat 14, and Surah Al-Ahqaf, Ayats 21-22.

39. He said: “O my Lord, help me because they denied me.”

قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونَ



40. He (Allah) said: “In a little, they will surely be regretful.”

قَالَ عَمَّا قَلِيلٍ لِيُصْبِحُنَّ



نَدِيمِينَ

41. So an awful cry seized them in truth, then We

فَأَخَذْتَهُمُ الصَّيْحَةَ بِالْحَقِّ

made them as (plant) stubble.*³⁷ So a far removal for wrongdoing people.

فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ غُثَاءً فَبَعْدًا لِلقَوْمِ
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

*³⁷ Lexically, the word *ghutha* means the rubbish which is brought by flood waters and is deposited on the banks to rot there.

42. Then We brought forth after them other generations.

ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قُرُونًا
ءَاخَرِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

43. Never can precede any nation its term, nor can they delay it.

مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلَهَا وَمَا
يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

44. Then We sent Our messengers in succession. Whenever there came to a nation their messenger, they denied him, so We caused them to follow one another (to disaster) and We made them mere tales. A far removal for a people who do not believe.*³⁸

ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا تَتْرًا كُلَّ مَا
جَاءَ أُمَّةً رَّسُولَهَا كَذَّبُوهُ فَاتَّبَعْنَا
بَعْضَهُمْ بَعْضًا وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ
أَحَادِيثَ فَبَعْدًا لِقَوْمٍ لَّا
يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

*³⁸ That is, those who do not believe in the Messengers.

45. Then We sent Moses and his brother Aaron with Our signs and a manifest

ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ وَأَخَاهُ
هَارُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ

authority.*³⁹



***39** The use of a manifest Authority along with Our signs may either mean that the signs were a clear proof that they were Messengers of Allah, or the signs may refer to all other miracles of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) than the staff, which may stand here for a clear authority, because the miracles shown by means of it were a clear proof that the two brothers had been sent by Allah.

46. To Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they were arrogant and were a people self-exalting.*⁴⁰

إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ
فَأَسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا عَالِينَ



***40** The words in the text may either mean:

- (1) They were highly arrogant and tyrannous people, or
- (2) They showed haughtiness and self conceit.

47. So they said: “Shall we believe in two mortals like ourselves,*^{40a} and their people are slaves to us.”*⁴¹

فَقَالُوا أَنْتُمْ لِبَشَرَيْنِ مِثْلِنَا
وَقَوْمُهُمَا لَنَا عَبِيدُونَ

***40a** For explanation, see E.N. 26.

***41** *Abid* is worshiper. According to the Arabic usage, to be a worshiper and a bondsman are almost synonymous. Therefore when the Prophets invited their people to worship Allah alone, they wanted them to worship and serve and obey none but Allah, and that is the real significance of the word *ibadat*. For further explanation, see

E.N. 50 of Surah Al-Kahf.

48. So they denied them both, then became of those who were destroyed.^{*42}

فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَكَانُوا مِنَ
الْمُهْلَكِينَ



***42** For further details of the story of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and Pharaoh, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 49-50; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 103-136; Surah Younus, Ayats 75-92, Surah Houd, Ayats 96-99, Surah Bani Israil, Ayats 101-104, Surah TaHa, Ayats 9-80 along with the relevant E. Ns.

49. And certainly, We gave Moses the Scripture that they may be guided.

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ



50. And We made the son of Mary and his mother a sign,^{*43} and We gave them refuge on a high ground, a place of security and water springs.^{*44}

وَجَعَلْنَا ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ
ءَايَةً وَأَوَيْنَهُمَا إِلَى رَبْوَةٍ ذَاتِ قَرَارٍ
وَمَعِينٍ



***43** The wording “We made the son of Mary and his mother a sign” is very significant, because it means that neither the son of Mary nor his mother was each a separate sign, but both of them together were a sign. This verse is a clear proof that a son was born to Mary without cohabitation with a man and that Jesus had no father. For further details see Surah Aal-Imran, Ayats 45-49; Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 156, 171; Surah Maryam, Ayats 16-35 and

Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 91 and the relevant E.N.s.

In this connection, it should also be noted that the case of the error in regards to Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) and his mother was different from the error in regard to other Prophets, who were rejected because they were human beings. But the deviation in regard to Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) and his mother was that the credulous people raised them from the low position of human beings to the high rank of Godhead. On the other hand, those, who went to the other extreme accused Mary of unchastity, although they were witnesses of the miraculous birth of Jesus and had heard him speak in the cradle.

*44 Different people have mentioned different places, like Damascus, Ar-Ramlah, Jerusalem and Egypt, in regard to the plateau where Allah gave them shelter. From the Christian traditions it appears that Mary had to leave her home twice after the birth of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), first in the time of Herod when she took him to Egypt and stayed there till Herod's death, and then in the time of Arichelaus when she took him to Nazareth in Galilee. (Matthew, 2: 13-23). Therefore it cannot be said with certainty to which of these two emigrations the Quran refers here. It is, however, obvious that the place of shelter was a plateau which provided them with all the necessities of life.

51. O (you) messengers, *45 eat of the pure things, and do righteous deeds. *46 Indeed, I

يَأْتِيهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُّوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ
وَأَعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا إِنِّي بِمَا

am Aware of what you do.

تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ

***45** In the preceding passage (verses 23-50), the stories of some Prophets have been related as individuals, but in this verse all of them have been addressed together. However, it does not mean that they were present at one and the same place at the time of address. As a matter of fact, this way of address has been adopted to show that the message of all the Messengers, who came to different countries in different ages, was the same and they all belonged to one and the same community, verse 52. Therefore the message to one Messenger was meant to be the message for each one of them. In this verse, they have been addressed together as if they were present at one and the same place in order to emphasize this same aspect of the matter. But it is an irony that some people of this age have concluded that this verse has been addressed to those messengers who were to come after Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It is obvious that this interpretation cannot fit in the context in which the verse occurs.

***46** “Pure things” implies that they should be wholesome and must have been earned in lawful ways. Here the instruction, “eat of the pure things”, is meant to refute the theory and practice of asceticism. The Quran teaches the middle way between the life of asceticism and that of licence. The fact that the instruction, “eat of the pure things”, precedes “do righteous deeds”, is meant to impress that righteous deeds are meaningless without eating lawful provisions. The Prophet (peace be upon him) impressed

this very thing by saying: O people, Allah is pure and loves pure things. Then he recited this verse (51) and said: A person makes a long pilgrimage in a disheveled condition and prays with raised hands, O my Lord, O my Lord, whereas he eats unlawful food, wears unlawful clothes and has been brought up on unlawful provisions. How can such a one expect that Allah will grant his prayer? (Related by Abu Hurairah).

52. And indeed, this religion of yours is one religion, and I am your Lord, so fear Me.^{*47}

وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً
وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ

***47** The original Arabic word *ummat* (community) comprises those individuals who have some basic things common among them. All the Messengers of Allah belonged to one and the same community because they had the same creed and the same religion and the same message. See also Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 130-133, 213; Surah Aal-Imran, Ayats 19-20, 33-34, 64, 79-85; Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 150-152; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 59, 65, 73, 85; Surah Yusuf, Ayats 37-40; Surah Maryam, Ayats 49-59; and Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 71-93 along with the relevant E.Ns.

53. But they (mankind) have divided their affair among them into sects. Each faction rejoicing in what they have.^{*48}

فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُم بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا
كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ

***48** This is not a mere statement of a fact, but it is a link of the same argument which is being put forward from the very beginning of the Surah. The argument is this: Islam has been the real and original religion of all the Prophets from Noah to Jesus (peace be upon them all), because all of them brought and taught the same doctrines of Tauhid and the Hereafter. On the contrary, all the other religions are the perversions of the real and original religion, which has been tampered with in many ways. Therefore, those who are following the perverted religions are in the wrong and not the Prophet (peace be upon him) who is inviting them to the real and original religion.

54. So leave them in their error until a time.^{*49}

فَذَرَّهُمْ فِي غَمَرَتِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ



***49** There is a gap between verses 53 and 54, which has been left to the listener to fill, because the background of the whole discourse itself helps to fill it. Five years had passed since the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been inviting his people to the original religion. He had left no stone unturned to convince them by reasoning and by historical evidence that his message was based on the truth. His people had seen the practical results of the acceptance of his message and had witnessed his own high character which was by itself a guarantee that he was a trustworthy man. But in spite of all this, his people were rejoicing in their erroneous beliefs which they had inherited from their forefathers. This was not all. They had become his bitter enemies and were trying to defeat him and his message by

every wicked machination.

After filling the gap, the meaning of verse 51 becomes quite clear. It does not mean that the Prophet (peace be upon him) should give up his preaching and leave the disbelievers to themselves. This way of address has been employed to shake and rouse the disbelievers. This verse warns them to realize that the time was coming near when they would see for themselves that the Messenger was in the right and they were in the wrong.

55. Do they think that because We have granted them with abundance of wealth and sons.

أَتَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّمَا نُمِدُّهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ
مَّالٍ وَبَنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

56. We hasten for them with good things. But they do not perceive. ^{*50}

نُسَارِعُ لَهُمْ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ بَلْ لَا
يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

***50** This question has been posed as a proof of the main theme of the Surah. It is meant to remove their misconception of success, welfare and prosperity, which the disbelievers had formed to delude themselves. According to them, the one, who enjoyed the good things of life and wielded power and influence in the society, had attained success. On the other hand, the he who was deprived of these things was a failure. This misconception had involved them in another serious misunderstanding. They thought that the one who had attained success was in the right, and the beloved of Allah. Otherwise, how could he have attained all the successes? On the contrary, the one who

was apparently deprived of these things was surely wrong in his creed and erroneous in his deeds, and was under the wrath of God (or gods). As this misconception is one of the greatest deviations of the materialists, the Quran has stated it and refuted it in different ways at different places and made the reality plain. For instance, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 126, 212; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 32; Surah At-Taubah, Ayats 55, 69, 85; Surah Yunus, Ayat 17; Surah Houd, Ayats 3, 27-31 38-39; Surah Ar-Rad, Ayat 26; Surah Al-Kahf, Ayats 28, 32-43, 103-105; Surah Maryam, Ayats 77-80; Surah Ta-Ha, Ayats 131-132; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 44 along with the relevant E.Ns. In order to remove the above mentioned misconceptions one should keep in view the following.

(1) Success is a far higher thing than the material prosperity and the transitory success of an individual, community or nation.

(2) It is absolutely wrong to consider prosperity and success as a criterion of truth and falsehood.

(3) It should be noted well that this world is a place of test and trial and not a place of reward and retribution. It is true that even in this world, sometimes there is some punishment or reward, but it is on a very limited scale and even in this, there is an aspect of the test. Therefore it is an utter folly to consider material success and prosperity to be a proof that the recipient is in the right and so the beloved of the Lord, and vice versa. Moreover, the tests and trials of individuals and communities are of many varieties and a seeker after truth must understand at the outset that the

worldly success or failure of the people is not the result of ultimate reward or punishment and cannot be regarded as the criterion for the right or wrong creed, morals and actions and a sign of being the beloved of God or otherwise.

(4) One must have a firm belief that truth and righteousness will ultimately gain victory over falsehood and wickedness. As regards to the criterion of truth and falsehood and right and wrong, one must judge this in the light of revelations and teachings of the Messengers, because common sense confirms the same, and it is also supported by the general conception which mankind has always had of good and evil.

(5) As a corollary of the above, it would have become clear that according to the Quran (and this is confirmed by common sense), the conception of reward and punishment should also be different from the common one. For instance, if a wicked person or community is enjoying prosperity, it is not a reward of its evil deeds but a harder test for it and it is not a blessing but the wrath of Allah. It means that Allah has decided to punish the prosperous people with a severe scourge. On the other hand, if the righteous people are suffering from hardships and afflictions, it is not a punishment from Allah but a blessing in disguise to pass them through the fire to remove impurity, if any, from the pure gold. If this hard trial is a blessing for the righteous people, it is a test for the wicked people to give them a severe punishment for the persecution of the former.

57. Indeed, those who are apprehensive from fear of their Lord.*51

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ هُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ رَبِّهِمْ
مُشْفِقُونَ

*51 That is, they do not live a carefree life devoid of the fear of God. They live in awe of Him and are fully conscious that He oversees and watches them in all their motives and actions and they are thus deterred from thinking and doing evil.

58. And those who believe in the revelations of their Lord.*52

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ
يُؤْمِنُونَ

*52 Signs here means both divine revelations to the Prophets and the signs found in man's own self and in the universe around him. To believe in the verses of the Book is to affirm them, and to believe in the signs of human self and the universe is to affirm the realities which they point to.

59. And those who do not assign partners with their Lord.*53

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ لَا يُشْرِكُونَ

*53 Though belief in the revelations itself ingrains the doctrine of Tauhid in the hearts, yet the believers have been warned to guard against shirk. This is because, in spite of believing in the revelations, man is inclined to commit shirk in one form or the other, for instance, in exaggerating the teachings of the Prophets and righteous people,

supplicating and serving others than Allah, etc.

60. And those who give that which they give with their hearts full of fear, because they will return to their Lord.*54

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ
وَجِلَّةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ رَاجِعُونَ



*54 This verse (60) may be elaborated like this: They serve their Lord and try their best to obey Him and do righteous deeds, but all along they remain humble in their hearts and are not puffed up with the pride of their piety. Nay, in spite of all their good deeds, their hearts are always filled with awe that they shall have to render an account to their Lord, and they are not sure whether they will come out successful in the judgment of their Lord or not.

A concrete interpretation of this verse is afforded by Umar. Although he served his Allah in a way that was exemplary, yet he was so afraid of accountability to Him that he is reported to have said before death: I shall consider it a favor, if I am neither rewarded nor punished in the Hereafter. Hasan Basri has expressed the same thing in a beautiful manner: A believer obeys Allah and is yet fearful of Him, and a hypocrite disobeys Allah and is yet fearless of Him.

61. It is those who hasten in good deeds and those who are foremost in them.

أُولَٰئِكَ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ
وَهُمْ لَهَا سَابِقُونَ



62. And We do not lay a burden on a soul beyond his capacity,^{*55} and with Us is a record which speaks with truth,^{*56} and they will not be wronged.^{*57}

وَلَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا
وَلَدَيْنَا كِتَابٌ يَنْطِقُ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ
لَا يُظْلَمُونَ



***55** The enunciation of this fundamental proposition, in the context in which it occurs, is very meaningful. In the preceding passage (verses 57-61), the characteristics of those people, who deserve true success, have been stated, and in this verse (62), it has been made clear that those excellent qualities can be attained by anyone who tries to achieve true success, as if to say: The conditions We have laid down for true success are within the reach of those who strive for it, for “We do not lay a burden”. Therefore if you, O disbelievers, desire to achieve true success, you should follow the example of the believers from among yourselves, who have really attained it.

***56** According to the Quran, an elaborate conduct book of every individual is being maintained accurately. This records every word he utters, every deed or act he performs, even every hidden thought and intention that he cherishes in his heart and mind. See also Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 49 and E.N. 46 thereof.

***57** That is, neither a person will be accused of and punished for something he had not done, nor will he be deprived of the full reward of a good act that he had done.

63. But their hearts are in ignorance of this (Quran),^{*58}

بَلْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فِي غَمْرَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا

and they have deeds, other than that (disbelief) which they are doing.

وَهُمْ أَعْمَلُ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ هُمْ
لَهَا عَمَلُونَ

***58** They are heedless that everything they are saying and doing, is being recorded in some book and that they shall have to render an account of everything.

64. Until, when We seize their affluent ones with the punishment, ^{*59} behold, they will groan in supplication. ^{*60}

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخَذْنَا مُتْرَفِيهِمْ
بِالْعَذَابِ إِذَا هُمْ يَجْعَرُونَ

***59** The epicureans will probably be punished in this worldly life because in the enjoyment of luxury and pleasure they forgot the rights of the other people and transgressed the prescribed limits.

***60** *Juar* is bellowing by a bull painfully. Here the word has been used tauntingly for a groaning person who does not deserve any mercy, as if to say: Now that you are going to be punished for your misdeeds, you have started bellowing.

65. “Do ^{*61} not groan in supplication this day. Assuredly, you will not be helped by Us.”

لَا تَجْعَرُوا أَلْيَوْمَ إِنَّكُمْ مِنَّا لَا
تُنصَرُونَ

***61** That is, they will be told this at that time.

66. “Indeed, My verses were recited to you, but you used to turn back on your

قَدْ كَانَتْ ءَايَاتِي تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ
فَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ تَنكُصُونَ

heels.”*62



*62 That is to say, in the worldly life you did not pay any heed to what the Messenger said. Nay, you did not even like to hear his voice.

67. “In arrogance regarding it (the Quran), talking nonsense, telling fables (at night).”*63

مُسْتَكْبِرِينَ بِهِ سَمِرًا تَهْجُرُونَ



*63 The meeting places where the people of Makkah gathered together at night to hold consultations, to gossip and tell tales, etc.

68. Then have they not pondered over the word (the Quran),*64 or has there come to them that which had not come to their fathers of old.*65

أَفَلَمْ يَدَّبَّرُوا الْقَوْلَ أَمْ جَاءَهُمْ
مَا لَمْ يَأْتِ آبَاءَهُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ



*64 That is, do they mean to imply that they reject the message because they do not understand it? Whereas the Quran is not an enigma, nor is it being presented in an incomprehensible language, nor does it deal with themes and subjects which are beyond human understanding. The fact is that they understand everything it presents, but they oppose and reject it, because they have no intention to follow and believe what it presents.

*65 That is, is the Quran presenting something which they had never heard before? No, that is not so. Allah had been sending His messages through His Prophets, who came to

Arabia and in the adjoining lands and they are well acquainted with them, especially with Prophets Abraham and Ismael, and Houd, Saleh and Shoaib (peace be upon them all), who are acknowledged by them as Prophets of God, and who were not idol worshipers but enjoined the worship of One God. For further explanation, see E.N. 84 of Surah Al-Furqan, E.N. 5 of Surah As-Sajdah and E.N. 35 of Surah Saba.

69. Or did they not recognize their messenger, so they reject him.*66

أَمْ لَمْ يَعْرِفُوا رَسُولَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَهُ
مُنْكَرُونَ



*66 That is, do they reject the message because Muhammad (peace be upon him), who is inviting them to it, is a stranger among them? No, this is not so, for he was born and bred among them in a noble family. He bears a pure and high character. He has been truthful, upright, trustworthy, honest and morally chaste throughout his life, He is a noble and gentle person, peace-loving and just by nature, honest in word and deed, sympathetic and helpful to the weak and poor. And they themselves testified to all this before he claimed to be a Messenger of Allah. Then he has been consistently preaching the same message from the first day of his mission. Then whatever he has preached, he has first practiced it himself and demonstrated its truth. There has been no contradiction between his word and deed. He and his followers have faithfully and honestly put into practice the message of the Quran and shown excellent results. For further details, see E.N. 21 of Surah Al-Anaam, E.N. 21 of

Surah Yunus and E.N. 105 of Surah Bani Israil.

70. Or do they say: “There is a madness in him.”*⁶⁷ But he brought them the truth, and most of them are averse to the truth.

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ بَلْ
جَاءَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَأَكْثَرُهُم لِلْحَقِّ
كَرِهُونَ

***67** That is, do they reject his message because they regard Muhammad (peace be upon him) to be possessed by a jinn? No, this is also not correct, because in their hearts, they themselves regard him as a wise and sagacious person. It is therefore ridiculous to regard a man like him to be possessed by a jinn. For, such a person cannot say wise things and do noble deeds like him. How strange that a person possessed by a jinn (or having epileptic fits according to the western orientalists) should utter and recite sublime discourses of the Quran and start and guide a successful movement which should revolutionize the way of life not only of his own people but of the whole world.

71. And if the truth had followed their desires, truly the heavens and the earth and whoever is therein would have been corrupted.*⁶⁸ But We have brought them their reminder, then they from their reminder turn away.*⁶⁹

وَلَوْ أَتَّبَعَ الْاَحْقُ اَهُوَاءَهُمْ
لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْاَرْضُ
وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ بَلْ اَتَيْنَهُمْ
بِذِكْرِهِمْ فَهُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِهِمْ
مُعْرِضُونَ

*68 This brief sentence expresses a great reality which should be understood well. The foolish people in the world generally feel offended by a person who points out the truth to them. They do not like to hear and consider the truth because it goes against their desires and interests but the truth remains the truth and cannot be changed after one's personal whims and wishes. Man is subject to the eternal and unalterable laws operating in the universe and has therefore to adjust his thinking, desires and conduct accordingly and should try to discover the truth and reality through experience, reasoning and observation. Only a foolish person can stick to and regard his personal whims, wishes and prejudices to be the reality and refuse to hear and consider any argument, however rational and scientific, simply because it goes against them.

*69 Here the word *zīkr* means.

- (1) Mention of human nature and its demands.
- (2) Admonition.
- (3) Esteem, honor and fame.

In the light of these, the full meaning of the verse will be: Your rejection of the Quran is irrational, for it contains the mention of those things which develop the best in human nature. It is an admonition that will result in your own good and well being, and it will bring esteem and honour for you in this world as well as in the Hereafter.

72. Or do you (O Muhammad) ask them for some recompense, but the recompense of your Lord is

أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ خَرْجًا فَخَرَاجُ
رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

better, and He is the best of those who give sustenance. *70



*70 This was yet another proof of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) Prophethood. He was conveying the message without demanding any recompense for it, and he had no self interest in it. Nay, he had staked his business, reputation, peaceful home life, relationships with the unbelieving kindred for the success of his mission and was being ruthlessly persecuted for its sake. A selfish person could not have risked his all for the sake of only worldly motives. He would rather have exploited the racial and tribal prejudices of his people to become their ruler and leader. On the contrary, his message not only cut at the root of those prejudices but tended to destroy the very bases which helped his tribe to wield influence and authority over the polytheists of Arabia. This is an argument which the Quran has advanced again and again as a proof of the truth of the mission of the other Prophets as well. See Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 90; Surah Yunus, Ayat 72; Surah Hud, Ayats 29, 51; Surah Yusuf, Ayat 104; Surah Ya-Seen, Ayat 21 along with the relevant E.Ns.

73. And indeed, you (O Muhammad) call them to the straight path. *71

وَإِنَّكَ لَتَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ

مُسْتَقِيمٍ

*71 This was the real reason why they were deviating from the right path. As they did not believe in the Hereafter, they thought that no account would be taken from them of what they did in this world. Therefore it did not matter whether

they followed the truth or falsehood. Their only aim in life was to gratify the lusts of the flesh and gratify them in the best way possible.

74. And indeed, those who do not believe in the Hereafter are surely deviating from the path.

وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِالْآخِرَةِ عَنِ الصِّرَاطِ
لَنَكِبُونَ

75. And even if We had mercy on them and removed what is upon them of the distress, they would persist in their transgression wandering blindly.^{*72}

﴿ وَلَوْ رَحِمْنَاهُمْ وَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِمْ
مِّنْ ضُرٍّ لَّلَجُوا فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ
يَعْمَهُونَ ﴾

***72** The affliction alluded to in this verse was the famine which occurred in Makkah some time after the advent of Prophethood. According to Abdullah bin Masud, when the Quraish persistently refused to accept the invitation of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and started putting up stiff resistance, he prayed: O Allah, help me against them with a seven year famine like the seven year famine of the time of Prophet Joseph. So a severe famine started in Makkah with the result that people were obliged to eat carrion. This famine has been alluded to in a number of Makki Surahs. For instance see Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 42-44; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 94-99; Surah Yunus, Ayats 11, 12, 21; Surah An-Nahl, Ayats 112-113 and Surah Ad-Dukhan, Ayats 10-16 along with the relevant E.Ns.

76. And certainly, We seized them with punishment, but they did not humble themselves to their Lord, nor did they supplicate with submission.

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ فَمَا
أَسْتَكَانُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَمَا يَتَضَرَّعُونَ



77. Until when We have opened upon them the door of severe punishment, behold, they will be plunged in despair therein.*73

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَابًا ذَا
عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ إِذَا هُمْ فِيهِ



*73 The Arabic word *mublis* is used for one whom frustration makes so desperate and obdurate that he does not hesitate to resort to any crime. The Devil has been called Iblis for the same reason.

78. And He it is who has created for you hearing (ears), and sight (eyes), and hearts (intellect). Little is what you thank.*74

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ
وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا



*74 The disbelievers have been told to consider the great blessings of eyes, ears, mind and heart and use them as human beings should, and show gratitude to the Creator by accepting His Message.

79. And He it is who has dispersed you on the earth,

وَهُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

and to Him you shall be gathered.

وَالِيهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

80. And He it is who gives life and causes death, and His is the alternation of the night and the day.*75
Will you then not understand.*76

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَلَهُ
أَخْتَلَفُ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ أَفَلَا
تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

***75** If one makes the right use of his faculties and observes these things properly, he can find the truth, for it is obvious that the great mechanism of the universe could not have come into existence by a mere accident. There must be its Creator who need not have any associates or partners and that the universe could not have been created without a purpose as a mere sport. The very existence of a wonderful, rational thinking and feeling creature, man, who has been delegated with powers, is a clear proof that his real life will not come to an end at death.

***76** Here attention is being drawn to the proof of both Tauhid and life after death, and in the other phenomena cited to the refutation of both shirk and rejection of the Hereafter.

81. But they say the like of that what the ancient (people) said.

بَلْ قَالُوا مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ
الْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

82. They said: "Is it that when we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall

قَالُوا أَإِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا

we indeed be raised again.”

وَعِظْمًا أَءِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

83. “Certainly, we have been promised, we and our fathers this before. This is not but the legends of the ancient (people).”^{*77}

لَقَدْ وَعِدْنَا نَحْنُ وَءَابَاؤُنَا هَذَا
مِن قَبْلُ إِن هَذَا إِلَّا أَسْطِيرُ
الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

***77** Their denial of the life after death implied the denial of the powers and wisdom of Allah as well.

84. Say: “To whom belongs the earth and whoever is therein, if you have knowledge.”

قُل لِّمَنِ الْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهَا إِن
كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

85. They will say: “To Allah.” Say: “Will you then not remember.”^{*78}

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ ۚ قُلْ أَفَلَا
تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

***78** That is, if you acknowledge this, why do you not then understand that none but Allah deserves to be worshiped and that when He has once created the earth and all the things in it, it is not difficult for Him to re-create them once again?

86. Say: “Who is Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Tremendous Throne.”

قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ السَّبْعِ
وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٨٦﴾

87. They will say: “To Allah (all that belongs).”^{*79}

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ ۚ قُلْ أَفَلَا

Say: “Will you then not fear (Him).”^{*80}

تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾

***79** See E.N. 78 of this Surah.

***80** That is, why are you not afraid of rebelling against Him and worshiping others besides Him? Why do you not dread that one day you shall have to give an account of all your deeds to the All-Powerful Sovereign of the universe?

88. Say: “Who is in whose hand is the sovereignty^{*81} of every thing and He protects, while there is no protection against him, if you should know.”

قُلْ مَنْ مِنْ بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾

***81** The word *malakut* in the text is a strong word which combines both sovereignty and ownership. The verse therefore means: Whose is the Sovereignty and Who possesses the real ownership rights over everything?

89. They will say: “To Allah (all that belongs). Say: “How then are you deluded.”^{*82}

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ فَأَنِي تُسْحَرُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾

***82** In order to understand the significance of this question, we should know that the art of magic makes a thing appear different from what it really is. Thus the question will mean: Who has bewitched you that, in spite of knowing and acknowledging all these things, you do not understand the reality? Who has bewitched you that even after acknowledging Allah to be the Owner and the All-Powerful Sovereign, you set up other owners and sovereigns along

with Him or make them partners with Him and worship them? Who has deluded you that you should dare to be treacherous and unfaithful to Allah knowing that none can protect you against Him, and forget that you will be called to account for these things?

In this connection, it should also be noted that this question has a subtle meaning also. The Quraish accused the Prophet (peace be upon him) of practicing magic and sorcery. This question turns the tables on them, as if to say, O people, the man who presents the reality appears to you to be a sorcerer, while those leaders who say things against reality, against common sense and against your own convictions and beliefs, do not appear to you to be sorcerers at all.

90. But We have brought them the truth, and indeed they are certainly liars. ^{*83}

بَلْ أَتَيْنَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

*83 They are liars because they say that others besides Allah have a share in His Godhead and that there is no life after death, because their first saying contradicts their own admission that Allah is the Owner and the Sovereign of the universe. Then their second assertion is based on the presumption that the All-Powerful Allah cannot recreate what He has created once. This is clearly a contradiction in terms.

91. Allah has not taken any son, ^{*84} nor is there along with Him any god, else each

مَا آتَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا

god would have assuredly taken away that what he created, and some of them would assuredly have overcome others.*85 glorified be Allah above all that they attribute.

كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهِ إِذَا
لَذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَّ
بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ
اللَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿٩١﴾

*84 It should be, noted that this is a general refutation of the belief that Allah has a child or children, and incidentally refutes the Christian belief that Christ is the son of God. Yet even some eminent commentators confine this to the refutation of the Christian belief. Obviously, there is no reason why it was necessary to refute the Christian belief specifically in this context, when the whole discourse has been directed towards the disbelievers of Makkah alone, who were, like the Christians, guilty of this sort of shirk.

*85 Here the argument of Tauhid is based on this principle: Had there been more than one God or partners in Godhead, there would have been serious differences, conflicts and wars among the different sovereigns and rulers. See Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 42 and E.N. 47 thereof, and Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 22 and E. N. 22 thereof.

92. Knower of the invisible and the visible.*86 So exalted be He over all that they ascribe as partners (to Him).

عَلِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَتَعَلَى
عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

*86 This contains a subtle allusion to the refutation of the

doctrine of intercession. See E.Ns 85, 86 of Surah Ta-Ha and E.N. 27 of Surah Al-Anbiya.

93. Say (O Muhammad):
“My Lord, if You should show me that which they are promised.”

قُلْ رَبِّ إِمَّا تُرِيْنِي مَا
يُوعَدُونَ

94. “My Lord, then do not make me among the wrongdoing people.”*87

رَبِّ فَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي فِي
الظَّالِمِينَ

*87 This prayer does not mean that, God forbid, there was any real danger of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) also being involved in the punishment, or that if he had not invoked this prayer, he might have been involved in it. This way of address has been adopted to warn that all people should fear Allah’s punishment. They should not demand it nor persist in their wickedness, if Allah gives them respite. As a matter of fact, Allah’s punishment is a thing which should be dreaded not only by the sinful people but also by the righteous people, and they should all seek His refuge from it, for when the scourge of God comes, it does not destroy only the wicked people but may also involve the righteous people in it. Therefore the right course for those, who have to live in a wicked society, is that they should always pray to Allah for His refuge, for one does not know when that scourge might come down.

95. And indeed, We certainly have Power over that We can show you what

وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُرِيْكَ مَا نَعِدُهُمْ

We have promised them.

لَقَدِرُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

96. Repel the evil with that which is better. We are best Aware of that which they allege.

أَدْفَعْ بِأَلَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةِ
نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

97. And say: “My Lord, I seek refuge in You from the suggestions of the evil ones.”

وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ
الشَّيَاطِينِ ﴿٩٧﴾

98. “And I seek refuge in You, my Lord, lest they be present with me.”*88

وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَنْ يَحْضُرُونِ
﴿٩٨﴾

*88 For explanation, see E.Ns 71, 72 of Surah Al-Anaam; E.Ns 138, 150 to 153 of Surah Al-Aaraf; E.N. 39 of Surah Yunus; E.N. 48 of Surah Al-Hijr; E.Ns 122 to 124 of Surah An-Nahl; E.Ns 58 to 63 of Surah Bani-Israil and E.Ns 35 to 41 of Surah HaMim-Sajdah.

99. Until, when death comes to one of them, he says: “My Lord, send me back.”*89

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ
قَالَ رَبِّ أَرْجِعُونِي ﴿٩٩﴾

*89 In the original text plural number has been used for Allah, which may be for reverence, or may include the angels as well, who will be seizing the criminal soul. The entreaty would be: O my Lord! Send me back.

100. “That I might do righteousness in that which

لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ

I have left behind.”^{*90} No,^{*91}
it is merely a word that he
speaks.^{*92} And behind them
is a barrier until the day^{*93}
when they will be raised.

كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِنْ
وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ



***90** It occurs at several places in the Quran that each of the criminals, after his death till his entry into Hell, and even after that, will plead again and again: Lord, send me back to the world, I will no more disobey Thee, I will now do righteous deeds. See Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 27, 28; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 53; Surah Ibrahim, Ayats 44, 45; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayat 102; Surah Al-Fatir, Ayat 37; Surah Az-Zumar, Ayats 58, 59; Surah Al-Momin, Ayats 10-12, and Surah Ash-Shura, Ayats 44 along with the relevant E.Ns.

***91** That is, he will never be sent back nor given another opportunity, for in that case the test and trial for which man is sent to this world becomes meaningless. For further explanation, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 210 and E. N. 228 thereof, and E.Ns 6, 139, 140 of Surah Al-Anaam and E.N. 26 of Surah Yunus.

***92** That is, now, when he has met his doom, he has nothing more to say than that he should be sent back to the world; so let him say what he likes; he will never be allowed to go back.

***93** That is, now there is a barrier between them and the world, which will not allow them to go back to it. Therefore they shall remain in that state until the Day of Resurrection.

101. Then when the trumpet is blown, then there will be no kinship among them that day, nor will they ask of one another.*94

فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا أَنْسَابَ
بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ



***94** It does not mean that the father will not remain father and the son will not remain son, etc. It only means that they will not be able to help each other, nor shall they be able to inquire about each other as father and son, for each one will be worried and anxious about his own plight. See Surah Al-Maarij, Ayats 10-14, and Surah Abasa, Ayats 34-37.

102. Then those whose scales are heavy,*95 so it is they, who are the successful.

فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ
هُمْ الْمُفْلِحُونَ



***95** That is, those whose good deeds will be heavy and will out-weigh their evil deeds.

103. And those whose scales are light, so it is they, those who have lost their own selves,*96 in Hell will they abide.

وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ
فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ فِي جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ



***96** For the criterion of success and failure in the Hereafter, please refer to E.Ns 1 and 50 above.

104. The fire will burn their faces, and they therein will

تَلْفَحُ وُجُوهَهُمُ النَّارُ وَهُمْ فِيهَا

grin with disfigured lips.*97

كَلِيحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

*97 The word *kalih* means a face whose skin has been removed so as to expose the jaws. When somebody asked Abdullah bin Masud the meaning of *kalih*, he said: Haven't you seen the scorched head of a slaughtered animal?

105. (It will be said): "Were not My verses recited to you, then you used to deny them."

أَلَمْ تَكُنْ ءَايَاتِي تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ
فَكُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

106. They will say: "Our Lord, our evil fortune overcame us, and we were a people astray."

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْنَا شِقْوَتُنَا
وَكُنَّا قَوْمًا ضَالِّينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

107. "Our Lord, bring us out of this, then if we were to return (to evil), then indeed we shall be wrongdoers."

رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْهَا فَإِنْ عُدْنَا
فإِنَّا ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

108. He will say: "Remain you in it with ignominy, and do not speak to Me."*98

قَالَ أَحْسَعُوا فِيهَا وَلَا تَكَلِّمُونِ ﴿١٠٨﴾

*98 "Do not speak to Me": Do not plead your case with Me. According to some traditions, these will be their last words and they shall never be allowed to speak again, but this is contradicted by the Quran itself in the succeeding verses. Therefore, it only means this that they will not be able to plead their case again.

109. Indeed, there was a party of My slaves who said: “Our Lord, we have believed, so forgive us, and have mercy on us, and You are the best of those who are merciful.”

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنْ عِبَادِي
يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا ءَامَنَّا فَاغْفِرْ
لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ



110. “So you took them in mockery until they made you forget My remembrance, and you used to laugh at them.”

فَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُمْ سِخْرِيًّا حَتَّىٰ
أَنْسَوَكُمْ ذِكْرِي وَكُنْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ
تَضْحَكُونَ



111. “Indeed, I have rewarded them this day for their patience. Indeed, they are those who are successful.”*99

إِنِّي جَزَيْتُهُمُ الْيَوْمَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا
أَنْهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ



***99** This is again a reference to those who will deserve success or be doomed to failure in the Hereafter.

112. He will say: “How long did you stay on earth, counting by years.”

قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ عَدَدَ
سِنِينَ



113. They will say: “We stayed a day or part of a day.*100 So ask of those who keep account.”

قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ
فَسْأَلِ الْعَادِينَ



*100 For explanation, see Surah Ta-Ha Ayat 103 and E.N. 80 thereof.

114. He will say: “You stayed not but a little, if indeed you had known.”*101

قَالَ إِن لَّبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا^ط لَّوْ
أَنْتُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١١٤﴾

*101 That is, Our Messengers warned you that the life in this world is transitory and is for test and trial, but you did not realize it then and denied that there was any life in the Hereafter and behaved in accordance with that belief.

115. “Did you then think that We had created you without any purpose,*102 and that you would not be brought back to Us”

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنْمَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا
وَأَنْتُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تَرْجَعُونَ ﴿١١٥﴾

*102 The Arabic word *abathan* in the text also means “for the sake of sport”. Then the verse will mean: Did you think that We had created you merely for the sake of sport and there was no purpose behind your creation? Therefore you may eat, drink, be merry and enjoy yourself as you please.

116. So exalted be Allah,*103 the Sovereign, the Truth. There is no god except Him, the Lord of the Noble Throne.

فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ^ط لَا
إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ
الْكَرِيمِ ﴿١١٦﴾

*103 Allah is above this that He should create you without any purpose and that you may associate partners with Him

with impunity.

117. And whoever invokes any other god along with Allah, for which he has no proof.^{*104} Then his reckoning is only with his Lord.^{*105} Indeed, the disbelievers will not be successful.^{*106}

وَمَنْ يَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا
بُرْهَانَ لَهُ بِهِ فَإِنَّمَا حِسَابُهُ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ
الْكَافِرُونَ

***104** It may also be translated as: The one who invokes any other deity along with Allah, has nothing to support him in this act.

***105** That is, he cannot escape accountability.

***106** Again, the reference is to those who will attain the success and to those who will be deprived of it.

118. And (O Muhammad) say: “My Lord, forgive and have mercy, for You are the best of those who are merciful.”^{*107}

وَقُلْ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ وَأَنْتَ
خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

***107** Compare and contrast this prayer with verse 109. Here the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been told to make the same prayer as contained in verse 109, as if to say, You (and your followers) should supplicate Allah with the same prayer so that, if the people scoff at you, they themselves might provide a proof of a strong case against themselves.





النُّور An-Noor

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah takes its name, *An-Noor*, from verse 35.

Period of Revelation

The consensus of opinion is that it was revealed after the campaign against Bani al-Mustaliq and this is confirmed by verses 11-20 that deal with the incident of the slander which occurred during that campaign. But there is a difference of opinion as to whether this campaign took place in 5 A.H. before the battle of the Trench, or in 6 A.H. after it. It is important to decide this issue in order to determine whether this Surah was revealed earlier or Surah Al-Ahzab, which is the only other Surah containing the commandments about the observance of *hijab* by women. Surah Al-Ahzab was admittedly revealed on the occasion of the battle of the Trench. Now if this battle occurred earlier, it would mean that the initial instructions in connection with the commandments of *hijab* were sent down in Surah Al-Ahzab and they were complemented later by the commandments revealed in this Surah. On the other hand, if the campaign against Bani al-Mustaliq occurred earlier,

the chronological order of the commandments would be reversed, and it would become difficult to understand the legal wisdom and implications of the commandments of *hijab*.

According to Ibn Saad, the campaign against Bani al-Mustaliq took place in Shaban 5 A.H. and the battle of the Trench in Zil-Qadah the same year. This opinion is based on some traditions from Ayesha about the events connected with the slander in which she refers to a dispute between Saad bin Ubadah and Saad bin Muaz. Saad bin Muaz, according to authentic traditions, died during the campaign against Bani Quraizah, which took place immediately after the battle of the Trench. It is, therefore, evident that he could not be present in 6 A.H. to take part in a dispute about the slander.

On the other hand, Muhammad bin Ishaq says that the battle of the Trench took place in Shawwal 5 A.H. and the campaign against Bani al-Mustaliq in Shaban 6 A.H. This opinion is supported by many authentic traditions from Ayesha and others. According to these traditions,

- (1) The Commandments about hijab had been sent down in Surah Al-Ahzab before the incident of the slander.
- (2) The Prophet (peace be upon him) had married Zainab in Zil-Qadah 5 A.H. after the battle of the Trench.
- (3) Hammah, sister of Zainab, had taken a leading part in spreading the slander, just because Ayesha was a rival of her sister. All this evidence supports the view of Muhammad bin Ishaq.

Now let us consider the two opinions a little more closely.

The only argument in favor of the first opinion is the mention of the presence of Saad bin Muaz in a dispute connected with the incident of the slander. But this argument is weakened by some other traditions from Ayesha, in which she mentions Usaid bin Hudair instead of Saad bin Muaz in this dispute. It may, therefore, be assumed that there has been some confusion regarding the two names in reporting the traditions. Moreover, if we accept the first opinion, just because of the mention of the name of Saad bin Muaz in some traditions, we encounter other difficulties that cannot be resolved in any way. For, in that case, we shall have to admit that the revelation of the commandments of hijab and the Prophet's (peace be upon him) marriage with Zainab had taken place even earlier than the battle of the Trench. But we learn from the Quran and many authentic traditions that both these events happened after that battle and the campaign against Bani Quraizah. That is why Ibn Hazm, Ibn Qayyim and some other eminent scholars have held the opinion of Muhammad bin Ishaq as correct, and we also hold it to be so. Thus, we conclude that Surah Al Ahzab revealed earlier than Surah An-Noor, which was revealed in the latter half of 6 A. H. several months after Surah Al-Ahzab.

Historical Background

Now let us review the circumstances existing at the time of the revelation of this Surah. It should be kept in mind that the incident of the slander, which was the occasion of its revelation, was closely connected with the conflict between Islam and the disbelievers.

After the victory at Badr, the Islamic movement began to gain strength day by day; so much so that by the time of the battle of the Trench, it had become so strong that the united forces of the enemy numbering about ten thousand failed to crush it and had to raise the siege of Al-Madinah after one month. It meant that, and both the parties understood it well, the war of aggression which the disbelievers had been waging for several years, had come to an end. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself declared: After this year, the Quraish will not be able to attack you; now you will take the offensive.

When the disbelievers realized that they could not defeat Islam on the battlefield, they chose the moral front to carry on the conflict. It cannot be said with certainty whether this change of tactics was the outcome of deliberate consultations, or it was the inevitable result of the humiliating retreat in the battle of the Trench, for which all the available forces of the enemy had been concentrated. They knew it well that the rise of Islam was nor due to the numerical strength of the Muslims nor to their superior arms and ammunition nor to their greater material resources. Nay, the Muslims were fighting against fearful odds on all these fronts. They owed their success to their moral superiority. Their enemies realized that the pure and noble qualities of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers were capturing the hearts of the people, and were also binding them together into a highly disciplined community. As a result of this, they were defeating the mushriks and the Jews both on the peace and on the war

fronts, because the latter lacked discipline and character. Under the above mentioned circumstances, the wicked designs of the disbelievers led them to start a campaign of vilification against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Muslims in order to destroy the bulwark of morale that was helping them to defeat their enemies. Therefore the strategy was to attain the assistance of the hypocrites to spread slanders against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers so that the mushriks and the Jews could exploit these to sow the seeds of discord among the Muslims and undermine their discipline.

The first opportunity for the use of the new strategy was afforded in Zil-Qadah 5 A.H. when the Prophet (peace be upon him) married Zainab (daughter of Jahsh), who was the divorced wife of his adopted son, Zaid bin Harithah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) had arranged this marriage in order to put an end to the custom of ignorance, which gave the same status to the adopted son that was the right only of the son from one's own loins. The hypocrites, however, considered this a golden opportunity to vilify the Prophet (peace be upon him) from inside the community, and the Jews and the mushriks exploited it from outside to ruin his high reputation by this malicious slander. For this purpose fantastic stories were concocted and spread to this effect: One day Muhammad (peace be upon him) happened to see the wife of his adopted son and fell in love with her; he maneuvered her divorce and married her. Though this was an absurd fiction it was spread with such skill, cunning and artfulness that it succeeded in its purpose; so much so

that some Muslim traditionalists and commentators also have cited some parts of it in their writings, and the orientalist have exploited these fully to vilify the Prophet (peace be upon him). As a matter of fact, Zainab was never a stranger to the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he should see her by chance and fall in love with her at first sight. For she was his first cousin, being the daughter of his real paternal aunt, Umainah, daughter of Abdul Muttalib. He had known her from her childhood to her youth. A year before this incident, he himself had persuaded her to marry Zaid in order to demonstrate practically that the Quraish and the liberated slaves were equal as human being. As she never reconciled herself to her marriage with a liberated slave, they could not pull on together for long, which inevitably led to her divorce. The above mentioned facts were well known to all, yet the slanderers succeeded in their false propaganda with the result that even today there are people who exploit these things to defame Islam.

The second slander was made on the honor of Ayesha, a wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him), in connection with an incident which occurred while he was returning from the campaign against Bani al-Mustaliq. As this attack was even severer than the first one and was the main background of this Surah, we shall deal with it in greater detail.

Let us say a few words about Abdullah bin Ubayy, who played the part of a villain in this attack. He belonged to the clan of Khazraj and was one of the most important chiefs of Al-Madinah. The people had even intended to

make him their king a little before the Prophet's (peace be upon him) migration there, but the scheme had to be dropped because of the changed circumstances. Though he had embraced Islam, he remained at heart a hypocrite and his hypocrisy was so manifest that he was called the chief of the Hypocrites. He never lost any opportunity to slander Islam in order to take his revenge.

Now the main theme. When in Shaban 6 A.H. the Prophet (peace be upon him) learned that the people of Bani al-Mustaliq were making preparations for a war against the Muslims and were also trying to muster other clans for this purpose, he fore-stalled and took the enemy by surprise. After capturing the people of the clan and their belongings, the Prophet (peace be upon him) made a halt near Muraisi, a spring in their territory. One day a dispute concerning taking water from the spring started between a servant of Umar and an ally of the clan of Khazraj, and developed into a quarrel between the Muhajirs (immigrants) and the Ansar (Muslims of Madinah), but was soon settled. This, however, did not suit the strategy of Abdullah bin Ubayy, who also had joined the expedition with a large number of hypocrites. So he began to incite the Ansar, saying: You yourselves brought these people of the quraish from Makkah and made them partners in your wealth and property. And now they have become your rivals and want domination over you. If even now you withdraw your support from them, they shall be forced to leave your city. Then he swore and declared: As soon as we reach back Al-Madinah, the respectable people will turn out the degraded

people from the city.

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to know of this, he ordered the people to set off immediately and march back to Al-Madinah. The forced march continued up to noon the next day without a halt on the way so that the people became exhausted and had no time for idle talk.

Though this wise judgment and quick action by the Prophet (peace be upon him) averted the undesirable consequences of the mischief, Abdullah bin Ubayy got another opportunity for doing a far more serious and greater mischief, i.e. by engineering a slander against Ayesha, for that was a mischief which might well have involved the young Muslim community into a civil war, if the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his sincere and devoted followers had not shown wisdom, forbearance and marvelous discipline in dealing with it. In order to understand the events that led to the incident of the slander, we cite the story in Ayesha's own words. She says:

Whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) went out on a journey, he decided by lots as to which of his wives should accompany him. Accordingly, it was decided that I should accompany him during the expedition to Bani al Mustaliq. On the return journey, the Prophet (peace be upon him) halted for the night at a place which was the last stage on the way back to Al-Madinah. It was still night, when they began to make preparations for the march. So I went outside the camp to ease myself. When I returned and came near my halting place, I noticed that my necklace had fallen down somewhere. I went back in search for it but in the

meantime the caravan moved on and I was left behind all alone. The four carriers of the litter had placed it on my camel without noticing that it was empty. This happened because of my light weight due to lack of food in those days. I wrapped myself in my sheet and lay down in the hope that when it would be found that I had been left behind, a search party would come back to pick me up. In the meantime I fell asleep. In the morning, when Safwan bin Muattal Sulami passed that way, he saw me and recognized me for he had seen me several times before the commandment about *hijab* had been sent down. No sooner did he see me than he stopped his camel and cried out spontaneously: How sad! The wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been left here. At this I woke up all of a sudden and covered my face with my sheet. Without uttering another word, he made his camel kneel by me and stood aside, while I climbed on to the camel back. He led the camel by the nose-string and we overtook the caravan at about noon, when it had just halted and nobody had yet noticed that I had been left behind. I learnt afterwards that this incident had been used to slander me and Abdullah bin Ubayy was foremost among the slanderers. According to other traditions, when Ayesha reached the camp on the camel, led by Safwan, and it was known that she had been left behind, Abdullah bin Ubayy cried out: By God, she could not have remained chaste. Look, there comes the wife of your Prophet openly on the camel led by the person with whom she passed the night.

When I reached Al-Madinah, I fell ill and stayed in bed for

more than a month. Though I was quite unaware of it, the news of the slander was spreading like a scandal in the city, and had also reached the Prophet (peace be upon him). Anyhow, I noticed that he did not seem as concerned about my illness as he used to be. He would come but without addressing me directly, would inquire from others how I was and leave the house. Therefore it troubled my mind that something had gone wrong somewhere. So I took leave of him and went to my mother's house for better nursing.

While I was there, one night I went out of the city to ease myself in the company of Mistah's mother, who was a first cousin of my mother. As she was walking along she stumbled over something and cried out spontaneously: May Mistah perish. To this I retorted: What a good mother you are that you curse your own son, the son who took part in the battle of Badr. She replied: My dear daughter, are you not aware of his scandal mongering? Then she told me everything about the campaign of the slander. Besides the hypocrites, some true Muslims also had been involved in this campaign, and among them who took leading part in it, were Mistah, Hassan bin Thabit, the famous poet of Islam, and Hamnah, daughter of Jahsh and sister of Hadrat Zainab. Hearing this horrible story, my blood curdled, and I immediately returned home, and passed the rest of the night in crying over it.

During my absence the Prophet (peace be upon him) took counsel with Ali and Usamah bin Zaid about this matter. Usamah said good words about me to this effect: O Messenger of Allah, we have found nothing but good in

your wife. All that is being spread about her is a lie and calumny. As regards to Ali, he said: O Messenger of Allah, there is no dearth of women. You may, if you like, marry another wife. If, however, you would like to investigate into the matter, you may send for her maid servant and inquire into it through her. Accordingly, the maid servant was sent for and questioned. She replied: I declare on an oath by Allah, Who has sent you with the truth, that I have never seen any evil thing in her, except that she falls asleep when I tell her to look after the kneaded dough in my absence and a goat comes and eats it.

On that same day the Prophet addressed the people from the pulpit, saying: O Muslims, who from among you will defend my honor against the attacker of the person who has transgressed all bounds in doing harm to me by slandering my wife. By God, I have made a thorough inquiry and found nothing wrong with her nor with the man, whose name has been linked with the slander. At this Usaid bin Hudair or Saad bin Mauz, according to other traditions stood up and said: O Messenger of Allah, if that person belongs to our clan, we will kill him by ourselves, but if he belongs to the Khazraj clan, we will kill him if you order us to do so. Hearing this Saad bin Ubadah, chief of the Khazraj clan, stood up and said: You lie, you can never kill him. You are saying this just because the person belongs to our clan of Khazraj. Had he belonged to your clan, you would never have said so. Usaid retorted: You are a hypocrite: that is why you are defending a hypocrite. At this, there was a general turmoil in the mosque, which

would have developed into a riot, even though the Prophet (peace be upon him) was present there the whole time. But he cooled down their anger and came down from the pulpit. The remaining details of the incident will be cited along with our commentary on the text, which honorably absolved Aishah from the blame. But here we would only want to point out the enormity of the mischief that was engineered by Abdullah bin Ubayy.

(1) It implied an attack on the honor of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Abu Bakr Siddiq.

(2) He meant to undermine the high moral superiority which was the greatest asset of the Islamic movement.

(3) He intended to ignite civil war between the Muhajirs and the Ansar, and between Aus and Khazraj, the two clans of the Ansar.

Theme and Topics

This Surah and verses 28-73 of Surah Al-Ahzab (of which this is the sequel) were revealed to strengthen the moral front, which at that time was the main target of the attack. Verses 28-73 of Surah Al-Ahzab were revealed concerning the Prophet's (peace be upon him) marriage with Zainab, and on the occasion of the second attack (the slander about Aishah), Surah An-Noor was revealed to repair the cracks that had appeared in the unity of the Muslim community. If we keep this in view during the study of the two Surahs, we shall understand the wisdom that underlies the commandments about hijab. Allah sent the following instructions to strengthen and safeguard the moral front, and to counteract the storm of propaganda that was raised

on the occasion of the marriage of Zainab.

1. The wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were enjoined to remain within their private quarters, to avoid display of adornments and to be cautious in their talk with other persons (verses 32, 33).

2. The other Muslims were forbidden to enter the private rooms of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and instructed to ask whatever they wanted from behind the curtain (v. 53).

3. A line of demarcation was drawn between the *mahram* and the *non-mahram* relatives. Only the former were allowed to enter the private rooms of those wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) with whom they were so closely related as to prohibit marriage with them (v. 55).

4. The Muslims were told that the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were prohibited for them just like their own real mothers; therefore every Muslim should regard them with the purest of intentions (verses 53, 54).

5. The Muslims were warned that they would invite the curse and scourge of Allah if they offended the Prophet (peace be upon him). Likewise, it was a heinous sin to attack the honor of or slander any Muslim man or woman (verses 57, 58).

6. All the Muslim women were enjoined to cover their faces with their sheets if and when they had to go out of their houses (v. 59).

On the occasion of the second attack, this Surah was revealed to keep pure and strengthen the moral fiber of the Muslim society, which had been shaken by the enormity of the slander. We give below a summary of the

commandments and instructions in their chronological order so that one may understand how the Quran makes use of the psychological occasion to reform the community by the adoption of legal, moral and social measures.

1. Fornication which had already been declared to be a social crime (Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 15,16) was now made a criminal offense and was to be punished with a hundred lashes.

2. It was enjoined to boycott the adulterous men and women and the Muslims were forbidden to have any marriage relations with them.

3. The one, who accused the other of adultery but failed to produce four witnesses, was to be punished with eighty lashes.

4. The Law of *lian* was prescribed to decide the charge of adultery against his own wife by a husband.

5. The Muslims were enjoined to learn a lesson from the incident of the slander about Aishah, as if to say: You should be very cautious in regard to charges of adultery against the people of good reputation, and should not spread these. Nay, you should refute and suppress them immediately. In this connection, a general principle was enunciated that the proper spouse for a pure man is a pure woman, for he cannot pull on with a wicked woman for long, and the same is the case with a pure woman, as if to say: When you knew that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was a pure man, nay, the purest of all human beings, how could you believe that he had experienced happiness with a wicked woman and exalted her as the most beloved of his

wives? For it was obvious that an adulterous woman could not have been able to deceive, with her affected behavior, a pure man like the Prophet (peace be upon him). You ought also to have considered the fact that the accuser was a mean person while the accused was a pure woman. This should have been enough to convince you that the accusation was not worth your consideration; nay, it was not even conceivable.

6. Those who spread news and evil rumors and propagate wickedness in the Muslim community deserve punishment and not encouragement.

7. A general principle was laid down that relations in the Muslim community should be based on good faith and not on suspicion. Everyone should be treated as innocent unless he is proven to be guilty and vice versa.

8. The people were forbidden to enter the houses of others unceremoniously and were instructed to take permission for this.

9. Both men and women were instructed to lower their gaze and forbidden to cast glances or make eyes at each other.

10. Women were enjoined to cover their heads and breasts even inside their houses.

11. Women were forbidden to appear with make-up before other men except their servants or such relatives with whom their marriage is prohibited.

12. They were enjoined to hide their make-ups when they went out of their houses, and even forbidden to put on jingling ornaments while they moved out of their houses.

13. Marriage was encouraged and enjoined even for slaves and slave girls, for unmarried people help spread indecency.

14. The institution of slavery was discouraged and the owners and other people were enjoined to give financial help to the slaves to earn their freedom under the law of *Mukatabat*.

15. Prostitution by slave girls was forbidden in the first instance, for prostitution in Arabia was confined to this class alone. This in fact implied the legal prohibition of prostitution.

16. Sanctity of privacy in home life was enjoined even for servants and under age children including one's own. They were enjoined not to enter the private rooms of any man or woman without permission; especially in the morning, at noon and at night.

17. Old women were given the concession that they could set aside their head covers within their houses but should refrain from display of adornments. Even they were told that it was better for them to keep themselves covered with head wrappers.

18. The blind, lame, crippled and sick persons were allowed to take any article of food from the houses of other people without permission, for it was not to be treated like theft and cheating, which are cognizable offenses.

19. On the other hand, the Muslims were encouraged to develop mutual relationships by taking their meals together and the nearest relatives and intimate friends were allowed to take their meals in each other's house without any

formal invitation. This was to produce mutual affection and sincere relationships between them to counteract any future mischief. Side by side with these instructions, clear signs of the believers and the hypocrites were stated to enable every Muslim to discriminate between the two. At the same time the community was bound together by adopting disciplinary measures in order to make it stronger and firmer than it was at the time so as to discourage the enemies from creating mischief in it.

Above all, the most conspicuous thing about this discourse is that it is free from the bitterness which inevitably follows such shameful and absurd attacks. Instead of showing any wrath at this provocation, the discourse prescribes some laws and regulations and enjoins reformative commandments and issues wise instructions that were required at the time for the education and training of the community. Incidentally, this teaches us how to deal with such provocative mischiefs coolly, wisely and generously. At the same time, it is a clear proof that this is not the word of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) but of a Being Who is observing all human conditions and affairs from the highest level, and guiding mankind without any personal prejudices, feelings and leanings. Had this been the word of the Prophet (peace be upon him); there would have been at least some tinge of natural bitterness in spite of his great generosity and forbearance, for it is but human that a noble man naturally become enraged when his own honor is attacked in this mean manner.

1. (This is) a surah which We have sent down and which We have enjoined, and We have revealed in it manifest verses,^{*1} that you may remember.

سُورَةٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهَا وَفَرَضْنَاهَا
وَأَنْزَلْنَا فِيهَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ
تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١﴾

*1 In all these sentences the emphasis is on We, which implies that it is Allah Who has revealed this and none else; therefore: You should not treat these instructions lightly like the word of an ordinary preacher. You should note it well that these have been sent down by One Who controls your lives and destinies and from Whom you can never escape even after your death.

The second sentence emphasizes that the instructions sent down in this Surah are not of the nature of advice which you may accept or reject at will. These are mandatory commandments which must be obeyed. If you are a believer and a true Muslim, you are obliged to act upon them.

The third sentence states that the instructions given in this Surah are free from any ambiguity and are couched in clear and plain words. Therefore, you cannot put up the excuse that you could not act upon them as you did not understand them.

This is the preamble of this blessed message after which the specific commandments follow. The cone of the preamble itself indicates the great importance which Allah has attached to the commandments contained in Surah An-Noor. The preamble of no other Surah containing commandments is so forceful as this.

2. The adulteress and the adulterer, lash each one of them (with) a hundred lashes.*2 And let not withhold you for the twain (any) pity in the religion of Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day.*3 And let a group of the believers witness their punishment.*4

الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ
وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلَا
تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا
طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*2 There are various legal, moral and historical aspects of this problem which need explanation, for if these are not clarified in detail, the modern man will find it difficult to understand the divine law concerning it. Accordingly, we shall discuss the various aspects of the problem below.

(1) The common meaning of *zina* which everyone knows is sexual intercourse between a man and a woman without the legal relationship of husband and wife existing between them. There has been complete unanimity of view among all the social systems from the earliest times to this day that this act is morally wicked, religiously sinful and socially evil and objectionable, and there has been no dissenting voice except from those stray individuals who have subordinated their moral sense to their lust, or who in their misguided notions try to be original and philosophical in their approach. The universal unanimity of view in this respect is

due to the fact that man by nature abhors *zina*. In fact, the future of human race and civilization depends on this that the relationship between the husband and wife should be built upon the basis of an enduring and everlasting bond of fidelity, which should not only be fully recognized in the social life but should also be guaranteed by the existing social structure. Without this the human race cannot survive. This is because the human child requires years of tender care and training for survival and development and a woman alone cannot bear the burden without the cooperation of the man who became the cause of the birth of the child. Similarly human civilization itself is the product of the corporate life of a man and a woman, their setting up a home, bringing up a family, and establishing mutual relationships and inter-connections between families. If men and women were to lose sight of this essential fact, that is, the establishment of a home and raising a family, and were to meet freely just for pleasure and lust, the entire structure of human society would crumble. In fact, the very foundations on which the structure of human civilization and culture has been built will topple down and the whole basis of the concept of a social life will disappear. It is for these reasons that free mixing of men and women, without any recognized and stable bonds of fidelity, is abhorrent to human nature, and it is for this reason that in every age *zina* has been considered as a moral evil and, in religious terminology, a grave sin. Accordingly, the social systems in every age recognized and adopted the institution of marriage and also

adopted preventive measures against adultery or fornication. The forms of the measures adopted in this direction have, however, differed under different social, cultural and religious systems. This difference has been the result of the realization of the disastrous effects of adultery (or fornication) in varying degrees: some societies have considered it to be more heinous than others, and some have conceived it clearly and some others not so clearly and confused it with other problems.

(2) Though adultery (or fornication) has always been accepted as an evil, opinion has differed as to whether it is legally a punishable offense or not, and this is where Islam differs from other religions and systems of law. Social systems which have been akin to human nature have always considered illicit intercourse between man and woman a serious crime and prescribed severe punishments for it. But with the deterioration in moral standards, this morality grew weaker and weaker and the attitude towards this crime became more and more tolerant.

The first common lapse in this connection was caused by the invidious distinction between fornication and adultery. The former as such was taken as an ordinary offense while the latter only was held as a punishable crime.

Zina, as defined under various laws, means a sexual intercourse between a man (whether married or bachelor) and a woman, who is not the wife of anybody. This definition takes into account the position of the woman rather than of the man. If a woman is without a husband, the illicit intercourse with her amounts to fornication

irrespective of the fact whether the man is married or not. The ancient laws of Egypt, Babylon, Assyria and India provided very light punishments for it, and the same were adopted by the Greeks and the Romans, which finally influenced the Jewish attitude. According to the Bible, only monetary compensation is payable for such an offense. The commandment on the subject is as follows:

And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins. (Exod. 22: 16,17).

The same commandment is repeated in different words in Deuteronomy, which is as below.

If a man finds a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with, and they be found. Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver (about fifty-five rupees), and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her. (Deut. 22: 28, 29).

Under the Jewish law, if a priest's daughter acts immorally, she is to be sentenced to burning and the man with whom she was alleged to have acted immorally was to suffer strangulation. (Everyman's Talmud, pp. 319, 320).

To judge the extent to which this conception resembles that of the Hindus, it will be worthwhile to compare it with the laws of Manu. According to him: Anybody who commits illicit intercourse with an unmarried girl of his own caste with her consent does not deserve any punishment. If the father of the girl is willing, the man should compensate him

and marry the girl. But if the girl happens to belong to a higher caste and the man belongs to a lower caste, the girl should be turned out from her parents' house and the limbs of the man should be cut off. (Adhiai 8. Ashlok 365, 366). This punishment may be changed into burning him alive, if the girl happens to be a Brahman. (Ashlok 377).

Under all these laws, illicit intercourse with a married woman only was the real and major crime. The deciding factor for treating it as a crime was not the illicit relationship between the man and the woman but the likelihood of an awkward situation under which a child might have to be reared up by a man (the real husband of the woman), who was not its father. It was therefore not the act of *zina* itself but the danger of the mixing up of progenies and the problem of rearing up somebody else's child at the expense of another and a possibility of its inheriting his property, that was the real basis of treating it as a crime and holding both the man and the woman as criminals. Under the Egyptian law, the man was to receive a severe beating with sticks and the nose of the woman was to be cut off. Similar punishments existed in Babylon, Assyria and Iran. According to the Hindus, the woman was to be thrown to the dogs to be torn apart and the man was to be put on a hot iron bed with fire all around him to burn him alive. At first the Greek and the Roman laws gave a man the right to kill his wife if he found her involved in adultery. He had also the option to demand monetary compensation. In the first century B.C. Augustus Caesar enacted that half the property of the man should be

confiscated and he should be exiled. In case of the woman, half her dowry should be written off and one-third of her assets confiscated, and she should also be sent out to a distant part of the country. Constantine changed this law and imposed death penalty both for the man and for the woman. In the times of Leo and Marcian, this punishment was changed to imprisonment for life. Justinian further reduced the punishment and ordered that the woman should be flogged with stripes and sent to a monastery and the husband should be given the right to take her out within two years if he liked, otherwise she was to remain there for ever. Under the Jewish law, the orders for illicit intercourse with a married woman are as under.

And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman, that is a bond maid, betrothed to an husband, and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her, she shall be scourged; they shall not be put to death, because she was not free. (Leviticus 19: 20).

And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. (Leviticus 20: 10).

If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. (Deuteronomy 22: 22).

If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel,

because she cried not, being in the city, and the man, because he had humbled his neighbor's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you. But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the Held, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the matt only that lay with her shall die: But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbor, and slayeth him, even so is this matter. (Deuteronomy 22: 23-26).

However, long before the advent of Christ, the Jewish jurists and scholars, the rich and the poor, had practically ceased to observe these laws. Though it was written in the Old Testament, and it was considered as a divine commandment, nobody was inclined to apply it practically. In the entire Jewish history, there is not a single instance where this commandment was ever enforced. When Jesus (peace be upon him) embarked upon his prophetic mission, and invited the people to the eternal truth, the learned Jews, seeing that there was no way to stop the tide, brought a woman guilty of adultery before him and asked him to decide her case. (John 8: 11). Their object was to create a dilemma for Jesus and to tempt and embarrass him. If he decided in favour of any punishment other than stoning, they would vilify him saying: Here comes a strange Prophet who has changed the divine law for the sake of worldly considerations. And if he were to give the verdict of stoning, this would, on the one hand, bring him in direct clash with the Roman law, and on the other, give them the opportunity to tell the people: Look, what you believe in a

Prophet who will expose you to all the severities of the Torah? But Jesus turned the tables on them with one sentence, saying: He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. This put the jurists to shame and they departed one by one in humiliation, and the moral degeneration of the learned in law was totally exposed. When the woman was left alone, Jesus admonished her and after her repentance let her go. Jesus did this because he was neither a judge of any court competent to decide the case, nor any evidence had been produced against her, nor was there any government to enforce the divine law.

On the basis of this incident and some miscellaneous sayings of Jesus (peace be upon him) on different occasions, the Christians formed an utterly erroneous conception about the crime of *zina*. According to them, illicit intercourse between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman is a sin but not a punishable offence. But if either of them (or both) is married, adultery is treated as a crime. It is so not because of the illicit intercourse as such but because of the vow of fidelity taken by each of them before the priest at the altar. Nevertheless, there is no punishment even for this, except that the wife has the right to sue her adulterous husband and claim separation for having violated the vow of fidelity. On the other side, the husband of the adulterous woman can also sue his wife for separation and can also claim compensation from the man who had illicit intercourse with his wife. This is the punishment in the Christian law for adultery. The irony is that even this punishment is a double-edged sword, because

a woman, though entitled to separation from her husband by proving his infidelity and getting rid of him cannot remarry under the Christian law. Similarly the husband who sues his wife for infidelity can obtain judicial separation, but cannot remarry. Both the man and the woman who accuse each other of infidelity in a Christian court, will be deprived of the right of remarriage for the rest of their lives.

The Western laws of the modern times, which have also been adopted by the Muslims in various countries, are based on such conceptions. According to them, *zina* may be an evil, and an immoral and sinful thing, but it is not a crime. It becomes a crime only when illicit intercourse is committed without the consent of the other party. As for adultery by a married man, this only provides a cause for complaint to his wife who may, if she likes, prove it and get a divorce. Similarly in the case of an adulteress, her husband can lodge a complaint against her and also against the man with whom adultery was committed and can sue both of them to claim divorce from the woman and monetary compensation from the man.

(3) The Islamic law, in contrast to all these conceptions, holds *zina* as a punishable crime and its committal by the married person enhances the guilt all the more. This is not so because of the violation of the oath of fidelity taken by the man or the woman nor because of the encroachment on the conjugal rights of the other, but because the criminal resorted to an unlawful method when there existed a lawful method for satisfying his sex desires. The Islamic law views

zina as an act which, if allowed to be indulged in freely, will strike at the very roots of both human race and human civilization. In the interest of the preservation of the human race and the stability of human civilization, it is imperative that relationship between man and woman should be regulated only through lawful and reliable means. And it is not possible to restrain this relationship if opportunities for free mixing of the sexes are allowed to exist, for it cannot be expected from a man or a woman to be prepared to bear the onerous responsibilities of the family life if he or she has the opportunities for the gratification of the sex desires without this. For in that case it will be as meaningless as buying a ticket for a journey when people can travel without a ticket as well. A ticket is essential only when travelling without a ticket is declared to be an offense. If somebody is found traveling without a ticket because he cannot afford to buy it, he is a criminal though in a lesser degree. But if a rich man resorts to this, his guilt becomes all the more serious.

(4) Islam does not rely on punitive law alone for saving humanity from the menace of *zina*. It employs both reformatory and prohibitory measures on a large scale. It has provided legal punishment only as a last resort. Islam does not want that the people should go on committing this crime and getting flogged with stripes day and night. Its real aim is that the people should not commit this crime at all and there should be no occasion to resort to the extreme punishment. For this purpose Islam first of all purifies man: it imbues him with the fear of All-Powerful and All-

Knowing Allah: it inculcates in him the sense of accountability for his actions in the Hereafter from which even death cannot release him. It fills him with obligation of obedience to divine law which is sure to follow true faith. Then, it repeatedly warns him that *zina* and unchastity are heinous crimes, which Allah will call to account with a severe reckoning. This theme occurs again and again in the Quran. Moreover, Islam provides all possible facilities for a man to marry. If he is not satisfied with one wife, he is allowed to take up to four. If the husband and the wife cannot pull on amicably, there are provisions for separation. In case of a dispute between the two, provision exists for reconciliation through the intervention of the members of the family and failing that through the judicial courts so that they should either reconcile or separate and then remarry wherever they like. All this has been explained in Surahs Al-Baqarah, An-Nisa and At-Talaq. In this Surah too, it is not considered good and right to remain unmarried and a clear commandment has been given that marriages should be arranged between unmarried persons and even slaves (men and women) should not be allowed to remain unmarried. Then Islam puts an end to all those factors which allure a man to *zina* or provide occasions for it. A year before the punishment for *zina* was prescribed, women were commanded (in Surah Al-Ahzab) to cover themselves with sheets and lower their head-covers over their faces when going out of their houses. The wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who were a model for every Muslim family, were ordered to restrict themselves to their

houses with decorum and dignity and not to display their charms and adornments. Moreover, they were required to communicate with men from behind the curtain if there be any need for that. This was a model which was followed by all the believing women who considered the Prophet's wives and daughters patterns of virtue and not the immodest women of the age of ignorance. Similarly, the free mixing of the men and women was discouraged before it was declared as a criminal offense and women were prohibited from going out openly in make-up.

After adopting such measures *zina* was declared to be a punishable offense and spreading of indecency in any way was also prohibited. Prostitution was legally banned and severe punishment was prescribed for charging men and women with adultery and propagating it without proof. Men were enjoined to restrain their gaze so that unrestricted feasting of eyes should not lead to lust for beauty and further on to illicit love. At the same time women were also enjoined to differentiate between mahram and non-mahram relatives. This enables one to understand the entire scheme of reform, a constituent part of which is the prescribed punishment for *zina*. This extreme punishment is for those incorrigible persons who persist in resorting to the illegal course for the gratification of their sex desires in spite of all the treasures adopted to reform the individual and society. They certainly deserve to be flogged. Punishment of a wicked person serves as a, psychological deterrent for those who have similar tendencies.

Mahram relatives are those between whom marriage is not permissible under the Islamic Law, e.g. father and daughter, uncle and niece, nephew and aunt, and so on. Non-mahram are those between whom marriage is permissible e.g. cousins, etc. Punishment is not merely a punishment for the criminal but is a declaration of the policy that the Islamic society has no room for debauchery and people cannot be allowed to live lives of indulgence and pleasures without restraint. If one tries to understand the Islamic scheme of reform from this point of view, one will realize that not a single part of the law can either be dispensed with or amended. Only a fool who assumes the role of a self-styled reformer, without understanding this divine law, will ever think of changing it, or a mischievous person, who deliberately wants to alter the very object of the social order designed by Allah, will try to tamper with it.

(5) *Zina* was declared a culpable act in the third year of Hijrah, but, it was not a legal crime at that time; as such the police and the courts were not competent to initiate legal proceedings. It was considered as a social crime against the institution of family. Accordingly the members of the family themselves were competent to punish the accused. The commandment at that time was that if four men should bear witness to having seen a man and a woman committing *zina*, both the culprits should get a beating and the woman should be imprisoned in the house. But at the same time there was a suggestion that this commandment would apply till further orders and that the

real law was yet to follow. (See Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 15). After about two to three years the present commandment was revealed which canceled the previous commandment and declared *zina* to be a cognizable offense.

(6) The punishment prescribed in this verse 2 is for sexual intercourse between unmarried persons; it does not apply to illicit intercourse after marriage, which is a much graver offense under the Islamic law. This thing is implied in verses 15 and 25 of Surah An-Nisa that the punishment being prescribed is for the unmarried offenders.

If any of your women are guilty of indecency, call four witnesses from among yourselves to testify this. If they give evidence and prove the guilt, then confine them to their houses until death comes to them, or Allah opens some other way out for them. (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 15). Whoso cannot afford to marry free Muslim women, he should marry one of the Muslim slave-girls in your possession. Allah has full knowledge of your faith. You all belong to one and the same community. Therefore you may marry them with the permission of their guardians and give them their dowries so that they may live a decent life in wedlock and not in licentiousness nor may have secret illicit relations. Then if they are guilty of indecency, after they have been fortified by wedlock, they shall be given half the punishment prescribed for free women. (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 25).

Verse 15 held out a hope that Allah would open some other way out for those adulterous women who were to be imprisoned according to the commandment contained in it.

Thus, the commandment in verse 2 of this Surah is the same which was promised in Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 15. Then in Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 25 the punishment for a married slave-girl guilty of adultery has been prescribed. The word *muhsanat* has been used twice in the same verse in the same context and one will have to concede that it has been used in the same sense at both the places. Now let us consider the sentence: “Whoso cannot afford to marry free Muslim women (*muhsanat*)” Obviously a *muhsanah* cannot mean a married woman; it can only mean an unmarried woman of a free family. Then at the end of the verse it has been enjoined that if a slave woman commits adultery after her marriage, she should be given half the punishment prescribed for a free unmarried woman. The context clearly indicates that in this sentence the word *muhsanat* has the same meaning as in the first sentence, i.e. an unmarried woman, who enjoys the protection of a free family. Thus it is concluded from these two verses of Surah An-Nisa that the commandment contained in this verse of Surah An-Noor is the same that was promised in verse 15 of Surah An-Nisa and it prescribes punishment for sexual intercourse between unmarried persons. (Also see E. N. 46 of Surah An-Nisa).

(7) As regards to the punishment for adultery after marriage, the Quran does not mention it, but it has been prescribed in the traditions. We learn from many authentic traditions that not only did the Prophet (peace be upon him) prescribe the punishment of stoning to death for it verbally but also enforced it practically in several cases.

Then after him his successors not only enforced this punishment during their caliphates but also declared repeatedly that this was the legal punishment. The companions and their followers were unanimous on this point and there is not a single saying of anyone to suggest that anybody doubted the authenticity of this law during that period. After them the jurists of all ages and countries have been unanimous that this is the legal punishment prescribed by the Sunnah, for there have been so many strong and continuous proofs of its authenticity that no scholar can refute them. In the entire history of the Muslims, nobody ever denied this except the Kharijites and some Mutazilites and even they did not deny it on the ground that there was some weakness in the proof of its having been enjoined by the Prophet (peace be upon him), but because they considered it to be against the Quran. This was, however, due to their lack of understanding the Quran. They argued that by using the words Az-zani waz-zaniyatu in their general sense the Quran has prescribed a punishment of one hundred stripes for this crime. Therefore, according to them, the only punishment for adultery (or fornication) prescribed in the Quran was this, and to prescribe a different punishment for the married persons who committed adultery would be against the divine law. But they forgot that the explanation of the Quranic verses by the Prophet (peace be upon him) carries the same weight and authority in law as the words of the Quran itself, provided that the explanation is proved to be from the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Quran has used

As-sariqu was-sariqatu in similar general terms and prescribed the punishment of amputation of hands for the thief, both male and female. Now if this commandment were to be interpreted literally without the limitations authentically emanating from the Prophet (peace be upon him), the generality of the words used would demand that every man or woman, who steals a needle or a plum, should be declared to be a thief and his or her hand cut off from the shoulder. On the other hand, if a thief, who has stolen millions, declares on his arrest that he has reformed himself and has repented of theft, he should be let off in accordance with: But whoso repents after his iniquity and reforms himself, Allah will surely turn towards him with His favour. (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 39).

Likewise, the Quran forbids marriage only with a foster mother and a foster sister. According to their argument, such a ban should not apply to a foster daughter. The Quran forbids a person to keep two sisters as wives at one and the same time; therefore if a person keeps the aunt (paternal or maternal) and her niece together as wives, he should not be charged with violating the Quranic injunction. Again, the Quran forbids marriage with a step-daughter only when she has been brought up in the house of her step-father; therefore, according to their way of reasoning, the absolute prohibition of marriage with a step-daughter should be regarded as against the Quran. Similarly the Quran allows mortgage only when a man is on a journey and nobody is available to prepare the loan documents; therefore if a person is at home and a scribe is

also available, mortgage should be regarded as un-Quranic. Then, the Quran enjoins in general terms: You should have witnesses whenever you buy or sell goods. Therefore, according to them, all sales and purchases taking place in the markets without witnesses should be unlawful.

These few instances should suffice to prove the error in the reasoning of those who hold the commandment of stoning to death as against the Quran. Nobody can deny the position and authority of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the legal system of Islam. It is he alone who can explain the underlying intention of a divine command, its procedures and in what cases it will be applicable and in what there is another injunction. To deny this position and authority of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is not only against the principles of Islam but it also entails innumerable complications in practice.

(8) There is a difference of opinion among the jurists about the legal definition of *zina*. According to the Hanafis, it means frontal sexual intercourse of a man with a woman who is neither his wife nor his bondwoman, nor is there any valid reason to believe that the sexual act was committed under the misapprehension that the woman was his own wife or his own Bondwoman. According to this definition, sexual act with a woman in the rectum, or sodomy, or sex gratification with animals, does not constitute *zina*. It is confined only to the frontal sexual intercourse with a woman without any legal right or any doubt thereof. According to the Shafais, *zina* means insertion of the male sexual organ into the female sexual part, which though

forbidden by law may be quite natural. According to the Malikis, *zina* means the entry of the male sexual organ into the frontal sexual part, or in the rectum of a woman or man, without legal right or any doubt about its being legal. According to these two definitions, sodomy also will be included in *zina*. The correct position, however, is that these definitions are removed from the common meaning of *zina*. The Quran always employs words in their ordinary meaning and according to their common usage, unless it uses a certain word as a term. In such a case the Quran itself makes plain the particular sense of the term. In the context in which the word *zina* occurs, there is no indication that it has been used in any particular sense. Accordingly, the word will have to be taken in the sense in which it is commonly understood. It is, therefore, confined to an illicit intercourse with a woman in the natural way and does not extend to other forms of sexual gratification. Besides, it is well known that there was a difference of opinion about the punishment for sodomy among the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Had sodomy been included in *zina* according to the Islamic terminology, there would have been no occasion for such a difference of opinion.

(9) Penetration of the glans of the penis is a sufficient legal ground for punishing the act of *zina*. It is not essential that the penetration should be full or the sexual intercourse should be complete. On the other hand, if there is no penetration of the glans of the penis, mere lying of the couple in the same bed or their caressing each other or

their being found naked, is not a sufficient ground for declaring them to be guilty of *zina*; so much so that the Islamic law does not bother to get the couple medically examined to establish their guilt of illicit sexual intercourse and then to get them punished according to the law. Those who are found in such an indecent condition are offenders and punishable according to the circumstances. The competent authority to determine the nature of the punishment is either a court or the legislature of the Islamic State. If the punishment is to be given in the form of flogging with stripes, it should not exceed ten stripes as specified in a tradition. Except in cases where a specific punishment has been prescribed by Allah, none should be flogged with more than ten stripes for any offense. (Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud). However, if a person is not caught red-handed but confesses his guilt himself, he should only be admonished to repent. According to a tradition reported by Abdullah bin Masud, a man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: I did everything with a woman except the sexual intercourse, outside the city. Now you may give me any punishment you may deem fit. Umar said: When Allah had concealed it, you also should have kept it concealed. The Prophet (peace be upon him), however, remained silent and the man went away. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) called him back and recited the following verse to him:

Establish salat at the two ends of the day and in early part of the night; indeed virtues remove evils. (Surah Houd, Ayat 114) At this a man asked: Does the commandment

apply to him alone? The Holy Prophet replied: No, it is for all. (Muslim, Tirmizi, Abu Daud, Nasai).

Not only this, the Islamic law does not permit that in cases where a man confesses his guilt without specifying his offense, any investigation be made to find out what the actual offense was. A man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: O Messenger of Allah, I deserve the prescribed punishment, so enforce the punishment on me. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not ask him what punishment he deserved. After the man had offered his prayers, he again came and said: I am guilty, please punish me. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked: Have you not offered your prayer with us? When he replied in the affirmative, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Well Allah has pardoned your sin. (Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad).

(10) The mere fact that a person (man or woman) has committed *zina*, is not enough to declare him guilty of it. For this there are certain conditions which must be satisfied. These conditions are different for fornication and for adultery. In the case of fornication, the offender should be of age and possessing normal common sense. If a child or a lunatic is guilty of it he does not incur the punishment prescribed for *zina*. In the case of adultery, there are some additional conditions which are as under.

(a) There is unanimity of opinion that the offender must be a free person and not a slave. The Quran itself has indicated that a slave shall not be stoned to death on the charge of *zina*. As has already been stated, a slave-girl, if found guilty of adultery after marriage, shall get half the

punishment prescribed for a free unmarried woman. The jurists agree that the same Quranic law will apply to a slave.

(b) The criminal must be a legally married person. This condition has also the unanimous support of all the jurists. According to this condition, a man who has had sexual intercourse with a slave girl, or whose marriage was performed in an illegal manner, will not be treated as married and shall not be stoned to death but will be flogged with stripes if he commits *zina*.

(c) Such a person should not only have been legally married but must have had sexual intercourse with his wife after marriage. The mere ceremony of marriage does not entitle a man or a woman to be regarded as a *muhsin* or a *muhsanah* and be stoned to death in case of *zina*. Most of the jurists agree on this condition. However, Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Muhammad have added a supplementary condition to the effect that a man or a woman will be treated as married only when he or she is a free person and is of age and possesses normal common sense at the time of marriage and sexual intercourse. According to this supplementary condition, if a man is married to a slave girl, or to a minor or mad girl, and even has had sexual intercourse with her, he will not be punishable by stoning to death if found guilty of *zina*. The same applies to the case of a woman who may have had intercourse with a slave or a mad or immature husband. She will not be stoned to death if found guilty of *zina*. This is a very reasonable addition by these two far sighted

scholars.

(d) The criminal should be a Muslim. But Imam Shafai, Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Ahmad have disputed this. According to them, even if a non-Muslim married person, who is a protege of the Islamic State, is found guilty of *zina*, he will be stoned to death. But Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Malik have concurred that the punishment of stoning to death for adultery after marriage, applies only to the Muslims. The most weighty argument advanced in this connection is that a man, who is to be given the extreme punishment of stoning to death, should be the one who, in spite of enjoying the complete state of *ihsan* does not refrain from committing adultery. The Arabic word *ihsan* means moral fortification, which has three essential components. First, the man should be a believer in Allah and in the accountability after death and should owe allegiance to divine law. Second, he should be a free member of society and not a slave of somebody which might hinder him from satisfying his desires in a lawful manner, and his helplessness and indigence should make him commit a sin when there is no family to help him in protecting his morality and honour. Third, he should be married and should have the means of satisfying his sex desires lawfully. Where these three components exist, the moral fortification would be complete and anybody who breaks through these three fortifications for the sake of illicit sex gratification would really deserve the extreme penalty of being stoned to death. But in a case where the very first and foremost component of belief in Allah, in the

Hereafter and in divine law, does not exist, the fortification is not complete, and accordingly, the gravity of the guilt is not such as to entail the extreme punishment. This is supported by a tradition related by Ibn Umar and cited by Ishaq bin Rahaviah in his Musnad and Daraqutni in his Sunan: Whoever is guilty of shirk, he is not muhsan (morally fortified). There is, however, a difference of opinion whether Ibn Umar has quoted this as a saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or as his own verdict. In spite of this lacuna, the principle is very strong and sound in its theme.

It will not be correct to counteract the above argument by a deduction from the case brought by the Jews to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in which he ordered the stoning of a person guilty of *zina*. This is because all the authentic reports about the case show that it was not the Islamic law of the land which was applied, but the punishment was awarded on the basis of the Jewish personal law itself. According to a tradition cited by both Bukhari and Muslim, when this case was brought before the Prophet (peace be upon him), he asked: What is the punishment for this offence in your Torah? When it was confirmed that the Torah prescribed stoning, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: I pass the same judgment as has been prescribed in the Torah. According to another tradition, at the time of the judgment the Prophet (peace be upon him) remarked: O Allah, I am the first man to revive Thy commandment which they (the Jews) had rendered null and void. (Muslim, Abu Daud, Ahmad).

(11) In order to hold a person guilty of *zina* as punishable, it is necessary to prove that he committed the act of his own free will. If a person is forced to commit the act under compulsion or pressure, he or she is neither an offender nor liable to any punishment. This is not only based on the general principle of the Shariah that a person cannot be held responsible for acts done under compulsion, but this is also in accordance with the Quranic law. In the subsequent verses of this Surah the Quran proclaims pardon for those women who are forced into prostitution. It has also been made clear in the various traditions that in a case of rape only the man was punished and the woman, who had been violated, was let off. According to a tradition cited by Tirmizi and Abu Daud, a woman went out in darkness for prayers when on the way she was overpowered by a man and raped. She raised a hue and cry and the adulterer was caught red-handed and stoned to death by the order of the Prophet (peace be upon him), but the woman was let off. According to a tradition in Bukhari, a man raped a girl during the Caliphate of Umar, who had the man flogged with stripes and let the girl off. It is clear from these instances that there is unanimity of opinion about the law in regard to the case of a woman raped or forced into prostitution. However, there is a difference of opinion in respect of the man who commits the act under compulsion and coercion. Imam Abu Yusuf, Imam Muhammad, Imam Shafai and Imam Hasan bin Salih express the opinion that the man too, who is forced to commit *zina* under pressure, will be pardoned. Imam Zufar is of the opinion that he will

not be let off because the act of *zina* could not have been performed unless the male organ was fully excited, which means that his own lust and sex desire had urged him to commit the act. Imam Abu Hanifah says that if the act is done under coercion, of the government or any of its officials, the man will not be punished because when the government itself compels a man to commit it, it has no right to punish him. But if somebody else compels him to it, the adulterer will be punished because he could not have committed this without his own desire for it, as sexual lust cannot be aroused by coercion. Of the three opinions, the first one is convincing. This is because even if erection of the male organ is a proof of the sexual urge of the man, it is not necessarily a proof of his willing participation in the act. Suppose, for example, that a tyrant imprisons a simple God-fearing man and puts a beautiful young woman stripped naked in the same cell and does not want to release him until he commits *zina* and the tyrant brings four witnesses to prove it in the court, it will not be justice to stone them to death or flog them with stripes in utter disregard of the circumstances. This is because there is a probability that circumstances may be created whereby sexual desire may overpower a man even though he may not be a willing partner. Supposing a man were imprisoned and not given anything to drink except wine; then if he drinks it, will he be punished simply because not a single drop of wine could have gone down his throat if he did not intend it, even though he was forced by the circumstances to drink it? For in order to establish a guilt, mere existence

of intention is not enough, but it is also necessary to see that the person was in a position to exercise his free will. Therefore, if a person is placed in such circumstances that he is compelled to commit a crime, he will not be a real culprit in some cases, and in some his offence will be very light.

(12) The Islamic law does not confer on anybody the authority except the government to sit in judgment against the man or the woman accused of *zina* and none except an Islamic court has the authority to punish them. There is a complete consensus of all the jurists that in verse 2 the commandment, flog them with stripes, is not addressed to the common people but to the officials and judges of an Islamic government. There is, however, a difference of opinion whether the owner of a slave is competent to punish him or not. According to the Hanafi scholars, he is not, but according to the Shafais he is. The Malikis hold that the owner has no right to cut the hand in case of theft, but in case of *zina*, calumny and drinking of wine, he can enforce the prescribed punishments.

(13) Under the Islamic law the punishment for *zina* is a part of the law of the land. Accordingly, it will apply to all people in the Islamic State whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims. Probably none of the jurists except Imam Malik has differed with this opinion. As regards to the opinion of Imam Abu Hanifah that a non-Muslim guilty of *zina* should not be stoned to death, it is not based on the reason that a non-Muslim is not a complete muhsin, which is one of the conditions of stoning for *zina*, for this condition

is not satisfied unless one is a Muslim. On the other hand, Imam Malik says that a non-Muslim should not be stoned to death because the commandment is a part of the Muslim personal law and the addressees are the Muslims and not the non-Muslims. As for the foreigner who has entered into an Islamic State with due permission and is found guilty of *zina*, he should also be stoned according to Imam Shafai and Imam Abu Yusuf, but according to Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Muhammad he cannot be given the prescribed punishment.

(14) The Islamic Law does not make it obligatory that a person must confess his guilt of *zina*, or those who have knowledge of it must inform the authorities about it. But in case his guilt comes to the notice of the authorities, there is then no room for pardoning the guilt. This is based on a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him): If any of you is guilty of any immorality, he should better remain hidden under the curtain of Allah, but if he discloses it to us, we shall certainly enforce the law of Allah on him. According to a tradition of Abu Daud, when Maiz bin Malik Aslami committed the crime of *zina*, he, on the advice of Hazzal bin Nuaim, went before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and confessed his guilt. The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered that he should be stoned to death, but at the same time he said to Hazzal: Would that you had kept the matter hidden: this would have been better for you. In another tradition cited in Abu Daud and Nasai, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: You should yourselves pardon the crimes which merit prescribed punishments because when

a crime which calls for such a punishment comes to my notice, it will become obligatory on me to award the punishment.

(15) Under the Islamic Law *zina* is not a compoundable crime. This is based on a tradition which has been cited in almost all the collection of Hadith. A boy who was working as a laborer in a certain house committed *zina* with the wife of his employer. The father of the boy gave 100 goats and one slave girl to the man and made a compromise with him. But when the case came before the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said: The goats and the slave girl are yours and they are returned to you. Then he awarded the prescribed punishment to both the guilty ones. This shows that the crime of *zina* is not compoundable and that under the Islamic law, an outraged chastity cannot be compensated in terms of money. This shameless conception of monetary compensation for outraged modesty is a part of Western laws only.

(16) The Islamic government shall not take action against anybody for *zina* unless it is fully proved. If the guilt is not proved, the authorities cannot pass orders for punishment even if they have the knowledge of the crime through many other sources. There was a woman in Al-Madinah who openly practised prostitution according to traditions cited in Bukhari and Ibn-Majah, but in spite of this no punishment was given to her as there was no proof of *zina* against her, so much so that the Prophet (peace be upon him) once uttered the following words about her.

If I were to stone anybody to death without a proof, I would

have certainly gotten this woman stoned.

(17) The first possible proof of *zina* is that proper evidence should be established against the criminal. The important components of the law are.

(a) The Quran explicitly ordains that there should at least be four eyewitnesses to prove the guilt. This has been stated in Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 15, and in this Surah An-Noor, too, it has been reiterated twice (verses 4, 13). A judge is not authorized to decide the case on the basis of his own knowledge even if he has seen with his own eyes the couple committing the crime.

(b) The witnesses should be reliable according to the Islamic law of evidence, which requires that they should not have been proved to be false witnesses on any previous occasion. They should not be dishonest, they should not be previous convicts, and there should be no proof of their having any personal grudge against the accused, etc. In short, no one can be stoned nor flogged with stripes on the basis of unreliable evidence.

(c) The witnesses should give evidence to the effect that they saw the man and the woman in the actual state of intercourse, i.e. the union was complete such as a piston in a cylinder, and a rope in a well.

(d) The witnesses should be unanimous in regard to the time, the place and the persons committing the crime. Any difference in these basic things will nullify their testimony. These conditions amply indicate that the Islamic law does not intend to punish people as a matter of course. It inflicts severe punishment only when, in spite of all the measures to

reform and eradicate the evil, there still exists a shameless couple in the Islamic society who commits the crime in a way as to be witnessed by as many as four men.

(18) There is a difference of opinion as to whether pregnancy by itself in a free woman, when she has no known husband, or in a slave-girl, when she has no known master, is a sufficient circumstantial evidence for the establishment of the crime of *zina*. According to Umar; this is sufficient evidence, and the Malikis have adopted it. But the majority of the jurists are of the opinion that mere pregnancy is not a sufficient ground for stoning or flogging anybody with a hundred stripes. It is imperative that such a serious punishment should be based either on the evidence or on the confession of guilt. One of the basic principles of the Islamic law is that the benefit of doubt should go to the accused. This is supported by a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him): Avoid punishments wherever you find scope for it. (Ibn Majah). In another tradition, he said: Try to avoid punishing the Muslims wherever possible and if there is a way for an accused to escape punishment, let him off. An error of judgment in letting off an accused is better than in punishing him. (Tirmizi). According to this principle, the existence of pregnancy is not a definite proof of *zina*, however strong it may be for doubt. For there is a possibility that in one out of a million cases the semen of a man may enter the womb of a woman somehow or other without any sexual intercourse and make her pregnant. Even such a slight possibility of doubt should be enough to spare the accused of the horrible punishment for *zina*.

(19) There is also a difference of opinion as to whether the witnesses will be punished for falsely accusing a person in case their evidence differs from one another, or if they are not able to prove the guilt. According to a section of the jurists they will be regarded as *qazif* (one who makes a false accusation as a slanderer), and will be punished with 80 stripes each. Others say that they should not be punished because they came as witnesses and not as plaintiffs, Moreover, if the witnesses are to be punished like this, nobody will come forward as a witness in cases involving *zina*. This is because in that case no one will volunteer to appear as a witness at the risk of punishment, for nobody can be certain that all the four witnesses will be unanimous in their evidence We consider this second opinion as more rational, for the benefit of doubt should also accrue to the witnesses as it does to the accused. Therefore, if lapse in their testimony cannot result in the extreme punishment to the accused, it should also not result in any punishment to the witnesses branding them as false witnesses, unless of course, their falsehood is clearly proved. In support of the first opinion, two strong arguments are offered.

First, the Quran holds false accusation about *zina* as a punishable offense. But this argument is incorrect because the Quran makes a distinction between the *qazif* (the slanderer) and the *shahid* (one who appears in a court as an eyewitness). An eyewitness cannot be branded as a slanderer merely because the court did not hold his evidence as a sufficient proof of the crime.

The second argument is based on the case of Mughirah bin

Shubah, in which Umar punished Abu Bakrah and the other two eyewitnesses on the charge of false accusation. A critical study of the entire case shows that this precedent is not applicable to every case where the crime is not proved by proper evidence.

The facts of the case are that Mughirah bin Shubah, the Governor of Basrah, did not have good relations with Abu Bakrah, whose house was opposite to his house across the same street. One day the windows of the two houses were opened by a strong current of wind. When Abu Bakrah got up to close his window, he saw through the opposite window across the street Mughirah in a state of actual sexual intercourse. He asked three of his friends (Nafi bin Kaladah, and Shibl bin Mabad) who were also sitting with him to stand up and witness what Mughirah was doing. The friends asked him who was the woman. Abu Bakrah said that she was Umm Jamil. The next day a complaint to this effect was sent to Umar, who immediately suspended Mughirah and appointed Abu Musa Ashari as Governor of Basrah. Mughirah along with the witnesses was called to Al-Madinah. When they were asked about the case, Abu Bakrah said that they had seen Mughirah actually committing sexual intercourse with umm Jamil, but Ziad said that the woman was not clearly visible and that he could not say definitely whether it was Umm Jamil or not. During the cross examination, Mughirah proved that they could not have seen the woman distinctly from the place where they were standing. He also proved that there was a close resemblance between his wife and Umm Jamil.

Besides this, circumstantial evidence also showed that during the Caliphate of Umar, the governor of a province could not have committed this crime in his official residence, especially when his wife was also living with him. Thus the supposition of Abu Bakrah and his companions that Mughirah was having sexual intercourse with Umm Jamil, instead of his own wife, was nothing but a misplaced suspicion. It was for this reason that Umar not only acquitted the accused but also punished Abu Bakrah, Nafi and Shibl as slanderers. It is obvious that this isolated decision was based on the specific circumstances of the case and not on the principle that the witnesses must be punished when they are not able to prove the charge by their evidence. (For details of this case, see *Ahkam al-Quran*, Ibn al-Arabi, Vol. II, pp. 88, 89).

(20) Besides the evidence, the other thing by which the offense of *zina* can be established, is the confession of the accused himself. This confession must be in clear and plain words and the guilty one must confess that he committed *zina* with a woman who was unlawful for him. He should also admit that the act of *zina* was complete in every respect. The court must satisfy itself that the guilty person is confessing his guilt voluntarily without any external pressure and that, at the time of confession, he is in his right senses. Some jurists hold that one confession is not enough and that the guilty one must make four separate confessions. This is the view of Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Ahmad, Ibn Abi Laila, Ishaq bin Rahaviah and Hasan bin Salih. But according to Imam Malik, Imam Shafai, Uthman

al-Batti, only one confession is enough. In cases where the conviction is based on the confession of the guilty person himself without the support of any other proof, the infliction of punishment should be suspended if during the course of punishment the guilty one retracts his confession. It does not matter even if it is quite evident that he is retracting his confession in order to escape the torture of punishment. This entire law is based on the precedents which have been cited in the traditions in the various cases of *zina*.

The most important case is that of Maiz bin Malik Aslami, which has been related by a large number of reporters on the authority of many companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and almost all books of traditions contain details with regard to it. Maiz was an orphan boy from the clan of Aslam who had been brought up by Hazzal bin Nuaim. He committed *zina* with a freed slave-girl. Hazzal said to him: Go to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and inform him of your sin, may be he will pray for your forgiveness. Maiz went before the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the mosque and said: I have committed *zina*, please purify me. The Prophet (peace be upon him) turned his face away from him and said: Woe be to you, go back and pray to Allah for forgiveness. But the boy again appeared before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said the same thing and the Prophet (peace be upon him) again turned his face away. The boy then repeated his offense for the third time and the Prophet (peace be upon him) again turned his face away. Abu Bakr warned the boy that if he confessed the crime for

the fourth time, the Prophet would get him stoned. But the boy persisted and repeated the same thing again. At this the Prophet turned to him and said: You might have only kissed or embraced or caressed her, or you might have looked at her with lust (and you thought it was an act of *zina*. The boy said: No. The Prophet asked: Did you lie with her in the same bed? The boy replied in the affirmative. The Prophet again asked: Did you have sexual intercourse with her? The boy again replied in the affirmative. The Prophet then inquired in the most explicit Arabic expression specifically used for this act. Such a naked expression had never before been heard nor was ever heard afterwards from him. Had it not been the question of the life of an individual, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would never have uttered such words. But the boy again replied in the affirmative to this explicit question. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then asked: Did you commit the act in such a manner that your male organ disappeared in her female part? The boy answered: Yes. Again he was asked whether the act was as complete as is a piston in a cylinder and a rope in a well. The boy again answered in the affirmative. Again he was asked whether he really understood what *zina* meant, and the boy said: Yes, I have committed the same act with her illegitimately which a husband commits legitimately with his wife. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked: Are you married? He said: Yes. Again the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked whether he had taken any wine. He said: No, and one of the companions smelt his mouth and confirmed that he had

not. After this the Prophet (peace be upon him) inquired of his neighbors whether he was suffering from insanity. They replied that he had not exhibited any sign of insanity. Then the Prophet said to Hazzal: Had you kept it secret, it would have been better for you. Then he ordered Maiz to be stoned to death and he was stoned to death outside the city. When they began to throw stones at him, Maiz tried to escape, and said: O people, take me back to the Prophet (peace be upon him). The people of my clan deluded me, assuring that the Prophet would not condemn me to death. But they did not let him escape. Afterwards when this incident was reported to the Prophet, he said: Why didn't you let him go? Had you brought him to me, he might have repented and Allah might have accepted his repentance.

The second incident is of Ghamidiyyah, who was a woman from the clan of Ghamid, a branch of Juhainah tribe. She also confessed four times that she had committed *zina* and had become pregnant as a result thereof. At her first confession, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Woe be to you, go back and ask forgiveness of Allah and repent. But she said: O Messenger of Allah, do you want to put me off like Maiz? I am pregnant as a result of *zina*. As there existed pregnancy along with the confession, the Prophet did not cross examine her in detail as he did in the case of Maiz. He said to her, Well, if you do not accept my counsel, go back and come to me after the birth of the child. After delivery had taken place, she came along with the child and said: Please purify me now. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Go and suckle your child, and come to me after

the suckling is over. She again came after the weaning of the child and brought a piece of bread with her. She fed the child with the piece of bread before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: O Messenger of Allah, now the child has been weaned and has started taking bread. At this the Prophet (peace be upon him) entrusted the child to a person to bring it up and ordered the stoning of the woman. In both these cases, four confessions have clearly been mentioned. According to a tradition, cited by Buraidah in Abu Daud, the companions of the Prophet, in general, held the opinion that if Maiz and Ghamidiyyah had not confessed their guilt four times, they would not have been stoned to death. In the third incident of this nature, the only words used therein, as contained in other traditions, were: Go and inquire from his wife about this. If she confesses her guilt, stone her to death. There is no mention of four confessions here and it is on the basis of this that some jurists have argued that only one confession is enough.

(21) The three cases mentioned above clearly show that a guilty person, who confesses his sin, will not be questioned about the other person with whom he or she committed *zina*. This is because in that case two persons shall have to be punished instead of one. The Islamic law is not anxious to punish people. But if the guilty person names the other party to the crime, then that party will be interrogated and also punished in case of confession. But if the other party denies it, only the person confessing the guilt will be punished. However, there is a difference of opinion among

the jurists as to whether such a person will be punished for *zina* or for false accusation. According to Imam Malik and Imam Shafai, he will be awarded the prescribed punishment for *zina*, because he has confessed that crime alone. According to Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Auzai, he shall be convicted as a false accuser, because the denial of the other party has made his crime of *zina* doubtful but his guilt of false accusation stands proved anyhow. According to Imam Muhammad and it is supported by a saying of Imam Shafai also, he will be punished for *zina* as well as for slander. This is because he has confessed the guilt of *zina* himself and has not been able to prove his accusation against the other party. A similar case was brought before the Prophet (peace be upon him). A tradition to this effect cited in Musnad Ahmad and in Abu Daud by Sahl bin Saad contains these words: A person confessed before the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he had committed *zina* with such and such a woman. The Prophet (peace be upon him) inquired of the woman but she denied it. Then he gave him the prescribed punishment but forgave the woman. This tradition, however, does not specify the punishment that was awarded. In another tradition cited in Abu Daud and Nasai from Ibn Abbas, it has been stated that on the man's confession the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave him the prescribed punishment for *zina*. But when the woman denied it, the man was flogged with stripes for making a false accusation. But this tradition is weak as regards to its links, because one of its reporters, Qasim bin Fayyaz, is not considered as reliable

by many scholars of traditions. Moreover, this tradition appears to be opposed to reason because it cannot be expected of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he would first punish the man for *zina* and then make an inquiry from the woman. Common sense and justice, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) could not have overlooked, demanded that his case should not have been decided before making an inquiry from the woman. This is supported by a tradition cited by Sahl bin Saad. Therefore, the second tradition cannot be considered as reliable.

(22) There is a difference of opinion among the jurists as to what punishment should be given to the person who has been proved guilty of *zina*. The various opinions in this regard are as under.

Punishment for married persons guilty of *zina*.

(a) According to Imam Ahmad, Daud Zahiris and Ishaq bin Rahaviah they shall be flogged with 100 stripes and then stoned to death.

(b) All other jurists are unanimous that they shall be stoned to death; stoning to death and flogging will not be combined together.

Punishment for unmarried persons:

(a) According to Imam Ahmad, Imam Shafai, Daud Zahiri, Sufyan Thauri, Ibn Abi Laila and Hasan bin Salih; the punishment is flogging with 100 stripes and exile for one year both for the man and the woman.

(b) According to Imam Malik and Imam Auzai, the man should be flogged with 100 stripes and exiled for one year, while the woman should only be flogged with 100 stripes.

(According to these jurists, exile means that the guilty one should be banished from his own habitation and sent to such a distant place where one has to shorten one's prayer. But according to Zaid bin Ali and Imam Jafar Sadiq, imprisonment also serves the purpose of exile).

(c) Imam Abu Hanifah and his disciples Imam Abu Yusuf, Imam Zufar and Imam Muhammad are of the opinion that the *hadd* (prescribed punishment) for *zina* in such cases is only 100 stripes both for the man and for the woman. Any additional punishment, such as exile or imprisonment, is not *hadd* but *tazir* (discretionary punishment). If the judge feels that the guilty man is of immoral character, or that the illicit relations of the guilty ones are too intimate, he may exile or imprisonment them as the occasion may demand. The difference between *hadd* and *tazir* is that *hadd* is a specific punishment which must be inflicted provided that the guilt has been proved according to the conditions laid down in the Shariah, whereas *tazir* is a punishment which has not been specified by the Shariah with regard to its nature and gravity, but is determined by the court in accordance with the circumstances of the case.

All the above different opinions have been based on various traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which are given below.

According to a tradition related by Ubadah bin Samit and cited by Muslim, Abu Daud, Ibn Majah, Tirmizi and Imam Ahmad, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Take it from me. Take it from me. Allah has prescribed the method for dealing with women guilty of *zina*. An unmarried man

committing *zina* with an unmarried woman should get 100 stripes and one year's exile. The married man committing *zina* with a married woman should get 100 stripes and stoning to death. Though this tradition is technically correct according to its authentic links, we learn from a large number of correct Traditions that it was neither acted upon during the time of the Prophet nor during the rightly-guided Caliphate nor any jurist ever gave any verdict strictly in accordance with it. According to a tradition from Abu Hurairah and Zaid bin Khalid Juhani, which has been cited by Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmizi Nasai, Ibn Majah and Ahmad, a case was brought by two beduins before the Prophet (peace be upon him). One of them said: My son, who worked as a laborer in the house of this man, got involved with his wife. I compromised with him by giving him 100 goats and one slave girl, but I have been told by the scholars that this is against the Book of Allah. Please decide the case between us according to the Book of Allah. The second man also said the same thing and asked for the decision according to the divine Book. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: I will decide according to the divine Book. You should take back your goats and the slave girl. Your son shall get 100 stripes and a year's exile. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to a man from the clan of Aslam: O Unais, go to this man's wife and inquire from her about this. If she confesses her guilt, stone her to death. The woman confessed the guilt and was stoned to death. It should be noted that in this tradition there is no mention of flogging the married woman before stoning her to death,

whereas the unmarried man, guilty of zina with a married woman, was punished with flogging and exile. Besides this, the accounts of the cases of Maiz and Ghamidiyyah, which have been cited in the various books of traditions, do not mention anywhere that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered flogging of the guilty person before stoning him or her to death.

There is no tradition in any book of traditions to the effect that the Prophet (peace be upon him), in any case, combined flogging with stoning to death. In all the cases of *zina* by married persons, he awarded the punishment of stoning to death only.

In his well-known address, cited by Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmizi, and Nasai on the authority of various reporters, Umar declared most emphatically that the punishment for *zina* after marriage is stoning to death. Imam Ahmad also has cited various traditions regarding this but in none of these there is any mention of flogging before stoning to death.

From among the rightly guided Caliphs Ali alone combined flogging with stoning to death in one case. Imam Ahmad and Bukhari have cited this case on the authority of Amir Shabi that a woman named Shuaha confessed being pregnant as a result of illicit intercourse. Ali got her flogged on Thursday and stoned to death on Friday, saying: We flogged her according to the Book of Allah and stoned her to death in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). There is no other case than this in which both the punishments were combined during the

rightly-guided Caliphate.

According to a tradition cited in Abu Daud and Nasai on the authority of Jabir bin Abdullah, a man committed zina and the Prophet (peace be upon him) awarded him the punishment of flogging. Afterwards when it came to be known that he was a married man, he ordered that he should be stoned to death. Besides this, we have already cited several other traditions showing that the Prophet (peace be upon him) awarded the punishment of flogging only to the unmarried persons guilty of zina. For instance, the man who raped a woman while she was going out for prayers, and the man who confessed his crime of *zina* but the woman did not, were given the punishment of flogging.

As regards to exile, the authority may use its own discretion. Umar exiled Rabiah bin Umayyah bin Khalf on a charge of drinking and he fled and joined the Romans. At this Umar said that in future he would not exile a man and a woman guilty of *zina*, because he feared that there was a risk of mischief in it. (Ahkam al-Quran, AI-Jassas, Vol. III, p. 315).

In the light of these traditions and cases as a whole, it becomes quite clear that the view of Imam Abu Hanifah and his disciples is correct. The punishment for a married man or woman for *zina* is stoning to death alone while the punishment for unmarried persons is 100 stripes only. Flogging and stoning to death were never combined from the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) up to the Caliphate of Uthman. As for combining flogging and exile, it was practiced on some occasions while on others it was

not. This clearly establishes the correctness of the way of Imam Abu Hanifah.

(23) The first reference to the nature of flogging with stripes is implied in the word *fajlidu* of the Quran itself. The word *jald* is derived from *jild*, which means skin. Accordingly all lexicographers and commentators have taken it to mean that flogging should be carried out in such a way that its effect should be confined to the skin only and should not reach the flesh under it. The flogging that causes deep wounds into the flesh or tears it up into pieces is against the Quran.

The whip or the cane used for the purpose of flogging should be medium in all respects: it should neither be thick and hard nor thin and soft. According to a Tradition cited by Imam Malik in Muatta, the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked for a whip for flogging but as it had worn out owing to long use, he said: Bring a harder one. Then a new whip was brought which was very hard because of lack of use. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Get me one between these two. Accordingly, a whip was brought which had been used in riding and with it he gave the flogging. A similar tradition has also been cited by Abu Uthman an-Nahdi about Umar that he always used a medium whip. (Ahkam al-Quran, AI-Jassas, Vol. III, p. 322). A whip with knots or one having two or three prongs is also prohibited. Flogging should also be of average intensity. Umar used to instruct the flogger, Strike in such a way that your armpit should not become visible during flogging, i.e. do not stretch your arm fully to strike with full force. (Ahkam al-

Quran, Ibn al-Arabi, Vol. II, p. 84, and Ahkam al-Quran, AlJassas, Vol. III, p. 322). All the jurists agree that.

- (a) The stripe should not be such as may cause a wound.
- (b) The flogging should not be confined to one and the same place but should be spread over the whole body.
- (c) The face and the private parts, and, according to the Hanafis, the head also should be spared but all other parts should get some flogging. Ali once said to the flogger: Let every part of the body get its due share except the face and the private parts. According to another tradition, he said: Save the head and the private parts only. (Ahkam al-Quran, Al Jassas Vol. III, p. 321). The Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: When anyone of you is flogging, he should not strike on the face. (Abu Daud).

While flogging, a man should be made to stand and a woman to sit. In the time of Imam Abu Hanifah, Qazi Ibn Abi Laila of Kufah got a woman flogged while she was standing. The Imam took a strong objection to it and openly declared it to be a wrong thing. Incidentally, this also throws light on Imam Abu Hanifah's stand with regard to the law of the contempt of court. At the time of flogging, the woman should be in her full dress: her clothes should rather be tied down on her so that no part of her body might be exposed; her thick clothes only will be taken off. But in regard to a man, there is some difference of opinion. According to some jurists, he will be allowed to remain in his pajamas only, and according to some others, the shirt will not be taken off. Abu Ubaidah bin al-Jarrah sentenced a person guilty of *zina* to be flogged. The man

said: This sinful body should get a severe flogging. Then he started taking off his shirt, but Abu Ubaidah said: Do not let him take off his shirt. (Ahkam al-Quran, Al-Jassas, Vol. III, p. 322). During the time of Ali, a man was flogged while he was wrapped in a sheet of cloth.

Flogging is prohibited in severe cold and in severe heat. In winter it should be done when it is hot and in summer when it is cool.

It is also not permissible to tie down a person at the time of flogging unless he tries to run away. According to Abdullah bin Masud, it is not permissible in the Islamic community to flog anybody after stripping him naked or after tying him on a tripod.

Jurists have permitted that at least twenty stripes may be given daily but it is better to inflict full punishment at one and the same time.

Flogging should not be entrusted to uncouth, uncultured executioners, but it should be done by men of deep insight who understand how the flogging should be carried out in order to meet the requirements of the Shariah. Ibn Qayyim has cited in *zad al-Maad* that the Prophet (peace be upon him) employed the services of such pious and respectable people as Ali, Zubair, Miqdad bin Amr, Muhammad bin Maslamah, Asim bin Thabit and Dahak bin Sufyan for this purpose. (Vol. I, pp. 44, 45).

If the guilty person is suffering from some disease and there is no hope of his recovery or is too old, it is enough to strike him once with a branch of 100 twigs, or with a broom of 100 twigs in order to meet the requirements of the law.

During the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), an old man, who was suffering from some disease, was found guilty of *zina* and the Prophet (peace be upon him) awarded him the same kind of punishment. (Ahmad, Abu Daud, Nasai Ibn Majah). In the case of a pregnant woman, the flogging will be postponed till the delivery and the complete discharge of blood after childbirth. But if she is to be stoned to death, the punishment will not be given till the child has been weaned.

If *zina* is proved by evidence, the flogging will be initiated by the witnesses themselves. If the punishment is based on confession, the judge himself will initiate the punishment. This is to make the witnesses and the judge realize the seriousness of the matter. In the case of Shuraha, when Ali decided to stone her to death, he said: Had there been any witness to this crime, he should have initiated the stoning, but as she is being punished on the basis of confession, I will initiate it myself. According to the Hanafis, this procedure is essential but according to the Shafais, it is not essential. It is, however, preferable according to all jurists.

After examining the above details of the law of flogging, just consider the audacity of those who hold this punishment as barbarous. This accusation becomes all the more ridiculous when the same people allow a harsher punishment in their jails. According to the existing law, not only the court but an ordinary superintendent of the jail also is authorized to award a punishment of 30 stripes to a prisoner for disobedience or insolence, and this flogging is carried out by a specialist who keeps himself ready and fit

by regular practice and the canes are wetted beforehand so that they may cut through the body like a knife. The convict is stripped off his clothes and nothing but a thin cloth wetted with tincture of iodine is left to cover his private parts. Then he is tied down to a tripod to prevent him from making any movement at the flogging and the flogger comes running from a distance and strikes him with full force. Every time the same part (buttocks) is struck so hard that the flesh flies out like minced meat and often the bones become bare. Often it so happens that even the strongest man does not stand 30 canes and becomes unconscious and it takes a long time before his wounds are healed. It is an irony that those people, who are themselves enforcing this civilized punishment in jails today, have the cheek to call the punishment enjoined by Islam as barbarous. Then the horrible tortures which are inflicted by their police not only on proved criminals but on suspects, especially those suspected of criminal crimes, are well known to every one.

(24) After a convict has been stoned to death, he (or she) will be treated like any other Muslim. His (or her) body will be washed and shrouded: funeral prayer will be said in the Islamic way, and he (or she) will be buried with due respect in a Muslim graveyard. Prayers for his (or her) forgiveness will be offered and it will be improper for anyone to talk ill of him (or her). According to Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari, as cited in Bukhari, when Maiz bin Malik was stoned to death, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said good words about him and himself led his funeral prayer. A tradition from

Buraidah, as cited in Muslim, states that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Pray for the forgiveness of Maiz bin Malik: he has offered such a repentance that if it were to be distributed over a whole community, it would suffice for the forgiveness of all its people. In the same tradition it has been mentioned that when Ghaimidiyyah died due to stoning, her funeral prayer was led by the Prophet (peace be upon him). When Khaid bin Walid talked ill of her, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Khalid, hold your tongue! I swear by Him Who controls my life that her repentance was such that even if a cruel tax-collector had offered such a repentance, he would have been forgiven. According to Abu Hurairah, as cited in Abu Daud, after the stoning of Maiz one day when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was walking along, he heard two men talking ill of Maiz. When he had gone a few paces further, he saw the dead body of a donkey. He stopped there and asked the two men: Come on and eat something out of it. They said: O Prophet of Allah, who can eat a dead donkey? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Talking ill of your own brother was much worse than eating a dead donkey. According to a tradition from Imran bin Hunain cited in Muslim, when the funeral prayer of Ghamidiyyah was about to be offered, Umar said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): Are we going to offer funeral prayer for this adulteress? The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: She has offered such a repentance that if it were to be distributed over the entire population of Al-Madinah, it would suffice for their forgiveness. According to another tradition from

Abu Hurairah, cited in Bukhari; when a man was being punished for drinking, somebody said: May God defame him! The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Do not utter such words and thus help Satan against him. In Abu Daud there is an addition to this, according to which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Pray like this, O Allah, pardon him and show mercy to him. This is the true spirit of punishment in Islam. Islam does not punish even the biggest criminal with vindictiveness but with the intention to reform him. That is why after the punishment, mercy and compassion are shown towards him. In contrast to this, the modern civilization adopts a very mean attitude towards those who are killed by the state military or police and whose death is upheld by a judicial inquiry. It is not tolerated that even somebody may carry his dead body to the graveyard or utter a good word about him. In the face of this behavior, they have the moral courage (a euphemism for impudence) to preach tolerance to the world.

(25) As regards to the law of punishment concerning *zina* with prohibited relations, see E.N. 33 of Surah An-Nisa, and for the punishment of sodomy see E.Ns 64-68 of Surah Al-Aaraf. As regards to the committal of this heinous act with animals, some jurists treat it as *zina* and hold that the guilty person deserves the prescribed punishment of this crime. But Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Yusuf, Imam Muhammad, Imam Zufar, Imam Malik and Imam Shafai hold that it is not *zina*, and therefore, the offender should be given the discretionary punishment and not the prescribed punishment. We have already stated that the

discretionary punishment has been left to the judge, or if necessary the state legislature can devise some appropriate form of punishment for it.

***3** The first thing that deserves attention in this verse is that the criminal law is being termed as the Way of Allah. This shows that the Way of Allah does not merely consist in Salat, Fasting, Hajj and payment of Zakat dues, but the law of the land is also a part of the Way of Allah. The establishment of the Way does not mean the establishment of Salat alone but it also includes the establishment of the divine law and the system of law based on it. If these things are not established, the mere establishment of the system of Salat will be regarded as partial implementation of the Way. But when instead of this an un-Islamic system of law is adopted, it amounts to the total rejection of the divine way itself.

The second thing which deserves attention is the warning from Allah that no feeling of compassion or pity should restrain you from inflicting the prescribed punishment on the guilty person. The same thing has been further elaborated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the following Tradition.

On the Day of Judgment, a judge who had reduced the punishment by one stripe in a certain case, will be called to account. He will be asked: Why did you do so? He will say, It was out of pity for your people. Allah will say: Well, it means you were more compassionate towards those people than Myself. Then it will be ordered: Take him to Hell. Another judge, who had enhanced the punishment by one

stripe will be brought forth. He will be asked: Why did you do so? He will say: It was done to serve as a deterrent for others. Allah will say: Well, it means you were wiser than I with regard to them. It will be ordered: Take him to Hell. (Tafsir Kabir, Vol. VI, p. 225).

The above applies to the case when reduction or enhancement in the punishment was the result of compassion or some other factor. But if the quantum of punishments were to be changed according to the status of the culprit, it would constitute the worst type of crime. According to a tradition related by Aishah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said in an address: The communities before you perished because whenever anyone from among their aristocrats committed a theft, he was forgiven but whenever an ordinary man committed the same offense, he was awarded the prescribed punishment. According to another tradition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The enforcement of one prescribed punishment is more beneficial to the people than 40 days of rainfall. (Nasai, Ibn Majah).

Some commentators have interpreted this verse to mean that the culprit should neither be forgiven after his guilt has been proved nor his punishment reduced. He must be flogged with 100 stripes. Some others have taken it to mean that the flogging should not be so light that the culprit may not feel its effect at all. The verse covers both the above interpretations and, in fact, both are plausible. It also means that the one guilty of fornication should get the same punishment which has been prescribed by Allah and no

other type of punishment. It is a sin to inflict any other type of punishment instead of flogging even for the sake of compassion or pity. But if any other type of punishment is inflicted on the ground that flogging with stripes is a barbarous type of punishment, it amounts to kufr; which should never be tolerated even for a moment by a true believer. To believe in the divinity of Allah and then to call Him a barbarian, suits only those who are the meanest of hypocrites.

*4 The punishment should be awarded publicly so that, on the one hand, the guilty one may feel disgraced and, on the other, it may serve as a deterrent for the other people. This throws light on the concept of punishment in Islam. In verse 38 of Surah Al-Maidah, in connection with the punishment of theft, it was said.

It is the recompense for what they have earned, and an exemplary punishment from Allah.

And now here it is being enjoined that the adulterer should be given the punishment publicly. This shows that in Islamic law punishment is awarded to meet three purposes.

(a) To inflict pain on the criminal for the excesses he committed against the other person or society,

(b) To stop him from repeating the crime,

(c) To serve as a deterrent for others, so that the people having evil inclinations in society may be deterred and dare not commit such crimes again.

Another advantage of awarding the punishment publicly is that the officials concerned should not be able to reduce or enhance the punishment at will while executing it.

3. The adulterer shall not marry but an adulteress or an idolatress, and the adulteress shall not marry but an adulterer or an idolater. And that has been forbidden to the believers.*5

الزَّانِي لَا يَنْكِحُ إِلَّا زَانِيَةً أَوْ
مُشْرِكَةً وَالزَّانِيَةُ لَا يَنْكِحُهَا إِلَّا
زَانٍ أَوْ مُشْرِكٌ وَحُرِّمَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ



*5 That is, only an adulterous woman is a fit match for an adulterous man who has not repented or an idolatrous woman. No believing, virtuous woman can be a match for him. It is forbidden for the believers that they should give their daughters in marriage to such wicked people knowing them to be so. Similarly the fit match for adulterous women (who have not repented) can only be adulterous or idolatrous men; they are not fit for any righteous believer. It is forbidden for the believers that they should marry women who are known to possess immoral character. This thing applies to those men and women who persist in their evil ways, and not to those who repent and reform themselves, for after repentance and reformation they will no longer be regarded as adulterous.

According to Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, the prohibition of marriage with an adulterous man implies that such a marriage, if contracted, will have no legal effect. But this view is not correct. Prohibition does not have any legal implications. It cannot mean that if a person violates this prohibition, the marriage will be void, and the parties concerned will be involved in *zina* in spite of marriage. For

the Prophet (peace be upon him) has stated: The unlawful does not make the lawful unlawful. (Tabarani, Daraqutni). In other words, an illegal act does not make a legal act also illegal. Therefore, if a person commits *zina* and then marries, his conjugal relations with his spouse cannot be considered as *zina*, because in that case the other party of the marriage contract who is not immoral, will also have to be considered as involved in *zina*. As a rule, no illegal act except open rebellion can cause the one guilty of it to be declared an outlaw, so that no act of his can be regarded legal after that. If the verse is considered in this light the plain meaning would be this: It is a sin to select such persons for marriage as are known to be immoral. The believers should shun them, otherwise they will feel encouraged, whereas the Shariah intends to segregate them as the undesirable and contemptible element of society. Similarly this verse does not validate the marriage of an adulterous Muslim with an idolatrous woman and of an adulterous Muslim woman with an idolatrous man. The verse simply means to emphasize the act of *zina*, and declares that the person who commits it being a Muslim, makes himself unfit for contracting a marriage in the pure and pious Muslim society. Even if the accuser is an eye-witness of an immoral act, he should keep the secret and let the filth remain where it is instead of causing it to spread. However, if he has witnesses, he should abstain from publicizing the matter in society but should bring the case to the notice of the authorities and get the criminals duly punished by the court of law.

4. And those who accuse chaste women then do not bring four witnesses, lash them (with) eighty lashes, and do not accept from them testimony ever after. And it is they who are the disobedient. *5a

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ
لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ
فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلَا
تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

*5a Below, we give the details of the law in serial order.

(1) The context in which the words *walla-zina yarmun-al-muhsanat* (those who accuse chaste women) occur clearly shows that it does not imply any common sort of accusation but specifically the accusation of *zina* against the chastity of pure women. Then the demand from the accusers to produce four witnesses in support of their accusation also shows that it relates to *zina*. For in the entire Islamic law producing four witnesses is the legal requirement only in a case of *zina* and in no other matter. The scholars, therefore, agree that this verse describes the law relating to the accusation of *zina*, which has been termed *qazf* for convenience so that this law is not extended to cover cases of other accusations like that of theft, drinking, taking of interest, etc. Apart from *qazf*, the question of determining punishments for other allegations can be left to the discretion of the judge, or to the consultative council of the Islamic state, who can make general laws to cover cases of contempt and defamation as and when required.

(2) Though the verse only mentions *al-muhsanat* (pure and chaste women), the jurists agree that the law is not confined to the accusation in respect of women, but it extends to the accusation in respect of chaste men also. Likewise, though the masculine gender has been used for the accusers, the law is not confined to male accusers only but extends to female accusers as well. For as regards to the gravity and wickedness of the crime, it does not make any difference whether the accuser or the accused is a man or a woman. Therefore in either case, the man or accuser or the woman accusing a virtuous and chaste man or woman of *zina*, will be dealt with under this law.

(3) This law can be applied only in a case where the accuser has accused a *muhsan* or *muhsanah*, i.e. a morally fortified man or woman. In case the accused is not morally fortified, the law cannot be applied. If a person who is not morally fortified is known for his immorality, there will be no question of the accusation, but if he is not, the judge can use his discretion to award a punishment to the accuser, or the consultative council can make necessary laws to deal with such cases.

(4) For an act of *qazf* to be considered as punishable, it is not enough that somebody has accused somebody else of immorality without a proof, but there are certain conditions which have to be fulfilled in respect of the *qazif* (accuser), *maqzuf* (the accused) and the act of *qazf* itself.

As for the *qazif*, he should satisfy the following conditions:

(a) He should be an adult: if a minor commits the crime of *qazf*, he can be given a discretionary punishment but not

the prescribed punishment.

(b) He should possess normal common sense: an insane and mentally abnormal person cannot be given the prescribed punishment. Similarly, a person under the influence of an intoxicant, other than a forbidden intoxicant, e.g. chloroform, cannot be considered as guilty of *qazi*.

(c) He should have committed *qazf* out of his own free will or choice, and not under duress.

(d) He should not be the father or grandfather of *maqzuf* (the accused), for they cannot be given the prescribed punishment.

According to the Hanafis, the fifth condition is that the accuser should not be drunk, because the person who only gesticulates cannot be held guilty of *qazi*. But Imam Shafai disputes this. He says that if the gesticulation of the drunk person is clear and unambiguous by which everybody can understand what he wants to say, he will be considered as a *qazif*, because his gesticulation is no less harmful to defame a person than the word of mouth. On the contrary, the Hanafis do not hold mere gesticulation as a strong enough ground for awarding the prescribed punishment of 80 stripes; they, therefore, recommend a discretionary punishment for it.

The conditions to be satisfied by *maqzuf* (the accused) are as follows:

(a) He should be possessing normal common sense, i.e. he should be accused of having committed *zina* while in the normal state of mind; the accuser of an insane person (who might or might not have become sane later) cannot be held

guilty of *qazf*, for the insane person cannot possibly safeguard his chastity fully; and even if the evidence of *zina* is established against him, he will neither become deserving of the prescribed punishment nor incur personal defamation. Therefore, the one accusing him also should not be held as deserving of the prescribed punishment of *qazf*. However, Imam Malik and Imam Laith bin Saad hold that the *qazif* of an insane person deserves to be awarded the prescribed punishment of *qazf*, because he is accusing another person of *zina* without a proof thereof.

(b) He should be an adult, i.e. he should be accused of having committed *zina* while being of full age legally. Accusing a minor, or a grown up person that has committed *zina* when a minor, does not deserve the prescribed punishment, for, like an insane person, a child also cannot fully safeguard his honor and chastity. However, according to Imam Malik, if a boy approaching the age of maturity is accused of *zina*, the accuser will not deserve the prescribed punishment, but if a girl of that age is accused of having submitted herself for *zina*, when sexual intercourse with her is possible, her *qazif* will deserve the prescribed punishment, for the accusation defames not only the girl's family but ruins the girl's future as well.

(c) He should be a Muslim, i.e. he should be accused of having committed *zina* while in Islam. Accusing a non-Muslim, or a Muslim that has committed *zina* when a non-Muslim, does not entail the prescribed punishment.

(d) He should be free; accusing a slave or a slave-girl, or a free person that has committed *zina* when a slave, does not

call for the prescribed punishment, for the helplessness and weakness of the slave can hinder him from safeguarding his honor and chastity. The Quran itself has considered the state of slavery as excluded from the state of *ihsan* (moral fortification). (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 25). But Daud Dhahiri does not concede this argument; he holds that the *qazif* of the slave or slave-girl also deserves the prescribed punishment of *qazf*.

(e) He should possess a pure and blameless character, i.e. he himself should be free from *zina* proper and everything resembling therewith, This means that he should neither have been held guilty of *zina* in the past, nor should have had sexual intercourse in an illegal marriage, nor with a slave girl who was not clearly in his possession legally, nor with a woman whom he mistook for his wife. His day to day life should be such that nobody could accuse him of immorality, nor he should have been held guilty of lesser crimes than *zina* before. In all such cases the moral purity of the person falls into disrepute, and the accuser of such a person cannot deserve the prescribed punishment of 80 stripes. So much so that if the guilt of *zina* against an accused person is proven on the basis of evidence just before the enforcement of the prescribed punishment on an accuser, the latter will be forgiven; because the former is no longer chaste and morally pure.

Though the prescribed punishment cannot be enforced in any of these five cases. It does not, however, mean that a person who accuses an insane person or a minor or a non-Muslim, or a slave, or an unchaste person of *zina* without

proof, does not even deserve a discretionary punishment. Now let us consider the conditions which must be found in the act of *qazf* itself. An accusation will be considered as *qazf*, if either an accuser accuses a person of such a sexual act which, if proved to be correct by necessary evidence, would make the accused liable to the prescribed punishment, or the accuser holds the accused as of illegitimate birth. But in either case the accusation must be unambiguous and in clear terms. Vague references in which the accusation of *zina* or illegitimacy depends upon the accuser's intention, are not reliable. For instance, using words like adulterer, sinner, wicked, immoral, etc. for a man, and prostitute, harlot, whore, etc. for a woman is only a reference and not *qazf*. Similarly, words which are used as an abuse like bastard, etc. cannot be regarded as *qazf*. There is, however, a difference of opinion among the jurists whether an allusion is also *qazf* or not. According to Imam Malik, if the allusion is clear and is meant to charge the addressee of *zina* or hold him as of illegitimate birth, it will be *qazf*, and the *qazif* will be liable to the prescribed punishment. But Imam Abu Hanifah and his companions and Imam Shafai, Sufyan Thauri, Ibn Shubrumah, and Hasan bin Saleh hold the view that an allusion is in any way ambiguous and doubtful, and wherever there is doubt, prescribed punishment cannot be awarded. Imam Ahmad and Ishaq bin Rahaviyah maintain that if an allusion is made in the heat of a quarrel or fight, it is *qazf*, but if in sport and fun, it is not. Umar and Ali, from among the Caliphs, awarded the prescribed punishment in cases of

allusion. In the time of Umar, one of the two men, who were involved in a brawl, said to the other: Neither was my father an adulterer nor was my mother an adulteress. The case was brought before Umar. He asked those present there what they understood by the remark. Some said that the man had only praised his parents and had not imputed anything to the other man's parents. Others objected to the use of the words and said that by these he had clearly alluded that the other man's parents were adulterous. Umar concurred with the latter and awarded the prescribed punishment. (Al-Jassas, vol. III, p. 330).

There is also a difference of opinion as to whether accusing somebody of sodomy is *qazf* or not. Imam Abu Hanifah does not regard it *qazf* but Imam Abu Yusuf, Imam Muhammad; Imam Malik and Imam Shafai hold it as *qazf* and recommend the prescribed punishment for it.

(5) There is a difference of opinion among the jurists as to whether *qazf* is a cognizable offence or not. Ibn Abi Laila says that this is the right of Allah; therefore, the *qazif* will be awarded the prescribed punishment whether *maqzuf* (the accused) demands it or not. Imam Abu Hanifah and his companions hold that it is certainly a right of Allah in so far as the enforcement of the prescribed punishment on the establishment of the offence is concerned, but in so far as the trial of the accuser under the law is concerned, it depends on the demand of the accused, and in this respect it is the right of man. The same is the opinion of Imam Shafai, and Imam Auzai. According to Imam Malik, if the offense of *qazf* is committed in the presence of the ruler, it is a

cognizable offense, otherwise legal action against the accuser will depend on the demand of the accused.

(6) Qazf is not a compoundable offense. If the accused does not bring the case to the court, it will be a different thing; but when the case is brought to the court, the accuser will be pressed to prove his accusation, and if he fails to prove it, he will be awarded the prescribed punishment. The court then cannot pardon him nor the accused himself, nor the matter can be settled by making monetary compensation, nor the accuser can escape punishment by offering repentance or apology. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has instructed: Forgive among yourselves offenses that deserve the prescribed punishment, but when a case is brought before me, the punishment will become obligatory.

(7) According to the Hanafis, the demand for the prescribed punishment of *qazf* call either be made by the accused, or, if the accused is not there, by the one whose lineage suffers the stigma, e.g., the father, mother, children, and the children's children. But according to Imam Malik and Imam Shafai, this right is inherited. If the accused dies, each one of his legal heirs can make the demand for the prescribed punishment. It is, however, strange that Imam Shafai excludes the husband and the wife from this right on the ground that their marriage bond breaks with death, and the accusation against one spouse does not affect the lineage of the other. The fact is that both these arguments are weak. When it is conceded that the right to demand the prescribed punishment for *qazf* is inheritable, it will be

against the Quran to exclude the husband and the wife from the exercise of this right on the ground that their marriage bond breaks with death, because the Quran itself has declared each of them as an heir on the death of the other. As for the argument that the accusation against one does not affect the lineage of the other, it may be correct in the case of the husband but it is absolutely wrong in the case of the wife; the man whose wife is accused of *zina* has the lineage of his children automatically rendered doubtful. Moreover, it is not correct to think that the punishment for *qazf* has been prescribed only to protect the lineage of the people; honour along with lineage is equally important. Thus, it is no less damaging for a gentleman or a lady that his wife or her husband is accused of *zina*. Therefore, if the right to demand the prescribed punishment for *qazf* be inheritable there is no reason why the husband and the wife should be debarred from exercising that right.

(8) After it has been established that a person has committed *qazf*, the only thing that can save him from the prescribed punishment is that he should produce four witnesses who should give evidence in the court that they have seen the accused committing *zina* practically with such and such a man or woman. According to the Hanafis, all the four witnesses should appear at one and the same time in the court and they should give evidence all together. For if they appear one after the other, each one of them will become a *qazf*, and will need four witnesses to support him. But this is a weak argument. The correct position is the one adopted by Imam Shafai and Uthman al-Bani, that it is

immaterial whether the witnesses appear all together or come one after the other; it is rather better that as in other cases the witnesses should come one after the other and give evidence. The Hanafis hold that it is not necessary that the witnesses should be righteous; even if the *qazif* produces four immoral persons as witnesses, he will escape the prescribed punishment of *qazf*, and the accused also the prescribed punishment of *zina*, because the witnesses are not righteous. However, if the *qazif* produces witnesses who are unbelieving, or blind, or slave, or those already convicted of *qazf*, he will not escape the punishment. Imam Shafai holds that if the *qzif* produces witnesses who are immoral, he and his witnesses all will become liable to the prescribed punishment, and the same is the opinion of Imam Malik. But the view of the Hanafis in this matter appears to be nearer the truth. According to them, if the witnesses are righteous, the *qazif* will be acquitted of the charge of *qazf*, and the crime of *zina* will become established against the accused. But if the witnesses are not righteous, the *qazif's* crime of *qazf*, the *maqzuf's* crime of *zina* and the evidence of the witnesses will all stand doubtful, and none will be held liable to punishment on account of the element of doubt.

(9) The Quran has given three commandments in respect of the person who fails to produce proper evidence which can cause his acquittal of the crime of *qazf*.

(a) He should be awarded 80 stripes.

(b) His evidence should not be accepted in future.

(c) He himself is a transgressor. After this the Quran says:

Except those who repent of it and mend their ways; Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

The question arises: To which of these three commands is the forgiveness due to repentance and reformation as mentioned in the verse related? The jurists agree that it is not related to the first command. That is, repentance will not render the punishment null and void, and the criminal will be given flogging in any case. The jurists also agree that the forgiveness is related to the third command, which means that after repentance and reformation the criminal will no longer be a sinner and Allah will forgive him. Here the difference of opinion is only in this matter whether the criminal becomes a sinner due to the crime of *qazf* itself, or after his conviction by the court. Imam Shafai and Laith bin Saad hold that he becomes a sinner due to the crime of *qazf* itself, and therefore, they reject his evidence thenceforth. On the contrary, Imam Abu Hanifah, his companions and Imam Malik maintain that he becomes a sinner after the enforcement of the sentence; therefore, till the enforcement of the sentence his evidence will be acceptable. But the truth is that in the sight of Allah the criminal becomes a sinner as a result of the crime of *qazf* itself, but for the people his being a sinner depends on his conviction by the court and the enforcement of the punishment on him. Now as far as the second command, viz. “The evidence of *qazif* should not be accepted in future, is concerned, there has been a great difference of opinion among the jurists as to whether the sentence “except those who repent” is related to this or not. One group says that

this sentence is related only to the last command. That is, a person who repents and mends his ways will no longer be a sinner in the sight of Allah and the common Muslims, but the first two commands will remain effective, i.e. the sentence will be enforced on him and his evidence will never be accepted in future. To this group belong eminent jurists like Qazi Shuraih, Said bin Musayyab, Said bin Jubair, Hasan Basri, Ibrahim Nakhai Ibn Sirin, Makhul, Abdur Rahman bin Zaid, Abu Hanifah, Abu Yusuf, Zufar, Muhammad, Sufyan Thauri, and Hasan bin Saleh. The other group says that the clause “except those who repent” is not related to the first command but is related to the other two. That is, after repentance, not only will the evidence of the offender who has been punished for *qazf* be acceptable, but he will also not be regarded as a sinner. This group comprises jurists of the status of Ata, Taus, Mujahid, Shabi, Qasim bin Muhammad, Salim, Zuhri, Ikrimah, Umar bin Abdul Aziz, Ibn Abi Nujaih, Sideman bin Yasar, Masruq, Zahhak, Malik bin Anas, Uthman al-Batti, Laith bin Saad, Shafai, Ahmad bin Hanbal and Ibn Jarir Tabari. Among other arguments, these scholars cite the verdict of Umar which he gave in the case of Mughirah bin Shubah. For, according to some traditions, after enforcing the punishment, Umar said to Abu Bakrah and his two companions: If you repent (or confess your lie), I shall accept your evidence in future, otherwise not. His companions confessed but not Abu Bakrah. On the face of it, it appears to be a strong argument. But from the details given above of Mughirah bin Shubah's case, it would

become obvious that it is not correct to cite this precedent in support of this view. For in that case, there was complete unanimity as far as the act (of sexual intercourse) was concerned and Mughirah bin Shubah himself did not deny it. The point of dispute was the identity of the woman. Mughirah said that she was his own wife, whom the accusers had mistaken for Umm Jamil. Then it had also been established that the wife of Mughirah and Umm Jamil resembled with each other to a degree that from the distance and in the kind of light that they were seen, the former could be mistaken for the latter. But the circumstantial evidence was wholly in favour of Mughirah bin Shubah, and a witness of the case also had admitted that the woman was not clearly visible. That is why Umar decided the case in favour of Mughirah bin Shubah, and after punishing Abu Bakrah, said the words as mentioned in the above-quoted traditions. This clearly shows that the real intention of Umar was to impress on the accusers that they should confess that they had given way to undue suspicion and that they should repent of accusing people on the basis of such suspicions in future, otherwise their evidence would never be accepted. From this it cannot be concluded that in the eyes of Umar the evidence of a person whose falsehood had been established, could become acceptable just after he had repented. The truth is that in this matter the view of the former group is stronger. None except Allah can know whether a person has repented sincerely or not. If a person repents before us, we may not consider him as a transgressor afterwards, but once his

falsehood has been established, we cannot afford to trust him in future simply because he has uttered repentance. Moreover, the words in the text themselves indicate that “except those who repent” is related only to “they themselves are transgressors”. The reason is that the first two things, in the sentence “flog them with eighty stripes, and never accept their evidence afterwards” have been given in the imperative form, while the third thing “they themselves are transgressors” is a predicate. Then the clause “except those who repent” just after the predicate itself indicates that the exception relates to the predicate and not to the two imperative sentences. Nevertheless, if it is conceded that the exception is not confined to the last sentence, one does not understand why it should be made to apply to “never accept their evidence” only and not extended to “flog them with eighty stripes” also.

(10) A question may be asked: Why should not the exception in “except those who repent” be made applicable to the first command also? *Qazf* after all is a sort of defamation. Why should not a person who confesses his guilt, apologizes and repents, be let off, when Allah Himself says: “except those who repent and trend their ways; Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.” It will be strange that Allah forgives while the people do not forgive. The answer is that the act of *taubah* (repentance) is not merely uttering the word *taubah* with the tongue; it rather implies having a feeling of regrets, a resolve to reform and an inclination to do right; and this can only be known to Allah whether a person has repented sincerely or not. That is why on

repentance worldly punishments are not forgiven but only punishments of the Hereafter; and that is why, Allah does not say that if the offenders repent, then they be forgiven, but says: “For those who repent, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.” If the worldly punishments are also excused on repentance, there will be no offender who will not offer repentance in order to escape his sentence.

(11) Another side of the question is that if a person cannot produce witnesses in support of his accusation, it may not necessarily mean that he is a liar. Is it not possible that he be true in his accusation, yet he may fail to produce evidence? Then, how is it that he should be condemned as a sinner on account of his failure to produce witnesses not only by the people but also by Allah? The answer is that even if a person is an eye-witness to the immorality committed by another person, he will be considered as a sinner for publicizing the act and accusing the offender without necessary evidence. The divine law does not want that if a person gets polluted in filth in a private place, the other person should start spreading the filth in the whole society. If he has any knowledge of the presence of the filth, there are two ways open for him: either he should let it remain where it is, or he should produce a proof of its existence, so that the officials of the Islamic State should cleanse it. There is no third way for him. If he publicizes it, he will be committing the crime of spreading the filth everywhere; and if he brings the matter to the notice of the officials without satisfactory evidence, they will not be able to deal with it effectively. The result will be that the failure

of the case will become a means of spreading the filth and encouraging the wicked element of society. Therefore, the one who commits *qazf* without necessary proof and evidence will in any case be a sinner even if he be true in his accusation.

(12) The Hanafi jurists hold that the *qazif* should be given a lighter punishment than the one who is convicted of *zina*. That is, he should be given eighty stripes but flogging should be less intense, the reason being that his being a liar is not certain in the offense for which he is being punished.

(13) Majority of the jurists including the Hanafis are of the view that only one punishment will be enforced on the *qazif* no matter how often he repeats the accusation before or during the enforcement of the punishment. If after the punishment the *qazif* goes on repeating the same accusation, the punishment which he has already been awarded, will suffice. However, if after the enforcement of the prescribed punishment, he brings another charge of *zina* against the accused, he will be tried again for the new charge of *qazf*. Abu Bakrah after getting the punishment in the case against Mughirah bin Shubah, went on repeating openly that he bore witness that Mughirah had committed *zina*. Umar wanted to try him again, but as he was repeating the same accusation, Ali expressed the opinion that he could not be tried again and Umar conceded it. After this the jurists became almost unanimous that a *qazif* who has received the prescribed punishment for a crime, cannot be tried again unless he commits a fresh crime of *qazf*.

(14) There is a difference among the jurists with regard to *qazf* against a group. According to the Hanafis, if a person accuses a number of persons in one word or in more words separately, he will be awarded only one prescribed punishment unless, of course, he commits a fresh crime of *qazf* after the enforcement of the first punishment. The words of the verse “Those who accuse chaste woman” indicate that the accuser of one person or more persons deserves only one punishment. Moreover, there can be no *zina* for which at least two persons cannot be accused, but in spite of that the law-giver has prescribed only one punishment and not two, one for accusing the woman and the other for accusing the man. Contrary to this, Imam Shafai holds that the person who accuses a group of persons, whether in one word or in more words separately, will be awarded as many punishments as the number of the persons accused, one for each. The same is the opinion of Uthman al-Batti. However, the ruling of Ibn Abi Laila, to which Shabi and Auzai also subscribe, is that the one who accuses a group of persons of *zina* in one word, deserves one punishment, and the one who accuses them separately in separate words, deserves separate punishments, one for each.

5. Except those who repent after that and do righteous deeds, then indeed, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.*6

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ



***6 Allah is the most merciful of all.**

6. And those who accuse their wives and there are no witnesses for them, except themselves, then the testimony of one of them is four testimonies (swearing) by Allah, that indeed he surely is of the truthful.

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ أَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَلَمْ
يَكُنْ لَهُمْ شُهَدَاءُ إِلَّا أَنْفُسُهُمْ
فَشَهَادَةُ أَحَدِهِمْ أَرْبَعُ شَهَادَاتٍ
بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ



7. And the fifth (testimony), that the curse of Allah be on him if he is of the liars.

وَالْخَمِيسَةُ أَنْ لَعَنَتَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ

8. And it shall avert from her the punishment that she bears witness four testimonies (swearing) by Allah that indeed he is surely of the liars.

وَيَدْرَأُ عَنْهَا الْعَذَابَ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ
أَرْبَعَ شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ
الْكَاذِبِينَ

9. And the fifth (testimony) that the wrath of Allah be upon her if he is of the truthful.*7

وَالْخَمِيسَةُ أَنْ غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا
إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

***7** These verses were revealed some time after the preceding verses. The law of qazf prescribed the punishment for the person who accused the other man or woman of *zina*, and did not produce witnesses to prove his

charge, but the question naturally arose, what should a man do if he finds his own wife involved in *zina*? If he kills her, he will be guilty of murder and punishable. If he goes to get witnesses, the offender might escape. If he tries to ignore the matter, he cannot do so for long. He can, of course, divorce the woman, but in this case there will be no moral or physical punishment either for the woman or her seducer. And if the illicit intercourse results in pregnancy, he will have to suffer the burden of bringing up another person's child. Initially this question was raised by Saad bin Ubadah as a hypothetical case, who said that if he happened to see such a thing in his own house, he would not go in search of witnesses, but would settle the matter there and then with the sword. (Bukhari, Muslim). But soon afterwards actual cases were brought before the Prophet (peace be upon him) by the husbands who were eyewitnesses of this thing. According to traditions related by Abdullah bin Masud and Ibn Umar, an Ansar Muslim (probably Uwaimir Ajlani) came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: O Messenger of Allah, if a person finds another man with his wife, and utters an accusation, you will enforce the prescribed punishment of qazf on him; if he commits murder, you will have him killed; if he keeps quiet, he will remain involved in anguish; then, what should he do? At this the Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed: O Allah, give a solution of this problem. (Muslim, Bukhari, Abu Daud, Ahmad, Nasai). Ibn Abbas has reported that Hilal bin Umayyah presented the case of his wife whom he had himself witnessed involved in the act of sin. The

Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Bring your proof, otherwise you will have the prescribed punishment of qazf inflicted on you. At this a panic spread among the companions, and Hilai said: I swear by Allah Who has sent you as a Prophet that I am speaking the truth. I have seen it with my eyes and heard it with my ears. I am sure Allah will send down a command, which will protect my back (from the punishment). So, this verse was revealed. (Bukhari, Ahmad, Abu Daud). The legal procedure which has been laid down in this verse is termed as the law of lian. The details of the cases which the Prophet (peace be upon him) judged in accordance with the law of lian are found in the books of Hadith and these form the source and basis of this law.

According to the details of Hilai bin Umayyah's case as reported in sihah-sitta, Musnad Ahmad and Tafsir Ibn Jarir, on the authority of Ibn Abbas and Anas bin Malik, both Hilai and his wife were presented before the Prophet (peace be upon him), who first of all apprised them of the divine law, and then said: You should note it well that the punishment of the Hereafter is much severer than the punishment of this world. Hilai submitted that his charge was absolutely correct. The woman denied it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then said: Let us proceed according to the law of lian. So, Hilai stood up first and swore oaths according to the Quranic command. The Prophet (peace be upon him) went on reminding them again and again: Allah knows that one of you is certainly a liar: then, will one of you repent? Before Hilai swore for the fifth time, the people

who were present there, said to him: Fear God, the punishment of the world is lighter than of the Hereafter. The fifth oath will make the punishment obligatory on you. But Hilai said that God Who had protected his back (from punishment) in this world, will also spare him in the Hereafter. After this he swore the fifth oath, too. Then the woman began to swear oaths. Before she swore the fifth oath, she was also stopped and counseled: Fear God, the worldly punishment is easier to bear than the punishment of the Hereafter. This last oath will make the divine punishment obligatory on you. Hearing this the woman hesitated a little. The people thought that she was going to make the confession. But instead of that she said: I do not want to put my clan to disgrace for ever, and swore for the fifth time, too. At this the Prophet ordered separation between them and ruled that her child after birth would be attributed to her and not to the man; that nobody after that would blame her or her child; that anybody who accused either of them would incur the punishment of qazf and that she had no right left to claim maintenance, etc. from Hilai during her legal waiting period, because she was being separated neither on account of divorce nor due to the husband's death. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked the people to see whether the child on birth looks after Hilai or the man who was being accused in connection with the woman. After delivery when it was seen that the child looked after the other man, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: If there had been no swearing of the oaths (or if Allah's Book had not settled the matter before this), I

would have dealt with this woman most severely.

The details of the case of Uwaimir Ajlani have been cited in Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Nasai, Ibn Majah and Musnad Ahmad, on the authority of Sahl bin Saad Saidi and Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both).

According to these, Uwaimir and his wife were both summoned to the Prophet's Mosque. Before proceeding against them in accordance with the law of lian, the Prophet (peace be upon him) warned them thrice, saying:

Allah knows well that one of you is a liar; then, will one of you repent? When neither repented, they were told to exercise lian. After that Uwaimir said: O Messenger of Allah, now if I keep this woman, I would be a liar and then he divorced her thrice there and then even without the Prophet's (peace be upon him) permission to do so.

According to Sahl bin Saad, the Prophet (peace be upon him) enforced the divorce to separate them, and said: There shall be separation between the husband and the wife if they exercise lian. This became established as a Sunnah that the couple who swore against each other would separate never to marry again. Ibn Umar only says this that the Prophet (peace be upon him) enforced separation between them. Sahl bin Saad, however, adds that the woman was pregnant and Uwaimir said that it was not due to his seed; so the child was attributed to the mother. The practice that thus became established was that such a child would inherit the mother and the mother him.

Apart from these two cases, we find several other traditions also in the books of Hadith, which may or may not be

related to these cases, but some of these traditions mention other cases as well, which provide important components of the law of lian.

Ibn Umar has reported traditions according to which the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered separation between the spouses after lian and ruled that in case of pregnancy the child would be attributed to the mother (sihah Sitta, Ahmad). According to another tradition of Ibn Umar, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to a man and woman after lian: Now your affair is with Allah, in any case one of you is a liar. Then he said to the man: Now she is not yours, you have no right on her, nor can you treat her vindictively in any way. The man requested to have my dowry returned. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: You have no right to have the dowry back. If you are true in your accusation, the dowry is the price of the pleasure you had from her when she was lawful to you; and if your accusation is false, the dowry has receded farther away from you than it is from her. (Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud).

Daraqutni has quoted Ali bin Abi Talib and Ibn Masud (may Allah be pleased with them both) as saying: The Sunnah that has become established is that the spouses who have exercised lian against each other, can never re-unite in marriage. Again Daraqutni has quoted Abdullah bin Abbas as saying: The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself has ruled that the two can never re-unite in wedlock.

Qabisah bin Zuaib has reported that a man in the time of Umar alleged that his wife was pregnant by illicit intercourse, then admitted that it was by his own seed, but

after delivery again denied that the child was his. The case was brought to the court of Umar, who enforced the prescribed punishment of *qazf* on the man and ruled that the child would be attributed to him. (Daraqutni, Baihaqi). Ibn Abbas has reported that a man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: I have a wife for whom I have great love; but her weakness is that she does not mind if the other man touches her. (By this he might have meant *zina* or a lesser moral evil). The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: You may divorce her. The man said: But I cannot live without her. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Then you should pull on with her. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not ask the man for any explanation, nor took his complaint as an accusation of *zina*, nor applied the law of *lian*. (Nasai).

Abu Hurairah has narrated the case of a beduin who came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said that his wife had given birth to a dark-coloured son and he was doubtful that it was his. (That is, the child's color had caused him the suspicion, otherwise there was no ground with him to accuse her of *zina*). The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him: Do you have any camels? The man replied in the affirmative. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then asked, What is their color? He said they were red. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Is any of them grey also? He said: Yes, some are gray also. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked: What caused that color? He said: Might be due to some ancestor of theirs. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: The same might be the cause for your child's

color. And he did not allow him to doubt and deny the child's fatherhood. (Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, Abu Daud). According to another tradition of Abu Hurairah, explaining the verse of lian the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The woman who brings a child into a family which does not actually belong to it (i.e. marries a man of the family with illicit pregnancy), has no relation with Allah. Allah will never admit her into Paradise. Similarly, the man who denies the fatherhood of his child, whereas the child looks up towards him, will never see Allah on the Day of Judgment, and Allah will put him to disgrace in front of all mankind. (Abu Daud, Nasai, Darimi).

Thus, the verse of lian, the traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the precedents and the general principles of the Shariah together form the basis of the law of lian, which the jurists have formulated a complete code with the following main clauses.

(1) There is a difference of opinion about the man who sees his wife involved in *zina* with another man and kills him instead of having recourse to lian. One group holds that he will be put to death because he had no right to take the law in his own hand and enforce the punishment. The other group says that he will not be put to death nor will he be held accountable for his act in any way provided that it is confirmed that he killed the man (adulterer) on account of *zina* and nothing else. Imam Ahmad and Ishaq bin Rahaviyah maintain that the man will have to produce two witnesses to confirm that he killed the adulterer only on account of *zina*. Ibn al-Qasim and Ibn Habib, from among

the Malikis, attach an additional condition that the murdered person should be a married man; otherwise the murderer will be made subject to the law of retaliation for killing an unmarried adulterer. But the majority of jurists are of the opinion that the man will be exonerated from retaliation only when he produces four witnesses to establish *zina*, or if the murdered person himself confesses before death that he committed *zina* with the wife of the murderer, and if it is also confirmed that the murdered person was a married man. (Nail al-Autar, vol. IV, p. 228).

(2) The law of lian cannot be applied mutually at home, but in a court of law in front of the judge.

(3) Exercise of lian is not the sole right of the man; the woman also has a right to demand it in a court of law if her husband accuses her of *zina*, or denies fatherhood of her child.

(4) There is a difference of opinion among the jurists as to whether lian can be resorted to between any husband and his wife, or whether they have to satisfy certain conditions. Imam Shafai holds that only that husband whose oath is legally reliable and who can exercise the right of divorce, can swear the oaths of lian. In other words, sanity and maturity according to him, are the sufficient conditions which entitle a husband to exercise lian no matter whether the spouses are Muslim or non-Muslim, slave or free, and whether their evidence is acceptable or not, and whether the Muslim husband has a Muslim or a zimmi wife. Imam Malik and Imam Ahmad have also given almost the same opinion. But the Hanafis maintain that lian can be

exercised only by free Muslim spouses, who should not have been convicted of *qazf* previously. If both husband and wife are non Muslim, or slaves, or convicted of *qazf* previously, they cannot exercise lian against each other. Further more, if the woman was ever found guilty of an illicit or doubtful relationship with another man, exercise of lian will not be valid. The Hanafis have imposed these conditions, because according to them, there is no other difference between lian and *qazf* than this: the other man commits *qazf*, he is given the prescribed punishment, but if the husband himself commits it, he can escape the punishment by exercising lian. In all other respects, lian and *qazf* are identical. Moreover, since according to the Hanafis, the oaths of lian are in the nature of evidence, they do not concede this right to a person who is not legally fit to give evidence. But the truth is that in this matter the position of the Hanafis is weak, and the opinion of Imam Shafai is correct, because the Quran has not made the accusation of the wife a component part of the verse of *qazf*, but has prescribed a separate law for it. Therefore, it cannot be linked with the law of *qazf* and treated under the conditions prescribed for *qazf*. Then, the wording of the verse of lian is different from the wording of the verse of *qazf* and the two lay down separate injunctions. Therefore, the law of lian should be derived from the verse of lian and not from the verse of *qazf*. For instance, according to the verse of *qazf*, the person who accuses chaste women (*muhsanat*) of *zina*, deserves to be punished. But in the verse of lian, there is no condition of the chastity of the wife. A woman might have

committed sins in life, but if she repents later on and marries somebody, the husband is not authorised by the verse of lian to accuse her unjustly whenever he likes, and to deny fatherhood of her children simply because she had once lived in sin. The other equally important reason is that there is a world of difference between accusing a wife and accusing the other woman. The law cannot treat the two alike. A man has nothing to do with the other woman. He is neither attached to her emotionally, nor his honor, nor his family relations and rights are at stake, nor his lineage. The only meaningful interest he can have in the woman's character can be his desire to see a morally pure and clean society. Contrary to this, his relationship with his wife is deep and of varied nature. She is the custodian of the purity of his race, of his property and his house; she is his life partner, sharer of his secrets, and with her he is attached in most delicate and deep feelings. If she is morally corrupt, it will deal a serious blow to his honor, his interests and his progeny. These two things, therefore, cannot be considered alike, and the law cannot treat them as equal to each other. Is an evil affair of the wife of a zimmi, or a slave, or a convicted husband in any way different, or less serious, in consequences than that of the wife of a free, mature and sound Muslim? If the husband himself sees his wife involved in *zina* with another person, or has reasons to believe that his wife is pregnant by illicit intercourse, how can he be denied the right of lian? And if he is denied this right, what else is there in our law which can help him out of his awkward situation? The intention of the Quran

seems to be to open a way out of a difficult situation for married couples in which a husband may find himself placed due to the wife's immorality or illicit pregnancy, or a wife due to the husband's false accusation or unjustified denial of the fatherhood of her child. This is not particularly the need of the free and sound Muslims alone; there is in fact nothing in the Quranic text which may confine it to them only. As for the argument that the Quran has described the oaths of lian as evidence (shahadat), and therefore the conditions of evidence will apply here, the logical implication would be that in case a righteous and just husband whose evidence is acceptable, takes the necessary oaths, and the wife declines to take the oaths, she would have to be stoned to death, because her immorality would thus become established. But it is strange that in this case the Hanafis do not recommend stoning. This is a clear proof of the fact that they too do not regard the oaths as exactly identical with evidence. The truth is that though the Quran describes the oaths of lian as evidence, it does not regard them as evidence in the technical sense, otherwise it would have required the woman to swear eight oaths and not four.

(5) Lian is not necessitated by an allusion or expression of doubt or suspicion, but only when the husband accuses his wife clearly of *zina*, or denies in plain words that the child is his. Imam Malik and Laith bin Saad impose an additional condition that the husband while exercising lian must say that he has himself seen his wife involved in *zina*. But this is an unnecessary restriction which has no basis

whatever in the Quran and Hadith.

(6) If after accusing his wife, the husband declines to swear the oaths, the verdict of Imam Abu Hanifah and his companions is that he will be imprisoned and shall not be released until he exercises lian or confesses the falsehood of his accusation, in which case he will be awarded the prescribed punishment of qazf. On the contrary, Imam Malik, Shafai, Hasan bin Saleh and Laith bin Saad express the opinion that refusal to exercise lian itself amounts to confessing one's being a liar, which makes the prescribed punishment of qazf obligatory.

(7) If after the swearing of oaths by the husband, the wife declines to take the oaths, the Hanafis give the opinion that she should be imprisoned and should not be released until she exercises lian, or else confesses her guilt of zina. On the contrary, the other Imams (as mentioned in clause 6 above) say that in this case she will be stoned to death. They base their argument on the Quranic injunction: "it shall avert the punishment from her if she swears four times by Allah," Now that she declines to swear the oaths, she inevitably deserves the punishment. But the weakness in this argument is that the Quran does not specify here the nature of punishment; it simply mentions punishment. If it is argued that punishment here means the punishment of zina only, the answer is that for the punishment of zina the Quran has imposed the condition of four witnesses in clear words, and this condition cannot be fulfilled by four oaths sworn by one person. The husband's oaths can suffice for him to escape the punishment of qazf and for the wife to

face the injunction of lian, but they are not enough to prove the charge of *zina* against her. The woman's refusal to swear the oaths in self-defense certainly creates a suspicion, and a strong suspicion indeed, but a prescribed punishment cannot be enforced on the basis of suspicions. This thing cannot be considered as analogous with the prescribed punishment of qazf for the man, because his qazf is established, and that is why he is made to exercise lian. But contrary to this, the woman's guilt of *zina* is not established unless she herself makes a confession of it or four eye-witnesses are produced to prove it.

(8) If the woman is pregnant at the time of lian, according to Imam Ahmad, lian itself suffices to absolve the husband from the responsibility for pregnancy whether he has denied accepting it or not. Imam Shafai, however, says that accusation of *zina* by the husband and his refusal to accept responsibility for pregnancy are not one and the same thing. Therefore, unless the husband categorically refuses to accept the responsibility for pregnancy, he will be considered as responsible for it in spite of the accusation of *zina* by him, because the woman's being adulterous does not necessarily mean that her pregnancy is also due to *zina*.

(9) Imam Malik, Imam Shafai and Imam Ahmad concede the husband's right to deny responsibility for pregnancy during pregnancy, and allow him the right of lian on that basis. But Imam Abu Hanifah says that if the basis for the man's accusation is not *zina*, but only this that he has found pregnancy in the woman when it could not possibly be due to him, exercise of lian should be deferred until after

delivery because sometimes symptoms of pregnancy appear due to some disease and not actual pregnancy.

(10) If a husband denies fatherhood of a child, there is a consensus that lian becomes necessary. There is also a consensus that after he has accepted the child once (whether it is in clear words or by implication, e.g. by receiving congratulatory messages on its birth, or by treating it lovingly like one's own child and taking due interest in its bringing up), he loses his right to deny him later, and if he does so, he makes himself liable to the prescribed punishment of qazf. There is, however, a difference of opinion as to how long the father retains a right to deny fatherhood of the child. According to Imam Malik, if the husband was present at home while the wife was pregnant, he can deny the responsibility from the time of pregnancy till the time of delivery; after that he will have no right. However, if he was away from home and delivery took place in his absence, he can deny the child's fatherhood as soon as it comes to his knowledge. According to Imam Abu Hanifah, if he denies within a day or two of the child's birth, he will be absolved from the responsibility of the child after exercising lian, but if he denies after a year or two, lian will be valid, but he will not be absolved from the responsibility of the child. According to Imam Abu Yusuf, the father has the right to deny fatherhood within 40 days of the child's birth or knowledge of its birth; after that he will have no right. But this restriction of 40 days is meaningless. The correct view is that of Imam Abu Hanifah that fatherhood can be denied within a day or two of the

child's birth or knowledge of its birth, unless one is hindered from doing so due to a sound and genuine reason.

(11) If a husband accuses a divorced wife of *zina*, according to Imam Abu Hanifah, this will be a case of qazf and not of lian. Lian can be resorted to between the spouses and cannot be extended to a divorced woman unless it is a retractable divorce and the accusation is made within the period of retraction. But Imam Malik holds that this will be qazf only if it does not involve the question of accepting or denying the responsibility of pregnancy or fatherhood of the child. If it is not that, the man has the right to exercise lian even after pronouncing the final divorce, because in that case he would not be having recourse to lian for the purposes of bringing infamy on the woman but to absolve himself from the responsibility of the child who, he believes, is not his. The same almost is the opinion of Imam Shafai.

(12) There is a complete consensus of opinion in respect of certain legal implications of lian, but certain others have been disputed by the jurists. The agreed ones are the following.

Neither the woman nor the man is liable to punishment. If the man denies fatherhood of the child, it will be attributed to the mother alone; it will neither be attributed to the father nor will inherit him; the child will inherit the mother and the mother him. Thereafter nobody will have the right to call the woman adulterous nor the child illegitimate, whether the people might be completely sure of her being adulterous under the circumstances at the time of lian. Any person who repeats the old charge against the woman or

her child, will make himself liable to the punishment of qazf. The woman's dowry will remain intact, but she will not be entitled to claim maintenance, etc. from the man, and she will become forbidden to him forever.

There is, however, a difference of opinion in respect of two things.

(a) After lian how will separation be effected between the husband and the wife?

(b) Is it possible for them to re-unite in marriage after they have been separated on account of lian?

As regards to the first question, Imam Shafai holds the opinion that as soon as a man has exercised his lian, the woman stands automatically separated whether she refutes the man's charge by her lian or not. Imam Malik, Laith bin Saad and Zufar maintain that separation is effected when both a man and a woman have exercised their lian one after the other. Imam Abu Hanifah, Abu Yusuf and Muhammad hold that separation does not take place automatically after lian, but it is affected by the judge. If the husband pronounces divorce, it takes effect otherwise the judge will announce their separation.

Regarding the second, question, the opinion of Imam Malik, Abu Yusuf, Zufar, Sufyan Thauri, Ishaq bin Rahaviyah, Shafai, Ahmad bin Hanbal and Hasan bin Zaid is that the spouses who have been separated due to lian are forbidden to each other forever. Even if they wish to remarry, they cannot do so in any case. The same is the opinion also of Umar, Ali and Abdullah bin Masud. Contrary to this, Said bin Musayyab, Ibrahim Nakhai,

Shabi, Said bin Jubair, Abu Hanifah and Muhammad (may Allah be pleased with them all) opine that if the husband confesses his lie, and he is awarded the prescribed punishment for qazf, the two can re-unite in marriage. They argue that it is lian which makes them unlawful for each other. As long as they stand by their lian, they will remain forbidden for each other, but when the husband confesses his lie and receives the punishment, lian will become null and void and so will their prohibition to marry each other again.

10. And if (it were) not for the favor of Allah upon you, and His mercy (you would be ruined indeed), and that Allah is Clement, Wise.

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ حَكِيمٌ

11. Indeed, those who brought forth the slander*⁸ are a group among you.*⁹ Do not think this an evil for you. But it is good for you.*¹⁰ For every man of them is (a payment) what he earned of the sin. And he who took upon the greater share thereof among them,*¹¹ for him is a great punishment.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ
مِّنْكُمْ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرًّا لَّكُم بَلْ
هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ
مَا اكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ وَالَّذِي
تَوَلَّىٰ كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيمٌ

*⁸ This is an allusion to the slander against Aishah. Allah has Himself described it as *ifk* (false accusation, calumny)

which implies its total refutation.

From here begins the mention of the incident which provided the occasion of this Surah's revelation. We have reproduced the initial part of it in the introduction as related by Aishah herself; the rest of it is reproduced below. She says:

Rumours about this slander went on spreading in the city for about a month, which caused great distress and anguish to the Prophet (peace be upon him). I cried due to helplessness and my parents were sick with mental agony. At last one day the Prophet (peace be upon him) visited us and he sat near me, which he had not done since the slander had started. Feeling that something decisive was going to happen that day, Abu Bakr and Umm Ruman (Aishah's mother) also sat near us. The Prophet (peace be upon him) started the conversation, saying: Aishah, I have heard this and this about you: if you are innocent, I expect that Allah will declare your innocence. But if you have committed a sin, you should offer repentance and ask for Allah's forgiveness; when a servant (of Allah) confesses his guilt and repents, Allah forgives him. Hearing these words, tears dried in my eyes. I looked up to my father expecting that he would reply to the Prophet (peace be upon him), but he said: Daughter, I do not know what I should say. Then I turned to my mother, but she also did not know what to say. At last I said: You have all heard something about me and believed it. Now if I say that I am innocent and Allah is my witness that I am innocent, you will not believe me; and if I confess something which I never did and Allah knows

that I never did it, you will believe me. At that time I tried to call to memory the name of Prophet Jacob but could not recall it. Therefore in view of the predicament that I was placed in, I said: I cannot but repeat the words which the father of Prophet Joseph had spoken: *fasabrun jamil*: I will bear this patiently with good grace. (Surah Yousuf, Ayat 83). Saying this I lay down and turned to the other side. I was thinking that Allah was aware of my innocence, and He would certainly reveal the truth, but I could never imagine that divine revelation would come down in my defense, which the people will read and recite till the Last Day. What I thought probable was that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would see a dream in which Allah would indicate my innocence. But in the meantime suddenly, the state of receiving revelation appeared on the Prophet (peace be upon him), when pearl-like drops of perspiration used to gather on his face even in severe winter. We all held our breath and sat silent. As for me I was fearless, but my parents seemed to be struck with fear; they did not know what the divine revelation would be. When the revelation was over, the Prophet (peace be upon him) seemed to be very pleased. Over-joyed with happiness the first words he spoke were: Congratulations, Aishah, Allah has sent down proof of your innocence and then he recited these ten verses (11-21). At this my mother said to me: Get up and thank the Prophet (peace be upon him). I said: I shall neither thank him nor you two, but thank Allah Who has sent down my absolution. You did not even so much as contradict the charge against me. (This is not the

translation of any one tradition, but the substance of many traditions which are found in the books of Hadith in connection with the incident of the slander against Hadrat Aishah).

One subtle point to be understood here is that before mentioning the absolution of Aishah, a full section of verses has been devoted to the commandments pertaining to *zina*, *qazf* and *lian* by which Allah means to admonish that *zina* is not a slight matter which may be used as a means of entertaining the people in a gathering. It is very serious. If the accuser is right in his accusation he should produce witnesses, and get a most horrible punishment inflicted upon the adulterer and the adulteress. If the accuser is false, he deserves to be given 80 stripes, so that nobody may dare to bring a false charge against the other person. And if the accuser is a husband, he will have to exercise *lian* in a court of law to settle the matter. So, none who utters such an accusation will have peace. The Islamic society which has been brought about for the purpose of establishing goodness and piety in the world can neither tolerate *zina* as a means of entertainment nor endure loose talk about it as a diversion and amusement.

*9 Only a few persons have been mentioned in traditions, who were spreading the rumours. They were: Abdullah bin Ubayy, Zaid bin Rifaah (who was probably the son of Rifaah bin Zaid, the Jewish hypocrite), Mistah bin Uthathah, Hassan bin Thabit, and Hamnah bint Jahsh. The first two of these were hypocrites, and the other three Muslims, who had been involved in the mischief due to

misunderstanding and weakness. Names of the other people who were more or less involved in the mischief have not been mentioned in the books of Hadith and life of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

*10 That is, you should not lose heart. Though the hypocrites, according to their own presumptions, have made the worst attack on you, it will eventually bring misfortune on them, and will prove to be a blessing in disguise for you.

As mentioned in the introduction above, the hypocrites had planned to inflict a defeat on the Muslims on the moral front, which was their real field of superiority and responsible for their victory on every other front against the opponents. But Allah turned this mischief into a means of strength for the Muslims. On this occasion, the conduct and attitude adopted by the Prophet (peace be upon him), Abu Bakr and his family, and the Muslims at large proved beyond any doubt that they were the purest people morally, tolerant and just in nature, noble and forbearing in character. If the Prophet (peace be upon him) had wished he could have gotten the people responsible for the attack on his honor beheaded immediately. But he bore everything with patience for a whole month. And when divine injunction came down from Allah, he enforced the punishment for qazf only on those three Muslims whose guilt was established, and even spared the hypocrites. Abu Bakr's own relative, whose whole family he had been supporting all along, continued heaping disgrace on him publicly, but that noble man neither severed his family

relations with him nor stopped monetary help to him and his family. None of the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) took the least part in the slander nor even expressed the slightest approval of it. So much so that Zainab (a wife of the Prophet), for whose sake her real sister, Hammah bint Jahsh, was taking part in the slander, did not utter anything about her rival (Aishah) except good words. According to Aishah herself: Zainab, among the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him), was my strongest rival, but when in connection with the incident of the slander, the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked her opinion of me, she said: O Messenger of Allah, I swear by God that I have perceived nothing in her except piety. Aishah's own nobility of character can be judged by this that though Hassan bin Thabit had played a prominent role in the campaign of slander against her, she continued to treat him with due honour and esteem. When the people reminded her that he was the man who had slandered her, she retorted: No, he it was who used to rebut the anti-Islamic poets on behalf of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Islam. Such was the conduct and attitude of those people who were directly affected by the slander. As for the other Muslims, their attitude can be judged from one instance. When Abu Ayyub Ansari's wife mentioned before him the rumours of the slander, he said: Mother of Ayyub, if you had been there in place of Aishah, would you have done that? She replied: By God, I would never have done it. Ayyub then said: Well, Aishah is a much better woman than you. As for myself, if I had been in place of Safwan, I

could never have entertained such an evil thought and Safwan is a better Muslim than me. Thus, the result of the mischief engineered by the hypocrites was contrary to what they had planned to achieve, and the Muslims emerged out of this test morally stronger than before.

Then there was more good to come from this. The incident became the cause of some very important additions to the social law and injunctions of Islam. Through these the Muslims received such commandments from Allah by which the Muslim society can be kept clean and protected against the creation and propagation of moral evils, and if at all they arise, they can be corrected promptly.

Furthermore, there was another aspect of goodness in it also. The Muslims came to understand fully that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had no knowledge of the unseen. He knew only that which Allah taught him. Beside that his knowledge was the same as that of a common man. For one full month he remained in great anxiety with regard to Aishah. He would sometimes make enquiries from the maid-servant, sometimes from his other wives, and sometimes from Ali and Usamah. At last when he spoke to Aishah, he spoke only this: If you have committed the sin, you should offer repentance, and if you are innocent, I expect that Allah will declare your innocence. Had he possessed any knowledge of the unseen, he would not have felt so upset nor would have made enquiries, nor counselled repentance. However, when divine message revealed the truth, he received that knowledge which he had not possessed for more than a month. Thus Allah

arranged to safeguard the Muslims, through direct experience and observation, against exaggerated notions in which people generally get involved in regard to their religious leaders on account of excessive blind faith. Perhaps this was the reason why Allah withheld revelation for a month, for if revelation had been sent down on the very first day, it could not have had any beneficial effect.

*11 That is, Abdullah bin Ubayy, who was the real author of the false accusation and mischief. In some traditions it has been wrongly claimed that this verse refers to Hassan bin Thabit; this is actually due to a misunderstanding of the narrators themselves. As a matter of fact, Hassan bin Thabit's only weakness was that he became involved in the mischief engineered by the hypocrites. Hafiz Ibn Kathir has rightly observed that if this tradition had not been included in Bukhari, it would not have deserved any notice. The greatest falsehood, rather a calumny, in this connection is the assertion by the Umayyads that it was Ali who had been referred to in this verse. A saying of Hisham bin Abdul Malik has been cited in Bukhari, Tabarani and Baihaqi to the effect: The one who had the greatest share of responsibility in it refers to Ali bin Abi Talib. The fact, however, is that Ali had no hand whatever in this mischief. The truth is that when Ali saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a perturbed state of mind and the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked for his counsel, he said: Allah in this matter has not laid any restriction on you: suitable women are plenty: you may if you like divorce Aishah and marry another woman. But this did not at all mean that Ali had

supported the accusation against Aishah. His object was only to allay the Prophet's (peace be upon him) mental anguish.

12. Why, when you heard it (the slander), did not think the believing men and the believing women good of their own people,^{*12} and said: "This is a clear lie."^{*13}

لَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَأَنْفُسِهِنَّ خَيْرًا
وَقَالُوا هَذَا إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ

***12** This may also be translated as: Why did they not have a good opinion of the people of their own community and society? The words in the text are comprehensive and contain a subtle meaning which should be understood well. What happened concerning Aishah and Safwan bin Muattal was only this: A woman belonging to the caravan (apart from the fact that she was the Prophet's wife) was left behind, and a man belonging to the same caravan, who was also left behind, happened to see her and brought her on his camel to the camp. Now if a person alleges that when the two found themselves alone, they became involved in sin, the accusation would imply two other hypotheses: First, if the accuser himself (whether man or woman) had been there, he would certainly have availed of the rare opportunity and committed the sinful act, for he had never before chanced upon a person of the opposite sex in a situation like this. Second, the accuser's assessment of the moral condition of the society he belongs to is that in that society there is no man or woman who could possibly have abstained from sin in similar circumstances. This will be

the case when it involves any one man and any one woman. But supposing if the man and the woman happened to belong to the same place, and the woman who was left behind by chance was the wife, or sister, or daughter of a friend, or a relative, or a neighbor, or an acquaintance of the man, the matter would become much more serious and grave. Then it would mean that the one who utters such an accusation has a very poor and degraded opinion of himself as well as of his society, which has nothing to do with morality and good sense. No gentleman can imagine that if he finds a woman belonging to the family of a friend, or a neighbor or an acquaintance, stranded on the way, the first thing he would do would be to molest and dishonor her, and then would think of escorting her home. But here the matter was a thousand times more serious. The lady was no other than the wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah, whom every Muslim esteemed higher than his own mother, and whom Allah Himself had forbidden for every Muslim just like his own mother. The man was not only a follower of the same caravan and a soldier of the same army, and an inhabitant of the same city, but also a Muslim, who believed in the lady's husband to be the Messenger of Allah and his religious leader and guide, and had even followed him and fought in the most dangerous battle at Badr. Viewed against this background, it would seem that the person who uttered such an accusation and those who considered the accusation as probable, formed a very poor opinion not only of their moral selves but also of the whole society.

***13** That is, the accusation was not worth any consideration; the Muslims should have rejected it there and then as a lie and a falsehood. A question might be asked: Why did not the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Abu Bakr Siddiq reject it on the very first day, and why did they give it all that importance? The answer is that the position of the husband and the father is different from that of the common people. Though none else can know a woman better than her husband and a righteous husband cannot doubt the character of a virtuous and pious wife only on account of the people's accusations, but when the wife is accused, the husband is placed in a difficult situation. Even if he rejects it outright as a calumny, the accusers will not listen. They will rather say that the woman is clever and has beguiled the husband into believing that she is virtuous and pious whereas she is not. A similar situation is faced by the parents. They also cannot remove the accusers' slander regarding their daughter's chastity even if they know that the accusation is manifestly false. The same thing had afflicted the Prophet (peace be upon him), Abu Bakr and Umm Ruman, otherwise they did not entertain any doubt about Aishah's character. That is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) had declared in his sermon that he had neither seen any evil in his wife nor in the man who was being mentioned in the slander.

13. Why did they not bring to (prove) it four witnesses. Then when they (slanderers) did not

لَوْلَا جَاءُوا عَلَيْهِ بِأَرْبَعَةٍ شُهَدَاءَ
فَإِذْ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِالشُّهَدَاءِ

produce the witnesses, then it is they, with Allah, who are the liars.*14

فَأُولَٰئِكَ
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُمُ
الْكَاذِبُونَ



*14 “With Allah”: In the sight of Allah or in the law of Allah, or according to the law of Allah. Obviously, in Allah’s knowledge, the accusation was by itself false and its falsehood was in no way dependent on the production of witnesses by the accusers.

Here nobody should have the misunderstanding that failure to bring witnesses is being regarded as the basis and argument to prove that the accusation was false, and that the Muslims are also being told to regard it as a manifest calumny only because the accusers did not bring four witnesses. This misunderstanding can arise if one does not keep in view the background of the actual incident. As a matter of fact, none of the accusers had actually witnessed the thing which they were uttering with their tongues. The only basis of their accusation was that Aishah had been left behind from the caravan and afterwards Safwan had brought her to the camp on his camel. From this nobody with a little common sense could conclude that Aishah’s being left behind was intentional. These are not the ways of those who do these things. It cannot happen that the wife of the army commander quietly stays back with a man, and then the same man makes her ride on his camel and makes haste to catch up with the army at the next halting place in the open daylight at noon. The situation itself warranted that they were innocent. There could, however, be some

justification in the charge if the accusers had seen something with their own eyes, otherwise the circumstances on which the accusers had based their accusation did not contain any ground for doubt and suspicion.

14. And if (it were) not for the favor of Allah upon you, and His mercy in the world and the Hereafter, would surely have touched you, regarding that wherein you had indulged, a great punishment.

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِي
مَا أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ



15. When you received it with your tongues, and uttered with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge, and you thought of it insignificant, and with Allah it was tremendous.

إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَتَقُولُونَ
بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ
عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ عِنْدَ
اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ



16. And why, when you heard it, did you not say: "It is not for us that we speak of this. Glory be to You (O Allah), this is a great slander."

وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُمْ مَا
يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ بِهَذَا
سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ



17. Allah admonishes you that you repeat not the like of it ever, if you should be believers.

يَعِظُكُمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَعُودُوا لِمِثْلِهِ
أَبَدًا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

18. And Allah makes clear to you the revelations. And Allah is All Knowing, All Wise.*15

وَيُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ
عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

*15 These verses, especially verse 12, wherein Allah says: “Why did not the believing men and the believing women have a good opinion of themselves” provide the general principle that all dealings in the Islamic society must be based on good faith. The question of a bad opinion should arise only when there is a definite and concrete basis for it. Every person should, as a matter of principle, be considered as innocent unless there are sound reasons to hold him guilty or suspect. Every person should be considered as truthful unless there are strong grounds for holding him as unreliable.

19. Indeed, those who love that indecency should spread among those who believe, theirs will be a painful punishment in the world and the Hereafter.*16
And Allah knows, and you do not know.*17

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ
الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
هُمَّ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ

***16** The direct interpretation of the verse, in the context in which it occurs, is this: Those who cast aspersions, propagate evil, publicize it and bring Islamic morality into disrepute deserve punishment. The words in the text, however, comprehend all the various forms that can be employed for the propagation of evil. These include actual setting up of brothels, production of erotic stories, songs, paintings, plays and dramas as well as all kinds of mixed gatherings at clubs and hotels, which induce the people to immoralities. The Quran holds all those who resort to such things as criminals, who deserve punishment not only in the Hereafter but in this world as well. Accordingly, it is the duty of an Islamic government to put an end to all such means of propagating immorality. Its penal law must hold all those acts as cognizable offenses which the Quran mentions as crimes against public morality and declares the offenders punishable.

***17** “You do not know”: You do not visualize the full impact of individual acts on society as a whole: Allah knows best the number of people who are affected by these acts and their cumulative effect on the collective life of the community. You should accordingly trust in Him and do all you can to eradicate and suppress the evils pointed out by Him. These are not trivial matters to be treated lightly; these have very serious repercussions and the offenders must be dealt with severely.

20. And if (it were) not for the favor of Allah upon you, and His mercy (you would be

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ

ruined indeed), and that Allah is Clement, Merciful.

وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ رءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ



21. O you, those who believe, do not follow the footsteps of Satan. And whoever follows the footsteps of Satan, then indeed, he enjoins indecency and wrong. And if (it were) not for the favor of Allah upon you, and His mercy, not any one among you would have been pure, ever.*¹⁸ But Allah purifies whom He wills. And Allah is All Hearer, All Knower.*¹⁹

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴾



***18** Satan is bent upon involving you in all kinds of pollutions and indecencies. Had it not been for the mercy and kindness of Allah Who enables you to differentiate between good and evil and helps you to educate and reform yourselves, you would not have been able to lead a pure and virtuous life on the strength of your own faculties and initiative alone.

***19** It is Allah's will alone which decides whom to make pious and virtuous. His decisions are not arbitrary but based on knowledge. He alone knows who is anxious to live

a life of virtue and who is attracted towards a life of sin. Allah hears a person's most secret talk, and is aware of everything that passes in his mind. It is on the basis of this direct knowledge that Allah decides whom to bless with piety and virtue and whom to ignore.

22. And let not swear, those of dignity among you and (those of) wealth, not to give to their relatives and the needy, and the emigrants for the cause of Allah. And let them forgive and overlook. Would you not love that Allah should forgive you. And Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.*20

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُوا الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ
وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا
ۗ أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ



***20** Aishah has stated that after the revelation of verses 11-21 absolving her from the accusation, Abu Bakr swore that he would no longer support Mistah bin Uthatha. This was because the man had shown absolutely no regard for the relationship, nor for the favors that Abu Bakr had all along been showing him and his family. At this verse 22 was revealed and Abu Bakr, on hearing it, immediately said: By God, we do want that Allah should forgive us. Consequently he again started to help Mistah and in a more liberal manner than before. According to Abdullah bin Abbas, some other companions, besides Abu Bakr, also had

sworn that they would discontinue helping those who had taken an active part in the slander. After the revelation of this verse, all of them revoked their oaths and the ill-will that had been created by the mischief was gone.

Here a question may arise as to whether a person, who swears for something and later on revokes the oath on finding that there was no good in it and adopts a better and more virtuous course, should offer expiation for breaking the oath or not. One group of the jurists is of the opinion that adoption of the virtuous course itself is the expiation and nothing more needs to be done. They base their argument on this verse where Allah commanded Abu Bakr to revoke his oath but did not require him to atone for it. They also cite a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in support of their argument, saying: If anybody takes an oath for something and later on finds that another course is better and adopts it, his adoption of a better course by itself is the atonement for breaking the oath.

The other group is of the view that there is a clear commandment in the Quran concerning the breaking of oath (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 225, and Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 89), which has neither been abrogated by this verse nor clearly amended. Therefore the earlier commandment stands. No doubt, Allah commanded Abu Bakr to revoke his oath but He did not tell him that expiation was not necessary. As regards to the tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him), it only means this that the sin of taking an oath for a wrong thing is wiped out when the right course is adopted; it does not absolve one from making expiation for

the oath itself. Another tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) clarifies this view. He said: Whoso swears for something and then finds that another course is better than the one he had sworn for, he should adopt the better course and atone for his oath. This shows that expiation for breaking one's oath and expiation of the sin for not doing good are different things. The expiation for the first is to adopt the right course, and for the second the same as has been laid down in the Quran. For further explanation, see E.N. 46 of Surah Suad.

23. Indeed, those who accuse chaste, indiscreet, believing women^{*21} are cursed in the world and the Hereafter. And for them is a great punishment.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ
الْغَافِلَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ لُعِنُوا فِي
الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيمٌ



***21** The word *ghafilat* as used in the text means the women who are simple, unpretentious souls, who do not know any artifice, who have pious hearts and have no idea of immorality. They cannot even imagine that their names could ever be associated with any slander. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: To slander chaste women is one of the seven deadly sins. According to another tradition cited by Tabarani from Huzaifah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: To slander a pious woman suffices to ruin the good deeds of a hundred years.

24. On the day when, will bear witness against them their tongues, and their hands, and their feet as to what they used to do. *21a

يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ
وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ



*21a For explanation, see E.N. 55 of Surah YaSin and E.N. 25 of Surah HaMim Sajdah.

25. On that day Allah will pay them in full their just dues, and they will know that Allah, He is the manifest Truth.

يَوْمَ مِذٍ يُوفِّيهِمُ اللَّهُ دِينَهُمُ الْحَقَّ
وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ
الْمُبِينُ



26. Impure women are for impure men, and impure men are for impure women. And women of purity are for men of purity, and men of purity are for women of purity. Such are innocent of that which they say. *22 For them is pardon and a bountiful provision.

الْخَبِيثَاتُ لِلْخَبِيثِينَ
وَالْخَبِيثُونَ لِلْخَبِيثَاتِ
وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ
لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ أُولَئِكَ مُبَرَّءُونَ
مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ
كَرِيمٌ



*22 This verse enunciates a fundamental principle. Impure men are a fit match for impure women and pious men are a

fit match for pious women. It never happens that a man is good in all other aspects but is addicted to a solitary vice. As a matter of fact, his very habits, manners and demeanor, all contain a number of evil traits, which sustain and nourish that single vice. It is impossible that a man develops a vice all of a sudden without having any trace of its existence in his demeanor and way of life. This is a psychological truth which everybody experiences in the daily lives of the people. How is it then possible that a man who has all along lived a pure and morally clean life, will put up and continue to live for years in love with a wife who is adulterous? Can a woman be imagined who is an adulteress, but she does not manifest her evil character through her talk, gait, manners and deportment? Is it possible for a virtuous man of high character to live happily with a woman of this type? What is being suggested here is that people in future should not credulously put their belief in any rumor that reaches them. They should carefully see as to who is being accused and on what account and whether the accusation fairly sticks on the person or not. And when there exists no trace of evidence to support the accusation, people cannot believe it just because a foolish or wicked person has uttered it.

Some commentators have interpreted this verse to mean that evil things are for the evil people and good things for the good people. The good people are free from the evil things which the wicked people utter about them. Some others have interpreted it to mean that evil deeds only go with evil people and good deeds with good people. The

pious people are free from the evil deeds which the wicked people ascribe to them. Still others interpret it to mean that evil and filthy talk is indulged in only by the evil and filthy people and good and pious talk only by the good and pious people. The pious people are free from the sort of talk that these mischievous people are indulging in. The words of the verse are comprehensive and can be interpreted in any of the three ways, but the first meaning that strikes the reader is the one that we have adopted above and the same fits in more meaningfully with the context than others.

27. O you, those who believe,^{*23} do not enter houses other than your own houses, until you have asked approval^{*24} and greeted to those in them. That is better for you, that perhaps you may remember.^{*25}

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا
بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّىٰ
تَسْتَأْنِسُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا
ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَذَكَّرُونَ



*23 The commandments given in the beginning of the Surah were meant to help eradicate evil when it had actually appeared in society. The commandments being given now are meant to prevent the very birth of evil, to reform society and root out the causes responsible for the creation and spread of evil. Before we study these commandments, it will be useful to understand two things clearly:

First, the revelation of these commandments immediately

after the divine appraisal of the incident of the slander clearly indicates that permeation of a calumny against the noble person of a wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the society, was the direct result of the existence of a sexually charged atmosphere, and in the sight of Allah there was no other way of cleansing society of the evil than of prohibiting free entry into other people's houses, discouraging free mixing of the sexes together, forbidding women to appear in their make up before the other men, excepting a small circle of close relatives, banning prostitution, exhorting men and women not to remain unmarried for long, and arranging marriages even of the slaves and slave-girls. In other words, the movement of the women without hijab and the presence of a large number of unmarried persons in society were, in the knowledge of Allah, the real causes that imperceptibly give rise to sensuality in society. It was this sexually charged atmosphere which kept the ears, eyes, tongues and hearts of the people ever ready to get involved in any real or fictitious scandal. Allah in His wisdom did not regard any other measure more suitable and effective than these commandments to eradicate this evil; otherwise He would have enjoined some other commandments.

The second important thing to remember is that divine law does not merely forbid an evil or only prescribe a punishment for the offender, but it also puts an end to all those factors which provide occasions for the evil, or incite or force a person to commit it. It also imposes curbs on the causes, incentives and means leading to the evil so as to

check the wrongdoer much before he actually commits the crime. It does not like that people should freely approach and loiter about near the border lines of sin and get caught and punished all the time. It does not merely act as a prosecutor but as a guide, reformer and helper, too. So it uses all kinds of moral, social and educational devices to help the people to safeguard themselves against evil and vice.

***24** The Arabic word *tasta nisu* in the text has been generally interpreted to mean the same as *tasta zinu*. There is, however, a fine difference between the two words which should not be lost sight of. Had the word in the text been *tasta zinu*, the verse would have meant: Do not enter other people's houses until you have taken their permission. Allah has used *tasta nisu* which is derived from the root *uns*, meaning fondness, affection, regard, etc. According to this, the verse would mean: Do not enter other people's houses until you are sure of their affection and regard for yourself. In other words, you should make sure that your entry in the house is not disagreeable to the inmates and you are sure of a welcome. That is why we have translated the word into approval of the inmates instead of permission of the inmates, because the word approval expresses the sense of the original more precisely.

***25** According to the Arab custom of the pre-Islamic days, people would enter each other's house freely without permission just by pronouncing good morning or good evening. This unannounced entry sometimes violated the privacy of the people and their women folk. Allah enjoined

the principle that everybody has a right to privacy in his own house and no one is entitled to force his entry unannounced and without permission of the inmates. The rules and regulations enforced by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in society on receipt of the above commandment are given below serially.

(1) The right of privacy was not merely confined to the question of entry in the houses, but it was declared as a common right according to which it is forbidden to peep into a house, glance from outside, or even read the other person's letter without his permission. According to Thauban, who was a freed slave of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: When you have already cast a look into a house, what is then the sense in seeking permission for entry? (Abu Daud). Huzail bin Shurahbil has reported that a man came to see the Prophet (peace be upon him) and sought permission for entry while standing just in front of the door. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: Stand aside: the object of the commandment for seeking permission is to prevent casting of looks inside the house. (Abu Daud). The practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was that whenever he went to see somebody, he would stand aside, to the right or the left of the door, and seek permission as it was not then usual to hang curtains on the doors. (Abu Daud). Anas, the attendant of the Prophet (peace be upon him), states that a man glanced into the room of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from outside. The Prophet (peace be upon him) at that time was holding an arrow in his hand. He advanced

towards the man in a way as if he would thrust the arrow into his belly. (Abu Daud). According to Abdullah bin Abbas, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Whoever glances through the letter of his brother without his permission, glances into fire. (Abu Daud). According to Muslim and Bukhari, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: If someone peeps into your house, it will be no sin if you injure his eye with a piece of stone. In another tradition, he has said: The inmates of a house, who injure the eye of the man peeping into their house, are not liable to any punishment. Imam Shafai has taken this commandment literally and permits smashing of the eye of the one who casts a glance like this. The Hanafis, however, do not take the command in the literal sense. They express the opinion that it is applicable only in that case where an outsider forces his entry into a house in spite of the resistance from the inmates and has his eye or some other limb smashed in the scuffle. In such a case, no penalty will lie on the inmates. (Ahkamal-Quran, Al-Jassan, Vol. III, p. 385).

(2) The jurists have included hearing also under glancing. For instance, if a blind man enters a house without permission, he will not be able to see anybody, but he will certainly be able to hear whatever is going on in the house. This also amounts to violation of the other person's right of privacy.

(3) The command to seek permission is not only applicable in cases where a person wants to enter the other people's houses, but it also applies to entry in the house of one's own

mother or sister. A man asked the Prophet: Should I seek permission to enter my mother's house also? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied that he should. The man stated that there was nobody beside him to look after her, and asked whether it was necessary to get permission every time he wanted to go in. The Prophet replied: Yes; would you like that you should see your mother in a naked state (Ibn Jarir quoting from Ata bin Yasar). According to a saying of Abdullah bin Masud, one should seek permission even when going to see one's own mother or sister. (Ibn Kathir). He has suggested that even when a person goes to visit one's wife in one's own house, he should announce his arrival by coughing, etc. It is related by his wife Zainab that Abdullah bin Masud would always announce his arrival by coughing, etc. and never liked that he should enter the house unannounced all of a sudden. (Ibn Jarir).

(4) The only exception to the general rule is that no permission is needed in case of an emergency or a calamity like theft, fire, etc. One can go for help without permission in such cases.

(5) In the beginning when the system of seeking permission was introduced, people did not know the exact procedure to be followed. Once a man came to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) house and shouted at the door: Should I be in? The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to his maid servant, Roudah: Go and instruct him about the correct way. He should say: Assalam-o-alaikum (peace be upon you): May I come in? (Ibn Jarir, Abu Daud). Jabir bin Abdullah says that once he went to the Prophet's (peace be upon him)

house in connection with certain liabilities of his father and knocked at the door. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked: Who is it? I replied: It's me. The Prophet (peace be upon him) thereupon repeated twice or thrice: It's me, it's me! That is, how can one understand from this, who you are? (Abu Daud).

A man named Kaladah bin Hanbal went to see the Prophet (peace be upon him) and got seated without the customary salutation. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told him to go out and come in again after calling: Assalam-o-alaikum (peace be upon you). (Abu Daud). Thus, the correct method of seeking permission was to disclose one's identity first and then ask for permission. It is related that whenever Umar went to see the Prophet (peace be upon him), he would say: Assalam-o-alaikum ya Rasul-Allah, I am Umar: May I enter! (Abu Daud). The Prophet (peace be upon him) enjoined that permission should be asked thrice at the most. If there is no reply even at the third call, one should go back. (Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dud). The same was his own practice. Once he went to the house of Saad bin Ubadah and sought permission twice after greeting with: Assalam-o-alaikum wa Rahmatullah (peace be upon you and mercy of Allah), but there was no response. After calling for the third time when he received no response, he turned back. Saad came out running from the house, and said: O Messenger of Allah, I was hearing you all right, but I desired to have Allah's peace and mercy invoked upon me through your sacred tongue as often as possible; therefore, I was replying to you in a low voice. (Abu Dud, Ahmad).

The three calls as enjoined above should not be made in quick succession, but at suitable intervals so as to allow sufficient time to the inmates to make the response in case they are not free to do so.

(6) The permission for entry should come from the master of the house himself or from some other reliable inmate like a servant or a responsible person, who gives permission on behalf of the master. One should not enter the house on the word of a mere child.

(7) Undue insistence for permission to enter or to keep standing at the door obstinately even after refusal, is not permissible. If no entry is permitted even after three calls, or the master refuses to see, one should go back.

28. So if you do not find anyone therein, then do not enter until permission has been given to you.^{*26} And if it is said to you, go back, then go back, for it is purer for you.^{*27} And Allah knows of what you do.

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَا أَحَدًا فَلَا
تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّى يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ
وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمْ آرْجِعُوا فَآرْجِعُوا
هُوَ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ



***26** Entry into an empty house is not allowed unless permitted as such by the master of the house. One may, for instance, have told a visitor or sent him a message to wait in his room till his arrival. The mere fact that there is nobody in the house, or the call is not answered does not entitle anybody to enter without permission.

***27** That is nobody should mind if entry is refused, for everybody has a right to refuse to meet another person, or offer a plea if otherwise busy. The command “Go back”, according to the jurists, means going back in the literal sense and moving away from the door. Nobody has any right to compel the other person for a meeting or to embarrass him by standing obstinately at his door.

29. (It is) no sin on you that you enter uninhabited houses wherein is comfort for you.^{*28} And Allah knows what you reveal and what you conceal.

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا
بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ مَسْكُونَةٍ فِيهَا مَتَعٌ
لَكُمْ^ج وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ
وَمَا تَكْتُمُونَ



***28** Houses which are not dwelling place are the hotels, inns, guest houses, shops, staging bungalows, etc. which are generally open to all people.

30. Say to the believing men to lower of their gaze^{*29} and guard their private parts.^{*30} That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Aware of what they do.

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ
أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ^ج
ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ^ق إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ
بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ



***29** The word *ghadd* means to reduce, shorten or lower down something. Accordingly, *ghadd basar* is generally translated as lowering the gaze or keeping it lowered. But

the command of *ghadd basar* does not imply that the gaze should always be kept lowered. It only means to imply that one should restrain his gaze and avoid casting of looks freely. That is, if it is not desirable to see a thing, one should turn the eyes away and avoid having a look at it. The restriction of a restrained gaze is applicable only in a limited sphere. The context in which the words occur shows that this restriction applies to the men's gazing at women, or casting looks at the satar of the other persons, or fixing the eyes at indecent scenes.

The details of this divine commandment as explained in the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) are given below.

(1) It is not lawful for a man to cast a full gaze at the other women except at his own wife or the mahram women of his family. The chance look is pardonable but not the second look which one casts when one feels the lure of the object. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has termed such gazing and glancing as wickedness of the eyes. He has said that man commits adultery with all his sensory organs. The evil look at the other woman is the adultery of the eyes; lustful talk is the adultery of the tongue; relishing the other woman's voice is adultery of the ears; and touching her body with the hand or walking for an unlawful purpose is adultery of the hands and feet. After these preliminaries the sexual organs either bring the act of adultery to completion or leave it incomplete. (Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud).

According to a tradition related by Buraidah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed Ali: O Ali, do not cast a

second look after the first look. The first look is pardonable but not the second one. (Tirmizi;, Ahmad, Abu Daud). Jarir bin Abdullah Bajali says that he asked the Prophet, What should I do if I happen to cast a chance look? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Turn your eyes away or lower your gaze. (Muslim, Ahmad, Tirmizi, Abu Daud, Nasai). Abdullah bin Masud quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him) as having said: Allah says that the gaze is one of the poisonous arrows of Satan. Whoever forsakes it, out of His fear, he will be rewarded with a faith whose sweetness he will relish in his own heart. (Tabarani). According to a tradition related by Abu Umamah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: If a Muslim happens to glance at the charms of a woman and then turns his eyes away, Allah will bless his worship and devotion and will make it all the more sweet. (Musnad Ahmad). Imam Jafar Sadiq has quoted from his father, Imam Muhammad Baqir, who has quoted Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari as saying: On the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, Fadal bin Abbas, who was a young cousin of the Prophet (peace be upon him), was riding with him on the camel-back during the return journey from Masharal-Haram. When they came to a few women passing on the way, Fadal started looking at them. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) put his hand on his face and turned it to the other side. (Abu Da'ud). On another occasion during the same pilgrimage, a woman of the clan of Khatham stopped the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the way and sought clarification about a certain matter pertaining to Hajj. Fadal bin Abbas fixed his gaze at her,

but the Prophet turned his face to the other side. (Bukhari, Abu Daud, Tirmizi).

(2) Nobody should have the misunderstanding that the command to restrain the gaze was enjoined because the women were allowed to move about freely with open faces, for if veiling of the face had already been enjoined, the question of restraining or not restraining the gaze would not have arisen. This argument is incorrect rationally as well as factually. It is incorrect rationally because even when veiling of the face is the usual custom, occasions can arise where a man and a woman come face to face with each other suddenly, or when a veiled woman has to uncover her face under necessity. Then even if the Muslim women observe hijab, there will be non-Muslim women who will continue to move about unveiled. Thus, the commandment to lower the gaze or restrain the eyes, does not necessarily presume existence of a custom allowing the women to move about with unveiled faces. It is incorrect factually because the custom of hijab which was introduced after the revelation of the commandments in Surah Al-Ahzab included veiling of the face, and this is supported by a number of traditions relating to the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. Aishah in her statement relating to the incident of the slander, which has been narrated on the authority of reliable reporters, has said: When I came back to the camp, and found that the caravan had left, I lay down and was overpowered by sleep. In the morning when Safwan bin Muattal passed that way he recognised me because he had seen me before the

commandment of hijab had been sent down. On recognising me he exclaimed: *Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajiun*: To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return; and I awoke and covered my face with my sheet. (Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Hisham). Abu Daud contains an incident that when the son of Umm Khallad was killed in a battle, she came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to enquire about him and was wearing the veil as usual. It was natural to presume that on such a sad occasion one is liable to lose one's balance and ignore the restrictions of hijab. But when questioned she said: I have certainly lost my son but not my modesty. Another tradition in Abu Daud quoted on the authority of Aishah relates that a woman handed an application to the Prophet (peace be upon him) from behind a curtain. The Prophet enquired: Is it a man's hand or a woman's? She replied that it was a woman's. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: If it is a woman's hand, the nails at least should have been coloured with henna! As regards to the two incidents relating to the occasion of Hajj, which we have mentioned above, they cannot be used as an argument to prove that the veil was not in vogue in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This is because wearing of the veil is prohibited in the state of ihram. However, even in that state pious women did not like to uncover their faces before the other men. Aishah has stated that during the Farewell Pilgrimage when they were moving towards Makkah in the state of ihram, the women would lower down their head sheets over their faces

whenever the travellers passed by them, and would uncover their faces as soon as they had passed by. (Abu Daud).

(3) There are certain exceptions to the command of lowering the gaze or restraining the look. These exceptions relate to occasions when it is really necessary to see a woman, for instance, when a man intends to marry her. It is not only permissible to see the woman in such a case but even commendable. Mughirah bin Shubah has stated: I wanted to marry in a certain family. The Holy Prophet asked me whether I had seen the girl or not. When I replied in the negative, he said: Have a look at her; this will enhance harmonious relationship between you two. (Ahmad, Tirmizi, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Darimi). According to a tradition related by Abu Hurairah, a man wanted to marry in a family of the Ansar. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him to have a look at the girl, for the Ansar usually had a defect in their eyes. (Muslim, Nasai, Ahmad). According to Jabir bin Abdullah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: When a person from among you wants to marry a woman, he should have a look at her to satisfy himself that there is some quality in the woman which induces him to marry her. (Ahmad, Abu Daud). According to another tradition emanating from Abu Humaidah and quoted in Musnad Ahmad, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that there was no harm in such a procedure. He also permitted that the girl may be seen without her being aware of it. From this the jurists have concluded that there is no harm in looking at a woman when it is really necessary. For instance, there is no harm

in looking at a suspect woman when investigating a crime, or in the judge's looking at a female witness, who appears in the court, or in the physician's looking at a female patient, etc.

(4) The intention of the command to restrain the gaze also implies that no man or woman should look at the private parts of the other man or woman. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: No man should look at the satar of another man nor a woman at the satar of another woman. (Ahmad, Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmizi). Ali has quoted the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: Do not look at the thigh of another person, living or dead. (Abu Daud, Ibn Majah).

***30 Guard their private parts:** Abstain from illicit sexual gratification and from exposing their satar before others. For males, the satar is the part of the body from the navel to the knee, and it is not permissible to expose that part of the body intentionally before anybody except one's own wife. (Daraqutni, Baihaqi). Jarhad Aslami states that once he was sitting in the company of the Prophet (peace be upon him) with his thigh exposed. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Do you not know that the thigh has to be kept concealed. (Tirmizi, Abu Daud, Muatta). Ali reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Do not expose your thigh. (Abu Daud, Ibn Majah). Not only is the satar to be kept concealed before others but even when alone. The Prophet has warned: Beware, never remain naked, for with you are those (that is, the angels of goodness and mercy), who never leave you alone except when you ease yourself or

you go to your wives. So feel shy of them and give them due respect. (Tirmizi). According to another tradition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Guard your satar from everybody except from your wife and your slave-girl. The questioner asked: Even when we are alone? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Yes, even when alone, for Allah has a greater right that you should feel shy of Him. (Abu Daud, Tirmizi, Ibn Majah).

31. And say to the believing women to lower of their gaze^{*31} and guard their private parts,^{*32} and not^{*33} to expose their adornment^{*34} except that which is apparent thereof,^{*35} and to draw their veils over their bosoms,^{*36} and not to expose their adornment except to their own husbands,^{*37} or their fathers, or their husbands' fathers,^{*38} or their sons, or their husbands' sons,^{*39} or their brothers,^{*40} or their brothers' sons,^{*41} or their sisters' sons,^{*42} or their women,^{*43} or that which their right hands possess (slaves),^{*44} or attendants,

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ
أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَتَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ
وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا
ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ خُمُرِهِنَّ
عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ
زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ
ءَابَائِهِنَّ أَوْ ءَابَاءِ
بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ
أَبْنَاؤَ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ
أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي
أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا

those of no physical desire from among men,^{*45} or children, those who are not yet aware of the private parts of women.^{*46} And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment.^{*47} And turn to Allah in repentance, all together, O you who believe,^{*48} that perhaps you may be successful.^{*49}

مَلَكْتَ أَيْمَانَهُنَّ أَوْ التَّبَعِينَ
 غَيْرِ أُولَى الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوْ
 الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا
 عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ
 بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ
 زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا
 أَيُّهُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
 تُفْلِحُونَ



***31** The commandments of restraining the gaze for women are the same as for men. They should not glance intentionally at the other men, and if they happen to cast a chance look, they should turn their eyes away; and they should abstain from looking at the satar of others. However, the commandments relating to the men's looking at women are a little different from those relating to the women's looking at men. On the one hand, there is an incident related in a tradition saying that Umm Salamah and Umm Maimunah, wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him), were sitting with him when Ibn Umm Maktum, a blind companion, made his appearance. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to his wives: Conceal your faces from him. The wives said: O Messenger of Allah, is he not a blind man? Neither will he see us nor recognize us.

Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) remarked: Are you two also blind? Do you not see him? Umm Salamah has clarified that this incident occurred at a time when the commandments about the observance of hijab had already been sent down. (Ahmad, Abu Daud, Tirmizi). This is also supported by a tradition in Muatta saying that a blind man came to see Aishah and she observed hijab from him. When asked as to why she observed hijab when the man could not see her, she replied: But I do see him. On the other hand, there is a different tradition from Aishah. In 7 A.H. a deputation of the Africans came to Al-Madinah and they gave a performance of physical skill in the compound of the Prophet's Mosque. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself showed their performance to Aishah. (Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad). In another case, we find that when Fatimah bint Qais was irrevocably divorced by her husband, the question arose as to where she should pass her Iddah (the prescribed waiting term after divorce or death of husband). The Prophet (peace be upon him) first told her to stay with Umm Sharik Ansari, but then instructed her to stay in the house of Ibn Umm Maktum, where she could stay with greater freedom as he was a blind man. He did not approve of her staying in the house of Umm Sharik because she was a rich lady and her house was frequented by the companions whom she entertained generously. (Muslim, Abu Daud). Read together these traditions show that the restrictions about the women's looking at men are not so hard as about the men's looking at women. While it is forbidden for women to sit face to face with men, it is not

unlawful if they cast a look at men while passing on the way or see a harmless performance by them from a distance. There is also no harm for women to see the other men in case of real need if they are living in the same house. Imam Ghazzali and Ibn Hajar Asqalani have also reached almost the same conclusion. Shaukani in his Nail al-Autar (Vol. VI, p. 101) has quoted Ibn Hajar as saying: Such a permission in respect of women is also supported by the fact that they have always enjoyed this type of freedom in outdoor duties while they came out veiled when visiting the mosques, or moving in the streets, or during the journey, so that men may not gaze at them, the men were never commanded to use the veil so that women may not gaze at them. This shows that the commandments in respect of the two sexes are different.. However, it is not at all permissible that women should gaze leisurely at men and draw pleasure of the eye in doing so.

***32** That is, they should abstain from illicit gratification of their sex desire as well as from exposing their satar before others. Though the commandments for men in this respect are the same as for women, the boundaries of satar for women are different from those prescribed for men. Moreover, the female satar with respect to men is different from that with respect to women.

The female satar with respect to men is the entire body, excluding only the hand and the face, which should not be exposed before any other man, not even the brother and father, except the husband. The woman is not allowed to wear a thin or a tight fitting dress which might reveal the

skin or the outlines of the body. According to a tradition from Aishah, once her sister Asma came before the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a thin dress. The Prophet (peace be upon him) immediately turned his face away and said: O Asma, when a woman has attained her maturity, it is not permissible that any part of her body should be exposed except the face and the hand. (Abu Daud). Ibn Jarir has related a similar incident from Aishah saying that once the daughter of Abdullah bin Tufail, who was her mother's son from her former husband, came to her house on a visit. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) entered the house, he saw her but turned his face to the other side. Aishah said: O Messenger of Allah, she is my niece. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) remarked: When a woman reaches the age of puberty, it is not lawful for her to display her body except the hand and the face. (Then he indicated what he meant by the hand by gripping his own hand from the wrist so that there was hardly a breadth left between his grip and the palm of the hand). The only relaxation permitted in this connection is that a woman can uncover only that much of her body before her close relatives (for example, her brother, father, etc.) as is absolutely necessary for attending to the household duties. For instance, she can roll up her sleeves while kneading the flour, or tuck up her trousers while washing the floor. The boundaries of female satar with respect to women are the same as the boundaries of the male satar with respect to men, which is the part of the body from the navel to the knee. This does not, however, mean that a woman should

appear half naked before other women. It only means that while it is obligatory to keep the part of body from the navel to the knee duly covered, it is not so in case of other parts.

***33** It should be carefully noted that the demands that divine law makes from women are not only those it has made from men, that is restraining of looks and guarding of the private parts, but it makes some other demands from them also, which it has not made from men. This shows that men and women are not identical in this respect.

***34** Adornment includes attractive clothes, ornaments and other decorations of the head, face, hand, feet, etc. which the women usually employ, and is expressed by the modern word make-up. The injunction that this makeup should not be displayed before others is discussed in detail in the following notes.

***35** Different interpretations given by different commentators of this verse have greatly confused its real meaning. All that is obviously meant is that women should not display their make-up and adornment except that which is displayed of itself and is beyond their control. This clearly means that women should not purposely and intentionally display their make-up, but there is no accountability if the make-up becomes displayed without any purpose or intention on their part; for instance, the head-wrapper's being blown aside by the wind thus exposing the adornment, or the outer-garment itself which cannot be concealed but which nevertheless has attraction being a part of the female dress. This very interpretation of

this verse has been given by Abdullah bin Masud, Hasan Basri, Ibn Sirin and Ibrahim Nakhai. On the contrary, some other commentators have interpreted the verse to mean all those parts of the body which usually remain exposed or uncovered and in this they include the hands and the face with all their adornments. This is the view of Ibn Abbas and his followers, and a large number of the Hanafi jurists have accepted it. (Ahkam-ul-Quran, AlJassas, Vol. III, pp. 388-389). Thus, according to them, it is permissible for a woman to move out freely with the uncovered face in full make-up and adornment of the hands.

We are, however, unable to subscribe to this view. There is a world of difference between displaying something and its becoming displayed of itself. The first implies intention and the second compulsion and a state of helplessness. Moreover, such an interpretation also goes against the traditions which state that the women never moved out with open and uncovered faces in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) after the commandments of hijab had been sent down. These commandments implied veiling of the face as well, and the veil had become a part of the female dress except during Hajj when one has to be in the prescribed state of ihram and keep the face uncovered. Another argument that is advanced in support of this view is that the hands and the face are not included in the satar of the woman, whereas satar and hijab are two entirely different things. Sanctity of satar is such that it cannot be violated even before the mahram males like the father,

brother, etc. As for hijab it is over and above satar which is meant to segregate women from non mahram males; the discussion here relates to the commandments of hijab and not to satar.

***36** In the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, women used to wear a sort of head-band, which was tied in a knot at the rear of the head. The slit of the shirt in the front partly remained open exposing the front of the neck and the upper part of the bosom. There was nothing except the shirt to cover the breasts, and the hair was worn in a couple or two of plaits hanging behind like tails. (Al-Kashshaf, Vol. II, p. 90, and Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, pp. 283-284). At the revelation of this verse, the head-wrapper was introduced among the Muslim women, which was meant to cover the head, the breasts, and the back, completely. The way the Muslim women responded to this command has been described by Aishah in a vivid manner. She states that when Surah An-Noor was revealed and the people learned of its contents from the Prophet (peace be upon him), they immediately went back to their houses and recited the verses before their wives, daughters and sisters. There was an instantaneous response. The Ansar women, one and all, immediately got up and made wrappers from whatever piece of cloth that was handy. The next morning all the women who came to the Prophet's Mosque for prayers were dressed in wrappers. In another tradition Aishah says that thin cloth was discarded and the women selected only coarse cloth for the purpose. (Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, p. 284, Abu Daud).

The very nature and object of the command demanded that the wrapper should not be made out of fine and thin cloth. The Ansar women immediately understood the real object and knew what type of cloth was intended to be used. The Law-Giver himself clarified this and did not leave it to be interpreted by the people. Dihya Kalbi states: Once a length of fine Egyptian muslin was presented to the Prophet (peace be upon him). He gave a piece of it to me and said, Use one part of it for your shirt, and give the rest of it to your wife for a wrapper, but tell her that she should stitch another piece of cloth on the inner side so that the body may not be displayed through it. (Abu Daud).

***37** This verse describes the circle in which a woman can move freely with all her make-up and adornment. Outside this circle she is not allowed to appear with make-up before the other people, whether they are relatives or strangers. The commandment implies that she should not display her embellishments outside this limited circle, intentionally or through carelessness. However, what becomes displayed incidentally, in spite of care and concern, or what cannot be concealed, it is excused by Allah.

***38** Fathers' include grandfathers and great grandfathers as well, both paternal and maternal. Accordingly a woman can appear before her own and her husband's grandfathers just as she can appear before her own father and father in law.

***39** Sons include grandsons and great grandsons from the male or female offspring. No distinction is to be made between the real sons and the step-sons.

***40** Brothers' include real and stepbrothers.

***41** Sons of brothers and sisters include sons, grandsons and great grandsons of all the three kinds of brothers and sisters.

***42** After the relatives, the other people are now being mentioned. But before we proceed further, it would be useful to understand three things in order to avoid confusion.

First, some jurists hold that the freedom of movement and display of adornment by a woman is restricted to the circle of relatives mentioned in this verse. All others, even the real paternal and maternal uncles, are excluded from this list and a woman should observe hiab from them because they have not been mentioned in the Quran. This is, however, not a correct view. Let alone the real uncles, the Prophet (peace be upon him) disallowed Aishah to observe hijab even from her foster uncles. A tradition quoted in Sihah Sitta and Musnad Ahmad on the authority of Aishah says that once Aflah, brother of Abul Quais, came to see her and sought permission to enter the house. But since the commandment of hijab had been received, Hadrat Aishah refused him permission. On this Aflah sent back the word saying, You are my niece: you were suckled by my brother Abul Quais's wife. But Aishah still was hesitant whether it was permissible to appear unveiled before such a relative or not. In the meantime the Prophet (peace be upon him) arrived and he ruled that he could see her. This shows that the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself did not interpret the verse in the way these jurists do that it was lawful to

appear unveiled only before those relatives who have been mentioned in the verse and not before others. He interpreted it to mean that hijab need not be observed from those relatives with whom marriage is prohibited, for instance, paternal and maternal uncles, son-in-law and foster relatives. Hasan Basri from among the followers has expressed the same opinion and the same has been supported by Allama Abu Bakr al-Jassas in his Ahkam-ul-Quran. (Vol. III, p. 390).

Secondly, there is the question of those relatives with whom marriage is not permanently prohibited; they neither fall in the category of mahram relatives (that women may freely appear before them with adornment) nor in the category of complete strangers that they should observe full hijab from them as from others. What should be the right course between the two extremes has not been determined by the Shariah for such a course cannot possibly be determined. The observance of hijab or otherwise in such cases will inevitably depend on the mutual relationship, age of the woman and of men, family relations and contacts and other circumstances (e.g. residence in the same house or in different houses). The personal example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself in this matter gives us the same guidance. A large number of traditions confirm that Asma, daughter of Abu Bakr, who was a sister-in-law of the Prophet (peace be upon him), appeared unveiled before him and no hijab, at least of the face and hands, was observed by her. This same position continued till the Farewell Pilgrimage which took place just a few months

before the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him). (Abu Daud). Similarly Umm Hani, daughter of Abu Talib and a first cousin of the Prophet (peace be upon him), appeared before him till the end without ever observing hijab of the face and hands. She herself has narrated an incident pertaining to the conquest of Makkah, which confirms the same. (Abu Daud). On the contrary, we see that Abbas sends his son Fadal, and Rabiah bin Harith bin Abdul Muttalib, a first cousin of the Prophet (peace be upon him), his son Abdul Muttalib before the Prophet (peace be upon him) with the request for a job, as they could not be married till they became earning members of the family. They both see the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the house of his wife Zainab, who is a first cousin of Fadal and is similarly related to the father of Abdul Muttalib bin Rabiah. But she does not appear before them and talks to them from behind a curtain in the presence of the Prophet (peace be upon him). (Abu Daud). Taking the two kinds of precedents together we come to the same conclusion as we have stated above.

Thirdly, in cases where the relationship itself becomes doubtful, hijab should be observed even from the mahram relatives. Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Daud have related a case where Saudah, a wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him), had a brother born of a slave woman. Utbah, the father of Saudah and the boy, left a will enjoining his brother, Saad bin Abi Waqqas, to look after the boy as a nephew for he was from his own seed. When the case came before the Prophet (peace be upon him), he rejected the

claim of Saad, saying: The boy belongs to him on whose bed he was born; as for the adulterer, let stones and pebbles be his lot. But at the same time he told Saudah to observe hijab from the boy because it was doubtful whether he was really her brother.

***43** The Arabic word *nisa-i-hinna* means their female associates. Before we consider what women are exactly meant, it is worth noting that the word used here is not *an-nisa*, which merely means women, but *nisa-i-hinna* which means their female associates. In the former case, it would be quite permissible for a Muslim woman to appear unveiled before all sorts of women and display her adornment. The use of *nisa-i-hinna*, however, has circumscribed her freedom within a specific circle. As to what specific circle of women is implied, the commentators and jurists have expressed different opinions.

According to one group, the female associates mean only the Muslim women; as for the non-Muslim women, whether zimmi or otherwise, they are excluded and hijab should be observed from them as from men. Ibn Abbas, Mujahid and Ibn Juraij hold this opinion and cite the following incident in support thereof: Umar wrote to Abu Ubaidah: I hear that some Muslim women have started going to public baths along with the non-Muslim women. It is not permissible for a woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day that she should expose her body before the women other than of her own community. On receipt of this letter Abu Ubaidah was much upset, and he cried out: May the face of the woman who goes to the public baths to

whiten her complexion be blackened on the Last Day! (Ibn Jarir, Baihaqi, Ibn Kathir).

Another group, which includes Imam Razi, is of the view that female associates are all women without exception. But it is not possible to accept this view as in that case *an-nisa* should have sufficed and there was no need to use *nisa-i-hinna*.

The third opinion, and this appears to be reasonable and nearer the Quranic text, is that their female associates mean those familiar and known women with whom a woman usually comes into contact in her daily life and who share in her household chores, etc. whether they are Muslim or non-Muslim. The object here is to exclude those women from the circle who are either strangers and whose cultural and moral background is not known or whose antecedents are apparently doubtful, which make them unreliable. This view is also supported by the authentic traditions which state that zimmi women used to visit the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The real thing to be considered in this connection would be the moral character and not the religious belief. Muslim women can meet and have intimate social contacts with noble, modest and virtuous women, who come from well-known and reliable families even if they are non-Muslim. But they must observe hijab from immodest, immoral and vulgar women even if they happen to be Muslims. Their company from the moral viewpoint is as dangerous as of other men. As for contacts with un-known, unfamiliar women, they may at the most be treated like non-mahram relatives. A

woman may uncover her face and hands before them but she must keep the rest of her body and adornments concealed.

***44** There is a good deal of difference of opinion among the jurists about the correct meaning of this injunction. One group holds that this refers only to the slave girls owned by a lady. Accordingly they interpret the divine command to mean that the Muslim woman can display her adornment before a slave girl, whether she is an idolatress or a Jew or a Christian, but she cannot appear before a slave man even if he is legally owned by her. For purposes of hijab, he is to be treated just like a free male stranger. This is the view of Abdullah bin Masud, Mujahid, Hasan Basri, Ibn Sirin, Said bin Musayyab, Taus and Imam Abu Hanifah, and a saying of Imam Shafai also supports this. They argue that the slave is not a mahram to the lady. If he is freed, he can marry his former owner. Therefore the fact of his being a slave cannot by itself entitle him to be treated like the male mahrams and allow the lady to appear freely before him. The question why should the words those in their possession which are general and applicable to both slaves and slave girls, be restricted to mean only slave girls, is answered by these jurists like this: Though the words are general, the context and background in which they occur make them specifically applicable to slave girls only. The words those in their possession occur just after their female associates in the verse; therefore one could understand that the reference was to a woman's relatives and other associates; this could lead to the misunderstanding that the

slave girls perhaps were excluded; the words those in their possession therefore were used to clarify that a woman could display her adornments before the slave girls as before her free female associates.

The other group holds that the words those in their possession include both the male slaves and the slave girls. This is the view of Hadrat Aishah, Umm Salamah and some learned scholars of the house of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and also of Imam Shafai. They do not argue merely on the basis of the general meaning of the words, but they also cite precedents from the Sunnah in support of their view. For instance, the incident that the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to the house of his daughter, Fatimah, along with his slave Abdullah bin Musadah al-Fazari. She was at that time wearing a sheet which, would leave the feet exposed if she tried to cover the head, and the head exposed if she tried to cover the feet. The Prophet (peace be upon him) felt her embarrassment and said: No harm: there are only your father and your slave! (Abu Daud, Ahmad, Baihaqi on the authority of Anas bin Malik). Ibn Asakir has stated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had given that slave to Fatimah, who brought him up and then freed him. (But the man turned out to be an ungrateful wretch; in the battle of Siffin, he was the bitterest opponent of Ali and a zealous supporter of Amir Muawiyah). They also quote the following words of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in support of their stand: When any of you agrees to a deed of emancipation with her slave, and the slave has the necessary means to buy his freedom, she (the owner) should

observe hijab from him. (Abu Daud, Tirmizi, Ibn Majah on the authority of Umm Salamah).

***45** The literal translation of the text would be: those from among the men who are your subordinates and have no desire. The obvious meaning is that apart from the mahram males, a Muslim woman can display her adornment only before the man who satisfies two conditions: firstly, he should be in a subordinate capacity, and secondly, he should be free from sexual urges either due to advanced age, impotence, mental weakness, poverty or low social position, so that he cannot cherish the desire or have the boldness to think evilly of his master's wife, daughter, sister or mother. Anybody who studies this injunction in the right spirit with a view to obeying it, and not for the sake of finding ways and means of escaping from or violating it, will readily appreciate that the bearers, cooks, chauffeurs and other grown up servants employed these days in the houses do not fall in this category. The following clarifications given by the commentators and the jurists of this point would show the type of men envisaged in the verse. According to Ibn Abbas: This implies a man who is a mere simpleton and has no interest in women. According to Qatadah: A poor man who is attached to you merely for his sustenance. According to Mujahid: A fool who only needs food and has no desire for women. According to Shabi: The one who is a subordinate and entirely dependent on his master, and cannot have the boldness to cast an evil look at the womenfolk of the house. According to Ibn Zaid: The one who remains attached to a family for such a long time

that he is regarded as a member brought up in that house, and who has no desire for the women of the house. He is there merely because he gets his sustenance from the family. According to Taus and Zuhri: One who does not cherish the desire for the women nor has the courage to do so. (Ibn Jarir, Vol. XVIII, pp. 95-96, Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, p. 285).

The best explanation in this regard is the incident that happened at the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which has been quoted by Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Nasai and Ahmad on the authority of Aishah and Umm Salamah. There was a certain eunuch in Madinah who was allowed free access to the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the other women of the city, on the assumption that he being incapable of sex was free from the sexual urge. One day when the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to the house of his wife, Umm Salamah, he heard him talking to her brother, Abdullah bin Abi Umayyah. He was telling Abdullah that if Taif was taken the following day, he should try to have Badia, daughter of Ghailan Thaqafi. And then he started praising Badia's beauty and her physical charms and even went to the extent of describing her private parts. On hearing this, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) said: O enemy of Allah, you seem to have seen her through. Then he ordered that the women should observe hijab from him and he should not be allowed to enter the houses in future. After this he turned him out of Madinah and forbade the other eunuchs also to enter the houses, because the women did not mind their

presence, while they would describe the women of one house before the other men of other houses in the society. This shows that the word incapable of sex desire do not merely imply physical impotence. Anyone who is physically unfit but cherishes sex desire in the heart and takes interest in women can become the cause of many mischiefs.

***46** That is, the children who do not yet have their sex feelings aroused. This may apply to boys of 11 to 12 at the most. Older boys start having sex feelings though they may still be immature otherwise.

***47** The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not restrict this injunction to the jingle of the ornaments, but has derived from it the principle that besides the look, anything which tends to excite any of the senses, is opposed to the objective for which Allah has forbidden the women to display their adornment. Therefore, he ordered the women not to move out with perfumes. According to Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Do not stop the bondmaids of Allah from coming to the mosques, but they should not come with perfumes. (Abu Daud, Ahmad). According to another tradition, Abu Hurairah passed by a woman who was coming out of the mosque and felt that she had perfumed herself. He stopped her and said: O bondmaid of Allah, are you coming from the mosque? When she replied in the affirmative, he said: I have heard my beloved Abul Qasim (peace be upon him) say that the prayer of the woman who comes to the mosque with perfumes, is not accepted till she purifies herself with a complete bath as is done after a sexual intercourse. (Abu

Daud, Ibn Majah, Ahmad, Nasai). Abu Musa Ashari has quoted the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: A woman who passes on the way with perfumes so that people may enjoy her perfumes, is such and such: he used very harsh words for her. (Tirmizi, Abu Daud, Nasai). His instruction was that women should use scents with bright colors but light odors. (Abu Daud). Similarly the Prophet (peace be upon him) disapproved that feminine voices should enter the ears of men unnecessarily. In case of genuine need the Quran itself has allowed women to speak to men, and the Prophet's (peace be upon him) wives themselves used to instruct people in religious matters. But where there is no necessity, nor any moral or religious objective, the women have been discouraged to let their voices be heard by men. Thus if the imam happens to commit a mistake during a congregational prayer, and he is to be warned of the lapse, the men have been taught to say Subhan-Allah (Glory be to Allah), while the women have been instructed to tap their hands only. (Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, Tirmizi, Abu Daud, Nasai, Ibn Majah).

***48** Turn towards Allah: Repent of the lapses and errors that you have been committing in this regard so far, and reform your conduct in accordance with the commands given by Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him).

***49** It would be useful to give here a resume of the other reforms which the Prophet (peace be upon him) introduced in the Islamic society after the revelation of these commandments.

(1) He prohibited the other men (even if they are relatives)

to see a woman in privacy or sit with her in the absence of her mahram relatives. Jabir bin Abdullah has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Do not visit the women whose husbands are away from home, because Satan circulates in one of you like blood. (Tirmizi). According to another tradition from Jabir, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should never visit a woman when alone unless she has a mahram relative also present, because the third one would be Satan. (Ahmad). Imam Ahmad has quoted another tradition from Amir bin Rabiah to the same effect. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself was extremely cautious in this regard. Once when he was accompanying his wife Safiyyah to her house at night, two men of Ansar passed by them on the way. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stopped them and said: The woman with me is my wife Safiyyah. They said: Glory be to Allah! O Messenger of Allah, could there be any suspicion about you? The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Satan circulates like blood in the human body; I was afraid lest he should put an evil thought in your minds. (Abu Daud).

(2) The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not approve that a man's hand should even touch the body of a non-mahram woman. That is why while administering the oath of allegiance, he would take the hand of the men into his own hand, but he never adopted this procedure in the case of women. Aishah has stated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) never touched the body of any other woman. He would administer the oath verbally to them; when this was

done, he would say: You may go, Your allegiance is complete. (Abu Daud).

(3) He strictly prohibited the woman from proceeding on a journey alone without a mahram or in company with a non-mahram. A tradition from Ibn Abbas has been quoted in Bukhari and Muslim saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave a sermon and said: No man should visit the other woman when she is alone unless she has a mahram also present, and no woman should travel alone unless accompanied by a mahram. A man stood up and said: My wife is going for Hajj, while I am under orders to join a certain expedition. The Prophet said: You may go for Hajj with your wife. Several other traditions on the subject, emanating from Ibn Umar, Abu Said Khudri and Abu Hurairah, are found in authentic books of traditions, which concur that it is not permissible for a Muslim woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day that she should go on a journey without a mahram. There is, however, a variation with regard to the duration and the length of the journey. Some traditions lay down the minimum limit as 12 miles and some lay down the duration as one day, a day and night, two days or even three days. This variation, however, neither renders the traditions unauthentic nor makes it necessary that we should accept one version as legally binding in preference to others. For a plausible explanation for the different versions could be that the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave different instructions at different occasions depending on the circumstances and merit of each case. For instance, a woman going on a three-day

journey might have been prohibited from proceeding without a mahram, while another going on a day's journey might also have been similarly prohibited. Here the real thing is not the different instructions to the different people in different situations, but the principle that a woman should not go on a journey without a mahram as laid down in the tradition quoted above from Ibn Abbas.

(4) He not only took practical measures to stop free mixing of the sexes together but prohibited it verbally as well. Everyone knows the great importance of the congregational and the Friday prayers in Islam. The Friday prayer has been made obligatory by Allah Himself; the importance of the congregational prayer can be judged from a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which says: If a person does not attend the mosque without a genuine reason and offers his prayer at home, it will not be acceptable to Allah. (Abu Daud, Ibn Majah, Daraqutni, Hakim on the authority of Ibn Abbas). But in spite of this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) exempted the women from compulsory attendance at the Friday prayer. (Abu Daud, Daraqutni, Baihaqi). As for the other congregational prayers, he made the women's attendance optional, saying: Do not stop them if they want to come to the mosque. Then at the same time, he made the clarification that it was better for them to pray in their houses than in the mosques. According to Ibn Umar and Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Do not prohibit the bondmaids of Allah from coming to the mosques of Allah. (Abu Daud). Other traditions from Ibn Umar are to the effect: Permit the women to come to

the mosques at night. (Bukhari, Muslim, Trimizi, Nasai, Abu Daud). And do not stop your women-folk from coming to the mosques though their houses are better for them than the mosques. (Ahmad, Abu Daud). Umm Humaid Saiduyyah states that once she said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): O Messenger of Allah, I have a great desire to offer my prayer under your leadership. He replied: Your offering the prayer in your room is better than your offering it in the verandah, and your offering the prayer in your house is better than your offering it in the neighboring mosque, and your offering the prayer in the neighboring mosque is better than offering it in the principal mosque (of the town). (Ahmad, Tabarani). A tradition to the same effect has been reported from Abdullah bin Masud in Abu Daud. According to Umm Salamah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The best mosques for women are the innermost portions of their houses. (Ahmad, Tabarani). But when Aishah saw the conditions that prevailed in the time of the Umayyads, she said: If the Prophet (peace be upon him) had witnessed such conduct of the women, he would certainly have stopped their entry into the mosques as was done in the case of the Israelite women, (Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud). The Prophet (peace be upon him) had appointed a separate door in his mosque for the entry of women, and Umar in his time had given strict orders prohibiting men to use that door. (Abu Daud). In the congregational prayers the women were instructed to stand separately behind the men. At the conclusion of the prayer, the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers used to

remain sitting for a while so that the women could leave the mosque before the men. (Ahmad, Bukhari). The Prophet (peace be upon him) would say: The best row for the men is the front row and the worst the last one (nearest to the women's row); and the best row for the women is the rearmost row and the worst the front one (just behind the men's). (Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmizi Nasai, Ahmad). The women joined the Eid congregational prayers but they had a separate enclosure from men. After the sermon the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to address them separately (Abu Daud, Bukhari, Muslim). Once outside the Mosque the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw the men and women moving side by side in the crowd. He stopped the women and said: It is not proper for you to walk in the middle of the road; walk on the sides. On hearing this the women immediately started walking along the walls. (Abu Daud). All these commandments clearly show that mixed gatherings of the men and women are wholly alien to the temper of Islam. It cannot therefore be imagined that divine law which disallows the men and women to stand side by side for prayers in the sacred houses of Allah, would allow them to mix together freely in colleges, offices, clubs and other gatherings.

(5) He permitted the women to make modest use of the make-ups, even instructed them to do so, but strictly forbade its overdoing. Of the various types of make-up and decoration that were prevalent among the Arab women in those days, he declared the following as accursed and destructive of communities:

- (a) To add extra hair to one's own artificially with a view to make them appear longer and thicker.
- (b) To tattoo various parts of the body and produce artificial moles.
- (c) To pluck hair from the eyebrows to give them a special shape, or to pluck hair from the face to give it a cleaner look.
- (d) To rub the teeth to make them sharp or to produce artificial holes in them.
- (e) To rub the face with saffron or other cosmetic to produce an artificial complexion.

These instructions have been reported in Sihah Sitta and in Musnad Ahmad on the authority of Aishah, Asma bint Abu Bakr, Abdullah bin Masud, Abdullah bin Umar, Abdullah bin Abbas and Amir Muawiyah through reliable narrators. After having the knowledge of these clear commandments from Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him), a Muslim has only two courses open before him. Either he should follow these commandments practically and purify himself, his family life and the society at large of the moral evils for the eradication of which Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him) have given such detailed commandments, or if due to some weakness he violates one or more of these commandments, he should at least realize that he is committing a sin, and regard it as such, and should abstain from labeling it as a virtue by misinterpretation. Apart from these alternatives, the people who adopt the Western, ways of life against the clear injunctions of the Quran and Sunnah, and then try their utmost to prove them Islam

itself, and openly claim that there is no such thing as hijab in Islam, not only commit the sin of disobedience but also display ignorance and hypocritical obstinacy. Such an attitude can neither be commended by any right-thinking person in this world, nor can it merit favor with Allah in the Hereafter. But among the Muslims there exists a section of modern hypocrites who are so advanced in their hypocrisy that they repudiate the divine injunctions as false and believe those ways of life to be right and based on truth, which they have borrowed from the non-Muslim communities. Such people are not Muslims at all, for if they still be Muslims, the words Islam and unIslam lose all their meaning and significance. Had they changed their Islamic names and publicly declared their desertion of Islam, we would at least have been convinced of their moral courage. But in spite of their wrong attitudes, these people continue to pose themselves as Muslim. There is perhaps no meaner class of people in the world. People with such character and morality cannot be unexpected to indulge in any forgery, fraud, deception or dishonesty.

32. And marry those who are single among you,^{*50} and the righteous of your male slaves and maid servants.^{*51} If^{*52} they are poor, Allah will enrich them of His bounty.^{*53} And Allah is all encompassing, Aware.

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيْمَىٰ مِنْكُمْ
وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ
وَإِمَائِكُمْ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ
يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

*50 The word *ayama* is the plural of *ayyim* which means a single person, and is applicable to every man who is without a wife and to every woman who is without a husband.

*51 That is, those who show the right attitude in their dealings with you and in whom you find the capability of discharging the responsibilities of married life. The owner whose slave does not show the right attitude nor seems to possess the necessary capability and temper to lead a reasonably happy married life, has not been required to arrange his or her marriage. For in that case he would become the cause of ruining another person's life. This condition, however, has not been imposed on free persons because in their case the people who promote marriages are no more than mere advisers, associates and introducers. The actual marriage depends on the mutual willingness of the bride and the bridegroom. In the case of a slave, however, the entire responsibility lies on the owner, and if he makes the mistake of marrying a poor person with an ill-natured, ill-mannered spouse, the responsibility for the consequences will be entirely his.

*52 The imperative mood of the verb "Marry: Arrange marriages....the righteous", has led some scholars to assume that it is obligatory to arrange such marriages; whereas the nature of the problem indicates that it cannot be so. Obviously it cannot be obligatory for somebody to arrange the marriage of the other person. Marriage is not a one-sided affair; it needs another party also. If it were obligatory, what would be the position of the person who is

going to be married? Should he willingly accept to be married wherever others arrange it? If so, it would mean that he or she had absolutely no choice in the matter. And if the one has a right to refuse, how are the others going to discharge their responsibility? Taking all these aspects into account the majority of the jurists have held that the commandment is not obligatory but recommendatory. The intention is that the Muslims should ensure that none in the society should remain unmarried. The people of the house, friends and neighbors, all should take necessary interest in the matter, and where no such help is available, the state should make necessary arrangements.

***53** This does not mean that Allah will certainly bestow wealth on anybody who marries. The intention is to discourage a calculative approach. This instruction is both for the parents of the girl and of the boy. The former should not reject a pious and virtuous suitor merely because he happens to be poor. Similarly the boy's parents should not go on postponing his marriage because he is not yet a full earning member or is not yet earning sufficiently. Young men have been advised not to go on postponing their marriage unnecessarily waiting for better times even if the income is not yet sufficient, one should marry with full faith in Allah. Very often the marriage itself becomes the cause of improving strained circumstances. The wife helps to control the family budget, or the husband starts to exert himself more to meet the new challenges and responsibilities. The wife can also earn to supplement the family budget. Then, who knows what the future holds in

store for him. Good times can change into bad times and bad into good. One should therefore refrain from being too calculative in this regard.

33. And let those keep chaste who do not find (the means for) marriage, until Allah enriches them of His bounty.^{*54} And those who seek a writing (of emancipation) among whom your right hands possess, so write^{*55} it for them^{*56} if you know any good in them,^{*57} and give them of the wealth of Allah which He has given you.^{*58} And do not compel your slave girls to prostitution if they would desire their chastity,^{*59} that you may seek enjoyment of the life of the world. And whoever would compel them, then indeed after their compulsion, Allah will be Forgiving, Merciful.

وَلَيْسَتَعَفِيفِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ
نِكَاحًا حَتَّى يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ
فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ يَبْتِغُونَ الْكِتَابَ
مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ
إِنْ عِلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا وَّءَاتُوهُمْ
مِّن مَّالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكُمْ ۚ وَلَا
تُكْرِهُوا فَتِيَّتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَاءِ إِنْ
أَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا لِّتَبْتَغُوا عَرَضَ
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَمَنْ يُكْرِهِنَّ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِكْرَاهِهِنَّ
غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ



***54** The best commentary on these verses are the traditions which have been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this connection. Abdullah bin Masud has related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) once said: O young

men, whoso among you can afford to marry, he should marry, because this will be a means of restraining the eyes from casting the evil look and of keeping one pure and chaste, and the one who cannot afford, should fast, because fasting helps cool down the passions. (Bukhari, Muslim). According to Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Allah has taken upon Himself to succor three men: (a) the one who marries with a view to guarding his chastity, (b) the slave who works to earn his freedom, and (c) the one who goes out to fight in the way of Allah." (Tirmizi, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Ahmad) For further explanation, see Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 25.

***55** *Mukatabat* as a term means a deed of emancipation between the owner and the slave entitling the latter to earn his or her freedom after payment of an agreed sum of money in a certain period. This is one of the methods laid down in Islam for the slaves to attain their freedom. It is not essential that the slave must always pay in cash; he can also earn his freedom by rendering some special service to the owner, provided that both the parties agree. Once the agreement is signed, the owner is not entitled to put any obstacles in the way of the slave's freedom. He will have to provide opportunities to enable him to earn for his emancipation and shall have to free him when the agreed amount has been paid in time. In the time of Umar, a slave entered into such an agreement with his lady owner, but managed to collect the amount in advance of the time limit. When the amount was offered to the lady, she refused to accept it on the ground that she would like to have it in

monthly and yearly installments. The slave complained to Umar who ordered that the amount be deposited in the state treasury and the slave be set free. The lady was informed that her money lay in the treasury and she had the option to take it in a lump sum or in yearly or monthly installments. (Daraqutni).

***56** A group of jurists have interpreted this as “execute the deed of emancipation with them”, that it is obligatory for the owner to accept the offer of a slave to earn his emancipation. This is the view of Ata, Amr bin Dinar Ibn Sirin, Masruq, Dahhak, Ikrimah, the Zahiriyah and Ibn Jarir Tabari, and Imam Shafai also favoured it in the beginning. The other group holds that it is not obligatory but only recommendatory and commendable. This group includes jurists like Shabi, Muqatil bin Hayyan, Hasan Basri, Abdul Rahman bin Zaid, Sufyan Thauri, Abu Hanifah and Malik bin Anas and Imam Shafai later on also had adopted this view. The first view is supported by two things:

(a) The imperative mood of the verb to execute the deed suggests that it is a command from Allah.

(b) Authentic traditions contain the incident that when Sirin, father of Muhammad bin Sirin, the great jurist and traditionalist, made a request to his master Anas for a deed of emancipation, the latter refused to accept it. Sirin took the matter before Umar, who with whip in hand turned to Anas, saying: Allah’s command is that you execute the deed. (Bukhari). From this it has been argued that it was not a discretionary and personal decision of Umar but it was

taken in the presence of the companions and none expressed any difference of opinion. This therefore should be taken as an authentic interpretation of the verse.

The other group argues that Allah does not merely say: Execute the deed of emancipation with them, but adds: Provided that you find some good in them. This condition of finding some good in them lies entirely on the owner, and there is no fixed standard or means by which the question of finding good in them could be adjudicated through a court. Legal injunctions are never couched in such language. As such this injunction can only be regarded as recommendatory and not as legally mandatory. As regards to the precedent of the case of Sirin, the jurists say that there was not one slave who asked for a deed of emancipation but thousands of them in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the rightly-guided Caliphs, and a large number of them earned their freedom in that way. But apart from Sirin's there is no case where an owner was forced by a judicial verdict to execute a deed of emancipation. Accordingly, this decision of Umar cannot be taken as a judicial decision. All that can be said is that Umar, apart from his position of a judge, was like a father to the Muslims and might have used his paternal authority in a matter where he could not intervene as a judge.

***57** Good" implies three things.

(a) The slave must be capable of earning his emancipation money through hard work and labor. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: Execute the deed when you are sure that the slave can earn the required amount of money; do

not let him go about begging the people for it. (Ibn Kathir).

(b) He should be honest, truthful and reliable for the purposes of the agreement. He should make the best of the opportunities and should not waste his earnings.

(c) The owner should make sure that the slave has no immoral trends and does not harbor feelings of enmity against Islam or the Muslims, nor should there be any apprehension that his freedom might prove harmful to the interests of the Muslim society. In other words, he should prove to be a loyal and faithful member of the Muslim society and not a fifth columnist. It should be noted that such precautions were absolutely necessary in the case of the prisoners of war taken as slaves.

***58** This command is general and is addressed to the owners, the common Muslims and the Islamic government.

(a) The owner is instructed that he should remit a part of the emancipation money. There are traditions to confirm that the companions used to remit a sizable amount of the emancipation money to their slaves. Ali used to remit a quarter of the amount and exhorted others also to do the same. (Ibn Jarir).

(b) The common Muslim is instructed that he should extend liberal help to all such slaves who asked for help in this regard. One of the heads of Zakat expenditure as laid down in the Quran is the ransoming of slaves. (Surah AtTaubah, Ayat 60). In the sight of Allah freeing of slaves is a great act of virtue. (Surah AlBalad, Ayat 13). According to a tradition, a bedouin came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and requested him to instruct him what he should do

to earn Paradise. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied You have asked about the most important thing in a most concise way. You should free the slaves and help them to earn their freedom, If you present a cattle to somebody, present such a one as gives plenty of milk. Treat your relatives kindly even if they treat you unjustly. If you cannot do all this, you should feed the poor, give water to the thirsty, exhort the people to do good and forbid them to do evil. If you cannot do even this, you should restrain your tongue: if you have to speak, speak something good, otherwise keep quiet. (Baihaqi).

(c) The Islamic government is advised to spend a part of the Zakat collections on the emancipation of slaves.

Here it should be noted that slaves in the ancient times were of three kinds: (i) Prisoners of war, (ii) Free men who were captured and traded as slaves, (iii) Hereditary slaves who did not know when their ancestors became slaves and to which of the above categories they originally belonged. Before the advent of Islam, Arabia as well as the outside world abounded in all kinds of slaves. The entire social and economic structure of society depended more on slave labor than on servants and wage-earners. The first question before Islam was to tackle the problem of the hereditary slaves, and secondly, to find a solution to the entire problem of slavery for all times to come. In tackling the first problem, Islam did not abruptly abrogate the ownership rights in respect of the hereditary slaves as it would have completely paralyzed the entire social and economic system, and involved Arabia in a far more destructive civil

war than the one fought in America. Islam did not follow any such policy of reform. Instead it generated a great moral movement for the emancipation of slaves and employed inducements, persuasions, religious injunctions and legal enactments to educate and motivate the people to free the slaves voluntarily for earning their salvation in the Hereafter, or as expiation of their sins as enjoined by Islam, or by accepting monetary compensation. To set the pace the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself freed 63 slaves. One of his wives, Aishah, alone freed 67 slaves. The Holy Prophet's (peace be upon him) uncle, Abbas, freed 70 slaves. Among others, Hakim bin Hizam freed 100 slaves, Abdullah bin Umar 1,000, Zulkala Himyari 8,000, and Abdur Rehman bin Auf 30,000. The other companions among whom Abu Bakr and Uthman were prominent also set a large number of slaves free. The people, in order to win Allah's favor, not only emancipated their own slaves, but also bought them from others and then set them free. The result was that in so far as hereditary slaves were concerned, almost all of them had been freed even before the righteous Caliphate came to an end.

As for the future, Islam completely prohibited free men from being kidnapped and traded as slaves. As for the prisoners of war, it was permitted (not commanded) that they might be kept as slaves so long as they were not exchanged for Muslim prisoners of war, or freed on payment of ransom. Then, on the one hand, the slaves were also allowed to earn their freedom through written agreements with their masters, and on the other, the

masters were exhorted to set them free just like the hereditary slaves, as an act of virtue, to win Allah's approval, or as expiation of sins, or by willing that a slave would automatically gain his freedom on the master's death, or that a slave girl would be free on the master's death if she had borne him children, whether he had left a will or not. This is how Islam solved the problem of slavery. Ignorant people raise objections without trying to understand this solution, and the apologists offer all sorts of apologies and have even to deny the fact that Islam had prohibited slavery absolutely.

***59** This does not mean that if the slave girls do not want to lead a chaste and virtuous life they can be forced into prostitution. It only means this that if a slave girl commits an immoral act of her own free will, she herself is responsible for it and the law will be applied against her alone. But if the owner forces her into it, it will be entirely his responsibility, and the law will proceed against him. Obviously the question of force arises only when someone is compelled to act against his own will. As for the words for your own worldly gains, these have not been used in a conditional or restrictive sense that if the owner is not sharing the immoral earnings of the slave girl, he is not an offender if he forces her into prostitution. The intention is to declare all such money unlawful as has been earned through illegal and immoral ways.

It is, however, not possible to comprehend the full import of this injunction merely from the words of the text. For this it is necessary to understand the entire background and

circumstances prevalent at the time of its revelation. Prostitution in Arabia existed in two forms: Domestic prostitution and open prostitution in the brothel.

(a) Domestic prostitution was carried out by freed slave girls who had no guardians, or by free women who had no family or tribal support. They would take residence in a house and enter into an agreement with a number of men simultaneously for financial help in return for sexual gratification. Whenever a child was born, the mother would name whomsoever she liked as its father and the man was accepted in society as the father of the child. This was an established custom in the pre-Islamic days, which was considered almost analogous to marriage. When Islam came, it recognized only that contract as legal marriage where a woman had only one husband. Thus all other forms of sexual gratification came to be regarded as adultery and punishable offenses as such. (Abu Daud).

(b) Open prostitution which was carried out entirely through slave girls was of two kinds. First, the slave girls were obliged to pay a fixed heavy amount every month to the owner, which they could only earn through prostitution. The owner knew well how the money was earned, and in fact there was no other object of imposing a heavy demand on the poor slave girl, especially when it was much higher than the usual wages for work or labor. Secondly, beautiful and young slave girls were made to stay in the brothel and a flag was put at the door to indicate that a needy person could satisfy his lust there. Such women were called *qaliqiyat* and their houses were known as *mawakhir*. All

prominent men of the day owned and maintained such houses of prostitution. Abdullah bin Ubayy (the chief of the hypocrites of Madinah, who had been nominated as king of Madinah before the Prophet's (peace be upon him) arrival there and who was in the forefront of the campaign to slander Aishah) himself owned a regular house of prostitution in Madinah, which had six beautiful slave girls. Not only did he earn money through them but also used them to entertain his respectable and important guests who came to see him from different parts of Arabia. He employed the illegitimate children thus born to enhance the splendor and strength of his army of slaves. When one of these prostitutes, named Muazah, accepted Islam and wanted to offer repentance for her past sins, Ibn Ubayy subjected her to torture. She complained of it to Abu Bakr, who brought it to the notice of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered that the woman be taken away from the cruel man. (Ibn Jarir, Vol. XVIII, pp. 55 -58, and 103-104; Al Istiab Vol 11, p. 762; p. 762; Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, pp. 288-289). Such were the conditions when this verse was revealed. If these conditions are kept in view, it will become obvious that the real object was not merely to stop the slave girls from being forced into prostitution but to ban prostitution itself as illegal within the boundaries of the Islamic state. Simultaneously, there was a declaration of general pardon for those who had been forced into this business in the past.

After the revelation of this divine command the Prophet (peace be upon him) declared: There is no place for

prostitution in Islam. (Abu Da'ud). The second command that he gave was that the earnings made through adultery were unlawful, impure and absolutely forbidden. According to a tradition reported by Rafi bin Khadij, the Prophet (peace be upon him) described such earnings as impure, product of the worst profession and most filthy income. (Abu Daud, Tirmizi, Nasai). According to Abu Huzaifah, he termed the money earned through prostitution as unlawful. (Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad). Abu Masud Uqbah bin Amr says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade the people to take prostitution earnings. (Sihah Sitta and Ahmad). The third command was that the slave girl could be employed for lawful manual labor, but the owner had no right to impose or receive any money from her about which he was not sure how it had been earned. According to Rafi bin Khadij, he prohibited accepting any earnings from the slave girl unless it was known how she had earned it. (Abu Daud). Rafi bin Rifaah Ansari has reported the same command in clearer words. He says: The Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah prohibited us from accepting anything from the earnings of a slave girl except that which she earned through manual labor, such as (and he indicated this with his hand) baking bread, spinning cotton or carding wool or cotton. (Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud). Another tradition quoted from Abu Hurairah in Abu Daud and Musnad Ahmad says that taking of money earned by a slave girl through unlawful means is prohibited. Thus the Prophet (peace be upon him) in accordance with the intention of this verse, banned by

religious injunction and law all kinds of prostitution prevalent in Arabia in those days. Over and above this, the decision he gave in the case of Muazah, the slave girl of Abdullah bin Ubayy, shows that an owner who forces his slave girl into prostitution loses his rights of ownership over her. This is a tradition from Imam Zuhri, which Ibn Kathir has quoted on the authority of Musnad Abdur Razzaq.

34. And certainly, We have sent down to you clear revelations, and the examples of those who passed away before you. And an admonition for the righteous.*60

وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ آيَاتٍ مُّبَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَثَلًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ



*60 This verse is not only connected with the verse immediately preceding it but with the entire discourse right from the beginning. Revelations giving clear guidance are those verses which:

- (1) State the law concerning *zina*, *qazf* and *lian*.
- (2) Forbid the believers to marry impure men or women.
- (3) Prohibit the slandering of chaste people and propagating indecencies in society.
- (4) Lay stress on men and women to restrain their gaze and guard their private parts.
- (5) Prescribe the limits of Hijab for women.
- (6) Disapprove of the marriageable people's remaining unmarried.
- (7) Lay down the rule for slaves to earn their freedom

through written agreements.

(8) Ban prostitution to purify society.

After all these commands and instructions, a warning is being given that now if the people violated these instructions it would only mean that they wanted to meet with the same doom as had been the lot of the wretched communities before them, whose stories have been related in the Quran itself. There could probably be no severer warning at the end of an edict. But it is a pity that a people who profess to be believers, and recite the holy edict and hold it sacred, yet continue to defy and violate its provisions in spite of the severe warning

35. Allah^{*61} is the Light of the heavens and the earth.^{*62} The similitude of His Light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a shining star, (the lamp) is kindled from a blessed tree,^{*63} an olive, neither of the east nor of the west,^{*64} whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) even though no fire touched it. Light upon Light.^{*65} Allah guides to His Light whom He wills.^{*66} And Allah speaks to

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ
فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي
زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ
دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ
مُبْرَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا
غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ
تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ
يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

mankind in parables. And Allah is Knower of all things.*67

وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَلَ لِلنَّاسِ
وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

*61 From here the discourse is directed towards the hypocrites, who were bent upon starting mischief in the Islamic community, and were as active from within as the unbelievers were from without to harm the Islamic movement and the body politic of Islam. As these people professed belief, and apparently belonged to the Muslim community, and had blood relationships with the Muslims, especially with the Ansar, they were better placed to start and spread mischief. The result was that even some sincere Muslims, due to simplicity or weakness, became tools in their hands and even their supporters. But in spite of their profession of faith, the lure of worldly gains had utterly blinded them to the light that was spreading in the world through the teachings of the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The indirect address to the hypocrites here has three things in view. Firstly, to admonish them, for the first and foremost demand of Allah's providence and His mercy is to go on admonishing the misguided and the erring one till the last in spite of his persistence in mischief and wickedness. Secondly, to differentiate clearly between belief and hypocrisy so that every right thinking person from the Muslim community should be able to distinguish between a true believer and a hypocrite. Then if anybody, in spite of this differentiation, falls a prey to the machinations of the hypocrites or

supports them, he should himself be responsible for his conduct.

Thirdly, to warn the hypocrites clearly and plainly that Allah's promises for the believers are meant only for those who sincerely believe and then fulfill the demands and requirements of their faith. These promises are not meant for anybody who poses himself as a Muslim. The hypocrites and the sinful people therefore should not cherish any hope that they will have any share in these.

*62 The phrase heavens and the earth in the Quran is generally used for the universe. Thus the verse would also mean: Allah is the light of the whole universe.

Light is something which makes things visible; which is itself manifest and helps make other things manifest. The human mind conceives light in this very sense. Absence of light is termed darkness, invisibility and obscurity. On the other hand, when there is visibility and things become exposed to view, man says there is light. Allah has been called 'Light' in this basic sense, and not in the sense of a beam of light which travels at the speed of 186,000 miles per second and stimulates the optic nerve through the retina. This conception of light has nothing to do with the reality of the meaning for which human mind has coined this word; rather the word light is used for all those lights which we experience in this physical world. All human words used for Allah are used in their basic sense and meaning, and not with reference to their physical connotation. For instance, when, the word sight is used with respect to Allah, it does not mean that Allah has an eye like

men and animals with which He sees. Similarly when we say that Allah hears or grips or grasps, it does not mean that He hears through ears, or grips or grasps with the hand like us. These words are used in a metaphorical sense and only a man of very poor intelligence would have the misconception that hearing or seeing or grasping is not possible except in the limited and specific sense in which we experience it. Similarly it will be shortsightedness to interpret the word light in the sense of physical light rays emanating from a luminous body and affecting the retina. This word is not applicable to Allah in its limited sense, but in its absolute sense. That is, He alone in this universe is the real and prime cause of manifestation, otherwise there is nothing but darkness here. Everything which gives light and illuminates other things has received its light from Him; it has no light of its own.

The word light is also used for knowledge, and ignorance is termed as darkness. Allah is the Light of the universe in this sense too, because the knowledge of reality and of right guidance can be obtained from Him alone; without having recourse to His Light, there will be nothing but darkness of ignorance and the resultant vice and wickedness in the world.

*63 “Blessed”: yielding multiple benefits.

*64 Which is neither in the east nor in the west: which grows in an open plane or on a hill, where it gets sunshine from morning till evening. Such an olive tree yields the oil which gives a bright light. On the other hand, a tree which gets sunlight only from the east or only from the west,

yields thick oil which gives weak light.

***65** In this parable, Allah has been likened to the Lamp and the universe to the Niche. The glass shade is the veil behind which Allah has concealed Himself from His creation. This veil is not a physical veil for concealment, but a veil caused by the intensity of divine manifestation. The human eye is unable to see Him not because of the intervening darkness but because of the intensity of the all pervading, all-embracing Light radiating through the transparent veil. The human vision which is limited in nature cannot comprehend it. It can only comprehend and perceive limited physical lights which vary in brightness, which disappear and reappear, and Which can be perceived only by contrast to existing darkness. But the Absolute Light has no confronting darkness. It does not vanish, it shines forth and pervades all around with ever-existing glory; it is beyond human perception and comprehension.

As for the lamp which is lit with the oil of a blessed olive tree, which is neither eastern nor western, this is a metaphor to give an idea of the perfect light of the lamp and its brilliance. In antiquity the source for brilliant light were the olive lamps, and the most superior oil for the purpose was that obtained from a tree standing in an open and elevated place. The epithet of Lamp for Allah in the parable does not mean that Allah is deriving His energy from some external source. It only means that the Lamp of the parable is not an ordinary lamp but the most brilliant lamp that can be imagined. Just as a brilliant lamp

illuminates the whale house, so has Allah illuminated the whole universe.

Again, the words “its oil is (so fine) as if it were going to shine forth by itself though no fire touched it”, are also meant to emphasize the brilliance of the light of the lamp, which is being fed by the finest and most readily combustible oil. The olive and its being neither eastern nor western, and high combustibility of its oil by itself' (without fire), are not the essential elements of the parable, but attributes of the lamp, which is the primary element of the parable. The essential elements of the parable are only three: the Lamp, the Niche and the transparent Glass Shade.

The sentence: His light may be likened, dispels the possible misunderstanding that one could have from the words: Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. This shows that the use of the word light for Allah does not at all mean that the essence of His Being is nothing but light. In essence, He is a Perfect Being, Who is All-Knowing, All-Powerful, All-Wise etc. and also possessing all Light has been called Light itself because of His Perfection as a source of Light, just as somebody may be called Grace on account of his being highly gracious and beneficent and Beauty because of his being highly beautiful and attractive.

*66 That is, although Allah's Light is illuminating the whole world, everybody does not and cannot perceive it. It is Allah alone Who blesses whomsoever He wills with the capacity for perceiving His Light and benefiting by it. Just as the day and night are alike to a blind man, so is the case

of a man without the gift of inner perception. He may see the electric light, the sunlight, the moonlight and the light from stars, but he cannot perceive the Light of Allah. For him there is nothing but darkness in the universe. Just as a blind man cannot see the stone in his way unless he stumbles over it, so is the man without the gift of inner perception, who cannot perceive even those realities around him which may be all brilliance and shining by Allah's Light. He will perceive them only when he is overtaken by the consequences of his own misdeeds.

***67** This means two things: First, He knows what parable can best explain a certain reality, and secondly, He knows who is entitled to receive this bounty and who is not. Allah has no need to show His Light to the one who has no desire or longing for it and who is utterly lost in worldly pursuits and in seeking material pleasures and gains. This bounty can be bestowed only on the one who in the knowledge of Allah has a sincere desire for it.

36. (The Light is) in houses which Allah has ordered that they should be exalted and wherein His name is remembered. ^{*68} They do offer praise for Him, therein, in the mornings and in the evenings.

فِي بُيُوتٍ أُذِنَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ تَرْفَعَ
وَيُذَكَّرَ فِيهَا أَسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ
فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ



***68** Some commentators have interpreted these houses to mean the mosques, and raising them to mean constructing and reverencing them. Some others, however, take them to mean the houses of the believers and raising them to mean

raising their moral status. The words to mention His name therein seem to refer to the mosques and support the first interpretation, but if we look deeper, we see that they support the second interpretation equally well. This is because divine law does not confine worship to mosques alone as is the case with the priest-ridden religions where the rituals can only be performed under the leadership of a clergy. In Islam a house is also a place of worship like the mosque and every man is his own priest. As this Surah mostly contains instructions for ennobling domestic life, we feel that the second interpretation is more in keeping with the context though there is no reason for rejecting the first interpretation. There will be no harm if both the mosques and the houses of the believers are implied here.

37. Men whom neither merchandise nor sale distracts from remembrance of Allah and establishing prayer and paying the poor due. They fear a day in which the hearts and the eyes will be overturned.

رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ
عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ
وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا
تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ



38. That Allah may reward them with the best of what they did, and increase (reward) for them of His bounty. And Allah provides to whom He wills without

لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا
وَيَزِيدَهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

measure.^{*69}



***69** Here those characteristics have been described which are necessary for the true perception of Allah's Absolute Light and for benefiting from His bounties. Allah does not bestow His bounties without reason. He bestows them on the deserving ones alone. He only sees this that the recipient has sincere love for Him, stands in awe of Him, seeks His favors and avoids His wrath; he is not lost in material pursuits but in spite of his worldly engagements keeps his heart warm with God's remembrance. Such a person does not rest content with low spiritual levels, but actively endeavors to attain the heights towards which his master may guide him. He does not go for the paltry gains of this transitory world, but has his gaze constantly fixed on the everlasting life of the Hereafter. These are the things which determine whether or not a person should be granted the favor to benefit from Allah's Light. Then, when Allah is pleased to bestow His bounties, He bestows them without measure; and it will be man's own incapacity if he does not receive them in full.

39. And those who disbelieve, their deeds^{*70} are as a mirage in a desert. The thirsty one thinks it to be water, until when he comes up to it, he does not find it to be anything, and he finds Allah with him, so He will pay him

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَلُهُمْ
كَسْرَابٍ بِقِيَعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ
الْظَّمْآنُ مَاءً حَتَّى إِذَا
جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ
شَيْئًا وَوَجَدَ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ
فَوَفَّاهُ

his due. And Allah is swift at reckoning.*71

حِسَابُهُ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ



*70 That is, they refused to accept sincerely the divine message which was brought by the Prophets, and which at that time was being given by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). These verses clearly show that the truthful and righteous believers only can benefit from Allah's Light. In contrast to them, the state of those people is being described here, who refused to believe and obey the Prophet (peace be upon him), who was the real and sole means of attaining the Light of Allah.

*71 This parable describes the condition of those people who, in spite of disbelief and hypocrisy, practice some good deeds and also believe, among other things, in the life after death in the hope that their good deeds will be of some help to them in the Hereafter even if they did not believe and follow the Prophet and lacked the qualities of true believers. In this parable they are being told that their expectations of reaping benefits of their ostentatious deeds of virtue in the Hereafter are no more than a mirage. Just as a traveler in the desert takes the glittering sands for a surging pool of water and runs towards it for quenching his thirst, so are these people traveling on the road to death cherishing false hopes on account of their good deeds. But just as the one running towards a mirage does not find anything there to quench his thirst, so will these people find nothing to avail them when they enter the state of death.

On the contrary, they will find Allah there, Who will require them to account for their disbelief, hypocrisy and misdeeds, which they committed along with their ostentatious deeds of virtue, and will deal with them in full justice.

40. Or as darkness in a vast deep ocean. There covered him a wave, on top of which is (another) wave, on top of which is a cloud. Darkness, one above another.

When he stretches out his hand, he almost can not see it.^{*72} And he for whom Allah has not appointed a light, then for him there is not any light.^{*73}

أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي نَحْرِ لُجِّي يَغْشَاهُ
 مَوْجٌ مِّن فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ مِّن فَوْقِهِ
 سَحَابٌ ۚ ظُلُمَاتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ
 بَعْضٍ إِذَا أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ لَمْ يَكِدْ
 يَرِنَهَا وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ
 نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ مِن نُّورٍ



^{*72} This parable describes the condition of all the disbelievers and the hypocrites including those who perform good deeds for ostentation. It is being stated that such people are passing their life in a state of absolute and complete ignorance, whether they are the most learned people in the world and leaders in their respective fields of learning. They are like the man who is lost in complete darkness where no ray of light can reach him. They think that knowledge merely consists in producing atom bombs, hydrogen bombs, supersonic planes and moon rockets, or in attaining excellence in economics and finance and law and philosophy. But they little understand that real

knowledge is something entirely different and they have no idea of it. Thus considered they are just ignorant, and an illiterate peasant who has gained some acquaintance of the divine truth is wiser than them.

*73 Here is stated the real object of the discourse which began with: Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. When in fact there is no light in the universe except the Light of Allah and all manifestation of reality is due to that Light, where from can the one whom Allah does not give light have light? There exists no other source of light from where he can receive a ray.

41. Have^{*74} you not seen that Allah, He it is Whom glorify whoever is in the heavens and the earth, and the birds with wings spread out. Each one indeed knows his prayer and his glorification. And Allah is All Aware of what they do.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالطَّيْرُ
صَفَّتِ كُلُّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُ
وَتَسْبِيحَهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا
يَفْعَلُونَ



*74 As has been explained above, Allah is the Light of the whole universe, but His Light can be perceived and comprehended by the righteous believers only. All other people grope about in the dark like the blind in spite of the all-pervading, all-embracing Light. Here a few of the countless signs which guide to the Light are being mentioned by way of example. If a person whose eyes of the heart are open, sees them, he can perceive Allah working

everywhere around him at all times. But those who are blind of the heart, and can only see with the head's eyes, can see Biology and Zoology and other sciences working in the world, but they fail to perceive and recognize Allah's signs anywhere working in the world.

42. And to Allah belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, and to Allah is the journeying.

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ

43. Have you not seen that Allah drives gently the clouds, then He joins them together, then He makes them into a heap of layers, then you see the rain coming forth from between them. And He sends down from the sky mountains (of clouds)^{*75} wherein is hail, then strikes therewith whom He wills, and averts it from whom He wills. It is almost (as) the flashing of His lightning snatches away the sight.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُزْجِي سَحَابًا ثُمَّ
يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ رُكَّامًا
فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ
خِلَالِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ
جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنْ بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيبُ بِهِ
مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَنِ مَن يَشَاءُ
يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرْقِهِ يَذْهَبُ
بِالْأَبْصَارِ

*75 This may mean frozen clouds which have been called mountains in the heavens metaphorically. It may also mean the mountains of the earth which stand high in the heavens and whose snow-capped peaks cause condensation in the

clouds which results in hailstorms.

44. Allah causes the revolution of the night and the day. Indeed, in that is surely a lesson for those who have vision.

يُقَلِّبُ اللَّهُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ إِنَّ فِي
ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ ﴿٤٤﴾

45. And Allah has created every moving (living) creature from water. Of them there are some that creep on their bellies. And of them there are some that walk on two legs. And of them there are some that walk on four. Allah creates what He wills. Indeed, Allah has Power over all things.

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَابَّةٍ مِّن مَّاءٍ
فَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَى بَطْنِهِ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَى رِجْلَيْنِ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَى أَرْبَعٍ
يَخْلُقُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤٥﴾

46. We have certainly sent down (in this Quran) manifest revelations. And Allah guides whom He wills to a straight path.

لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ مُّبِينَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ
يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ
مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٤٦﴾

47. And they say: "We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey." Then a faction of them turns away after

وَيَقُولُونَ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ
وَبِالرَّسُولِ وَأَطَعْنَا ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّى

that. And they are not those who believe.*76

فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَمَا أُوَلِّيكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

*76 That is, their turning away from obedience itself belies their claim that they are believers and their conduct clearly shows that their profession of faith and submission was absolutely false.

48. And when they are called to Allah and His Messenger that he (the Messenger) may judge between them,*77 behold, a faction of them turns away.*78

وَإِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

*77 These words clearly state that the judgment of the Prophet is the judgment of Allah and the command of the Prophet is the command of Allah. Therefore, the invitation to obey the Prophet is an invitation to obey both Allah and His Prophet. (Also see Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 59-61, and the E.Ns thereof).

*78 This does not only apply to the cases which came up before the Prophet (peace be upon him) for a decision in his lifetime, but this continues valid even today. Thus, a summon from the court of a judge in an Islamic government, who judges a case in accordance with the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of Prophet (peace be upon him), is actually a summon from the court of Allah and His Prophet and the one who repudiates the judge indeed repudiates both Allah and His Prophet. This thing has been

explained in a tradition related by Hasan Basri thus: Whosoever is summoned to appear before a judge from among the judges of the Muslims but fails to appear before him, he is a transgressor and forfeits his rights. (Al-Jassas, Ahkam-ul-Quran, Vol. III, p. 405). In other words, such a person not only renders himself punishable but also guilty and liable to be proceeded against.

49. And if the right is on their side, they come to him with all submission. *79

وَإِنْ يَكُنْ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ يَأْتُوا إِلَيْهِ مُذْعِنِينَ

*79 This verse states that a person who willingly accepts only that part of the divine law which serves his advantage, but rejects that which goes against his interests and desires, and prefers the worldly laws instead, is not a believer but a hypocrite. His profession of faith is false for he does not in fact believe in Allah and His Prophet but in his own interests and desires. With this attitude even if he believes in and follows a portion of the divine law, his belief has no value whatever in the sight of Allah.

50. Is there a disease in their hearts, or they have doubted, or do they fear that Allah will be unjust to them, and His messenger. But it is they who are the wrongdoers. *80

أَفِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ أَمْ ارْتَابُوا أَمْ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَحِيفَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَرَسُولَهُ ۗ بَلْ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

*80 That is, there can be only three reasons for such a

conduct. First, a person may not have believed at all but may only be posing as a Muslim in order to enjoy the benefits of belonging to the Muslim community. Secondly, he might have believed but may still be having doubts about the reality of the Prophethood, revelations, life-after-death, and even the existence of Allah Himself. Thirdly, he may be a believer but might at the same time be apprehending injustice from Allah and His Prophet and considering their commands disadvantageous to him personally in one way or the other. There can be no doubt that the people belonging to any of these categories are themselves unjust. A person who, having such doubts and suspicions, enters the Muslim community and enjoys undeserved benefits posing himself as a member thereof, is indeed a deceiver, cheater and forger. He is not only doing injustice to himself, practicing constant falsehood and developing the meanest traits of character, but he is being unjust to the Muslim people as well, who look upon him as one of themselves merely on the basis of his verbal profession of the faith and let him enjoy all sorts of social, cultural, political and moral relations with them as such.

51. The only saying of the believers is, when they are called to Allah and His Messenger to judge between them that they say: “We hear and we obey.” And it is they who are the successful.

إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا
دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ
بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ يُقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا
وَأَطَعْنَا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ

الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

52. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, and fears Allah, and keeps his duty (to Him), then it is they who are the victorious.

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَتَخْشَ اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقْهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

53. And they swear by Allah their strongest oaths that if you ordered them, they will surely go forth (for Allah's cause). Say: "Swear not, known obedience (is better)." ^{*81} Indeed, Allah is Informed of what you do. ^{*82}

﴿٥٣﴾ وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ أُمِرْتُمْ لَيَخْرُجُنَّ قُلْ لَا تُقْسِمُوا طَاعَةٌ مَعْرُوفَةٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

***81** The verse may also mean that the obedience expected of the believers is of recognized and well known type, which is above every kind of suspicion, and not such as may need swearing of oaths to convince others of its sincerity. Their conduct is manifest and everybody who comes into contact with them feels that they are truly obedient to Allah and His Prophet.

***82** That is, you might succeed in deceiving the people, but you cannot deceive Allah, Who is aware of everything, open or hidden, even of your innermost motives and intentions.

54. Say: "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger. So if you turn away, then upon him is

قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا

only that (duty) which is placed on him, and upon you that which is placed on you. And if you obey him, you will be rightly guided. And upon the Messenger there is no (responsibility) except to convey clearly.”

عَلَيْهِ مَا حُمِّلَ وَعَلَيْكُمْ مَا حُمِّلْتُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوهُ تَهْتَدُوا وَمَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا أَلْبَانُ الْمُبِينِ



55. Allah has promised those who have believed among you, and do righteous deeds that He will certainly grant them succession (authority) upon the earth, just as He granted succession to those before them. And that He will certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them. And that He will certainly give them in exchange security after their fear. (For) they worship Me, (and) do not associate with Me anything.^{*83} And whoever disbelieved after that,^{*84} then it is they who are the disobedient.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَىٰ لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ



***83** As has been hinted in the beginning of this discourse, this means to warn the hypocrites that the promise of Allah

to bestow successorship in the land is not meant for those people who are Muslims only in name, but for those who are true in faith, pious in character, sincere in devotion and who follow Allah's religion in letter and spirit eschewing every tinge of shirk. Those who lack these qualities and pay mere lip service to Islam are neither worthy of this promise nor its addressees. Therefore they should entertain no hope of having any share in it.

Some people interpret *Khilafat* (successorship in the land) to mean political power and authority, and conversely conclude that whosoever possesses power and authority in the land is necessarily a true believer and a follower of Allah's approved religion and His devotee, free from all traces of shirk. Then in order to get support for their wrong conclusion, they even change the very meanings of faith, virtue, divine creed, Allah's worship, idolatry, etc. to suit their interpretation. This is the worst distortion of the meaning of the Quran, even worse than what the Jews and Christians did with their Scriptures. This interpretation of the verse tends to destroy the very message of the Quran. If successorship in the land were to mean mere power and authority in the land; then all those people who wielded power and authority in the world, or wield it today, would fit in with the description contained in the verse, even if they denied Allah, revelations, Prophethood, life in the Hereafter, and were involved in all kinds of major sins like usury, adultery, drinking and gambling. Now if all such people are regarded as pious believers and considered worthy of holding the high offices because of their qualities

as such, then faith would imply simple obedience to physical laws and virtue would mean making use of those laws effectively and successfully. Allah's approved religion would mean making maximum progress in the fields of industry and trade, commerce and politics by achieving excellence in the physical sciences; devotion to Allah would mean abiding by the rules and procedures which are naturally useful and essential for success in individual and collective enterprises; and shirk would mean adopting a few harmful methods also along with the useful procedures and rules. But the question is: Would a person who has studied the Quran with an open heart and mind ever believe that the terms faith, righteous deeds, true religion, devotion to Allah, tauhid and shirk as used in the Quran really mean this? As a matter of fact, such a meaning can be understood either by the one who has never made an intelligent study of the Quran as a whole, but has picked up verses from here and there and given them his own biased meaning according to preconceived notions and theories, or by the one who has read the Quran through but has all along been holding all those verses as wrong and absurd, which invite people to accept Allah as the One and only Lord, His revelations as the only source of guidance, His Messengers as the only true guides worthy of absolute obedience, and which demand not only belief in the life-after-death, but also state that the people who would consider success in the worldly life as their sole and ultimate objective, without any idea of their accountability in the Hereafter, would be deprived of real success. The

Quran has repeated these themes so frequently in diverse ways and in such clear and plain language that it is difficult to believe that anybody who studies it honestly can ever be involved in those misunderstandings in which the modern interpreters of this verse have been involved. The fact is that they have misconstrued *Khilafat* and *Istikhlaf* (successorship) after their own notions, which cannot be held as correct by anybody who has some knowledge of the Quran.

The Quran has used *Khilafat* and *Istikhlaf* in the following three meanings and the context determines in which particular meaning it has been used in a particular place:

(a) To bear the authority delegated by Allah. The whole human race is Allah's *Khalifah* (successor) on the earth in this sense.

(b) To acknowledge Allah as the Supreme Sovereign and to use His delegated powers and authority in accordance with His law. In this sense only a pious and righteous believer can be a *Khalifah*, because he alone can discharge the responsibilities of *Khilafat* truly. On the other hand, a disbeliever and sinner cannot be *Khalifah*: he is rather a rebel against Allah, because he abuses the power and authority delegated by Allah in disobedience to Him in the land bestowed by Him.

(c) The succession of one ruling nation in the land after the fall of another nation. The meanings (a) and (b) imply vicegerency while (c) implies successorship. Both these meanings of *Khilafat* are well known and recognized in the Arabic lexicon.

Now anybody who reads this verse in this context cannot have any doubt that the word *Khilafat* has been used here for the government which discharges the responsibilities of Allah's vicegerency strictly in accordance with Allah's law, and not in accordance with mere physical laws of the world. That is why, not to speak of the disbelievers, even the hypocrites, who professed faith in Islam, are being excluded from the purview of Allah's promise. That is why it is being stated that true and righteous believers only are worthy of this promise. That is why it is being averred that the establishment of Khilafat will result in the establishment of Islam, Allah's approved religion, on strong foundations; and that is why the condition being put forward for earning this favor is that the believers should remain steadfast in their faith and devotion to Allah avoiding every tinge of shirk. To remove this promise from its right context and apply it on the international scene to any power is sheer absurdity and nonsense. (For further details, see E. N. 99 of Surah Al-Anbiya also).

Another thing that needs to be mentioned here is that the direct addressees of this promise were the Muslims living in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) though indirectly it applies to the future generations of Muslims as well. When in the beginning this promise was held out by Allah, the Muslims were living in a state of fear and Islam had not yet taken firm roots even in Hejaz. A few years later this state of fear not only gave way to peace and equanimity but Islam also spread outside Arabia to large parts of Africa and Asia, and it became firmly established

not only in its own land of birth but outside it as well. This is a historical proof of the fact that Allah fulfilled His promise in the times of Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman (may Allah be pleased with them all). No right thinking person, therefore, can have any doubt that the Khilafat of the first three Caliphs has been authenticated by the Quran itself and Allah Himself has testified to their being pious believers. If anybody still has a doubt, he should read the address of Ali in Nahjal Balaghah, which was meant to dissuade Umar from going personally to fight against the Iranians. He said:

Our success in this work is not dependent on numerical strength; it is the religion of Allah for which He Himself has opened ways. We are grateful to Him for His help and succor which has enabled us to serve its cause till it has been raised to its present glory. Allah Himself has said: Allah has promised to those among you, who believe and do righteous deeds that He will make them successors in the land. Allah will certainly fulfill this promise and will help the armies of Islam. The position of the Caliph in Islam is like that of the string in a necklace of pearls. If the string breaks, the pearls scatter away and the order is destroyed. Once scattered and dispersed, it becomes difficult to collect them again. No doubt the Arabs are small in number, but they have been increased by Islam and strengthened by unity. You should therefore stick to Madinah like the pivot and make the grindstone of Arabia rotate about you and guide the war-machine from here. Once you leave this place, your entire organization will begin to crumble, then

you will start feeling more worried about the dangers behind than the enemies in front. Moreover, the Iranians will concentrate their whole attention on you, and will like to exterminate you, taking you as the main and only hurdle in their way to victory. As for your apprehension that they have come out in much greater strength, I would say that hitherto we have been fighting them not merely on the strength of numbers, but have been putting them to rout on the strength of Allah's help and succor. Any discerning reader can see for himself as to which side is being held by Ali as worthy of Allah's promise with regard to successorship in the land.

*84 *Kufr* (disbelief) here may also mean ingratitude or denial of the truth. In the first case, the verse will refer to those people who deviate from the right path after Allah has favored them with successorship, and in the second, to the hypocrites, who do not give up their hypocritical attitude even after hearing this promise of Allah.

56. And establish worship and pay the poor due and obey the Messenger, that you may receive mercy.

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ
وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُرْحَمُونَ

57. Do not think that those who disbelieve can escape in the land. And their abode shall be the Fire, and worst indeed is

لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
مُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

that destination.

وَمَا أَوْلَاهُمْ النَّارُ وَلَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ



58. O you, those who believe,^{*85} let them ask your permission, those whom your right hands possess,^{*86} and those who have not come to puberty among you,^{*87} at three times (before they come to your presence). Before the prayer of dawn, and when you lay aside your clothes for the heat of noon, and after the prayer of night. Three times of privacy for you.^{*88} It is no sin upon you nor upon them^{*89} beyond these (times) when you move about attending to each other.^{*90} Thus Allah makes clear for you the revelations. And Allah is All Knower, All Wise.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
لِيَسْتَعِذْنَ كُمْ الَّذِينَ مَلَكَتْ
أَيْمَانُكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا
الْحُلُمَ مِنْكُمْ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ مِّنْ
قَبْلِ صَلَاةِ الْفَجْرِ وَحِينَ
تَضَعُونَ ثِيَابَكُمْ مِّنَ الظَّهْرِ
وَمِنْ بَعْدِ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ ثَلَاثُ
عَوْرَاتٍ لَّكُمْ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَلَا عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌ بَعْدَهُنَّ
طَوَافُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ
عَلَى بَعْضٍ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ
لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ



***85** From here again, the commandments for social life are

being resumed. It is just possible that this portion of Surah An-Noor was revealed at a later date.

***86** According to the majority of commentators and jurists, this refers to both male and female slaves. Ibn Umar and Mujahid, however, have expressed the opinion that it refers to the male slaves only. But in view of the commandment that follows there appears to be no reason for making this distinction. Violation of one's privacy by his children is as undesirable as by his female slaves. All jurists agree that the commandment given in this verse is applicable both to the minor and to the grown up slaves.

***87** Another translation can be: Who have not yet reached the age of seeing wet dreams. From this the jurists have deduced the principle that in case of boys puberty starts when they begin having nocturnal emissions. But the translation that we have adopted is preferable because the injunction is meant both for boys and for girls. If nocturnal emission is taken as the sign of attaining puberty, the injunction would be confined to boys only, because in the case of girls it is the menstrual discharge, and not nocturnal emission, which marks the beginning of puberty. In our opinion the intention is that the children of the house should follow this procedure till the time that they become sex conscious. After they have become sex conscious they have to follow the injunction that follows.

***88** Literally *aurat* is a place of danger and trouble; it also means a private part of the body which one would not like to expose before others, and something which is not fully secured. All these meanings are close to each other and all

are implied in the meaning of this verse. The verse means to say that these are your times of privacy when you are either alone or with your wives in a state when it is not proper for your children and servants to come in to see you unannounced. Therefore, they should be instructed that they must take your permission before coming in to see you in your places of privacy at these three times.

***89** That is, at other times than these, there is no restriction on the entry of minor children and slaves in your private rooms without permission. If on such an occasion you are not properly dressed and they enter without permission, you will have no right to take them to task. For in that case, it will be your own folly to have kept yourself in an improper state at a time when you should have been properly dressed for the day's business. However, if they enter without permission during the times of privacy, the blame will lie with them provided they have been taught the necessary etiquette.

***90** This is the reason for the general permission for children and slaves to come without permission at other times than those mentioned above. This throws light on a fundamental fiqh principle that every religious injunction is based on some wisdom or good reason, whether it has been explained or not.

59. And when the children among you reach puberty,^{*91} then let them ask for permission just as those who used to ask

وَإِذَا بَلَغَ الْأَطْفَالُ مِنْكُمْ الْحُلُمَ
فَلْيَسْتَعِذُوا كَمَا اسْتَعِذْنَ

before them. Thus Allah makes clear His revelations for you. And Allah is All Knower, All Wise.

الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ وَاللَّهُ

عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

*91 That is, when they have reached the age of puberty. As has been explained in E.N. 87 above, the signs of puberty in the case of boys and girls are nocturnal emission and menstrual discharge respectively. There is, however, a difference of opinion among the jurists regarding the beginning of puberty in those boys and girls who for some reason do not show these physical signs for an unduly long time. According to Imam Shafai, Imam Abu Yusuf, Imam Muhammad and Imam Ahmad, a boy or a girl of 15 years will be considered to have attained puberty, and a saying of Imam Abu Hanifah also supports this view. But the well known view of Imam Abu Hanifah is that in such cases the age of puberty will be 17 years for girls and 18 years for boys. Both these opinions are the result of juristic reasoning and neither is based on any injunction of the Quran or Sunnah. It is therefore not necessary that the age limits of 15 or 18 years be accepted as marking the beginning of puberty everywhere in the world in abnormal cases. In different countries and ages there are different conditions of physical development and growth. The age of puberty in a certain country can be determined by means of the law of averages in normal cases. As for abnormal cases, the mean difference of ages may be added to the upper age limit to

determine the age of puberty. For instance, if in a country, the minimum and maximum ages for nocturnal discharge are normally 12 and 15 years respectively, the mean difference of one and a half years may be added to the maximum limit of 15 years to determine the beginning of puberty for abnormal cases. The same principle can be used by the legal experts of various countries to fix the age of puberty keeping in view their peculiar local conditions.

There is a tradition quoted from Ibn Umar in support of the age of 15 years for puberty. He says: I was 14, when I presented myself before the Prophet (peace be upon him) to ask his permission to join the battle of Uhud, but he declined permission. Then on the occasion of the battle of the Trench, when I was 15, I was again presented and he permitted me to join. (Sihah Sitta, Musnad Ahmad). This tradition, however, does not stand scrutiny for the following two reasons:

(a) The battle of Uhud took place in Shawwal, 3 A.H., and the battle of the Trench in Shawwal, 5 A.H. according to Ibn Ishaq, and in Zil-Qad, 5 A.H. according to Ibn Saad. There is an interval of two years or more between the two events. Now if Ibn Umar was 14 at the time of the battle of Uhud, he could not be 15 at the time of the battle of the Trench. It may be that he mentioned 14 years for 13 years and 11 months and 15 years for 15 years and 11 months.

(b) It is a different thing to be regarded as an adult for the purposes of war and quite different to be legally adult for social affairs. They are not necessarily interconnected. Therefor the correct view is that the age of 15 for an

abnormal boy has been fixed on the basis of analogous and juristic reasoning and not on the basis of anything in the Quran or Sunnah.

60. And among the women past child bearing, who have no hope of marriage,^{*92} it is then no sin for them that they discard their (outer) clothing,^{*93} as not to show adornment.^{*94} And if they remain modest, that is better for them. And Allah is All Hearer, All Knower.

وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ الَّتِي لَا
يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحًا فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِنَّ
جُنَاحٌ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ
غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجَاتٍ بِزِينَةٍ وَأَنْ
يَسْتَعْفِفْنَ خَيْرٌ لَهُنَّ وَاللَّهُ
سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ



***92** Literally, this means those women who are no longer capable of bearing children, who no longer cherish sexual desires, and who cannot excite the passions of men.

***93** Obviously it cannot mean that they should strip themselves naked. That is why all the jurists and commentators agree that it implies the outer garments which are used to hide the adornments as enjoined in Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 59.

***94** *Tabarruj* is display and exhibitionism. When used with regard to a woman, it would imply the one who displays her charms and adornments before other men. The permission to lay aside the outer garments is being given to those old women who are no longer interested in personal embellishments and whose sex desires are gone. But if they still have a hidden desire smoldering in their hearts and an

urge to display, they cannot avail of this permission.

61. No blame is there upon the blind, nor any blame upon the lame, nor any blame upon the sick, nor upon yourselves if you eat from your houses, or the houses of your fathers, or the houses of your mothers, or the houses of your brothers, or the houses of your sisters, or the houses of your fathers' brothers, or the houses of your fathers' sisters, or the houses of your mothers' brothers, or the houses of your mothers' sisters, or (from the house) whereof you hold the keys, or (from the house) of a friend.^{*95} No sin shall it be for you whether you eat together or separately.^{*96} But

لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرَجٌ وَلَا
عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى
الْمَرِيضِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى
أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَنْ تَأْكُلُوا مِنْ
بُيُوتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ آبَائِكُمْ
أَوْ بُيُوتِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ
إِخْوَانِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ
أَخَوَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ
أَعْمَامِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ عَمَّاتِكُمْ
أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخْوَالِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ
خَالَاتِكُمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتُمْ
مَفَاتِحَهُ أَوْ صَدِيقِكُمْ
لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ
تَأْكُلُوا جَمِيعًا أَوْ أَشْتَاتًا

when you enter houses,
then send peace upon
one another with a
greeting from Allah,
blessed and good.
Thus does Allah make
clear for you the
revelations, that perhaps
you may understand.

فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمْ بُيُوتًا فَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى
أَنْفُسِكُمْ تَحِيَّةً مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
مُبْرَكَةً طَيِّبَةً كَذَلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

***95** Three things are necessary to understand this verse:

(a) The verse consists of two parts: the first part relates to the sick, the lame, the blind and other handicapped people, and the second part to the other People.

(b) The moral teachings of the Quran had so thoroughly changed the Arab mind that they had become highly sensitive with regard to the distinction between the lawful and the unlawful. According to Ibn Abbas, when Allah commanded them “not to devour one another's property by unlawful ways” (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 29), the people became unduly cautious and would not eat freely at each other's house; so much so that unless a formal invitation was extended, they considered it unlawful even to dine in the house of a relative or a friend.

(c) The mention of taking meals at your own houses only means to impress that taking meals at the house of a relative or a friend is just like taking meals at one's own house, where no permission is required.

With these three things in mind, one can easily understand the meaning of the verse. It says that the handicapped

person can have his meal anywhere and at any house in order to satisfy his hunger, because the society as a whole owes to him this privilege on account of his handicap. As for the other people, for them their own houses and the houses of the relatives mentioned in the verse are equally good for the purpose. No formal invitation or permission is needed to have the meals of their houses. In the absence of the master, if his wife or children offer something, it can be taken without hesitation. In this connection, it should be noted that the houses of one's children are just like one's own house, and the friends imply close friends.

*96 In ancient Arabia, some tribes had the tradition that each member sat and ate separately. Eating together in one place was considered bad as some Hindus do even today. On the contrary, some other tribes considered it bad to eat alone individually; so much so that they would even go without food if they did not have company at meals. This verse means to abolish such customs and restrictions.

62. The true believers^{*97} are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and when they are with him on some common matter,^{*98} do not go away until they have asked his permission. Indeed, those who ask your permission (O Muhammad), those are they who believe

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ
 ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِذَا
 كَانُوا مَعَهُ عَلَىٰ أَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ
 لَّمْ يَذْهَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَسْتَأْذِنُوهُ
 الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ أُولَٰئِكَ

in Allah and His Messenger. So, when they ask your permission for some affair of theirs,^{*99} give permission to whom you will of them,^{*100} and ask forgiveness of Allah for them.^{*101} Indeed, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
فَإِذَا أَسْتَعَذُّوكَ لِبَعْضِ شَأْنِهِمْ
فَإذن لِمَن شِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ
وَأَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ



***97** These are the final instructions being given to tighten the discipline of the Muslim community and make it more organized than before.

***98** This commandment is also applicable in respect of the successors of the Prophet (peace be upon him) after him and other leaders of the Muslims. When the Muslims are called upon to get together for a common cause, whether relating to war or peace, it is not permissible for them to retreat or disperse without due permission of the leader.

***99** This contains a warning that it is absolutely unlawful to ask permission without any genuine need.

***100** That is, it depends upon the Prophet or his successor after him to grant or not to grant permission even in case of a genuine need. If he deems the collective cause to be more important than the individual need of the person, he may refuse permission, and a believer will not mind it.

***101** This again contains a warning: If in asking permission there is even a tinge of excuse making, or of placing individual interests above collective interests, it would be a

sin. Therefore the Prophet or his successor should also pray for the forgiveness of the one whom he gives permission.

63. Do not make the calling of the Messenger among you as the calling of your one another.*102

Indeed, Allah knows those who slip away among you concealed by others.*103

Then let those beware who oppose of his (Messenger) order, lest some trial befall them*104 or a painful punishment be inflicted on them.

لَا تَجْعَلُوا دُعَاءَ الرَّسُولِ
بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَاءِ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا
قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ
يَتَسَلَّلُونَ مِنْكُمْ لِوَاذًا
فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ
أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ
يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ



*102 Dua means to summon, to pray and to call. Dua-ar-Rasul, therefore, may mean summoning or praying by the Messenger or calling the Messenger. The verse can thus have three meanings which would all be equally correct; (a) The Prophet's summons should not be treated as a common man's summons, for the Prophet's summon is of extraordinary importance, which you cannot ignore, because if you fail to respond to it, or feel hesitant about it, you will be doing so at the very risk of your faith. (b) Do not consider the Prophet's prayer as a common man's prayer. If he is pleased with you and prays for you, there can be no greater good fortune for you. But if he is displeased with you and curses you, there can be no greater

misfortune for you.

(c) Calling the Prophet should not be like calling among yourselves of each other. That is, you should not call or address the Prophet just as you call and address other people aloud by their names. You should have full respect for him, because the slightest disrespect in this regard will call for Allah's reckoning in the Hereafter. Though all the three meanings quite fit in with the context, the first meaning is more in keeping with the theme which follows.

***103** This is yet another trait of the hypocrites. When they are summoned to gather together for a collective cause, they do respond to the call, because they want to be counted among the Muslims. But they grudge their presence, and steal away somehow as soon as they find an opportunity.

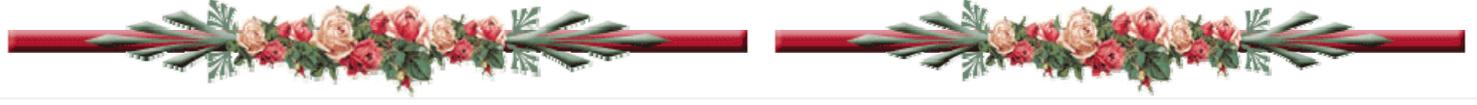
***104** According to Imam Jafar Sadiq, trial means rule of the unjust. That is if the Muslims will disobey the commands of the Prophet (peace be upon him), they will be put under tyrants. Besides this, there can be many other forms of affliction also; for instance, sectarian differences, civil war, moral degradation, disruption of community life, internal chaos, disintegration of political and material power, subjugation by others, etc.

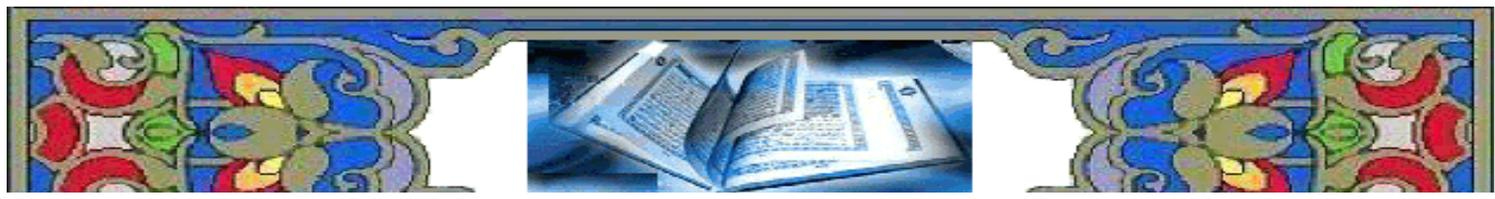
64. Behold, indeed to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. Surely, He knows well what (state) you are in. And (He knows) the Day when they will be brought back to

أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ مَا أَنْتُمْ
عَلَيْهِ وَيَوْمَ يُرْجَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ

Him, then He will certainly inform them of what they did. And Allah is Knower of all things.

فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ





Al-Furqan

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name *Al-Furqan* from the first verse. Though it is symbolic like the names of many other Surahs, it has a close relation to its subject matter.

Period of Revelation

It appears from its style and subject matter that, like Surah Al-Mominoon, it was also revealed during the third stage of Prophethood at Makkah. Ibn Jarir and Imam Razi have cited a tradition of Dahhak bin Muzahim that this Surah was revealed eight years before Surah An-Nisa. This also confirms our opinion as to its period of revelation. (Ibn Jarir, Vol. XIX, pp. 28-30, and Tafsir Kabir, Vol. VI, p. 358).

Subject Matter and Topics

The Surah deals with the doubts and objections that were being raised against the Quran, the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his teachings by the disbelievers of Makkah. Appropriate answers to each and every objection have been given and the people have been warned of the consequences of rejecting the truth. At the

end of the Surah, a clear picture of the moral superiority of the believers has been depicted as in the beginning of Surah Al-Mominoon, as if to say: Here is the criterion for distinguishing the genuine from the counterfeit. This is the noble character of those people who have believed in and followed the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and this is the kind of people that he is trying to train. You may yourselves compare and contrast this type of people with those Arabs, who have not as yet accepted the message, and who are upholding ignorance and exerting their utmost to defeat the truth. Now you may judge for yourselves as to which you would like to choose. Though this question was not posed in so many words, it was placed before every one in Arabia in a tangible shape. It may be noted that during the next few years, the practical answer given to this question by the whole nation, with the exception of a small minority, was that they chose Islam.

1. Blessed^{*1} is He who has sent down the Criterion^{*2} upon His servant^{*3} that he may be a warner to all mankind.^{*4}

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى
عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ
نَذِيرًا

*1 The Arabic word *tabaraka* is very comprehensive, and cannot be understood fully and completely by “blessed”, not even by a sentence. However, its meanings may be grasped by keeping in view the remaining portion of verses 1-2. Here it has been used to convey the following meanings:

(1) He is the most Beneficent: that is why He has bestowed the great blessing of Al-Furqan by degrees on His servant so that he may admonish all mankind.

(2) He is the most Exalted and Great: for the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth belongs to Him.

(3) He is the most Holy, Pure and Perfect: He is free from every tinge of shirk and has neither a partner in His Godhead, nor needs a son to succeed Him; for He is Ever-Lasting.

(4) He is the Highest and the Most Supreme in rank: the Kingdom and the Dominion wholly and solely belong to Him, and there is none who has any share in His Authority and Powers.

(5) He is the sole Creator of the universe and has created each and everything in it and predetermined its destiny. For further details, see E.N. 14 of Al-Mominoon and E.N. 19 of Al-Furqan.

*2 Al-Furqan: The Criterion. The Quran has been called Al-Furqan because it is the Criterion for judging right and wrong virtue and vice, truth and falsehood.

*3 The word *nazzala* implies revelation of the Quran piecemeal by degrees. The wisdom of this introductory remark will be explained in the study of verse 32, where the objection of the disbelievers of Makkah as to why the Quran has not been sent down all at once, has been dealt with.

*4 “Warner to all mankind”: To warn all mankind of the evil consequences of their heedlessness and deviation. The warner may be Al-Furqan or the Prophet (peace be upon

him) to whom it was revealed. In fact, both were the warners because they were both sent for one and the same purpose. The message of the Quran and Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) were not meant for any particular country but for the whole world; and not for their own time, but for all times to come. This has been stated at several places in the Quran. For instance: O Muhammad, say, O mankind, I am a Messenger to all of you from Allah (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 158). And this Quran has been revealed to me so that I should thereby warn you all and to whom it may reach. (Surah Al Anaam, Ayat 19). We have sent you only as a bearer of good news and as a warner to all mankind. (Surah Saba, Ayat 28). We have sent you as a mercy to all mankind. (Surah Al Anbiya, Ayat 107). The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself has stated this clearly in the Hadith. For instance, he said: I have been sent to all men, the red and the black. Before me a Prophet was sent only to his own people, but I have been sent to all mankind. (Bukhari, Muslim). I have been sent to all mankind, and I am the last of the Prophets. (Muslim).

2. He is to whom belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth,^{*5} and who has not taken a son,^{*6} nor there is a partner to Him in the sovereignty,^{*7} and He has created every thing, then has ordained its destiny.^{*8}

الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ
يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ
كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا



***5** “To Him belongs the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth.” That is, He alone has an exclusive right to it, and no one else has any right to it nor any share in it.

***6** That is, He has neither any relation of direct parenthood to anyone, nor has He taken anyone as a son. Therefore, none else in the universe is entitled to worship. He is Unique and there can be no partner in His Godhead. Thus all those who associate with Him angels or jinns or saints as His offspring, are ignorant. Likewise, those who believe that someone is His son, are also ignorant. They have no true conception of the Greatness of Allah and consider Him to be weak and needy like human beings, who require someone to become their inheritor. It is sheer ignorance and folly. For further details, see E.Ns 66 to 68 of Surah Younus.

***7** The Arabic word *mulk* means Sovereignty, Supreme Authority, and Kingship. Thus the sentence will mean: Allah is the Absolute Ruler of the whole universe and there is none other who may have any right to authority; therefore He alone is God. For, whenever a man takes anything else as his lord, he does so under the presumption that his deity has the power to do good or bring harm and make or mar his fortune; nobody will like to worship a powerless deity. Now when it is recognized that none but Allah has the real power and authority in the universe, nobody will bow before anyone other than Him in worship, nor will sing anybody else’s hymns, nor commit the folly of bowing in worship before anything else except his real God, or recognize any other as his ruler, because “To Allah

belongs the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and to Him alone.”

*8 There may be other translations of this also: He has ordained it in due proportion; or He has appointed an exact measure for everything. But no translation can convey its real meaning, which is: Allah has not only created everything in the universe but also determined its shape, size, potentialities, characteristics, term of existence, the limitations and extent of its development and all other things concerning it. Then, He has created the means and provisions to enable it to function properly in its own separate sphere.

This is one of the most comprehensive verses of the Quran with regard to the doctrine of Tauhid. According to traditions, the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself taught this verse to every child of his family as soon as it was able to speak and utter a few words. Thus, this verse is the best means of impressing the doctrine of Tauhid on our minds, and every Muslim should use it for educating his children as soon as they develop understanding.

3. And they have taken other than Him gods which do not create anything and they are (themselves) created,^{*9} and they do not possess for themselves any harm, nor benefit, and they do not possess (any power) over

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ ءَالِهَةً لَّا
تَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ
تُخْلَقُونَ وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ
لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَلَا
يَمْلِكُونَ مَوْتًا وَلَا حَيَوَةً وَلَا

death, nor life, nor resurrection.*10

نُشُورًا

*9 The words are comprehensive and cover all the false gods whom the mushriks worship whether they are angels, jinns, Prophets, saints, the sun, the moon, the stars, trees, rivers, animals etc., which have been created by Allah, or those which have been created by man, as the idols of stone, wood, etc.

*10 That is, Allah has sent down *Al-Furqan* on His servant so that he may invite the people to the truth, which they have forsaken due to heedlessness and waywardness, and warn them of the evil consequences of their folly. The *Furqan* is being revealed piecemeal so that he may distinguish right from wrong and the genuine from the counterfeit.

4. And those who disbelieve say: “This (Quran) is not except a falsehood that he has invented, and another people have helped him with it.” So certainly, they have produced an injustice*11 and a lie.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا
إِفْكٌ أَفْتَرْتَهُ وَأَعَانَهُ
قَوْمٌ ءَاخِرُونَ ۗ فَقَدْ جَاءُوا ظُلْمًا
وَزُورًا

*11 Another translation may be: a great injustice.

5. And they say: “Legends of the ancient people, which he has written down, so they are dictated to him

وَقَالُوا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ
أَكْتَتَبَهَا فَهِيَ تُمْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِ

morning and evening.”*12

بُكْرَةٌ وَأَصِيلًا

*12 This is the same objection which the modern orientalists have raised against the Quran, but strange as it may seem, no contemporary of the Prophet (peace be upon him) ever raised such an objection against him. Nobody, for instance, ever said that Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a boy had met Buhairah, the monk, and had attained religious knowledge from him, nor did anybody claim that he had obtained all that information from the Christian monks and Jewish rabbis during the trade journeys in his youth. In fact, they knew that he had never traveled alone but in the caravans and if they said such a thing, it would be refuted by hundreds of their own people from the city.

Then, one could ask, if he had gained all that knowledge from Buhairah when he was about 12, and during trade journeys when he was 25, why did he keep it secret from the people till he became 40? Whereas he did not leave his country even for a single day, but lived for years among his own people in the same city. That is why the people of Makkah dared not bring such an impudent and baseless charge against him. Their objections related to the time when he claimed to be a Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah and not to the time preceding that claim. Their argument was like this: This man is illiterate and cannot obtain any knowledge through books. He has lived among us for forty years, but we have never heard from him anything that might have shown that he had any

acquaintance with what he is preaching; therefore he must have had the help of other people who copied these things from the writings of the ancients for him: he learns these things from them and recites them as divine revelations: this is a fraud. So much so that according to some traditions, they named some of his helpers, who were the people of the Book, were illiterate and lived in Makkah.

They were:

(1) Addas, a freed slave of Huvaitib bin Abdul Uzza.

(2) Yasar, a freed slave of Ala bin Al Hadrami.

(3) Jabr, a freed slave of Amir bin Rabbiah.

Apparently this is a weighty argument. For there can be no greater proof of the fraud of Prophethood than to specify its source. But it looks strange that no argument has been put forward to refute this charge except a mere denial, as if to say: Your charge is an impudent lie: you are cruel and unjust to bring such a false charge against Our Messenger; for the Quran is the Word of Allah Who knows all the secrets in the heavens and the earth. Had their charge been based on facts, it would not have been rejected with contempt, for in that case the disbelievers would have demanded a detailed and clear answer. But they realized the strength of the arguments and did not make such a demand. Moreover, the fact that the weighty argument failed to produce any doubt in the minds of the new Muslims, was a clear proof that it was a lie.

The enigma is clearly explained if we keep in view the prevalent circumstances.

(1) The disbelievers of Makkah did not take any decisive

steps to prove their charge, although they could, had there been any truth in their charge. For instance, they could have made raids on the houses of the alleged helpers and on the house of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself and taken hold of the whole material which was being used in this fraud, and made it public to expose his Prophethood. And this was not difficult for them because they never hesitated to resort to anything to defeat him, including persecution, as they were not bound by any moral code.

(2) The alleged helpers were not strangers. As they lived in Makkah, everyone knew it well how learned they were. The disbelievers themselves knew that they could never have helped to produce a unique and sublime Book like the Quran which had the highest literary excellence and merit. That is why none of them challenged the answer to the charge. That is why even those people, who did not know them, considered this frivolous. Then if the alleged helpers were such geniuses, why did they not claim to be prophets themselves?

(3) Then, all the alleged helpers were freed slaves who were attached to their former masters even after their freedom according to the customs of Arabia; therefore they could not have become willing accomplices of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this fraud of false prophethood because their former masters could have coerced them to expose it. The only reason for them to help the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his claim could have been some greed or interest which, under the circumstances, could not even be imagined. Thus, apparently there was no reason why they

should have offended those whose protection and patronage they needed and enjoyed, and become accomplices in the fraud.

(4) Above all, all these alleged helpers embraced Islam. Could it be possible that those very persons, who had helped the Prophet (peace be upon him) to make his fraud successful, could have possibly become his devoted followers? Moreover, if, for the sake of argument, it be admitted that they helped him, why was not any of them raised to a prominent rank as a reward of his help? Why were not Addas and Yasar and Jabr exalted to the same status as were Abu Bakr and Umar and Abu Ubaidah? Another odd thing is that if the fraud of prophethood was being carried on with the help of the alleged helpers, how could it remain hidden from Zaid bin Harithah, Ali bin Abi Talib, Abu Bakr and other people, who were the Prophet's (peace be upon him) closest and most devoted companions? Thus the charge was not only frivolous and false, but it was also below the dignity of the Quran to give any answer to it. The charge has been cited merely to prove that those people had been so blinded by their opposition to the truth that they could say anything.

6. Say: "This has been sent down by Him, who knows the secret within the heavens and the earth. Indeed, He is All Forgiving, All Merciful."*13

قُلْ أَنْزَلَهُ الَّذِي يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ
كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

*13 "He is All Forgiving and All Merciful" is very

meaningful here. It means that Allah is giving full respite to the enemies of the truth, for He is Forgiving and Merciful; otherwise He would have sent down a scourge to annihilate them because of the false charges they were bringing against the Messenger. It also contains an admonition, as if to say: O unjust people, if even now you give up your enmity and obduracy and accept the truth, We shall forgive your previous misdeeds.

7. And they say: “What is this messenger that he eats food and he walks in the markets.*¹⁴ Why was not sent down to him an angel, so he would be a warner with him.”*¹⁵

وَقَالُوا مَا لِهَذَا الرَّسُولِ
يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي
الْأَسْوَاقِ لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ
فَيَكُونَ مَعَهُ نَذِيرًا

*¹⁴ That is, he cannot be a Messenger of Allah because he is a human being like us. Had Allah willed to send a Messenger, He would have sent an angel, and if at all a human being was to be sent, he should have been a king or a millionaire, who would have resided in a castle and been guarded by attendants. A Messenger could not be an ordinary person who has to move about in the market places like the common people, for it is obvious that such a human Messenger cannot attract the attention of the people. In other words, they thought that a Messenger was not meant to guide the people to the right path but to coerce them to obedience by show of worldly power and grandeur. For details, see E.N. 26 of Surah Al-Mominoon.

***15** That is, if a human being was to be sent as a Messenger, an angel should have been appointed to accompany him to proclaim: If you do not believe in him, I will scourge you. But what kind of a Messenger is he, who has to suffer from abuse and persecution?

8. “Or (why is not) is bestowed on him a treasure, or (why) does he (not) have a garden that he may eat from it.”^{*16} And the wrongdoers say: “You do not follow but a man bewitched.”^{*17}

أَوْ يُلْقَىٰ إِلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ أَوْ تَكُونُ لَهُ
جَنَّةٌ يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا ۚ وَقَالَ
الظَّالِمُونَ إِن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا
رَجُلًا مَّسْحُورًا

***16** That is, if nothing else, Allah should at least have made extraordinary arrangements for his livelihood. But this man has no treasure and no gardens; yet he claims to be a Messenger of the Lord of the universe.

***17** The disbelievers of Makkah made the false propaganda against the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he had been bewitched by some jinn or by the sorcery of an enemy or by the curse of some god or goddess for his insolence. But it is strange that they also admitted that he was a clever man who could make use of extracts from the ancient writings for the sake of his prophethood, could practice sorcery and was also a poet.

9. See, how they bring forth similitudes for you, so they have gone astray, then they cannot find a way.^{*18}

أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ
الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ

***18** As these objections were frivolous and meaningless like others, the Quran has ignored them, saying: Your objections are irrelevant, unreasonable and void of sense. You bring no sound argument to prove your doctrine of shirk, or to refute the doctrine of Tauhid put forward by him, whereas the Messenger gives such proofs of the doctrine of Tauhid that you cannot refute them except by saying: He is bewitched. The same is true of the doctrine of the life-after-death and of the moral system of the Quran, which has produced men of high character. You cannot deny these things; you reject them, saying, He is a human being like us, etc.

10. Blessed^{*19} is He who, if He willed, could have made for you better than that, gardens underneath which rivers flow, and He could make for you palaces.

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي إِنْ شَاءَ جَعَلَ لَكَ
خَيْرًا مِّنْ ذَلِكَ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَيَجْعَلُ لَكَ
قُصُورًا

***19** Here again the word *tabaraka* has been used and in the context it means: Allah has full control over everything and has unlimited powers: if he wills to favor somebody, He can do so as and when He wills without let or hindrance.

11. But they have denied the Hour.^{*20} And^{*21} We have prepared for those who

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالسَّاعَةِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا
لِمَنْ كَذَّبَ بِالسَّاعَةِ سَعِيرًا

deny the Hour a blazing
Fire.



***20** The word *as-saat*, meaning the time or the Hour, has been used in the Quran as a term for the promised Hour of Resurrection, when all human beings of all ages will be raised from the dead and gathered together before Allah Almighty to account for their beliefs and deeds, right or wrong, and rewarded or punished accordingly.

***21** That is, the objections they are raising are not due to the reason that they doubt the authenticity of the Quran on some rational ground, or that they do not believe in you for the reason that you eat food and walk about in the streets like the common people, or that they did not accept your message of truth only because you were not escorted by an angel, or were not given a treasure. But the real reason why they are putting forward all sorts of absurd arguments to reject your message is that they do not believe in the life-after-death, and this denial has made them free from all moral obligations. For when one denies the life-after death, there remains no need for him to consider and decide what is true or false, or what is right or wrong, etc. Their argument is like this: There is going to be no life after this one on the earth when we will be called to account for our deeds before God. Death will be the end of everything, and it will therefore make no difference whether one was a worshiper of God or a disbeliever or a mushrik or an atheist. When the ultimate end is to become one with the dust, there is no need of judging what is right and what is wrong except by the criterion of success and failure in this

life. Those who deny the Hereafter also see that worldly success or failure does not entirely depend upon one's faith or conduct; nay, they very often see that the righteous and the wicked persons meet with the same end irrespective of their faith for which there is no ordained punishment or reward in this life; one righteous person may be living a life of hardship while another enjoying all the good things of life; one wicked person may be suffering for his misdeeds while the other enjoying a life of pleasure and plenty. As such, as far as the worldly consequences of adopting a particular moral attitude are concerned, the disbelievers in the Hereafter cannot be satisfied whether it is right or wrong. In view of this, those who deny the Hereafter, do not see any need to consider an invitation to faith and morality even if it is presented in a most forceful way.

12. When it (the Fire) sees them from a distant place,^{*22} they will hear its raging and roaring.

إِذَا رَأَتْهُمْ مِّن مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ سَمِعُوا لَهَا تَغِيظًا وَزَفِيرًا



***22** “The Fire sees them” The words used in the text may be metaphorical, or they may mean that the Fire of Hell will be endowed with the faculties of seeing, thinking and judging.

13. And when they are thrown therein, a narrow place, bound in chains, they will call therein for death.

وَإِذَا أُلْقُوا مِنْهَا مَكَانًا ضَيِّقًا مُّقْرَّنِينَ دَعَوْا هُنَالِكَ ثُبُورًا



14. (It will be said): “Do not call today for one death, and call for many deaths.”

لَا تَدْعُوا الْيَوْمَ ثُبُورًا وَاحِدًا
وَأَدْعُوا ثُبُورًا كَثِيرًا ﴿١٤﴾

15. Say: “Is that better or the Garden of Eternity which is promised to the righteous.” It will be their recompense and the final destination.

قُلْ أَذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ جَنَّةُ الْخُلْدِ
الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ ؕ كَانَتْ
لَهُمْ جَزَاءً وَمَصِيرًا ﴿١٥﴾

16. For them will be therein whatever they desire, abiding forever. It is upon your Lord a promise that must be fulfilled. *23

لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُونَ خَالِدِينَ
كَانَ عَلَى رَبِّكَ وَعْدًا مَسْئُولًا ﴿١٦﴾

*23 Literally: It is a promise whose fulfillment can be demanded (from Allah).

Here one may ask the question: How can the promise of the Garden and the threat of the Fire produce any effect on the attitude of a parson who denies resurrection and the existence of Paradise and Hell? In order to understand the wisdom of this method of admonition, one should keep in view that it is meant to appeal to the self-interest of an obdurate person, who does not otherwise listen to such arguments. This is, as if to say: Even if, for the sake of argument, there is no proof of the reality of the life-after-death, there is also no proof that such an event will not occur at all, and there is a possibility for both. In the latter

case, the believer and the disbeliever both will be in one and the same position, but if there is life in the Hereafter, as the Prophet asserts, then the disbelievers will be doomed to utter ruin. Therefore, such an approach breaks the stubbornness of the disbelievers and proves to be highly effective when the entire scene of resurrection gathering of the people, their accountability and of Hell and Heaven is presented in a vivid manner as if the Prophet (peace be upon him) had himself seen it with his own eyes. For further explanation, see Surah HaMim Sajdah, Ayat 52 and E. N. 69 thereof, and Surah Al-Ahqaf, Ayat 10.

17. And on the Day He will gather them and that which they worship other than Allah.*24 Then He will say: “Did you mislead these servants of Mine, or did they (themselves) stray from the path.”*25

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ
 مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَقُولُ ءَأَنْتُمْ
 أَضَلَلْتُمْ عِبَادِي هَؤُلَاءِ أَمْ هُمْ
 ضَلُّوا السَّبِيلَ



*24 Here, deities do not mean idols but the angels, the prophets; the saints, the martyrs and the pious men, whom the mushriks of different communities have made their deities.

*25 Such dialogues between Allah and the gods of the disbelievers occur at several places in the Quran. For instance, in Surah Saba it has been stated: On the day when He will gather them all together, He will ask the angels, Did these people worship you? They will answer, Glory be to Thee! Thou art our Patron and not they: they

in fact worshiped the jinns (that is, satans); most of these believed in them. (verses 40-41). Similarly in Surah Al-Maidah, it is said: And when Allah will say, O Jesus, son of Mary, did you ever say to the people: Make me and my mother gods instead of Allah? He will answer, Glory be to Thee! It did not behoove me to say that which I had no right to say. I told them only that which Thou didst bid me: Worship Allah, Who is my Lord as well as your Lord. (verses. 116, 117).

18. They will say: “Glorified be You, it was not right for us that we would take other than You any guardian. But You provided comforts (of life) for them and their forefathers, until they forgot the admonition. And they became a people ruined.”^{*26}

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ مَا كَانَ يَنْبَغِي
لَنَا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَ مِنْ دُونِكَ مِنْ
أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَكِنْ مَتَّعْتَهُمْ وَءَابَاءَهُمْ
حَتَّى نَسُوا الذِّكْرَ وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا
بُورًا



***26** That is, they were mean people: You gave them all the provisions of life so that they may show gratitude to You, but they became ungrateful and ignored all the admonitions given by the Prophets.

19. So certainly, they (false gods) will deny you in what you say,^{*27} then you will not be able to avert (punishment), nor get help. And whoever does wrong^{*28} among you, We shall make

فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ بِمَا تَقُولُونَ
فَمَا تَسْتَطِيعُونَ صَرْفًا وَلَا
نَصْرًا وَمَنْ يَظْلِم مِّنْكُمْ نُدِقْهُ

him taste a great
punishment.

عَذَابًا كَبِيرًا

*27 That is, on that day your religion, which you now believe, to be true, will prove to be false and even your gods, whom you yourselves have set up, will declare it to be a lie; for none of them ever asked you to make them your deities and worship them as such. Consequently, instead of interceding on your behalf; they will bear witness against you.

*28 They will be guilty of iniquity. They will be unjust to the reality and the truth and guilty of disbelief and shirk. The context shows that those who reject the Prophet (peace be upon him) and set up other deities instead of Allah and deny life in the Hereafter, are guilty of *zulm* (iniquity).

20. And We did not send before you (O Muhammad) any among the messengers, but indeed, they verily ate food and walked in the markets.*29

And We have made some of you a trial for others.*30 Will you be steadfast,*31 and your Lord is ever Seer.*32

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنْ
الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا آٰلِيَهُمْ
لِيَأْكُلُوا الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشُوا
فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ وَجَعَلْنَا
بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً أَتَصْبِرُونَ
وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ بَصِيرًا

*29 This is an answer to the objection of the disbelievers of Makkah that Muhammad (peace be upon him) could not be a Messenger of Allah because he ate food and moved

about in the streets. They have been told that all the Messengers of Allah who came before Muhammad, like Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Moses and many others (peace be upon them all) whom they knew and acknowledged as Prophets and Messengers of Allah also ate food and walked about in the streets. Nay, even Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), son of Mary, himself, whom the Christians had made the son of God (and whose image had also been placed in the Kabah by the disbelievers of Makkah) ate food and walked about in the streets like a common man even according to the Gospels themselves.

***30** It is obvious that the Messenger and the believers were a test for the disbelievers as to whether they would believe even after hearing the divine message and seeing their pure character. On the other hand, the disbelievers were a test for the Messenger and his followers in the sense that they were a means of proving and trying their true faith by their persecution. For it is this test alone which helps to discriminate the true believers from the hypocrites. That is why, at first, only the poor and the helpless but sincere people embraced Islam. Had there been no persecution and hardships but prosperity, wealth and grandeur, the worshipers of the world and the selfish people would have been the first to embrace Islam.

***31** That is, now when you have understood the wisdom of the test by persecution, it is hoped that you will endure all kinds of hardships without complaint, and willingly undergo the persecutions that are inevitable.

***32** It probably means two things: First, the way your Lord

is conducting your affairs, is according to His will and nothing that happens is without His knowledge. Second: He is fully aware of your sincerity and righteousness in serving His cause under all kinds of hardships. You should therefore rest assured that you will have your full reward. He also sees the persecution and iniquity of the disbelievers; therefore they will not escape the consequences of their wickedness.

21. And those who do not expect the meeting with Us say: “Why are angels not sent down to us,^{*33} or (why) do we (not) see our Lord.”^{*34} Certainly, they have become arrogant within themselves^{*35} and are scornful with great insolence.

﴿ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ نَرَى رَبَّنَا لَقَدِ اسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَعَتَوْا عُتُوًّا كَبِيرًا ﴾

***33** That is, if Allah had really intended to convey His message to us, He would not have chosen a prophet and sent an angel only to him, but to each one of us individually with the guidance, or He should have sent a deputation of angels to appear before the people with the message. The same objection has been stated in Surah Al-Anaam thus: When a revelation comes before them, they say: We will not believe in it unless we are given the like of what has been given to the Messengers of Allah. Allah knows best whom to entrust with His mission and how it should be enforced. (verse 124).

*34 That is, Allah Himself should appear before us and make the appeal.

*35 Another translation could be: They have formed a very high opinion of their own selves.

22. The day when they will see the angels, there will not be rejoicing that day for the criminals,^{*36} and they (angels) will say: "A barrier, forbidden (to you)."

يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَا بُشْرَىٰ
يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُجْرِمِينَ وَيَقُولُونَ
حِجْرًا مَّحْجُورًا

*36 This very theme has been expressed in much greater detail in Al-Anaam, Ayat 8; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 7-8 and 51-64; and in Surah BaniIsrail, Ayats 90-95.

23. And We shall turn to what they have done of deeds, then make them as scattered dust.^{*37}

وَقَدِمْنَا إِلَىٰ مَا عَمِلُوا مِنَّ عَمَلٍ
فَجَعَلْنَاهُ هَبَاءً مَنْثُورًا

*37 For explanation, see Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 18 and E.Ns 25, 26 thereof.

24. The dwellers of Paradise on that Day have the best abode, and the fairest resting place.^{*38}

أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَيْرٌ
مُّسْتَقَرًّا وَأَحْسَنُ مَقِيلًا

*38 In contrast to the miserable plight of the disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection, the believers will be protected from the hardships of that Day. They will be treated with honor and will have a blissful place for midday rest. According to a tradition, the Prophet (peace be upon him)

said: I declare on oath by Allah, in Whose hand is my life, that the long, horrible Day of Resurrection will be made very short and light for a believer, as short and light as the time taken in offering an obligatory Prayer. (Musnad Ahmad).

25. And the day when the heaven with the clouds will split open and the angels will be sent down in successive descent.

وَيَوْمَ تَشَقُّ السَّمَاءُ بِالْغَمِّ
وَنُزِّلَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ تَنْزِيلًا

26. The sovereignty on that Day will be the true, belonging to the Beneficent. *39 And it will be a harsh Day for the disbelievers.

الْمَلِكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ لِلرَّحْمَنِ
وَكَانَ يَوْمًا عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ
عَسِيرًا

*39 That is, on that Day all other kingdoms, which deluded man in the world, will come to an end, and there will be only the Kingdom of Allah, Who is the real Sovereign of the universe. In Surah Momin, Ayat 16, the same thing has been stated thus: On that Day when all the people will stand exposed, and nothing of them will be hidden from Allah, it will be asked: Whose is the Sovereignty today? The response from every side will be: Of Allah, the Almighty. According to a tradition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Allah will take the heavens in one hand and the earth in the other, and will declare: I am the Sovereign: I am the Ruler. Where are the other rulers of the earth? Where are those tyrants? Where are the

arrogant people? (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, and Abu Daud, with slight variations).

27. And on that Day, the wrongdoer will bite on his hands, he will say: “Would that I had taken a way along with the Messenger.”

وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ الظَّالِمُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ
يَقُولُ يَلَيْتَنِي أَتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ
الرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا ﴿٢٧﴾

28. “O, woe to me, would that I had not taken so and so as a friend.”

يَوَيْلَتِي لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أَتَّخِذْ فُلَانًا
خَلِيلًا ﴿٢٨﴾

29. “Certainly, he led me astray from the reminder after when it had reached me. And Satan was ever to man, a betrayer.”*40

لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِي عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ إِذٍ
جَاءَنِي ۗ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ
لِلْإِنْسَانِ خَذُولًا ﴿٢٩﴾

*40 Satan has proved very treacherous to man. It may also be a part of the disbelievers’ lament, or it may be a remark by Allah, in which case the meaning will be: And Satan is indeed the one who always deceives man.

30. And the Messenger will say: “O my Lord, indeed my people had taken this Quran as (an object) abandoned.”*41

وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي
اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا ﴿٣٠﴾

***41** The Arabic word *mahjur* is capable of several meanings. As such, the sentence may mean: these people did not regard the Quran as worthy of their consideration: they neither accepted it nor followed it. Or they considered it to be nonsense or the delirium of insanity. Or they made it the target of their ridicule and mockery.

31. And thus have We made for every prophet an enemy from among the criminals.^{*42} And sufficient is your Lord as a guide and a helper.^{*43}

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا
مِّنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ
هَادِيًّا وَنَصِيرًا

***42** That is, it is not a new thing that the disbelievers have become your enemies, for it has always been so with all the former Prophets and Messengers. (See also Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 112-113). This is inevitable because it is Our Law that the criminals will always oppose the truth. You should, therefore, pursue your mission with full confidence and determination without expecting any immediate results.

***43** Guidance does not only imply bestowing of the knowledge of the truth, but it also means giving the right guidance at the right time to guide the Islamic movement on the right lines and to defeat the strategy and scheme of the enemies of Islam. Help means all kinds of moral, spiritual and material help to the followers of the truth in their conflict against falsehood. Thus, Allah is All Sufficient for the righteous people and they need no other support provided they have full faith in Allah and fight falsehood

with all their energies and strength.

This meant to encourage the Prophet (peace be upon him), otherwise the previous assertion would have been very discouraging without this. It meant to say: Even if the unbelievers have become your enemies, you should continue your mission, for We shall guide you in every stage and situation and help you against them. We shall defeat all the schemes of your enemies and help you in every way in your conflict with falsehood. We shall provide you with material means also, but you should trust in Us and exert your utmost against falsehood.

32. And those who disbelieve say: “Why has not the (entire) Quran been sent down to him all at once.”*44

Thus (it is), that We may strengthen thereby your heart.*45 And We have revealed it gradually, in stages.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ
عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً
كَذَلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ
وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْتِيلًا



*44 As the disbelievers of Makkah considered this objection to be very strong, they repeated it over and over again. The Quran also has cited it with its answer at several places. For instance, see E.Ns 101-106 of Surah An-Naml and E.N. 119 of Surah Bani Israil. Their question implied: Had the Quran been really the Word of Allah, it would have been sent as a complete book all at once; for Allah has the knowledge of everything and every human affair. Thus it is obvious that nothing is being sent down from above;

but this man himself fabricates all its themes or gets these from other people or other books.

***45** So that by it We may strengthen your heart and imbue it with courage. The words are comprehensive. This concise sentence contains the following explanation why the Quran was revealed piecemeal by degrees:

(1) So that the Prophet (peace be upon him) may commit it to memory perfectly and recite it to his people, who are illiterate, rather than present it in a written form.

(2) So that its teachings and messages may be impressed deeply on the minds.

(3) So that the way of life it teaches, may be followed with complete conviction, which would not be possible if all the commandments and the whole system of life had been sent down all at once.

(4) So that the hearts of the Prophet and his followers may be imbued with courage during the conflict between the truth and falsehood. This required that the divine guidance and messages of encouragement should be revealed as and when needed according to the practical situation. Obviously, this could not have been possible if these had been sent down all at once. This also showed that Allah had not left His Messenger alone amidst persecution to counter all sorts of resistance and opposition after appointing him to the mission, but He Himself was watching the struggle with concern and guiding His Prophet through every difficulty by direct communion in every critical situation.

33. And no similitude do they bring to you, but We

وَلَا يَأْتُونَكَ بِمَثَلٍ إِلَّا جِئْنَاكَ

bring to you the truth and
the better explanation.*46

بِالْحَقِّ وَأَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا

*46 This is yet another point of wisdom of sending down the Quran by degrees. Allah did not intend to produce a book on guidance and spread its teachings through the agency of His Prophet (peace be upon him). Had it been so the disbelievers would have been justified in their objection as to why the Quran had not been sent down as a complete book all at once. The real object of the revelation of the Quran was that Allah intended to start a movement of faith, piety and righteousness to combat disbelief, ignorance and sin, and He had raised a Prophet to lead and guide the movement. Then, on the one hand, Allah had taken it upon Himself to send necessary instructions and guidance to the leader and his followers as and when needed, and on the other, He had also taken the responsibility to answer the objections and remove the doubts of opponents and give the right interpretation of things which they misunderstood. Thus the Quran was the collection of the different discourses that were being revealed by Allah; it was not merely meant to be a code of laws or of moral principles, but a Book, which was being sent down piecemeal to guide the movement in all its stages to suit its requirements on different occasions.

34. Those who will be gathered on their faces to Hell, those are the worst in plight and farther astray from the path.*47

الَّذِينَ يُحْشَرُونَ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ
إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ أُولَٰئِكَ شَرُّ مَكَانًا
وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا

***47** That is, they will be driven towards Hell upon their faces because of their perversion and their perverted thinking.

35. And certainly, We gave Moses the Scripture,^{*48} and We appointed with him his brother Aaron as a counselor.

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ
وَجَعَلْنَا مَعَهُ أَخَاهُ هَارُونَ
وَزِيْرًا

***48** Here by the Scripture is not meant the Torah, which was given to Prophet Moses after the exodus from Egypt, but it implies that divine guidance which was given to him after his appointment as a Prophet up to the Exodus. It included the orations delivered by him in the court of Pharaoh and also the instructions given to him during his conflict with Pharaoh as mentioned in the Quran here and there. Most probably, these things were not included in the Torah; the Torah began with the Ten Commandments which were given to Moses engraved on stone tablets on Mount Sinai after the exodus.

36. Then We said: “Go both of you to the people who have denied Our signs.”^{*49} Then We destroyed them, a total destruction.

فَقُلْنَا أَذْهَبَا إِلَى الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ
كَذَّبُوا بِءَايَاتِنَا فَدَمَّرْنَاهُمْ
تَدْمِيرًا

***49** The divine teachings which had reached them through Prophets Jacob and Joseph, and which had been preached to them by the righteous people of Israel for centuries.

37. And the people of Noah, when they denied the messengers,^{*50} We drowned them and We made them a sign for mankind. And We have prepared for the wrongdoers a painful punishment.^{*51}

وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ لَمَّا كَذَبُوا الرُّسُلَ
أَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ لِّلنَّاسِ آيَةً
وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ عَذَابًا
أَلِيمًا

***50** They did not charge only Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) with imposture because he was a man, but, in fact, charged all the Prophets with imposture because they were all human beings.

***51** That is, a painful chastisement in the Hereafter.

38. And the Aad and the Thamud and the companions of the Rass,^{*52} and many generations in between them.

وَعَادًا وَثَمُودًا وَأَصْحَابَ الرَّسِّ
وَقُرُونًا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ كَثِيرًا

***52** There is no definite knowledge about the people of the Raas. Different commentators have said different things about them, but nothing is convincing. The only thing that may be said about them is that they were a people who had killed their Prophet by throwing him into or hanging him down a Rass (an old or dry well).

39. And each, We presented to them examples (as warnings) and each (of them) We destroyed to utter ruin.

وَكُلًّا ضَرَبْنَا لَهُ الْأَمْثَالَ
وَكُلًّا تَبَّرْنَا تَتْبِيرًا

40. And certainly, they have passed by the town which was rained with an evil rain.*53 Can then it be that they have not seen it. But they are not expecting for resurrection.*54

وَلَقَدْ أَتَوْا عَلَى الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي
 أَمْطَرَتْ مَطَرًا سَوِيًّا أَفَلَمْ
 يَكُونُوا يَرَوْنَهَا بَلْ كَانُوا
 لَا يَرْجُونَ نُشُورًا

*53 The habitation referred to was that of the people of Prophet Lot (peace be upon him), which was destroyed by a rain of stones. The people of Hijaz while traveling to Palestine and Syria, passed by its ruins and heard the horrible tales of its destruction.

*54 As the disbelievers did not believe in the Hereafter, they looked at these ancient ruins as mere spectators and did not take any warning from them. Incidentally, this is the difference between the observation of a disbeliever and of a believer in the Hereafter. The former looks at such things as a mere spectator or at the most as an archaeologist whereas the latter learns moral lessons from the same and obtains an insight into the realities beyond this worldly life.

41. And when they see you, (O Muhammad) they take you not except as a mockery. (Saying): "Is this the one whom Allah has sent as a messenger?"

وَإِذَا رَأَوْكَ إِن يَتَّخِذُونَكَ إِلَّا
 هُزُوعًا أَهَذَا الَّذِي بَعَثَ اللَّهُ
 رَسُولًا

42. “He had almost led us astray from our gods, if it was not that we had remained firm with regard to (worshipping) them.”*55
 And soon they will know when they see the punishment, who is farther astray from the path.

إِنْ كَادَ لِيُضِلَّنَا عَنْ ءَالِهَتِنَا
 لَوْلَا أَنْ صَبَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا
 وَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ حِينَ يَرَوْنَ
 الْعَذَابَ مَنْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٤٢﴾

*55 Obviously there is a contradiction between the question posed by the disbelievers and the assertion made by them about their deities. The question was meant to bring the Prophet (peace be upon him) into contempt, as if to say: You are making a claim that is far above your low position. On the other hand, their assertion shows that they indirectly admitted the force of the arguments and the high character of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and were even afraid of the effectiveness and success of his message, because, according to them, it was going to turn them away from their false gods.

43. Have you seen him who has taken his desire as his god.*56 Then would you be responsible for him.

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ
 أَفَأَنْتَ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٤٣﴾

*56 “The person who makes his desire as his god” is the one who becomes the slave of his lusts and desires. As he serves his lust like the one who worships his deity. He becomes as much guilty of shirk as the one who worships an idol. According to a tradition, related by Abu Hurairah,

the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Of all the false gods being worshipped and served instead of Allah, the worst in the sight of Allah is one's own lust. (Tabarani). For further explanation, see E.N. 50 of Surah Al-Kahf.

The man who keeps his desires under control, and uses his common sense to make decisions, can be expected to come to the right path by making an appeal to his reason even though he might have been involved in shirk or disbelief. For if he decides to follow the right way, he will remain firm and steadfast on it. On the other hand, the man who is the slave of his own lust, is like a ship without an anchor, who wanders about on any path where his lust leads him to. He is least bothered about the distinction between the right and the wrong, the true and the false, and has no desire to choose one against the other. And, if at all, such a person is persuaded to accept the message of guidance, no one can take the responsibility that he will observe any moral laws.

44. Or do you think that most of them hear or understand. They are not except like the cattle. But they are even farther astray from the path.^{*57}

أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ
يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ ۚ إِنَّ
هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ ۗ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ
سَبِيلًا

*57 They are only like the cattle because they follow their lusts blindly. Just as the sheep and cattle do not know

where their driver is taking them, to the meadow or to the slaughter house, so are these people also following their leaders blindly without knowing or judging where they are being led, to success or to destruction. The only difference between the two is that the cattle have no intelligence and will not be accountable as to the place where they are being taken by the driver. But it is a pity that human beings who are endowed with reason, should behave like cattle; therefore their condition is worse than that of cattle.

Incidentally it should be noted that this passage (verses 43, 44) is not meant to dissuade the Prophet (peace be upon him) from conveying the message to such people, but it is an indirect warning to the disbelievers of the consequences if they continued to behave like cattle .

45. Have you not turned your vision toward your Lord, how He lengthens out the shadow. And if He willed, He could have made it stationary. Then We made the sun a guide upon it.*58

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ
وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَجَعَلَهُ سَاكِنًا ثُمَّ
جَعَلْنَا الشَّمْسَ عَلَيْهِ دَلِيلًا

*58 The word *dalil* has been used in the sense of the pilot, who is a person trained to take ships safely in or out of a harbor, or along a waterway. The sun has been made the pilot of the shadow because the lengthening out of the shadow and its being rolled up depends on the rising, declining and setting of the sun.

46. Then We withdraw it unto Us, a gradual

ثُمَّ قَبْضُنَا إِلَيْنَا قَبْضًا يَسِيرًا

withdrawal.*59



***59** We annihilate it or cause it to disappear, for everything which is annihilated returns to Allah, because everything comes from Him and returns to Him.

The Quran has used the phenomenon of the shadow caused by the sun for two purposes. (if it is taken literally, it is meant to warn the disbelievers that they should learn a lesson from this and should not behave like cattle, as if to say: If you had considered the benefits of the shadow in regard to your everyday experience, you would have accepted without any hesitation the doctrine of Tauhid. Had the shadow been constant, there would have been no life on earth, for life depends on the light and heat of the sun. On the other hand, if there had been no shadow at all, the constant heat and light of the sun would have made life impossible. Besides this, if there had been sudden changes in the sun and the shadow, they would not have been able to endure it for long; therefore you should reflect on this phenomenon and understand it well that it has been so ordained by the All-Wise and the All-Powerful Creator so that it always increases or decreases gradually in accordance with fixed natural laws. Thus it is obvious that it could not have come into existence by itself nor produced by blind mechanisms nor functioned so regularly and continuously under many independent gods.

But if it is taken in the metaphorical sense, there is between the lines a subtle suggestion, and it is this: Just as the shadow does not remain in one and the same state, likewise

the shadow of disbelief and shirk, which appears to have spread far and wide, will begin to shorten as the sun of guidance gradually rises; but it requires patience, for Allah never brings about sudden changes.

47. And He it is who has made for you the night as a garment,^{*60} and the sleep as a repose, and He has made the day as the return to life.^{*61}

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ اللَّيْلَ
لِبَاسًا وَالنَّوْمَ سُبَاتًا وَجَعَلَ
النَّهَارَ نُشُورًا



*60 The night is a garment in the sense that it covers and hides things.

*61 This verse has three objects:

(1) It provides a proof of Tauhid.

(2) It furnishes a proof of the possibility of life-after-death from everyday human experience.

(3) It bears the good news that the night of ignorance has come to an end and now the bright day of knowledge and guidance has dawned. It is therefore inevitable that those who were sleeping in ignorance, will sooner or later wake up, but those who have slept the sleep of death, will not wake up and will themselves be deprived of life, while the business of the day will go on thriving even without them.

48. And He it is who sends the winds as heralds of good tidings, before His mercy (rainfall), and We send down from the sky pure water.^{*62}

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا
بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً طَهُورًا



***62** That is, such water as is pure and free from all sorts of impurities, germs and poison, which cleanses and washes away filth and becomes a source of life for men, beasts as well as all kinds of plant life.

49. That We may bring to life with it the dead land, and We give it to drink to those We created, numerous livestock and mankind.*63

لِنُحْيِيَ بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَّيْتًا وَنُسْقِيَهُ
مِمَّا خَلَقْنَا أَنْعَمًا وَأُنَاسِيَّ
كَثِيرًا

***63** This verse also gives proofs of the doctrine of Tauhid and the Hereafter. Besides, it contains a subtle suggestion that the period of the drought of ignorance has been replaced through Allah's mercy by the blessed rain of Prophethood, which is showering the life giving knowledge of revelation from which many servants of Allah will certainly benefit, if not all.

50. And certainly, We have repeated it among them*64 that they may remember, then most of the people decline except ingratitude.*65

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَاهُ بَيْنَهُمْ لِيَذَكَّرُوا
فَأَبَى أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ إِلَّا كُفُورًا

***64** "We have repeated it among them" may have three meanings:

- (1) We have cited the phenomenon of rainfall over and over again in the Quran in order to make plain to them the reality.
- (2) We are time and again showing them the wonderful

phenomenon of the heat and drought, seasonal winds and clouds, rainfall and its life producing effects.

(3) We go on changing the system of the distribution of rainfall throughout the world year after year, so that the same place does not receive the same amount of rainfall every time. Sometimes a place is left completely dry, another has more or less of rainfall than usual, while some other is flooded with rain water. They see all these different phenomena with their countless different results in their daily life.

***65** The verse means to impress that the wonderful system of rainfall is by itself a proof of the existence of Allah, of One Lord of the universe, and of His attributes. Its wonderful distribution during the year and over different parts of the earth is a clear proof that there is an All-Wise Designer. But the obdurate disbelievers do not learn any lesson from it, and persist in their ingratitude, though this has been cited in the Quran repeatedly for this purpose.

It is also a proof of the life-after-death, for the disbelievers themselves see that rainfall brings to life dead land year after year. This clearly shows that Allah has the power to bring the dead back to life, but the disbelievers do not learn any lesson from it and persist in their irresponsible ways.

If verse 48 is taken in the metaphorical sense, the pure water of rain will mean the blessings of Prophethood. Human history shows that whenever this blessing has been sent down, ignorance has been replaced by knowledge, injustice by justice and wickedness by righteousness. The coming of Prophets has always proved to be the harbinger

of a moral revolution. But only those who accepted their guidance benefited from it. This is the lesson of history, yet the disbelievers reject it because of their ingratitude.

51. And if We had willed, We could certainly have raised in each township a warner.*66

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَبَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ
نَذِيرًا



*66 That is, if We had willed, We could have sent a separate Prophet to every habitation but We did not do so, because like the sun, Our Last Prophet suffices to enlighten the entire world.

52. So do not obey the disbelievers, and strive against them with it (Quran), the great striving.*67

فَلَا تُطِيعِ الْكَافِرِينَ
وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا



*67 The Arabic words *jihad-i-kabir* imply three meanings:

- (1) To exert utmost for the cause of Islam.
- (2) To dedicate all the resources to this cause.
- (3) To fight against the enemies of Islam on all possible fronts with all the resources in order to raise high the “Word of Allah”. This will include jihad with the tongue, the pen, wealth, life and every other available weapon.

53. And He it is who has let loose the two seas, this one palatable sweet, and the other bitter salty, and He has set between

۞ وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ
هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ
أُجَاجٌ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخًا

them a partition, and an insurmountable barrier.*68

وَجِبْرًا مَّحْجُورًا

*68 This phenomenon has been perceived in many places in the sea and on the land that sweet water and bitter water has existed side by side. Turkish Admiral Syedi Ali Rais, in his book Mirat-al-Mamalik, written in the 16th century, has mentioned a place in the Persian Gulf, where springs of sweet water exist under the bitter waters of the sea, where he could get drinking water for his fleet. The American Oil company at first obtained water from the same springs in the Persian Gulf, before they dug up wells near Dhahran for the supply of the drinking water. Near Bahrain also there exist springs of sweet water at the sea bed from which people have been taking water until quite recently. Besides this apparent meaning which gives a rational proof of Allah's being the One and the only Lord of the universe, the verse contains a subtle suggestion as well: When Allah wills, He can raise up a righteous community from among a large wicked society just as He can cause springs of palatable and sweet water to gush out from under the salty waters of the sea.

54. And He it is who has created man from water, then has appointed for him kindred by blood and kindred by marriage.*69 And your Lord is All Powerful.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ مِنَ الْمَاءِ بَشَرًا
فَجَعَلَهُ نَسَبًا وَصِهْرًا ۗ وَكَانَ
رَبُّكَ قَدِيرًا

*69 Here the miracle of the birth of man from a mere sperm drop and the procreation of his offspring from man

and woman have been cited as a proof of Tauhid. Though both man and woman belong to the same genus, they are two species, having important common human characteristics but different physical structures and psychological traits. It is a proof of Tauhid that the All-Powerful Allah has used this difference for making the two as complements and not antagonists. It is also the design of the All-Powerful Creator that He is creating sons and daughters in the world in due proportion. Then the sons marry and create blood relationships, and the daughters are married and become means of forming new relationships. This process goes on widening to produce families, tribes and nations belonging to the same race and bound by the same civilization.

The verse has also a subtle suggestion: The entire life is being run on the principle of difference. For example, the difference between the night and the day, the summer and the winter, etc. Therefore, O Muslims, you should patiently endure the differences you are having with your opponents for these are certain to produce good results.

55. And they worship other than Allah that which does not benefit them, nor harm them. And the disbeliever is a helper (to Satan) against his Lord. ^{*70}

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا
يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَلَا يَضُرُّهُمْ ۗ وَكَانَ
الْكَافِرُ عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِ ظَهِيرًا

***70** This is a characteristic of the typical disbeliever. He is a helper and defender of all those who are rebels against Allah and an enemy of all those who may be striving to

raise Allah's Word and enforce His Law in the world. He is associated directly or indirectly with all the works of Allah's disobedience and opposes and resists in one way or the other every effort that is made to bring people to the path of Allah's obedience and service.

56. And We have not sent you except as a bearer of good tidings and a warner.*71

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا



***71** This verse (56) was meant to comfort the Prophet (peace be upon him) and to warn the disbelievers who opposed him and obstructed his work, as if to say: Your duty is only to convey the message of good news to the people and to warn them of the consequences of disbelief. You are not responsible as to whether they accept your message or reject it, or to reward the believers and punish the disbelievers.

Such words occur in the Quran at other places also and are obviously directed to the disbelievers, as if to say: The message of the Prophet is meant to reform the people without any tinge of selfishness. As he does not force the people to accept his message, there is no reason why you should feel offended. If you accept the message, it will be for your own good, and if you reject it, you will be harming yourselves alone. For after conveying the message, he is relieved of his duty and responsibility; then the matter will be between you and Us.

Although this is a very simple and clear interpretation of verse 56 (and of similar other verses), yet some people

erroneously conclude from it that the only duty and responsibility of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is to convey the message and nothing else. They forget that the Quran has stressed over and over again that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is not only a giver of good news to the believers but he is also their teacher, their lawgiver, judge and guide, a purifier of their morals and a model of life for them, and that every word which he utters is law which they have to obey and follow willingly in all walks of life and for all times to come.

57. Say: "I do not ask of you for this any recompense, except that whoever wills, that he may take a path to his Lord."*71a

قُلْ مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ
إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ
سَبِيلًا



*71a For explanation, see E.N. 70 of Surah Al-Mominoon.

58. And trust upon him who is Ever Living, who does not die. And glorify His praise. And sufficient is He to be aware of the sins of His servants.

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَىٰ الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا
يَمُوتُ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِهِ
وَكَفَىٰ بِهِ بِذُنُوبِ عِبَادِهِ
خَبِيرًا



59. He who created the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them in six days. Then He

الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ

established (Himself) on the Throne.^{*72} The Beneficent, so ask about Him anyone well informed.

أَسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ الرَّحْمَنُ
فَسْأَلْ بِهِ خَيْرًا

***72** For explanation of Throne, see E.Ns 41, 42 of Surah Al-Aaraf; E.N. 4 of Surah Younus, and E.N. 7 Surah of Houd. It is difficult to say what exactly is mean by six days. Here a day may mean a period of time or an ordinary day of this world. For explanation of the day, see E.Ns 11 to 15 of Surah HaMim Sajdah.

60. And when it is said to them: “Prostrate to the Beneficent.” They say: “And what is the Beneficent. Shall we fall down in prostration to that which you command us.”^{*73} And it increases them in hatred.^{*74}

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اسْجُدُوا لِلرَّحْمَنِ
قَالُوا وَمَا الرَّحْمَنُ أَنَسْجُدُ لِمَا
تَأْمُرُنَا وَزَادَهُمْ نُفُورًا

***73** This they said due to their arrogance and stubbornness just as Pharaoh had said to Prophet Moses: What is the Lord of the universe? For the disbelievers of Makkah were not unaware of the Merciful (Rahman), nor was Pharaoh unaware of the Lord of the universe. The wording of the verse itself shows that their question about the Merciful was not the result of their ignorance of Him but was due to their rebelliousness. Otherwise Allah would not have punished them for this but would have informed them politely that He Himself is Merciful. Besides this, it is well known historically that the word Rahman (Merciful) for

Allah had been in common usage in Arabia since the ancient times. Please see also E.N. 5 of Surah As-Sajdah and E.N. 35 of Surah Saba.

*74 All scholars agree that here a prostration of recital (Sajdah Talawat) has been enjoined, which means that every reader and every hearer must prostrate himself on reciting or hearing the recital of this verse. According to traditions, the one who hears this verse being recited should say: Zadan Allahu khuduan - aenama - zada liladaai nufura: May Allah increase us in humility - even as - the enemies are increased in their hatred.

61. Blessed is He who has placed in the heaven mansions of the stars,^{*75} and placed therein a great lamp^{*76} and a moon giving light.

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ
بُرُوجًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا سِرَاجًا وَقَمَرًا
مُنِيرًا

*75 See E.Ns 8 to 12 of Surah Al-Hijr.

*76 That is, the sun, as mentioned clearly in Surah Nooh, Ayat 16: And made the sun a lamp.

62. And He it is who has appointed the night and the day in succession, for him who desires that he should remember, or desires thankfulness.^{*77}

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ
خِلْفَةً لِّمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَذَّكَّرَ أَوْ
أَرَادَ شُكُورًا

*77 The observation and deep consideration of the wonderful phenomenon of the alternation of the day and night is a proof of Tauhid and His Providence so that man

may feel grateful to Him and prostrate himself before Him in all humility.

63. And the slaves of the Beneficent are those^{*78} who walk upon the earth^{*79} humbly. And when the ignorant people address them, they say: "Peace."^{*80}

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ
يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا
خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا
سَلَامًا



***78** That is, though all human beings are by birth the servants of the Merciful before Whom you have been invited to prostrate yourselves, and which you disdain, his true servants are those who adopt the way of His obedience consciously and develop such desirable characteristics. Then the natural consequences of the prostration are those found in the lives of the believers and the evil results of rejecting the invitation, those found in your lives. Here attention is being drawn to the two patterns of character and life. First of those who had accepted the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and were following it, and the second of those who persisted in the ways of ignorance. Here only the prominent characteristics of the true believers have been cited, and for contrast, the characteristics of the disbelievers have been left to every discerning eye and mind which could see them all around in the society and make its own decision.

***79** That is; they do not walk haughtily and arrogantly like the tyrants and mischief-makers, but their gait is of a

gentle, right thinking and good natured person. Walking humbly does not mean walking like a weak or sick person, nor does it imply the gait of a hypocrite who walks ostentatiously to show humility or fear of God. According to traditions, the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself used to walk with firm, quick steps. One day Caliph Umar saw a young man walking slowly like a weak, sick person, and asked him: Are you ill? When the man replied in the negative, the Caliph raised his whip, rebuked him and told him to walk like a healthy man. This shows that the humble gait is the natural gait of a noble and gentle person and not a gait which shows weakness and undue humility.

In this connection, the first characteristic of the true servants of Allah to which attention has been drawn, is their gait. This is because the gait indicates the character of an individual. If a man walks in a humble and dignified way, as opposed to a haughty, vain and proud manner, it shows that he is a noble and gentle person. Thus the different gaits of different types of people show what sort of characters they possess. The verse means to imply that the true servants of the Merciful can be easily recognized by their gait among the people. Their attitude of Allah's worship and obedience has changed them so thoroughly that it can be seen at first sight from their gate that they are noble, humble and good natured people, who cannot be expected to indulge in any mischief. For further explanation, see E.N.43 of Surah Bani Israil and E.N 33 of Surah Luqman.

***80** “the ignorant people”: Rude and insolent people and

not uneducated and illiterate ones. The true servants of the Merciful do not believe in vengeance, even though they may have to deal with the ignorant people who behave rudely and insolently towards them. If they happen to come across such people, they wish them peace and turn away. The same thing has been expressed in Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 55, thus: And when they hear something vain and absurd they turn away from it, saying, our deeds are for us and your deeds are for you, peace be to you, we have nothing to do with the ignorant. For details see E.Ns 72 to 78 of Surah Al-Qasas.

64. And those who spend night before their Lord, prostrating and standing.*81

وَالَّذِينَ
يَبْتَئُونَ
لِرَبِّهِمْ
سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا

*81 That is, they neither spend their nights in fun and merry making nor in gossips and telling tales, nor in doing wicked deeds, for these are the ways of the ignorant people. The true servants of Allah pass their nights in worshipping and remembering Him as much as they can. This characteristic of theirs has been brought out clearly at several places in the Quran, thus: Their backs forsake their beds and they invoke their Lord in fear and in hope. (Surah As-Sajdah, Ayat 16). These people (of Paradise) slept but little at night, and prayed for their forgiveness in the hours of the morning. (Surah Az-Zariyat, Ayats 17, 18). And: Can the end of the one, who is obedient to Allah, prostrates himself and stands before Him during the hours of the night, fears the Hereafter and places his hope in the

mercy of his Lord, be like that of a mushrik. (Surah Az-Zumar, Ayat 9).

65. And those who say: “Our Lord, avert from us the punishment of Hell. Indeed, its punishment is anguish.”

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ
عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ إِنَّ
عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا

66. “Indeed it is evil as an abode and as a place to dwell.”*82

إِنَّهَا سَاءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا

*82 That is, their worship has not made them vain and proud to presume that they are the beloved ones of Allah and that the Fire of Hell will not touch them. On the other hand, in spite of all their worship and good deeds, they are so filled with the fear of the torment of Hell that they pray to their Lord to save them from it, for they do not depend upon their own work for success in the Hereafter but upon the mercy of Allah.

67. And those who when they spend are neither extravagant, nor miserly, and between those (two extremes) there is a medium (way).*83

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا
وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ
ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا

*83 The true servants of Allah adopt the golden mean between the two extremes in spending their money. They neither go beyond prudence and necessity in expenditure nor live in wretched circumstances in order to save and

hoard money but are frugal. This was the characteristic of the followers of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which distinguished them from the well-to-do people of Arabia, who were either spend thrifts in regard to the gratification of their own lusts or niggardly in spending their money on good works.

According to Islam extravagance is:

(1) To spend even the smallest amount of money in unlawful ways.

(2) To go beyond one's own resources in expenditure even in lawful ways, or to spend money for one's own pleasure.

(3) To spend money in righteous ways not for the sake of Allah but for mere show. On the other hand, one is miserly if one does not spend money for his own needs and requirements and those of his family in accordance with his resources and position, or if one does not spend money for good works. The way taught by Islam is the golden mean between the two extremes. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: It is a sign of wisdom to adopt the golden mean in one's living. (Ahmad, Tabarani).

68. And those who do not call upon along with Allah any other god, nor kill a soul, which Allah has forbidden, except in (course of) justice, nor commit adultery.^{*84} And he who does this shall meet the penalty.

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَدْعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ
إِلَهًا ءَاخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُونَ النَّفْسَ
الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا
يَزْنُونَ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ يَلْقَ
أَثَامًا

***84** The true servants refrain from three great sins: shirk, murder and adultery. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself warned of their gravity. According to Abdullah bin Masud, when someone asked him about the worst sins, he replied,

(1) It is to set up someone as equal in rank with Allah, Who has created you.

(2) To kill your own child for fear of its sustenance.

(3) To commit adultery with the wife of your neighbor. (Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmizi, Nasai, Ahmad). Obviously this is not a complete list of the heinous sins. But these three instances have been cited because they were most prevalent in the Arab society of those days.

As regards to the inclusion of refraining from shirk among the excellences of the true servants, one may ask why it should be presented as virtue before the disbelievers who did not regard shirk as a vice. It is because the Arabs had doubts about the doctrine of shirk even though they appeared to be deeply involved in it. This is amply supported by their history. For instance, when Abraha invaded Makkah, the Quraish did not invoke their idols to save the Kabah from him, but they begged Allah to save it. Their contemporary poetry bears sufficient evidence that they regarded the destruction of the people of the elephant due to Allah's power and supernatural interference and not due to any help of their idols. The Quraish and the polytheists of Arabia had also come to know that when Abraha reached Taif on his way to Makkah, the people of Taif had offered him their services to destroy the Kabah

and had even provided him guides to take him safely to Makkah through the hills, for fear that he might also destroy the temple of Lat, their chief deity. This event so much offended the Arabs that for years after this they continued pelting the grave of the chief guide with stones for retaliation. Moreover, the Quraish and the other Arabs attributed their creed to Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and looked upon their religious and social customs and their Hajj rites as part of Abraham's religion. They knew that Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) was a worshiper of Allah and not of idols. They also had traditions to show as to when they had started idol worship, and which idol had been brought from where, when and by whom. The fact is that the common Arab did not have much of reverence for his idols. He would even speak insultingly of it and withheld his offerings when it failed to fulfill his wishes and prayers. For instance, there is the story of an Arab who wanted to avenge the murder of his father. He went to the temple of his idol, Zul-Khalasah, and wanted to take an omen. The response came that he should abandon his intention. At this the Arab became furious and cried out: O Zul-Khalasah! Had you been in my place, and your father was murdered, you would not have said that the murderers should not be punished. Another Arab took his herd of camels to the shrine of his god, named Saad, for seeking its blessings. It was a tall idol which had been smeared with sacrificial blood. On seeing it, the camels became terrified and started running in all directions. The Arab was so filled with rage that he started pelting the idol

with stones, shouting: May God destroy you. I had come to you to seek blessings for my camels, but you have deprived me of all of them. There were certain idols about whose origin filthy stories were current. For instance, the story about Asaf and Nailah whose images had been placed at Safa and Marwa, was that they were actually a man and a woman, who had committed adultery inside the Holy Kabah and had been turned into stone by God as a punishment. When the deities had such reputation, no worshiper could cherish any reverence for them in his heart. From this one can easily understand that the Arabs did recognize the value of true God worship deep in their hearts, but, on the one hand, it had been suppressed by ancient customs and ways of ignorance, and on the other, the priestly class among the Quraish had vested interests, who were busy creating prejudices against it among the people. They could not give up idol worship because such a step would have brought to an end to their supremacy in Arabia. That is why, refraining from shirk and worship of One Allah has been mentioned as a mark of superiority of the followers of the Prophet (peace be upon him) without any fear of contradiction by the disbelievers, for even they in their hearts knew that it was a weighty argument against them.

69. His punishment shall be doubled on the Day of Resurrection,^{*85} and he shall abide therein humiliated.

يُضَعَفُ لَهُ الْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ وَيَخْلُدُ فِيهِ مُهَانًا



***85** This can have two meanings:

(1) His punishment will never come to an end, but it will continue being inflicted relentlessly over and over again.

(2) the person who in addition to the sins of disbelief, shirk and atheism, would have committed murders, adultery and other sins, will get separate punishment for rebellion and for each other sin. He will be accountable for each of his major and minor sins none of which will be pardoned. For instance, for each murder and for each act of adultery he will be given a separate punishment, and likewise, there will be a separate punishment for every sin committed by him.

70. Except those who repent and believe and do righteous deeds,^{*86} then for those Allah will replace their evil deeds with good deeds. And Allah is Oft Forgiving, Merciful.

إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ
عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُولَئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ
اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ ۗ وَكَانَ
اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا



***86** This is a good news for those people who repented and reformed themselves, for they will have the benefit of the general amnesty contained in verse 70. This was regarded as a great blessing by the true servants because very few of those who embraced Islam had been free from those vices during their ignorance, and were terrified by the threat contained in verses 63-69, but this amnesty not only redeemed them but filled them with hope.

Many instances of such people, who sincerely repented and reformed their lives, have been related in the traditions.

For instance, Ibn Jarir and Tabarani have related an incident from Abu Hurairah, who says: One day when I returned home after offering the Isha prayer in the Prophet's (peace be upon him) Mosque, I saw a woman standing at my door. I saluted her and walked into my room, closed the door and busied myself in voluntary worship. After a while she knocked at the door. I opened the door and asked what she wanted. She said that she had come with a problem: She had committed *zina*, had become pregnant, given birth to a child and then killed it. She wanted to know if there was any chance of her sin being forgiven. I replied in the negative. She went back grief-stricken, exclaiming, Ah! this beautiful body was created for the fire! The next morning, after the prayer, when I related the night's incident before the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said: You gave a very wrong answer, Abu Hurairah: Haven't you read the Quranic verse which says: (Those) who do not invoke any deity other than Allah...except the one who may have repented (after those sins) and have believed and done righteous deeds? Hearing this from the Prophet (peace be upon him), I went out in search of the woman, and had her traced again at the Isha time. I gave her the good news and told her what the Prophet (peace be upon him) had said in reply to her question. She immediately fell prostrate on the ground and thanked Allah, Who had opened a way for her forgiveness. Then she offered repentance and set a slave-girl, along with her son, free. A similar incident about an old man has been related in the traditions. He came before the Prophet

(peace be upon him) and said: O Messenger of Allah, all my life has passed in sin, there is no sin which I have not committed; so much so that if my sins were to be distributed over the people of the whole world, they would all be doomed. Is there any way out for my forgiveness? The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him: Have you embraced Islam? He said: I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Messenger of Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Go back, Allah is All-Forgiving and has the power to change your evil deeds into good deeds. He asked: Is it about all my crimes and errors? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Yes, it is about all your crimes and errors. (Ibn Kathir).

71. And whoever^{*87} repents and does righteous deeds, then indeed, he repents towards Allah with true repentance.^{*88}

وَمَنْ تَابَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَإِنَّهُ
يَتُوبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَتَابًا



***87** It has two meanings:

(1) When he has repented sincerely, he will start a new life of belief and obedience to Allah and by His grace and help will start doing good deeds instead of evil deeds that he used to do in his life of unbelief, and his evil deeds will be replaced by good deeds.

(2) Not only will his evil deeds done in the past be written off, but it will also be recorded in his conduct register that he was the servant who gave up rebellion against his Lord and adopted the way of His obedience. Then, as he will feel

more and more sorry for his past sins and offer repentance, more and more good deeds will be credited to him. For repenting of one's wrong doing and seeking forgiveness is in itself a good deed. Thus, good deeds will supersede all his evil deeds in his conduct register, and he will not only escape punishment in the Hereafter but, in addition, he will also be blessed with high favors by Allah.

***88** That is, ultimately everyone has to return to Allah for Allah alone is man's last and real refuge. He alone can reward him for his good deeds or punish him for his evil deeds. He alone is All-Merciful and All Compassionate, Who receives the penitent with forgiveness and Who does not rebuke him for his past errors provided that he has repented sincerely, and adopted the right attitude and reformed himself.

72. And those who do not bear witness to falsehood^{*89} and when they pass by what is vain, pass by like dignified people.^{*90}

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ
وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا

***89** This also has two meanings:

(1) They do not give evidence (in the court of law etc.) in regard to a false thing in order to prove it right, when in fact it is a falsehood, or at best a doubtful thing.

(2) They have no intention to witness anything which is false, evil or wicked as spectators. In this sense, every sin and every indecency, every sham and counterfeit act is a falsehood. A true servant of Allah recognizes it as false and

shuns it even if it is presented in the seemingly beautiful forms of art.

***90** The Arabic word *laghv* implies all that is vain, useless and meaningless and it also covers falsehood. The true servants pass by in a dignified manner if they ever come across what is vain, as if it were a heap of filth. They do not stay there to enjoy the filth of moral impurity, obscenity or foul language, nor do they intentionally go anywhere to hear or see or take part in any sort of filth. For further details, see E.N. 4 of Surah Al-Mominoon.

73. And those, when they are reminded of the revelations of their Lord, do not fall at them deaf and blind.^{*91}

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا بِآيَاتِ
رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَسْمَعُوا عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا
وَعُمْيَانًا



***91** The true servants of Allah do not behave like the blind and the deaf towards the revelations of Allah, when they are recited to them for their admonition. They do not turn a deaf ear to their teachings and message and do not deliberately close their eyes to the signs that they are asked to observe, but are deeply moved by them. They follow and practice what they are enjoined and retrain from what is forbidden.

74. And those who say: “Our Lord, grant us among our wives and our children the comfort of our eyes,^{*92} and make us leaders for the

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا
مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا ذُرِّيَّتَنَا قُرَّةَ
أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

righteous.”*93



***92** The most distinctive characteristic of the true servants is their eagerness for prayer to Allah. In verse 65 their prayer for their own salvation and in verse 74 their prayer for their wives and children have been cited: Our Lord, make our wives and children true believers so that they should practice righteousness and become a source of comfort for us. Their prayer shows that the true servants of Allah are more concerned about the salvation of their beloved ones in the Hereafter than the enjoyment of the world.

It should be noted that this characteristic has been cited here to show that the true servants had sincerely believed in the message. That is why they were so concerned about the faith of their beloved ones. It should also be kept in mind that many of the near and dear ones of the believers had not as yet embraced Islam. If a husband had embraced Islam, the wife was still an unbeliever, and if a youth had accepted Islam, his parents and brothers and sisters were still involved in disbelief, and vice versa. Therefore, the true servants wept and prayed for them, whenever the picture of their horrible state in Hell came before their eyes.

***93** That is, we should excel in piety, righteousness and good works; nay, we should become the leaders of the pious people so that we may lead them in the propagation of virtue and piety in the world. Incidentally, this characteristic of the true servants was in great contrast to

that of the disbelievers, who strove in competition and rivalry with one another for superiority in worldly power and wealth. But it is a pity that some people in our time have misinterpreted this verse as containing sanction for seeking candidature for political leadership. According to them, the verse means: Our Lord, make us rulers over the pious people.

75. Such are those who will be rewarded with high palaces because of their patience.^{*94} And^{*95} they will be welcomed wherein with greetings and salutations.

أُولَئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ الْغُرْفَةَ بِمَا
صَبَرُوا وَيُلَقَّوْنَ فِيهَا تَحِيَّةً
وَسَلَامًا



***94** The word *sabr* (fortitude) has been used here in its most comprehensive sense. The true servants courageously endured their persecution by the enemies of the truth; they remained firm and steadfast in their struggle to establish Allah's way in the land. They carried out their duties enjoined by Allah sincerely and tearlessly without any concern for the worldly losses and deprivation, and they withstood all temptations held out by Satan and all the lusts of the flesh.

***95** *Ghurfa* is a high mansion and the word is generally used for the upper chamber of a two storey house. But the reality is that the highest buildings made by man in this world, even the Taj Mahal of India and the skyscrapers of New York, are not true imitation of the excellent abodes in Paradise. They are so magnificent, grand and beautiful that human imagination cannot form any picture of their

grandeur.

76. Abiding eternally therein, an excellent abode and resting place.

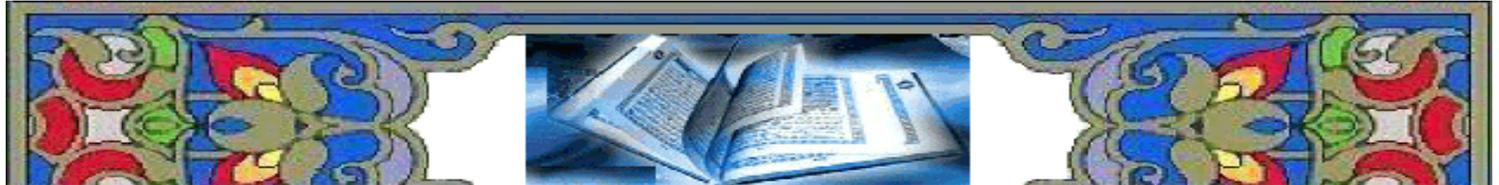
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا حَسُنَتْ
مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا

77. Say: "What would My Lord care for you if you do not invoke Him.*96 Then indeed, you have denied, so soon will be the inevitable (punishment)."

قُلْ مَا يَعْبُؤُا بِكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا
دُعَاؤُكُمْ فَلَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ
يَكُونُ لِيَزَامَا

*96 This warning to the disbelievers has been given in order to contrast it with the great rewards that have been promised to the true servants of Allah, as if to say: If you do not invoke Allah for help and protection, and do not worship Him, you will have no value and importance in His sight, and He will not care at all for you because He does not stand in need of any help from you. It is indeed for your own sake that He has given you the opportunity to invoke Him so that He may turn in mercy towards you; otherwise there is no difference between you and the rest of creation.





الشُّعْرَا Ash-Shuara

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from verse 224 in which the word *Ash-Shuara* occurs.

Period of Revelation

The subject matter and the style show, and the traditions confirm, that it was revealed during the middle Makkan period. According to Ibn Abbas, Surah TaHa was revealed first, then Surah Al-Waqiah, and then Surah Ash-Shuara. (Ruh-ul-Maani, Vol. xx, p. 64). About Surah TaHa it is well known that it had been revealed before Umar embraced Islam.

Subject Matter and Topics

The background of the Surah is that the disbelievers of Makkah were persistently refusing, on one pretext or the other, to accept the message of Islam given by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Sometimes they would say that he did not show them any sign to convince them of his Prophethood; sometimes they would brand him as a poet or a sorcerer and mock his message; and sometimes they would ridicule his mission, saying that his followers were

either a few foolish youth, or the poor people and slaves. Whereas, they argued, if his mission had really some value for the people, the nobles and the elders would have accepted it first. Thus, while on the one hand, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was becoming wearied by his efforts to show them rationally the errors of their creeds and prove the truth of the doctrines of Tauhid and the Hereafter. The disbelievers, on the other hand, were never tired of adopting any kind of obduracy one after the other. This state of affairs was causing great anguish and grief to the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Such were the conditions when this Surah was revealed. It begins with words of consolation to the Prophet (peace be upon him), implying: Why do you fret for their sake? If these people have not believed in you, it is not because they have not seen any sign, but because they are obdurate. They will not listen to reason, they want to see a sign which makes them bow their heads in humility. When this sign is shown in due course of time, they will themselves realize that what was being presented to them was the truth.

After this introduction, up to verse 191, one and the same theme has been presented continuously, and it is said: The whole earth abounds in such signs as can guide a seeker after truth to reality, but the stubborn and misguided people have never believed even after seeing the signs, whether these were the signs of the natural phenomena or the miracles of the Prophets. These wretched people have stubbornly adhered to their erroneous creeds till the divine scourge actually overtook them. It is to illustrate this that

the history of seven of the ancient tribes has been told, who persisted in disbelief just like the disbelievers of Makkah. In this connection, the following points have been stressed:

1. The signs are of two kinds: (a) Those which are scattered all over the earth, and by seeing which an intelligent person can judge for himself whether what the Prophet is presenting is the truth or not, and (b) those which were seen by Pharaoh and his people, Noah's people, the Aad and the Thamud, Lot's people and the people of Aiykah. Now it is for the disbelievers to decide which kind of the signs they are eager to see.

2. The mentality of the disbeliever has been the same throughout the ages. Their arguments and their objections, and their excuses and subterfuges for not believing have been similar and ultimately the fate, they met with, has also been the same. Likewise, the Prophets in every age presented the same teachings, their personal character and their reasoning and arguments against their opponents were the same, and they were all similarly blessed with mercy by Allah Almighty. Both these patterns of behavior and conduct are found in history, and the disbelievers could themselves see as to which respective patterns they and the Prophet (peace be upon him) belonged to.

3. Allah is All Mighty, All Powerful and All Merciful at the same time. History contains instances of His Wrath as well as of His Mercy. Now, therefore, it is for the people to decide whether they would like to deserve Allah's Mercy or His Wrath.

4. Lastly, the discussion has been summed up, saying: O

disbelievers, if at all you want to see the signs, why should you insist on seeing those horrible signs that visited the doomed communities of the past? Why don't you see the Quran which is being presented in your own language? Why don't you see Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions? Can the revelations of the Quran be the work of a Satan or a jinn? Does the recipient of the Quran appear to be a sorcerer? Are Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions no different from a poet and his admirers? Why don't you give up disbelief and search your hearts for their judgment? When in your hearts you yourselves believe that the revelations of the Quran have nothing in common with sorcery and poetry, then you should know that you are being cruel and unjust, and will certainly meet the doom meant for the cruel and unjust.

1. Ta. Sin. Mim.



2. These are the verses of the manifest Book.*1



*1 That is, the verses being presented in this Surah are of that Book, which presents and explains its subject-matter clearly and plainly so that every reader and listener may easily understand what it invites to, what it enjoins and what it forbids, and what it regards as true and what as false. To believe or not to believe is a different matter; but no one can have the excuse that he could not understand the teachings of the Book and its injunctions and prohibitions.

Al-Kitab-ul-Mubin also has the meaning that the Quran is,

beyond any doubt, a divine Book. Its language, its diction and themes, the facts presented by it and the background of its revelations, all testify to the fact that this is indeed the Book of the Master of all Creation. In this sense, its every sentence is a sign and a miracle. As such, any person who has common sense has no need of any other sign than the verses of this Book for believing in the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him).

This brief introductory sentence, which covers both these meanings, has a close connection with the subject-matter of this Surah. The disbelievers of Makkah demanded a miracle from the Prophet (peace be upon him) so as to be convinced that the message he gave was really from Allah. In answer to that, it has been said that if someone really wanted a sign for believing in the Prophet (peace be upon him), he should study the verses of this Book. Then, the disbelievers accused the Prophet (peace be upon him) of being a sorcerer. This charge has been refuted by saying that the Quran has nothing ambiguous or mysterious in it; but it plainly puts forward all of its teachings which cannot be the creation of a poet or a sorcerer's imagination.

3. Perhaps you (O Muhammad) would kill yourself with grief that they will not be believers.*2

لَعَلَّكَ بِنَجْعِ نَفْسِكَ إِلَّا يَكُونُوا
مُؤْمِنِينَ

*2 The words *bakhiun-nafsaka* literally mean: You would kill yourself. The verse in fact describes the extreme anguish, anxiety and grief of the Prophet (peace be upon him) over the Makkan disbelievers' ways of deviation,

moral degradation, and obduracy and opposition to his message of reform. Sometimes it seemed as if his grief and mental suffering for their sake would cause his death. This state of the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been referred to at other places in the Quran as well, for instance in Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 6, thus: Well, O Muhammad, it may be that you will consume your life for their sake out of sorrow if they do not believe in this message. And in Surah Al-Fatir, Ayat 8, thus: Let not your life be consumed in grief for their sake.

4. If We willed, We could send down to them from the heaven a sign, so their necks would remain bowed down before it.*³

إِنْ نَّشَاءُ نُنزِلُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
آيَةً فَظَلَّتْ أَعْنَاقُهُمْ لَهَا

خَاضِعِينَ

*³ That is, it is not at all difficult for Allah to send down a sign which would make all the disbelievers yield and submit. If, however, He does not send one, it does not mean that such a thing is beyond His powers, but the reason is that the belief under compulsion is not acceptable to Him. Allah wants that people should use their common-sense and recognize the truth through the verses of the divine Book and the signs which are scattered all over the universe and are found even in their own selves. Then, when their hearts are satisfied that the message of the Prophets contains the truth, and the beliefs and the creeds which are opposed to it, are false, they should willingly give up falsehood and adopt the truth. This voluntary belief, acceptance of the

truth and rejection of falsehood, is what Allah demands from man. It is for this reason that Allah has bestowed upon man choice and free will, and freedom to follow any way, right or wrong, that he pleases. For the same reason He has placed in his nature both the tendencies, towards good and towards evil, and opened up before him both the ways, to piety and to sin. For the same purpose He has given Satan the freedom and respite to mislead him and has made arrangements of Prophethood, revelation and invitation to goodness to guide him to the right way, and has placed man on trial to see whether he adopts the way of belief and obedience or of disbelief and sin. On the other hand, if Allah had adopted a method of coercing people to believe and obey, it would have defeated the very purpose of the trial and test. Then there was no need to send down the signs for the purpose, but He would have created man with a pure nature, without any inclination for evil, disbelief and sin, and made him obedient by birth like the angels. This has been referred at several places in the Quran, for instance in Surah Yunus, Ayat 99: Had your Lord willed, all the dwellers of the earth would have believed in Him. And in Surah Houd, Ayat 118: Your Lord could have made mankind one community had He so willed, but now they will continue to follow different ways, but only those on whom Allah has His mercy (escape wrong ways). It will be so because He has created them for this (very freedom of choice and action). For further explanation, see E.Ns 101,102 of Surah Yunus and E.N. 116 of Surah Houd.

5. And does not come to them any newly-revealed reminder from the Beneficent, except they turn away from it.

وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرٍ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ
مُحَدَّثٍ إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهُ مُعْرِضِينَ



6. So certainly they have denied, then will come to them the news of what they used to ridicule at.*4

فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوا فَسَيَأْتِيهِمْ أَنْبَاءُ مَا
كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ



*4 That is, the people who show lack of feeling and interest for every rational attempt made to bring them to the right way, cannot be made to believe forcibly by sending down signs from heaven. They only deserve to be shown their evil end after they have been duly warned and shown guidance, which they not only treated with indifference but rejected scornfully. This evil end can be shown to them in several ways.

(1) The truth which they have bitterly opposed and scoffed at should prevail in the world in front of their very eyes in spite of their antagonism.

(2) They should be visited by a painful torment and eliminated from the world.

(3) After a few years of misguided life they should meet death and see for themselves that what they had been following whole heartedly throughout their lives was nothing but falsehood and what the Prophets had been presenting was the very truth, which they had been scoffing at. Thus the evil end can take place differently for different

people as it happened in the past.

7. Have they not seen at the earth, how much We make to grow therein of every good kind.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الْأَرْضِ كَمْ أَنْبَتْنَا
فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿٧﴾

8. Indeed, in that is surely a sign.^{*5} And most of them are not believers.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً ^ط وَمَا كَانَ
أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨﴾

***5** That is, the seeker after truth does not have to look far for a sign. If only he sees with open eyes the phenomena of vegetation around him, he will be able to judge for himself whether the reality about the system of the world (i.e. Tauhid) which was being presented by the Prophets is true or the speculations of the polytheists and atheists. From the variety and abundance of creation found on the earth, the various elements and factors supporting it, the laws of nature causing it to grow and flourish, and the accord and harmony existing between its characteristics and the countless needs and demands of innumerable creatures, only a fool will conclude that all this is happening automatically without the wisdom, knowledge, power and design of an All-Mighty, All-Powerful Creator. Obviously, many masters and gods could not have by any device arranged and produced the perfect harmony and accord between the soil, the sun and the moon, and the animal and plant life produced with their help and the needs of a great variety of creatures living on the earth. A sensible person, unless he is prejudiced and biased, cannot help feeling

convinced that these are the clear signs and proofs of the existence of One God, and there is no further need of a miracle to convince him of the reality of Tauhid.

9. And indeed, your Lord, He surely is the All Mighty, the Merciful.*6

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

*6 That is, He has the power and ability to annihilate completely anyone whom He wills to punish, but it is His mercy that He does not hasten to punish the wrong-doer, but gives him respite for years and centuries to allow him time to think, understand and mend his ways, and is ever ready to forgive the sins of a lifetime if the sinner offers repentance but once.

10. And when your Lord called Moses,*7 (saying) that: "Go to the wrongdoing people."

وَإِذْ نَادَى رَبُّكَ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ ائْتِ الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

*7 After a brief introduction, historical events have been presented beginning with the story of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and Pharaoh, and attention has been drawn specifically to the following points:

(1) The conditions under which Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had to work were much harsher and more severe than those faced by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Prophet Moses belonged to a slave community very much suppressed by Pharaoh and his people. In contrast to them, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was a member of the clan of Quraish and his family enjoyed an equal status with the other clans. Then Prophet

Moses (peace be upon him) had been bred and brought up in the house of Pharaoh and after remaining a fugitive for ten years due to a charge of murder, he was commanded to go before the same king from whom he had fled for life. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not have to face any such situation. Then the empire of Pharaoh was the most extensive and powerful empire of the time and the meager power of the Quraish had no comparison with it. In spite of that Pharaoh could not do any harm to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and ultimately perished in the conflict. From this Allah wanted the Quraish to learn this lesson: None can defeat the one who has Allah to help him? When Pharaoh with all his might became helpless against Moses (peace be upon him), how can you, O poor Quraish, succeed against Muhammad (peace be upon him)?

(2) There could not be clearer and more manifest signs (miracles) than those which were shown to Pharaoh through Moses (peace be upon him). Then in an open contest with the magicians before a gathering of hundreds of thousands of people to meet the challenge of Pharaoh himself, it had been conclusively demonstrated that what was presented by Moses (peace be upon him), was not magic. The skillful magicians who were themselves Egyptians and had been summoned by Pharaoh himself bore witness to the fact that turning of Moses' (peace be upon him) staff into a serpent was a real change of nature, which could only happen through a divine miracle, and not by any trick of magic. Then the magicians' believing in Moses (peace be upon him) immediately, even at the risk of

life, proved beyond any doubt that the sign presented by Moses (peace be upon him) was a miracle and not magic. Yet the disbelievers were not inclined to believe in the Prophet (peace be upon him). Now how can you, O Quraish, say that you will believe only when you are shown a perceptible miracle and a physical sign? As a matter of fact, if a person is free from prejudice, false sense of prestige and vested interest, and has an open mind to appreciate the distinction between truth and falsehood, and is prepared to give up falsehood for the truth, he does not stand in need of any other signs than those found in this Book, in the life of the one presenting it and in the vast universe around him. On the contrary, an obstinate person, who is not interested in the truth, and who because of selfish motives is determined not to recognize and accept any such truth as may clash with his interests, will not be prepared to believe after seeing any sign whatsoever, even if the earth and the heaven are turned upside down in front of his eyes.

(3) The tragic end of such obstinacy as met by Pharaoh is not something for which other people should become so impatient. Those who do not believe even after seeing with their own eyes the signs of divine power have inevitably to meet a similar fate. Therefore, instead of learning a lesson why do you insist on seeing such a dreadful sign? For comparison, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 103-137; Surah Yunus, Ayats 75-92; Surah Bani Israil, Ayats 101-104; and Surah Ta Ha, Ayats 9-79.

11. “The people of Pharaoh.*⁸ Will they not fear (Allah).”^{*9}

قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَلَا يَتَّقُونَ

*⁸ The epithet of the wicked people describes the extremely wicked character of the people of Pharaoh.

*⁹ That is, O Moses! Just see how these people are perpetrating crime and injustice presuming that they are all-powerful in the land having no fear of God, Who will call them to account in the Hereafter.

12. He said: “My Lord, indeed, I fear that they will deny me.”

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُكَذِّبُونِ

13. “And my breast straitens, and my tongue expresses not well, so send unto Aaron.”^{*10}

وَيَضِيقُ صَدْرِي وَلَا يَنْطَلِقُ لِسَانِي فَأَرْسِلْ إِلَىٰ هَارُونَ

*¹⁰ The sentence, “My breast straitens”, shows that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was somewhat hesitant of going alone on such a difficult mission, and also had the feeling that he was not eloquent in speech. That is why he begged Allah to appoint Aaron too, as messenger to assist him who, being more vigorous in speech, could support and strengthen him as and when the need arose. It is just possible that in the beginning, the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) might have begged that Aaron be appointed to Prophethood instead of him, but later when he felt that Allah willed him to be appointed to that position, he might have appealed that Aaron should at least be made his

counselor and assistant. We say this because here Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) is not praying for Aaron to be made his counselor, but says: Appoint Aaron to Prophethood. On the other hand, in Surah Ta Ha, he says: Appoint for me a counselor from my family, (let it be) my brother Aaron. Then in Surah Al-Qasas, he says: My brother Aaron is more vigorous in speech than myself, so send him as an assistant with me to confirm (and support) me. From this it appears that these two requests were made later, but originally Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had begged Allah to appoint Aaron to Prophethood instead of himself.

The Bible has a different story to tell. According to it, Prophet Moses, fearing that he would be rejected by the people of Pharaoh, and putting forward the excuse of his faltering speech, had declined to accept his appointment to prophethood on the pretext that he lacked vigor and eloquence in speech: O my, Lord, send, I pray Thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. (Exodus, 4: 13), Then Allah, of His own will, appointed Aaron to be his assistant and persuaded them: to go together before Pharaoh. (Exodus, 4: 1-13). For further details, see E.N. 19 of Ta Ha.

14. “And they have against me a (claim of) sin, so I fear that they will kill me.”*11

وَهُمْ عَلَيَّ ذَنْبٌ فَأَخَافُ أَنْ
يَقْتُلُونِ



*11 The allusion is to the incident of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) giving a blow to an Egyptian, who was fighting with an Israelite, and thus causing his death. Then

as soon as Moses came to know that the report had reached Pharaoh and his people and they were planning to take revenge, he fled the country and took refuge in Midian. (See Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 15-21). Now when after a period of almost ten years of hiding he was suddenly called upon and commanded to go before Pharaoh, who had already a charge of murder against him, with the message, Prophet Moses rightly felt apprehensive that he would immediately be involved in the murder case even before he was able to convey the message as commanded by Allah.

15. He (Allah) said: “No, so go you both with Our signs.*¹² Indeed, We are with you, listening.”

قَالَ كَلَّا فَاذْهَبَا بِعَايَتِنَا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُسْتَمِعُونَ

*¹² Here the signs meant the miracles of the staff and the shining hand, which were given to Moses. For details see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 106-117; Surah Ta Ha, Ayats 17-23; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 7-14; and Surah Al-Qasas; Ayats 31-32).

16. So go to Pharaoh and say: “Indeed, we are messengers of the Lord of the worlds.”

فَاتِيَا فِرْعَوْنَ فَقُولَا إِنَّا رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

17. “That, send with us the Children of Israel.”*¹³

أَنْ أَرْسِلَ مَعَنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

*¹³ The mission of the Prophets Moses and Aaron (peace be upon them) was twofold: First, to invite Pharaoh to the

worship and obedience of Allah which has been the foremost aim of the mission of every Prophet, and secondly, to liberate the Israelites from the bondage of Pharaoh, which was specifically assigned to them. The Quran has mentioned sometimes only the first part of their mission (as in Surah An-Naziat) and sometimes only the second.

18. He (Pharaoh) said: “Did we not bring you up among us as a child,^{*14} and you did dwell among us many years of your life.”

قَالَ أَلَمْ نُرَبِّكَ فِيْنَا وَلِيدًا
وَلَبَّثْتَ فِيْنَا مِنْ عُمُرِكَ سِنِينَ



***14** This remark of Pharaoh shows that he was not the same Pharaoh who had brought up Moses in his house, but his son. Had he been the same Pharaoh, he would have said, “I brought you up.” But, on the contrary, he says, “You were brought up among ourselves.” For a detailed discussion, see E.Ns 85-93 of Surah Al-Aaraf.

19. “And then you did your deed, which you did.^{*15} And you were of the ingrates.”

وَفَعَلْتَ فَعَلْتِكَ الَّتِي فَعَلْتَ وَأَنْتَ
مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ



***15** The allusion is to the incident of murder committed by Moses accidentally.

20. He (Moses) said: “I did it then, while I was of those who are astray.”^{*16}

قَالَ فَعَلْتُهَا إِذَا وَأَنَا مِنْ
الضَّالِّينَ



***16** The word *dalalat* does not always mean straying away,

but it is also used in the sense of ignorance, folly, error, forgetfulness, inadvertence, etc. As mentioned in Surah Al-Qasas, Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had only given a blow to the Egyptian (Copt) when he saw him beating an Israelite cruelly. A blow does not cause death, nor is it given with the intention of causing death. It was only an accident that the Egyptian died. As such, it was not a case of deliberate murder but of accidental murder. A murder was committed but not intentionally, nor was any weapon used, which is usually employed for murder, or which can cause murder.

21. “Then I fled from you when I feared you. Then my Lord granted me judgment (wisdom)^{*17} and appointed me (as one) of the messengers.”

فَفَرَرْتُ مِنْكُمْ لَمَّا خِفْتُكُمْ
فَوَهَبَ لِي رَبِّي حُكْمًا وَجَعَلَنِي
مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٢١﴾

*17 The word *hukm* means wisdom, knowledge or authority, which is granted by Allah to a Prophet so that he may speak with confidence and power.

22. “And this is the favor with which you reproach me, that you have enslaved the Children of Israel.”^{*18}

وَتِلْكَ نِعْمَةٌ تَمُنُّهَا عَلَيَّ أَنْ
عَبَدْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿٢٢﴾

*18 That is, if you had not been unjust and cruel to the Israelites. I should not have been brought to your house for upbringing. It was only on account of your barbarism that my mother put me in a basket and cast it into the river. Had it not been so, I should have been happily brought up

in my own house. Therefore, it does not behoove you to remind me of your favor of bringing me up in your house.

23. Pharaoh said: ^{*19} “And what is Lord of the worlds.” ^{*20}

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ



***19** Here the details that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) went before Pharaoh as the Messenger of the Lord of the universe and conveyed to him His message, have been omitted, and only the conversation that took place between them has been related.

***20** This question of Pharaoh concerned the assertion of Moses (peace be upon him) that he had been sent by the Lord, Master and Ruler of all Creation with the message that he should let the Israelites go with him. This was a political message. It implied that the One, Whom Moses claimed to represent, possessed authority and sovereign rights over all the people of the world including Pharaoh and that he was not only encroaching upon his sphere of sovereignty as Supreme Ruler, but was also sending him the command that he should hand over a section of his subjects to the representative appointed by Him, so that he should take them out of his kingdom. That is why Pharaoh asked: Who is this Master and Ruler of all Creation who is sending such a command to the king of Egypt through an ordinary subject of his kingdom?

24. He (Moses) said: “Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between

قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ مُوقِنِينَ

them, if you should be convinced.”*21



*21 That is, I have not been sent by any mortal king ruling in the world, but I come from Him Who is the Owner of the heavens and the earth. If you believe that, there is a Creator and Master and Ruler of this universe, it should not be difficult for you to understand who is the Lord of all Creation.

25. He (Pharaoh) said to those around him: “Do you not hear.”

قَالَ لِمَنْ حَوْلَهُ أَلَا تَسْتَبْعُونَ



26. He (Moses) said: “Your Lord and Lord of your forefathers, gone before.”*22

قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ

الْأَوَّلِينَ

*22 These words were addressed to the chiefs of Pharaoh, whom he had asked: Do you hear? Prophet Moses said: I do not believe in the false gods who exist today, but did not exist yesterday, or who existed yesterday but do not exist today. This Pharaoh, whom you worship as your lord today, did not exist yesterday, and the Pharaohs whom your elders worshiped yesterday, do not exist today; whereas I believe in the sovereignty and authority of that Lord Who is both your Lord and Pharaoh’s Lord as much today as He was your elders’ Lord before this.

27. He (Pharaoh) said: “Indeed, your messenger who has been sent to you is surely

قَالَ إِنَّ رَسُولَكُمْ الَّذِي أُرْسِلَ

a madman.”

إِلَيْكُمْ لَمَجْنُونٌ ﴿٢٧﴾

28. He (Moses) said: “Lord of the east and the west and whatever is between them, if you should understand.”*23

قَالَ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَمَا
بَيْنَهُمَا إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

*23 That is, You regard me as a mad person, but if you think you are wise people, you should yourself decide as to who is the real lord: this wretched Pharaoh who is ruling over a small piece of earth, or He Who is the Owner of the east and the west and of everything bounded by the east and the west including the land of Egypt. I believe in His sovereignty alone and have been sent to convey His message to a creature of His.

29. He (Pharaoh) said: “If you take a god other than me, I will certainly put you among those imprisoned.”*24

قَالَ لَئِن آتَّخَذتَ إِلَهًا غَيْرِي
لَأَجْعَلَنَّكَ مِنَ الْمَسْجُونِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

*24 To understated and appreciate this conversation fully, one should bear in mind the fact that as it is today, in the ancient times too, the concept of deity was confined to its religious sense only. The deity was meant to be worshiped and presented offerings and gifts, and because of its supernatural powers and authority the people were to pray to it for help and fulfillment of their desires. But a deity's being supreme legally and politically also and his right to

enjoin anything he pleased in the mundane affairs and man's duty to submit to his commands as to superior law, has never been recognized by the so-called worldly rulers. They have always claimed that in the mundane affairs, they alone possess absolute authority and no deity has any right to interfere in the polity and law prescribed by them. This very thing has been the real cause of the conflict between the Prophets and their righteous followers, on the one hand, and the worldly kingdoms and governments on the other. The Prophets have been trying their utmost to make the worldly rulers acknowledge the sovereign and absolute rights of the Lord of the Worlds, but they in return have not only been claiming sovereign powers and rights for themselves, but have been considering every such person as a criminal and rebel, who has held someone else as a deity in the political and legal sphere. With this background one can easily understand the real significance of Pharaoh's words. Had it been a question of mere worship and offerings, he would have least bothered that Moses (peace be upon him), forsaking all gods, regarded only Allah, the Lord of all Creation, as worthy of those rights. If Moses (peace be upon him) had invited him to serve Allah alone, he would not have felt provoked and offended. At the most he would have refused to give up the creed of his forefathers, or would have challenged Moses (peace be upon him) to have a debate with his own religious scholars. But what caused him provocation was that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was presenting himself as the representative of the Lord of all Creation and was

conveying to him a political command as if he was a subordinate ruler and the representative of the superior authority was demanding obedience from him to the command. In this sense, he was not prepared to acknowledge any other political or legal authority, nor allow any of his subjects to acknowledge anybody instead of himself as the supreme ruler. That is why he challenged the term “Lord of all Creation”, for the message sent by Him clearly reflected sovereignty in the political and not in the mere religious sense. Then, when Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) explained over and over again what he meant by the Lord of all Creation, Pharaoh threatened that if he held anyone other than him as sovereign in the land of Egypt, he would be cast into prison.

30. He (Moses) said:
“Even if I bring you of
something manifest.”*25

قَالَ أَوْلَوْ جِئْتُكَ بِشَيْءٍ مُّبِينٍ



*25 That is, will you still deny me and send me to prison, even if I present a convincing sign to prove that I am really the Messenger of God, Who is Lord of all Creation , Lord of the heavens and the earth and Lord of the east and the west?

31. He (Pharaoh) said:
“Then bring it, if you are of
the truthful.”*26

قَالَ فَأْتِ بِهِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ

الصّٰدِقِيْنَ

*26 This reply of Pharaoh shows that he was not in any way different from the common polytheists of the ancient and

modern times. Like all other polytheists, he believed in Allah's being the highest Deity in the supernatural sense. Who wielded greater power and authority than all other gods and goddesses. That is why Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) said to him: If you do not believe that I have been appointed by Allah, I can present such clear signs as will prove that I have really been sent by Him. And that is why Pharaoh said: If you are true in your claim, come out with your sign, otherwise if he had any doubt about the existence of Allah or His being Master of the universe, he would not have asked for the sign.

32. So he (Moses) threw his staff, then behold it was a serpent manifest.*27

فَالْقَىٰ عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ

مُبِينٌ

*27 *Thuban* means a serpent. At other places, the Quran has used *hayyatun* (snake) and *jaann* (a small snake) to describe the snake of the staff. The interpretation given by Imam Razi is that the snake of the staff looked like a serpent from its big size and has been called *jaann* on account of its swift movement which is characteristic of small snakes.

33. And he drew out his hand, then behold it was white to the beholders.*28

وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ

لِلنَّظِرِينَ

*28 Some commentators under the influence of the Israelite traditions have translated *baida* as white and have taken it to mean that the healthy hand when drawn out of the

armpit became white as if struck by leprosy. But commentators like Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Zamakhshari, Razi, Abul Saud Imadi, Alusi and others agree that *baida* here means shining and bright. As soon as Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) took his hand out from the armpit, it made the whole place bright as if by the sun. For further explanation, see E.N. 13 of Ta Ha.

34. He (Pharaoh) said to the chiefs around him: “Indeed, this is a well-versed sorcerer.”

قَالَ لِلْمَلَإِ حَوْلَهُ إِنَّ هَذَا
لَسَاحِرٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

35. “He wants that he drives you out of your land by his sorcery,^{*29} then what do you command.”^{*30}

يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَكُم مِّنْ
أَرْضِكُمْ بِسِحْرِهِ فَمَاذَا
تَأْمُرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

***29** The impact of the two miracles can be judged from the fact that a moment before this Pharaoh was calling Moses (peace be upon him) a mad man, because he had claimed to be a Prophet and had the boldness to openly demand release of the Israelites. He was also threatening Moses (peace be upon him) that if he took somebody else as Lord instead of him, he would cast him into the prison for life. But, after he had seen the signs, he became so terror-stricken that he felt his kingdom to be at stake, and in his confusion he did not realize that he was talking meaninglessly to his servants in the court. Two men from the oppressed community of the Israelites were standing

before the most powerful ruler of the time. They had no military force with them, they belonged to a weak and lifeless community, and there was no sign of any rebellion in any corner of the country, nor did they have the support of any foreign power, yet as soon as the miracles of the snake of the staff and the shining hand were shown, the tyrant desperately cried out: These two men want to seize power and deprive the ruling class of their sovereign rights! His apprehension that Moses (peace be upon him) would do so by force of his magic again reflected a confused state of mind, for nowhere in the world has a political revolution been ever brought about, nor a country taken, nor a war won merely by force of magic. There were many magicians in Egypt, who could perform masterly tricks of magic, but Pharaoh knew it well that they were nonentities because they performed magic only for the sake of rewards.

*30 This sentence further shows Pharaoh's perplexed state of mind. A moment before he was the deity of his courtiers and, now, struck by awe, the deity is asking his servants as to what he should do to meet the dangerous situation.

36. They said: "Put him off and his brother, and send into the cities summoners."

قَالُوا أَرْجِهْ وَأَخَاهُ وَأَبْعَثْ فِي
الْمَدَائِنِ حَاشِرِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

37. "Who shall bring to you every well-versed sorcerer."

يَأْتُوكَ بِكُلِّ سَحَّارٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

38. So the sorcerers were assembled at a fixed time on a day appointed.*31

فَجُمِعَ السَّحَرَةُ لِمِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ



*31 As already mentioned in Surah TaHa (verse 59), the day fixed for the purpose was the day of the national festivities of the Egyptians so that large crowds of people coming to the festivals from every part of the country should also witness the grand contest which was to be held in the broad daylight so that the spectators could see the performances clearly.

39. And it was said to the people: “Are you (also) gathering.”*32

وَقِيلَ لِلنَّاسِ هَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُجْتَمِعُونَ



*32 That is, besides proclamation heralds were sent to urge the people to come and see the contest. It appears that the news of the miracle shown by Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) before the packed court had reached the common people also, and Pharaoh fearing that the people at large might be influenced, wanted that they should come together in large numbers so that they could see for themselves that turning a staff into a snake had nothing extraordinary in it because such a trick could be performed by every common magician of their own country as well.

40. “That perhaps we might follow the sorcerers if they are those who would be dominant.”*33

لَعَلَّنَا نَتَّبِعَ السَّحَرَةَ إِنْ كَانُوا هُمُ الْغَالِبِينَ



***33** This sentence confirms the idea that those who had witnessed the miracle of Moses (peace be upon him) in the royal court and those who had heard of it reliably outside were losing faith in their ancestral religion, and now the strength of their faith depended on this that their own magicians also should give a performance similar to that of Moses (peace be upon him). That is why Pharaoh and his chiefs themselves regarded this contest as a decisive one, and their heralds were busy moving about in the land, impressing on the people that if the magicians won the day, they would yet be secured against the risk of being won over to Moses' (peace be upon him) religion, otherwise there was every possibility of their creed being exposed and abandoned forever.

41. Then when the sorcerers arrived, they said to Pharaoh: "Will there indeed be for us a sure reward if we are the dominant."*34

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالُوا
لِفِرْعَوْنَ أَئِنَّا لَنَأَجْرًا إِن كُنَّا
نَحْنُ الْغَالِبِينَ



***34** Such was the mentality of the supporters of the polytheistic creed of the land, whose only ambition was to win rewards from the king if they won the day.

42. He said: "Yes, and indeed, you will then be of those brought near (to me)."*35

قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ إِذَا لَمِنَ
الْمُقَرَّبِينَ



***35** This was then the highest honor that the king could confer on those who served the creed best. Thus, at the very

outset, Pharaoh and his magicians manifested by their conduct the great moral distinction that exists between a Prophet and a magician. On the one side, there stood that embodiment of courage and confidence, who in spite of belonging to the suppressed community of the Israelites and having remained to hiding for ten long years on account of a charge of murder, had suddenly appeared in Pharaoh's court to proclaim fearlessly that he had been sent by the Lord of all Creation and demanded release of the Israelites.

He did not even feel the least hesitation in starting a discussion face to face with Pharaoh not caring in the least for his threats. On the other side, there were the wretched magicians wholly lacking in moral fiber, who had been summoned by Pharaoh himself to help secure the ancestral religion, and yet they were begging for rewards in return for the services. And when they are told that they will not only be given rewards but will also be included among the royal courtiers, they feel greatly overjoyed. These two types of characters clearly bring out the difference between the grand personality of a Prophet and that of a mere magician. Unless a man loses all senses of modesty and decency, he cannot have the audacity to call a Prophet a magician.

43. Moses said to them:
“Throw what you are going
to throw.”

قَالَ لَهُمْ مُوسَىٰ أَلْقُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ
مُلْقُونَ



44. So they threw down their ropes and their staffs and said: “By the might of Pharaoh, certainly it is we who will be the dominant.”*36

فَالْقَوَا حِبَاهُمْ وَعِصِيَّهُمْ
وَقَالُوا بَعِزَّةَ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّا لَنَحْنُ
الْغَالِبُونَ

*36 As soon as they cast down their cords and staffs, these started moving like so many snakes towards Moses. This has been described in greater detail at other places in the Quran. According to Surah Al-Araf, Ayat 116: When they threw down their devices, they bewitched the eyes of the people and terrified their hearts: for they had indeed produced a great magic. And according to Surah TaHa, Ayats 66, 67: Suddenly it so appeared to Moses that their cords and staffs were running about by the power of their magic, and Moses’ heart was filled with fear.

45. Then Moses threw his staff, then behold, it swallowed up that which they did falsely fake.

فَالْقَى مُوسَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ
تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ

46. Then did the sorcerers fall down in prostration.

فَالْقَى السَّحَرَةُ سَاجِدِينَ

47. They said: “We believe in the Lord of the worlds.”

قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

48. “The Lord of Moses and Aaron.”*37

رَبِّ مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ

*37 This was not merely an acknowledgment of their defeat at the hands of Moses (peace be upon him) as though he

was a greater magician, but their falling prostrate in submission to Allah, Lord of the universe, was an open declaration before thousands of Egyptians that what Moses (peace be upon him) had brought about was no magic at all, but a manifestation of the powers of Allah, Almighty.

49. He (Pharaoh) said: “You have believed in Him before that I give permission to you. Indeed, he is your chief, who has taught you magic.*³⁸ So surely you shall come to know. Surely, I will have your hands cut off and your feet of opposite sides, and surely I will have you crucified, all together.*³⁹

قَالَ ءَامَنْتُمْ لَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ ءَاذَنَ
لَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَكَبِيرُكُمُ الَّذِي
عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ فَلَسَوْفَ تَعْمُونَ
لَا تُقِطَعَنَّ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَرْجُلُكُمْ مِّنْ
خَلْفٍ ۖ وَأَلْصَبْنَكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

***38** This only shows the extreme obstinacy and obduracy of Pharaoh, who even after witnessing a clear miracle and the testimony of the magicians on it, was still insisting that it was magic. But according to Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 123, Pharaoh said: Indeed it was a plot you conspired in the capital to deprive the rightful owners of their power. Thus he tried to make the people believe that the magicians had yielded to Moses (peace be upon him) not because of the miracle but due to a conspiracy with Moses (peace be upon him) before they entered the contest, so that they might seize political power and enjoy its fruits together.

***39** This horrible threat was held out by Pharaoh to justify his thinking that the magicians had entered a conspiracy with Moses (peace be upon him). He thought that the magicians, in order to save their lives, would confess the plot and thus the effect produced by their falling prostrate and believing in Moses (peace be upon him) in front of thousands of spectators would be gone.

50. They said: “No matter. Indeed, to our Lord we shall return.”

قَالُوا لَا ضَيْرَ ^ص إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا
مُنْقَلِبُونَ

51. “Indeed, we hope that our Lord will forgive us our sins because we are the first of the believers.”^{*40}

إِنَّا نَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لَنَا رَبُّنَا
خَطِيئَتَنَا أَنْ كُنَّا أَوَّلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

***40** That is, we have to return to our Lord in any case. If you kill us now, we shall present ourselves before Him just today, and we have nothing to worry about this. We rather expect that we shall be forgiven our sins and errors because out of this entire gathering we were the first to believe as soon as reality became known to us.

This reply of the magicians made two things absolutely clear to the people who had been gathered together by Pharaoh heralds.

First, that Pharaoh was a dishonest obdurate and deceitful person. When he saw that Moses had come out successful in the contest which he himself had arranged to be decisive, he

concocted a plot and forced the magicians to confess it by coercion and threats. Had there been any truth in it, the magicians would not have readily offered to have their hands and feet cut off on opposite sides and get crucified. The fact that the magicians remained steadfast and firm in their belief, even in the face of such a horrible threat, proves that the accusation of plotting a conspiracy against Pharaoh was baseless. The fact was that the magicians being experts in their art had realized that what Moses (peace be upon him) had displayed was no magic, but surely a manifestation of the powers of Allah, Lord of the universe.

Secondly, thousands of the people who had gathered together from all corners of the land had themselves witnessed the great moral change that had occurred in the magicians as soon as they professed belief in the Lord of the universe. The same magicians who had been summoned to strengthen and secure the ancestral creed by means of their magic and who, a minute before, were humbly begging Pharaoh for rewards had now become so bold and ennobled spiritually that they would not take any notice of Pharaoh's powers and his threats and were even prepared to face death and extreme physical torture for the sake of their faith. Thus psychologically there could not be a better occasion to expose the polytheistic creed of the Egyptians in their own eyes and help impress the truth of Moses' (peace be upon him) religion in the minds of the people.

52. And We inspired to Moses that: ^{*41} "Travel by

﴿ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَن أَسْرِ ﴾

night with My slaves, indeed you will be pursued.”*42

بِعِبَادِي إِنَّكُمْ مُتَّبَعُونَ

*41 The mention of migration here does not mean that Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and the Israelites were immediately ordered to leave Egypt. The history of the intervening period has been related in Surah Al-Araf, Ayats 127-135 and Surah Yunus, Ayats 83-89, and a part of it has been mentioned in Surah Al-Momin, Ayats 23-46 and Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayat 46-56. Here the story is being cut short and only the final phase of the conflict between Pharaoh and Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) is given to show the tragic end of Pharaoh who had remained obdurate even after witnessing clear signs and the ultimate success of Moses (peace be upon him) who had divine support behind his message.

*42 The warning that “you will be pursued” shows the wisdom of the instruction to set off during the night. The idea was that before Pharaoh came out with his hosts to pursue them, they should have gone far enough so as to be out of reach of him. It should be borne in mind that the Israelites were not settled in one place in Egypt but were scattered in cities and habitations all over the country and lived in large numbers especially in the land between Memphis and Rameses called Goshen. It appears that when Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was commanded to leave Egypt, he must have sent instructions to the Israelite habitations telling the people to make necessary preparations for migration and he must have also fixed a night for them to leave their homes for the exodus.

53. Then Pharaoh sent into the cities summoners.

فَأَرْسَلَ فِرْعَوْنُ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ
حَاشِرِينَ

54. (Who said): “Indeed, these certainly are but a little troop.”

إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَشِرْذِمَةٌ قَلِيلُونَ

55. “And indeed, they are offenders against us.”

وَإِنَّهُمْ لَنَا لَغَائِظُونَ

56. “And indeed, we are a host who are always on guard.”*43

وَإِنَّا لَجَمِيعٌ حَادِرُونَ

*43 All this shows that Pharaoh in fact was terror-stricken, but was trying to hide his fear under cover of fearlessness. On the one hand, he was mobilizing forces to face the situation; and on the other hand, he wanted to show that he was undaunted and undeterred, for a despotic ruler like Pharaoh could have no danger from a suppressed and slave community which had been living in disgrace for centuries. That is why his heralds made the people believe that the Israelites were just a handful of people, who could do them no harm, but had to be punished for the provocation they had caused. As for mobilization it was only a precautionary measure which had been taken to meet any eventuality in time.

57. So We took them out from gardens and water springs.

فَأَخْرَجْنَاهُمْ مِّنْ جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ

58. And treasures and honorable place.*44

وَكَنُوزٍ وَمَقَامٍ كَرِيمٍ

*44 The general mobilization ordered by Pharaoh was aimed to crush the Israelites completely, but God's device turned the tables on him and drew out all his chiefs and courtiers from their dwelling places and drove them to the place where they and their hosts were to be drowned all together. Had they not pursued the Israelites, nothing would have happened save that a community would have left the country quietly and they would have continued to enjoy life in their fine dwellings as before. But they in fact had cleverly planned not to allow the Israelites go away peacefully, but to attack the migrating caravans suddenly to finish them completely. For this very purpose the princes and the high chiefs and the nobles came out of their palaces and joined Pharaoh in the campaign, but their cleverness did not avail them anything. Not only did the Israelites succeed in escaping from Egypt, but also at the same time the elite of Pharaoh's tyrannical kingdom perished in the sea.

59. Thus. And We caused the Children of Israel to inherit them.*45

كَذَلِكَ وَأَوْرَثْنَاهَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

*45 Some commentators have interpreted this verse to mean that Allah made the Children of Israel to inherit the gardens, water-springs, treasure-houses and fine dwellings vacated and left behind by Pharaoh and his people. This would inevitably mean that after the drowning of Pharaoh,

the Israelites returned to Egypt and took possession of the wealth and properties of Pharaoh's people. This interpretation, however, is neither supported by history nor by other verses of the Quran. The relevant verses of Surahs Al-Baqarah, Al-Maidah, Al-Aaraf and TaHa confirm that after the destruction of Pharaoh in the sea, the Israelites did not return to Egypt but proceeded towards their destination (Palestine) and then, till the time of Prophet David (973-1013 B.C.) all the major events of their history took place in the lands which are now known as the Sinai Peninsula, northern Arabia, Transjordan and Palestine. As such, in our opinion the verses mean this: On the one hand, Allah deprived the people of Pharaoh of their wealth, possessions and grandeur, and on the other hand, He bestowed the same on the Children of Israel in Palestine, and not in Egypt. This same meaning is borne out by verses 136-137 of Surah Al-Aaraf: Then We took Our vengeance on them and drowned them in the sea because they had treated Our signs as false and grown heedless of them. And after them We gave as heritage to those who had been abased and kept low, the eastern and the western parts of that land, which had been blessed bountifully by Us. The epithet of the blessed land has generally been used for Palestine in the Quran as in Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 1; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 71-81; and Surah Saba, Ayat 18.

60. So they pursued them at sunrise.

فَاتَّبَعُوهُمْ مُشْرِقِينَ

61. Then when the two hosts saw (each other), the

فَلَمَّا تَرَاءَا الْجَمْعَانِ قَالَ

companions of Moses said: “Indeed, we are sure to be overtaken.”

أَصْحَابُ مُوسَىٰ إِنَّآ لَمُدْرَكُونَ



62. He (Moses) said: “No, indeed, my Lord is with me, He will guide me.”*46

قَالَ كَلآءًا إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ



*46 That is, He will show me the way out of this calamity

63. Then We inspired to Moses that: “Strike the sea with your staff.” so it parted, then each portion was like a great towering mountain.*47

فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنِ اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْبَحْرَ ط فَاَنْفَلَقَ فَكَانَ

كُلُّ فِرْقٍ كَالطَّوْدِ الْعَظِيمِ



*47 Literally, *tawd* is a high mountain. It appears that as soon as Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) struck the sea with his staff, it tore the sea asunder and the waters stood like two mighty mountains on the sides and remained in that condition for so long that, on the one hand, the Israelite caravans consisting of hundreds of thousands of the migrants were able to pass through safely, and on the other, Pharaoh and his hosts stepped in and reached the middle of the sea. In the natural course, a phenomenon like this has never occurred that due to a windstorm, however strong, the sea should have parted and stood like mighty mountains on either side for such a long time. According to verse 77 of Surah Ta Ha, Prophet Moses (peace be upon

him) was commanded by Allah to make for them (the Israelites) a dry path across the sea. This shows that the smiting of the sea did not only result in dividing the waters into two parts, which stood like mighty mountains on either side, but it also created a dry path in between without any mud or slush. In this connection, one should also consider verse 24 of Surah Dukhan, which says that after Moses (peace be upon him) had crossed the sea along with his people, he was commanded by Allah to let the sea remain as it is because Pharaoh is to be drowned in it. This implies that if after crossing the sea, Moses had again struck it with his staff, the two sides would have rejoined, but he was forbidden to do so. Obviously, this was a miracle, and the view of those who try to interpret it as a natural phenomenon, is belied. For explanation, see E.N. 53 of Surah Ta Ha.

64. And We brought near to that place, the others.

وَأَزَلَفْنَا ثُمَّ الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

65. And We saved Moses and those with him, all together.

وَأَنْجَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾

66. Then We drowned the others. *48

ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

*48 That is, Pharaoh and his army.

67. Indeed, in that is truly a sign. *49 And most of them are not believers.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً ۖ وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

***49** That is, the Quraish have this lesson to learn from this: The obdurate people like Pharaoh, his chiefs and followers had not believed even though they had been shown clear miracles for years. They had been so blinded by obduracy that even on the occasion of their drowning in the sea although they had seen the sea parting asunder in front of their very eyes, the waters standing like high mountains on either side, and the dry path in between for the Israelite caravans to pass, yet they failed to understand that Moses(peace be upon him) had divine succor and support with him which they had come out to fight. At last when they came to their senses, it was too late, because they had been overtaken by the wrath of Allah and the sea waters had covered them completely. It was on this occasion that Pharaoh had cried out: I have believed that there is no god but the real God in Whom the Children of Israel have believed and I am of those who surrender. (Surah Yunus, Ayat 90).

On the other hand, there is a sign in this for the believers, too. They should understand how Allah by His grace causes the truth to prevail in the long run and the falsehood to vanish even though the forces to evil may appear to be dominant for the time being .

68. And indeed, your Lord, He surely is the All Mighty, the Merciful.

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ



69. And recite to them the story of Abraham.^{*50}

وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ



***50** This part of the life-history of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) relates to the time when after his appointment to Prophethood, a conflict had started between him and his people on the questions of shirk and Tauhid. In this connection, the reader should also see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 258-260; Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 75-83; Surah Maryam, Ayats 41-50; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 51-70; Surah As-Saffat, Ayats 83-113; and Surah Al-Mumtahanah, Ayats 4-5.

The Quran has specially repeated this part of Prophet Abraham's life story over and over again because the Arabs in general and the Quraish in particular regarded themselves as his followers and professed his way and creed. Besides them, the Christians and the Jews also claimed that Abraham was their religious leader and guide. That is why the Quran admonishes them over and over again that the creed brought by Abraham was Islam itself, which is now being presented by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and which they are opposing tooth and nail. Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) was not a mushrik, but an antagonist against shirk, and for the same reason he had to leave his home and country and live as a migrant in Syria, Palestine and Hejaz. Thus he was neither a Jew nor a Christian, because Judaism and Christianity appeared centuries after him. This historical argument could neither be refuted by the mushriks, nor by the Jews or the Christians, because the mushriks themselves admitted that idol-worship in Arabia had started several centuries after Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), and

the Jews and the Christians also could not deny that Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had lived long before the beginning of Judaism and Christianity. This obviously meant that the special beliefs and customs which those people thought formed the basis of their religion, were not part of the original religion taught by Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). True religion was the one which had no tinge of those impurities, but was based on those worship and obedience of One Allah alone. That is why the Quran says: Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a Muslim, sound in the faith, and he was not of those who set up partners with Allah. Surely only those people who follow Abraham are entitled to claim a relationship with him. Now this Prophet and the believers are better entitled to this relationship. (Surha Al Anaam, Ayats 67, 68).

70. When he said to his father and his people: “What do you worship.”^{*51}

إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ

***51** Obviously the object of this question was to remind the people that the deities which they worshiped were false and absolutely powerless. In Surah Al Anbiya the same question has been posed thus: What are these images to which you are so devoted. (verse 52).

71. They said: “We worship idols, and we are ever devoted to them.”^{*52}

قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ أَصْنَامًا فَنَنْظِلُّهَا عَلَيْكِنَّ

***52** Though everybody knew that they worshiped idols, their answer implied that they were firm in faith and their hearts were satisfied with it, as if to say: We also know that these are idols of stone and wood, which we worship, but our faith demands that we should serve and worship them devotedly.

72. He (Abraham) said: “Do they hear you when you call.”

قَالَ هَلْ يَسْمَعُونَكُمْ إِذْ تَدْعُونَ



73. “Or do they benefit you or do they harm (you).”

أَوْ يَنْفَعُونَكُمْ أَوْ يَضُرُّونَ



74. They said: “But we have found our forefathers doing the same.”^{*53}

قَالُوا بَلْ وَجَدْنَا ءَابَاءَنَا كَذٰلِكَ

يَفْعَلُونَ



***53** That is, we do not worship and serve them because they hear our prayers and supplications, or that they can harm and benefit us, but because we have seen our elders worshiping and serving them. Thus, they themselves admitted that the only reason of their worshiping the idols was the blind imitation of their forefathers. In other words, they meant this: There is nothing new in what you are telling us, We know that these are idols of stone and wood, which do not hear anything, nor can harm or do good, but we cannot believe that our elders who have been worshiping them since centuries, generation after generation, were foolish people. They must have had some good reason for worshiping these lifeless images, so we are

doing the same as we have full faith in them.

75. He said: “Do you then see what you have been worshipping.”

قَالَ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ



76. “You and your ancient forefathers.”*54

أَنْتُمْ وَاَبَاؤُكُمْ الْأَقْدَمُونَ



*54 That is, is it enough to say that a religion is true only because it has been held as such by their ancestors? Should people, generation after generation, go on following their ancestors in their footsteps blindly without ever caring to see whether the deities they worship possess any divine attribute or not, and whether they have any power to influence their destinies?

77. “Indeed, they are enemy to me,*55 except the Lord of the worlds.”*56

فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِّيَ إِلَّا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ



*55 That is, when I consider them, I see that if I worship them, I shall ruin myself both in this world and in the Hereafter. As their worship is clearly harmful, worshipping them is worshipping one’s enemy. These words of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) bear a close connection with verses 81, 82 of Surah Maryam, which say: These people have set up gods other than Allah so that they may become their supporters. But they will have no supporter; all of them will not only disown their worship but also become

their opponents (on the Day of Judgment).

It should be noted that Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) did not say: They are enemies to you, but said: They are enemies to me. In the first case, there was every chance that the people would have felt offended and provoked, because it would have been difficult for them to understand how their own gods could be their enemies. As a matter of fact, Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) appealed to the natural feeling of man that he is his own well-wisher and cannot wish ill of himself deliberately. This would inevitably have led the addressees to think whether what they were doing was really for their good and was in no way harmful.

*56 That is, of all the deities who are being worshiped in the world, there is only One Allah alone, Lord of the universe, in whose worship I find any good for myself, and Whose worship is the worship of one's own Cherisher and Supporter, and not of one's enemy. Then Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) briefly gives the arguments, which nobody could refute, as to why Allah alone is worthy of man's worship and indirectly suggests that his addressees (the idol-worshippers) had no rational basis for worshiping deities other than Allah except in blind imitation of their forefathers.

78. "Who created me,^{*57} then it is He who guides me."

الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ ﴿٧٨﴾

*57 This is the first reason for which Allah, and One Allah alone, is worthy of man's worship. The people also knew and believed that Allah alone was their Creator without

any partner. Not only they but all the polytheists of the world also have always held the belief that even the deities they worshiped were the creation of Allah, and except for the atheists none have ever denied that Allah is the Creator of the whole universe. This argument of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) implied that being a creature, he could only worship his Creator, Who was alone worthy of his worship, and none else, because none besides Allah had any share in His creation.

79. “And He it is who feeds me and gives me to drink.”

وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ



80. “And when I am ill, then it is He who cures me.”*58

وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ



*58 The second reason for worshipping Allah and Allah alone is that Allah has not become unconcerned with man after creating him and has not left him alone to seek other supporters for help, but has also taken the responsibility of making arrangements for his guidance, protection and fulfillment of his needs. The moment a human child is born, milk is produced for it in the breasts of his mother, and some unseen power teaches it the way to suck it and take it down the throat. From the first day of his life till his death, the Creator has provided in the world around him all necessary means required for every stage of his life for his development and guidance, sustenance and survival. He has also endowed him with all those powers and abilities which

are needed to use the means with advantage and given him all necessary guidance for every sphere of life. Then for the protection of human life against all sorts of disease, germs and poisons, He has created such effective antidotes that they have not yet been fully encompassed by human knowledge. If these natural arrangements had not been made, even a thorn-prick would have proved fatal. When this all-pervading mercy and providence of the Creator is supporting and sustaining man at all times in every way, there could be no greater folly and ingratitude on the part of man than this that he should bow down before others than Allah and seek their help in need and trouble.

81. “And who will cause me to die, then will bring me to life.”

وَالَّذِي يُمِيتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ ﴿٨١﴾

82. “And who, I hope that He will forgive me my faults on the Day of Judgment.”*59

وَالَّذِي أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿٨٢﴾

*59 The third reason for worshiping none but Allah is that man’s relation with his God is not merely confined to this worldly life, which will end at death, but extends to life-after-death also. The same God Who brought him into existence, recalls him and there is no power which can stop his return from the world. No remedy, no physician, no god or goddess has ever been able to catch the hand which takes man out of this world. Even all those men who were made deities and worshiped could not ward off their own deaths. Only Allah judges and decides when a particular person is

to be recalled from the world, and whenever somebody is recalled by Him, he has to leave this world in any case. Then it is Allah alone Who will decide as to when He should raise back to life all those people who were born in this world and died and buried here, and ask them to account for their worldly lives. Then also nobody will have the power to stop resurrection of himself or others. Every human being will have to rise at the command of Allah and appear in His court. Then Allah alone will be the Judge on that Day, and nobody else will be a partner in his judgment in any degree. To punish or to forgive will be entirely in Allah's hand. Nobody will have the power to get somebody forgiven if Allah would want to punish him, and punished if Allah would want to forgive him. All those who are regarded as intercessors in the world, will themselves be hoping for Allah's mercy and grace for their forgiveness. In view of these facts anybody who worships others than Allah, is in fact preparing for his own doom. There can be no greater misfortune than this that man should turn away from Allah Who controls his life here as well as in the Hereafter, and should turn for help and support to those who are utterly powerless in this regard.

83. "My Lord, bestow on me wisdom^{*60} and join me with the righteous."^{*61}

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي حُكْمًا وَالْحَقْنِي
بِالصَّالِحِينَ



^{*60} *Hukm* here does not mean Prophethood, because at the time this prayer was made, Prophet Abraham (peace be

upon him) had already been appointed a Prophet. Even if this prayer was made before that, Prophethood is not bestowed at request, but it is something which Allah Himself bestows on those He wills. That is why *hukm* has been translated wisdom, knowledge, right understanding and power of judgment. The Prophet (peace be upon him) is also reported to have made a similar prayer.

Arinal-ashyaa kama hiya: O Allah, give us the power to see and understand a thing as it really is and to form an opinion about it according to its reality.

***61** “Join me with the righteous”: Give me a righteous society to live here in this world and raise me along with the righteous in the Hereafter. To be raised back to life with the righteous and to attain one’s salvation have one and the same meaning. Therefore, this should be the prayer of every person who believes in the life-after-death and in reward and punishment. Even in this world a pious man cherishes the desire that God should save him from living a life in an immoral and wicked society and should join him with the righteous people. A pious and righteous person will remain ill at ease and restless until either his own society should become clean and pure morally, or he leaves it to join another society which is practicing and following the principles of truth and honesty.

84. “And grant me an honorable mention among the later generations.”^{*62}

وَأَجْعَلْ لِي لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِي
الْآخِرِينَ



***62** That is, grant me true renown among posterity. Grant

me the grace that posterity should remember me as a good and pious man after my death and not as one of the unjust people, who were not only wicked themselves, but who left nothing but wickedness behind them in the world. Enable me to perform such high deeds that my life should become a source of light for others for all times to come, and I should be counted among the benefactors of humanity. This is not a prayer for worldly greatness and renown, but for true greatness and renown, which can be achieved only as a result of solid and valuable services. A person's achieving such true renown and glory has two good aspects:

(1) The people of the world get a good example to follow, as against bad examples, which inspires them with piety and encourages them to follow the right way; and

(2) The righteous person will not only get the rewards of works done by posterity who were guided aright by the good example left and set by him, but in addition to his own good works, he will have the evidence of the millions of people in his favor that he had left behind him in the world fountains of guidance, which went on benefiting people, generation after generation, till the Day of Resurrection.

85. “And place me among the inheritors of the Garden of Delight.”

وَأَجْعَلَنِي مِنْ وَرَثَةِ جَنَّةِ النَّعِيمِ



86. “And forgive my father. Indeed, he is from among those who have strayed.”*63

وَأَغْفِرْ لِأَبِي إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ



***63** Some commentators have interpreted this prayer of Prophet Abraham for his father's forgiveness to imply that he had prayed to God to grant his father the favor to accept Islam because forgiveness in any case is inter-linked with and dependent upon faith. But this interpretation is not borne out by the other verses of the Quran. The Quran says that when Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) left his home at the tyrannical treatment of his father, he said: I bid farewell to you; I shall pray to my Lord to forgive you for He is very kind to me. (Surah Maryam, Ayat 47). To fulfill this promise, he not only prayed for the forgiveness of his father, but for both his parents: Lord, forgive me and my parents. (Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 41). But afterwards he himself realized that an enemy of the truth, even if he be the father of a believer, does not deserve a prayer of forgiveness. Thus according to verse 114 of Surah At-Taubah: The prayer of Abraham for his father was only to fulfill a promise he had made to him, but when he realized that he was an enemy of Allah, he disowned him.

87. “And do not disgrace me on the Day they are raised.”*64

وَلَا تُخْزِنِي يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُونَ

***64** That is, do not put me to disgrace on the Day of Judgment by inflicting punishment on my father in front of all mankind, when I myself shall be witnessing his punishment helplessly.

88. The Day when there will not benefit wealth, nor sons.

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ



89. Except him who brings to Allah a clean heart.*65

إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

*65 It cannot be said with certainty whether verses 88, 89 are a part of Prophet Abraham's (peace be upon him) prayer, or they are an addition by Allah. In the first case, they will mean that Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) while praying for his father had a full realization of these facts. In the second case, they will be a comment by Allah on Abraham's (peace be upon him) prayer, as if to say: On the Day of Judgment, only a sound heart, sound in faith and free from disobedience and sin, will be of any avail to man and not wealth and children, for wealth and children can be useful only if one possesses a sound heart. Wealth will be useful if one would have spent it sincerely and faithfully for the sake of Allah, otherwise even a millionaire will be a poor man there. Children also will be of help only to the extent that a person might have educated them in faith and good conduct to the best of his ability; otherwise even if the son is a Prophet, his father will not escape punishment if he died in the state of unbelief, because such a father will have no share in the goodness of his children.

90. And*66 the Paradise will be brought near to the righteous.

وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

*66 Verses 90-102 do not seem to be a part of Prophet Abraham's (peace be upon him) speech, but they are Allah's words.

91. And Hellfire will be placed in full view for the deviators.*67

وَبُرِّزَتْ الْجَحِيمُ لِلْغَاوِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

*67 That is, on the one hand, the righteous people will be shown the countless blessings which they will enjoy in Paradise by Allah's grace, and on the other hand, Hell will be set open with all its dreads and horrors before the straying people, when they will still be in the Plain of Resurrection.

92. And it will be said to them: "Where are those whom you used to worship?"

وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

93. "Other than Allah. Can they help you or can they help themselves?"

مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ هَلْ يَنْصُرُونَكُم أَوْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾

94. Then they will be thrown on their faces into it (Hellfire), they and the deviators.*68

فَكُبِّكِبُوا فِيهَا هُمْ وَالْغَاوِرُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

*68 Kubkibu in the text has two meanings: (1) They will be hurled into Hell one upon the other; and (2) they will go on rolling down into the depths of Hell.

95. And the hosts of Iblis, all together.

وَجُنُودُ إِبْلِيسَ أَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

96. They will say, while they are disputing therein.

قَالُوا وَهُمْ فِيهَا يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

97. “By Allah, indeed, we were truly in a manifest error.”

تَاللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنَّا لَفِي ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ



98. “When we made you equal with the Lord of the worlds.”

اِذْ نُسَوَّيْكُمْ بِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ



99. “And none led us astray except the criminals.”*69

وَمَا اَضَلّٰنَا اِلَّا الْمَجْرِمُوْنَ



*69 This is how the followers will treat their religious leaders and guides, whom they served and revered like deities in the world, whose words and patterns of behavior they took as authoritative and before whom they presented all sorts of offerings in the world. In the Hereafter when the people will find that their guides had misled them and caused their ruin as well as their own, they will hold them responsible for it and will curse them. The Quran has presented this horrible scene of the Hereafter at several places so as to admonish the blind followers to see and judge carefully whether their guides in this world were leading them on the right path or not. For instance: As each generation will be entering Hell, it will curse its preceding generation till all generations shall be gathered together there; then each succeeding generation will say regarding the preceding one: O Lord, these were the people who led us astray; therefore give them a double chastisement of the Fire. Allah will reply: There is a double chastisement for everyone but you know it not. (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 38). And the disbelievers will say: Our Lord, bring those jinns

and men before us, who led us astray so that we may trample them under our feet and put them to extreme disgrace. (Surah Ha Mim Sajdah, Ayat 29). And they will say: Our Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and our great men and they misled us from the right path; our Lord, give them a double chastisement and curse them with a severe curse. (Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 67-68).

100. “So (now) for us there are none of the intercessors.”*70

فَمَا لَنَا مِنْ شَافِعِينَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

*70 That is, those whom we regarded as our intercessors in the world and who, we believed, would take us safely into Paradise, are utterly helpless today and of no avail to us.

101. “And not a loving friend.”*71

وَلَا صَدِيقٍ حَمِيمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾

*71 That is, we have no sympathizer either who could feel for us and console us. The Quran says that in the Hereafter only the believers will continue to be friends; as for the disbelievers, they will turn enemies of one another even though they had been sworn friends in the world. Each will hold the other as responsible for the doom and try to get him maximum punishment. Friends on that Day will become enemies of one another except the righteous (who will continue to be friends). (Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayat 67).

102. “So if indeed for us there is a return (to the world), we shall then be among the true believers.”*72

فَلَوْ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَكُونُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

***72** That Quran has given an answer to this kind of longing and desire as well: Even if they be sent back to the earthly life, they would do all that they had been forbidden to do. (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 28). As for the reasons why they will not be allowed to return to the world, please see E.Ns 90-92 of Surah Al-Mominoon above.

103. Indeed, in that is surely a sign.^{*73} And most of them are not believers.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً ط وَمَا كَانَ
أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

***73** There are two aspects of the sign in the story of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him).

(1) On the one hand, the mushriks of Arabia, especially the Quraish, claimed that they were the followers of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and were proud of being his descendants, but on the other hand, they were involved in shirk against which Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had been engaged in a relentless struggle throughout his life. Then these people were opposing and treating the Prophet (peace be upon him) who was inviting them towards the religion brought by Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). They have been reminded that Abraham (peace be upon him) was an enemy of shirk and an upholder of Tauhid which they themselves admitted, and yet they persisted in their obduracy to follow the creed of shirk.

(2) The people of Abraham (peace be upon him) were eliminated from the world. If any of them survived, it was the children of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and

his sons, Ishmael and Isaac (peace be upon them). Though the Quran does not mention the torment that descended on Abraham's people after he had left them, it has included them among the tormented tribes: Has not the story reached them of those who had gone before them: the people of Noah, the tribes of Aad and Thamud, the people of Abraham, and the inhabitants of Midian and of the overturned cities? (Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 70).

104. And indeed, your Lord, He is surely the All Mighty, the Merciful.

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ



105. The people of Noah^{*74} denied the messengers.^{*75}

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ



***74** For comparison, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 59-64; Surah Yunus, Ayats 71-73; Surah Houd, Ayats 25-48; Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 3; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 76-77; Surah Al-Mominoon, Ayats 23-30; and Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 37. For the details of the story of Prophet Noah, see Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayat 15; Surah As-Saffat, Ayats 75-82; Surah Al-Qamar, Ayats 9-15 and Surah Nooh itself.

***75** Though they had rejected only one Messenger, it amounted to rejecting all the messengers because all of them had brought one and the same message from Allah. This is an important fact which the Quran has mentioned over and over again in different ways. Thus, even those people who rejected just one Prophet have been regarded as unbelievers though they believed in all other Prophets, for the simple reason that the believer in the truth of one

Messenger cannot deny the same truth in other cases unless he does so on account of racial prejudice, imitation of elders, etc.

106. When their brother Noah said to them: “Will you not fear (Allah).”^{*76}

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمُّ أَخُوهُمْ نُوحٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ



***76** The initial address of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) to his people, as mentioned at other places in the Quran, was as follows: O my people, worship Allah alone, you have no deity other than Him. Are you not afraid (of Him)? (Surah Al-Mominoon, Ayat 23); and Worship Allah and fear Him and obey me. (Surah Nooh, Ayat 3). That is, are you not afraid of the consequences of adopting an attitude of rebellion against Allah and worshipping others than Him?

107. Indeed, I am a trustworthy messenger to you.^{*77}

إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ



***77** It has two meanings.

(1) I present before you nothing but what Allah reveals to me.

(2) I am a Messenger whom you have already known to be a trustworthy and honest and righteous man. When I have been honest and true in my dealings with you, how can I be dishonest and untrustworthy in conveying the message of God? Therefore, you should rest assured that whatever I am presenting is the truth.

108. “So fear Allah, and obey me.”*78

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا
١٠٨

*78 That is, when I am a truthful and trustworthy Messenger, you are duty-bound to obey me alone as against all other patrons, and carry out my commands and instructions, because I represent the will of God. Obedience to me is in fact obedience to God and disobedience to me is disobedience to Him. In other words, the people are not only required to accept a Messenger as a true Messenger sent by Allah, but it inevitably implies that they have to obey him and follow his Law against all other laws. To reject a Prophet, or to disobey him after accepting him as a Prophet, is tantamount to rebellion against God, which inevitably leads to His wrath. The words “fear Allah” are, therefore, a warning that every hearer should clearly understand the consequences of rejecting the message of a Messenger or of disobeying his commands.

109. “And I do not ask for it any payment. My payment is not but from the Lord of the worlds.”*79

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ
أَجْرِي إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
١٠٩

*79 This is the second of the two arguments of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) about the truth of his message, the first being that they had known him as a trustworthy man during his earlier life, which he had lived among them. This second argument implies this: I do not have any selfish motive or personal interest in conveying the message which

I am propagating day and night in spite of all sorts of opposition and antagonism from you. At least you should understand this that I am sincere in my invitation, and am presenting honestly only that which I believe to be the truth and in following which I see the true success and well-being of humanity at large. I have no personal motive in this that I should fabricate falsehood to fool the people.

These two arguments are among the most important arguments which the Quran has advanced repeatedly as proofs of the truthfulness of the Prophets, and which it presents as criterion for judging Prophethood. A man who before Prophethood has lived a life in a society and has always been found to be honest, truthful and righteous, cannot be doubted even by a prejudiced person that he would suddenly start fabricating falsehood in the name of Allah and making people believe that he has been appointed a Prophet by Him, whereas he has not been. More important than that, such a lie cannot be fabricated with a good intention unless somebody has a selfish motive attached to this kind of fraud. And even when a person indulges in this sort of fraud, he cannot hide it completely from the people. The foul means and devices adopted by him to promote his business become known and all the various selfish interests and gains become all too apparent. Contrary to this, the personal life of a Prophet is full of moral excellencies. It has no trace of the employment of foul means and devices. Not to speak of any personal interest, he expends whatever he has for the cause of a mission which to all appearances is fruitless. No person who

possesses any common sense and also has a sense of justice, can ever imagine that a sensible man who was leading a perfectly peaceful life, would come out all of a sudden with a false claim, when such a false claim does not do him any good, but on the contrary, demands all his money, time and energy and earns him nothing in return but the antagonism and hostility of the whole world. Sacrifice of personal interests is the foremost proof of a man's sincerity; therefore, doubting the intentions and sincerity of a person who has been sacrificing his personal interests for years and years can only be the pastime of the one who himself is selfish and insincere. See E.N. 70 of Surah Al-Mominoon.

110. “So fear Allah, and obey me.”*80

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا

*80 Repetition of this sentence is not without reason. In the first case (verse 108), it implied this: You should fear Allah if you treat as false a true and trustworthy Messenger from Him, whom you yourselves have been regarding as a true and trustworthy man in the past. Here it means: You should fear Allah if you doubt the intention of a person who is working sincerely only for the reformation of the people without any personal interest. This thing has been stressed because the chiefs of Prophet Noah's (peace be upon him) people, in order to find fault with his message of truth, accused him of struggling merely for his personal superiority: He merely intends to obtain superiority over you. (Surah Al-Mominoon, Ayat 24).

111. They said: “Shall we believe in you, while the

قَالُوا أَنْتُمْ مِنْ لَكَ وَاتَّبَعَكَ

lowest (of the people) follow you.”*81

الأرذلون

*81 This answer to Prophet Noah’s (peace be upon him) message of truth was given by the chiefs, elders and nobles of his people as mentioned in Surah Houd, Ayat 27. In answer to this, those chiefs of his people, who had rejected his message: said, We see that you are no more than a mere man like ourselves, and we also see that only the meanest from among us have become your followers without due consideration, and we find nothing in you that might give you superiority over us. This shows that those who believed in Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) were mostly the poor people, and ordinary workmen, or some youth who enjoyed no position in society. As for the influential and rich people, they had become his bitter opponents, and were trying by every trick and allurements to keep the common man behind them. One of the arguments they advanced against Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) was this: Had there been some weight and substance in Noah’s message, the rich people, scholars, religious divines, nobles and wise people of the community should have accepted it, but none of them has believed in him; the only people to follow him are the foolish people belonging to the lowest stratum of society, who have no common-sense. Now how can the noble and high ranking people like us join the company of the common people?

Precisely the same thing was being said by the unbelieving Quraish about the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers. Abu Sufyan in reply to the questions asked by

Heraclius had said: Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been followed by the poor and weak of our people. What they seemed to be thinking was that truth was that which was considered as truth by the chiefs and elders of the community, for only they had the necessary common-sense and power of judgment. As for the common people, their being common was a proof that they lacked sense and judgment. As such, if a thing was accepted by them but rejected by the chiefs, it meant that the thing itself was without worth and value. The disbelievers of Makkah even went further. They argued that a Prophet could not be a common man. If God had to appoint a Prophet, He would have appointed a great chief to be a Prophet. They say: why has not the Quran been sent down to a prominent man of our two cities (Makkah and Taif)? (Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayat 31).

112. He said: “And what is my knowledge of what they may have been doing.”

قَالَ وَمَا عَلِمِي بِمَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ

113. “Their account is not but upon my Lord, if you could (but) know.”*82

إِنَّ حِسَابَهُمْ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ رَبِّي لَوْ
تَشْعُرُونَ

*82 This is the first answer to their objection, which was based on the assumption that the poor people belonging to the working classes and lower social strata who performed humble duties, did not possess any mental maturity and were without intelligence and common sense. Therefore,

their belief was without any rational basis, and so unreliable, and their deeds were of no value at all. To this Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) replies: I have no means of judging the motives and assessing the worth of the deeds of the people who accept my message and act accordingly. This is not my concern but the responsibility of God.

114. “And I am not (here) to drive away the believers.”

وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

115. “I am not except a plain warner.”*83

إِن أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

*83 This is the second answer to their objection, which implied that since those who were gathering around Noah (peace be upon him) as believers, belonged to the lowest social strata, none of the nobles would like to join them, as if to say: O Noah, should we believe in you in order to be counted among the low-ranking people like the slaves and servants and workmen? To this Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) answers: How can I adopt this irrational attitude that I should attend earnestly to those who do not like to listen to me, but drive away those who have believed and followed me? I am simply, a warner, who has declared openly that the way you are following is wrong and will lead you to ruin, and the way that I am inviting to is the way of salvation far all. Now it is up to you whether you heed my warning and adopt the right path, or go on following blindly the way to your ruin. It does not behoove me that I should start inquiring into the castes and ancestry and trades of the people who have heeded my warning and adopted the right path. They might be mean in your sight,

but I cannot drive them away and wait to see when the nobles will give up the path of destruction and adopt the way of salvation and success instead.

Precisely the same thing was going on between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers of Makkah when these verses were revealed, and one can fully understand why the dialogue between Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) and the chiefs of his people, has been related here. The chiefs of the disbelievers of Makkah thought exactly the same way. They said how they could sit side by side with the slaves like Bilal, Ammar and Suhaib and other men of the working class, as if to say: Unless these poor people are turned out, there can be no possibility that the nobles may consider to become believers; it is impossible that the master and the slave should stand shoulder to shoulder with each other. In answer to this the Prophet (peace be upon him) was commanded by Allah to tell the vain and arrogant disbelievers plainly that the poor believers could not be driven out of Islam just for their sake: O Muhammad, you attend earnestly to him who has shown indifference (to your message), whereas you have no responsibility if he does not reform himself; and the one who comes to you earnestly, fearing Allah, to him you pay no attention. Nay, this indeed is an admonition, so let him, who wills, accept it. (Surah Abasa, Ayats 5-12).

And do not drive away those who invoke their Lord morning and evening and are engaged in seeking His favor. You are not in any way accountable for them, nor are they in any way accountable for you: so, if you should drive

them away, you shall be counted among the unjust. As a matter of fact, in this way We have made some of them a means of test for others, so that, seeing them, they should say: Are these the people from among us upon whom Allah has showered His blessings? Yes, does Allah not know His grateful servants better than they? (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 52-53).

116. They said: “If you do not desist, O Noah, you will surely be among those who are stoned.”*84

قَالُوا لَئِن لَّمْ تَنْتَهِ يَنْوُحْ
لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمَرْجُومِينَ

*84 The words in the text may have two meanings.

(1) You will be stoned to death.

(2) You will be showered with abuses from all sides, and cursed and reviled wherever you go.

117. He said: “My Lord, indeed, my people have denied me.”*85

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي كَذَّبُونِ

*85 That is, they have rejected me completely and absolutely and now there is no hope of their becoming believers. Here nobody should have the misunderstanding that just after this conversation between Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) and the chiefs of his people, and the rejection of his message by them, the Prophet submitted a report to Allah that his people had rejected him and now He should settle the accounts between them. The Quran has mentioned at different places the details of the long struggle that went on for centuries between Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) and his people, who persisted in unbelief.

According to verse 14 of Surah Al-Ankabut, the struggle continued for 950 years: He (Noah) remained among them for a thousand years save fifty years. Prophet Noah during this long period studied their collective behavior, generation after generation, and came to the conclusion that they had no inclination to accept the truth, and formed the opinion that in their future generations also there was no hope of anybody becoming a believer and adopting the righteous attitude: My Lord, if You should leave them, they will lead Your servants astray, and they will bear as children none but sinners and disbelievers. (Surah Nooh, Ayat 27). Allah Himself confirmed this opinion of Noah, saying: No more of your people will believe in you now than those who have already believed. So do not grieve at their misdeeds. (Sura Houd, Ayat 36).

118. “Then judge between me and them, a (conclusive) judgment, and save me and those who are with me among the believers.”*86

فَأَفْتَحْ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُمْ فَتْحًا وَنَجِّنِي
وَمَنْ مَعِيَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ



*86 You should not only give Your judgment as to who is in the right and who is in the wrong, but deliver Your Judgment in such a manner that the followers of the truth are saved and the followers of falsehood are completely annihilated from the earth.

119. So We saved him and those with him in the laden ship.*87

فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلِكِ
الْمَشْحُونِ



***87 Laden ship:** because the ship became loaded with the believers and the pairs of animals from every species. For further details, see Surah Houd, Ayat 40.

120. Then We drowned thereafter those who remained.

ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا بَعْدُ الْبَاقِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾

121. Indeed, in that is surely a sign. And most of them are not believers.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً ^ط وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٢١﴾

122. And indeed, your Lord, He surely is the All Mighty, the Merciful.

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٢٢﴾

123. A'ad denied the messengers (of Allah).^{*88}

كَذَّبَتْ عَادُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

***88** For comparison, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 65-72; Surah Houd, Ayats 50-60; and for further details of this story, see Surah HaMim Sajdah, Ayats 13-16; Surah Al-Ahqaf, Ayats 21-26; Surah Az-Zariyat, Ayats 41,45; Surah Al-Qamar , Ayats 18-22; Surah Al-Haqqah, Ayats 4-8; and Surah Al-Fajr, Ayats 6-8.

124. When their brother Hud said to them:^{*89} “Will you not fear (Allah).”

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ هُودٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

***89** In order to understand this discourse of Prophet Houd fully, we should keep in mind the various details about the

people of Aad which the Quran has given at different places: For instance, it says:

(1) After the destruction of the people of Noah (Peace be upon him), the Aad were given power and prominence in the world: Do not forget that after Noah's people your Lord made you the successors. (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 69).

(2) Physically they were very robust and powerful people: And made you very robust. (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 69).

(3) They had no parallel as a nation in the world: The like of which was not created in the lands. (Surah Al-Fajr, Ayat 8).

(4) They were civilized and were well-known in the world for their great skill and art in erecting lofty buildings with tall columns: Have you not seen what your Lord did with Aad Iram, of lofty columns? (Surah Al-Fajr, Ayat 6, 7).

(5) This material progress and physical power had made them arrogant and vain: As for Aad, they deviated from the right path and adopted an arrogant attitude in the land and said: Who is mightier than us in power? (Surah Ha Mim Sajdah, Ayat 15) .

(6) Their political power was in the hands of a few tyrants before whom none could dare raise his voice: And they followed and obeyed every tyrannous enemy of the Truth. (Surah Houd, Ayat 59).

(7) They were not disbelievers in the existence of Allah, but were involved in shirk; they only denied that Allah alone should be worshiped and none else: They said (to Houd), Have you come to us (with the demand) that we should worship Allah alone and discard those whom our elders have been worshiping? (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 70).

125. “Indeed, I am a trustworthy messenger to you.”

إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٢٥﴾

126. “So fear Allah and obey me.”

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا عَلِيًّا ﴿١٢٦﴾

127. “And I do not ask you any payment for it. My payment is not but from the Lord of the worlds.”

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢٧﴾

128. “Do you build on every high place a sign for vain delight.”*90

أَتَبْنُونَ بِكُلِّ رِيعٍ ءَايَةً تَعْبَثُونَ ﴿١٢٨﴾

*90 That is, you build grand buildings merely to show off your wealth and power, whereas they have no use and purpose except that they stand as monuments to your grandeur and glory.

129. “And you take strongholds, that you might live for ever.”*91

وَتَتَّخِذُونَ مَصَانِعَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَخْلُدُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾

*91 That is, though you have built other buildings also for dwelling purposes, in order to make them grand, beautiful and strong, you expend your wealth and mental and physical abilities in a manner as if you were going to live forever, and there was no purpose of life except seeking of comfort and pleasure and nothing beyond this worldly life

which might deserve your attention.

In this connection, one should bear in mind the fact that extravagance in architecture is not a solitary vice in a people. This happens as a result of a people's becoming affluent and then crazy for selfish gains and materialistic pursuits. When a people reach such a stage, their whole social system becomes corrupted and polluted. Prophet Houd's (peace be upon him) criticism of his people's extravagant and luxurious architecture was not simply aimed at the high castles and monuments, but he was actually criticizing their corrupt civilization and social system, whose glaring symptoms could be seen everywhere in the land in the shape of castles and monuments.

130. “And when you seize by force, seize you as tyrants.”*92

وَإِذَا بَطَشْتُمْ بَطَشْتُمْ جَبَّارِينَ



*92 That is, in order to meet the demands of your ever rising standards of life, you do not rest content with small living quarters but you build castles and fortresses, and yet being unsatisfied you erect lofty edifices unnecessarily just for ostentation. But as human beings you have become so depraved that there is no mercy in your hearts for the weak, no justice for the poor, and all people of lower social strata, living inside or around your land, are being oppressed tyrannically and none is safe from your barbarities.

131. “So fear Allah, and obey me.”

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ



132. “And fear Him who has provided you with (the good things) that which you know.”

وَاتَّقُوا الَّذِي أَمَدَّكُمْ بِمَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

133. “He has provided you with cattle and sons.”

أَمَدَّكُمْ بِأَنْعَمٍ وَبَنِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

134. “And gardens and water springs.”

وَجَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿١٣٤﴾

135. “Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a great day.”

إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٣٥﴾

136. They said: “It is all same to us whether you advise or be not of those who advise.”

قَالُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْنَا أَوَعَظْتَ أَمْ لَمْ تَكُنْ مِنَ الْوَاعِظِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

137. “This is not but a fable of the ancients.”*93

إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا خُلُقُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٣٧﴾

*93 This can have two meanings.

(1) Whatever we are doing is not new but has been happening from the time of our elders since centuries: they had the same creed, the same way of life, the same morality and the same kind of dealings and yet they remained unharmed and safe from every calamity. If there was any evil in this way of life, we should have met the doom with which you are threatening us.

(2) The things you are preaching have also been preached and said before by religious maniacs and so-called

moralists, but they could not change the ways of the world. It has never happened that the world suffered a disaster only because people refused to listen to preachers like you.

138. “And we are not to be punished.”

وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذِّبِينَ ﴿١٣٨﴾

139. So they denied him, then We destroyed them.*94
Indeed, in that is surely a sign. And most of them are not believers.

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً ۗ وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾

***94** According to the Quran, the people of Aad were destroyed by a violent windstorm. When they saw it advancing towards their valleys, they rejoiced with the hope that those were dense clouds which would bring much rain for them, but in reality it was Allah’s scourge. The windstorm continued to rage for eight days and seven nights and destroyed everything. The people were swept away like straw and everything on which the hot, dry wind blew was left rotting. The storm did not abate until the last man of the wicked tribe had met his doom. Only ruins of their habitations remained to tell the tale of their terrible fate, and today even the ruins have become extinct. The whole territory of Ahqaf has turned into dreadful desert dunes. For details, see E.N. 25 of Surah Al-Ahqaf.

140. And indeed, your Lord, He surely is the All Mighty, the Merciful.

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٤٠﴾

141. Thamud denied the messengers. *95

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

*95 For comparison, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 73-79; Surah Hud, Ayats 61-68; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 80-84; Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 59; and for further details, see Surah An-Naml, Ayats 45-53; Surah Az-Zariyat, Ayats 43-45; Surah Al-Qamar, Ayats 23-31; Surah Al-Haqqah, Ayats 4-5; Surah Al-Fajr, Ayat 9; and Surah Ash-Shams, Ayat 11.

Thamud achieved power and glory after the destruction of Aad and as far as progress in civilization is concerned, they followed in the footsteps of their predecessors. In their case, too, the standards of living went on rising higher and higher and the standards of humanity continued to fall lower and lower, suffering one deterioration after the other. On the one hand, they erected large edifices on the plains and hewed beautiful houses out of the hills like those in the caves of Ellora and Ajanta in India, and on the other hand, they became addicted to idol-worship and the land was filled with tyranny and oppression. The worst men became leaders and rulers in the land. As such, Prophet Salih's (peace be upon him) message of truth only appealed to the weak people belonging to the lower social strata and the people of the upper classes refused to believe in him.

142. When their brother Salih said to them: "Will you not fear (Allah)."

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمُ أَخُوهُمْ صَالِحٌ أَأَلَّا تَتَّقُونَ

143. “Indeed, I am a trustworthy messenger to you.”*96

إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾

*96 According to the Quran, the people of Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) themselves admitted that he was a man of great integrity and extraordinary caliber: They said, O Salih, till now you were such a person among us of whom we had great expectations. (Surah Houd, Ayat 62).

144. “So fear Allah and obey me.”

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا ﴿١٤٤﴾

145. “And I do not ask you any payment for it. My payment is not but from the Lord of the worlds.”

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

146. “Will you be left in that what is here secured.”*97

أَتُرَكُونَ فِي مَا هَاهُنَا ءَامِنِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾

*97 That is, do you consider that your life of indulgence and pleasure is everlasting, and you will never be asked to account for Allah’s favors to you and for your own misdeeds?

147. “In gardens and water springs.”

فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿١٤٧﴾

148. “And tilled fields and date palms with juicy fruit laden.”*98

وَزُرُوعٍ وَنَخْلٍ طَلْعُهَا هَضِيمٌ ﴿١٤٨﴾

***98 Hadim:** heavy bunches of ripe, juicy and soft date-palm fruit hanging from trees.

149. “And you carve out of mountains houses with great skill.”^{*99}

وَتَنْحِتُونَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا

فَرَاهِينَ

***99** Just as the most prominent feature of the Aad civilization was that they built large edifices with high pillars, so the most prominent feature of the Thamud civilization for which they were known among the ancient peoples was that they carved out dwellings in the hills. That is why in Surah Al-Fajr, the Aad have been referred to as (people) of the pillars, and the Thamud as those who hewed rocks in the valley. These people also built castles on the plains, the purpose and object of which was nothing but display of wealth and power and architectural skill as there was no real necessity for them. These are, in fact, the ways of the perverted people: the poor among them do not have proper shelters, and the wealthy members not only have sufficient fine dwellings but over and above those they raise monuments for ostentation and display.

Some of these Thamudic works exist even today, which I have seen in December, 1959. This place is situated between Al-Madinah and Tabuk, a few miles to the north of Al-Ula (Wad-il-Qura of the Prophet’s time) in Hejaz. The local inhabitants call it Al-Hijr and Madain Salih even today. Al-Ula is still a green and fertile valley abounding in water springs and gardens, but Al-Hijr appears to be an abandoned place. It has thin population, little greenery and

a few wells, one of which is said to be the one at which Prophet Salih's (peace be upon him) she camel used to drink water. This well is now dry and located within a deserted military post of the time of the Turks. When we entered this territory and approached Al-Ula, we found hills which seemed to have been shattered to pieces from top to bottom as if by a violent earthquake. We saw the same kind of hills while travelling to the east, from Al-Ula to Khaibar, for about 50 miles, and towards the north inside Jordan, for about 30 to 40 miles. This indicated that an area, stretching well over 300 to 400 miles in length and 100 miles in width, had been devastated by the terrible earthquake.

A few of the Thamudic type monuments that we saw at Al-Hijr were also found at Madyan along the Gulf of Aqabah and at Petra in Jordan. At Petra, specially, the Thamudic and Nabataean works stand side by side, and their styles and architectural designs are so different that anyone who examines them will find that they were neither built in the same age nor by the same nation. Doughty, the British orientalist, in his attempt to prove the Quran as false, has claimed that the works found at Al-Hijr were not carved out by Thamud but by the Nabataeans. I am of the view that the art of carving houses out of the rocks started with the Thamud, and thousands of years later, in the second and first centuries B.C., it was considerably developed by the Nabataeans and it reached perfection in the works of the caves of Ellora, which were carved out about 700 years after Petra.

150. “So fear Allah and obey me.”

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا
١٥٠

151. “And do not obey the command of the extravagant.”

وَلَا تُطِيعُوا أَمْرَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ
١٥١

152. “Those who spread corruption in the land, and do not reform.”*100

الَّذِينَ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا
يُصْلِحُونَ
١٥٢

*100 That is, you should give up obedience to your chiefs, guides and rulers under whose leadership you are following an evil way of life. These people have transgressed all bounds of morality: they cannot bring about any reforms and they will corrupt every system of life that they adopt. The only way for you towards success and well-being is that you should inculcate fear of God, give up obedience to the misguided and obey me, because I am God’s Messenger. You are fully aware of my honesty and integrity. I have no personal interest and motive for undertaking the work of reform. This was in short the manifesto which Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) presented before his people. It not only contained the religious message but invitation to cultural, moral and political revolution as well.

153. They said: “You are only of the bewitched.”*101

قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِينَ
١٥٣

*101 Enchanted person, mad and insane person who has

lost reasoning power. According to the ancient conceptions, madness was either due to the influence of a jinn or magic. That is why a mad person was either called majnun (one under the influence of a jinn) or one enchanted by magic.

154. “You are not but a human being like us. Then bring us a sign if you are of the truthful.”^{*102}

مَا أَنْتَ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا فَأْتِ بِآيَةٍ
إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ



***102** That is, we cannot believe you to be a Messenger from God because you are just like us and we see no distinction in you. However, if you are true in your claim that God has appointed you as His Messenger, you should present such a clear miracle as should make us believe that you have really been sent by the Creator and Master of the universe.

155. He said: “This is a she camel.^{*103} For her is a (time of) drink, and for you is a (time of) drink, on a day known.”^{*104}

قَالَ هَذِهِ نَاقَةٌ لَهَا شِرْبٌ
وَلَكُمْ شِرْبٌ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ



***103** From the context it appears that it was not a common she-camel, but it was brought about in a supernatural manner because it was presented in response to the demand for a miracle. Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) could not have produced before the people an ordinary she-camel as a proof of his Prophethood because that would not have satisfied them. At other places in the Quran it has been clearly referred to as a miracle. In Surahs Al-Aaraf and Houd it has been said: Here is Allah’s she camel, a sign for you. (Surahs Al-Aaraf, Ayat 73). In Surah Bani Israil the

same thing has been stated more emphatically: And nothing has hindered Us from sending signs except that the former people refused to acknowledge them as such. (For example) We sent the she-camel as an open sign to Thamud but they treated her with cruelty; whereas We send signs only by way of warning. (verse 59). Moreover, the challenge given to the wicked people of Thamud, after presenting the she-camel before them, was such that it could only be given after presenting a miracle.

***104** That is, one day the she-camel will drink water all alone at your wells and springs, and one day you and your animals will take water, and this arrangement will not be violated in any way. There could hardly be a greater challenge for the people of Arabia, for taking of water had been the foremost cause of feuds and fights among them, which mostly resulted in bloodshed, even loss of life. As such, the challenge given by Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) was indeed a challenge to the whole nation, which could not be acceptable unless the people were sure that the challenger had a great power at his back. But Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) threw this challenge all by himself without any worldly power behind him, and the whole nation not only received it quietly, but also abided by it submissively for quite some days.

In Surahs Al-Aaraf and Houd there is an addition to this: Here is Allah's she-camel, a sign for you. So let her graze at will in Allah's land, and do not touch her with an evil intention. (Surah Houd, Ayat 64). That is, the challenge was not only this that the she-camel would drink water all alone

every alternate day, but, in addition, she would freely move about and graze at will in their fields and gardens and palm groves and pastures and was not to be touched with an evil intention.

156. “And do not touch her with harm, lest you be seized by the punishment of a great day.”

وَلَا تَمْسُوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ
عَذَابُ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ



157. So they hamstrung her,^{*105} then they became regretful.

فَعَقَرُوهَا فَاصْبَحُوا نَدِمِينَ



***105** This does not mean that as soon as they heard the challenge, they attacked the she-camel at once and hamstrung her. Actually, when the she-camel became a problem for the whole nation, the hearts of the people were filled with rage, and they began to hold lengthy consultations as to how to get rid of her. At last, a haughty chief undertook the task of putting an end to her, as mentioned in Surah Ash-Shams thus: When arose the most villainous of the people (verse 12), and in Surah Al-Qamar thus: They appealed to their companion; so he took up the responsibility and hamstrung her. (verse 29).

158. Then the punishment seized them.^{*106} Indeed, in that is surely a sign. And most of them are not believers.

فَأَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ
لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ
مُؤْمِنِينَ



***106** As stated at other places in the Quran, when the she-camel was killed, Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) declared: You have only three more days to enjoy yourselves in your houses. (Surah Houd, Ayat 65). When this time limit came to an end, a shocking explosion took place in the night at about dawn, followed by a violent earthquake, which destroyed the whole nation completely. In the morning their dead bodies lay scattered here and there like dry pieces of bush trampled down by animals around an enclosure. Neither their stony castles nor their rock-hewn caves could protect them against the calamity. We sent against them a single blast and they became as the trampled twigs of the fence of a fold-builder. (Surah Al-Qamar, Ayat 31). Consequently a shocking catastrophe overtook them and they lay lifeless in their dwellings. (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 78). At last a violent blast overtook them with the approach of the morning, and all that they had achieved proved of no avail to them. (Surah Al-Hijr, Ayat 83, 84).

159. And indeed, your Lord, He surely is the All Mighty, the Merciful.

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ



160. The people of Lot denied the messengers. ^{*107}

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ



***107** For comparison, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 80-84; Surah Houd, Ayats 74-83; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 57-77; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 71-75; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 54-58; Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayats 28-35; Surah As-Saffat, Ayats

133-138; and Surah Al-Qamar; Ayats 33-39.

161. When their brother Lot said to them: “Will you not fear (Allah).”

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمُ أَخُوهُمْ لُوطٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ
١٦١

162. “Indeed, I am a trustworthy messenger to you.”

إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ
١٦٢

163. “So fear Allah and obey me.”

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا
١٦٣

164. “And I do not ask you any payment for it. My payment is not but from the Lord of the worlds.”

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
١٦٤

165. “Do you come unto the males, of all the creatures.”*108

أَتَأْتُونَ الذُّكْرَانَ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ
١٦٥

***108** This can have two meanings.

(1) Of all the creatures you have chosen males only for the purpose of gratifying your sex desires, whereas there are plenty of women in the world.

(2) You alone are the people in the whole world, who go to men to satisfy the sex desires; even the animals do not resort to this. This second meaning has been explained in Surahs Al-Aaraf and Al-Ankabut thus: Have you become so shameless that you commit such indecent acts as no one

committed before you in the world? (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 80).

166. “And leave what your Lord has created for you of your wives.^{*109} But you are a trespassing people.”^{*110}

وَتَذَرُونَ مَا خَلَقَ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ
أَزْوَاجِكُمْ ۚ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ
عَادُونَ

***109** This can also have two meanings.

(1) You leave your wives whom God has created for you to satisfy your sex desire and adopt unnatural ways with the males for the purpose.

(2) Even with respect to your wives you do not follow the natural way but adopt unnatural ways for the gratification of your lust? This they might have been doing with the intention of family planning.

***110** That is, this is not the only vice in you; your whole lives have become corrupted and perverted, as stated in Surah An-Naml, Ayat 54 thus: Do you commit indecent acts openly and publicly? And in Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayat 29 thus: Have you become so perverted that you gratify your lust with the males, you rob travelers, and you commit wicked deeds publicly in your assemblies? For further details, see E.N. 39 of Surah Al-Hijr.

167. They said: “If you do not desist, O Lot, you will surely be of those who are driven out.”^{*111}

قَالُوا لَئِنْ لَمْ تَنْتَهِ يَلُوطُ
لَتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُخْرَجِينَ

***111** That is, you know that whosoever has spoken against

us, or protested against our doings, or opposed us in any way, he has been turned out of our habitations. If you also behave like that, you too will be treated likewise. It has been stated in Surahs Al-Aaraf and An-Naml that before giving this warning to Prophet Lot (peace be upon him), the wicked people had decided to “turn out these people of your habitations for they pose to be very pious.” (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 82).

168. He said: “Indeed, I am towards your deeds, of those who disapprove (it).”

قَالَ إِنِّي لِعَمَلِكُمْ مِنَ الْقَالِينَ



169. “My Lord, save me and my family from what they do.”^{*112}

رَبِّ نَجِّنِي وَأَهْلِي مِمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ



***112** This may also mean: My Lord, deliver us from the evil consequences of their misdeeds, and also this: Protect the children of the believers from the evil effects of the immoral acts of the wicked people.

170. So We saved him and his family, all together.

فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ



171. Except an old woman of those who remained behind.^{*113}

إِلَّا عَجُوزًا فِي الْغَابِرِينَ



***113** This refers to the Prophet Lot’s (peace be upon him) wife as stated in verse 10 of Surah At-Tahrim about the wives of Prophets Noah and Lot (peace be upon them):

These two women were in the houses of Our two pious servants but they acted treacherously towards them. That is, they did not believe, and sided with the unbelievers instead of their righteous husbands. Therefore, when Allah decreed to send a torment on the people of Prophet Lot (peace be upon him), He commanded the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) to leave the place along with his people but to leave his wife behind: So depart from here with the people of your household in the last hours of the night. And look here: none of you should turn round to look behind; but your wife (who will not accompany you) shall meet the same doom as they. (Surah Houd, Ayat 81).

172. Then We destroyed the others.

ثُمَّ دَمَّرْنَا الْآخَرِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾

173. And We rained upon them a rain (of stones). So evil was the rain of those who were warned. ^{*114}

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا ط فَسَاءَ مَطَرُ الْمُنذَرِينَ ﴿١٧٣﴾

***114** This was not a rain of water but a rain of stones. According to the details given at other places in the Quran, when Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) had left the place along with the people of his household in the last hours of the night, there occurred a terrible explosion at dawn and a violent earthquake, which turned all their habitations upside down and rained on them stones of baked clay as a result of a volcanic eruption and a strong blast of wind. Below we give a resume of the Biblical account and of ancient Greek and Latin writings and modern geological researches and archaeological observations about the

torment and the place where it occurred:

The hundreds of ruins found in the waste and uninhabited land lying to the south and east of the Dead Sea indicate that this must have been a prosperous and thickly populated area in the past. The archaeologists have estimated that the age of prosperity of this land lasted between 2300 and 1900 B.C. According to historians, Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) lived about 2000 B.C. Thus the archaeological evidence confirms that this land was destroyed in the time of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and his nephew Prophet Lot (peace be upon him).

The most populous and fertile part of the area was the vale of Siddim as mentioned in the Bible: And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt (Gen. 13: 10). The present day scholars are of the opinion that valley is now under the Dead Sea and this opinion is supported by firm archaeological evidence. In the ancient times, the Dead Sea did not so much extend to the south as it does today. Opposite and to the west of the present Jordanian city of Al-Karak, there is a small peninsula called Al-Lisan. This was the end of the sea in ancient days. The area to the south of it, which is now under sea water was a fertile valley, the vale of Siddim, in which were situated Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, Zoar, the famous cities of the people of Lot. In about 2000 B.C. this valley sank as a result of a violent earthquake and

was submerged in sea water. Even today this is the most shallow part of the Sea. In the Roman period it was more so and was fordable from Al-Lisan to the western coast. One can still see submerged jungles along the southern coast and there might as well be submerged buildings.

According to the Bible and the ancient Greek and Latin writings, the region abounded in pits of petroleum and asphalt and at places inflammable gas also existed. It appears from the geological observations that with the violent earthquake shocks, petroleum, gases and asphalt were thrown up and ignited, and the whole region exploded like a bomb. The Bible says that when Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) got the news and went from Hebron to see the affected valley, he saw that the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace. (Gen. 19: 28).

174. Indeed, in that is surely a sign. And most of them are not believers.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً ط وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

175. And indeed, your Lord, He surely is the All Mighty, the Merciful.

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

176. The dwellers in the wood (Madain) denied the messengers. *115

كَذَّبَ أَصْحَابُ لَيْكَةِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

*115 The people of *Aiykah* have been briefly mentioned in verses 78-84 of Surah Al-Hijr. More about them here.

There is a difference of opinion among the commentators as to whether the Midianites and the people of Aiykah were two different tribes or one and the same people. One group holds that they were different tribes and gives the argument that in Surah Al-Aaraf Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) has been brother of the Midianites (verse 85), whereas here, with regard to the people of Aiykah, he has not been called so. The other group holds that they were one and the same people on the ground that the moral diseases and characteristics mentioned of the Midianites in Surahs Al-Aaraf and Houd are the same as of the people of Aiykah mentioned here. Then the message and admonition of Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) to both the tribes was the same, and the two tribes also met the same end.

Research in this regard has shown that both the views are correct. The Midianites and the people of Aiykah were doubtless two different tribes but branches of the same stock. The progeny of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) from his wife (or slave girl) Keturah, is well known in Arabia and in the history of the Israelites as the children of Keturah. Their most prominent branch was the one which became famous as the Midianites, after their ancestor, Midian, son of Abraham. They had settled in the territory between northern Arabia and southern Palestine, and along the coasts of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqabah. Their capital city was Madyan, which was situated, according to Abul Fida, on the western coast of the Gulf of Aqabah at five days' journey from Aiykah (present day Aqabah). The rest of the children of Keturah, among whom the Dedanites

are comparatively better known, settled in the territory between Taima and Tabuk and Al-Ula in northern Arabia, their main city being Tabuk, the Aiykah of the ancient times. (Yaqut in his Mujam al-Buldan, under Aiykah, writes that this is the old name of Tabuk, and the natives of Tabuk confirm this).

The reason why one and the same Prophet was sent to the Midianites and the people of Aiykah was probably that both the tribes were descendants of the same ancestors, spoke the same language and had settled in the adjoining areas. It is just possible that they lived side by side in the same areas and had marriages and other social relations between them. Then, these two branches were traders by profession and had developed similar evil practices and social and moral weaknesses. According to the early books of the Bible, these people worshiped Baal-peor. When the Children of Israel came out of Egypt and entered their territory, they also became infected with the evils of idolatry and adultery. (Numbers, 25: 1-5, 31: 16-17). Then those people had settled on the two main international trade routes, the one joining Yaman with Syria and the other the Persian Gulf with Egypt. Due to their advantageous position they had started big scale highway robbery and would not let any caravan pass till it had paid heavy taxes. They had thus rendered these trade routes highly unsafe. Their characteristic of highway robbery has been mentioned in the Quran, for which they were admonished through Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him), thus: And do not lie in ambush by every path (of life) as

robbers in order to frighten the people (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 86). These were the reasons why Allah sent to both the tribes the same Prophet, who conveyed to them the same teachings and message. For the details of the story of Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) and the Midianites, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 85-93; Surah Houd, Ayats 84-95; and Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayats 36-37.

177. When Shueyb said to them: “Will you not fear (Allah).”

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ شُعَيْبٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ



178. “Indeed, I am a trustworthy messenger to you.”

إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ



179. “So fear Allah and obey me.”

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا



180. “And I do not ask you any payment for it. My payment is not but from the Lord of the worlds.”

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ



181. “Give full measure, and do not be of those who cause loss.”

﴿ أَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُخْسِرِينَ



182. “And weigh with the true balance.”

وَزِنُوا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ

183. “And do not deprive people by reducing their goods, nor do evil in the land, making corruption.”

وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ
وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

184. “And fear Him who created you and the generations of the former (people).”

وَاتَّقُوا الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالْجِبِلَّةَ
الْأَوَّلِينَ

185. They said: “You are only of those bewitched.”

قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِينَ

186. “And you are not but a human being like us, and indeed, we think you are surely of the liars.”

وَمَا أَنْتَ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُنَا وَإِن
نَظُنُّكَ لَمِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ

187. “So cause to fall upon us a piece of the heaven, if you are of the truthful.”

فَأَسْقِطْ عَلَيْنَا كِسْفًا مِّنَ
السَّمَاءِ إِن كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

188. He said: “My Lord is Best Knower of what you do.”*116

قَالَ رَبِّيَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

*116 That is, it is not in my power to bring down the torment; it is in Allah's power, and He is fully aware of your misdeeds. He will send down the torment as and when He wills. In this demand of the people of Aiykah and the answer of Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) to them there was an admonition for the Quraish as well. They also demanded from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to bring down the torment on them: Or... you cause the sky to fall down on us in fragments, as you threaten us. (Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 92). As such the Quraish are being told that the people of Aiykah had also demanded a similar thing from their Prophet, and the answer that they got from their Prophet is the answer of Muhammad (peace be on him) to you.

189. So they denied him, then seized them the punishment of a day of the gloomy cloud.*117

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَهُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمِ
الظُّلَّةِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ
عَظِيمٍ



*117 The details of this torment are neither found in the Quran nor in any authentic tradition. What one can learn from the text is this: As these people had demanded a torment from the sky, Allah sent upon them a cloud which hung over them like a canopy and kept hanging until they were completely destroyed by the torment of continuous rain. The Quran clearly points out that the nature of the torment sent upon the Midianites was different from that sent upon the people of Aiykah. The people of Aiykah, as

mentioned here, were destroyed by the torment of the canopy, while the torment visiting the Midianites was in the form of a terrible earthquake: It so happened that a shocking catastrophe overtook them and they remained lying prostrate in their dwellings. (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 91). And: A dreadful shock overtook them and they lay lifeless and prostrate in their homes. (Surah Houd, Ayat 94). Therefore, it is wrong to regard the two torments as identical. Some commentators have given a few explanations of the torment of the Day of canopy, but we do not know the source of their information. Ibn Jarir has quoted Abdullah bin Abbas as saying: If somebody from among the scholars gives you an explanation of the torment of the Day of canopy, do not consider it as correct.

190. Indeed, in that is surely a sign. And most of them are not believers.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً ط وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

191. And indeed, your Lord, He surely is the All Mighty, the Merciful.

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

192. And ^{*118} indeed, this (Quran) is certainly a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. ^{*119}

وَإِنَّهُ لَتَنْزِيلُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

***118** At the end of the historical account, the same theme, with which the Surah began, is resumed. For reference, see verses 1-9.

***119** That is, this lucid Book whose verses are being recited to you, and this admonition from which the people are turning away, is not the product of the whims of a man. It has not been written and compiled by Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself, but it consists of the revelations of the Lord of this universe.

193. The trustworthy Spirit (Gabriel)^{*120} has brought it down.

نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ
١١٣

***120** That is, Angel Gabriel, as mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 97: Say to them: Whosoever is the enemy to Gabriel, he should understand that he has, by Allah's command, revealed to your heart the Quran. Here the object of using the title of the trustworthy Spirit for Gabriel implies that the Quran is not being sent down by Allah through some material agency, which is subject to change and vacillation; but through a pure Spirit, having no tinge of materialism, and who is perfectly trustworthy. This Spirit conveys the messages of Allah precisely in the same form and with the same content as they are entrusted to him. It is not possible for him to tamper with the messages, or to make his own additions to them in any way.

194. Upon your heart, (O Muhammad) that you may be of the warners.

عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ
الْمُنذِرِينَ
١١٤

195. In a clear Arabic language.^{*121}

بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُّبِينٍ
١١٥

***121** This sentence may be related to “the trustworthy Spirit has come down” and also to: “who are (appointed by God) to warn.” In the first case, it will mean that the trustworthy Spirit has brought it down in plain Arabic language, and in the second case, it will mean that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is included among those Prophets who were appointed to warn the people in the Arabic language, i.e. Houd, Salih, Ishmael and Shuaib (peace be upon them all). In both cases the object is the same: the divine message has not been sent down in a dead or mysterious language, or in a language of riddles and enigmas, but in such clear and lucid Arabic, which can be understood easily by every Arab and every non Arab who has learned Arabic. As such, the people who are turning away from it, they cannot have the excuse that they could not understand the message of the Quran. The only reason of their denial and aversion is that they are afflicted with the same disease with which Pharaoh, the people of Abraham the people of Noah, the people of Lot, the Aad and the Thamud, and the people of Aiykah were afflicted.

196. And indeed, it (Quran) is certainly in the Scriptures of the former people. ^{*122}

وَأِنَّهُ لَفِي زُكِرٍ الْأَوَّلِينَ

***122** That is, this very admonition and divine message and teachings are contained in the former Scriptures also. The same message of submission to One God, the same belief in the Hereafter and the same invitation to follow the Prophets has been given in all those Books. All the Books sent down by God condemn shirk and the materialistic

philosophy of life and invite people to accept the true and sound philosophy of life, which is based on the concept of man's accountability before God, and demands that man should give up his independence in deference to divine commands brought and preached by the Prophets. None of these things is new, which the Quran may be presenting for the first time, and none can blame the Prophet (peace be upon him) of saying something which had never been said before by the former Prophets.

Among other arguments this verse also is quoted in support of Imam Abu Hanifah's early opinion that if a person recites the translation of the Quran in the prayer, his prayer will be in order and valid, whether he is able to recite the Quran in Arabic or not. According to Allama Abu Bakr al-Jassas, the basis of this argument is: Allah says that the Quran was contained in the former Scriptures also; obviously this could not be in Arabic words, As such, if translated and presented in another language, it will still be the Quran. (Ahkam-ul-Quran, Vol. III, p. 429). But the weakness of this argument is obvious. The Quran, or any other divine Book, was never revealed in a manner that Allah inspired to the Prophet with its meaning and then he presented it before the people in his own words. The fact is that every Book, in whatever language it came, was revealed in divine words and meanings together. As such, the teachings of the Quran were contained in the former Scriptures in divine words and not in human, and none of their translations could be considered as the divine Book or its representation. As regards the Quran, it has been stated

over and over again that it was literally revealed in the Arabic language: We have sent it down as Quran in Arabic. (Surah Yusuf, Ayat 2). We have sent this command in Arabic to you. (Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 37). An Arabic Quran without any crookedness. (Surah Az-Zumar, Ayat 28). Then just before this verse, it has been said that the trustworthy Spirit has brought it down in Arabic. Now how can it be said that the translation of the Quran made into another language will also be the Quran and its words will represent the words of Allah? It appears that later the Imam himself felt this weakness in the argument and, according to authentic traditions, gave up his earlier opinion, and adopted the opinion of Imams Abu Yusuf and Muhammad, who held that a person who could not recite Arabic words, could recite the translation of the Quran in his prayer till he was able to pronounce Arabic words. However, the prayer of a person, who was able to recite the Quran in Arabic, would not be valid if he recited its translation. The fact is that the two Imams had proposed this concession only for those non Arab converts who were not able to offer their prayer in Arabic immediately after embracing Islam. In this the basis of their argument was not that the translation of the Quran was the Quran itself, but that just as a person unable to perform Ruku and Sajdah was allowed to offer his prayer by making signs, so a person unable to pronounce Arabic words could recite the translation. Then just as the prayer of a person who offered it by making signs could not be valid as soon as the cause of inability was removed, so the prayer of a person

who recited the translation would not be valid as soon as he became able to pronounce Arabic words. (For a detailed discussion, see Al-Mabsut by Sarkhasi, Vol. I, p. 37; Fath ul-Qadir and Sharh Inaya alal-Hedaya, Vol. I. pp. 190-201).

197. And has it not been for them a sign that the scholars of the Children of Israel know it. ^{*123}

أَوَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ آيَةٌ أَنْ يَعْلَمَهُ
عُلَمَاءُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

***123** That is, the learned men of the Israelites know that the teachings of the Quran are the same as of the former Scriptures. Though the people of Makkah themselves were un-initiated in the knowledge of the Book, there were many scholars among the Israelites living in the surrounding areas, who fully understood that the Quran did not bring a novel message, which was being presented by Muhammad bin Abdullah for the first time, but it was the same message which had been brought and preached by Prophets of Allah one after the other since thousands of years. Is it not then a convincing proof of the fact that the Quran has been sent down by the same Lord of the universe Who sent down the former Books.

According to Ibn Hisham's Life of the Holy Prophet, a little before the revelation of these verses a deputation of 20 men, who had been influenced by the preaching of Jaafar, came to Makkah from Habash. They met the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Masjid al-Haram and asked him in the presence of the unbelieving Quraish what his teachings were. In response, the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited a few verses of the Quran, whereupon tears came down

from their eyes and they believed in him there and then to be a true Messenger of Allah. When they took leave of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Abu Jahl met them along with a few other men of the Quraish and rebuked them, saying: Never has a more stupid company come here before: O foolish men, you were sent here by your people with a view to inquiring about this man, but no sooner did you meet him than you gave up your own faith. Those gentle people did not like to have a dispute with Abu Jahl, so they left him, saying: We have no wish to enter an argument with you. You are responsible for your faith and we are for ours. We adopted something in which we saw some good for ourselves. (Vol II, p. 32). This same incident has been mentioned in Surah Al-Qasas, thus: Those to whom We had given the Book before this, believe in the Quran and when it is recited to them, they say: We have believed in it. This is the very truth from our Lord. We were even before this followers of Islam. And when they heard vain and meaningless talk, they refrained from entering an argument, saying: For us are our deeds and for you yours, peace be to you, we do not like the ways of the ignorant. (verse 52-55).

198. And if We had revealed it to any of the non-Arabs.

وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ بَعْضِ الْأَعْجَمِينَ

199. And he had recited it unto them, they would not have believed in it. ^{*124}

فَقَرَأَهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ

*124 That is, now when a man from among themselves is reciting to them this divine revelation in lucid Arabic, they say that he himself has composed it, and therefore it cannot be from Allah. But if the same revelation in eloquent Arabic had been sent down by Allah to a non Arab as a miracle, and he had recited it before them in perfect Arabic accent, they would have invented some other excuse for not believing in him. They would have said that he is under the power and influence of a jinn, who speaks Arabic through a non Arab. As a matter of fact, a lover of the truth considers the thing presented before him coolly and forms an opinion about it after due thought. But an obdurate person who is unwilling to believe, pays no attention to it at all, but instead seeks all sorts of excuses to reject it, and will, in any case, invent an excuse for his denial. This obduracy of the unbelieving Quraish has been exposed over and over again in the Quran, and they have been clearly told that even if a miracle were shown to them, they would certainly have found an excuse to deny it because they are not inclined to believe: O Messenger, even if We had sent down to you a Book written on paper, and even if they had touched it with their own hands, the disbelievers would have said: This is nothing but manifest sorcery. (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 7). Even if We had opened a gate for them in heaven, and they had begun to ascend through it, they would have said: Our eyes have been dazzled; nay, we have been bewitched. (Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 14-15).

200. Thus have We caused it (the denial of the Quran) to

كَذَلِكَ سَلَكْنَاهُ فِي قُلُوبِ

enter into the hearts of the criminals.*125

الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

*125 That is, unlike the truth loving people to whom the Quran brings peace of the mind and heart, it passes like a hot iron rod through the hearts of the disbelievers, which sets them ill at ease, and they, instead of pondering over its themes, start looking for subterfuges to deny it.

201. They will not believe in it until they see the painful punishment.*126

لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ حَتَّىٰ يَرَوْا
الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٢٠١﴾

*126 The kind of torment with which the tribes and communities mentioned above were punished.

202. So it will come upon them suddenly, while they do not perceive.

فَيَأْتِيهِمْ
بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا
يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢٠٢﴾

203. Then they will say: "Can we be reprieved."*127

فَيَقُولُوا هَلْ نَحْنُ مُنظَرُونَ ﴿٢٠٣﴾

*127 That is, until the criminals are actually overtaken by the torment, they do not believe in the Prophet. Then they feel remorse and desire to be given some respite when it is too late.

204. Would then for Our punishment, they hasten.

أَفِعْدَابِنَا يُسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿٢٠٤﴾

205. Have you then seen, if We do let them enjoy for years.

أَفَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ مَتَّعْنَاهُمْ سِنِينَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾

206. Then comes to them that which they were promised.

ثُمَّ جَاءَهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ

207. It shall not avail them, that which they have been enjoying.*128

مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يُمْتَعُونَ

*128 There is a subtle gap between this and the preceding sentence, which the reader himself can fill with a little thinking. They were asking for the torment to be hastened because they were not sure that it would ever come. They were confident that they would continue living a life of ease and indulgence as they had been living till then. On account of the same confidence they challenged the Prophet (peace be upon him), as if to say: If you are a Messenger of Allah, and we deserve to be chastised by Allah because we have treated you as a liar, then you should hasten that torment on us, with which you threaten us. At this it is being said: Well, even if they be right in their confidence, and the torment is not sent upon them immediately, and they are allowed a long respite to enjoy life as they expect, the question is: What will these few years of worldly pleasure and comfort avail them when the inevitable scourge from Allah overtakes them suddenly as it overtook the Aad and the Thamud, or the people of Lot and of Aiykah, or if they are visited by death which nobody can escape.

208. And We did not destroy any township except

وَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا هَا

that it had warners.

مُنذِرُونَ

209. By way of reminder, and We have never been unjust. ^{*129}

ذِكْرِي وَمَا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ

***129** That is, We could not be blamed for any injustice when they did not heed the warning and admonition of the warners and were destroyed. It would have been injustice if no effort had been made to admonish them and guide them aright prior to their destruction.

210. And the devils have not brought it (Quran) down. ^{*130}

وَمَا تَنْزَّلَتْ بِهِ الشَّيَاطِينُ

***130** After the positive aspect as stated in verses 192-193, the negative aspect is being stated that the Quran has not been brought down by satans as the enemies of the truth allege. The unbelieving Quraish in their campaign to spread lies and slander against the Prophet (peace be upon him) were facing a real difficulty. They did not know how to account for the wonderful discourses which were being presented before the people in the form of the Quran and which were moving their hearts deeply. They could not stop the Quran from reaching the people. The only thing they could do to counteract its effect and influence was to create doubts and suspicions about it in their minds and hearts. Therefore, in their desperation they charged that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a sorcerer, who was being inspired by the satans, and they considered this charge of theirs to be the most effective because it could

neither be easily verified nor refuted.

211. And it would neither suit them,^{*131} nor would they be able (to produce it).^{*132}

وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُمْ وَمَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ

***131** That is, these revelations and themes do not at all suit the satans. Any person who has a little common sense can well understand that the sublime discourses being presented in the Quran cannot be inspired by the satans. Never has it happened that the satans might have taught the people through the sorcerers to worship God and fear Him, or forbidden them from shirk and idol-worship, or warned them of the accountability of the Hereafter, or prohibited them from tyranny and sexual and moral evils, and exhorted them instead to act righteously and do good to others. Such works cannot behoove the satans. Their only pastime can be to sow the seeds of discord among the people and to arouse them to mischief and vice. The common observation is that people visit the sorcerers to find out whether they will succeed in their love affairs or not, what move would suit them in gambling, what trick and stratagem would be helpful against the enemy, or who had stolen the camel of so and so. Apart from such affairs and problems, the sorcerers and their patron-saints cannot be expected to worry themselves about matters like reforming the people, teaching them morals and cleansing their lives of vice and evil.

***132** That is, even if the satans wanted they could not impart truth and goodness to the people like a true teacher

and reformer as the Quran does. Even if to deceive the people, they came out under the guise of a benefactor, their work would not be free from blemishes, which would betray their ignorance and their hidden satanic nature. Similarly the life and the teachings of a person who poses to be a religious guide, under the influence and inspiration of satans, would inevitably reflect the wickedness of intention and design. Thus the satans can neither inspire others with piety and goodness, nor can those, who have any relation with the satans, become pious and righteous themselves. Then in addition to its high and noble teachings, the Quran is a lucid and eloquent Book, which contains the knowledge of reality. That is why it has over and over again put forward the challenge that human beings and jinns would never be able to produce a book like the Quran even if they collaborated with all their energies and capacities. Declare this: Even if human beings and jinns should cooperate with one another to bring forth a book like the Quran, they will never be able to bring anything like it, even though all of them help one another (Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 88).

Tell them: if what you say be true, then produce one Surah like this, and you may call to your assistance anyone you can other than Allah. (Surah Yunus, Ayat 38).

212. Indeed, they have been removed far from hearing it. ^{*133}

إِنَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّمْعِ لَمَعزُولُونَ



***133** That is, not to speak of interfering with the revelation of the Quran, the satans are not even given a chance to hear

the Quran any moment from the time Angel Gabriel receives it from Allah till he reveals it to the heart of the Prophet. They are so kept out of its hearing that they cannot get any hint as to its words and contents so as to tell their friends that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was going to give such and such a message to his followers, or that his address would contain such and such a thing that day. For further details see E.Ns 8-12 of Surah Al-Hijr, E.Ns 5-7 of Surah As-Saffat and Surah Jinn, Ayats 8-9,27.

213. So do not call upon with Allah any other god, then you will be among those punished. ^{*134}

فَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ
فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُعَذِّبِينَ



***134** This does not mean that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was going to be involved in shirk from which he was to be admonished to desist. The object was to warn the disbelievers and polytheists to the effect: As the message of the Quran is based on pure truth revealed by the Almighty Ruler of the universe, and there is no tinge of any satanic impurity in it, there could be no question of showing a favor to somebody in regard to the truth. Even if the Messenger (peace be upon him) himself, who is nearest to Allah and His most beloved servant, deviated a little from the path of His obedience and invoked any other deity than Allah, he could not escape the punishment. When it was so in the case of the Prophet, who else could have the hope that after committing shirk with regard to Allah, he would be able to escape the punishment or help others to escape it.

214. And warn your tribe
(O Muhammad) of near
kindred.*135

وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ



*135 Just as there could be no concession or favor for the person of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a matter concerning Allah's religion, so there could be no question of a favor being shown to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) family or his nearest kinsfolk. Here the case of everybody will be judged on merit, and nobody will be shown any favor on account of his ancestry or relation with somebody else. The accountability of the Hereafter and punishment for deviation and misdeeds are the same for everybody and even the Prophet's (peace be upon him) nearest kinsfolk are no exception. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was commanded to warn his relatives and kindred to attain the right belief and to act righteously because they would not escape punishment only by virtue of being his relations.

There are authentic traditions to show that after the revelation of this verse, the Prophet (peace be upon him) first of all addressed the sons and daughters of his grandfather. Calling each one of them by name, he said: O children of Abdul Muttalib, O Abbas, O Safiah, paternal aunt of Allah's Messenger, O Fatimah, daughter of Muhammad! You are warned to beware and save yourselves from the torment of the Hell-Fire. I cannot protect you from Allah's punishment. You may, however, demand whatever you like from my worldly property. Then

as was the custom in Arabia, to warn the people of an impending calamity, he stood on top of Mount Safa one morning and called out: O people of Quraish, O children of Kaab bin Luayy, O children of Murrah, O children of Qasayy, O children of Abd Manaf, O children of Abd Shams, O children of Hashim, O children of Abdul Muttalib, and in this way he called out each branch and clan of the Quraish by name. When all the people had come together, he said: O People, if I tell you that on the other side of this hill, there is a huge army ready to attack you, will you believe my word? With one voice they replied in the affirmative, saying that they had never heard a lie from him in the past. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Well, I warn you of the impending scourge of Allah. Save yourselves from His punishment. I cannot be of any help to you against Him. On the Day of Resurrection, the only righteous will be nearest to me. Let it not happen that others should come forth with good deeds and you should appear with the burden of sins on your heads. Then you will call me for help, but I shall be constrained to turn my face away from you. Of course, here in this world, I am bound to you by blood relations, and I shall treat you with all possible politeness as a good relation should. (Several traditions on this subject have been reported in Bukhari, Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Tirmizi, Ibn Jarir on the authority of Aishah, Abu Hurairah, Abdullah bin Abbas, Zubair bin Amr and Qabisah bin Makhariq).

The matter was not simply this that on receipt of the command to warn your nearest kinsfolk, the Prophet

(peace be upon him) called together all his relatives and complied with it. In fact, the principle it meant to stress was that in the matter of religion the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his relations enjoyed no special privilege of which the other people might be deprived. What was harmful for one man was harmful for everybody. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was supposed to first protect himself from this and then warn his nearest kinsfolk and the common people of its fatal consequences. On the other hand, what was good and beneficial for one man was good and beneficial for all. As such, the Prophet (peace be upon him) should first adopt it himself and then exhort his relatives also to adopt it, so that everybody may see that the Prophet does not only preach his message to others but also practices it himself sincerely. The Prophet (peace be upon him) followed this principle throughout his life. On the conquest of Makkah, when he entered the city, he declared: Every kind of interest payable from the people during the age of ignorance, is trampled under my feet, and first of all, I remit the interest payable to my uncle Abbas." (It should be noted that before the prohibition of interest, Abbas traded money on interest, and a substantial amount of interest payable to him at that time was outstanding against the people). Once the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered cutting off of the hand of a Quraishite woman, named Fatimah, on the charge of theft, Usamah bin Zaid came to intercede for her, whereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: By God, even if Fatimah, daughter of Muhammad, had committed the theft, I would have

ordered amputation of her hand, too.

215. And lower your wing (in kindness) unto those who follow you among the believers.

وَأَخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ
مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

216. So if they disobey you, then say: “Indeed, I am free of (the responsibility of) what you do.”*136

فَإِنْ عَصَوْكَ فَقُلْ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ
مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

*136 This can have two meanings.

(1) Treat those of your relatives with kindness, who have believed in you and followed your teachings practically; as for those who have not accepted your message, you may declare that you are not responsible for what they do.

(2) You should treat with kindness every such person, who believes in and obeys you, and you should warn every unbeliever that you take no responsibility for his actions.

This verse shows that at that time there were some people among the Quraish and the neighboring Arabs, who had believed in the truth of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) message; but they had not as yet started obeying his teachings practically. They were still, as usual, living the same life of unbelief among their people as were the other unbelievers. Allah set apart such believers from those true believers who after belief had adopted total obedience of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Command to treat with kindness was meant only for the latter group. As for those who had turned away from his obedience, and who included both those who believed in the truth of his

message and those who rejected it, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was instructed to disown them, and tell them plainly that they themselves were responsible for their deeds, and that after giving them the warning he was not at all responsible for what they did.

217. And put your trust in the All Mighty, the Merciful.*137

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ

*137 That is, you should not care at all for any worldly power, howsoever big and strong, but should continue to perform your mission with complete trust in that Being Who is Mighty as well as Merciful. He is Mighty and, therefore, anybody enjoying His support, cannot be overcome by any other power; He is Merciful and, therefore, He will not let go waste the sacrifices and efforts of the one who struggles for the sake of raising His Word in the world.

218. He who sees you when you stand up (to pray).*138

الَّذِي يَرَاكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ

*138 “Stand up” may mean getting up for the Prayers during the night, or coming out for the purpose of performing the Prophetic mission.

219. And (sees) your movements among those who fall prostrate.*139

وَتَقَلُّبِكَ فِي السَّاجِدِينَ

*139 This can have several meanings.

(1) Allah watches you when in the congregational Prayers you stand and sit and perform Ruku and Sajdah with your

followers behind you.

(2) He watches you when you get up in the night to see what your companions (whose mark of distinction is that they prostrate themselves in worship) are doing for their own well-being in the Hereafter.

(3) He is fully aware of how you and your companions are endeavoring to reform the people.

(4) He is fully aware of all your efforts to revolutionize the lives of the people who prostrate themselves in worship; He knows what sort of training you are giving them to reform them; how have you purified their lives and transformed them into the best people.

These characteristics of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions have a special significance in the context here. In the first place, the Prophet (peace be upon him) deserves Allah's mercy and His support for Allah, being All-Hearing and All-Knowing, is fully aware of the struggle he is waging for His cause and of the efforts he is making to reform his companions. Secondly, when a person is living such a noble life as Muhammad (peace be upon him) is actually living, and the characteristics of his followers are those which Muhammad's (peace be upon him) companions have, only an ignorant person can have the boldness to say that he is inspired by the satans, or that he is a poet. People are fully aware of the lives of the sorcerers who are inspired by the satans and also of the poets and their admirers living among them. Can anybody honestly say that there is no difference whatsoever between the noble life being led by Muhammad (peace be upon him)

and his companions and the sort of life being led by the poets and the sorcerers. Then, what is it if not sheer impudence that the former are openly being branded as poets and sorcerers without any shame.

220. Indeed He, only He is the All Hearer, the All Knower.

إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٢٢٠﴾

221. Shall I inform you upon whom the devils descend.

هَلْ أَنْبِئُكُمْ عَلَىٰ مَنْ تَنَزَّلُ الشَّيَاطِينُ ﴿٢٢١﴾

222. They descend upon every lying, sinful one. ^{*140}

تَنَزَّلُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿٢٢٢﴾

***140** This implies the sorcerers, astrologers, fortune-tellers and conjurers who pose as knower of the unseen and tell the people their future, or as wise men who have control over jinns and spirits and can make the destinies of the people through them.

223. They whisper hearsay into ears, and most of them are liars. ^{*141}

يُلْقُونَ السَّمْعَ وَأَكْثُرُهُمْ كَذِبُونَ ﴿٢٢٣﴾

***141** This may have two meanings.

(1) The satans somehow get a little hint of the truth and inspire their agents with it, mixing it with all kinds of falsehood.

(2) The deceitful, unscrupulous sorcerers hear something from the satans and then mixing it with falsehood, whisper

it into the people's ears. This has been explained in a tradition which Bukhari has quoted on the authority of Aishah. She says that when some people asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about sorcerers, he replied that they were nothing. They said: O Messenger of Allah, they, sometimes, tell the right thing. The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered: That right thing is overheard by the jinns who whisper it into their friend's ear, who concocts a story by mixing a lot of falsehood in it.

224. And the poets, those straying in evil, follow them. ^{*142}

وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ

***142** That is, the people who follow and accompany the poets, are wholly different in their characteristics, habits and temper from those who follow and accompany Muhammad (peace be upon him). The difference between the two groups is so obvious that one group can be easily distinguished from the other. On the one side, there are the people who are characterized by the high seriousness, civilized and gentle behavior, righteousness and fear of God, sense of responsibility and a high regard for the rights of others. People who are fair and just in their dealings, who do not utter a word except in the cause of goodness, who have a high and pure ideal before them, which they pursue with single-minded devotion and for whose attainment they expend all their energies and capabilities. On the other side, there are the people whose only pastime is to portray erotic scenes of love and wine-drinking, mocking and jesting, satirizing and eulogizing, or to arouse

feelings of hatred and enmity and vengeance against others, or to describe charms of unchaste women to the brothel or of chaste ladies in the houses, only for the sake of pleasing the people and winning their applause. From the crowds who throng the poetic sessions and follow the famous poets, one cannot help forming the impression that those people are free from every moral restriction, who have no object in life except to gratify the lusts of the flesh like animals, and who have no idea whatever of the higher and nobler ideals and ends of life. The person who cannot see the obvious difference between the two types is indeed blind. But if in spite of seeing and knowing the difference, only for the purpose of suppressing the truth, he says that Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions are no different from the poets and their followers, he is not only a liar but has also transgressed all bounds of modesty and decency.

225. Have you not seen that they stray in every valley. ^{*143}

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ
يَهيمُونَ



***143** That is, they follow no fixed pattern for their thought and speech but wander aimlessly in every valley. Every new impulse makes them take up a new theme regardless as to whether it has any truth in it or not. Under one momentary impulse they would start uttering wise things; under another they would give expression to filthy and base feelings. If they felt pleased with somebody, they would exaggerate his praises, and if they felt offended by him,

they would condemn him and run him down to hell. If they had a selfish motive, attached with somebody, they would feel no hesitation in giving preference to a miserly person over a generous person and to a cowardly person over a gallant person. On the contrary, if they felt displeased with somebody, they would not feel any shame in blotting his character and ridiculing him and his ancestors. That is why, one can find God-worship and atheism, materialism and spiritualism, morality and immorality, piety and filthiness, seriousness and jesting, eulogy and satire expressed side by side in the poetry of one and the same poet. A person who is aware of these well known characteristics of the poets cannot reconcile himself to charging the recipient of the Quran with poetry, whose every discourse and word is clear and precise, whose objective is clearly defined, and who has never in his life uttered a word deviating in any way from the path of truth, righteousness and virtue.

At another place in the Quran, it has been stated that poetry is not suited to the temperament of the Prophet: (peace be upon him). We have not taught him poetry, nor does it suit him. (Surah Ya Sin, Ayat 69). And this fact was well known to the people who had any personal acquaintance with the Prophet (peace be upon him). Authentic traditions show that he could not recite a complete verse from memory. If ever during conversation he remembered of a good verse of some poet, he would recite it without much care and regard for its meter and order of words.

Once Aishah was asked whether the Prophet (peace be upon him) ever made use of poetic verses in his discourses. She replied that he hated poetic verses the most, though sometimes he would recite a verse of a poet of Bani Quais, but in so doing he would unconsciously change the order of its words. When Abu Bakr corrected him, he would say: Brother, I am not a poet, nor composing poetry is my object. Arabic poetry abounded in themes of sex and love romances, wine drinking, tribal hatreds and feuds, ancestry pride and vanity and made little or no mention of pure and noble themes. It was so saturated with falsehood, exaggeration, false accusations, undue praise, vanity, satiric invectives, jesting and polytheistic obscenities that the Prophet (peace be upon him) once remarked: It is better that the interior of one of you be filled with pus than with poetic verses. However, if there was something good in a verse, he would appreciate it, and say: Some verses are based on wisdom. When he heard the verses of Umayyah bin Abi-Salt, he said: His verse is a believer but his heart a disbeliever. Once a companion recited a hundred or so good verses before him, and he went on urging him to recite more.

226. And that they say
what they do not do. *144

وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ مَا لَا
يَفْعَلُونَ



*144 This characteristic of the poets was just the antithesis of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) conduct and practice. Everybody knew that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said

what he practiced and practiced what he said. The fact that there was complete conformity between his word and deed could not be denied by anybody. On the contrary, everyone was well aware that the poets said one thing and practiced just the opposite of it. For instance, they would express noble themes of generosity, indifference to worldly wealth, contentment and self-respect in their poetry, but, in practical life, they would turn out to be extremely stingy and cowardly, avaricious and selfish. They would find fault with others on trifles, but would themselves be involved in grave moral weaknesses.

227. Except those (poets) who believe and do righteous deeds, and remember Allah much, and defend themselves after that they have been wronged.^{*145} And those who do wrong will come to know by what overturning they will be overturned.^{*146}

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا
وَأَنْتَصَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا^ط
وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ
مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ



***145** Here those poets have made an exception from the general reproach, who possess the following four characteristics:

- (1) They should be believers in Allah, His Prophets, His Books and the Hereafter.
- (2) They should be pious in practical life and not sinners, nor free from moral restrictions to say whatever they like.

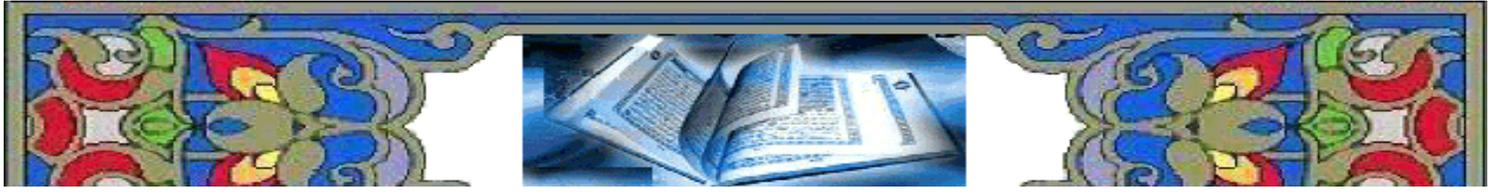
(3) They should be remembering Allah much in their day to day lives as well as in their literary work. It should not be so that their personal lives reflect God consciousness and piety, but their poetry is replete with themes of debauchery and lusts of the flesh, or that their poetry is full of serious themes of wisdom and God consciousness, but their personal lives are devoid of any trace of the remembrance of Allah. As a matter of fact, both these states are equally despicable. A good poet is he who is God conscious in his personal life and whose poetic talent and skills also are devoted to the advancement of the way of life followed by the God conscious, God fearing and God worshipping people.

(4) They should not satirize others for personal reasons, nor take vengeance on others on account of personal, racial and national prejudices, but when they are required to support the truth, they should use their literary powers like weapons of war against the unjust and treacherous people. It does not behoove the believers to adopt a humble, supplicating attitude against injustice and oppression. Traditions show that when the unbelieving and mushrik poets raised a storm of false accusations against Islam and the Prophet (peace be upon him) and spread the poison of hatred against the Muslims, the Prophet (peace be upon him) urged and encouraged the poets of Islam to counter attack them. Once he said to Kaab bin Malik: Satirize them, for, I swear by God in Whose hand is my soul, your verse will be more effective and damaging for them than the arrow. Likewise he said to Hassan bin Thabit: Deal

with them and Gabriel is with you. And: Say and the Holy Spirit is with you. (This statement should be taken as when Hassan bin Thabit would say his poetry to refute the poetry of the disbelievers, Allah's help will be with him and an angel (Gabriel) will stand next to him and refute along with him). Once he said: The believer fights with the sword as well as with the tongue.

***146** "Those who do wrong": The people who out of sheer obduracy calumniated the Prophet (peace be upon him) of being a sorcerer, poet and a mad and enchanted man, in order to defeat Islam, and to confuse the other people and distract them from his message and invitation.





النَّمْل An-Namal

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the phrase *wad-in-naml* which occurs in verse 18, implying that it is a Surah in which the story of *An-Naml* (the Ant) has been related.

Period of Revelation

The subject matter and the style bear full resemblance with the Surahs of the middle Makkan period and this is supported by traditions as well. According to Ibn Abbas and Jabir bin Zaid, “First the Surah Ash-Shuara was sent down, then the Surah An-Naml and then Al-Qasas.”

Theme and Topics

The Surah consists of two discourses, the first from the beginning of the Surah to the end of verse 58, and the second from verse 59 to the end of the Surah.

The theme of the first discourse is that only those people can benefit from the guidance of the Quran and become worthy of the good promises made in it, who accept the realities which this Book presents as the basic realities of the universe, and then follow up their belief with obedience and submission in their practical lives as well. But the

greatest hindrance for man to follow this way is the denial of the Hereafter. For it makes him irresponsible, selfish and given to worldly life, which in turn makes it impossible for him to submit himself before God and to accept the moral restrictions on his lusts and desires. After this introduction three types of character have been presented.

The first type is characterized by Pharaoh and the chiefs of Thamud and the rebels of the people of Lot, who were all heedless of the accountability of the Hereafter and had consequently become the slaves of the world. These people did not believe even after seeing the miracles. Rather they turned against those who invited them to goodness and piety. They persisted in their evil ways which are held in abhorrence by every sensible person. They did not heed the admonition even until a moment before they were overtaken by the scourge of Allah.

The second type of character is of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him), who had been blessed by God with wealth and kingdom and grandeur to an extent undreamed of by the chiefs of the disbelievers of Makkah. But, since he regarded himself as answerable before God and had the feeling that whatever he had was only due to Allah's bounty. He adopted the attitude of obedience before Him and there was no tinge of vanity in his character.

The third type is of the queen of Sheba, who ruled over a wealthy and well known people in the history of Arabia. She possessed all those means of life, which could cause a person to become vain and conceited. Her wealth and possessions far exceeded the wealth and possessions of the

Quraish. Then she professed *shirk*, which was not only an ancestral way of life with her, but she had to follow it in order to maintain her position as a ruler. Therefore, it was much more difficult for her to give up *shirk* and adopt the way of *Tauhid* than it could be for a common *mushrik*. But when the truth became evident to her, nothing could stop her from accepting it. Her deviation was, in fact, due to her being born and brought up in a polytheistic environment and not because of her being a slave to her lusts and desires. Her conscience was not devoid of the sense of accountability before God.

In the second discourse, at the outset, attention has been drawn to some of the most glaring and visible realities of the universe, and the disbelievers of Makkah have been asked one question after the other to the effect: “Do these realities testify to the creed of *shirk* which you are following, or to the truth of *Tauhid* to which the Quran invites you?” After this the real malady of the disbelievers has been pointed out, saying, “The thing which has blinded them and made them insensitive to every glaring reality is their denial of the Hereafter. This same thing has rendered every matter and affair of life non-serious for them. For, when according to them, everything has to become dust ultimately, and the whole struggle of life is purposeless and without an object before it, the truth and falsehood are equal and alike. Therefore, the question whether one’s system of life is based on the right or wrong foundations, becomes meaningless for him.”

But the discourse, as outlined above, is not meant to

dissuade the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Muslims from calling the obdurate and heedless people to the way of *Tauhid*; it is, in fact, intended to arouse them from their slumber. That is why in Ayats 67-93 certain things have been said repeatedly in order to produce in people a sense of the Hereafter, to warn them of the consequences of being heedless of it, and to convince them of its coining, like an eye witness of something, who convinces the other person of it, who has not seen it.

In conclusion, the real invitation of the Quran that is, the invitation to serve One Allah alone, has been presented in a concise but forceful manner, and the people are warned that accepting it would be to their own advantage and rejecting it to their own disadvantage. For, if they deferred their faith until they saw those signs of God after the appearance of which they would be left with no choice but to believe and submit, they should bear in mind the fact that that would be the time of judgment and believing then would be of no avail.

1. Ta. Seen. These are the verses of the Quran and a Book (that makes things) clear.*1

طس ۚ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْقُرْآنِ
وَكِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ

*1 *Kitabim-mubin* has three meanings: (1) This book presents its teachings and instructions and injunctions plainly; (2) It distinguishes between the truth and falsehood clearly; and (3) Its being a divine Book is obvious. Whoever studies it with open eyes will realize that it has not been composed and forged by the Prophet (peace be upon him).

2. A guidance and good tidings^{*2} for the believers.

هُدًى وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*2 That is, the verses themselves are a “guidance” and “good tidings”, because they give guidance and convey good news in a most excellent manner.

3. Those who establish prayer and give the poor-due^{*3} and they regarding the Hereafter, they have certainty.^{*4}

الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ
الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ
يُوقِنُونَ

*3 That is, these verses of the Quran give guidance and convey the good news of a good end only to those people who possess these two qualities: (1) They should affirm faith, that is, accept the invitation of the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), believe in One God as their only Deity and Lord, accept the Quran as the Book of Allah, acknowledge the Prophet (peace be upon him) as a true prophet and their leader, and also adopt the belief that after this life there is another life, in which man has to render his full account of deeds and be rewarded or punished accordingly. (2) They should not only profess faith verbally, but should also be inclined to follow and obey the divine commands practically, and the first indication of this inclination is that they should establish the Salat and pay the Zakat. The verses of the Quran will show the right way of life only to those people who fulfill these two conditions; they will explain to them the difference between the right and the wrong at every stage

on the way, protect them against the wrong ways at every turn of the way, and bless them with the satisfaction that whatever be the consequences of following the right way in the world. In the Hereafter, they will certainly attain the eternal and everlasting success and the good will of Allah only through it. For, in order to derive full benefit from the teaching of a teacher, one has first to have faith in him, then accept to be his student, and then work according to his instructions. Similarly, a patient who wants to be benefited by a doctor has first to accept him as a physician, and then follow his instructions with regard to medical dosage, prevention, etc. Then only he can assure the patient of the desired results.

Some people have interpreted the words *yutun-az-zakat* in this verse to mean that they should adopt moral purity. But, wherever in the Quran the word *ita-i-zakat* has occurred along with the word *iqamat-i-salat*, it means payment of the Zakat, which is the second pillar of Islam after the Salat. Moreover, the Quran has used the word *tazakka* for adopting piety and purity and not *ita* which is specifically used for the payment of the Zakat. In fact, what is meant to be impressed here is this: In order to benefit fully by the guidance of the Quran, it is imperative that one should adopt the attitude of submission and obedience in practical life, as well after the affirmation of the faith, and the establishment of the Salat and the payment of the Zakat is the first indication that one has actually adopted such an attitude. If there is no such indication, it will become obvious that one is rebellious: he might have acknowledged

a ruler as such, but he is not inclined to carry out his commands.

*4 Although belief in the Hereafter is an article of the faith, and a believer will also believe in it along with believing in *Tauhid* and the prophethood, here it has been specially mentioned separately in order to bring out its unique importance. The object is to impress that for those people who do not believe in the Hereafter, it is impossible to follow, even tread, the way taught by the Quran. For the people of this way of thinking naturally determine their criterion of good and evil by the results that appear, in this world. For them it is not possible to accept any admonition or guidance which seeks to determine the good and evil by the criterion of the gain and loss in the Hereafter. Such people in the first instance do not at all heed the teachings of the prophets, but if for some reason, they also get included among the believers, they find it difficult to take even the initial steps on the way of the faith and Islam because of the lack of faith in the Hereafter. For, as soon as they will encounter the first situation where the demands of the worldly gains and the losses of the Hereafter will pull them in opposite directions, they will freely allow themselves to be pulled towards the worldly gains without caring in the least for the losses of the Hereafter, even though they may be making all sort of claims to be the believers.

4. Indeed, those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have made fair seeming to

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ
زَيَّنَّا لَهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُمْ

them their deeds, so they
stray about blindly.*5

يَعْمَهُونَ

*5 That is, this is God's law of nature and the natural logic of human psychology that when man thinks that the results of his life's struggle are confined to this world only when he does not believe in the existence of any court where his life's work has to be scrutinized and judged finally for good and evil, and when he does not believe in any life in Hereafter when he will be requited strictly in accordance with the real worth of his life's deeds, he will inevitably develop in himself a material outlook on life, and every kind of conflict between the truth and falsehood, good and evil, morality and immorality, will appear utterly meaningless to him. Then, whatever earns him pleasure and enjoyment, material progress and prosperity, power and authority, will be the good for him, no matter it be any philosophy of life, any way of life and any system of morality. He will have no concern for truth and reality. His real ambition will be to win successes and earn adornments only of this worldly life, and their pursuit will lead him astray into every valley. Then, whatever he does with this object in view will be a thing of beauty for him, and he will regard all those others as foolish, who are not absorbed like him in seeking the world, and doing anything and everything without any moral qualm and inhibition.

5. They are those for whom
there is the worst of
punishment,*6 and they in the
Hereafter, they will be the

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ
وَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ هُمُ الْآخْسَرُونَ

greatest losers.



*6 Nothing definite has been said about the form, time and place of this “worst of punishment.” For it is imposed in this world also on different persons and groups and nations in countless different ways; a part of it is also experienced by the wicked when they are about to leave the world; man experiences it also in the intermediary state between death and resurrection; and then after resurrection it will become endless and everlasting.

6. And indeed (Muhammad), you surely receive the Quran from All Wise, All Aware.*7

وَإِنَّكَ لَتُلْقَى الْقُرْآنَ مِنْ
لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ عَلِيمٍ

*7 That is, the things being mentioned in the Quran are not imaginary, nor are they based on the presumptions and opinions of a man, but they are being revealed by the One Who is All-Wise and All-Knowing, Who is perfect in Wisdom and Knowledge, Who has full knowledge of the affairs of His creation and of its past and present and future, and Whose Wisdom devises the best schemes for the reform and guidance of His servants.

7. When Moses said to his family:*8 “Indeed, I have seen a fire. I will soon bring you from there some information, or I will bring you a burning brand, that you may warm yourselves.”*9

إِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِأَهْلِهِ إِنِّي
ءَأَنْتُمْ نَارًا سَعَاتِكُمْ مِّنْهَا
بِخَبْرٍ أَوْ ءَاتِيكُمْ بِشِهَابٍ قَبَسٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ
تَصْطَلُونَ



***8** This happened at the foot of Mount Tur when the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was traveling along with his family in search of a suitable place for settlement, after passing eight to ten years in Madyan (Midian). From Madyan, whose territory lay on both sides of the Gulf of Aqabah, on the sea-shores of Arabia and the Sinai Peninsula, he reached the place called Mt. Sinai and Jabal Musa in the southern part of the Peninsula, which at the time of the revelation of the Quran was well known as Tur. (See Ash-Shuara, E.N. 115). The details of this story have been given in Surah Ta Ha: Ayats 9-24, and in Surah Al-Qasas: Ayats 29-36.

***9** The context shows that it was a cold wintry night and the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was passing through unfamiliar land. Therefore, he said to his family, "Let me go and find out what habitation it is where a fire is alight, and get some information about the traveling routes and the nearby habitations. I shall at least bring a few embers for you to light a fire and warm yourselves."

The place where the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had seen a burning bush is situated at about 5,000 ft. above sea level at the foot of Mt. Tur. Constantine, the first Christian Emperor of the Roman Empire, had a church built in about 365 A.D. right at the spot where this event had occurred. Two hundred years later Emperor Justinian had a monastery built which included the church built by Constantine as well. Both the monastery and the church stand even today and are under the control of the monks of the Greek Orthodox Church.

8. So when he came to it, he was called that:^{*10} “Blessed is whoever is in the fire, and whoever is around it. And glorified be Allah, the Lord of the worlds.”^{*11}

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهَا نُودِيَ أَنْ بُورِكَ
مَنْ فِي النَّارِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا
وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

***10** According to Al-Qasas: Ayat 30, the voice was calling out from a tree. What one understands from this is this: A sort of a fire was alight on the ground on the edge of the valley, but neither was anything burning nor any smoke arising. In the midst of the fire there stood a lush green tree from which a voice started calling out this all of a sudden. This is a strange thing which the prophets of Allah have been experiencing. When the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was first blessed with prophethood, an angel appeared before him in the solitude of the cave of Hira and started delivering Allah’s message. A similar thing happened with the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) also. A journeying person has halted at a place, sees a fire at a distance, approaches it in order to get some information about the route, or to pick a burning ember, and suddenly Allah, Lord of the Worlds, the Infinite, the Inconceivable Being, starts speaking to him. On such occasions, there exists externally as well as within the Prophets’ own selves an extraordinary state which fills them with the assurance that it is not a jinn or a satan or an illusion of their own mind, nor are their senses being deceived, but it is the Lord of the universe, or His Angel, who is speaking to them. (See E.N. 10 of Surah An-Najm).

*11 Here the use of the words *Subhan-Allah* (glorified is Allah) is meant to warn the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) to this effect: “You should never think that Allah, Lord of the universe, is sitting in the tree, or has entered into it, or that His absolute Light has concentrated itself into the limited sphere of your sight, or some tongue is functioning in some mouth to produce speech, but it is Allah, Who is Pure and Free from all such limitations, Who is Himself speaking to you.”

9. “O Moses, indeed, it is I, Allah, the All Mighty, the Wise.”

يَمُوسَىٰ إِنَّهُ أَنَا اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ

10. “And throw down your staff.” Then when he saw it writhing as if it were a snake,^{*12} he fled turning his back and did not look back. “O Moses, do not fear. Indeed, the messengers do not fear in My presence.”^{*13}

وَأَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَلَمَّا رَءَاهَا تَهْتَزُّ
كَأَنَّمَا جَانٌّ وَّلِيٌّ مُدْبِرًا وَلَمْ
يُعَقِّبْ يَمُوسَىٰ لَا تَخَفْ إِنِّي
لَا يَخَافُ لَدَىَّ الْمُرْسَلُونَ

*12 In Surahs Al-Aaraf and Ash-Shuara, the snake has been called *thuban* (a large serpent) but here *jaann*, a small snake. The reason is that in physical size it was a serpent but in movement it was swift like a small snake. The same thing has been expressed by *hayyatun tasaa* (a running snake) in Surah Ta Ha: Ayat 20.

*13 That is, “In My presence there is no danger of any harm to the messenger. When I call someone into My

presence to appoint him to the high office of prophethood, I Myself become responsible for his safety. Therefore, the messenger should remain fearless and confident in every kind of unusual situation: it will never harm or hurt him in any way.”

11. “Except him who did wrong,^{*14} then has changed evil for good afterwards, so indeed, I am Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.”^{*15}

إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ ثُمَّ بَدَّلَ حُسْنًا
بَعْدَ سُوءٍ فَإِنِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

***14** This exception can be contiguous as well as remote. In the first case it will imply that there can be a genuine cause of fear if the messenger has committed an offense; in the second case it will mean: “None should have any cause of fear in My presence, unless, of course, someone has committed an offense.”

***15** That is, “If even an offender repents and reforms himself and does good instead of evil, I will pardon him.” This implied both a warning and a good news. The Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had killed a Copt inadvertently and fled from Egypt. This was an offense to which a subtle reference was made. When this offense was committed unintentionally by the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), he had immediately offered repentance to Allah, saying, “O my Lord! I have sinned against myself, so forgive me.” So, “Allah forgave him” there and then. (Surah Al-Qasas: Ayat 16). Here the good news of the same forgiveness has been given to him, as if to say, “O Moses, there could be a genuine cause for you to feel afraid in My presence,

because you had committed an offense, but when you have changed the evil into good, I have nothing but forgiveness and mercy for you. I have not called you here at this time to punish you, but I am going to send you on a great mission with wonderful miracles.”

12. “And put your hand into your bosom, it will come out white without disease. (These are) among nine signs^{*16} to Pharaoh and his people. Indeed, they have been disobedient people.”

وَأَدْخَلَ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجُ
بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ فِي تِسْعِ
آيَاتٍ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمِهِ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ
كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَسِيقِينَ

***16** According to Surah Bani-Israil: Ayat 101, the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had been granted nine clearly visible signs, which according to the details given in Surah Al-Aaraf were the following: (1) The staff’s turning into a serpent, (2) the shining hand when it was drawn out of the armpit, (3) public triumph over the magicians, (4) occurrence of a widespread famine in the land as foretold by the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), (5) the storm, (6) the locusts, (7) the incidence of weevils in the grain stores and of lice among human beings and animals, (8) the frogs, and (9) the rain of blood. (See E.N. 43 of Surah Az-Zukhruf).

13. Then when Our signs came to them, plain to see, they said: “This is an obvious magic.”

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَاتُنَا مُبْصِرَةً
قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ

14. And they rejected them, while their souls had acknowledged them, wrongfully and arrogantly.^{*17} Then see how was the end of those who acted corruptly.

وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا
أَنْفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا فَانظُرْ
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ



***17** As mentioned at other places in the Quran, whenever a plague befell Egypt as foretold by the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), Pharaoh would say, “O Moses, pray to your Lord to remove this plague; then we shall submit to what you say.” But as soon as the plague was removed, Pharaoh would break his promise. (Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayat 134, Az-Zukhruf: Ayats 49-50). The Bible also has mentioned it (Exodus. 8 to 10). It could not be imagined that the occurrence of a famine throughout the country, and the coming of a violent storm, and the incidence of the locusts and the frogs and the weevils in such abundance could be due to any trick of magic. The miracles were so manifest that even a simple minded person could not help but realize that the occurrence of the plagues on such a large scale and their removal at the Prophet’s prayer could be only due to Allah, Lord of all Creation’s Power and Authority. That is why the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had told Pharaoh plainly: “You know it full well that none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent down these signs.” (Surah Bani-Israil: Ayat 102). But the reason why Pharaoh and his chiefs rejected Moses (peace be upon him)

knowingly was: “What! should we believe in these two men who are human beings like ourselves and whose people are our bondsmen?” (Surah Al-Muminun: Ayat 47).

15. And certainly, We gave knowledge to David and Solomon,^{*18} and they said: “Praise be to Allah, who has favored us above many of His believing slaves.”^{*19}

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ
عِلْمًا وَقَالَا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي
فَضَّلَنَا عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

***18** That is, the knowledge of the reality, the knowledge that whatever they have is not theirs but the gift of Allah and whatever rights they have been granted over those things should be used strictly according to Allah’s will. For, they will be held answerable before Allah, the real Owner, for the right and wrong use of those rights. This knowledge is the opposite of the ignorance in which Pharaoh was involved. The type of character built on the ignorance has been presented in the preceding verses. Now, in the following verses, the model of the character built on the knowledge is being presented. The sort of kingdom, wealth, power and grandeur were common on both sides. The Pharaoh had been given these as well as the Prophets David and Solomon. But the distinction of the ignorance and the knowledge built and molded them into entirely different personalities.

***19** That is, “There were other believing, servants as well, who could be blessed with vicegerency. But it is only

Allah's favor, not due to any special quality in ourselves, that He has chosen us to be rulers over this kingdom.”

16. And Solomon inherited David,^{*20} and he said: “O people, we have been taught the language of birds,^{*21} and we have been bestowed of all things.^{*22} Indeed this, it surely is an evident favor.”

وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمٰنٌ دَاوُدَ ۗ وَقَالَ
يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عَلَّمْنَا مَنطِقَ
الطَّيْرِ وَاوتينا مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۗ اِنَّ
هٰذَا لَهٗوَ الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِيْنُ

***20** Succession here does not mean inheritance of wealth and properties, but the succession to the Prophet David (peace be upon him) in the prophethood and vicegerency. For the wealth and possessions, if at all transferred, could not be transferred to the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) only, because Prophet David (peace be upon him) had other children also. Therefore, this verse cannot be cited to refute the Hadith reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him), saying, “The inheritance left by us, the Prophets, is not divided as such. Whatever we leave behind is charity.” (Bukhari). And, “There is no heir to a Prophet. Whatever he leaves behind is divided among the needy and the indigent of the Muslims.” (Musnad Ahmad).

The Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) was the youngest son of the Prophet David (peace be upon him). His Hebrew name Solomon is a synonym of Salim (right-minded, affable). He succeeded the Prophet David (peace be upon him) in 965 B.C. and ruled his kingdom for forty years, till 926 B.C. (For other details of his life and works,

see E.N. 74-75 of Surah Al-Anbiyaa). Our commentators have greatly exaggerated the vastness of his kingdom, and have held that he ruled over a large part of the world. The fact, however, is that his kingdom comprised only the present Palestine and Transjordan and a part of Syria.

*21 There is no mention in the Bible that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) had been taught speech of the birds and animals, though the Israelite traditions contain a reference to it.

*22 That is, "Allah has bestowed on us all sorts of things." This, however, should not be understood literally; it only means the abundance of the wealth and the means of life granted by Allah. This was not said proudly by Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) but only to express his gratitude to Allah for His grace and bounty and favors.

17. And there were gathered before Solomon his armies of the jinn and men, and the birds,^{*23} and they were set in battle order.

وَحُشِرَ لِسُلَيْمَانَ جُنُودُهُ مِنَ
الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ وَالطَّيْرِ فَهُمْ
يُوزَعُونَ



*23 The Bible does not either make any mention that there were jinns in the Prophet Solomon's (peace be upon him) armies, and he took service from them; but the Talmud and the rabbinical traditions contain details of this. Some of the present-day writers have strained every nerve to prove that the words *jinn* and *tair* do not refer to the jinns and birds but to men who performed different duties in the Prophet Solomon's (peace be upon him) army. They say

that the *Jinn* were the people of the mountain tribes whom Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) had subdued and who performed tasks of great strength and skill under him; and *tair* implies cavalry which could move much faster than the infantry. But these are indeed the worst examples of misinterpreting the Quran. The Quran here mentions three distinct kinds of the army consisting of the men, the jinns and the birds, and all the three have been qualified by the prefix *al* (*alif-lam*) to denote a class. Therefore, *al-jinn* and *al-tair* could not be included in *al-ins* (the men), but could be two separate and different classes from the men. Moreover, a person who has a little acquaintance with Arabic cannot imagine that in this language the mere word *al-Jinn* could ever imply a group of the men, or *al-tair* as troops mounted on horses, nor could any Arab understand these meanings from these words. Calling a man a jinn because of some supernatural feat of his, or a woman a fairy because of her beauty, or a fast moving person a bird, does not mean that the words jinn and fairy and bird will henceforth be taken to mean a powerful man and a beautiful woman and a fast moving person respectively. These are only the metaphoric and not the real meanings of these words. In a discourse, a word is used in its figurative instead of its real meaning, and the listeners also will take it in that meaning, only when there exists in the context a clear pointer to its being figurative. What, after all, is the pointer in the context here from which one may understand that the words *jinn* and *tair* have been used not in their real and lexical meaning but in their figurative meaning?

Contrary to this, the work and the state of a member each of the two groups that have been mentioned in the following verses, fall entirely against the purport of this interpretation. If a person does not want to believe in something stated in the Quran, he should frankly say that he does not believe in it. But it would be moral cowardice and intellectual dishonesty if one should force the clear words of the Quran to give the meaning that he wants them to give, and tells the world that he believes in what the Quran says, whereas he does not, in fact, believe in it but believes in his own distorted meaning.

18. Until, when they came upon the valley of the ants, an ant said: “O ants, enter your dwellings lest Solomon and his armies crush you, while they are not perceiving.”*24

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَوْا عَلَىٰ وَادِ النَّمْلِ
قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ
ادْخُلُوا مَسْكِنَكُمْ لَا
يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ
وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ



*24 This verse also has been greatly misconstrued by some commentators of the present day. They say that *wad-in naml* does not mean “valley of the ants”, but it is the name of a valley that was in Syria, and *namlah* does not mean an ant but it is the name of a tribe. Thus, according to them, the verse means this: “When the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) reached the valley of the ants, a Namilite said, O people of the Naml tribe” But this also is an interpretation which is not supported by the words of the

Quran. Even if we took *wad-in-naml* to be the name of a valley and supposed that it was inhabited by the tribe of Bani an-Naml, it would be against the Arabic idiom and usage to speak of a member of the tribe as namlah. Although there are many Arab tribes which have been named after the animals, e.g. Kalb (dog), Asad (lion), etc. Yet no Arab would ever say in respect of a member of the Kalb or the Asad tribe: "A dog said, or a lion said, etc." Therefore, it would be against the Arabic idiom to say in respect of a member of the Naml tribe: "An ant (namlah) said this." Then a member of the Naml tribe's warning the people of his tribe, saying, "O Namilites, get into your houses lest Solomon's hosts should trample you down without even knowing it," becomes meaningless, It has never happened that an army of men should have trampled down a group of men without knowing it. If the army has come with the intention of an attack, it would be useless for the other side to get into their houses, for in that case the invaders would follow them into their houses, and trample them more ruthlessly. And if the army is only on the routine march, it is just enough to clear off the way for it. Human beings may be harmed by the marching columns, but it can never happen that the soldiers on the march would trample down other men without knowing it. Therefore, if Bani an-Naml were a tribe of human beings, and one of its members were to warn his people, then in case of an attack, he would have said, "O Namilites, flee your houses and take refuge in the mountains lest Solomon's armies should destroy you." And in case there

was no danger of an attack, he would have said, “O Namilites, clear off the way lest one of you should be harmed by the marching columns of Solomon’s armies.”

This error in the interpretation is on account of the Arabic idiom and the subject-matter. As for the name of the valley and the tribe of Bani an-Naml inhabiting it, it is a mere hypothesis for which there exists no scientific proof. Those who hold that *wad-in-naml* was the name of a valley have themselves pointed out that it had been so named because of the abundance of ants in it. Qatadah and Muqatil say, “It is a valley in the land of Syria where ants are found in abundance.” But in no book of history and geography and in no archaeological research it is mentioned that it was inhabited by a tribe called Bani an-Naml. Thus, it is merely a concoction that has been invented to support one’s own interpretation.

This story is also found in the Israelite traditions but its latter portion falls against the Quran as well as against the real dignity of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him). According to it, when the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) was passing through a valley which abounded in ants, he heard an ant calling out to the other ants to say, “Get into your holes, otherwise you will be trampled down by Solomon’s hosts.” At this, Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) displayed great vanity before the ant to which the ant said, “What are you? - the product of a mere sperm drop!” Hearing this the Prophet Solomon felt greatly ashamed. This shows how the Quran corrects the wrong traditions of the Israelites, and cleanses the filthy spots with which they

had themselves branded the characters of their prophets. It is these traditions about which the Western orientalists shamelessly claim that the Quran has plagiarized them for its narratives.

Rationally also, it is not at all inconceivable that an ant should warn members of its own species of an impending danger and tell them to get into their holes. As for the question as to how the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) heard it, the answer is: It is not all difficult to understand the crude speech of an ant for a person whose senses can comprehend and receive a subtle message like the word of revelation.

19. So he (Solomon) smiled, laughing at her speech, and said: “My Lord, bestow upon me^{*25} that I may be thankful for your favor with which You have favored upon me and upon my parents, and that I may do righteous deeds that will please You. And admit me by Your mercy among Your righteous slaves.”^{*26}

فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّن قَوْلِهَا
وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ
نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ
وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ
صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي
بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ



الصَّالِحِينَ

***25** “Bestow upon me that I may be thankful” means this: “O my Lord! The wonderful powers and abilities that You have given me are such that if I become even a little

forgetful and heedless, I might transgress the bounds of service and be puffed up with pride and go astray. Therefore, O my Lord, bestow upon me so that I may remain grateful to You for all Your blessings instead of being ungrateful.”

*26 “And admit me by Your mercy among Your righteous slaves” probably implies this: “I should be included among the righteous in the Hereafter and should enter Paradise along with them.” For a person who does righteous acts will automatically be righteous, but one’s entry into Paradise in the Hereafter cannot come about merely on the strength of one’s good works, but it will depend on Allah’s mercy. According to a *Hadith*, the Prophet (peace be upon him) once said, “Merely the deeds of any one of you will not enable him to enter Paradise.” It was asked, “In your case too, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied, “Yes, I also shall not enter Paradise only on the strength of my deeds, unless Allah Almighty covers me with His mercy.”

This prayer of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) on this occasion becomes irrelevant if *an-namal* is taken to mean a tribe of human beings and *namlah* a member of that tribe. After all, there could be nothing extraordinary in the warning given by a member of a human tribe to the people of his tribe about the approaching troops of a powerful king that it should have induced the king to make such a prayer to Allah. However, a person having such a wonderful power of comprehension that he may hear the speech of an ant from a distance and also understand it, is certainly something extraordinary, which can involve a

person in self-conceit and vanity. In such a case only the prayer of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) can be relevant.

20. And he inspected the birds^{*27} and said: “How is it of me, I do not see the hoopoe, or is he among the absentees.”

وَتَفَقَّدَ الطَّيْرَ فَقَالَ مَا لِيَ لَا
أَرَى الْهُدُودَ أَمْ كَانَتْ مِنْ
الْغَائِبِينَ

*27 That is, the birds whose troops, as mentioned above, were included in the armies of Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) like the troops of the men and jinns. It is just possible that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) had employed them for communicating messages, hunting and performing other such services.

21. “I will surely punish him with a severe punishment, or I will certainly slaughter him, or he must bring to me a clear reason (for absence).”^{*28}

لَأُعَذِّبَنَّهُ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا أَوْ
لَأَأْذِنَنَّه أَوْ لِيَأْتِيَنِّي بِسُلْطَنِ
مُبِينٍ

*28 Some people of the modern time say that the *hud-hud* (hoopoe) does not mean the bird commonly known by this name, but is the name of a man who was an officer in the army of Solomon. This claim is not based on any historical research in which they might have found a person named *hud-hud* included in the list of the officers of the government of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him), but they base their claim on the argument that the custom

of naming human beings after animals is prevalent in Arabic as in other languages and was also found in Hebrew. Moreover, the work that has been ascribed to the *hud-hud* in the following verses and its conversation with the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) can, according to them, be only performed by a human being. But if one keeps in view the context in which this thing occurs in the Quran, it becomes evident that this is no commentary of the Quran but its distortion. After all, why should the Quran put the intellect and intelligence of man to the test by using enigmatic language? Why should it not clearly say that a soldier of the Prophet Solomon's (peace be upon him) cavalry, or platoon, or communication department, was missing, whom he ordered to be searched out, and who came and gave this news and whom he dispatched on such and such a mission? Instead, it uses such language that the reader, from the beginning to the end, is compelled to regard it as a bird. Let us, in this connection, consider the parts in their sequence as presented in the Quran.

First of all, Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) expresses his gratitude to Allah for His this bounty: "We have been taught the speech of the birds." In this sentence, firstly, the word *tair* has been used absolutely which every Arab and scholar of Arabic will take in the meaning of a bird, because there is nothing in the context that points to its being figurative; secondly, if *tair* implied a group of men and not a bird, the word language or tongue would have been used concerning it and not speech. Then, a person's knowing the tongue of another people is not so

extraordinary a thing that it should be specially mentioned. Today there are among us thousands of men and women, who can speak and understand many foreign languages. This is in no way an unusual achievement which may be mentioned as an extraordinary gift of God.

Then the Quran says, “For Solomon (peace be upon him) were gathered hosts of jinns and then and birds.” In this sentence, firstly, the words *jinn* and *ins* (men) and *tair* have been used as names for three well-known and distinct species denoted by these words in Arabic. Then they have been used absolutely and there is nothing in the context that may point to any of them being used metaphorically, or as a simile, because of which one may take them in another meaning than their well-known lexical meaning. Then the word *ins* has occurred between the words *jinn* and *tair* which does not allow taking it in the meaning that the *jinn* and the *tair* were, in tact, two groups included in the species of *ins* (men). Had this been meant the words would have been: *ul jinn wat-tair min-al-ins* and not *min-al-jinn wal-ins wat-tair*.

A little further on, the Quran says that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) said this when during his review of the birds he found the *hud-hud* missing. If the *tair* were human beings and *hud-hud* also was the name of a man, a word or two should have been there to indicate this so that the poor reader should not have taken the word for a bird. When the group being mentioned is clearly of the birds and a member of it is called *hud-hud*, how can it be expected that the reader will of his own accord understand

them to be human beings?

Then the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) says, “I will punish him severely, or even slaughter him, unless he presents before me a reasonable excuse.” A man is killed, or hanged, or sentenced to death, but never slaughtered. Some hard-hearted person may even slaughter another person out of vengeance, but it cannot be expected of a Prophet (peace be upon him) that he would sentence a soldier of his army to be slaughtered only for the offense of desertion, and Allah would mention this heinous act of the Prophet (peace be upon him) without a word of disapproval.

A little further on, we shall again see that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) sends the same *hud-hud* with a letter to the queen of Sheba and tells him “to cast it before her”. Obviously, such an instruction can be given to a bird but not at all to a man when he is sent as an envoy or messenger. Only a foolish person will believe that a king would send his envoy with a letter to the queen of another country and tell him to cast or throw it before her. Should we suppose that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) was not aware of the preliminary social etiquette which even common people like us also observe when we send our servant to a neighbor? Will a gentleman tell his servant to carry his letter to the other gentleman and throw it before him?

All these things show that the word *hud-hud* here has been used in its lexical meaning, showing that he was not a man but a bird. Now, if a person is not prepared to believe that a

hud-hud can speak those things that have been ascribed to it in the Quran, he should frankly say that he does not believe in this narrative of the Quran. It is sheer hypocrisy to misconstrue plain and clear words of the Quran according to one's own whims only in order to cover up one's lack of faith in it.

22. But he (bird) did not take long when he came and said: "I have grasped (in knowledge) that which you have not grasped, and I have come to you from Sheba with a true news."^{*29}

فَمَكَثَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ فَقَالَ أَحَطْتُ
بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ، وَجِئْتُكَ مِنْ
سَبَأِ بِنَبَأٍ يَقِينٍ



***29** Sheba were a well-known commercial people of southern Arabia, whose capital city of Marib lay about 55 miles to the north east of Sana, the present capital of Yaman. They rose to power after the decline of the Minaean Kingdom in about 1100 B.C. and flourished for a thousand years in Arabia. Then in 115 B.C. they were replaced by the Himyarites, the other well-known people of southern Arabia, who ruled Yaman and Hadramaut in Arabia and Habash in Africa. The Sabaeans controlled the whole trade that passed between eastern Africa, India, the Far East and Arabia, as well as Egypt, Syria, Greece and Rome. That is why they were famous for their wealth in the ancient times; so much so that according to the Greek historians they were the richest people of the world. Besides trade and commerce, another great reason for their prosperity was that they had built dams here and there in

their country to store rainwater for irrigation purposes, which had turned their whole land into a veritable garden. The Greek historians have made mention of the unusual greenery of their country; and the Quran also refers to it in Surah Saba: Ayat 15. The statement of the *hud-hud*, “I have obtained knowledge of things of which you have no knowledge”, does not imply that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) was wholly unaware of Saba. Obviously, the ruler of Syria and Palestine whose kingdom extended to the northern shores of the Red Sea (Gulf of Aqabah), could not be unaware of a people who ruled the southern shores (Yaman) of the same Red Sea, and who also controlled an important pan of the international trade. Moreover, according to Psalms, Solomon’s father, Prophet David (peace be upon them), knew Saba. We find the following words of his prayer in Psalms.

“Give the king thy judgment, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king’s son (i.e. Solomon). The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba (i.e. of Yaman’s and Habash’s branches) shall offer gifts.”

Therefore, what the *hud-hud* means to say is this: “The knowledge of the things I have seen with my eyes in the central city of the Sabaeans has not yet reached you.”

23. “Indeed, I have found a woman ruling over them, and she has been given (abundance) of all things, and hers is a mighty throne.”

إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ أَمْرًا تَمَلِكُهُمْ
وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهِيَ
عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ

24. “I found her and her people prostrating to the sun other than Allah,^{*30} and Satan^{*31} has made their deeds fair-seeming to them,^{*32} and has kept them away from the way (of truth), so they are not guided.”

وَجَدْتَهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ
لِلشَّمْسِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَزَيْنَ
لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَلَهُمْ
فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا
يَهْتَدُونَ



***30** This shows that the people of Saba at that time followed the religion of sun-worship, which is also supported by the ancient traditions of Arabia. Ibn Ishaq has cited the genealogists saying to the effect that Saba have in fact descended from an ancestor whose name was Abd Shams (slave of the sun, or sun-worshiper) and title Saba. This is supported by the Israelite traditions as well. According to these when the *hud-hud* arrived with the Prophet Solomon’s (peace be upon him) letter, the queen of Sheba was going for the worship of the sun-god, and it threw the letter on the way before the queen.

***31** The style shows that the sentences from here to the end of the paragraph are not a part of the *hud-hud*’s speech but its speech ended with: “they prostrate themselves before the sun”, and these words are an addition by Allah to its speech. His opinion is supported by the sentence: “He knows all that you conceal and reveal.” These words give the impression that the speaker and the addressees here are not the *hud-hud* and the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon

him) and his courtiers respectively, but the speaker is Allah and the addressees the mushriks of Makkah, for whose admonition this story has been related. From among the commentators, Allamah Alusi, the author of *Ruh-al-Maani*, also has preferred the same opinion.

*32 That is, Satan has made them believe that earning the worldly wealth and making their lives more and more grand and pompous is the only real and best use of their mental and intellectual and physical powers. Apart from these, they need not think seriously of anything else: they need not bother themselves to see whether there was any factual reality behind the apparent life of the world or not. And whether the basis of their religion, morality, culture and system of life accorded with that reality or went utterly against it. Satan satisfied them that when they were making adequate progress in respect of wealth and power and worldly grandeur, they had no need to see whether their beliefs and philosophies and theories were correct or not, for the only proof of their being correct was that they were earning wealth and enjoying life to their hearts content.

25. “So they do not prostrate to Allah, who brings forth the hidden in the heavens and the earth,^{*33} and knows what you hide and what you proclaim.”^{*34}

أَلَّا يَسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي يُخْرِجُ
الْخَبَاءَ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُخْفُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ



*33 That is, He is bringing continuously into existence those

things which before their birth were hidden here and there. He is bringing out continuously countless kinds of vegetation and minerals from the bowels of the earth. He is manifesting from upper space such things as could not even be conceived by the human mind before their manifestation.

***34** That is, His knowledge embraces everything, the open and hidden are alike for Him. He is aware of everything. By citing these two attributes of Allah the object is to impress that if they had not been deluded by Satan, they could have seen the right way clearly. They could have perceived that the hot burning sphere of the sun which has no sense of its own existence, did not deserve to be worshiped but worship was due to Him alone who is the All-Knowing and the All-Wise Being, and whose power is bringing into existence new and ever new phenomena every moment.

26. “Allah, there is no god but Him, Lord of the Supreme Throne.”^{*35}

AsSajda.

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ



***35** This is one of the verses of the Quran, where its recital makes it obligatory to perform a Sajdah (prostration), and there is a consensus on this of the Muslim jurists. The object of performing a Sajdah here is that a believer should set himself apart from the sun-worshipers and should declare by his action that he does not regard the sun but Allah Almighty alone as his Deity and Lord.

27. He (Solomon) said: “We shall soon see whether you speak the truth or you are of the liars.”

﴿ قَالَ سَنَنْظُرُ أَصَدَقْتَ أَمْ كُنْتَ

مِنَ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾

28. “Go with this letter of mine and cast it down to them, then turn away from them and see what (answer) they return.”^{*36}

اَذْهَبْ بِكِتٰبِيْ هٰذَا فَاَلْقِهٖ اِلَيْهِمْ
ثُمَّ تَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَاَنْظُرْ مَاذَا

يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾

***36** Here ends the role of the *hud-hud* (hoopoe). The rationalists deny its being a bird for the reason that a bird could not possibly be endowed with such powers of observation, discrimination and expression that it should pass over a country and should come to know that it is the land of Saba, it has such and such a system of government, it is ruled by a certain woman, its religion is sun worship, that it should have worshiped One God instead of having gone astray, and then on its return to the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) it should so clearly make a report of all its observations before him. Due to these very reasons the open atheists object that the Quran is a book of fables and legends; then those who try to interpret the Quran rationally misconstrue its clear words in order to prove that the *hud-hud* was not at all a bird but he was a man. But the question is: What scientific information do these people have by which they could tell, with absolute certainty, what powers and abilities do the different species of animals and their different individuals have? The information that they possess only consists of the results

inferred from the grossly insufficient observation made by them of the life and behavior of the animals. In fact, man has not so far been able to know through any certain means what different animals know and what they see and hear, and what they feel and think and understand, and how the mind of each one of them works. Yet, whatever little observation has been made of the life of the different species of animals, it has revealed some of their wonderful abilities. Now, when Allah, Who is the Creator of these animals, tells us that He had taught the speech of the birds to one of His Prophets and blessed him with the ability to speak to them, and the Prophet's taming and training had so enabled a *hud-hud* that it could make certain observations in the foreign lands and could report that to the Prophet, we should in fact, be prepared to revise our little knowledge about the animals in the light of Allah's statement. But, instead, we commit the folly of taking our insufficient knowledge as the criterion and belie this statement of Allah or distort it out of its true meaning.

29. She (The Queen of Sheba) said "O chiefs, indeed, there has been cast to me a noble letter."

قَالَتْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُوْا إِنِّي أُلْقِيَ إِلَيَّ
كِتَابٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

30. "Indeed, it is from Solomon, and indeed it is, in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful."

إِنَّهُ مِنْ سُلَيْمَانَ وَإِنَّهُ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ
الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. "That exalt not against me, and come to me in

أَلَّا تَعْلُوا عَلَيَّ وَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ

submission.”^{*37}



***37** That is, “The letter is important for several reasons: (1) It has reached me in an unusual way. Instead of an envoy it has been brought and dropped at me by a bird. (2) It is from Solomon, the great ruler of Palestine and Syria. (3) It begins with the name of Allah, the Compassionate, and Merciful, which is an unusual way of correspondence and is not followed by any kingdom in the world. (4) Then, it is also unusual that a letter should be written only in the name of Allah, the Exalted, spare from all other gods and goddesses. (5) The most important thing in it is that it quite clearly and plainly invites us to give up rebellion and adopt obedience and present ourselves before Solomon in submission (or as Muslims).”

“Come to me in submission” can have two meanings: (1) “Present yourselves in submission”; and (2) “present yourselves as Muslims (after embracing Islam).” The first meaning is in accordance with the Prophet Solomon’s (peace be upon him) position as a ruler, and the second with his position as a prophet. Probably this comprehensive word was used in order to convey both the meanings through the letter. The same sort of invitation has always been extended by Islam to independent nations and governments that they should either accept Islam and become equal partners in the Islamic system of life, or surrender political independence and submit to the system of Islam and pay Jizyah.

32. She said: “O chiefs, advise me in my affair. I do not decide a matter until you are present.”*38

قَالَتْ يَأَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَفْتُونِي فِي
أَمْرِي مَا كُنْتُ قَاطِعَةً أَمْرًا
حَتَّى تَشْهَدُونَ

*38 The words used in the text are: *hatta tash-hu-dun* (until you are present, or unless you bear witness). That is: “I regard your presence necessary when I take a decision in important matters, and also that whatever decision I take you should be there to testify that it is right and correct.” This shows that though the system of government among Saba was kingship, it was not tyrannical; but the ruler of the time decided matters in consultation with the important people in the government.

33. They said: “We are men of great strength, and of great military might, but it is for you to command, so consider what you will command.”

قَالُوا نَحْنُ أَوْلُوا قُوَّةً وَأَوْلُوا بِأَسْ
شَدِيدٍ وَالْأَمْرُ إِلَيْكَ فَانظُرِي
مَاذَا تَأْمُرِينَ

34. She said: “Indeed kings, when they enter a township, they ruin it, and make most honorable amongst its people low.*39 And thus will they do.”*40

قَالَتْ إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا
قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا وَجَعَلُوا أَعِزَّةَ
أَهْلِهَا أَذِلَّةً وَكَذَلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ

***39** In this one sentence a thorough criticism has been made of imperialism. The kings' invasion of the other countries and the victorious nations' violence against the oppressed nations has never been for the sake of reform and goodwill. The object has been to control and exploit the means and resources of sustenance granted to the other nation by God, and make it so helpless that it should never be able to rise in resistance and demand its share. For this purpose they block up all its means of prosperity, power and honor, crush down all self respecting elements, instill in its members attitudes of slavery, flattery, treachery and spying against one another, imitation of the conqueror and respect for his civilization, contempt of their own civilization and other such mean qualities of character. Thus, gradually they bring them down to such a low level of character where they may not hesitate even to sell off any of their most sacred objects of heritage and be ready to perform any wretched service on payment.

***40** This sentence has two meanings and both are equally probable: (1) It may be a part of the queen of Sheba's speech, which she might have added in order to emphasize her foregoing words; and (2) it may be Allah's words which have been added as a parenthesis in support of the queen's speech.

35. "And indeed, I will send to them a gift, then see with what (reply) the messengers return."

وَإِنِّي مُرْسَلَةٌ إِلَيْهِمْ بِهَدِيَّةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ
بِمَ يَرْجِعُ الْمُرْسَلُونَ



36. So when they came to Solomon, he said: “Would you help me with wealth. But that which Allah has given me is better than that which He has given you.^{*41} But, it is you who rejoice in your gift.”

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ سُلَيْمَانَ قَالَ
أَتُمِدُّونَنِي بِمَالٍ فَمَا آتَانِي اللَّهُ
خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا آتَاكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ
بِهِدَايَتِكُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

***41** This sentence is not meant to express pride and vanity. What it means to say is this: “I have no desire for your wealth; I only desire that you should believe, or at least submit to a righteous system. If you agree to neither of these alternatives, it is not possible for me to accept the bribes of wealth and leave you free in the matter of a polytheistic and wicked system of life. What my Lord has given me is enough for me to cherish any desire for your wealth.”

37. “Return to them, then we will surely come to them with hosts^{*42} that they cannot resist them, and we will surely drive them out from there in disgrace, and they will be abased.”

أَرْجِعْ إِلَيْهِمْ فَلَنَأْتِيَنَّهُمْ بِجُنُودٍ لَّا
قِبَلَ لَهُمْ بِهَا وَلَنُخْرِجَنَّهُمْ مِنْهَا
أَذِلَّةً وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

***42** There is a subtle gap between this and the previous sentence, which one can easily fill up by a careful study of the discourse. It means this: “O messengers, take these gift back to the people who have sent you. They will either have to yield to our first proposal, i.e. they should come before us as Muslims, or we shall bring forces against them.”

38. He (Solomon) said: “O chiefs,^{*43} which of you will bring to me her throne before that they come to me, surrendering.”^{*44}

قَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُوا أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِي
بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتُونِي
مُسْلِمِينَ



***43** The details of the story that have been omitted are to the effect. The envoys returned to the queen with the gift and made a report of what they had seen and heard. The queen decided on the basis of what she heard about the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) to make a visit to Jerusalem to see him personally. She left Saba for Palestine accompanied by her royal entourage and sent a message to Solomon’s court that she was coming to personally hear the invitation from the king and to have a direct talk with him. Here, the story is resumed from the time when the queen had reached near Jerusalem and was going to appear before Solomon (peace be upon him) in a day or two.

***44** That is, the same throne about which the hoopoe (*hud-hud*) had reported, “She has a splendid throne.” Some commentators have given a strange interpretation here. They say that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) wanted to have the throne before him before the queen’s arrival because he wanted to take possession of it. For, he feared that if the queen became a Muslim. It would be unlawful to take possession of her property without her approval: therefore, he made haste to have the queen’s throne with him even before her arrival in Jerusalem,

because at that time it was lawful to take it into his possession. May Allah pardon us! This is a strange concept about the intention of a prophet. Why should one not understand the verse in the light that Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) wanted to show a miracle also to the queen and her courtiers besides preaching his message so that she might know what extraordinary powers Allah, Lord of the worlds, had granted His prophet so that she might be convinced that Solomon (peace be upon him) was surely a prophet of Allah? Some modern commentators have put an even more strange meaning on this verse. They translate the verse thus: “Which of you can bring me a throne for the queen:” whereas the Quran has used the word *bi-arshi-ha* which means “her throne”, and not *bi-arshil-laha*, “a throne for her”. They mistranslate the verse in order to get rid of what the Quran has stated that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) wanted the queen’s own throne to be brought froth Yaman to Jerusalem and that too before the queen’s arrival.

39. A mighty one from among the jinn said: “I will bring it to you before that you rise from your place.^{*45} And indeed, I am for such (task) surely strong, trustworthy.”^{*46}

قَالَ عِفْرِيْتُ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا
ءَاتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِنْ
مَّقَامِكَ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ



***45** From this it becomes obvious whether the jinns under the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) were, according

to the interpretation of some rationalist commentators of the modern times, from among mankind or from among the hidden creation commonly known as jinns. Obviously, the sitting of the Prophet Solomon's court would at the most be of three to four hours, and the distance of Marib, capital of Saba, from Jerusalem was, even as the crow flies, not less than 1500 miles. To fetch a splendid throne of a queen from such a distant place in such a short time could not be possible for a man, even if he be a very strong and robust person. This task cannot be performed even by a jet plane of today. The throne was not lying in a jungle from where it had just to be fetched. It lay in a queen's palace, which must have been well-guarded, and in the absence of the queen it must have been kept in a secure place. If a man had gone to fetch it, he should have been accompanied by a commando force so that he could overwhelm the guards and snatch away the throne. How could all this be accomplished before the rising of the court? This thing can be conceived only in connection with a real jinn!

*46 That is, "You can trust me in that I will not carry it away, nor steal any valuable thing from it."

40. He who had knowledge from the Scripture said: "I will bring it to you before that your gaze returns to you."^{*47} Then when he saw it placed before him, he said: "This is from the favor of my Lord, that He may test me

قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِّنَ
الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ
يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ فَلَمَّا رَآهُ
مُسْتَقَرًّا عِنْدَهُ قَالَ هَذَا مِن

whether I give thanks or I am ungrateful.*48 And whoever gives thanks, so he only gives thanks for (the good of) his ownself. And whoever is ungrateful, then indeed, my Lord is Absolute in independence, Bountiful.”*49

فَضْلَ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي ۖ أَشْكُرُ أَمْ
أَكْفُرُ ۖ وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ
لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي
غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ



*47 Nothing is known with certainty as to who this person was, what special knowledge he had and what book is referred to here, the knowledge of which he had. No explanation of these things has been given either in the Quran or in any authentic *Hadith*. Some of the commentators say that it was an angel, others say that it was a man. Then they differ as to the identity of the man. Someone mentions the name of Asaf bin Barchiah, who, according to the rabbinical traditions, was the Prince of Men. Someone says that he was Khidr, someone mentions some other name, and Imam Razi insists that it was the Prophet Solomon himself. But none of these has any reliable source for this information, and Imam Razi's opinion does not even fit in with the Quranic context. Likewise, about the book also the commentators differ. Someone says that it refers to *Lauh-i-Mahfuz* (the Preserved Tablet) and some other takes it for the Book of Law. But all this is mere guess work. Similar guesses have been made about the knowledge the man had from the book. We only know and believe what has been said in the Quran, or what becomes evident from its words. In any

case the person was not from among the jinns, and possibly he was a man. He possessed some extraordinary knowledge, which had been derived from some Divine Book (al-Kitab). The jinn had claimed to fetch the throne within a few hours by means of his physical strength; this man fetched it in a moment by the power of his knowledge.

***48** The words of the Quran are very clear in this regard. This person's claim did not remain a claim like the jinn's, but, in fact, as soon as he made the claim the throne was seen placed before the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) the next moment. just consider these words:

“I will bring it to you before that your gaze returns to you. Then when he saw it placed before him.”

Anyone who reads these words, regardless of the extraordinary nature of the event, will surely understand that no sooner did the person utter these words than the event as claimed by him took place forthwith. There is, therefore, no need to make far-fetched interpretations of this plain matter. Then, on seeing the throne, the Prophet Solomon's exclaiming, “This is from the favor of my Lord, that He may test me whether I give thanks or I am ungrateful” can be relevant only if the event be extraordinary; otherwise if only a skillful craftsman of the king had hurriedly made or arranged a throne for the queen, it could not be so novel an event at which the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) should have spontaneously exclaimed: “This is from the favor of my Lord” and feared that the prompt arrangement of a throne for the honorable guest might cause him to become

ungrateful to Allah instead of being grateful. After all, there could be no question of a believing ruler's becoming involved in vanity and self-conceit on this small achievement, especially when he was not merely an ordinary believer but a Prophet of Allah.

As for the question as to how a royal throne was fetched over a distance of 1,500 miles in the twinkling of an eye, it can be briefly answered thus: "The concepts of time and space, and matter and movement, that we have formed on the basis of our experiments and observations, are only applicable to us. These concepts are not correct in respect to God, nor is He bound by these. Not to speak of an ordinary throne, His power can make the sun; and even much larger stars, travel millions of millions of miles in the matter of moments. The God who by His one command brought this huge universe into being, has the power to have moved the throne of the queen of Sheba at a speed greater than the speed of light. In this very Quran it has been stated that Allah, by His powers, took his servant Muhammad (peace be upon him) from Makkah to Jerusalem and also brought him back in the same night.

***49** That is, He does not stand in need of somebody's gratefulness. His Godhead is neither enhanced by an iota by somebody's gratefulness, nor diminished by that amount by somebody's ingratitude or thanklessness. He is Sovereign in His own right. His Sovereignty is not dependent on His creation's acknowledgment or rejection. The same thing has been expressed in the Quran through the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him): "If you prove

thankless, you and all the dwellers of the earth, (you should know that) Allah is All-Sufficient and worthy of all praise by Himself.” (Surah Ibrahim: Ayat 8). The same theme is contained in a *Hadith Qudsi* related in Sahih-Muslim saying: “Allah says: O My servants, if you all men and jinns, from the beginning to the end, together become like the heart of the most righteous person among you, it will not cause any increase in My Kingdom; and O My servants, if you all men and jinns, from the beginning to the end, together become like the heart of the most sinful person among you, it will not cause any decrease in My Kingdom. O My servants, it is your own deeds which I credit to your account, and then fully recompense you for them. So, whoever receives something good, let him be grateful to Allah, and whoever receives something else, let him curse his own self only”.

41. He said:^{*50} “Disguise her throne for her, that we may see whether she will be guided, or be of those not rightly guided.”^{*51}

قَالَ نَكِّرُوا لَهَا عَرْشَهَا نَنْظُرْ
أَتَهْتَدِي أَمْ تَكُونُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ لَا
يَهْتَدُونَ

^{*50} As to how the queen reached Jerusalem and how she was received, has been omitted. The story is resumed from the time when she had arrived at the palace to see Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him).

^{*51} This is a meaningful sentence, which means: (1) “Whether she understands or not that it is her own throne which has been fetched in no time from her capital to distant place like Jerusalem;” and also (2) “whether she is

guided aright after seeing this wonderful miracle, or persists in her error.” This refutes the wrong idea of the people who say that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) intended to take possession of the throne. Here he himself clearly says that he had done this in order to help the queen see guidance.

42. So when she came, it was said (to her): “Is your throne like this.” She said: “(It is) as though it were the very one.”*52 (Solomon said): “And we were given knowledge before her, and we had surrendered (to Allah).”*53

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ قِيلَ أَهَكَذَا
عَرْشُكَ قَالَتْ كَأَنَّهُ هُوَ
وَأُوتِينَا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا وَكُنَّا
مُسْلِمِينَ



*52 This also refutes the speculations of those people who depict the event in a manner as though the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) wanted to have a throne made for the queen and for this purpose he invited tenders and a strong robust artisan offered to make him a throne in the matter of a few hours, but an expert craftsman submitted that he could make and produce it in no time. This whole guess-work is destroyed by the tact that Solomon (peace be upon him) himself ordered the throne to be fetched before him (Ayat 38), and when it had been fetched, ordered his servants to set it before the queen casually (Ayat 41), and then when she arrived, she was asked whether her throne was like that (Ayat 42), and she answered, “(It is) as though it were the very one.”

Obviously, there could be no room for the absurd interpretations in the face of such a clear statement of facts. If there is still any doubt left, it can be satisfied by the next sentence.

*53 That is, “Even before we saw this miracle, we had been convinced by what we had heard of Solomon (peace be upon him) that he was a Prophet of Allah, and not merely a ruler of a kingdom.” After seeing the throne and saying, “(It is) as though it were the very one”, what could be the relevance of adding this sentence if it is supposed that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) had gotten a throne manufactured and set the same before her? Even if it is assumed that no effort was spared to have a throne manufactured closely resembling that of queen’s throne, what could have made a sun-worshiping queen exclaim “We had already known this and we had become Muslims!”

43. And had prevented her (from believing) that which she used to worship other than Allah. Indeed, she was from a disbelieving people.*54

وَصَدَّهَا مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ
كَافِرِينَ



*54 This sentence has been added by Allah to clarify the queen’s position, saying that she was not obdurate and stubborn. She had been an unbeliever till then mainly because she came of an unbelieving people. As she had become accustomed to bowing down before a false deity since her childhood, it had become a hindrance for her to

the right way. As soon as she came in contact with the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him), she discerned the right way and the hindrance was removed forthwith.

44. It was said to her: “Enter the palace.” Then when she saw it, she thought it a pool of water and uncovered her shins. He (Solomon) said: “Indeed, it is a palace made smooth with glass.”*55 She said: “My Lord, indeed, I have wronged myself, and I surrender with Solomon to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.”*56

قِيلَ لَهَا ادْخُلِي الصَّرْحَ فَلَمَّا
رَأَتْهُ حَسِبَتْهُ لُجَّةً وَكَشَفَتْ عَن
سَاقِيهَا^ج قَالَ إِنَّهُ صَرْحٌ مُّمَرَّدٌ
مِّن قَوَارِيرَ^ق قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي
ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ
سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

*55 This was the last thing that opened queen’s eyes. The first thing was Solomon’s (peace be upon him) letter that began with the name of the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful Allah, a way different front the common custom prevalent among the kings. The second was his rejection of her gifts, which made the queen understand that he was a different kind of king. The third was the report made by the queen’s envoys from which she came to know about Solomon's pious life, his wisdom and his message of the truth. This very thing had induced her to travel to Jerusalem to personally meet the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him), and to this she had referred when she said: “and we had surrendered (to Allah)”. The fourth thing was

the removal of her throne from Marib to Jerusalem in no time, from which the queen realized that he had Allah's power with him. Now this was the last thing that removed every doubt from her mind regarding the unique and great personality of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him). When she saw that in spite of possessing every means of comfort and ease and a grand palace for a dwelling, he was so free from every conceit, so God-fearing and righteous and so grateful to God that he bowed before Him for every small favor and his life was so different from the life of those who were enamored of the world, she exclaimed the words that follow.

***56** This story of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) and the queen of Sheba has been related in the Old and the New Testaments and the Israelite traditions in different ways, but the Quranic narration differs from all others. A resume of the story as given in the Old Testament is as follows:

“And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great company. When she came to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. And Solomon told her all her questions. And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cup bearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her. And she said

to the king, It was a true report which I heard in my own land of thine acts, and of thine wisdom: Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and thine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: for thou exceedest the fame that I heard. Happy are thy men and happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne. And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices great abundance and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon. And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatever she asked. So she turned, and went away to her own land, she and her servants.” (2 Chronicles, 9: 1-12. A similar account is also found in 1 Kings, 10: 1-13).

In the New Testament, the following sentence only has been reported from a discourse of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) about the queen of Sheba.

“The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.” (Matthew, 12: 42; Luke, 11: 31).

The story of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) and the queen of Sheba as given in the rabbinical traditions resembles in most parts with the Quranic version. The hoopoe’s absence, then its arrival and reporting about Sheba and its queen, the Prophet Solomon’s sending her a

letter through it, the hoopoe's dropping the letter in front of the queen at the time when she was going for sun-worship, the queen's calling for her ministers' council, then her sending of valuable gifts to Solomon, her traveling to Jerusalem and meeting him personally, her arrival in the palace and thinking that Prophet Solomon was sitting in the midst of a pool of water, tucking up her skirt in order to enter it. All this has been mentioned in these traditions as in the Quran. But there is no mention whatsoever in these traditions of the Prophet Solomon's reply on receipt of the gift, having the queen's throne fetched from Marib, his bowing down before God in thankfulness for every favor of His, and the queen's embracing the faith ultimately, at his hand, his belief in the oneness of God, etc. And worst of all, these wicked people have accused Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) of having committed adultery, God forbid, with the queen of Sheba, giving rise to an illegitimate race, which gave birth to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, who destroyed Jerusalem. (Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. XI, p. 443). The fact of the matter is that a section of the Jewish learned men have been highly critical of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him). They have accused him of heinous crimes like violating the commandments of the Torah, of pride of government, pride of wisdom, of being a hen-pecked husband, and of luxurious living, polytheism and idol-worship. (Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. XI, pp. 439-441). It is due to this propaganda that the Bible presents him only as a king instead of a Prophet. A king who was lost in the love of polytheistic women against the divine

commandments, whose heart was turned away from God, and was turned to other gods and goddesses. (I Kings, 11: 1-11). As against this, it can be seen what great favor has the Quran done to the Israelites by cleansing the personalities of their elders of the filth thrown at them by themselves, and yet the Israelites, ungrateful as they are, look upon the Quran and him who brought it as their enemies.

45. And certainly,^{*57} We sent to Thamud their brother Salih, (saying) that: “Worship Allah.” Then they were two parties quarrelling.^{*58}

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ
صَالِحًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ فَإِذَا هُمْ
فَرِيقَانِ يَخْتَصِمُونَ

^{*57} For comparison, see Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayats 73-79, Surah Hud: Ayats 61-68, Surah Ash-Shuara: Ayats 141-159, Surah Al-Qamar: Ayats 23-32, Surah Ash-Shams: Ayats 11-15.

^{*58} That is, as soon as the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) embarked on his mission, his people were divided into two groups, the believers and the disbelievers, and a conflict started between them as stated elsewhere in the Quran. The chiefs of his tribe, who were full of pride, said to those who had believed from among the oppressed people, “Do you know it for certain that Salih is a Messenger from his Lord?” They replied, “Indeed, we believe in the message with which he has been sent.” But those who had arrogant assumption of superiority, said, “We deny that which you believe”. (Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayats

75-76). One should note that precisely the same situation arose in Makkah at the advent of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The nation was divided into two factions and a conflict started between them. Therefore, this story fully applies to the conditions in which these verses were revealed.

46. He said: “O my people, why do you seek to hasten the evil before the good.*59 Why do you not seek forgiveness of Allah, that you may receive mercy.”

قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ لِمَ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ
بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ لَوْلَا
تَسْتَغْفِرُونَ اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُرْحَمُونَ



*59 That is, “Why do you hasten in asking for a torment instead of some good from Allah?” The following saying of the chiefs of the Prophet Salih’s people has been related at another place: “O Salih, bring that scourge with which you threaten us, if you really are one of the Messengers.” (Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayat 77).

47. They said: “We augur evil of you and of those with you.”*60 He said: “Your evil augury is with Allah. But, you are a people that are being tested.”*61

قَالُوا أَطَّيَّرْنَا بِكَ وَبِمَنْ مَّعَكَ
قَالَ طَبَّيرُكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ
قَوْمٌ تُفْتَنُونَ



*60 One meaning of what they said is: “Your movement has proved to be an evil omen for us. Since you and your companions have revolted against the ancestral religion,

one or the other calamity is befalling us almost daily, because our deities have become angry with us.” In this sense, this saying is similar to the sayings of most of those polytheistic nations who regarded their Prophets as ominous. In Surah YaSin, for instance, a nation has been mentioned, which said to its Prophet “We regard you as an evil omen for ourselves.” (Ayat 18). The same thing was said by the Pharaoh’s people about the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). Whenever a good time came, they would say, “This is but our due”, and when there was a bad time, they would ascribe their calamities to Moses and his companions. (Surah Al-Aaraf Ayat 130). Almost similar things were said in Makkah about the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The other meaning of their saying is this: “Your advent has stirred up divisions in our nation. Before this we were a united people, who followed one religion. Your ominous coming has turned brother against brother, and separated son from father.” This very accusation was being brought against the Prophet (peace be upon him) by his opponents over and over again. Soon after he started his mission of inviting the people to the faith, the delegation of the chiefs of the Quraish, who went to Abu Talib, had said, “Give up to us this nephew of yours: he has opposed your religion and your forefathers’ religion and has sown discord among your people, and has held the whole nation as foolish.”

On the occasion of Hajj, when the disbelievers of Makkah feared that the visitors from outside might be influenced by the Prophet (peace be upon him), they held consultations

and decided to approach the Arab tribes and tell them: “This man is a sorcerer, who by his sorcery separates son from his father, brother from his brother, wife from her husband, and man from his family.”

*61 That is, “The truth is not that which you understand it to be. The fact which you have not yet realized is that my advent has put you to the test. Until my arrival you were following a beaten track in your ignorance. You could not recognize the truth from the falsehood; you had no criterion for judging the genuine from the counterfeit; your worst people were lording over your best people, who were rolling in the dust. But now a criterion has come against which you will all be judged and assessed. Now a balance has been set up publicly, which will weigh everybody according to his true worth. Now both the truth and the falsehood have been made manifest. Whoever accepts the truth will weigh heavy whether he was not being held even worth a farthing so far; and whoever persists in falsehood will not weigh a gram even though he was being esteemed as the chief of the chiefs before this. Now the judgment will not be based on the nobility or otherwise of the family one came of, or the abundance of the means and resources that one possessed, or one’s physical strength, but on this whether one accepted the truth gracefully or preferred to remain attached to falsehood.”

48. And there were in the city nine persons^{*62} who made mischief in the land and reformed not.

وَكَانَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ تِسْعَةُ رَهْطٍ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

*62 That is, nine chiefs of the tribes each of whom had a band of followers with him.

49. They said: “Swear by Allah, we will surely attack by night him and his family, then we will surely say to his guardian,^{*63} we did not witness the destruction of his family. And indeed, we are telling the truth.”^{*64}

قَالُوا تَقَاسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ لَنُبَيِّتَنَّهُ
وَأَهْلَهُ ثُمَّ لَنَقُولَنَّ لِوَلِيِّهِ مَا
شَهِدْنَا مَهْلِكَ أَهْلِهِ وَإِنَّا
لَصَادِقُونَ

*63 “The guardian”: the chief of the Prophet Salih’s (peace be upon him) tribe, who, according to the ancient tribal tradition and custom, could make a claim to blood vengeance. The same was the position in Makkah of the Prophet’s uncle (peace be upon him), Abu Talib. The Quraish were hesitant that if they attacked and killed the Prophet (peace be upon him), Abu Talib, the chief of Bani Hashim, would come out with a claim to blood vengeance on behalf of his clan.

*64 This precisely was the kind of plot which the Makkan chiefs of the clans were devising against the Prophet (peace be upon him), and they devised the same ultimately on the occasion of migration (Hijrah) to kill him. They decided that men from all the clans would attack him in a body so that the Bani Hashim could not hold any one of the clans as responsible for the murder, and, therefore, would find it impossible to fight all of them at one and the same time.

50. And they plotted a plot, and We planned a plan, while they perceived not.^{*65}

وَمَكْرُوا مَكْرًا وَمَكْرَنَا مَكْرًا
وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ

*65 That is, “Before they could make the night attack on the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) at the appointed time, Allah sent down His scourge which destroyed their whole nation completely. It appears that they made this plot after hamstringing the she-camel. According to Surah Hud: Ayat 65, when they had killed the she-camel, Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) gave them a notice to enjoy life in their houses for three more days, for then they would be seized by the torment. At this they might have thought that the torment with which Salih (peace be upon him) threatened them might come or might not, but they must take the vengeance on Salih himself. Therefore, most probably they chose the same night for the attack which Allah had appointed for sending down the torment, and thus were struck down by Allah even before they could touch the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him).”

51. Then see how was the end of their plotting. Indeed, We destroyed them and their people, all together.

فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
مَكْرِهِمْ أَنَا دَمَرْنَاهُمْ وَقَوْمَهُمْ
أَجْمَعِينَ

52. So these are their houses in utter ruin because they had done wrong. Indeed, in that is surely a

فَتِلْكَ بُيُوتُهُمْ خَاوِيَةٌ بِمَا
ظَلَمُوا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً

sign for a people who
have knowledge.*66



لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

*66 That is, the ignorant people will say, “There is no link between the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) and his she-camel and the earthquake which struck the people of Thamud. These things have their natural causes. Their occurrence or otherwise has nothing to do with the piety and wickedness of the people of a place, with their high-handedness or their show of mercy. It is meaningless merely to say that such and such a city or land was filled with sin and wickedness, and therefore, it was overwhelmed by flood, or its habitation turned upside down by an earthquake, or it was ruined by a sudden disaster.” But the people who possess knowledge know that this universe is being ruled by an All-Wise, All-Knowing One Who is deciding the destinies. His decisions are not subject to physical causes, but the physical causes are subject to His will. His decisions to debase or exalt nations are not taken blindly but with wisdom and justice. In His Book of Law there is also included the principle of retribution, according to which the wicked are made to suffer for their evil deeds even in this world, on moral grounds. The people who are aware of these realities, cannot explain away the occurrence of an earthquake by citing physical and natural causes; they will rather look upon them as the scourge of warning for themselves, and they will learn lessons from it. They will try to understand those moral causes because of which the Creator annihilated a flourishing nation, which He Himself had created. They will divert their conduct and

attitude from the track that brings Allah's wrath to the way that joins them to His mercy.

53. And We saved those who believed and used to fear (Allah).

وَأَنْجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

54. And Lot, when he said to his people: ^{*67} “Do you commit indecency while you are seeing.” ^{*68}

وَلُوطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ
أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ وَأَنْتُمْ
تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

***67** For comparison, see Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayats 80-84; Surah Hud: Ayats 74-83; Surah Al-Hijr: Ayats 57-77; Surah Al-Anbiya: Ayats 71-75; Surah Ash-Shuara: Ayats 160-174; Surah Al-Ankabut: Ayats 28-75; Surah As-Saffat: Ayats 133-138; Surah Al-Qamar: Ayats 33-39.

***68** This can have several meanings and probably all are implied: (1) “That you are not unaware of this act’s being wicked, but you commit it knowing it to be so”. (2) “You are also not unaware that the man has not been created for the man’s sexual desire, but the intimate relationship is between man and woman, and the distinction between them (man and woman) is not such as you cannot perceive, yet with open eyes you commit this abominable act.” (3) “You indulge in this indecency publicly when there are people watching you”, as stated in Surah Al-Ankabut: Ayat 29, thus: “And you indulge in indecencies in your assemblies.”

55. “Do you indeed approach men with lust instead of women. But you are a people behaving ignorantly.”*69

أَيْنِكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّنْ
دُونِ النِّسَاءِ ۚ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ
تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

*69 The word *jahalat* here has been used in the sense of folly and stupidity. But even if it is taken in the sense of ignorance and lack of knowledge, it will mean: “You do not know the evil consequences of your acts. You only know that you are deriving sensual pleasure, but you do not know what severe punishment awaits you for this criminal and heinous pleasure-seeking. The scourge of Allah is ready to strike you but you are engaged in a senseless, filthy game with impunity.

56. So there was no answer by his people except that they said: “Expel the family of Lot from your township. Indeed, they are men who would keep pure.”

﴿٥٦﴾ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ
إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَخْرِجُوا آلَ لُوطٍ
مِّنْ قَرْيَتِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ أَنَاسٌ
يَّتَطَهَّرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

57. So We saved him and his family except his wife. We destined her to be of those who stayed behind.*70

فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ
قَدَّرْنَا مِنْ الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

*70 That is, “The Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) had

already been instructed not to take the woman along because she had to be destroyed along with her people.”

58. And We rained down upon them a rain (of stones). So evil was the rain of those who were warned.

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا^ط فَسَاءَ
مَطَرُ الْمُنذِرِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. Say (O Muhammad):^{*71} “Praise be to Allah, and peace upon His slaves whom He has chosen. Is Allah best, or (all) that they ascribe as partners (to Him)”^{*72}

قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ عِبَادِهِ
الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَىٰ^ط ءَآلَهُ خَيْرٌ مَّا
يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

***71** From here starts the second discourse, and this is its introductory sentence. This introduction teaches how the Muslims should begin a speech. That is why the truly Islamic-minded people have always been starting their speeches and discourses with the praise of Allah and salutation on His righteous servants. But now this is looked upon as characteristic of bigotry, and the present-day Muslim speakers have no idea of starting their speech with these words, or feel shy of doing so.

***72** Superficially the question whether Allah is better or the false deities appears to be odd. As a matter of fact, there can be no question of goodness in the false gods and, therefore, they cannot be compared to Allah. As for the polytheists, even they had no misconception that Allah could be compared to their gods. But they were asked this question in order to be warned against their error. For obviously none in the world would do anything unless he

saw some good in it. Now if the polytheists served their deities and implored them for their needs instead of Allah, and presented their offerings before them, this would be meaningless unless they perceived some good in them. That is why they have been explicitly asked to consider whether Allah is better or their deities, for they could not face and answer this forth-right question. Even the most hardened polytheist among them could not venture to say that their deities were better. But if they acknowledged that Allah is better it would demolish their whole creed, for then it would be unreasonable to adopt the inferior against the superior creed. The Quran at the very outset made the opponents helpless. After this, pointed questions have been asked, one after the other, about the manifestations of the power and creation of Allah to the effect: “Whose works are these? Is there besides Allah any other god also associated with these works? If not, why have you then set up these others as your deities?”

According to traditions, whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited this verse, he would immediately respond to it, saying: “Nay, but Allah is better, and He alone is the Everlasting and Exalted and High.”

60. Who is it who has created the heavens and the earth, and sent down for you water from the sky. Then We cause to spring forth with it orchards full of beauty of delight. It is not in your

أَمَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
مَاءً فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ حَدَائِقَ ذَاتَ
بَهْجَةٍ مَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ

(power) that you cause the growth of the trees in them. Is there any god with Allah.*73 But they are a people who have ascribed (His) equals.

تُنَبِّتُوا شَجَرَهَا أَئِلَٰهٌ مَّعَ اللَّهِ
بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ يَعْدِلُونَ

*73 No one from among the mushriks could answer that someone other than Allah had done these works, or someone else was Allah's associate in doing these. The Quran at other places says with respect to the pagans of Makkah and the Arab mushrikin: "If you ask them, who has created the heavens and the earth?" they will surely say: "The All-Mighty, the All-Knowing One has created them." (Surah Az-Zukhruf: Ayat 9). "And if you ask them, who has created them?" they will surely say, 'Allah'. (Surah Az-Zukhruf: Ayat 87), "If you ask them, who sent down rain water from the sky and thereby raised the dead earth back to life?" they will surely say, 'Allah'. (Surah Al-Ankabut: Ayat 63). "Ask them, who provides for you from the heavens and the earth? who has power over these faculties of hearing and sight? who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? who controls and directs the system of the universe?" they will surely say, 'Allah'." (Surah Yunus: Ayat 31). Not only the polytheists of Arabia but of the whole world generally acknowledged, and acknowledge even today, that Allah is the Creator of the universe and He alone controls and directs its system. Therefore, none of them could answer this question even obstinately for the sake of the argument

that their deities were Allah's associates in those works, for if he had done so, thousands of his own people would have belied him saying that, that was not their belief.

This and the other questions that follow not only contain a refutation of the creed of shirk (polytheism) but of atheism as well. For example, in this first very question, it has been asked, "Who has sent down rainwater and caused to spring up by it beautiful gardens?" Just consider whether the presence of the substances essential for the growth of countless kinds of plant life, in the soil or near the soil, and the existence in water of those very qualities which are in accordance with the requirements of animal and vegetable life, and the evaporation of this water again and again from the seas, and its condensation and raining regularly in different parts of the earth from time to time, and the coordination between the soil and the air, the water, the temperature; etc, conducive to proper growth of plant life and fulfillment of the countless requirements of every sort of animal life, could be just accidental, or the result of the wise scheming and planning the supreme power and will of an All-Wise Designer. And is it possible that this accident should continue to recur constantly for millions and millions of years? Only an obstinate person who has been blinded by prejudice will regard it as accidental, for no truth loving, sensible person can make such a senseless claim or accept it.

61. Who is it who made the earth a firm abode,^{*74} and placed rivers in its

أَمَّنْ جَعَلَ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَجَعَلَ
خِلَالَهَا أَنْهَارًا وَجَعَلَ هَا

midst, and placed therein firm hills, and has set between the two seas a barrier.*75 Is there any god with Allah. But most of them do not know.

رَوَّسِيَّ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَ
الْبَحْرَيْنِ حَاجِزًا أَتَىٰ لَهُ مَعَ اللَّهِ
بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ



*74 It is not a simple thing for the earth to be a place of rest for the countless kinds of different creations living on it. If man looks into the wise harmony and coordination with which this sphere of the earth has been established, he is simply amazed and starts feeling that these harmonies and concordances and relations could not be brought about without the grand design of an All-Wise, All Knowing and All-Powerful God. This sphere of the earth is floating in space and is not resting on anything, yet there is no commotion and no vibration in its movement. Had there been any vibration in it, such as we experience during an earthquake, life could not exist here. This sphere comes before the sun and hides from it regularly, which causes the alternation of the day and night. Had it turned the same face perpetually towards the sun and kept the other side always hidden, no life could be possible here, for on the bright side all life would have been shriveled up, and on the dark side all life would have been frozen to death. The sphere is enveloped by a five hundred mile thick atmosphere, which protects it against the continual bombardment of meteors, otherwise the twenty million meteors on the average, which dart towards the earth daily

at 30 miles per second, would have caused such destruction as would not have allowed any man animal or tree to survive. The same atmosphere controls the temperature, raises clouds from the oceans, carries water to different parts of the earth and provides the required gases that sustain the human, animal and plant life. Without it the earth could not become a fit place of rest for any kind of animal life. Just under the earth's surface all those minerals and chemicals which are essential to the survival of vegetable and animal life have been provided in abundance. Wherever these natural resources do not exist, the land there cannot sustain any kind of life. A great store of water has been arranged on the earth in the form of oceans, rivers, lakes, springs and underground channels and snow on the mountains which melts and flows down in the form of rivers. Without such an arrangement there could be no life. Then the earth has been endowed with an appropriate gravitational pull by which it keeps the water and the air and all other things found on it attracted to it. If this pull had been a little less strong, it could not have stopped the air and the water from escaping. It would also have so much increased the temperature that life here would have become difficult. On the other hand, if the gravitational pull had been a little stronger, the atmosphere would have been denser, its pressure would have increased, evaporation would have become difficult and rains impossible; the cold would have increased and less areas on earth would have been inhabitable; men and animals would have been shorter in size but heavier in weight, which

would have made movement difficult. Besides, this sphere has been located at a suitable distance from the sun, which is most appropriate for the population here. If the distance had been longer, the earth would have received less of heat, the climate would have been much colder, the seasons much longer and the earth would be hardly inhabitable. On the other hand, if the distance had been shorter, the intensity of the heat along with other factors would have rendered it unfit for the kind of life man is living here.

These are a few of those harmonies and concordances due to which earth has become a place of rest for its population. A man with a little common sense who is aware of these facts cannot imagine for a moment that these concordances have come into existence without the design of an All-Wise Creator, as a mere accident, nor can he ever conceive that a god or goddess, jinn or prophet, saint or angel, could have had any hand in the creation and bringing into operation of this grand design.

*75 That is, the bodies of sweet and saline waters that exist on the earth but do not intermingle. Underground water channels mostly flow separately with sweet water and saline water side by side. Even in the middle of the bitter seas there exist at some places springs of sweet water; their current remains separate from the sea water and the sea passengers obtain their drinking water from it. (See, E.N. 68 of Surah Al-Furqan).

62. Who is it who answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him and removes

أَمَّنْ يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَّرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ
وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ

the affliction,^{*76} and has made you viceroys of the earth.^{*77} Is there any god with Allah. Little is that you remember.

خُلَفَاءَ الْأَرْضِ أَيْلَهُ مَعَ اللَّهِ
قَلِيلًا مَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

***76** The Arab polytheists themselves knew and acknowledged that Allah alone could avert a disaster. Therefore, the Quran reminds them again and again that they implore Allah alone for help when they are confronted by a calamity. But when the calamity is removed, they start invoking others besides Allah. (See E.Ns. 29 to 41 of Surah Al-Anaam; Surah Yunus: Ayats 21-22; E.N. 46 of Surah An-Nahl; and E.N. 84 of Surah Bani-Israil). And this is not only true of the Arab polytheists but of all polytheists; so much so that even the Russian atheists who are regularly campaigning against God-worship, had to invoke God when in the Second World War they were tightly encircled by the German forces.

***77** This has two meanings: (1) “He raises one generation after the other and one nation after the other”; and (2) “He gives you power and authority to rule in the earth”.

63. Who is it who shows you the way in the darkness of the land and the sea,^{*78} and who sends the winds as heralds of good tidings before His mercy (rain).^{*79} Is there any god with Allah. High Exalted be Allah from all that they

أَمَّن يَهْدِيكُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ
وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَنْ يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا
بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ أَيْلَهُ مَعَ
اللَّهِ تَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَمَّا

ascribe as partners (to Him).

يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

***78** That is, “He has made such arrangements by means of the stars that you can find your way even in the darkness of the night.” This is also because of the wise planning of Allah that He has created such means by which man can determine his direction and the way to his destination in his journeys by sea and land. In the day time he is guided by different land-marks and the direction of sunrise and sunset, and in the dark nights by the stars. In Surah An-Nahl this has been counted among the bounties of Allah: “He has placed land-marks to direct people, and by the stars, too, they are guided aright.” (Ayat 16).

***79** “His mercy” the rain whose coming is promptly foretold by the winds.

64. Who is it who originates the creation, then reproduces it,^{*80} and who provides you sustenance from the heaven and the earth.^{*81} Is there any god with Allah. Say: “Bring your proof, if you are truthful.”^{*82}

أَمَّنْ يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ
وَمَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ
وَالْأَرْضِ أَءِلَهُ مَعَ اللَّهِ قُلْ
هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ

صَادِقِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

***80** The simple fact that has been expressed in this one sentence is so vast in meaning and detail that as one considers it more and more deeply, one goes on getting new and ever new proofs of Allah’s existence and His unity. To

the first place, take the question of the creation itself. Man by his knowledge has not been able to discover what life is, and how and where it comes from. So far the admitted scientific fact is that the mere arrangement of inanimate matter by itself cannot bring about life. Though the atheists assume, unscientifically, that life comes into existence automatically when all the elements essential for its creation combine together accidentally in the right proportion, yet if the mathematical law of chance is applied to it, the possibility of its occurrence comes to naught. All attempts made so far to produce animate matter out of inanimate matter experimentally in the laboratory have met with utter failure in spite of employing every possible care. At the most what has been created is DNA, which is the basic constituent of the living cell. This is the essence of life but not life itself. Life in itself even now is a miracle which cannot be explained scientifically except by saying that it is the result of a Creator's will and command and design.

Furthermore, life does not exist in a solitary form but in a limitless variety of forms. Man has so far discovered more or less a million species of animals and two hundred thousand species of plants on the earth, which in their constitution and special characteristics are so clearly and absolutely different from one another, and have been maintaining their distinctive features since the earliest known times so consistently that no Darwin could ever give any rational explanation of this great variety of life except the existence of the creative design of One God. Not a link

has so far been discovered between any two species, which might have broken up the form of the characteristics and constitution of one species and might be struggling to attain the characteristics and constitution of another species. The whole record of the fossils is without such a precedent, and among the existing animals also there is no such “eunuch” in its physical form. Any member of any species that exists is found with the distinctive features of its own species, and every story that is invented and announced from time to time about the discovery of some missing link is destroyed by the facts themselves. Therefore, the inevitable fact is that it is the All-Wise Designer, the Planner of creation, its Enforcer and its Fashioner, who has endowed life with all its countless different forms.

This was about the beginning of the creation. Now let us consider its reproduction. The Creator has placed in the constitution and make-up of every animal and vegetable species such a wonderful mechanism, which goes on producing through its countless members an endless race exactly with its own distinctive form and nature and characteristics, and it never has happened even by mistake that in these millions and millions of tiny sex workshops a certain workshop of a species may have turned out a specimen of a different species. The observations of modern Genetics in this connection present wonderful facts. Every plant has been so endowed with the capability of procreating its species that the new generation should possess all the distinctive characteristics of its own species and its every member should be distinguished in its special

features from the members of all other species. This element for the survival of the species and its procreation is contained in a part of a cell of every plant, which can be seen with effort only through a most powerful microscope. This tiny engineer directs the whole development the plant precisely and definitely on the way which is the way of its own distinctive species. That is why all the plants that have emerged from a grain of wheat anywhere in the world have in turn produced only wheat. In no climate and in no region has it ever happened that from the whole race of a grain of wheat even a single grain of barley might have emerged. The same is the case with animals and men. None of them has been created just for once, but on an inconceivably high scale a huge factory of reproduction is functioning every where, which is constantly bringing into existence, from the members of every species, countless other members of the same species. If one considers the microscopic germ of procreation which along with all the distinctive features and hereditary characteristics of its species is found in a small portion of its tiny self and then looks at the extremely delicate and complex physiological system and the subtle, intricate processes by which the procreative seed of every member of every species produces a member of the same species, one cannot conceive for a moment that such a fine and subtle system could come into being by itself, and then keeps on functioning by itself in millions and millions of the members of different species. This thing stands in need of an All-Wise Designer not only for its beginning but for its proper and perpetual functioning. It also needs an

Administrator Who is at once Wise and Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent, who is ever watching and guiding the work of these workshops.

These facts destroy the very basis of an atheist's denial of God as also of a polytheist's creed of polytheism. A foolish person only can think that an angel or a jinn or a prophet or a saint has any hand in this work of God, but no unbiased person possessed of a little common sense can ever say that this huge workshop of production and reproduction with all its underlying wisdom and order started working just accidentally and has since been working so automatically.

***81** The question of the provision of sustenance also is not so simple as a person may feel it to be from a cursory study of this brief sentence. There exist on this earth millions of animal and vegetable species, each comprising billions of members having different food requirements. The Creator has arranged the means of sustenance for each species in such abundance and so within easy reach that members of no species ever go without food. Then the agencies of the earth and sky which combine and work together in this system are varied and countless. Unless there is the right kind of coordination and harmony between the heat, light, air, water and the diverse substances of the earth, not a single particle of food can be produced.

Can anyone conceive that this wise system could come about just accidentally without the intelligent planning and design of an All-Wise Creator? And can anybody in his senses imagine that in this system there could be any hand

of a jinn or an angel or the spirit of a pious man?

*82 That is, “You should either bring a proof to show that someone else is an associate of Allah in these works, or, if that is not possible, you should at least explain by an argument why you should worship and serve any other god beside Allah, when One Allah alone has done, and is doing, all these works.”

65. Say (O Muhammad): “No one who is in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen except Allah.*83 And they do not perceive when they will be raised (again).”*84

قُلْ لَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَمَا
يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ

*83 In the preceding verses, arguments have been given to prove that Allah is the One and only Deity when considered from the viewpoint of creation, design and provision of the means of sustenance. Now in this verse it is being told that from the viewpoint of knowledge too, which is an important attribute of Godhead, Allah is Unique and without associate. Whatever creations are there in the heavens and the earth, whether angels or jinns, prophets and saints, or other men and other creatures, they have only limited knowledge. Something is hidden from all of them. The All-Knowing One is only Allah, from Whom nothing whatever of this universe is hidden, and who knows every thing of the past and the present and the future.

The word *ghaib* means something hidden and covered. As a term it implies everything which is unknown, and beyond one's sphere of knowledge and information. There are

many things in the world which individually are known to some human beings and unknown to others. And there are many others which taken as a whole have never been known to any of mankind, nor are known at present; nor will be known in the future: The same is the case with the jinns and the angels and other kinds of creation: certain things are known to some of them and hidden from others, and many things hidden from all of them and known to none. All kinds of hidden things are only known to One Being, the All-Knowing Allah. For Him nothing is unknown, everything is known and evident.

In order to bring out this reality the method of the question as employed above with regard to creation, design and sustenance of the universe has not been adopted here. The reason is that the manifestations of those attributes are clear and evident which everyone sees, and which even the pagans and polytheists acknowledged, and do even today, that they are the works of Allah. So, the argument adopted above was: When all these works, as you admit, are being done by Allah, and no one else is His partner in these, why have you then made others His associates in Divinity, and in His worship? However, the attribute of knowledge has no perceptible manifestation which may be referred to and pointed out. It can be comprehended only by thought and reflection. Therefore, it has been put forward as an assertion instead of a question. Now it is for every intelligent person to think and consider for himself whether it is reasonable to believe that there should be any other than Allah, who is all-knowing, i.e. who knows all those

conditions and things and realities which existed in the universe in the past; or exist now; or will exist in the future. And if there is none other who is all knowing, and cannot be, then is it reasonable to believe that any of those who are not aware fully of the realities and conditions and circumstances, cannot become the answerer of the people's prayers, fulfiller of their needs and remover of their hardships?

There is a subtle relationship between Divinity and the knowledge of the unseen and hidden. Since the earliest times in whatever being has man imagined the presence of an attribute of Godhead, he has taken it for granted that it knows everything and nothing is hidden from it. In other words, it is self-evident for man to believe that making or marring the destinies, answering the prayers, fulfilling the needs and helping everyone in need of help, can be the work of the being who knows everything and from whom nothing is hidden. That is why whomsoever man has regarded as possessor of the powers and authority of Godhead, he has necessarily regarded him as the knower of all hidden things as well. For his intellect testifies rightly that knowledge and authority are inter-dependent. Now if it is a fact that none but God is the Creator and the Designer and the Answerer of the prayers and the Providence, as has been proved in the foregoing verses, then it is also a self-evident reality that none but God is the Knower of the hidden things. After all, who in his senses could imagine that an angel or a jinn or a prophet or a saint or any other creature would be knowing where and

what kinds of animals existed in the oceans and in the atmosphere and under the layers of the earth and upon its surface? And what is the correct number of the planets in the heavens? And what kinds of creatures exist in each of them? And where is each one of these creatures living and what are there requirements? All this should necessarily be known to Allah, because He has created them and He alone has to watch over their conditions and control their affairs and arrange for their sustenance. But how can some one else with his limited self have this vast and all-embracing knowledge and what has he to do with the functions of creation and sustenance that he should know these things? Then this quality is also not divisible in the sense that a person, for instance, may be the knower of everything on the earth, or the knower of everything concerning human beings only, on the earth. It is in the same way indivisible as are God's Creativity and His Providence and His Self-Subsistence indivisible. After all, how can it be possible for one to know all the affairs and all the conditions and states of all human beings who have been born in the world since the beginning of creation, and will be born till Resurrection, from the time their mothers conceived them till the time they will breath their last? And how and why will he know all this? Is he the creator of these countless multitudes? Did he create their seed in their fathers' sperm-drop? Did he mold and shape them in their mother's womb? Did he arrange for their normal birth? Did he make the destiny of each one of them? Is he responsible for taking decisions with regard to their life

and death, their health and ill-health, their prosperity and adversity, and their rise and fall in the world? And since when did he become responsible for it? Since before his own birth or since after it? And how can these responsibilities remain confined only to human beings? This is only a part of the universal administration of the heavens and the earth. The Being Who is controlling the whole universe is the Being Who alone can be responsible for the creation and death of men, for restricting and extending their provisions and for making and marring their destinies.

That is why it is a fundamental article of Islam that none other than Allah is the Knower of the hidden and unseen things. Allah may disclose whatever of His information He wills to whomsoever of His servants He pleases and blesses him with the knowledge of one or more of the hidden things as a whole. Being the Knower of all hidden and unseen things is the attribute only of Allah, Who is the Lord of all creation “He alone has the keys of the ‘unseen’ of which none has the knowledge but He.” (Surah Al-Anaam: Ayat 59). “Allah alone has the knowledge of the Hour: He alone sends down the rain and He alone knows what is (taking shape) in the wombs of the mothers. No living being knows what he will earn the next day, nor does anybody know in what land he will die.” (Surah Luqman: Ayat 34). “He knows what is before the people and also what is hidden from them; and they cannot comprehend anything of His knowledge save whatever He Himself may please to reveal.” (Al Baqarah: Ayat 255).

The Quran does not rest content with this general and absolute negation of the knowledge of the hidden and unseen for the different forms of creation. But about the Prophets in particular, and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), it clearly says that they do not possess the knowledge of the hidden and unseen, and that they were given only that much knowledge of the hidden by Allah as was necessary to enable them to carry out the duties of prophethood. Surah Al-Anaam: Ayat 50; Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayat 187; Surah At-Taubah: Ayat 101; Surah Hud: Ayat 31; Surah Al-Ahzab: Ayat 63; Surah Al-Ahqaf: Ayat 9; Surah At-Tahrim: Ayat 3: and Sutah Al-Jinn: Ayats 26-28 do not leave any room for doubt in this regard.

All these elucidations of the Quran support and explain the verse under discussion after which there remains no doubt that looking upon another than Allah as the knower of the hidden and unseen and believing that someone else also possesses the knowledge of all the past and future events, is an absolutely un-Islamic belief. Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Imam Ahmad, Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abu Hatim have cited this saying of Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) through authentic reporters: “Whoever claimed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) knew what was going to happen the next day, accused Allah of lying, for Allah says: O Prophet, say, None in the heavens and the earth has the knowledge of the hidden and unseen but Allah.” Ibn al-Mundhir has reported this on the authority of Ikrimah, the well-known pupil of Abdullah bin Abbas: A person asked the Prophet (peace be upon him), O Muhammad, when will

Resurrection be? And our territory is suffering from famine: when will it rain? And my wife is pregnant: what will she deliver, a boy or a girl? And I know what I have earned today; but what shall I earn tomorrow? And I know where I was born, but where shall I die? In reply, the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited verse 34 of Surah Luqman as cited above. Then the well-known tradition as reported in Bukhari; and Muslim and other works of Hadith also supports the same. According to it one of the questions asked by Angel Gabriel from the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he sat among the companions in human shape before him, was: “When will Resurrection be?” The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: “The one being questioned knows no better than the one questioning.” Then added, “This is one of those five things whose knowledge is possessed by none but Allah,” and then he recited the above-cited verse of Surah Luqman .

***84** That is “Those others about whom it is thought that they possess the knowledge of the hidden and, therefore, are regarded as partners in Divinity, are themselves unaware of their future. They do not know when will Resurrection be, and when will Allah raise them up again.”

66. Nay, but does their knowledge reach to the Hereafter. Nay, but they are in doubt about it. Nay, but they are blind about it. ^{*85}

بَلِ أَدْرَاكَ عِلْمُهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ
بَلْ هُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِنْهَا بَلْ هُمْ
مِنْهَا عَمُونَ

***85** After warning the people about their basic errors with

regard to Divinity, it is being said that the reason why these people are involved in these errors is not that they have reached this conclusion after serious thought and deliberation that there also exist other beings who are Allah's associates in His Divinity, but the actual reason is that they have never considered this matter seriously. As they are unaware of the Hereafter, or are in doubt about it, or are blind to it, their heedlessness of the Hereafter has developed in them an utterly irresponsible attitude. They are not at all serious about the universe and the real problems of their own lives. They do not bother to know what reality is and whether their philosophy of life accords with that reality or not. For, according to them, in the end the polytheist and the atheist, the monotheist and the agnostic, all will become one with the dust after death, and nothing will bear any fruit.

The theme of the Hereafter is contained in this sentence of the preceding verse: "They do not know when they will be raised back to life." In that sentence it was said that those who are made deities, the angels, jinns, prophets, saints, etc., do not themselves know when will be the Resurrection. Here three things have been said about the common polytheists and the atheists: (1) They do not at all know whether there will be any Hereafter or not; (2) this lack of information on their part is not due to the reason that they were never informed of this, but because they did not believe in the information given to them and doubted its authenticity; and (3) they never bothered to consider with due thought and seriousness the arguments that were

advanced about the coming of the Hereafter, but they preferred to remain blind to it.

67. And those who disbelieve say: “When we have become dust, and our forefathers, shall we indeed be brought forth (again).”

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَإِذَا كُنَّا تُرَابًا
وَأَبَاؤُنَا أَإِنَّا لَمُخْرَجُونَ



68. “Certainly, we have been promised this, we and our forefathers before. These are not but legends of the ancient people.”

لَقَدْ وَعَدْنَا هَذَا نَحْنُ وَءَابَاؤُنَا
مِن قَبْلُ إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسْطِيرُ
الْأَوَّلِينَ



69. Say (O Muhammad): “Travel in the land and see how has been the end of the criminals.”*86

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ



*86 This brief sentence contains two strong arguments for the Hereafter as well as admonition:

Firstly, those communities who rejected the Hereafter could not help becoming criminals: they lived irresponsibly; they committed cruelties and all kinds of sins; and ultimately their moral depravity led them to utter ruin. This continuous experience of human history which is testified by the doomed communities all over the world, clearly shows that belief and unbelief in the Hereafter has a

deep relationship with the soundness or the unsoundness of human behavior. Belief in it generates sound behavior and denial of it unsound behavior. This is a clear proof of the fact that belief in it is in accordance with the reality; that is why belief helps life to follow the right path. And rejection of it is against the reality; that is why rejection leads life into crooked alleys.

Secondly, the destruction of those communities which became criminals, one after the other, in the long experience of history is a clear pointer to the fact that this universe is not being ruled by the deaf and blind and senseless forces, but this is a wise system which is functioning according to the unalterable law of retribution, which is dealing with the human communities only on moral grounds. In which no community is given long enough rope to commit whatever evil it likes and continue to enjoy life and commit injustices after it has once risen to power and prosperity. But when a wicked community happens to reach a certain stage, a mighty hand topples it from power and hurls it into the abyss of ignominy. Anyone who realizes this fact can have no doubt that the same law of retribution calls for the establishment of a new world after this world, where all individuals and nations and the whole mankind collectively should be rewarded and punished for their deeds. For the requirements of justice cannot be fulfilled only by the destruction of a wicked nation; this does not in any way redress the grievances of the oppressed people; this does not punish those who had enjoyed life and left the world before the coming down of

the scourge; this does not also take to task those wicked people who went on leaving behind them legacies of immoralities and deviations for the coming generations. The torment that visited the nation only put a stop to the further tyrannies of its last generation. The court has not yet started working, to punish every wicked person for the evil done, to compensate every oppressed person for the losses incurred, and to reward all those who stood by the right against the onslaught of evil, endeavored to reform things and faced persecutions in this way throughout their lives. All this should necessarily happen at some time. For the continuous operation in the world of the law of retribution clearly points to the temperament and technique of the ruling government of the universe that it judges human deeds by moral standards and punishes and rewards them accordingly.

Besides these two arguments, the aspect of admonition in this verse is: “Learn lessons from the fate of the guilty people of the past, and do not persist in the foolish belief of the denial of the Hereafter, which, in fact, was responsible for making them criminals.”

70. And do not grieve over them, nor be in distress because of what they plot (against you).^{*87}

وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُنْ فِي
ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ

***87** That is, “You have done full justice to your mission of preaching. Now if they do not listen to you, and wish to persist in their folly and deserve the Divine torment, you should not consume yourself by being distressed and

grieved at their condition. Then, why should you feel vexed at their mean machinations that they are devising in order to fight the truth and to frustrate your movement of return? You have Allah's power at your back. If they do not listen to you, they will only be harming themselves, not you."

71. And they say: "When (will) this promise (be fulfilled), if you are truthful."*88

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٧١﴾

*88 The same threat which is implied in the preceding verse. What they meant was: "When will the scourge with which you threaten us overtake us? Why are we not being punished when we have not only rejected you but have also done whatever we could to frustrate your mission?"

72. Say: "It may be that it is close behind you, some of that which you would hasten on."*89

قُلْ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونَ رَدِفَ لَكُمْ
بَعْضُ الَّذِي تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

*89 This is a royal way of saying a thing. When words like "may be", "perhaps", "no wonder", etc. occur in the Divine discourse, they do not contain any sense of doubt, but express Allah's Independence and Self-Sufficiency. Allah's power is so great that His willing a thing and its happening is one and the same thing. It is inconceivable that He should will a thing and it should not happen. Therefore, when He says, "No wonder it may well be so", it means, "It will certainly be so if you do not mend your ways."

73. And indeed, your Lord is full of bounty for mankind, but most of them do not give thanks.*90

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى
النَّاسِ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا
يَشْكُرُونَ



***90** That is, “It is Allah's mercy that He does not seize the culprit immediately after his commission of a crime but gives him respite to reform himself. But most people are not grateful for this, and do not utilize the period of respite for their reformation. On the contrary, when they see that they have not been taken to task immediately, they form the idea that there is none to call them to account. Therefore, they are free to do whatever they like and they should not listen to any word of admonition”.

74. And indeed, your Lord surely knows what their breasts conceal, and what they reveal.*91

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُّ
صُدُورُهُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ



***91** That is, “He is not only aware of their open misdeeds but is also fully aware of the malice and spite which they are concealing in their hearts and the evil plots which they are making secretly. Therefore, when the time comes to call them to account, they will be taken to task for everything done and thought.”

75. And there is not any (thing) hidden in the heaven and the earth but it is in a clear Record.*92

وَمَا مِنْ غَائِبَةٍ فِي السَّمَاءِ
وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ



***92** Here by “Record” is not meant the Quran, but the Divine Record in which everything has been registered.

76. Indeed, this Quran narrates to the Children of Israel most of that about which they differ.^{*93}

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يُقْصُّ عَلَى
بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَكْثَرَ الَّذِي هُمْ
فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ



***93** This sentence is connected with the foregoing theme as well as with what follows. In the first case, it means that it is a manifestation of the knowledge of the All-Knowing God that He is explaining through a gentile (non-Jew) in this Quran the reality of those events which are a part of the Israelite history, and which are being disputed by the learned men of the Israelites themselves. In the second case, it means that just as Allah has decided those disputes, so He will decide this dispute also which is going on between the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his opponents as to who is following the truth and who the falsehood. So, a few years after the revelation of these verses the decision came before the whole world. In the same land of Arabia and in the same clan of the Quraish there was no single person left who was not convinced that it was Muhammad (peace be upon him) who was following the truth and not Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab. Even the children of these people admitted that their fathers were wrong.

77. And indeed, it is certainly a guidance and a

وَإِنَّهُ هُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

mercy for the believers.*94



*94 That is, “It is mercy and guidance for those who accept the message of the Quran and believe in what it presents. Such people will be saved from the errors in which their own people are involved. They will find the right way of life by means of the Quran and they will be blessed with such favors by Allah, which the disbelievers among the Quraish cannot even imagine today.” This shower of Allah’s mercy was also witnessed by the world after a few years. The same people who were living unknown lives in a corner of the Arabian desert and could at the most become successful raiders in the state of unbelief, suddenly emerged after their belief in the Quran as the guides of the world, leaders of the nations, makers of human civilization and rulers over a vast part of the world.

78. Indeed, your Lord will judge between them*95 by His wisdom. And He is the All Mighty, the All Knowing.*96

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ
بِحُكْمِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَلِيمُ



*95 “Between them”: Between the disbelievers of the Quraish and the believers.

*96 That is, “Neither can any power withhold His judgment from being enforced, nor is there any chance of an error in His judgment.”

79. So put your trust in Allah. Indeed, you are on a

فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۖ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ

clear truth.

الْحَقِّ الْمُبِينِ ﴿٧٩﴾

80. Indeed, you cannot make the dead hear,^{*97} nor can you make the deaf hear the call, when they flee, turning their backs.^{*98}

إِنَّكَ لَا تَسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَلَا تَسْمِعُ الْأُصْمَاءَ إِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

***97** “The dead” the ones whose consciences are dead and whose stubbornness, obstinacy and love of the usage and custom have deprived them of the sense of discrimination between the truth and falsehood.

***98** That is, “Who not only close their ears against what you say, but slink away from the place where they fear they ought hear what you say.”

81. And you cannot lead the blind out of their error.^{*99} You cannot make hear except those who believe in Our revelations, then they have surrendered.

وَمَا أَنْتَ بِهَادِي الْعُمْيِ عَنْ ضَلَالَتِهِمْ ۗ إِن تَسْمِعُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

***99** That is, “It is none of your job to pull them forcibly to the right way and drag them along with you. You can only tell them by the word of mouth and by your example that this is the right way and the way they are following is the wrong way. But how can you guide the one who has closed his eyes and is not at all inclined to see anything?”

82. And when the word is fulfilled against them,^{*100} We shall bring out to them a beast from the earth, which will speak to them, that mankind did not believe with certainty in Our verses.^{*101}

وَإِذَا وَقَعَ الْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ
أَخْرَجْنَا لَهُمْ دَابَّةً مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ
تَكَلِّمُهُمْ أَنَّ النَّاسَ كَانُوا
بِعَايَتِنَا لَا يُوقِنُونَ

*100 That is, “When Resurrection which they are being promised will approach.”

*101 According to Ibn Umar, this will happen when there remains no one in the world to command the people to do good and forbid them to do evil. Ibn Marduyah has reported a *Hadith* on the authority of Abu Said Khudri; according to which the latter heard the same thing from the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. This shows that when man gives up the duty of exhorting others to do good and forbidding them to do evil, Allah will bring forth a beast to serve as the final warning just before Resurrection. This, however, is not clear whether it will be just one beast, or a particular species of beasts, who will spread all over the earth. The words *daabbat-an-min-al-ard* might contain both the meanings. In any case, what it will say will be: “The people did not believe in Allah’s revelations in which Resurrection was foretold. Now the same Resurrection is about to come; let everyone know that what Allah said was true”. The sentence, “The people did not believe in Our Revelations”, is either a part of the beast’s own speech, or Allah’s narration of its words. If these are its own words,

the word “Our” will be understood in the style of an official who speaks on behalf of his government and not on his personal behalf. In the second case, since Allah is narrating the beast’s words, He has used “Our Revelations” in the normal sense.

As to the time and occasion of the appearance of this beast, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: “The sun will rise in the west and the beast will suddenly appear in the open daylight. Whichever of these signs appears first, it will be closely followed by the other.” (Sahih-Muslim). In the other traditions related in Sahih-Muslim, Ibn-Majah, Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, etc. the Prophet (peace be upon him) foretold that the signs of Resurrection as emergence of the Anti-Christ (Dajjal), appearance of the beast, smoke and the rising of the sun in the west will appear one after the other.

As for the nature, general appearance, place of appearance and other details about the beast, contradictory traditions have been reported, which only cause confusion and are not relevant to the object for which this thing has been mentioned in the Quran.

As regards the beast’s speaking to human beings in a human language, this will be a manifestation of the power of Allah, Who can give the power of speech to anything He pleases. He will give this power only to a beast before the event of Resurrection, but when Resurrection will have taken place, each limb of man, his ears, his eyes, even his skin, will speak out and give evidence in the court of Allah, as has been clearly stated in Ha-Mim As-Sajdah: Ayats 20-

21: “Then, when all will have reached there, their ears and their eyes and their very skins will bear witness against them concerning what they had been doing in the world. They will say to their skins, why have you borne witness against us? They will reply, the same God who has given speech to everything has given us speech.”

83. And the Day when We shall gather from every nation a host of those who denied Our signs, and they shall be driven in ranks.

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ فَوْجًا
مِمَّنْ يُكْذِبُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُمْ
يُوزَعُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

84. Until when they come, He (Allah) will say: “Did you deny My signs while you did not comprehend them in knowledge,^{*102} or what was it you used to do.”^{*103}

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوا قَالَ أَكَذَّبْتُمْ
بِآيَاتِي وَلَمْ تُحِيطُوا بِهَا عِلْمًا
أَمْ آذًا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

*102 That is, “You did not deny My revelations on the basis of some scientific investigation, which might have proved them to be false, but you denied them without any sound reason.”

*103 That is, “If it is not so, can you then prove that you treated them as false only after a thorough scientific investigation through which you came to know that the reality was not that which was being presented in these verses?”

85. And the word will be fulfilled against them because

وَوَقَعَ الْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمَا ظَلَمُوا

they have done wrong, and they will not (be able to) speak.

فَهُمْ لَا يَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

86. Do they not see that We have appointed the night that they may rest therein, and the day sight giving. ^{*104} Indeed, in that are surely signs for a people who believe. ^{*105}

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا جَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لَيْسَكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا ۗ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

***104** That is, “Two out of the countless signs were such which they were observing at all times, whose benefits they were enjoying every moment, and which were not hidden even from a blind or deaf or dumb person. While they benefited by the rest at night and the opportunities afforded by the day, why did they not think that it is a system devised by an All-Wise Being, Who has established the relationship between the sun and the earth precisely to meet their requirements and needs. This cannot be a mere accident, for it clearly manifests purposefulness, wisdom and planning, which cannot be the characteristic of the blind forces of nature, nor the work of many gods. It can only be a system established by the One Creator and Master and Disposer, Who is ruling over the earth, the moon, the sun and all other planets. From the observation of this single phenomenon they could judge that the alternation of the day and night testified to the truth that We have conveyed through Our Messenger and Our

Book.”

*105 That is, “It was not something incomprehensible either. There were among their own relatives, their own clan and their own brotherhood people like themselves, who had seen the same very signs and believed that the creed of God worship and Tauhid towards which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was inviting them was precisely in accordance with the truth and reality.”

87. And the Day when the Trumpet will be blown, then whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth will be terrified,^{*106} except him whom Allah wills. And all shall come to Him humbled.

وَيَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَفَزِعَ مَنْ
فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَكُلٌّ أَتَوْهُ
دَاخِرِينَ



*106 For a detailed discussion of the blowing of the Trumpet, see E.N. 47 of Al-Anaam, E.N. 57 of Ibrahim, E.N. 78 of Ta Ha, E.N. 1 of Al-Hajj, E.Ns. 46, 47 of Ya Sin and E.N. 79 of Az-Zumar.

88. And you will see the mountains thinking them as firmly fixed, and they shall pass away as the passing away of the clouds. The work of Allah, who perfected all things. Indeed He is Well-Aware with what you do.^{*107}

وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسِبُهَا جَمَادَةً
وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ صُنْعَ
اللَّهِ الَّذِي أَتَقَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ إِنَّهُ
خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَفْعَلُونَ



*107 That is, “From such God you should not expect that

after giving you the powers of intellect and discrimination and control over things, He will remain unaware of your deeds and actions and will not see how you have been using the delegated authority in the earth.”

89. Whoever comes with a good deed will have better than it,^{*108} and they will be safe from the terror on that Day.^{*109}

مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ خَيْرٌ مِنْهَا
وَهُمْ مِنْ فِرْعَ يَوْمَئِذٍ ءَامِنُونَ



***108** The reward will be better in two ways: (1) It will be higher than what a person will actually deserve for his good deeds; and (2) it will be everlasting and for ever though the good act was temporary and its influence confined to a limited period only.

***109** That is, “Though the terrors of Resurrection will stun and confound the disbelievers, the believers will remain safe and secure from them, for everything in the Hereafter will be according to their expectations. They had already known from the messages brought by the messengers of Allah that Resurrection will take place, and a new world will be established when everyone will be called to account for his deeds. Therefore, they will neither be bewildered nor alarmed, which will be the case with those who had denied this Day and remained heedless of it, till their last breath in the world. They will also be satisfied because they had worked for this Day and had brought necessary provisions from the world for their success here. Therefore, they will not be stupefied and confounded as will be those

who had invested all their energies and capabilities in their struggle for achieving worldly successes only, and had never thought that there would be a life hereafter for which they should make some provision. Contrary to them, the believers will be satisfied that the Day had, at last come, for the sake of which they had given up the unlawful benefits and pleasures of life and had undergone hardships and toil. And they will not be deprived of the rewards of their works.”

90. And whoever comes with an evil deed, they will be cast down on their faces in the Fire. (It will be said), “Are you being recompensed (anything) except what you used to do.”*110

وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَكُبَّتْ
وُجُوهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ هَلْ
تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ



***110** At several places in the Quran it has been stated clearly that an evil will be punished in the Hereafter only to the extent of the evil committed, but a good act will be rewarded much more generously by Allah than what the doer will actually deserve for it. For more examples of this, see Surah Yunus: Ayats 26-27; Surah Al-Qasas: Ayat 84; Surah Al-Ankabut: Ayat 7; Surah Saba: Ayats 37-38; Surah Al-Mumin: Ayat 40.

91. (O Muhammad, say), I have been commanded that I worship only the Lord of this city (Makkah), Him who has

إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ رَبَّ
هَذِهِ الْبَلَدَةِ الَّذِي حَرَّمَهَا وَلَهُ

made it sacred, and His is every thing.*111 And I have been commanded that I be of those who surrender.

كُلُّ شَيْءٍ وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ
مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

*111 As this Surah was sent down at a stage when the message of Islam was confined to Makkah and its addressees were the people of that city only, it was said, “I have been commanded that I should worship the Lord of this city.” And the characteristic of the Lord was stated to be that He had made that city sacred. This was meant to warn the disbelievers of Makkah, as if to say, “You may if you so like prove thankless to that God Who has done you the great favor of making this city of yours a haven of peace in the strife-ridden land of Arabia. And Who by His grace has made it the center of spiritual affiliation for the whole of Arabia. But I have been commanded to be grateful to him and bow down before Him. None of your deities had the power to make this city a sanctuary and make the quarrelsome and plundering tribes of Arabia have respect for it. I cannot abandon my real Benefactor and bow down before those who have done me no favor at all.

92. And that I recite the Quran. Then whoever is guided, so he is only guided for his ownself. And whoever strays, then say: “I am only of the warners.”

وَأَنْ أَتْلُوَ الْقُرْآنَ فَمَنْ
أَهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ
وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا مِنَ
الْمُنذِرِينَ

93. And say: "Praise be to Allah, who will soon show you His signs, so you shall recognize them. And your Lord is not unaware of what you do."

وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ سِيرِكُمْ ءَايَاتِهِ
فَتَعْرِفُونَهَا ۚ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ
عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ



Al-Qasas الْقَصَص

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from verse 25 in which the word *Al-Qasas* occurs. Lexically, *qasas* means to relate events in their proper sequence. Thus, from the viewpoint of the meaning too, this word can be a suitable title for this Surah, for in it the detailed story of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) has been related.

Period of Revelation

As already mentioned in the introduction to Surah An-Naml, according to Ibn Abbas and Jabir bin Zaid, Surahs Ash-Shuara, An-Naml and Al-Qasas were sent down one after the other. The language, the style and the theme also show that the period of the revelation of these three Surahs is nearly the same. Another reason for their close resemblance is that the different parts of story of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) as mentioned in these Surahs together make up a complete story. In Surah Ash-Shuara, seeking excuse for not accepting the office of prophethood the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) submits, "The people of Pharaoh have the charge of a crime against me; therefore, I fear that they will put me to

death.” Then, when he goes before Pharaoh, the latter says, “Did we not bring you up as a child in our house? You lived quite a few years of your life among us, and then you did what you did.” Nothing more of this has been mentioned there, but in this Surah the other details have been supplied. Similarly, in Surah An-Naml the story starts from the time when the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was journeying with his family and suddenly saw a fire at a distance. In that Surah nothing has been said about the nature of his journey, or the place he was coming from, or his destination, but this Surah supplies all the necessary details. Thus, the three Surahs read together complete the story of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him).

Theme and Topics

The main theme is to remove the doubts and objections that were being raised against the Prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and to invalidate the excuses which were being offered for not believing in him.

For this purpose, first the story of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) has been related, which, by analogy with the period of revelation, impresses upon the following points in the listeners mind automatically.

First, Allah provides the means and motives of whatever He wills to do, in imperceptible ways. Thus, Allah so arranged things that the child through whom Pharaoh had to be removed from power, was bred and brought up in his own house, and he could not know whom he was fostering. Who can then fight God and frustrate Him by his machinations. Secondly, Prophethood is not granted to a person amid

festivities by issuing a proclamation from the earth and heavens. You wonder how Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been blessed with prophethood unexpectedly, all of a sudden, but Moses (peace be upon him) whom you yourselves acknowledge as a prophet (Ayat 48) had also become a prophet unexpectedly, while on a journey, and nobody had known what event had occurred in the desolation at the foot of Mt. Sinai. Even Moses (peace be upon him) himself did not know a moment before what he was going to be blessed with. He, in fact, had gone to bring a piece of the fire but had returned with the gift of prophethood.

Thirdly, the person from whom Allah wants to take some service comes out without any army and armor and without an apparent helper or force behind him, yet he puts to rout much stronger and better equipped opponents. The contrast that existed between the strengths of Moses (peace be upon him) and Pharaoh was much more prominent and glaring than that which existed between Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Quraish; yet the world knows who had come out victorious in the end and who had been routed.

Fourthly, you refer to Moses again and again and say, "Why has Muhammad not been given the same which was given to Moses?" i.e. miracles of the staff, the shining hand, etc. as if to suggest that you would readily believe only if you were shown the kind of the miracles that were shown by Moses (peace be upon him) to Pharaoh. But do you know what sort of response was made by those who were

shown those miracles? They had not believed even after seeing the miracles, and had only said, “This is magic”, for they were involved in stubbornness and hostility to the truth. The same malady afflicts you today. Will you believe only if you are shown the same kind of miracles? Then, do you know what fate the disbelievers had met even after seeing the miracles? They were annihilated by Allah. Do you now wish to meet the same doom by asking for the miracles in your obstinacy?

These were the things which were impressed in the mind of every listener who heard this story in the pagan environment of Makkah, for a similar conflict was going on at that time between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and disbelievers of Makkah as had already taken place between the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and Pharaoh before. This was the background against which the story of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was narrated so that a perfect analogy could be established in every detail between the conditions prevailing then in Makkah and those existing in the time of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). Then, from verse 43 onward the discourse turns to the real theme.

In the first place, the narration of a two thousand year old historical event by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) with such accuracy and detail, is presented as a proof of his prophethood although he was un-lettered and the people of his city and clan knew full well that he had no access to any source of such information as they could point out.

Then the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned and

put to shame for an event that occurred in those very days. Some Christians had come to Makkah and embraced Islam when they heard the Quran from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Instead of learning any lesson from this the Makkans were so upset at this that their leader, Abu Jahl, disgraced those people publicly.

In conclusion, the excuse that the disbelievers put forward for not believing in the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been dealt with. What they feared was this: “If we give up the polytheistic creed of the Arabs and accept the doctrine of *Tauhid* instead, this will put an end to our supremacy in the religious, political and economic fields, which, in turn, will destroy our position of the most influential tribe of Arabia and we shall be left with no refuge anywhere in the land.” As this was the real motive of the chiefs of the Quraish for their antagonism towards the truth. Their doubts and objections were only the pretenses, which they invented to deceive the common people. Allah has dealt with these fully till the end of the Surah, considered each aspect of these in a wise manner and offered the remedy for their basic ailment due to which those people judged the truth and falsehood only from the viewpoint of their worldly interests.

1. Ta. Seen. Mim.



2. These are revelations of the manifest Book.*1



*1 For comparison, see Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayats 47-59; Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayats 100-141; Surah Yunus: Ayats 75-92;

Surah Hud: Ayats 96-109; Surah Bani Israil: Ayats 101-111; Surah Maryam: Ayats 51-53; Surah Ta-Ha: Ayats 1-89; Surah Al-Muminun: Ayats 45-49; Surah Ash-Shuara: Ayats 10-68; Surah An-Naml: Ayats 7-14; Surah Al-Ankabut: Ayats 39-40; Surah Al-Mumin: Ayats 23-50; Surah Az-Zukhruf: Ayats 46-56; Surah Ad-Dukhan: Ayats 17-33; Surah Adh-Dhariyat: Ayats 38-40; Surah An-Naziyat: Ayats 15-26.

3. We recite to you of the news of Moses and Pharaoh with truth, for a people who believe.*2

نَتْلُوا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ نَبَأِ مُوسَى
وَفِرْعَوْنَ بِالْحَقِّ لِقَوْمٍ
يُؤْمِنُونَ

*2 That is, “For the benefit of those who are not obstinate and stubborn, for it would be useless to address those who are not at all inclined to listen to you.”

4. Indeed, Pharaoh exalted himself in the land*3 and made its people sects,*4 weakening a group among them, slaughtering their sons, and keeping alive their females*5. Indeed, he was of those who spread corruption.

إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَجَعَلَ أَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا يَسْتَضِعُّ
طَائِفَةً مِنْهُمْ يُذَبِّحُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ
وَيَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ إِنَّهُ
كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

*3 The words *ala fil-ard* in the text are comprehensive and mean that he adopted a rebellious attitude in the land,

assumed independence and godhead and superiority instead of behaving like a servant and a subordinate, and started oppressing his subjects like a tyrannical and haughty ruler.

*4 That is, he did not rule his subjects with an even hand giving equal rights to all of them, but he had adopted the polity of dividing them into groups. He bestowed privileges and preferential rights on some to be made the ruling class and reduced others to serfs to be oppressed and exploited.

Here, nobody should think that an Islamic government also discriminates between its Muslim and *dhimmi* subjects, and does not allow them equal rights and privileges in every way. This doubt is misplaced because this distinction, contrary to Pharaonic discrimination, is not based on any distinction owing to race, color, language or class, but on the distinction of ideology and way of life. In the Islamic system there is absolutely no difference between the legal rights of the Muslims and the *dhimmis*. The only difference is in their political rights, for the simple reason that in an ideological state the ruling class can only be the one which believes in its basic ideology. Every person who accepts this ideology can enter that class, and anyone who rejects it quits it. Thus, there can be no element of resemblance between this discrimination and the Pharaonic discrimination according to which no member of the oppressed race can ever enter the ruling class, under which the people of the oppressed race do not even enjoy the basic human rights, not to speak of their political and economic rights. They are even deprived of their right to live and

survive, and are denied security of any right whatever. All special privileges and benefits and offices and good things of life are reserved for the ruling class and for every such person who happens to have been born in it.

***5** The Bible elucidates this as follows:

“Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them: lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them task masters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Ramses. And the Egyptians trade the children of Israel to serve with rigor; And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigor. And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives. And he said, when ye do the office of a midwife to Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.” (Exod. 1: 8-16).

This shows that after the passing away of the Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him), a nationalist revolution took place in Egypt, and when the Copts regained power, the new nationalist government employed every means to subdue the Israelites. They did not only humiliate and disgrace them and took mean services from them, but, over

and above this, they adopted the policy of reducing their population, by killing their sons and allowing their daughters to live so that their women should gradually pass into the Copts' hands and produce the Coptic instead of the Israelite race. The Talmud adds that this revolution had taken place a little over a hundred years after the death of the Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him). According to it, the new government, in the first instance, deprived the Israelites of their fertile lands and houses and possessions, and then removed them from the government jobs and offices. Even after this, whenever the Coptic rulers felt that the Israelites and their Egyptian coreligionists were becoming formidable they would disgrace them and employ them in rigorous jobs on little or no wages at all. This is the explanation of the Quranic verse: "He debased a section of the Egyptian population", and of verse 49 of Surah Al-Baqarah: "They had inflicted a dreadful torment on you." However, neither the Bible nor the Quran mentions that the Pharaoh was told by an astrologer that a boy would be born among the Israelites, who would become a cause of his deposition from power. And to meet this danger he had issued orders to kill the male children born in the Israelite homes. Or that Pharaoh himself had seen a dreadful dream and the explanation given was that a son would be born among the Israelites, who would cause his downfall. Our commentators have taken this legend from the Talmud and other Israelite traditions.

5. And We intended that
We confer favor upon those

وَنُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ

who were weak (and oppressed) in the land, and make them leaders and make them the inheritors.*6

أَسْتُضْعَفُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَنَجْعَلُهُمْ أَيْمَةً
وَنَجْعَلُهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ



*6 That is, “Make them leaders and guides of the people in the world.”

6. And establish them in the land,*7 and show Pharaoh and Haman*8 and their hosts through them that which they were fearful.

وَنُمَكِّنْ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنُرِيَ
فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا
مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَحْذَرُونَ



*7 That is, “Bestow on them inheritance of the land so that they should be rulers over it.”

*8 The Western orientalists have been very critical of this. They say that Haman was a courtier of the Persian King Xerxes, who reigned hundreds of years after the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), from 486 to 465 B.C., but the Quran has made him a minister of Pharaoh in Egypt. This is nothing but an instance of sheer prejudice. After all, what historical evidence do these orientalists have to prove that there never lived any other person called Haman before Xerxes' courtier Haman? If an orientalist has been able to discover, through authentic means, a complete list of all the ministers and chiefs and courtiers of the Pharaoh

under discussion which does not contain the name of Haman, he should make it public, or publish a photocopy of it, because there could be no better or more effective instrument than this of the refutation of the Quran.

7. And We^{*9} sent inspiration to the mother of Moses that: “Suckle him, so when you fear for him, then cast him into the river and do not fear, nor grieve. Indeed, We shall return him to you and shall make him of the messengers.”^{*10}

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ
أَرْضِعِيهِ فَإِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ
فَالْقِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ وَلَا تَخَافِي وَلَا
تَحْزَنِي إِنَّا رَادُّوهُ إِلَيْكِ وَجَاعِلُوهُ
مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

*9 That a son was born in the same period to an Israelite parents who was later known by the name of Moses to the world, has been omitted. According to the Bible and the Talmud, the family descended from Levi, a son of the Prophet Jacob (peace be upon him), and the name of the Prophet Moses' (peace be upon him) father was Amram, which has been pronounced as Imran by the Quran. They already had two children before Moses, the elder a daughter, named Miriam, and the younger her brother, Aaron. Probably the proclamation that every male child born in an Israelite home would be killed, had not yet been issued when the Prophet Aaron (peace be upon him) was born; therefore, he was saved. The third child was born when the proclamation was in full force.

*10 That is, she was not commanded to cast the child into

the river immediately after birth, but to suckle it till she felt a real danger for it. For instance, if she felt that the secret had been exposed and the enemies had come to know of the child's birth through some means, or through some wretched informer from among the Israelites themselves, she should place the child in a box and cast it into the river, without any hesitation. According to the Bible, the Prophet Moses' (peace be upon him) mother kept him hidden for three months after his birth. The Talmud adds that the Pharaoh's government had appointed Egyptian women who carried infants into the Israelite homes, and would make these babies cry, so as to make any hidden Israelite infants also cry and be thus discovered. This new method of spying worried Moses' mother and in order to save her child's life, she cast him into the river three months after his birth. Up to this point the version given by these Books is the same as the Quran's, and the event of casting the box into the river has also been described just as the Quran has described it. In Surah Ta-Ha it has been said: Put this child in a box and place the box in the river. (Ayat 39). The same has been said by the Bible and the Talmud. According to these, the Prophet Moses' mother made a basket of reeds and covered it with slime (tar) and with pitch to make it watertight. Then she laid the child in it and placed it in the river Nile. But the most important thing, which the Quran mentions, has found no mention anywhere in the Israelite traditions, that is, that the Prophet Moses' mother had done all this according to an inspiration from Allah, and Allah had already assured her that by following that device

not only would her child remain safe and secure but the child would ultimately be restored to her, and that her child would become Allah's Messenger in the future.

8. Then the family of Pharaoh picked him up, that he might become for them an enemy and a (cause of) grief.*¹¹ Indeed, Pharaoh and Haman and their hosts were deliberate sinners.

فَالْتَقَطَهُرَّ ءَالُ فِرْعَوْنَ
لِيَكُونَ لَهُمْ عَدُوًّا وَحَزَنًا
إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَمَمَانَ
وَجُنُودَهُمَا كَانُوا
خَاطِئِينَ

*¹¹ This was not their aim, but the ultimate destiny of their act. They picked up the child through whom they were to be destroyed in the end.

9. And Pharaoh's wife said: " (He will be) a comfort of the eye for me and for you. Do not kill him, perhaps that he may be of benefit to us, or we may adopt him as a son."*¹² And they did not perceive.

وَقَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ فِرْعَوْنَ قُرْتُ
عَيْنِي لِي وَلَكَ لَا تَقْتُلُوهُ عَسَى
أَنْ يَنْفَعَنَا أَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَوَلَدًا وَهُمْ
لَا يَشْعُرُونَ

*¹² What one understands from this is briefly so: When the ark or the basket was carried by the river to the place where Pharaoh's palaces were situated, the servants of Pharaoh picked it up and took it before the king and the queen. It is just possible that the king and the queen were

at that time strolling along the river bank and might have noticed the basket and ordered it to be picked up. When they saw a child in it, they could easily guess that it belonged to an Israelite family. For it came from the quarters inhabited by the Israelites, whose sons were being put to death in those days. It was understood that somebody had hidden the child for some time but when it could not be hidden any longer, it was cast to the river in the hope that it might be picked up and rescued from death. With this in view, the most obedient servants submitted that the king order the child to be killed forthwith, for it might prove dangerous for him. But the Pharaoh's wife was a woman and might even be childless. Then it was a lovely child, as Allah has reminded Moses in Surah Ta-Ha: Ayat 39, thus: "I had cast on you love from Myself." That is "I had made you such a lovely child that the beholders could not help but love you." Therefore, the woman could not keep their feelings for him, and said to the king, "Do not kill him, but let us adopt him. When he grows up in our house as our son, he will not know that he was an Israelite: he will rather think he is one of Pharaoh's own kinsfolk, and he will be useful for us as against the Israelites."

According to the Bible and the Talmud, the woman who had counseled adoption of Moses was Pharaoh's daughter, but according to the Quran his wife (*imraat-u-Firaun*). Obviously, the direct word of Allah is more reliable than the verbal traditions which were compiled centuries afterwards. Therefore, it is absolutely needless to translate

imraat-u-Firaun as a woman of Pharaoh's family against the Arabic idiom and usage only for the sake of seeking conformity with the Israelite traditions.

10. And the heart of the mother of Moses became empty. She would have disclosed his (case) if it was not that We had strengthened her heart, that she might be of the believers.

وَأَصْبَحَ فُؤَادُ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ فَرِحًا
إِن كَادَتْ لِتُبَدِيَ بِهِ
لَوْلَا أَن رَّبَطْنَا عَلَىٰ قَلْبِهَا
لَتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. And she said to his sister: "Follow him up." So she watched him from afar, and they did not perceive.^{*13}

وَقَالَتْ لِأُخْتِهِ قُصِّيهِ فَبَصُرَتْ
بِهِ عَن جُنُبٍ وَهُمْ لَا
يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١١﴾

***13** That is, the girl walked along and watched the floating basket in such a manner that the enemies could not know that she had anything to do with the child in it. According to the Israelite traditions, this sister of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was 10 to 12 years old. She followed up her brother intelligently and cleverly and ascertained that he had been picked up by the Pharaoh's household.

12. And We had prevented for him foster suckling mothers before,^{*14} so she said: "Shall I tell you of a household that will bring

﴿١٢﴾ وَحَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَرَاضِعَ مِن
قَبْلُ فَقَالَتْ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ
أَهْلِ بَيْتٍ يَكْفُلُونَهُ لَكُمْ

him up for you and they will look after him well.”*15

وَهُمْ لَهُ نَصِيحُونَ

*14 That is, “The child would not take to any nurse whom the queen would call for suckling him.”

*15 This shows that the sister did not go and sit back at home when she found that her brother had reached Pharaoh’s palace, but cleverly hung about the palace to watch every new development. Then, when she found that the child was not taking to any nurse, and the queen was anxious to get a nurse who would suit it, the intelligent girl went straight into the palace, and said, “I can tell you the whereabouts of a nurse, who will bring him up with great affection.” Here it should be borne in mind that in old days the well-to-do and noble families of these countries generally used to entrust their children to nurses for bringing up. We know that in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) nurses from the suburbs also used to visit Makkah from time to time in order to get infants from the well-to-do families for suckling and nursing on rich wages. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself was brought up by Halimah Sadiyah in the desert. The same custom was prevalent in Egypt, that is why the Prophet Moses’ (peace be upon him) sister did not say that she would bring a suitable nurse, but said that she would tell them of a house whose people would take up the responsibility of bringing him up with care and affection.

13. So We restored him*16 to his mother that her eyes might be cooled and she

فَرَدَدْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ أُمِّهِ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا

might not grieve, and that she might know that the promise of Allah is true.^{*17} But most of them do not know.

وَلَا تَحْزَنْ وَلِتَعْلَمَ أَنَّ
وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ



***16** According to the Bible and the Talmud, the child was named “Moses” in Pharaoh’s house. It is not a Hebrew but a Coptic word, which means, “I drew him out of the water”, for in Coptic *mo* meant water and *oshe* rescued.

***17** Another good thing that resulted from this wise device by Allah was that the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) could not become a real prince in Pharaoh’s house, but grew up among his own people and became fully aware of his family and community traditions and his ancestral religion. Thus, instead of growing up as a member of Pharaoh’s class and people, he arose sentimentally and intellectually as a full-fledged Israelite.

In a Hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: “He who works to earn his livelihood and keeps in view Allah’s goodwill also, has a likeness with the Prophet Moses’ (peace be upon him) mother, who suckled her own son as well as received her wages for the service, too.” That is, although such a person works to earn a living for his children, since he works honestly with a view to pleasing God, and he is just and upright in his dealings with others, seeks lawful provisions for himself and his children in the spirit of God’s worship, he does deserve a reward from Allah even for earning his own livelihood.

14. And when he reached his full strength and was established,^{*18} We gave him wisdom and knowledge.^{*19} And thus do We reward those who do good.

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَاسْتَوَىٰ
ءَاتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا
وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ



***18** That is, when he had attained his full mental and physical development. In this connection, different ages of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) have been mentioned in the Jewish traditions. Some say he was 18, others have mentioned 20 years and still others 40 years. According to the New Testament, he was 40 years old. (Acts, 7: 23). But the Quran does not mention any age. For the purpose of the incident being mentioned in the following verses, it is enough to know that he had attained his full maturity at that time.

***19** *Hukum* implies wisdom, understanding, and power of judgment. *Ilm* is both religious and worldly knowledge. The Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) became familiar with the teachings of his forefathers, Prophets Joseph, Jacob, Isaac and Abraham (peace be upon all of them) through his contact with his parents, and with the sciences prevalent in Egypt by virtue of his training as a prince in the king's palace. Here the gift of *Hukm* (wisdom) and *Ilm* (knowledge) does not refer to the gift of prophethood, because prophethood was bestowed on Moses several years afterwards, as is mentioned below, and has already been mentioned in Surah Ash-Shuaraa: Ayat 21.

Regarding his education and training while as a prince, the New Testament says: “Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.” The Talmud says: Moses grew up, a handsome lad, in the palace of the king: he dressed royally, was honored by the people, and seemed in all things of royal lineage. He visited the land of Goshen daily, observing the rigor with which his brethren were treated. Moses urged the king of Egypt to grant the men of Goshen one day of rest from the labor, in each week, and the king acceded to his request. Moses said, “If you compel them to labor steadily their strength will fail them; for your benefit and profit allow them at least one day in the week for rest and renewal of strength”, And the Lord was with Moses, and his fame extended through all the land.

15. And he entered the city at a time when its people were heedless,^{*20} and he found therein two men fighting, one from his own caste, and the other from his enemy. And he who was of his caste asked him for help against him who was of his enemy. So Moses struck him with his fist^{*21} and killed him. He said: “This is from the work of Satan. Indeed, he is an enemy, a

وَدَخَلَ الْمَدِينَةَ عَلَى حِينٍ
 غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا فَوَجَدَ فِيهَا
 رَجُلَيْنِ يَقْتَتِلَانِ هَذَا مِنْ
 شِيعَتِهِ وَهَذَا مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ
 فَاسْتَعَاثَهُ الَّذِي مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ
 عَلَى الَّذِي مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ فَوَكَرَهُ
 مُوسَى فَقَضَى عَلَيْهِ قَالَ هَذَا
 مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ

manifest misleader.”*22

مُضِلُّ مَبِينٌ

*20 It might be the early morning, or midday in summer, or night in winter, when the roads were deserted and there was all quiet in the city. The words “entered the city” indicate that the royal palaces were situated outside the capital, away from the common population. The words used are “entered the city” and not “came out in the city”, because the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) lived in the royal palace.

*21 The word *wakaza* in the original means both giving a slap and giving a blow. We have adopted “Moses gave a blow” for the reason that a blow can cause death but not a slap.

*22 One can imagine the state of utter remorse and confusion in which the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) uttered these words when he saw the Egyptian fall down after receiving the blow and breathe his last. He had no intention to murder, nor is a blow struck to kill, nor can one expect that a healthy person would die on receiving a blow. That is why the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) exclaimed: “This is the work of Satan! He has made me do this in order to work some great mischief, so that I am accused of killing an Egyptian while defending an Israelite, and a violent storm of anger and indignation is aroused in the whole of Egypt not only against me but the whole Israelite community.” In this connection, the Bible gives a different version from the Quran. It declares the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) to be guilty of willful murder. It

says that when Moses saw an Egyptian and an Israelite fighting, “He (Moses) looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, He slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.” (Exodus 2: 12). The same is the version of the Talmud also. Now anybody can see how the Israelites brand the characters of their elders with infamy and how the Quran exonerates them. The verdict of common sense also is that a wise and discreet person, who was to become a great Prophet in the future, and who had to give man a great code of law and justice, could not be such a blind nationalist that seeing a member of his own community fighting with a man of the other community, he would be so infuriated that he would kill the other person willfully. Evidently, it could not be lawful to kill the Egyptian only for the sake of rescuing an Israelite from his tyranny.

16. He said:^{*23} “My Lord, indeed I have wronged my soul, so forgive me,” then He forgave him. Indeed, He is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.^{*24}

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي
فَاغْفِرْ لِي فَغَفَرَ لَهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ
الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

^{*23} What the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) meant by this prayer was: “O my Lord, forgive this sin of mine, which you know I have not committed willfully, and also cover and conceal it from the people.”

^{*24} This has two meanings and both are implied here: Allah pardoned Moses’ error as well as concealed his sin from the people so that neither any Egyptian, nor any

official of the Egyptian government, passed that way at that time that he might witness the incident. So, the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) got an opportunity to escape undetected from the place of the occurrence of murder.

17. He said: “My Lord, for that You have bestowed favor upon me,^{*25} I will then never be a helper of the criminals.”^{*26}

قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ فَلَنْ أَكُونَ ظَهِيرًا لِلْمُجْرِمِينَ



^{*25} That is, “The favor of concealing my act from my enemies and enabling me to escape unharmed from Egypt.”

^{*26} This pledge of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) is in very comprehensive words. What he meant by this was that he would neither become a helper of an individual, nor of those who perpetrated cruelty and tyranny in the world. Ibn Jarir and several other commentators have rightly understood this to mean that on that very day the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) pledged to sever his relations with Pharaoh and his government, for it was a tyrannical government, which had set up a wicked system on God’s earth. He realized that it was not for any honest person to continue as a functionary of a tyrannical kingdom and become an instrument of increasing its power and grandeur.

The Muslim scholars in general have deduced from this pledge of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) that a believer should completely refrain from helping a tyrant, whether the tyrant is an individual, or a group, or a government, or a kingdom. Somebody asked Ata bin Abi

Rabah (may Allah be pleased with him), the well-known follower of the companions, “My brother is secretary to the governor of Kufah, under the Umayyids. Though he does not decide the disputes of the people, the decisions, however, are issued through his pen. He has to continue in this service because this is his only source of income.” Ata recited this verse, and said, “Your brother should throw away his pen: the Provider is Allah.”

A secretary asked Amir Shabi, “O Abu Amr, I am only responsible for writing down and issuing the judgments: I have nothing to do with passing them. Is it lawful provision for me?” He replied, “It is just possible that a sentence of murder is passed against an innocent person and it is issued under your pen; or a person’s property is confiscated unjustly; or somebody’s house is ordered to be pulled down, and the orders are issued under your pen.” Then the said Imam recited this verse, hearing which the secretary said, “After this day my pen will not be used for issuing judgments of the Umayyids.” The Imam said, “Then Allah also will not deprive you of your daily bread.”

Abdur Rehman bin Muslim had only asked Dahhak to go to Bukhara and distribute the salaries of the officials there, but he declined even this. When his friends said there was nothing wrong in it, he replied, “I do not want to be a helper of the unjust in any way.”

All of Imam Abu Hanifah’s authentic biographers including Al-Muwaffaq al-Makki, Ibn al-Bazzaz al-Karvari, Mulla Ali Qari, etc. have related that Hasan bin Qahtubah, the commander-in-chief of Mansur, had

tendered his resignation only on his instruction, saying, “Whatever I have done to support your kingdom until today, is enough for me if it was in the cause of Allah, but if it was for injustice and tyranny, then I do not want to add to my crimes in my book of conduct.”

18. And morning found him in the city, fearing, vigilant, when behold, he who had sought his help the day before, cried out to him for help. Moses said to him: “You are certainly a plain misguided man.”*27

فَأَصْبَحَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ خَائِفًا
يَتَرَقَّبُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي اسْتَنْصَرَهُ
بِالْأَمْسِ يَسْتَصْرِخُهُ قَالَ لَهُ
مُوسَى إِنَّكَ لَغَوِيٌّ مُّبِينٌ

*27 That is, “You seem to be a quarrelsome man: you have a new quarrel daily with one or the other person.”

19. Then when he (Moses) intended that he should seize the one who was an enemy to both of them,*28 he said:*29 “O Moses, do you intend to kill me as you killed a soul yesterday. Your intention is none other than that you become a tyrant in the land, and you do not intend to be of the reformers.”

فَلَمَّا أَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَبْطِشَ بِالَّذِي
هُوَ عَدُوٌّ لَهُمَا قَالَ يَمْوَسَى
أَتُرِيدُ أَنْ تَقْتُلَنِي كَمَا قَتَلْتَ
نَفْسًا بِالْأَمْسِ إِنْ تُرِيدُ إِلَّا أَنْ
تَكُونَ جَبَّارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا
تُرِيدُ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْمَصْلِحِينَ

***28** Here, the Biblical version is different from the Quranic. The Bible says that the fight on the next day was between two Israelites, but according to the Quran this fight also was between an Israelite and an Egyptian. This second version seems to be credible, for the manner in which the secret of the murder of the first day became known, as is being mentioned below, could be possible only if a member of the Coptic community had come to know of the matter. An Israelite's knowledge of it could not be so treacherous: he could not have gone to inform the Pharaonic government of such a heinous crime committed by the prince, who was a great supporter of his own community.

***29** The one who cried out was the same Israelite whom the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) wanted to help against the enemy. When after scolding and rebuking him, he turned to assault the Egyptian, the Israelite thought that Moses (peace be upon him) was going to strike him; therefore, he raised a hue and cry and disclosed the secret of the previous day's murder by this own folly.

20. And a man came from the farthest part of the city,^{*30} running. He said: "O Moses, indeed, the chiefs take counsel against you to kill you, so escape. Indeed, I am to you of those who give sincere advice."

وَجَاءَ رَجُلٌ مِّنْ أَقْصَا الْمَدِينَةِ
يَسْعَىٰ قَالَ يَا مُوسَىٰ إِنَّ
الْمَلَائِكَةَ يَأْتَمِرُونَ بِكَ لِيَقْتُلُوكَ
فَاخْرُجْ إِنِّي لَمِنَ
النَّاصِحِينَ



***30** This happened when in the second day's fight, the secret of the murder became known and the Egyptian informed the authorities about the case accordingly.

21. So he escaped from there, fearing, vigilant. He said: "My Lord, save me from the wrongdoing people."

فَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا خَائِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ قَالَ
رَبِّ نَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ



22. And when he turned his face toward Midian.^{*31} He said: "It may be that my Lord will guide me to the right path."^{*32}

وَلَمَّا تَوَجَّهَ تِلْقَاءَ مَدْيَنَ قَالَ
عَسَىٰ رَبِّي أَن يَهْدِيَنِي سَوَاءَ

السَّبِيلِ

***31** Both the Bible and the Quran agree that after leaving Egypt, the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had gone to live in Madyan (Midian). But the Talmud tells the absurd story that Moses fled to Ethiopia and became a great favorite with the king there. After the king's death the people made Moses their king and leader and gave him the widow of the king for a wife, but during the 40 years of his reign there he never had intercourse with his African wife. Then the queen of Ethiopia, who was a wife to Moses (peace be upon him) in name only, said to the people, "Why should this stranger continue to rule over you? He has never worshiped the gods of Ethiopia." At this the people of Ethiopia deposed him and made him many rich presents and dismissed him with great honors. Then he came to

Midian and met with the events being mentioned below. At this time he was 67 years old.

A clear proof of this story's being absurd is that according to it Assyria (northern Iraq) in those days was under Ethiopia, and the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and the Ethiopian king, his predecessor, had led military campaigns to crush the Assyrian revolts. Now anybody who has a little acquaintance with the history and geography can have a look at the map and see things for himself. Assyria could be under Ethiopian domination and have been attacked by the Ethiopian army only in case Egypt and Palestine and Syria had been under its subjugation, or the whole of Arabia under its sway, or, at least the Ethiopian navy so powerful as to have conquered Iraq across the Indian ocean and the Persian Gulf. History, however, does not support the view that the Ethiopians ever held sway over these countries, or their naval force was ever so powerful. This indicates how imperfect was the Israelites' knowledge of their own history, and how the Quran corrects their errors and presents the true facts in their pure form. Nevertheless, the Christian and the Jewish orientalist are never ashamed of asserting that the Quran has plagiarized the Israelite traditions for its narratives.

***32** The right path: The path that may take me to Midian safely." It should be borne in mind that Midian in those days was outside Pharaoh's empire. Egypt did not have control over the whole of the Sinai Peninsula but only on its western and southern parts. The Midianites who inhabited the eastern and western coasts of the Gulf of Aqabah were

free from Egyptian influence and authority. That is why the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had headed for Midian after leaving Egypt, because that was the nearest free and inhabited land. But to reach Midian he had to pass through Egyptian territories; avoiding the Egyptian police and military posts on the way. That is why he prayed to God to put him on the right track which should take him to Midian safely.

23. And when he arrived at the water of Midian,^{*33} he found there a group of men, watering (their flocks). And he found apart from them two women keeping back (their flocks). He said: "What is the matter with you." The two said: "We do not give (our flocks) to drink until the shepherds take back (their flocks). And our father is a very old man."^{*34}

وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَاءَ مَدْيَنَ وَجَدَ
عَلَيْهِ أُمَّةً مِّنَ النَّاسِ
يَسْقُونَ وَوَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ
أَمْرَاتَيْنِ تَذُودَانِ قَالَ مَا
خَطْبُكُمَا قَالَتَا لَا نَسْقِي حَتَّى
يُصَدِرَ الرِّعَاءُ وَأَبُونَا شَيْخٌ
كَبِيرٌ



***33** This place where the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had arrived was situated, according to the Arab tradition, on the western coast of the Gulf of Aqabah, a few miles to the north of Magna. Today it is called Al-Bid, and is a small habitation. I visited this place in December, 1952, when I was traveling from Tabuk to Aqabah. The natives told me that, as they had heard from their elders, Midian

was situated there. From Josephus to Burton, all ancient and modern explorers and geographers, have generally confirmed this very place as the location of ancient Midian. Nearby there is the place now called Maghair-Shuaib or Magharat Shuaib. There are some Thamudic monuments here. A mile or so away, There are some ancient ruins, where we saw two dry wells, one of which was said to be the well where the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had watered the goats. The same has been related by Abu Fida in Taqvim al-Buldan and Yaqut in Mujam al-Buldan, on the authority of Abu Zaid Ansari; that the natives point to the same well there as the well of Moses (peace be upon him). This indicates that the tradition is being handed down since centuries among the people, and therefore, it can be confidently asserted that this is the same place which has been mentioned in the Quran.

***34** That is, we are women: it is not possible for us to water our animals by resisting these shepherds. Our father is too old to perform this rigorous duty. There is no other male member in the house either. Therefore we, the women-folk, have to come out to perform these chores, and until all the shepherds have watered their animals and left, we have to wait.” This whole meaning was conveyed by the ladies in a brief sentence, which is indicative of their modesty. They did not want to have a lengthy conversation with a stranger, but at the same time, they did not like that he should form a wrong impression about their family, thinking how lethargic were the man-folk who sat back in their homes and sent the women to perform outdoor duties.

About the father of these ladies, traditions that have become current among the Muslims are that he was the Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him), but the Quran makes no allusion to this, although Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) is a prominent character of the Quran. If he were really the father of the ladies, it would have been clearly mentioned here. No doubt there are some traditions in which his name has been mentioned, but both Allama Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir concur that none of them has been authentically reported. That is why great commentators like Ibn Abbas, Hasan Basri, Abu Ubaidah and Said bin Jubair have relied on the Israelite traditions and mentioned the same names of this personage which appear in the Talmud etc. Evidently, if the name of Shuaib had actually been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him), these scholars would not have mentioned any other name.

The Bible mentions him as Reuel in one place and Jethro in another, and says that he was the priest of Midian. In the Talmudic literature he has been variously called as Reuel, Jethro and Hobab. The present-day Jewish scholars are of the view that Jethro was a synonym for "his excellency" and his real name was Reuel or Hobab. Similarly, they differ about the meaning of the word Kohen. Some regard it as a synonym of priest and others of prince.

According to the Talmud Reuel used to visit Pharaoh from time to time before the birth of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), and pharaoh relied on his knowledge and good counsel and mature opinion. But when the royal council of Egypt started consultations for the subduing of the

Israelites and it was decided that their male children be killed on their birth, he did his best to stop Pharaoh from enforcing this wrong decision, warned him of its evil consequences and counseled that if he found the Israelites unbearable, he should let them go to Canaan, the land of their forefathers. These words of Reue angered Pharaoh, and he sent him in shame from his presence. Reuel then left Egypt for his country Midian and settled there ever afterwards.

As to his religion it is commonly believed that, like the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), he was a follower of Prophet Ibrahim's (peace be upon him) faith, for just as the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was a descendant of Isaac, son of Abraham (peace be upon them), so he was a descendant of Midian, son of Abraham. Probably, due to this relationship he tried to prevent Pharaoh from persecuting the Israelites and angered him. Nisaburi, the commentator, writes on the authority of Hasan Basri: "He was a Muslim: he had embraced the religion of the Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him). The Talmud says that he publicly condemned the idol-worship of the Midianites as a folly. Due to this the people of Midian had turned his opponents.

24. So he watered (their flocks) for them. Then he turned aside into the shade, and said: "My Lord, indeed, whatever you send down for me of good, I am needy."

فَسَقَى لَهُمَا ثُمَّ تَوَلَّى إِلَى الظِّلِّ
فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ
مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ

25. Then there came to him one of the two (women), walking with shyness.^{*35} She said: “Indeed, my father calls you that he may reward you with a payment for having watered (our flocks) for us.”^{*36} Then, when he came to him and narrated to him the story. He said: “Do not fear. You have escaped from the wrongdoing people.”

فَجَاءَتْهُ إِحْدَاهُمَا تَمْشِي عَلَى
أَسْتِحْيَاءٍ قَالَتْ إِنَّ أَبِي
يَدْعُوكَ لِيَجْزِيَكَ أَجْرَ مَا
سَقَيْتَ لَنَا فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُرُ وَقَصَّ
عَلَيْهِ الْقِصَصَ قَالَ لَا تَخَفْ
نَجَّوْتَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ



^{*35} Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) has explained this sentence, thus: “She came walking modestly, with her face covered with a part of her outer garment, unlike those immodest women, who go about wherever they like, and enter wherever they like without any hesitation.” Several traditions bearing on this subject have been reported by Said bin Mansur, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn al-Mundhir from Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) through authentic chains of authorities. This shows that the Islamic concept of modesty, which the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) had understood from the Quran and the teaching and training of the Prophet (peace be upon him), was absolutely opposed to keeping the face exposed to others and moving about immodestly outside the house. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) has clearly regarded covering of the face as a symbol of modesty and

exposing it to other men as an immodesty and shamelessness.

***36** She said this also out of modesty, for she had to give a sound reason for her coming to another man all alone; otherwise it was not at all necessary that a gentleman should have been rewarded if he had rendered some service to the helpless women in trouble. And then, in spite of hearing of a reward, the Prophet Moses' (peace be upon him) willingness to follow her forthwith to her house indicates the state of extreme helplessness in which he found himself at that time. He had left Egypt empty-handed and might have taken at least eight days to reach Midian. He must be hungry and worn out by journey. And above all, he must be anxious to find a shelter in the unfamiliar land and a sympathetic person to give him refuge. Under this very compulsion, in spite of hearing that he was being called to be rewarded for a small service he had rendered, the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) felt no hesitation in going with the woman. He must have thought that the prayer he had just made to God was being answered by God Himself. Therefore, he did not think it was right to turn down the means of hospitality provided by his Lord by an unnecessary show of self-respect.

26. One of the two women said: "O my father, hire him. Indeed, the best one whom you can hire is the strong, the trustworthy."^{*37}

قَالَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا يَا أَبَتِ
اسْتَجِرْهُ إِنَّ خَيْرَ مَنْ
اسْتَجَرْتَ الْقَوِيُّ الْأَمِينُ



***37** It is not necessary that the girl said this to her father in his very first meeting with Moses. Most probably her father made the traveler stay with him for a couple of days, and the girl counseled him thus during that time. What she meant by this counsel was: “Father, you are old, and therefore, we girls have to go out to perform outdoor duties. We have no brother either, who could take up these chores. You may, therefore, employ this man as a servant: he is strong and will be able to face all kinds of rigors, and he is also trustworthy. He helped us only due to his noble nature when he found us standing helpless, but he never raised his eyes at us.”

27. He said: ^{*38} “Indeed, I intend that I wed to you one of these two daughters of mine, on (the condition) that you serve me for eight years, but if you complete ten, so it will be (a favor) from you. And I do not intend that I put a difficulty on you. You will find me, if Allah willing, from among the righteous.”

قَالَ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُنِكَحَكَ
 إِحْدَى ابْنَتِي هَاتَيْنِ عَلَى أَنْ
 تَأْجُرَنِي ثَمَنِي حِجَجٍ فَإِنْ
 أَتَمَمْتَ عَشْرًا فَمِنْ عِنْدِكَ
 وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَشُقَّ عَلَيْكَ
 سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ
 الصَّالِحِينَ

***38** It is also not necessary that the father should have said this to Moses (peace be upon him) immediately at the daughter’s counsel. One feels that he must have formed this

opinion after due consideration. He must have thought: “No doubt he is a noble person, but employing a healthy and strong young man like him as a servant in a house where there are grown up daughters would not be the right thing. When he is a gentle, educated and civilized man of a noble family (as he must have come to know from the story told by Moses), why shouldn’t he be kept as a son-in-law in the house?” After reaching such a decision, he might have spoken to Moses at a suitable time.

Here again the Israelites have done a grave injustice to their illustrious Prophet, greatest benefactor and national hero. The Talmud says, “Moses lived with Reuel, and he looked with favor upon Ziporah, the daughter of his host, and married her.” Another Jewish tradition related in the Jewish Encyclopedia is to the effect: When Moses related his story to Jethro, the latter understood that he was the person at whose hand, according to prophecies, the kingdom of Pharaoh was to be destroyed. Therefore, he immediately imprisoned Moses so that he should hand him over to Pharaoh and get a reward. He remained imprisoned for seven or ten years in a dark underground cell, but Jethro’s daughter, Ziporah, whom he had first met at the well of water, kept visiting him in the cell secretly and providing him with food and drink;. They had even decided to marry. After seven or ten years Ziporah said to her father, “Years ago you put a man in the cell and then forgot him altogether. He should have died by now. But if he is still alive, he must be a godly person.” Hearing this when Jethro went to the prison, he found Moses alive and was

convinced that he had miraculously remained so. Then he married Ziporah to him.

Have the Western orientalist who are ever on the lookout for the sources of the Quranic narratives ever cared to see this manifest difference that exists between the Quranic version and the Israelite traditions?

28. He said: “That (is settled) between me and you. Whichever of the two terms I fulfill, so there will be no injustice to me. And Allah is a witness over what we say.”*39

قَالَ ذَلِكَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ أَيَّمَا
الْأَجَلَيْنِ قَضَيْتُ فَلَا عُدْوَانَ
عَلَيَّ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى مَا نَقُولُ
وَكَيلٌ

*39 Some people have taken this conversation between the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and the girl’s father for a contract of marriage, and have started the dispute whether service under the father can be looked upon as a dower of the daughters marriage, and whether such external conditions can be laid down for the marriage contract; whereas the words of the verses under discussion themselves indicate this was not the contract of marriage but the initial proposal that is generally made before the execution of the marriage contract itself. After all, how can this be taken for a contract of marriage when it had not yet been decided which of the girls was to be given away in marriage. The purport of the conversation was that the girl’s father said, “I am prepared to marry one of my daughters to you provided that you promise that you will

stay in my house for eight to ten years and help me in performing household chores, for I am old and have no son either, who could manage my properties. I have only daughters whom I have to send to perform outdoor duties. I want you to strengthen me as my would be son in law. If you are willing to accept this responsibility, and do not intend to take away your wife soon after marriage, I will marry one of my daughters to you.” The Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was himself in search of a shelter at that time, so he accepted the proposal. Evidently, it was a sort of contract that had been agreed upon between the two parties before the marriage. After this the actual marriage must have taken place according to the law and the dower also settled. There could be no question of including the condition of service in the marriage bond itself.

29. Then, when Moses had fulfilled the term,^{*40} and was traveling with his family, he saw in the direction of Toor (Mount) a fire.^{*41} He said to his family: “Stay here, indeed, I have seen a fire. Perhaps I may bring to you from there some information, or a burning wood from the fire that you may warm yourselves.”

فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ مُوسَى الْأَجَلَ
وَسَارَ بِأَهْلِيهِ ۖ آنَسَ مِنْ
جَانِبِ الطُّورِ نَارًا قَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ
امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا لَعَلِّي
آتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوْ جَذْوَةٍ
مِّنَ النَّارِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ

***40** According to Hasan bin Ali bin Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with them), the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had completed the ten years term instead of the eight years. According to Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him), this has been related on the authority of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. He has said, “Moses (peace be upon him) completed the term which was more perfect and more agreeable to his father in law, i.e. ten years.”

***41** That the direction of the journey was towards Mt. Toor shows that the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) might be traveling to Egypt with his family, for Toor lies on the way from Midian to Egypt. Probably Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) thought that he had stayed away from home for ten long years and the Pharaoh in whose reign he had left Egypt had also died, if he quietly went back and stayed with his people, nobody would know it.

The Biblical version of the sequence of events is different from the Quran's. It says that the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) led the flocks (of his father in law) to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God. There God spoke to him, and appointed him to prophethood and commanded him to go to Egypt. Then Moses went back to Jethro, his father in law, took his permission and went to Egypt with his family. Contrary to this, the Quran says that the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) left Midian with his family after completing the term and during this journey Allah spoke to him and appointed him to prophethood.

Both the Bible and the Talmud agree that the Pharaoh in

whose house Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had been brought up had died during his stay in Midian, and now another Pharaoh was the king of Egypt.

30. Then, when he came to it, he was called from the right side^{*42} of the valley in the blessed field,^{*43} from the tree that: “O Moses, indeed, I am Allah, the Lord of the worlds.”

فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا نُودِيَ مِنْ شَاطِئِ
الْوَادِ الْأَيْمَنِ فِي الْبُقْعَةِ
الْمُبْرَكَةِ مِنَ الشَّجَرَةِ أَنْ
يَمُوسَىٰ إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ رَبُّ
الْعَالَمِينَ

*42 That is, in the ground which was being lit up by Divine Light.

*43 That is, on that side of the valley which lay to the right of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him).

31. “And that, throw down your staff.” Then when he saw it writhing as if it was a snake, he turned back, and did not return. (Allah said): “O Moses, draw near and do not fear. You are indeed of those who are secure.”

وَأَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَلَمَّا رَءَاهَا
تَهْتَزُّ كَأَنَّهَا جَانٌّ وَلَّى مُدْبِرًا وَلَمْ
يُعِقبْ^ج يَمُوسَىٰ أَقْبِلْ وَلَا
تَخَفْ^ط إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْأَمِينِينَ

32. “Put your hand in your bosom, it will come out

أَسْلُكْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجْ

white, without disease.*⁴⁴
And fold back to you your
arm (to ward off) from
fear.*⁴⁵ So these are two clear
signs from your Lord to
Pharaoh and his chiefs.
Indeed, they are a people
disobedient.”*⁴⁶

بَيضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ وَأَضْمَمَ
إِلَيْكَ جَنَاحَكَ مِنَ الرَّهْبِ
فَذَانِكَ بُرْهَانَانِ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ^ج إِنَّهُمْ
كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَسِيقِينَ



*⁴⁴ These two miracles were shown to the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) at that time so that, firstly, he himself is fully convinced that the same Being Who is speaking to him is, in fact, the Creator and Master and Ruler of the whole system of the universe and secondly, he should have full satisfaction that he was not going unarmed before Pharaoh, to perform the dangerous mission assigned to him, but would go well armed with the two powerful weapons.

*⁴⁵ That is, “Whenever you experience the fear of any danger, fold back your arm to yourself: this will strengthen your heart and will deliver you completely from every feeling of fear and dread.”

The arm probably implies the right arm. The arm can be folded back in two ways: either by bringing the arm and pressing it against the side, or by pressing one hand under the armpit of the other. Probably the first way was implied, for in that case the other person cannot perceive that one is specially doing so in order to ward off fear.

The Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was taught this

device because he was being sent to counter a tyrannical government without any army and worldly equipment. He was going to meet with many a dreadful situation when a great Prophet could not also remain safe from fear and terror. Allah said to him, “Whenever you face such a situation, just do this, and Pharaoh will not be able to shake your heart in spite of all the power of his mighty kingdom.”

***46** The words by themselves imply: “Go to Pharaoh with these signs and present yourself as Allah’s Messenger, and invite him and his chiefs to the obedience and worship of Allah, Lord of the worlds.” That is why his appointment has not been specified here, though at other places it has been clearly stated, thus: “Go to Pharaoh for he has become rebellious” (Surah Ta-Ha: Ayat 24). And: “When your Lord called Moses, saying: Go forth to the wicked people, the people of Pharaoh”. (Surah Ash-Shuara: Ayat 10).

33. He said: “My Lord indeed, I killed a man among them, so I fear that they will kill me.”^{*47}

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي قَتَلْتُ مِنْهُمْ نَفْسًا
فَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَقْتُلُونِ

***47** It did not mean that he was hesitant to go there because of the fear, but it meant this: “Kindly make some such arrangement that I am not apprehended on the charge of murder just on arrival even before I may convey to them Your message, for in that case the very object for which I am being sent will be defeated.” The next verse makes it plain that the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), by this

submission, did not at all mean to reject the office of prophethood and refuse to go before Pharaoh because of the fear.

34. And my brother Aaron, he is more eloquent than me in speech, so send him with me as a helper, confirming me. Indeed, I fear that they will deny me.”

وَأَخِي هَارُونَ هُوَ أَفْصَحُ مِنِّي
لِسَانًا فَأَرْسِلْهُ مَعِيَ رِدْءًا
يُصَدِّقُنِي إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ
يُكَذِّبُونِ

35. He (Allah) said: “We will strengthen your arm with your brother, and We will give you both power so they shall not be able to reach you, with Our signs. You two and those who follow you will be the victors.”*48

قَالَ سَنَشُدُّ عَضُدَكَ بِأَخِيكَ
وَنَجْعَلُ لَكُمَا سُلْطٰنًا فَلَا
يَصِلُونَ إِلَيْكُمَا بِآيٰتِنَا أَنْتُمَا
وَمَنْ أَتَّبَعَكُمَا الْغٰلِبُونَ

***48** This meeting of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) with Allah and the mutual conversation has been described in much greater detail in Surah Ta-Ha Ayats 9-48. Anyone who compares this Quranic version with the story given in the Bible will himself be able to judge which of the two is a divine revelation and which one is the result of human story telling. Besides, he will also be able to judge whether the Quranic version is, God forbid, a plagiarism of the Bible and Israelite traditions, or that God Himself is

describing the actual event, Who had honored Moses (peace be upon him) by calling him up into His Presence. (See E.N. 19 of Surah Ta-Ha).

36. Then when Moses came to them with Our clear signs, they said: “This is nothing but a magic fabricated,^{*49} and we have not heard of this among our fathers of old.”^{*50}

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا
بَيَّنَّتْ قَالُوا مَا هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ
مُّفْتَرٍ وَمَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي
ءَابَائِنَا الْأُولِينَ



***49** The words of the text mean “Fabricated or forged magic.” If fabrication is taken to mean falsehood, it would mean, “The staff's turning into a serpent and the shining of the hand is not any real change in the nature of the thing itself, but a mere illusion, which this man calls a miracle in order to deceive us.” And if it is taken to mean a forgery, it will imply: “This person has forged something which appears to be a staff; but when it is thrown on the ground, it moves like a snake. As for the hand, he has rubbed something on it so that when he draws it out of the armpit, it shines. He himself works these magical tricks but tries to make us believe that these are miracles which God has granted him.”

***50** The reference is to the teachings which the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had presented while conveying this message of Tauhid. The details have been given at other places in the Quran. For example, according to Surah An-Naziyat: Ayats 18-19, he said to Pharaoh: “Will you

mind to purify yourself, that I may guide you to your Lord so that you may have fear (of Him)?” And in Surah Ta Ha: Ayats 47-48, “We have come to you with signs from your Lord; peace is for him who follows the right way. We have been informed by revelation that there is punishment for him who rejects it and turns away.” And: “We are Messengers from your Lord: so let the Israelites go with us.” It was about these things that Pharaoh said, “Even our forefathers had never heard that there was a Being more powerful than Pharaoh of Egypt, Who was authorized to command him, to punish him, to send a man to his court to convey His instructions to him, and to warn the king of Egypt to fear Him. These are strange things which we are hearing today from a man like you.”

37. And Moses said: “My Lord knows best of him who came with guidance from Him, and him whose will be the (best) end of the Hereafter. Indeed, the wrongdoers will not be successful.”*51

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ رَبِّيَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ
جَاءَ بِالْهُدَىٰ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ
تَكُونُ لَهُ عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا
يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ



*51 That is, “You think I am a magician and a forger, but my Lord is well aware of me. He knows what sort of a man is the person whom He has appointed as a messenger; and the final judgment rests with Him. If I am a liar, I shall meet an evil end; and if you are a liar, you should know that your end will not be good. In any case, the inevitable fact is that the unjust will not attain true success. He, who

is not Allah's messenger but falsely presents himself as a messenger for selfish motives, is also unjust and will not attain success. And the one who rejects a true messenger by false accusations and suppresses the truth by deceit and fraud, is also unjust and will never attain success."

38. And Pharaoh said: "O chiefs, I have not known for you any god other than me.^{*52} So kindle for me (a fire), O Haman, to (bake) the clay, then make for me a lofty tower that I may look at the God of Moses. And indeed, I think that he is of the liars."^{*53}

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَتَأْتِيهَا الْمَلَأُ مَا
عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلَهِ غَيْرِي
فَأَوْقَدْ لِي يَهْمَنُ عَلَى الطِّينِ
فَأَجْعَلْ لِّي صَرْحًا لَّعَلِّي أَطَّلِعُ
إِلَىٰ إِلَهِ مُوسَىٰ وَإِنِّي لَأَظُنُّهُ
مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ



***52** By this Pharaoh did not, and could not, mean that he was the creator of his people and the earth and the heavens, for such a thing be uttered only by a madman. Likewise; he also did not mean that they had no other deity besides him for the Egyptians worshiped many gods, and the Pharaoh himself had been made the incarnation of the sun god. The Quran testifies that the Pharaoh himself worshiped many gods: "The chiefs of Pharaoh's people said, Will you leave Moses and his followers free to spread disorder in the land, and to discard you and your deities?" (Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayat 127) Therefore, inevitably, the Pharaoh had not used the word "god" here for himself as a creator and deity, but

as an absolute and supreme sovereign. What he meant was this: “I am the owner of this land of Egypt: I alone will rule here: My law will be the law of the land; I alone shall be accepted as the fountainhead of all commands and prohibitions here. None else is entitled to give commands in this country. Who is this Moses, who has appeared as the delegate of the Lord of the universe and is conveying orders to me as though he is the ruler and I am his subordinate?” That is why he addressed his courtiers, thus: “O people: Is not the kingdom of Egypt mine? And are not these canals flowing beneath me?” (Surah Az-Zukhruf: Ayat 51). And that is why he said to Moses (peace be upon him) again and again, “Have you come to turn us away from the faith of our forefathers so that you too may dominate over the land?” (Surah Yunus: Ayat 78). “O Moses, have you come to drive us out of our land by the power of your sorcery?” (Surah Ta-Ha: Ayat 57) “I fear he will change your religion, or cause mischief to appear in the land.” (Surah Al-Mumin: Ayat 26).

If the matter is considered from this angle it will become evident that the position of Pharaoh was no different from the position of those states which claim political and legal sovereignty independent of divine law brought by the prophets. Whether they accept a king as the fountainhead of law and commands and prohibitions, or the will of the nation, in any case as long as they stick to the position that the country will be ruled by their law and not by the Law of Allah and His Messengers, there will be no fundamental difference between their position and that of Pharaoh. It is,

however, a different thing that the ignorant people curse Pharaoh but approve these as lawful. A person who understands reality will look for the spirit and sense and not merely for words and terminology. Pharaoh had used the word “god” for himself but these states use the term sovereignty in the same sense. (See E.N. 21 Surah Ta-Ha).

***53** This was the same kind of mentality as the communists of today are displaying. They launch rockets and tell the world that they have not found God anywhere above. Pharaoh wanted to see God from the top of a tower. This shows that the extent of the imagination of the straying people during the past 3,500 years has remained where it was. They have not advanced even an inch. It is not known who has told them that the Being, Whom the God-worshippers acknowledge as the Lord of the universe, resided somewhere above according to their belief. And if they do not see Him a few thousand feet or a few thousand miles above the earth’s surface in this limitless universe, it will be a proof that He exists nowhere.

The Quran does not specify whether Pharaoh actually got such a tower built and tried to see God from the top of it, but it only relates what he said. Apparently, he did not commit the folly. He only meant to befool the people.

This also is not clear whether Pharaoh was, in fact, a disbeliever in the Being of the Lord of the universe, or talked atheism only due to stubbornness. In this regard his sayings point to the same mental confusion which one finds in the statements of the communists. Sometimes he wanted to climb into the sky and come back to tell the world that

he had nowhere seen the God of Moses (peace be upon him), yet another time he would say, “Why were not bracelets of gold sent down on him, or a company of angels as attendants?” (Sura Az-Zukhruf: Ayat 53). We are of the opinion that after the passage of the period of the Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) and his successors when Egypt was dominated by the Coptic nationalism, and a political revolution took place in the country owing to the racial and nationalistic prejudice. The new leaders, in their nationalistic enthusiasm, also revolted against the God towards Whom the Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) and his followers, the Israelites and the Egyptian Muslims, had been calling the people. They thought that if they believed in God, they would never be able to shed the influence and impact of the civilization brought about by the Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him). For if that civilization remained, they would never be able to consolidate their political influence. For them belief in God and Muslim sovereignty were inseparable and inter-dependent. Therefore, to get rid of the one it was necessary to reject the other, although they could not root out belief in One God from the depths of their hearts.

39. And he was arrogant, he and his hosts in the land, without right,^{*54} and they thought that they would not be brought back to Us.^{*55}

وَأَسْتَكْبَرُ هُوَ وَجُنُودُهُ فِي
الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ
إِلَيْنَا لَا يُرْجَعُونَ

*54 That is, Allah, Lord of the worlds, alone is entitled to

the right to greatness, but Pharaoh and his hosts assumed greatness when they attained a little power in a small territory on the earth.

*55 That is, “They thought they were answerable to none and with this assumption they started behaving absolutely independently in their day to day life.”

40. So We seized him and his hosts, then We threw them into the sea.*56 Then behold how was the end of those who did wrong.

فَأَخَذْنَاهُ وَجُنُودَهُ فَنَبَذْنَاهُمْ
فِي الْيَمِّ فَأَنْظِرُ كَيْفَ كَانَ
عَاقِبَةُ الظَّالِمِينَ

*56 Allah in these words has depicted their worthlessness and insignificance as against their false pride. They thought they were big people, but when the respite, Allah had granted them to reform, came to an end, they were thrown into the sea like rubbish.

41. And We made them leaders inviting to the Fire,*57 and on the Day of Resurrection they will not be helped.

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَدْعُونَ إِلَى
النَّارِ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا
يُنصَرُونَ

*57 That is, “They have set a precedent for the later generations as to committing injustices, rejecting the truth and persistence in their rejection till the last, and using all sorts of devices to defend falsehood against the truth.” They showed these ways to the people and have gone to Hell, and now their descendants are following in their footsteps and

rushing towards the same doom.

42. And We made a curse to follow them in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection they will be among the despised.*58

وَأَتَّبَعْنَاهُمْ فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً
وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ هُمْ مِنَ
الْمَقْبُوحِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

*58 The words in the text mean: “On the Day of Resurrection they will be among the *maqbuhin*”, which has several meanings: (1) They will stand rejected and repulsed; (2) they will be wholly deprived of Allah’s mercy; and (3) they will be severely beaten up and their faces will become distorted.

43. And certainly, We gave Moses the Scripture after what We had destroyed the generations of old, as clear testimonies for mankind, and a guidance and a mercy, that they might remember.*59

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونََ
الْأُولَىٰ بِصَايِرَ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى
وَرَحْمَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

*59 That is, “When the former generations met with the evil consequences of turning away from the teachings of the Prophets, and they met the doom that was experienced by Pharaoh and his hosts, then Moses was granted the Book so as to usher in a new era for mankind.”

44. And you (O Muhammad) were not on the western side (of the mount)*60 when We expounded to Moses the

وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الْغَرْبِيِّ إِذْ
قَضَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَى الْأَمْرَ وَمَا

command, and you were not among the witnesses. *61

كُنْتَ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

*60 “Western side”: Mount Sinai, which lies to the west of the Hijaz and on which the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was given the Divine Law.

*61 “The witnesses”: the seventy of the elders of Israel who had been summoned along with Moses for the covenant to follow the Law. (See Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayat 155).

45. But We brought forth generations, and long were the ages that passed over them. *62 And you were not a dweller among the people of Midian, reciting to them Our verses. *63 But We kept sending (the messengers).

وَلَكِنَّا أَنْشَأْنَا قُرُونًا فَتَطَاوَلَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْعُمُرُ وَمَا كُنْتَ ثَاوِيًا فِي أَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ تَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا وَلَكِنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ

*62 That is, “You had no direct means of obtaining this information. All this is being revealed to you by Allah. That is how you have been enabled to relate these two thousand years old events, in a manner as if you were an eye witness.”

*63 That is, “You did not exist at the time when the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) reached Midian, passed ten years of his life there, and then left for Egypt. You were not preaching in the habitations of Midian that which you are preaching in the streets of Makkah. You are not relating those events as an eye witness, but because you have been given the knowledge of these by Us through

revelations.”

46. And you were not at the side of the mount when We called (Moses). But as a mercy from your Lord^{*64} that you (O Muhammad) may warn a people to whom any warner had not come before you^{*65} that they might remember.

وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الطُّورِ إِذْ
نَادَيْنَا وَلَكِنْ رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ
لِتُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أَتَتْهُمْ مِّن نَّذِيرٍ
مِّن قَبْلِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ



***64** These things have been presented as a proof of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) prophethood. At the time when these were cued, all the chiefs of Makkah and the common disbelievers were bent upon somehow proving him as a non prophet, and, God forbid, a false claimant to prophethood. To help and assist them in their campaign, there were the Jewish scholars and the Christian monks also, who were living in the habitations of the Hijaz. Besides, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had not appeared all of a sudden from somewhere and started reciting the Quran to the people, but he was a resident of the same city of Makkah, and no aspect of his life was hidden from the people of his city and clan. That is why when these three things were presented like an open challenge as a proof of his prophethood, not a single person from Makkah and Hijaz and the entire land of Arabia could stand up to say the absurd thing which the modern orientalist say, although those people were no less efficient in fabricating falsehood than these so called scholars. But

how could they utter an unprofitable lie that could not survive for a single moment? How could they say, “O Muhammad, you have attained this information from such and such a Jewish scholar and a Christian monk?” For, this purpose, they could not mention any name in the entire land. For whatever name they mentioned, it would become manifest there and then that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had not obtained any information from him. How could they say, “O Muhammad, you possess a full-fledged library containing all sorts of books on ancient history and sciences and literature, from which you take help to prepare all your discourses?” For not to speak of a library, no one could seize even a scrap of paper from his house containing such information. Everyone in Makkah knew that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was unlettered and no one could also say that he had had some translators at his disposal, who supplied him with translations from Hebrew and Assyrian and Greek books. Then, none of them could be so shameless as to dare claim that he had obtained this information during the trade journeys to Syria and Palestine, for he had not performed those journeys alone, but had traveled in company with trade caravans of Makkah. Had somebody made any such assertion, hundreds of living witnesses would have refuted this and testified that he had received no such instruction from anyone there. Then, within two years of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) death, war started between the Romans and the Muslims. If he had any sort of discussion anywhere in Syria and Palestine with any

Christian monk or Jewish rabbi, the Roman Empire would not have hesitated to launch a propaganda campaign, saying, that Muhammad (peace be upon him), God forbid, had learned everything from them and gone back to Makkah and proclaimed himself a Prophet. In short, at that time when the challenge of the Quran was the knell of the disbelieving Quraish and the polytheists and the need of those people to refute it was far greater than of the modern orientalists, no one could discover any material by which he could prove that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had some other means than revelation for obtaining that information.

One should also know that the Quran has not given this challenge only here, but also at several other places in connection with different stories. After narrating the story of the Prophet Zacharias (peace be upon him) and Mary, it was said: “These are of the “unseen” things We are revealing to you: you were not present there when the priests of the Temple were casting lots by throwing their quills to decide which of them should be the guardian of Mary: nor were you there with them when they were arguing about it.” (Surah Aal-Imran: Ayat 44). At the end of the Prophet Joseph’s (peace be upon him) story it was said: “This story which We are revealing to you is of those things that were not known to you: for you were not with the brothers (of Joseph), when they had conspired together a plot against Joseph.” (Surah Yusuf: Ayat 102). Similarly, after relating the full story of the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him), it was said: “These are some of the tidings of the

unseen which We are revealing to you. You did not know these before nor did your people.” (Surah Hud: Ayat 49). That, this thing has been reiterated several times, shows that this was one of the main arguments that the Quran gave to prove its being Allah’s Word and the Prophet (peace be upon him) being a Messenger of Allah. For there was no perceptible means of knowledge available to the Prophet (peace be upon him) who was an unlettered person, apart from revelation, through which he could narrate so accurately the events that had happened hundreds and thousands of years in the past. And this was one of the important reasons why the contemporaries of the prophet (peace be upon him) were coming to believe, in larger and still larger numbers, that he was really a Prophet of Allah and has received Allah’s revelations. Now one can easily imagine how important it must have been for the opponents of the Islamic movement at that time to meet this challenge, and what efforts they must have made to collect arguments and proofs against it. One can also see that if, God forbid, there was the slightest weakness in this challenge, it would not have been at all difficult for the contemporary people to provide evidence for its refutation.

*65 No prophet had been born especially in Arabia after the Prophets Ishmael and Shuaib (peace be upon them), during the past two thousand years or so, though teachings of the Prophets like Moses and Solomon and Jesus (peace be upon them) had reached the people of that land.

47. And if (We had) not (sent you as a warner), in

وَلَوْلَا أَن تُصِيبَهُمْ مُّصِيبَةٌ بِمَا

case should afflict them a calamity because of what their own hands have sent before, they might say: “Our Lord, why did You not send to us a messenger, that we might have followed Your revelations, and should have been among the believers.”*66

قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُوا رَبَّنَا
لَوْلَا أَرْسَلْتَ إِلَيْنَا رَسُولًا فَنَتَّبِعَ
آيَاتِكَ وَنَكُونَ مِنَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ



*66 This very thing has been presented at several places in the Quran as the reason for sending the messengers, but it will not be correct to conclude from this that a messenger should be sent on every occasion at every place for this purpose. As long as the message of a prophet remains intact in the world and the means of conveying it to others exist, there is no need for a new prophet, unless need arises to supplement the previous message, or to supplant it by a new message, Nevertheless, when the teachings of the prophets are forgotten, or become mixed up with errors and deviations and can no longer be relied upon as means of guidance, then the people do get a chance to make the excuse that there existed no arrangement whatsoever to make them aware of the distinction between the truth and the untruth and guide them to the right way: so they could not be guided aright. To meet such an excuse, Allah sends the prophets in such conditions so that any one who follows a wrong way after that may himself be held responsible for his going astray.

48. Then, when there came to them the truth (Quran) from Us, they said: “Why was he not given the like of what was given to Moses.”^{*67} Did they not disbelieve in that which was given to Moses before.^{*68} They say: “Two magics^{*69} that support each other.” And they say: “Indeed, in each we are disbelievers.”

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا
 قَالُوا لَوْلَا أُوتِيَ مِثْلَ مَا
 أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ أَوْلَمْ يَكْفُرُوا
 بِمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَالُوا
 سِحْرَانِ تَظَاهَرَا وَقَالُوا إِنَّا بِكُلِّ
 كَفْرٍ نَوَّ



***67** That is, “Why has not Muhammad (peace be upon him) been given all those miracles which had been given to the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him)? He also should have shown us the miracle of the staff; his hand also should have shone like the sun; his deniers also should have been struck with storms and plagues from the earth and heaven; and he also should have brought them commandments written on stone tablets.”

***68** This is a reply to their objection, which implies: “The disbelievers of Makkah had not believed in Moses (peace be upon him) either, nor followed his teachings. Therefore they had no right to say: Why has the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) not been given the same miracles that were given to the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him)?” In Surah Saba: Ayat 31, this saying of the disbelievers of Makkah has been related: “We shall never believe in this Quran, nor in any other Book which came before it.”

***69 That is, the Quran and the Torah both.**

49. Say (O Muhammad):
“Then bring a scripture from Allah which is a better guide than these two (that) I may follow it, if you are truthful.”^{*70}

قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِكِتَابٍ مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ
هُوَ أَهْدَىٰ مِنْهُمَا أَتَّبِعُهُ إِن
كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

***70 That is, “I have to follow the guidance in any case, provided that it is not forged but is real guidance from God. If you possess a divine Book which gives better guidance than the Quran and the Torah, you should produce it: I shall follow it without any hesitation.”**

50. So if they do not respond to you, then know that what they follow is their desires. And who is more astray than him who follows his desire without guidance from Allah. Indeed, Allah does not guide the wrong doing people.

فَإِن لَّمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكَ فَاعْلَمْ
أَنَّ مَا يَتَّبِعُونَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَمَنْ
أَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بِغَيْرِ
هُدًى مِّنَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

51. And certainly, We have conveyed to them the Word (Quran) that they might remember.^{*71}

وَلَقَدْ وَصَّلْنَا لَهُمُ الْقَوْلَ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

***71 That is, “As far as conveying of the admonition is concerned, we have done full justice to it in the Quran in**

the best way. But guidance is attained only by him who gives up stubbornness and frees his heart from prejudices and is inclined to accept the truth willingly and sincerely.”

52. Those to whom We gave the Scripture before it, they believe in it (Quran).^{*72}

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ هُمْ بِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ

***72** This does not mean that all the people of the Book (the Jews and the Christians) affirm faith in it. This, in fact, contains an allusion to the event that occurred during the period when this Surah was revealed, and was meant to put to shame the people of Makkah, as if to say, “You are denying and rejecting a blessing that has been sent in your own city, whereas the people from far off places, when they hear of it, come to recognize its worth and benefit from it.” This event has been related by Ibn Hisham, Baihaqi and others on the authority of Ibn Ishaq, thus: “After the migration to Habash when the news about the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) advent and message spread in that land, a deputation of about twenty Christians came to Makkah to find out the truth, and they met the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Masjid-al-Haram. A crowd of the Quraish also gathered around them to watch what happened. The members of the deputation asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) some questions, which he answered. Then he invited them to accept Islam and recited some verses of the Quran before them. When they heard the Quran, tears came down from their eyes and they confirmed its being Allah’s Word and believed in the

Prophet (peace be upon him). When the meeting was over and the people left, Abu Jahl and some of his men overtook them on the way, and rebuked them severely, saying, “Never has a more stupid company come here before: O foolish men you were sent here by your people with a view to inquiring about this man, but no sooner did you meet him, you gave up your own faith!” Those gentle people answered, “Peace be to you! We have no wish to enter an argument with you: you are responsible for your faith and we are for ours: we cannot afford to deprive ourselves knowingly of goodness.” (See E.N. 123: Surah Ash-Shuara).

53. And when it is recited to them, they say: “We believe in it, indeed, it is the truth from our Lord, indeed we were, even before it, those who surrender.”*73

وَإِذَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ قَالُوا ءَأَمَنَّا
بِهِ إِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا
مِن قَبْلِهِ مُسْلِمِينَ



*73 That is, “Even before this we were believers in the Prophets and the divine Books. Therefore, we had no other faith than Islam and we have believed in that Book too, which this Prophet has brought from Allah. Thus, no change has occurred in our religion: we were Muslims before even as we are Muslims now.”

This saying clearly indicates that Islam is not the name of the faith brought by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the term Muslim is not only applicable to his followers, but Islam has been the faith of all the prophets since the very beginning and their followers were Muslims in every age. These Muslims became disbelievers

only when they refused to acknowledge a true prophet who came afterwards. But no interruption occurred in the Islam of those people who believed in the former prophet and also affirmed faith in the prophet who succeeded him. They continued to be Muslims as they had been Muslims before. It is strange that even some learned men also have failed to comprehend this fact, and this clear verse also could not satisfy them. Allama Suyuti wrote a treatise on the subject that the term Muslim was only reserved for the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Then, as he further says, when this verse came before him, he was stunned: he prayed to God to guide him in the matter. At last, instead of revising his opinion he stuck to it even more firmly and gave several interpretations of the verse, each to which is more meaningless than the other. For example, one of his interpretations is: "We were Muslims even before this" means: We intended to become Muslims even before the revelation of the Quran, because we had been foretold by our Scriptures that it would come, and we had the intention that when it came we would accept Islam." Another interpretation is: "In this sentence, the word *bi-hi* after *muslimin* is omitted, implying: We believed in the Quran beforehand, because we expected it would come, and had believed in it in anticipation. Therefore, we were Muslims, not because we believed in the Torah and the Gospels, but because we had believed in the Quran as Allah's Word even before its revelation." The third interpretation is: "It had been divinely destined for us that we would accept Islam on the advent of the Prophet (peace

be upon him) and the revelation of the Quran; therefore, we were Muslims even before this.” None of these interpretations bears any impress that divine help had become available for the right understanding of this verse.

The fact is that the Quran has expressed this fundamental principle not only here, but also at scores of other places that the real way of life is only Islam (submission to Allah), and in God’s universe there can be no other way of life than this for His creatures. Since the beginning of the creation every Prophet who came for the guidance of mankind brought this very way of life: the Prophets themselves have always been Muslims, and they impressed upon their followers also to live as Muslims, and all their followers who submitted to the divine command brought by the Prophets, were also Muslims in every age. Consider the following few verses for instance:

(1) Indeed, Islam is the only right way of life in the sight of Allah. (Surah Aal-Imran: Ayat 19).

(2) Whoever adopts any other than this way of submission (Islam), it will not be accepted from him. (Surah Aal-Imran: Ayat 85).

(3) My reward is with Allah, and I have been commanded to believe like a Muslim. (Surah Yunus: Ayat 72).

About Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and his descendants it has been said:

(4) When his Lord said to him, “Surrender”, he promptly responded, “I have surrendered to the Lord of the universe (and become a Muslim)”. He also enjoined on his children to follow the same way. Jacob (peace be upon him) also did

the same and his last will to his sons was: “O my children, Allah has chosen the same way of life for you. Hence, remain Muslims up to your last breath.” Were you present at the time when Jacob (peace be upon him) was on the point of death? He asked his children, “Whom will you worship after me?” They all answered, “We will worship the same One Allah Whom you, your forefathers Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac (peace be upon them) acknowledged as their Allah and to Him we all surrender as Muslims.” (Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayat 133).

(5) Abraham (peace be upon him) was neither a Jew, nor a Christian, but he was a Muslim, sound in the Faith.” (Surah Aal-Imran: Ayat 67). Prophets Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them) prayed:

(6) Lord, make us Thy Muslims and raise from our offspring a community which should also be Muslim (submissive to Thy will). (Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayat 128). In connection with the story of the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) it has been said:

(7) “We did not find in it any house of the Muslims except one.” (Surah Adh-Dhariyat: Ayat 36). The Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) prayed to Allah:

(8) Let me die as a Muslim, and join me with the righteous in the end. (Surah Yusuf: Ayat 101). Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) said to his people:

(9) O my people, if you sincerely believe in Allah, put your trust in Him, if you are Muslims. (Surah Yunus: Ayat 84).

The real religion of the Israelites was not Judaism but Islam as was known to their friends and foes alike. That is

why the last words that Pharaoh said while drowning were:
(10) I have believed that there is no god but the real God in Whom the children of Israel have believed, and I am of the Muslims.” (Surah Yunus: Ayat 90).

Islam was the Way of life of all the Israelite prophets:

(11) Indeed, We sent down the Torah wherein was uigdance and light: thereby all the prophets, who were Muslims, judged the cases of those who had become Jews.” (Surah Al-Maidah: Ayat 44).

The same was the Prophet Solomon’s (peace be upon him) way of life. So when the queen of Sheba believed in him, she said.

(12) I submit myself (as a Muslim) with Solomon (peace be upon him) to Allah, Lord of the worlds.” (Surah An-Naml: Ayat 44).

And the same was the religion of the disciples of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him):

(13) And when I inspired the disciples to believe in Me and My Messenger, they said: We believe and bear witness that we are Muslims.” (Sura Al-Maidah: Ayat 111).

In this connection, if somebody expresses the doubt that the Arabic words “Islam” and “Muslims” could not have been used in different languages and countries, it would not obviously be a justified objection. For the real thing is not the Arabic words but the meaning in which they are used in Arabic. In fact, what has been stressed in the above cited verses is that the real way of life sent by God was neither Christianity, nor Mosaicism, nor Muhammadanism, but to surrender to the divine commands taught by the prophets

and the scriptures, and whoever adopted this way anywhere and at any time in the world, is the follower of the same universal, eternal and everlasting true way of life. For those who have adopted this way consciously and sincerely, it is no change of the faith to believe in Jesus after Moses and in Muhammad after Jesus(peace be upon them), but a natural and logical demand following the same real way of life (Islam). Contrary to this, those people who got into the Prophets' communities without due understanding or were born in them, and for whom nationalistic and racial and tribal prejudices were the religion, became mere Jews or Christians, and on the advent of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) their ignorance was exposed. For by refusing to believe in the last Prophet of Allah, they not only refused to remain Muslims in the future but also proved that they were not "Muslims" even before: they had been charmed by the personality of a Prophet or Prophets, or had taken blind conformity to their forefathers for religion.

54. Those will be given their reward twice^{*74} because they are patient,^{*75} and repel evil with good,^{*76} and from that which We have provided them, they spend.^{*77}

أُولَئِكَ يُؤْتَوْنَ أَجْرَهُمْ مَرَّتَيْنِ
بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَيَدْرَءُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ
الْسَّيِّئَةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ
يُنْفِقُونَ



^{*74} That is, one reward for affirming faith in the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) and the second for affirming

faith in Muhammad (peace be upon him). The same thing has been expressed in the *Hadith* which Bukhari and Muslim have related on the authority of Abu Musa Ashari. He says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “One of the three persons who will get a double reward is he who belonged to the people of the Book, had full faith in his Prophet and then affirmed faith in Muhammad (peace be upon him).”

***75** That is, “They will get a double reward for the reason that they avoided nationalistic, racial and tribal prejudices and remained steadfast on the way of true faith. When, on the advent of the new prophet, they were confronted by a hard test, they proved by their conduct that they were not Christ worshipers but God worshipers: they were not charmed by Christ's personality but were followers of “Islam”. That is why when the new Prophet after Christ brought the same Islam that Christ had brought, they adopted the way of Islam under his leadership; without any hesitation, and gave up the way of those who remained stuck to Christianity.”

***76** That is, “They answer evil and falsehood with what is good and right: they repel injustice and mischief with what is just and noble; and they do not pay the other man back in the same coin.”

***77** That is, “They also make monetary sacrifices in the way of the truth. There might also be in it an allusion to this that those people had traveled from Habash to Makkah in search of the truth: they had no material gain in view when they undertook a toilsome journey involving a lot of

expenses. When they heard that a man in Makkah had made a claim to be a Prophet, they thought it necessary to go and find out the truth, so that if a prophet had really been sent by God, they should not be deprived of affirming faith in him and being guided aright.”

55. And when they hear vain talk,^{*78} they withdraw from it and say: “For us are our deeds and for you are your deeds. Peace be upon you. We do not seek (the way of) the ignorant.”

وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا اللَّغْوَ أَعْرَضُوا عَنْهُ
وَقَالُوا لَنَا أَعْمَلُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَلُكُمْ
سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ لَا نَبْتَغِي الْجَاهِلِينَ



***78** The reference is to the “vain talk” that Abu Jahl and his men had with the Christians from Habash, as mentioned in E.N. 72 above.

56. Indeed, you (O Muhammad) do not guide whom you love, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He is most knowing of those who are the guided.^{*79}

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ
أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ



***79** The context shows that the object of addressing this sentence to the Prophet (peace be upon him), after mentioning the affirmation of the faith by this Christians from Habash, was to put the disbelievers of Makkah to shame, as if to say. “O unfortunate people, what wretches you are! People from far off places are coming to benefit from the fountainhead of blessings that has been made

available in your own city, but you are willfully depriving yourselves of it.” But the same thing has been said like this: “O Muhammad, you wish that your clansmen and your kinsfolk; and your near and dear ones should benefit from this life-giving nectar, but your willing alone cannot avail. To give guidance is in the power of Allah: He favors with it only those whom He finds inclined to accept guidance. If your kinsfolk lack this inclination, how can they be favored with this blessing?”

According to Bukhari and Muslim, this verse was sent down with regard to the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) uncle, Abu Talib. When he was about to breathe his last, the Prophet (peace be upon him) tried his utmost that he should affirm faith in *La ilaha illallah*, so that he might die as a Muslim, but he preferred to die on the creed of Abdul Muttalib; that is why Allah said: “You cannot give guidance to whom you please.” But this is a well known method of the traditionalists and commentators that when they find that a particular verse applies to an event of the Prophet's time, they regard it as the occasion of the verse’s revelation. Therefore, it cannot be necessarily concluded from this and the other similar traditions that have been related in Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, etc. on the authority of Abu Hurairah, Ibn Abbas, Ibn Umar, etc. that this verse of Surah Al-Qasas was revealed on the occasion of Abu Talib’s death. This only shows that the truth of its meaning became most evident only on that occasion. Though the Prophet (peace be upon him) sincerely wished that every man should be blessed with guidance, the person whose

dying on disbelief could cause him the greatest anguish and of whose guidance he was most desirous on account of personal bonds of love and affection, was Abu Talib. But when he was helpless in affording guidance even to him, it became evident that it did not lie in the power of the Prophet to give guidance to one or withhold it from another, but it lay wholly in the power of Allah. And Allah bestows this favor on whomever He wills not on account of a family or tribal relationship, but on the basis of one's sincerity, capability and inclination of the heart.

57. And they say: "If we were to follow the guidance with you, we would be snatched away from our land."^{*80} Have We not established for them a secure sanctuary (Makkah), to which are brought fruits of all kinds (in trade), a provision from Us. But most of them do not know.^{*81}

وَقَالُوا إِن نَّتَّبِعِ الْهُدَىٰ مَعَكَ
نُتَخَطَّفُ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَأُولَمَّا
نُمْكِنَ لَهُمْ حَرَمًا ءَامِنًا يُجْبَىٰ
إِلَيْهِ ثَمَرَاتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رِّزْقًا مِّن
لَّدُنَّا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ



***80** This was the most important excuse which the unbelieving Quraish made for not accepting Islam. To understand fully we shall have to see what was the position of the Quraish historically which they feared would be affected if they accepted Islam. The importance that the Quraish gained initially in Arabia was due to them being genealogically the descendants of the

Prophet Ishmael (peace be upon him), and therefore, the Arabs looked upon them as the children of the Prophets. Then, when they became the custodians of the Kaabah through Qusayy bin Kilab's sagacity, and Makkah became their home, their importance grew, because they were the attendants of the most, sacred shrine of Arabia, and its priests too. Therefore, every Arab tribe had to have relations with them on account of the annual pilgrimage. Taking advantage of this central position the Quraish started gaining prominence as a commercial people, and to their great good fortune, the political conflict between the Eastern Roman Empire and Iran helped them to gain an important place in the international trade. Iran in those days had blocked entrance to all the trade routes between Rome, Greece, Egypt, and Syria in the north, and China, India, Indonesia and eastern Africa in the southeast. The only exception was the Red Sea route. This also was blocked when Yemen fell to Iran. After this, no way of the transit of trade goods remained except that the Arab merchants should transport merchandise of the Roman territories to the harbors of the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf, and then lift trade goods of the eastern countries from these harbors and transport them to the Roman territories. This sort of arrangement made Makkah an important center of the international trade, and the Quraish were its monopolists. But the chaotic conditions prevailing in Arabia did not allow smooth transit of the trade goods unless the Quraish had pleasant relations with the tribes through whose territories the trade

caravans passed. For this the religious influence of the Quraish was not enough; they had to enter into treaties with the tribes concerned, pay them dividends from their profits, and make gifts to the tribal chiefs and other influential people. Besides, they also traded in money lending on a vast scale, which had ensnared the merchants and the chiefs of almost all the neighboring tribes.

Such were the conditions when the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave his message of *Tauhid*. More than the prejudice of ancestral religion what caused the Quraish the greatest provocation against it was that in it they saw their own interests in jeopardy. They thought that even if polytheism and idol worship were proved wrong and *Tauhid* right by rational arguments and reasoning, it was ruinous for them to accept *Tauhid*. For as soon as they did so the whole of Arabia would rise in revolt against them. Then, they would be ousted from the custodianship of the Kaabah, and all their bonds and pacts of friendship with the polytheistic tribes would be severed, which alone guaranteed the safe transit of their trade caravans through their territories. Thus, the new faith would not only put an end to their religious influence but also to their economic prosperity, and they might even be forced by the Arabs to quit Makkah.

This presents a strange phenomenon of the lack of insight on the part of the world worshipers. The Prophet (peace be upon him) tried his best to make them believe that if they accepted his Message, the whole world would yield and submit to them. But they saw their death in it. They

thought that the change of the faith would not only deprive them of their wealth and prosperity and influence but would render them so completely helpless in the land. They could not foresee the time when a few years afterwards the whole of Arabia was going to be ruled by a central government under the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. Then even during the lifetime of their own generation Iran and Iraq and Syria and Egypt were going to fall, one after the other, to the same central authority and within a century of this utterance by them Caliphs from the clan of the Quraish itself were to rule over vast territories, from Sind to Spain and from Caucasus to the coasts of Yemen.

***81** This is the first reply to their excuse by Allah. It means this: It is all due to the sacredness and the central position of this Sanctuary that the merchandise of the entire world is being drawn and attracted to this barren and uncultivated valley, for your benefit and use. You should know that you are in no way responsible for giving it the central position it enjoys and for the state of security that prevails in the areas around it. 2,500 years ago a servant of Allah came to this barren valley in the bare mountains with his wife and suckling child. Here he built a small room with stone and mud, proclaimed that Allah had made it a Sanctuary, and that the people should come to visit it and go round it in worship and adoration. Now this is only due to Allah's blessing that this Sanctuary has been the center of Arabia for the past 25 centuries. Peace reigns here even when there is chaos all around. It is held in the highest

esteem by every Arab, and thousands of people are drawn to it every year for going round it in worship. It is only by virtue of this blessing that you are looked upon as the spiritual leaders of Arabia and a large part of the international trade is under your control. Now, do you think; that if you turned and revolted against that God Who has favored you with this blessing, you will prosper, but as soon as you followed His faith you would be ruined?

58. And how many a town have We destroyed that were thankless for their means of livelihood. And those are their dwellings which have not been inhabited after them, except a little. And it is We who were the inheritors.*82

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ بَطِرَتْ
مَعِيشَتَهَا فَتِلْكَ مَسْكِنُهُمْ لَمْ
تُسْكَنْ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
وَكُنَّا نَحْنُ الْوَارِثِينَ



*82 This is the second answer to their excuse. It means to imply this: The worldly wealth and prosperity of which you are so proud and whose probable danger of loss makes you stick to falsehood and turn away from the truth. This was also possessed once by Aad and Thamud and Saba and the people of Lot. Then, did it save them from destruction? After all, a high standard of living is not the only aim in life that man should endeavor to pursue it regardless of every consideration for truth and falsehood, and refuse to accept the right way only because there was a risk of losing it if one did so. Do you have any guarantee that if you persisted in the errors and evils that ruined the prosperous peoples of

the past, you would remain safe and never meet the doom that they met?

59. And never was your Lord the one to destroy the townships until He had raised up in their mother town a messenger reciting to them Our verses. And We would not destroy the townships except while their people were wrongdoers. *83

وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرَى
حَتَّى يَبْعَثَ فِي أُمَمِهَا رَسُولًا
يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا وَمَا كُنَّا
مُهْلِكِي الْقُرَى إِلَّا وَأَهْلُهَا
ظَالِمُونَ



*83 This is the third answer to their excuse. It means: The nations which were destroyed before you had become wicked. To warn them Allah sent His messengers, but when they took no notice of their warnings and persisted in their evil ways, they were destroyed. The same is the case with you now. You have also become wicked, and a Messenger has come to you to warn you. Now if you persist in your disbelief and denial, you will not be safeguarding your prosperity and comforts of life but endangering them. The destruction that you are afraid of will overtake you not because of believing but on account of refusal to believe.

60. And whatever you have been given of the things is an enjoyment of the life of the world and its adornment. And that which is with Allah is better and

وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَّعُ
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتُهَا وَمَا
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى أَفَلَا

more lasting. Have you then no sense.

تَعْقُلُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

61. Then is he whom We have promised an excellent promise, which he will find (true), like him whom We have made to enjoy the comfort of the life of the world. Then he will be, on the Day of Resurrection, among those brought (to be punished).^{*84}

أَفَمَنْ وَعَدْنَاهُ وَعَدًّا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ لَاقِيهِ كَمَنْ مَتَّعْنَاهُ مَتَاعَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ هُوَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِينَ ﴿٦١﴾

***84** This is the fourth answer to their excuse. To understand it fully one should bear in mind two things: First, the present life which is no more than a few years for anyone is only the temporary phase of a journey. The real life which will be everlasting is yet to come. In this life man may amass as much provision as he may please and live the few years at his disposal as comfortably as he can, it will in any case come to an end, and man will depart from the world empty handed. No sensible person will like to make the bad bargain of suffering the everlasting distress and affliction in the Hereafter in exchange for the pleasures and comforts of his brief sojourn in the world. As against this, he would rather prefer to face a few years of hardships here and earn the goodness that may earn him everlasting bliss and comfort in the eternal life of the next world. Secondly, Allah's religion does not demand that man should totally refrain from seeking and enjoying the good

things of life and discard its adornments in any case. Its only demand is that he should prefer the Hereafter to the world, for the world is perishable and the Hereafter everlasting; and the pleasures of the world are inferior and of the Hereafter superior. Therefore, man must try to attain those provisions and adornments of the world that may enable him to fare well in the everlasting life of the next world, or at least protect him from the eternal loss there. But in case there is a question of a comparison between the two, and the success of the world and of the Hereafter oppose and contradict each other, the faith demands, and this is the demand of man's good sense too, that he should sacrifice the world to the Hereafter, and should never adopt the way of only seeking the transitory provisions and adornments of this world, which inevitably lead to his ruin in the Hereafter forever.

Keeping these two things in view let us see what Allah says to the disbelievers of Makkah in the foregoing sentences. He does not tell them to wind up their business, stop their trade and follow His Prophets and become mendicants. What He says is that the worldly wealth of which they are so enamored, is very meager and they can utilize it only for a few days in this worldly life. Contrary to this, that which is with Allah is much better both in quality and in quantity and is also everlasting. Therefore, they would be foolish if for the sake of benefiting by the limited blessings of this transitory life, they adopted the way whose evil results they will have to suffer in the form of everlasting loss in the next world. They should judge for themselves as to who is

successful: He who exerts himself in the service of his Lord and then is blessed with His favors for ever, or he who will be produced as a culprit in His court, only after having had an opportunity of enjoying unlawful wealth for a few days in the world.

62. And the Day He will call them and say: “Where are My partners whom you used to assert.”*85

وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ
شُرَكَائِيَ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ
تَزْعُمُونَ

*85 This discourse is in continuation of the fourth answer, and is linked with the last sentence of the preceding verse. It means to imply this: Those who persist in the evil of shirk and idol worship and refuse to believe in the Prophet only for the sake of their worldly interests, will meet with such and such evil consequences in the eternal life of the Hereafter. They should, therefore, carefully judge for themselves whether it would be a good bargain if they were to be doomed to such an end, after they had enjoyed fully the provisions and adornments of the short worldly life, even if no calamity befell them in the world.

63. Those upon whom the word will have come true*86 will say: “Our Lord, these are they whom we led astray. We led them astray, just as we ourselves were astray. We declare our disassociation

قَالَ الَّذِينَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ
رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَغْوَيْنَا
أَغْوَيْنَهُمْ كَمَا غَوَيْنَا ط تَبَّرْنَا
إِلَيْكَ مَا كَانُوا إِيَّانَا

before You.*⁸⁷ It was not us
they worshipped.”*⁸⁸



***86** This implies those satans from among jinns and men, who had been set up as associates of God in the world, whose teachings had been followed in preference to divine commandments, and dependence on whom had made the people give up the right way and adopt the wrong ways of life. Such persons may not have been called gods and lords as such, but since they were worshiped and obeyed as one should worship and obey only God, they were inevitably made partners in Godhead.

***87** That is, “We did not lead them astray forcibly. We neither deprived them of their powers of seeing and hearing nor of their powers of thinking, nor there ever arose a situation when they wanted to follow the right way but we might have forcibly pulled them to the wrong way. But just as we ourselves had gone astray of our own free will, so they also of their own free will accepted the wrong way when we presented it before them. Therefore, we are not responsible for what they did: we are responsible for our acts and they are responsible for theirs.”

There is a subtle point to be noted here. Allah, in fact, will question those who had set up others as associates with Him, but before they make an answer, those who had been set up as associates will speak up. The reason is: When the common polytheists will be questioned thus, their leaders and guides will feel that their doomsday had come, for their followers will certainly blame them for their deviation. Therefore, even before the followers say something in

response, the leaders will forestall them and start pleading their innocence.

***88** That is, “They did not serve us but served their own selves alone.”

64. And it will be said: “Call upon your partners (of Allah).”^{*89} Then they will call upon them, so they will not respond to them, and they will see the punishment. (They will wish), if only they had been guided.

وَقِيلَ ادْعُوا شُرَكَاءَكُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ
فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ وَرَأَوُا
الْعَذَابَ لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَهْتَدُونَ



***89** That is, “Invoke them for help. In the world you had relied on them and rejected Our commandments. So invoke them to come to your rescue here also and save you from the punishment.”

65. And the Day He will call them and say: “What did you answer the messengers.”

وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَا
أَجَبْتُمْ الْمُرْسَلِينَ



66. Then the news (of a good answer) will be obscured to them on that day, and they will not (be able to) ask one another.

فَعَمِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَنْبَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ
فَهُمْ لَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ



67. So as for him who had repented, and believed, and had done righteous deeds, it is then expected that he will

فَأَمَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ
صَالِحًا فَعَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنَ

be among the successful.

الْمُفْلِحِينَ

68. And your Lord creates whatever He wills and chooses. No choice is for them.*90 Glorified be Allah and Exalted above all that they associate (with Him).

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ
مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ
سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

***90** This, in fact, is a refutation of shirk. Allah objects to the setting up of countless gods from among His creatures by the mushriks and assigning to them from themselves of attributes and ranks and offices, and says: “We Ourselves bless with whatever attributes, capabilities and powers whomever We like from among the men, angels, jinns and other servants whom We have created, and employ whomever We will for whatever service We will. But, how and where from have the mushriks gotten the authority that they should make whomever they like from among My servants remover of hardships, bestower of treasures and answerer of prayers? That they should make someone the lord of rain, another the giver of jobs and children, still another bestower of health and ill-health? That they should look upon whomever they please as the ruler of a part of My Kingdom and assign to him whichever of My powers they like? Whether it is an angel or a jinn, or a prophet, or saint, or anybody else, he has been created by Us. Whatever excellences he has, have been granted by Us, and whatever service We willed to take from him, We have taken.

Therefore, the selection of someone for a particular service does not mean that he should be raised from the position of a servant to godhead and be worshipped instead of God, invoked for help, prayed to for fulfillment of needs, taken as maker or destroyer of destinies and possessor of divine attributes and powers.

69. And your Lord knows what their breasts conceal, and what they declare. ^{*91}

وَرَبُّكَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُّ
صُدُورُهُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ



^{*91} The object for which this thing has been said in this context is: A person can make a claim before the people in this world that he is fully satisfied on rational grounds that the deviation he has adopted is sound and right. And the arguments that are given against it are not convincing; that he has adopted the deviation not due to any evil motive but with the sincerest and purest intentions; that he has never been confronted by anything that might have proved him to be in the wrong. But he cannot advance such an argument before Allah, for Allah is not only aware of the open, but also of the hidden secrets of the mind and heart. He knows directly what kind of knowledge and feelings and sentiments and desires and intentions and conscience a certain person has. He is aware of the occasions and the means and the ways through which a person was warned, through which the truth reached him, through which falsehood was proved to be false to him, and also the real motives for which he preferred his deviation to the right way.

70. And He is Allah, there is no god but Him. His is all praise in the former and the latter (state), and His is the command, and to Him you will be brought back.

وَهُوَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لَهُ
الْحَمْدُ فِي الْأُولَى وَالْآخِرَةِ وَلَهُ
الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

71. Say, (O Muhammad): “Have you considered, if Allah made night everlasting for you until the Day of Resurrection, who is a god besides Allah who could bring you light. Will you then not hear.”

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ
عَلَيْكُمْ اللَّيْلَ سَرْمَدًا إِلَى يَوْمِ
الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ إِلَهُ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ
يَأْتِيكُمْ بِضِيَاءٍ أَفَلَا
تَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

72. Say, (O Muhammad): “Have you considered, if Allah made day everlasting for you until the Day of Resurrection, who is a god besides Allah who could bring you night wherein you rest. Will you then not see.”

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ
عَلَيْكُمْ النَّهَارَ سَرْمَدًا إِلَى يَوْمِ
الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ إِلَهُ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ
يَأْتِيكُمْ بَلِيلٍ تَسْكُنُونَ فِيهِ
أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

73. And of His mercy He made for you the night and the day, that you may rest therein, and that you may

وَمِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ اللَّيْلَ
وَالنَّهَارَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا

seek of His bounty, and that you may be thankful.

مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ



74. And the Day He will call them and say: “Where are My partners whom you used to assert.”

وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَائِيَ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ

تَزْعُمُونَ



75. And We shall take out from every nation a witness,^{*92} and We shall say: “Bring your proof.”^{*93} Then they will know that the truth is with Allah, and will vanish from them that (falsehood) which they used to invent.

وَنَزَعْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا فَقُلْنَا هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ فَعَلِمُوا

أَنَّ الْحَقَّ لِلَّهِ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا

كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ



***92** “A witness”: the prophet who had warned that community, or a rightly guided person from among the followers of the prophets, who had performed the duty of preaching the truth in the community, or a means through which the message of the truth had reached the community.
***93** That is, “Present a cogent argument in your defense so that you are pardoned. You should either prove that the shirk and the denial of the Hereafter and prophethood in which you persisted were the correct creed. And you had adopted it on rational grounds. Or, if you cannot do that,

you should at least prove that no arrangement had been made by God to warn you of this error and guide you to the right path.”

76. Indeed,^{*94} Korah was from the people of Moses, but he oppressed them.^{*95} And We gave him of treasures so much that indeed the keys thereof would burden a troop of mighty men.^{*96} When his people said to him: “Do not Exult. Indeed, Allah does not love the exultant.”

﴿ إِنَّ قُرُونًا كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمِ
مُوسَىٰ فَبَغَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ وَآتَيْنَاهُ
مِنَ الْكُنُوزِ مَا إِنَّ مَفَاتِحَهُ لَتَنُوءُ
بِالْعُصْبَةِ أُولَى الْقُوَّةِ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ
قَوْمُهُ لَا تَفْرَحْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ

الْفَرِحِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

^{*94} This fact also is being related in continuation of the answer to the excuse which has been the theme of the discourse from verse 57 onward. In this regard, one should bear in mind the fact that the people who feared that the Prophet Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) message would affect the overall national interests adversely were, in fact, the big money owners, money lenders, and capitalists of Makkah, who by virtue of their international trade and money lending business had become the Korahs of their time. These were the people who thought that the real truth was to earn and amass maximum wealth. Anything that seemed to vitiate this object was an untruth which could not be accepted in any case. On the other hand, there were the common people who looked with longing eyes at these

magnates and earnestly desired that they should also attain the same heights as those people had attained. In an atmosphere charged with the love of money, as it was, people considered it to be a weighty argument that if the invitation of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) towards *Tauhid* and the Hereafter and the moral code was accepted, it would spell ruin for the Quraish not only commercially but economically too.

*95 Qarun who has been called Korah in the Bible and the Talmud was a first cousin of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). According to the account of descent given in Exodus, the fathers of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and Korah were real brothers. At another place in the Quran it has been stated that this man had joined with Pharaoh in spite of being an Israelite and become one of his favorites; so much so that one of the two ring leaders of opposition to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) after Pharaoh was this same Korah: “We sent Moses to Pharaoh and Haman and Korah with Our signs and a clear authority of appointment, but they said: He is a sorcerer, a liar.” (Surah Al-Mumin: Ayats 23-24).

From this it follows that Korah had rebelled against his own people and become a supporter of the hostile forces which were bent upon wiping out the Israelites. On account of this rebellion against his own people he had attained a high place with Pharaoh. The two persons, besides Pharaoh, to whom the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had been sent were Pharaoh’s minister Haman, and this Israelite capitalist, Korah. All other chiefs and couriers

were of inferior status, who were not worth mentioning. The same position of Korah has been alluded to in Surah Al-Ankabut: Ayat 39.

*96 In the story related of him in the Bible, there is no mention of this man's wealth. But according to the Jewish traditions, he possessed immense wealth, so much so that three hundred mules were required to carry the keys of his treasures. Though greatly exaggerated, this statement shows that even according to the Israelite traditions, Korah was a very wealthy man of his time.

77. "And seek through that (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and do not forget your portion of the world, and do good as Allah has done good to you, and do not seek corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not love the corrupters."

وَابْتَغِ فِي مَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ
الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ
مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنَ كَمَا
أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ
الْفَسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

78. He said: "This has been given to me only on account of knowledge I possess."*97 Did he not know that Allah had indeed destroyed before him of the generations, those who were mightier than him in strength and greater in the

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيْتُهُر عَلَى عِلْمٍ
عِنْدِي ؕ أَوْلَمْ يَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ
قَدْ أَهْلَكَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مَنْ
الْقُرُونِ مَنْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُ قُوَّةً

amount (of riches) they had collected.^{*98} And the criminals are not questioned about their sins.^{*99}

وَأَكْثَرُ جَمْعًا وَلَا يُسْأَلُ عَن
ذُنُوبِهِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ



***97** The words of the text can have two meanings: (1) “Whatever I have obtained is by virtue of my own ability. It is not a bounty which somebody else might have given me as a favor without my deserving it as a right, and now I may have to render thanks for it by giving a portion of it to those who have not been given anything, as a favor, or give some of it in charity so that the bounty is not withdrawn from me.” (2) “I think God has given me this wealth in view of my qualities and excellences. Had I not been a likable person, He would not have given me all this. That He has bestowed on me all kinds of blessings is a proof that I am His favorite and he approves of the way of life that I am following.”

***98** That is, “Did this person who was proud of being so knowledgeable and wise and well informed and capable never know that people with greater wealth and grandeur and power and might than him had lived before him in the world, and Allah at last, had annihilated them completely? If capability and skill and competence are the only factors conducive to worldly progress, then why didn’t these virtues avail them when they were destroyed? And if the worldly progress of a person is a sure proof that Allah is pleased with him and approves of his deeds and qualities, then why were those people doomed to destruction at all?”

***99** That is, “The criminals have always been claiming to

be the best people, who are free from every evil, but their punishment is not dependent on their own confessions. Whenever they are seized; they are not seized on the basis of their own confessions of sins, etc.”

79. Then he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the life of the world said: “Oh, would that we had the like of what has been given to Korah. Indeed, he is the owner of a great fortune.”

ط
فَخَرَجَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فِي زِينَتِهِ
قَالَ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ
الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا يَلِيتَ لَنَا مِثْلَ
مَا أُوتِيَ قَارُونُ إِنَّهُ لَذُو حَظٍّ
عَظِيمٍ

80. And those who had been given knowledge said: “Woe to you. The reward of Allah is better for those who believe and do righteous deeds. And none shall attain this except those who are patient.”*100

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ
وَيَلَكُمْ ثَوَابُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِّمَنْ
ءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَلَا
يُلْقِيهَا إِلَّا الصَّابِرُونَ

*100 That is, “This kind of character and the way of thinking and the bounty of Allah’s reward falls to the lot of only those who stick firmly and steadfastly and patiently to the lawful ways in life, whether by so doing they are able to earn only a bare living, or are enabled to become millionaires, but are never inclined to follow the unlawful

ways even if they are promised all the benefits and wealth of the world. In this verse, “Allah’s reward” means the bounteous provision that is gained by man in the world and the Hereafter as a result of labor and toil undertaken within the bounds set by Allah; and “patience” means to have control over one’s emotions and desires, to stick to honesty and righteousness as against greed and lust, to bear the losses that one may have to incur on account of the truth and justice, to spurn the gains that might accrue from employing unlawful devices, to remain content and satisfied with the lawful earning even if it is meager and insufficient, to eschew feelings of envy and jealousy at the splendor of the corrupt people and avoid, even casting a glance at it, and to be satisfied with the thought that for an honest man the colorless purity that Allah has granted him by His grace is better than the lustrous filth of evil and corruption. As for “fortune”, it implies Allah’s reward as well as the pure mentality by virtue of which a believing and righteous person finds it easier to suffer hunger and starvation than become a multi millionaire by adopting dishonest and corrupt ways and means.”

81. So We caused the earth to swallow him and his dwelling place. Then for him there was not any host to help him other than Allah, nor was he of those who could save themselves.

فَحَسَفْنَا بِهِ وَبِدَارِهِ الْأَرْضَ
فَمَا كَانَ لَهُ مِنْ فِئَةٍ
يَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا
كَانَ مِنَ الْمُنْتَصِرِينَ



82. And the morning (found) those who had desired his place the day before, saying: “Alas (we forgot) that, Allah enlarges the provision to whom He wills of His slaves and restricts it.*101 If it was not that Allah conferred favor on us, He would have caused it to swallow us. Alas (we forgot) that, the disbelievers will not be successful.”*102

وَأَصْبَحَ الَّذِينَ تَمَنَّوْا مَكَانَهُ
بِالْأَمْسِ يَقُولُونَ وَيَكَانَ اللَّهُ
يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ
عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ لَوْلَا أَنْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ
عَلَيْنَا لَخَسَفَ بِنَا وَيَكَانَهُ لَا
يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ



***101** That is “The extension or the restriction of provisions is always according to the will of Allah, and Allah’s will is determined by His own reasons and considerations. His favoring somebody with generous provisions does not necessarily mean that Allah is well pleased with him and is honoring him with gifts. Mostly it so happens that a person is under Allah’s wrath, but He goes on favoring him with more and more wealth till, at last, the same wealth causes Allah’s torment to descend on him. Contrary to this, if somebody is being given restricted provisions, it does not necessarily mean that Allah is displeased with him and is punishing him. Mostly the righteous live in hardship although they are Allah’s favorites, and in many cases the same hardship becomes a cause of Allah’s mercy for them. Consequently, a person who does not understand this reality looks with envious eyes at the prosperity of those

who actually deserve Allah's wrath."

*102 That is, "We had the misconception, that worldly prosperity and wealth by themselves constituted real success. Therefore, we thought that Korah was highly successful, but now we have come to know that real success is an entirely different thing, and it is never attained by the disbelievers."

This moral of the story of Korah has been mentioned only in the Quran. The Bible and the Talmud are without it. However, according to the details given in these books, when the Israelites left Egypt, Korah also accompanied them along with his men, and then conspired against the Prophets Moses and Aaron (peace be upon them) and was joined in this by 250 of his followers. At last, Allah's wrath descended on him, and the earth opened up and swallowed him and his followers together with their possessions."

83. That abode of the Hereafter, *103 We shall assign it to those who do not seek exaltedness in the land, *104 nor mischief. *105 And the end is (best) for the God fearing. *106

تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ



*103 That is, Paradise which is the abode of real success.

*104 "Who do not seek exaltedness": who are not desirous of establishing their own glory in God's earth: who do not live like rebels and tyrants and arrogant people but like humble servants: who do not seek to make God's servants their personal servants.

***105** “Mischief” implies the chaos that inevitably appears in human life in consequence of violating the truth. Whatever man does when he disobeys Allah and turns away from His service is nothing but mischief. Partly this mischief occurs when wealth is amassed through unlawful means and expended in unlawful ways.

***106** “The God fearing”: those who refrain from His disobedience.

84. Whoever comes with a good deed, he shall have the better thereof. And whoever comes with an evil deed, then those who did evil deeds, their recompense will not be except what they used to do.

مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ خَيْرٌ مِنْهَا
وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَى
الَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ إِلَّا مَا
كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



85. Indeed, He who has ordained upon you (O Muhammad) the Quran,^{*107} will surely bring you back to the Place of Return.^{*108} Say: “My Lord knows best of him who brings guidance, and who it is in manifest error.”

إِنَّ الَّذِي فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ
الْقُرْآنَ لَرَادُّكَ إِلَىٰ مَعَادٍ
قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْهُدَىٰ
وَمَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ



***107** That is, “He has placed on you the responsibility of conveying the Quran and teaching it to the people, and reforming the world according to the guidance contained in it.”

***108** The word *maad* in the original means the place to which one has to return ultimately. Its use as a common noun implies that it is a place of eminence and glory. Some commentators think it refers to Paradise. But there is no reason why it should be restricted only to Paradise. Let it remain indefinite as Allah Himself has put it so that the promise become applicable both in this world and to the next world. The context also requires that it should be looked upon as a promise to bestow the highest glory and eminence on the Prophet (peace be upon him) not only in the Hereafter, but in this world also. In the saying of the disbelievers of Makkah, which has been the theme of the discourse from verse 57 until now, they had said, “O Muhammad (peace be upon him), do you want us also to be doomed with you? If we join you and adopt this faith, it will become hard for us to live in Arabia.” In response to this, Allah tells His Prophet: “O Muhammad, that God Who has placed the burden of conveying the message of the Quran on you, will not destroy you: rather He will exalt you to the rank which these people cannot even imagine today.” And, in fact, in a few years after this, even in this world, Allah granted the Prophet (peace be upon him) complete authority over the whole of Arabia, and there was no power to resist him, and no religion to stand its ground. There had been no precedent in the history of Arabia that the whole peninsula might have come under the sway of one man so completely that no opponent might be there to challenge him and no soul to dare disobey his orders. Then it was not only a political domination but religious too, for the whole

population had been won over to Islam.

Some commentators opine that this verse of Surah Al-Qasas was sent down on the way during the Prophet's (peace be upon him) migration from Makkah to Madinah, and in this Allah had promised His Prophet that He would again bring him back to Makkah. But, firstly, the words of the verse do not allow that "maad" be taken to mean "Makkah". Secondly, this Surah, both according to the traditions and the internal evidence of its theme, was revealed sometime during the time of the migration to Habash, and one cannot understand that if this verse was revealed after several years on the way during the migration to Madinah, why was it inserted in this context without any relevance? Thirdly, in this context, the mention of the Holy Prophet's (peace be upon him) return to Makkah seems quite irrelevant. For if the verse is taken to mean this, Muhammad will be expelled from this city, but he will not remain an exile forever, but eventually We will bring him back to this very place. Though this tradition has been reported by Bukhari, Nasai, Ibn Jarir and other traditionalists on the authority of Ibn Abbas, it is, in fact, Ibn Abbas's own opinion; it is not a tradition that might have been received direct from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that one may have to accept it.

86. And you were not expecting that the Book (this Quran) would be conveyed to you, but (it is) a mercy from your Lord. *109

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَرْجُوا أَنْ يُلْقَىٰ
إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابُ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً
مِّن رَّبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ ظَهِيرًا

So do not be a supporter of
the disbelievers.*110

لِّلْكَافِرِينَ
٨٦

*109 This thing is being presented as a proof of the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) prophethood. Just as the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was unaware that he was going to be appointed a Prophet, and sent on a grand mission, when he had never even expected or wished for such a thing, but had been suddenly called upon while on a journey and made a Prophet and assigned a mission which had no relevance with his previous life. So was precisely the case with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The people of Makkah knew well what kind of life he was leading till a day when he came down from the cave of Hira with the message of prophethood. They were fully aware of his occupations, of the topics of his conversation, of the nature of his interests and activities. No doubt it was a life which was an embodiment of truth, honesty and righteousness, a model of nobility, peacefulness, fulfillment of obligations and rights of others and of the service to humanity, but there was nothing in it which could give somebody any idea that the righteous man was going to make a claim to prophethood the next day. There was no one among his most intimate friends and relations and neighbors, who could say that he had already been preparing to become a Prophet. No one had ever heard a word on the themes and problems and topics from him, which became the subject of his daily conversation all of a sudden after the revolutionary moment in the cave of Hira. No one had heard him employing the kind of diction

and words and terms, which the people started hearing from him in the shape of the Quran. He had never stood up for preaching, had never given a message or started a movement, and none of his activities had ever indicated that he was anxious to undertake a program for the solution of the social problems or for religious or moral reformation. Until the day before this revolutionary moment, he was leading the life of a trader, who earns his living by fair and lawful means. Who lives a happy life with his family, receives his guests, helps the poor and treats his relatives well, and at times retires from society into seclusion for the sake of worship. For such a person it would be a great change if he started making, all of a sudden, world moving orations, preaching a revolutionary message, producing a sublime literature and propounding an enduring philosophy of life and a profound system of thought and morality and social life. For psychologically too, such a change is not possible through any kind of preparation and conscious effort. Any such effort and preparation, in any case, has to pass through certain evolutionary stages, which cannot remain hidden from the people among whom a person is passing his life. Had the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life passed through any such stages of gradual development, hundreds of the people in Makkah would have come out to say, "Did we not tell you beforehand that this man would one day make a tall claim?" But history bears evidence that no one in Makkah ever made such an objection although the disbelievers of Makkah raised all sorts of other objections against the

Prophet (peace be upon him).

Then another thing: the Prophet (peace be upon him) never wished for or expected or awaited his appointment to prophethood, but he came across this experience all of a sudden quite unexpectedly. This is supported by the event that has been reported in the traditions in connection with the beginning of revelation. After his first meeting with the Angel Gabriel and the revelation of the initial verses of Surah Al-Alaq he rushes back home from Hira trembling with fear, and says to his wife, “Cover me with a cloak! Cover me with a cloak!” After a while when he recovers a little from the state of anxiety, he relates what he had experienced to his wife and says, “I feel there is danger to my life!” She responds, “No, never! Allah will never bring you to grief: you render the rights of your kindred, you support the indigent, help the poor, treat your guests well, and are ever ready to contribute to a good cause.” Then she takes him to Waraqa bin Naufal, who was her cousin and a righteous and knowledgeable person from among the people of the Book. Hearing from him what had happened, Waraqa says without any hesitation, “The one who came to you is the same Namus (the specially appointed divine messenger), who used to come to Moses (peace be upon him). I wish I were a young man and could live till the time when your people will expel you.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) asks, “Will my people expel me?” He replies, “Yes; no one has passed before, who brought same thing that you have brought, and his people did not turn hostile to him.”

This whole event depicts the state which a simple man will naturally undergo when he is confronted unexpectedly by a most extraordinary experience all of a sudden. If the Prophet (peace be upon him) had already been anxious to become a prophet and thinking that a man like him ought to be a prophet, and had been meditating and straining his mind and awaiting the arrival of an angel with a message, he would have been filled with delight at the experience in the cave, and descending from the mountain would have gone straight before his people and proclaimed Prophethood. But, quite to the contrary, he is confounded at what he had seen, reaches home trembling and lies in bed fully covered up. When he is composed a little, he tells his wife quietly what had happened in the solitude of the cave, and expresses feelings of anxiety and insecurity. How different is this state from the state of a candidate for prophethood!

Then, who can be better aware of the husband's life, his ambitions and thoughts, than the wife? If she had perceived before-hand that the husband was a candidate for prophethood and had been anxiously awaiting the arrival of the angel, her reply would have been different from what Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) said. She would have answered, "Dear husband! Why are you so agitated? You have got what you have been longing for long. Now, flourish as a saint: I too shall get ready for collecting gifts and offerings." But on the basis of what she had seen of her husband during her 15 years long companionship, she did not take more than a moment to

understand that Satan could not have come to a righteous and selfless man like him, nor could Allah have put him to a severe test. Therefore, whatever he had seen was the very truth and reality.

The same is also true in the case of Waraqa bin Naufal. He was not an outsider, but a member of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) own clan and a brother in law by a close relationship. Then being a knowledgeable Christian he could discriminate the prophethood and book and revelation from fabrication and fraud. Being the Prophet's (peace be upon him) senior by many years his whole life since childhood had been spent before him. Therefore, when he heard what the Prophet (peace be upon him) had to say about his experience in the cave, he at once said that it was most surely the same Angel who used to bring divine messages to the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). For in this case also precisely the same thing had happened as in the case of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). He also was a pure and righteous person, simple in thought and without any preconceived notions about prophethood, he also had experienced the same thing unexpectedly in full consciousness. Therefore, without the least hesitation, he was led to the firm conclusion that there was no self deception or satanic insinuation involved, but whatever the honest man had seen, without any will or desire on his own part, was in fact, an experience of the reality.

This is such a clear proof of the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) prophethood that a realistic person

can hardly deny it. That is why it has been presented as a proof of prophethood at several places in the Quran. For example, in Surah Yunus it has been said: “O Prophet, say to them: Had Allah willed so, I would never have recited this Quran to you, nor would He have told you anything (about its existence). I have already lived a lifetime among you before its revelation. Do you not use common sense?” (Ayat 16). And in Surah Ash-Shura it has been said: “O Prophet, you did not know at all what was the Book and what was the faith but We made that revelation a light by which We show the way to any of Our servants We will.” (Ayat 52). For further explanation, see E.N. 21 of Surah Yunus, E.Ns 88 to 92 of Surah Al-Ankabut, and E.N. 84 of Surah Ash-Shuara.

***110** That is, “When Allah has granted you this blessing without your asking for it, you are under an obligation to exercise all your energies and spend all your efforts in upholding it conveying it to others and promoting its cause. Any slackness in this regard would mean that you helped the disbelievers. This does not mean that, God forbid, there was any chance of such slackness on the part of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Allah, in fact, is exhorting the Prophet (peace be upon him), as if to say, you should go on doing your mission in spite of the disbelievers’ opposition and their uproar, and do not at all mind what fears the enemies of the truth express regarding your message's being harmful to their national interests.”

87. And let them not
divert you^{*111} from the

وَلَا يَصُدُّنَكَ عَنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ

revelations of Allah after when they have been sent down to you, and call (mankind) to your Lord, and do not be of those who ascribe partners (to Him).

بَعْدَ إِذْ أَنْزَلْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَدْعُ إِلَىٰ
رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

***111 Divert you: divert you from conveying them to others and acting in accordance with them in practical life.**

88. And do not invoke with Allah any other god. There is no god but Him. Every thing will perish except His Face. His is the command,^{*112} and to Him you will be brought back.

وَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا
إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا
وَجْهَهُ ۗ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ
تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾

***112 Another meaning can be: "Sovereignty is for Him, for He alone is entitled to it by right."**





Al-Ankabut

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from verse 41 in which the word *Ankabut* (Spider) has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Verses 56 to 60 clearly show that this Surah was revealed a little before the migration to Habash, and this is supported by the internal evidence of the subject matter as well. Some commentators have opined that since it mentions the hypocrites, and hypocrisy appeared in Al-Madinah, the first ten verses of this Surah were revealed at Al-Madinah and the rest of it at Makkah; whereas the people whose hypocrisy has been mentioned here are those who had adopted a hypocritical way of life because they were afraid of the oppression and extreme physical torture to which the Muslims were being subjected by the disbelievers. Evidently, this kind of hypocrisy could be there only at Makkah and not at Al-Madinah. Similarly, some other commentators, seeing that in this Surah the Muslims have been exhorted to migrate, have regarded it as the last Surah to be revealed at Makkah, whereas the Muslims had

migrated to Habash even before their migration to Al-Madinah. These opinions are not based on any tradition but on the internal evidence of the subject matter, and this internal evidence, when considered against the subject matter of the Surah as a whole, points to the conditions prevailing in the time of the migration to Habash and not to the last stage at Makkah.

Theme and Subject matter

A perusal of the Surah shows that the period of its revelation was the period of extreme persecution of the Muslims in Makkah. The disbelievers were opposing and fighting Islam tooth and nail and the new converts were being subjected to the severest oppression. Such were the conditions when Allah revealed this Surah to strengthen and encourage the sincere Muslims as well as to put to shame those who were showing weakness of the faith. Besides, the disbelievers of Makkah have been threatened and warned not to invite for themselves the fate that the antagonists of the truth have been experiencing in every age.

In this connection, the questions that some young men answered. For instance, their parents were urging them to abandon Muhammad (peace be upon him), and return to their ancestral religion, for they argued: "The Quran in which you have put your faith, regards the rights of the parents as the uppermost; therefore, listen to what we say; otherwise you will be working against the dictates of your own faith." This has been answered in Ayat 8.

Similarly, the people of some clans said to the new converts

to Islam, “Leave the question of punishments, etc. to us. Listen to us and abandon this man. If God seizes you in the Hereafter, we will come forward and say, Lord, these people are innocent. We had forced them to give up the faith, therefore, seize us.” This has been dealt with in Ayats 12-13.

The stories mentioned in this Surah also impress the same point mostly, as if to say, “Look at the Prophets of the past: they were made to suffer great hardships and were treated cruelly for long periods of time. Then, at last they were helped by Allah. Therefore, hold fast: Allah’s succor will certainly come. But a period of trial and tribulation has to be undergone.” Besides teaching this lesson to the Muslims, the disbelievers also have been warned, as if to say, “If you are not being immediately seized by Allah, you should not form the wrong impression that you will never be seized. The signs of the doomed nations of the past are before you. Just see how they met their doom and how Allah succored the Prophets.”

Then the Muslims have been instructed to the effect: “If you feel that the persecution has become unbearable for you, you should give up your homes, instead of giving up your faith: Allah’s earth is vast: seek a new place where you can worship Allah with the full peace of mind.” Besides all this, the disbelievers also have been urged to understand Islam. The realities of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter have been impressed with rational arguments, *shirk* has been refuted, and drawing their attention towards the signs in the universe, they have been told that all these signs confirm

the teachings that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is presenting before them.

1. Alif. Lam. Mim.



2. Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: “We believe, and they will not be tested.”*1

أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ
يَقُولُوا ءَامَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ



*1 When this thing was said, the conditions prevailing in Makkah were extremely trying. Whoever accepted Islam was made a target of tyranny and humiliation and persecution. If he was a slave or a poor person, he was beaten and subjected to unbearable tortures. If he was a shopkeeper or artisan, he was made to suffer economic hardships, even starvation. If he was a member of an influential family, his own people would tease and harass him in different ways and make life difficult for him. This had created an atmosphere of fear and fright in Makkah, due to which most people were afraid of believing in the Prophet (peace be upon him) although they acknowledged him to be a true Prophet (peace be upon him) in their hearts; and some others who believed would lose heart soon afterwards and would submit and yield to the disbelievers when they confronted dreadful persecutions. Though these trying circumstances could not shake the determination of the strong willed companions, naturally they also were sometimes overwhelmed by an intense feeling of anxiety and distraction. An instance of this is found in the tradition

of Khabbab bin Arat (may Allah be pleased with him), which has been related by Bukhari, Abu Daud and Nasai. He says, “During the time when we had become tired of our persecution by the mushriks, one day I saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) sitting in the shade of the wall of the Kabah. I went up to him and said, O Messenger of Allah, don’t you pray for us. Hearing this, his face became red with feeling and emotion, and he said, The believers who have gone before you had been subjected to even greater persecutions. Some one of them was made to sit in a ditch in the earth and was sawed into two pieces from head to foot. Someone’s joints were rubbed with iron combs so as to withhold him from the faith. By God, this mission will be accomplished and the time is not far when a person will travel without apprehension from Sana to Hadramaut and there will be none but Allah Whom he will fear.”

In order to change this state of agitation into forbearance, Allah tells the believers, “No one can become worthy of Our promises of success in the world and the Hereafter merely by verbal profession of the faith, but every claimant to the faith will have to pass through trials and tribulations so as to furnish proof of the truth of his claim. Our Paradise is not so cheap, neither are Our special favors in the world so low priced that We should bless you with all these as soon as you proclaim verbal faith in Us. The trial is a prerequisite for them. You will have to undergo hardships for Our sake, suffer losses of life and property, face dangers, misfortunes and difficulties; you will be tried both with fear and with greed; you will have to sacrifice

everything that you hold dear for Our pleasure, and bear every discomfort in Our way. Then only will it become manifest whether your claim to faith in Us was true or false. This thing has been said at every such place in the Quran where the Muslims have been found placed in hardships and difficulties and obsessed by fear and consternation. In the initial stage of life at Al-Madinah, after the migration, when the Muslims were in great trouble on account of economic hardships, external dangers and internal villainy of the Jews and the hypocrites, Allah said: “Do you think that you will enter Paradise without undergoing such trials as were experienced by the believers before you? They met with adversity and affliction and were so shaken by trials that the Prophet of the time and his followers cried out, when will Allah’s help come? (Then only they were comforted with the good tidings:) “Yes, Allah’s help is near!” (Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayat 214). Likewise, when after the battle of Uhud, the Muslims again confronted a period of afflictions, it was said: “Do you think that you will enter Paradise without undergoing any trial, whereas Allah has not yet tried you to see who among you are ready to lay down their lives in His way and who will show fortitude for His sake.” (Surah Aal-Imran: Ayat 142). Almost the same thing has been said in Surah Aal-Imran: Ayat 179, Surah At-Taubah: Ayat 16 and Surah Muhammad: Ayat 31. Allah in these verses has impressed on the Muslims that trial is the touchstone by which the pure and the impure are judged. The impure is turned aside by Allah and the pure is selected so that Allah may

honor them with His favors which the only sincere believers deserve.

3. And certainly, We have tested those who were before them.*² Thus Allah will surely make evident*³ those who are truthful, and He will surely make evident the liars.

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
فَلْيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا
وَلْيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ

*² That is, this is not a new thing which you alone may be experiencing. The same has also been happening before you. Whoever made a claim to the faith, he was made to pass through trials and tribulations. And when the others were not given anything without the trial, you are in no way any special people that you should be favored and rewarded merely on verbal profession of the faith.

*³ Literally, "It is necessary that Allah should find out." A question may be asked: "When Allah already knows the truth of the truthful and the untruth of the liar, why should He put the people to the test for the sake of these" The answer is: Until a person has manifested his potential and capability to do a thing in practical terms, justice requires that he neither deserves any rewards nor any punishment. One man, for example, is capable of being trustworthy and another man of being un-trustworthy. Unless both are tried and one manifests trustworthiness and the other the lack of it practically, it will not be justice on the part of Allah that He should reward one for trustworthiness and punish the other for the lack of it only on the basis of His knowledge of the unseen. Therefore the knowledge Allah already

possesses about the capabilities of the people and about their conduct in the future is not enough to satisfy the requirements of justice until the people have manifested their potentialities in practical ways. Justice with Allah is not based on the knowledge that a person possesses a tendency to steal and will commit a theft, but on the knowledge that he has actually committed a theft. Likewise, Allah does not bestow favors and rewards on the basis of the knowledge that a person has the potential and capability to become a great believer and fighter in His way, but on the basis of the knowledge that the person concerned has practically proved by deed and action that he is a sincere believer and a brave fighter in His way. That is why we have translated the words of the verse as: “Allah will surely make evident.”

4. Or do those who do evil deeds^{*4} think that they can outrun (escape) Us.^{*5}

Evil is what they judge.

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ
السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَسْبِقُونَا ۗ سَاءَ مَا
يَحْكُمُونَ



*4 This may refer to all those people who disobey Allah’s commands but here particularly it implies those wicked chiefs of the Quraish, who were in the forefront in their antagonism to Islam and persecution of the converts to Islam, e.g. Walid bin Mughirah, Abu Jahl, Utbah, Shaibah, Uqbah bin Abi Muait, Hanzalah bin Wail, etc. Here the context itself requires that after exhorting the Muslims to patience and fortitude against the trials and tests, those

people also should be chided and scolded, who were persecuting the believers.

*5 It may also mean: “that they will escape Our grasp.” The words *yasbiquna* in the original may have two meanings: (1) “Whatever we will (i.e. the success of the mission of Our Messenger) should meet with failure, and whatever they wish (i.e. to frustrate the mission of Our Messenger) should be accomplished;” and (2) “We may want to seize them for their excesses and they should be able to escape and get out of Our reach.”

5. Whoever hopes to the meeting with Allah. Then indeed, Allah's term is coming.*6 And He is the All Hearer, the All Knower.*7

مَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ
أَجَلَ اللَّهِ لِآتٍ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ
الْعَلِيمُ

*6 That is, the case of the one who does not believe in the life Hereafter and thinks he is answerable to none for his deeds and there is no accountability whatever, is different. He may remain heedless and act as he likes, for he will himself see the consequences when they appear against his expectations. But those who expect that they have to meet their Lord one day and will be rewarded or punished according to their deeds, should not have the misunderstanding that the time of death is yet far off. They should rather think that it is near at hand and the respite for action is about to come to an end. Therefore, whatever they can do for their well being in the Hereafter, they should do. They should not delay self reform on account of

the baseless belief that they have yet to live a long life.

*7 That is, that God before Whom they will appear to render their accounts is not uninformed. He hears everything and knows every thing, and nothing about them is hidden from Him.

6. And whoever strives, so he only strives for himself.*8 Indeed, Allah is Free from need of the worlds (creation).*9

وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ
لِنَفْسِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ
الْعَالَمِينَ

*8 The word *mujahadah* means to struggle and exert one's utmost against an opponent, and when the particular opponent force is not pointed out, the word implies an all-out, many sided struggle. The struggle that a believer has to make in the world is of this very nature. He has to fight against Satan, who frightens him every moment of the possible losses that they have to incur for the sake of good and allures him with the benefits and pleasures of the evil. He has to fight his own self also, which exerts to make him the slave of its lusts. He has also to fight all those men, from home to the world outside, whose ideology, trends, morality, customs, way of life and social and economic principles may be in conflict with his faith. And he has to fight that state too, which enforces its laws independent of obedience to Allah, and employs its forces to promote evil instead of the good. This struggle is not of a day or two, but of a lifetime, of every moment of the day and night. And it is not a struggle in one field only but on every front of life.

It is about this that Hasan Basri has said: “Man exerts in the way of Allah, even though he may not strike one sword at any time.”

*9 That is, Allah is not asking you to exert your utmost because he stands in need of any help from you to establish His Godhead and keep it established and sustained. But He instructs you to enter this conflict because this opens the way to your own progress. Through this way only, you can get rid of the evil and follow the way of truth. Through this way alone you can develop the ability and power to rise as the standard bearers of goodness in the world and become worthy of Allah’s Paradise in the Hereafter. By waging this war you will not do any favor to Allah but will only be helping your own selves.

7. And those who believe and do righteous deeds, We shall surely remove from them their evil deeds, and We shall surely reward them the best of what they used to do.*10

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ
سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَحْسَنَ
الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

*10 *Iman* means to believe in and accept sincerely all those things to which the Messenger of Allah and this Book invite; and *As-salihah* are those righteous deeds which are performed in accordance with the guidance of Allah and His Messenger. The righteous deed of the heart and mind is that man’s thinking and his ideas and his intentions should be right and pure. The righteous deed of the tongue is that

man should refrain from talking evil things, and whatever he says should be just and right and true. And the righteous deed of the limbs is that man's entire life should be spent in Allah's worship and in obedience to His commands and law. Two results of the belief and righteous deeds have been mentioned: (1) That man's evils will be wiped off; and (2) that he will be rewarded for the best of his deeds better than what he will actually deserve.

Wiping off of evils means several things: (1) All kinds of sins that man might have committed before his affirmation of the faith will be pardoned as soon as he believes; (2) the errors that man might have committed after the affirmation of the faith due to human weakness, but not because of a rebellious attitude, will be overlooked in view of his good deeds; (3) man's self reform will automatically take place when he adopts a life of belief and righteousness, and most of his weaknesses will be removed from him.

The sentence, "We shall reward them for the best of what they used to do" has two meanings: (1) Man will be given his rewards on the basis of the best of his deeds; and (2) he will be rewarded better and more handsomely than what he will actually deserve for his deeds. This thing has been stated at other places also in the Quran. For instance, in Surah Al-Anaam: Ayat 160, it has been said: "He who will bring a good deed before Allah, will receive a tenfold reward for it", and in Surah Al-Qasas: Ayat 4: "Whoever brings a good deed, shall have a better reward than that", and in Surah An-Nisa: Ayat 40: "Indeed Allah does not wrong anyone even by a jot: if one does a good deed, He

increases it manifold.”

8. And We have enjoined upon man kindness to his parents. And if they strive with you to make you join with Me that of which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them.*¹¹ To Me is your return, then I shall surely inform you about what you used to do.*¹²

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ
حُسْنًا وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ
بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا
تُطِعْهُمَا ۖ إِلَىٰ مَرْجِعِكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُم
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

*¹¹ According to Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ahmad, Abu Daud and Nasai, this verse was sent down in respect of Saad bin Abi Waqqas. He was 18 or 19 years old when he embraced Islam. When his mother, Hamnah, daughter of Sufyan bin Umayyah (neice of Abu Sufyan), came to know that her son had become a Muslim, she said, “I will neither eat nor drink nor sit in shade unless you disown Muhammad. The rights of the mother are superior even according to Allah’s command. Therefore if you disobey me, you will be disobeying Allah too.” Saad was perplexed and came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and told this entire story. At that, this verse was revealed. Possibly other young men who embraced Islam in the initial stage at Makkah were also confronted with similar situations. Therefore, the same theme has been repeated forcefully in Surah Luqman: Ayat 15 also.

What the verse means to impress is this: The rights of the parents, among the creation of Allah, are to be held as the

supreme, but even if the parents force a person to adopt shirk, they should not be obeyed. The words, “And if they strive with you to make you join with Me” imply that a lesser pressure, or a pressure by either of them, deserves to be set aside much more promptly. The next sentence, “Of which you have no knowledge (as such)” is also noteworthy. This gives a sound reason for not obeying the parents in this regard. The parents certainly have the right that the children should serve them, respect them, and obey them in lawful things. But they do not have the right that one should obey them blindly against one’s knowledge of the reality. Therefore, there is no reason why a person should go on following his parents’ religion just because it is their religion. If the children come to know that their parents are following a false religion, they should give it up and adopt the right religion, and should not follow the wrong way whose falsehood has become clear to them even if the parents use every kind of pressure for it. When this is so in the case of even the parents, it should be so with every other person, too. No one deserves to be followed and obeyed unless one is sure that the person being followed is on the right path.

*12 That is, the relationships of this world and their obligations are confined to the world. At last, the parents as well as the children have to return to their Creator, and before Him everybody will be held answerable only on the basis of his personal responsibility. If the parents have misled the children, they will be called to account. If the children have accepted deviation for the sake of the

parents, they will be punished. And if the children adopted the right way, and showed no slackness in rendering the parents' lawful rights either, but the parents ill treated them only for the reason that they did not join them in their deviation, they will not be able to escape Allah's punishment.

9. And those who believe and do righteous deeds, We will surely admit them among the righteous.

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٩﴾

10. And among mankind are those who say: ^{*13} "We have believed in Allah." Then, when they are made to suffer in (the cause of) Allah, they consider the persecution of mankind as the punishment of Allah. ^{*14} And if victory comes from your Lord, they will surely say: "Indeed, we were with you." ^{*15} Is not Allah best aware of what is in the breasts of the worlds (creation).

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا
بِاللَّهِ فَإِذَا أُوْذِيَ فِي اللَّهِ جَعَلَ
فِتْنَةَ النَّاسِ كَعَذَابِ اللَّهِ وَلَئِن
جَاءَ نَصْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّا
كُنَّا مَعَكُمْ أَوْلَىٰ آللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ
بِمَا فِي صُدُورِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

^{*13} Though the speaker is a single person, he uses the plural pronoun and says, "We have believed," Imam Razi

has pointed out a subtle point in it. He says that the hypocrite always tries to be counted among the believers and mentions his faith as though he is also a true believer like others. His case is like that of a cowardly soldier who accompanies an army to the battlefield where the soldiers have fought well and put the enemy to rout. This cowardly person might have made no contribution at all, but when he returns home, he will say, "We put up a good fight and routed the enemy," as if he was one of the heroes of the battlefield.

***14** That is, just as one should desist from disbelief and sin due to fear of Allah's punishment, so did this man desist from faith and goodness due to fear of persecution by the people. When after belief he was confronted with threats and imprisonment and harsh treatment from the disbelievers, he thought that Allah's punishment in Hell which he will have to suffer after death in consequence of his disbelief, will be no severer than that. Therefore, he decided that he would suffer the torment of the next world at its own time, but should give up faith and rejoin the disbelievers so that he might save himself from the torment of this world and pass an easy life.

***15** That is, today he has joined the disbelievers in order to save his skin, and has abandoned the believers for he is not prepared even to suffer a thorn prick in the cause of promoting Allah's religion. But when Allah will favor with success and victory those who are struggling in His cause with their lives and wealth, this person will come forward to have his share of the fruits of the victory and will tell the

Muslims, “Our hearts were with you, we used to pray for your success, we thought very highly of your devotion to duty and your sacrifices.”

Here, one should understand that in case of an unbearable persecution and loss and extreme fear, one is permitted to disown Islam and save one’s life, provided that he remains firm in his faith with a sincere heart. But there is a big difference between the sincere Muslim who disowns Islam under compulsion in order to save his life and the opportunist who ideologically believes in Islam as a true religion but joins the disbelievers when he sees the dangers and risks. Apparently, they do not seem to be much different from each other, but the thing which sets them apart is this: The sincere Muslim who utters disbelief under compulsion not only remains attached to Islam ideologically, but practically, his sympathies remain with Islam and the Muslims; he feels happy over their successes and unhappy at their defeat. Even under compulsion he tries to avail himself of every opportunity to cooperate with the Muslims, and remains on the lookout for a chance to join his brethren in faith as soon as the grip of the enemies loosens a little. Contrary to this, when the opportunist finds that the way of the faith is difficult to follow and calculates carefully that the disadvantages of siding with Islam outweigh the advantages of rejoining the disbelievers, he turns away from Islam and the Muslims for the sake of personal safety and worldly gains, establishes friendship with the disbelievers and is prepared to carry out for his own interests any service for them, which may be utterly

opposed to the faith and harmful to the Muslims. But at the same time, he does not close his eyes to the possibility that Islam also might prosper some time in the future. Therefore, whenever he gets an opportunity to talk to the Muslims, he acknowledges their ideology and admits his faith and pays homage to their sacrifices most generously, so that his verbal admissions might be helpful as and when required. In Surah An-Nisa: Ayat 141, this same bargaining mentality of the hypocrites has been described, thus: The hypocrites are watching you closely to see (how the wind blows). If victory comes to you from Allah, they will say to you, “Were we not with you?” And if the disbelievers gain the upper hand, they will say to them, “Were we not strong enough to fight against you? Yet we defended you from the Muslims.”

11. And Allah will surely make evident those who believe, and He will surely make evident the hypocrites.*16

وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ

*16 That is, Allah provides occasions for the trial again and again so that the faith of the believers and the hypocrisy of the hypocrites become manifest, and whatever is hidden in the hearts becomes exposed. The same thing has been said in Surah Aal-Imran: Ayat 179: “Allah will not leave the believers in the state in which you happen to be at present: He will surely separate the pure from the impure people.”

12. And those who disbelieve say to those who

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ

believe: "Follow our way, and we will carry your sins."^{*17}

And they will not carry from their sins anything.^{*18}

Indeed, they are liars.

ءَامِنُوا أَتَّبِعُوا سَبِيلَنَا وَلِنَحْمِلَ

خَطِيئَتِكُمْ وَمَا هُمْ بِحَامِلِينَ

مِنَ خَطِيئَتِهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ إِنَّهُمْ

لَكَذِبُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

***17** What they meant to say was: "In the first place, the talk about life hereafter and Resurrection and accountability is all meaningless. But supposing there is another life in which the people will be called to account for their deeds, we take the responsibility that we shall take the punishment, etc. on our own selves. You should, therefore, listen to us and give up this new faith and return to your ancestral religion. According to the traditions several chiefs of the Quraish used to counsel thus the people who embraced Islam in the beginning. So, when Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) accepted Islam, Abu Sufyan and Harab bin Umayyah bin Khalaf met him and said these very things.

***18** That is, it is not at all possible that a person should take the responsibility for another before Allah, and thus enable the actual sinner to escape the punishment of his sin, for every person will be responsible for his own deeds there. No bearer of a burden shall bear the burden of another (Sura An-Najm: Ayat 38). But if at all it be so, none will have the nerve, while the blazing Hell is ready to punish the disbelievers, to say to Allah, only for the sake of

honoring his pledge in the world, “Lord, forgive this person and send him to Paradise, he had turned apostate on my counseling: I offer myself to suffer the punishment for my own disbelief as well as for his in Hell.”

13. And they will surely carry their (own) burdens and (other) burdens along with their (own) burdens,^{*19} and they will surely be questioned on the Day of Resurrection about what they used to invent.^{*20}

وَلِيَحْمِلْنَ
مَعَ أَثْقَاهِمَ
أَلْقِيمَةَ
يَفْتَرُونَ
وَأَثْقَالًا
ط
وَلَيْسَ لَنَّا
عَمَّا كَانُوا



***19** That is, though they will not bear the burdens of others, they will neither escape bearing a double burden: one burden of their own selves going astray, and the burden of leading the others astray. This can be understood by an example. A person commits theft and also asks another person to join him. Now if the other person also commits theft, no judge will let him off only because he had committed the offense on someone else’s prompting. He will in any case be punished for the theft and it will not be fair according to any law of justice to let him off and punish instead of him the first thief who had prompted him to commit the theft. However, the first thief will suffer punishment for two offenses: the offense of committing theft himself and the offense of turning another person into a thief along with himself. This principle has been stated at another place in the Quran thus “So that they should bear the full brunt of their own burdens on the Day of

Resurrection together with some of the burdens of those whom they are leading astray in their ignorance.” (Surah An-Nahl: Ayat 25) The same principle has been elucidated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this *Hadith*: “Whoever invited others to the right path will be granted a reward equal to the rewards of all those who listened to him and adopted the right path, without diminishing their rewards in any way. And whoever invited others to deviation will earn a sin equal to the sins of all those who followed him, without diminishing their sins in any way.”

***20** “They used to invent” implies all those untruths which were hidden in this saying of the disbelievers: “Follow our way and we will bear the burden of your sins.” In fact, they said this on the basis of two presumptions: (1) The creed of shirk they are following is based on the truth and the Prophet Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) doctrine of *Tauhid* is false; therefore, there is nothing wrong if it is rejected; and (2) there is going to be no Resurrection, and the doctrine of the Hereafter which deters a Muslim from unbelief is baseless. With these presumptions they would counsel a Muslim, saying, “Well, if you think that disbelief is really a sin, and there is going to be Resurrection when you will be called to account for this sin, then we are ready to take this sin of yours on our selves. You leave it to us and give up the religion of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and return to your ancestral religion.” In this two other false things were also included: (a) Their belief that a person who commits an offense on someone else’s prompting can be exempted from its responsibility, and the

whole responsibility can be assumed by the one who had prompted the commission of the offense; and (b) their false promise that on the Day of Resurrection they will certainly assume the responsibility for those who might have turned apostates on their counseling. For, when Resurrection will actually be established, and they will see Hell against their expectations, they will never be prepared to receive the punishment of their own disbelief as well as bear the whole burden of the sins of those others whom they had deceived and misled in the world.

14. And indeed, We sent Noah to his people,^{*21} and he stayed among them a thousand (years) less fifty years.^{*22} Then the flood engulfed them while they were wrongdoers.^{*23}

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ
فَلَبِثَ فِيهِمْ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ إِلَّا
خَمْسِينَ عَامًا فَأَخَذَهُمُ
الطُّوفَانُ وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ

^{*21} For comparison, see Surah Aal-Imran: Ayats 33-34, Surah An-Nisa: Ayat 163, Surah Al-Anaam: Ayat 84, Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayats 59-64, Surah Yuuns: Ayats 71-73, Surah Hud: Ayats 25-48, Surah Al-Anbiyaa: Ayats 76-77, Surah Al-Muminun: Ayats 23-30, Surah Al-Furqan: Ayat 37, Surah Ash-Shuara: Ayats 105-123, Surah As-Saffat: Ayats 75-82, Surah Al-Qamar: Ayats 9-15, Surah Al-Haqqah: Ayats 11-12, Surah Nuh: Entire Surah.

One should keep the initial verses of this Surah in view in order to understand the relevancy of these stories in this context. There, on the one hand, it has been said to the

believers, “We have put to the test all those believers who have passed before you”, and, on the other, the wicked disbelievers have been warned to the effect: “You should not have the misunderstanding that you will outstrip Us and escape Our grasp.” It is to impress these two things that these historical events are being related here.

***22** This does not mean that the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) lived for 950 years, but it means that after his appointment to prophethood till the coming of the flood, he went on making efforts for 950 years for the reformation of his wicked people, and he did not lose heart even though he suffered persecutions for such a long time. The same is the aim of the discourse here. The believers are being told: “You have been suffering persecutions and experiencing stubbornness of your wicked opponents hardly for six years or so. Just imagine the patience and resolution and firmness of Our servant who braved such afflictions and hardships continuously for nine and a half centuries.”

The Quran and the Bible differ about the age of the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him). The Bible says that he lived for 950 years. He was 600 years old when the flood came, and lived for another 350 years after the flood. But according to the Quran, he must have lived for at least a thousand years, because 950 years is the time that he spent in preaching his mission after his appointment to prophethood till the coming of the flood. Evidently, he must have been appointed to prophethood after he had attained his maturity, and must have lived some life after the flood also.

For some people such a long life is inconceivable. But in this world of God strange happenings are not rare. Wherever one may look one will see extraordinary manifestations of His power. The occurrence of certain events and things in a usual form and manner is no proof that the event or thing cannot happen in an unusual and extraordinary way. To break these assumptions there exists a long list of unusual events and things that have taken place in every kind of creation in every part of the universe. In particular, the person who has a clear concept of God's being All-Powerful, cannot be involved in the misunderstanding that it is not possible for God, Who is the Creator of life and death, to grant a life of a thousand years or so to any man. The fact is that man of his own will and wish cannot live even for a moment, but if Allah wills, He can make him live for as long as He pleases.

*23 That is, the flood came when they still persisted in their wickedness. Had they desisted from it before the coming of the flood, Allah would not have sent this torment on them.

15. Then We rescued him and the companions of the ship,^{*24} and made it a sign for all peoples.^{*25}

فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَأَصْحَابَ السَّفِينَةِ
وَجَعَلْنَاهَا آيَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ



*24 That is, the people who had believed in Noah (peace be upon him), and who had been permitted by Allah to board the Ark. This has been elucidated in Surah Hud: Ayat 40, thus: "Until when Our command came to pass and *at-Tannur* began to boil up, We said, (O Noah), take into Ark a pair from every species, and embark your own people

save those who have already been specifically marked, and also those who have believed; and those who had believed with Noah (peace be upon him) were only a few.”

***25** It can also mean this: “We made this dreadful punishment or this great event a sign of warning for the later generations.” But from the way this has been mentioned here and in Surah Al-Qamar, it appears that the object of warning was the Ark itself, which remained on the top of the mountain for centuries and continued to remind the later generations that a flood of such magnitude had once come in that land because of which the Ark had risen up to rest on the mountain. In Surah Al-Qamar: Ayats 13-15, it has been said: “And We bore Noah upon a thing (Ark) made of planks and nails, which floated under Our care. This was a vengeance for the sake of him who had been slighted. And We left that Ark as a sign. Then, is there any who would take admonition?”

In his commentary on this verse of Surah Al-Qamar, Ibn Jarir says on the authority of Qatadah that during the period of the companions when the Muslims went to the land of al-Jazirah, they saw the Ark on mount Judi (according to another tradition, near the habitation of Baqirwa). In the modern times also news appear from time to time in the media that expeditions are being sent to search out the boat, because something resembling a boat has been sighted many time from airplanes during flights over Mount Ararat. (See E.N. 47 of Surah Al-Aaraf and E.N. 46 of Surah Hud).

16. And Abraham,^{*26} when he said to his people: “Worship Allah and fear Him.^{*27} That is better for you if you should know.”

وَابْرَاهِيمَ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ اعْبُدُوا
اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوهُ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

***26** For comparison, see Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayats 122-141, 258-260; Surah Aal-Imran: Ayats 64-71; Surah Al-Anaam: Ayats 71-82; Surah Hud: Ayats 69-83; Surah Ibrahim: Ayats 35-41; Surah Al-Hijr: Ayats 45-60; Surah Maryam: Ayats 41-50; Surah Al-Anbiyaa: Ayats 51-75; Surah Ash-Shuaraa: Ayats 69-104; Surah As-Saffat: Ayats 75-113; Surah Az-Zukhruf: Ayats 26-35; Surah Az-Zariyat: Ayats 24-46.

***27** That is, “Fear disobeying Him and associating others with Him.”

17. You worship other than Allah only idols, and you invent a falsehood.^{*28} Indeed, those whom you worship other than Allah have no power to give you provision, so seek provision from Allah, and worship Him, and be grateful to Him. To Him you will be brought back.”^{*29}

إِنَّمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ
أَوْثَانًا وَتَخْلُقُونَ إِفْكًا إِنَّ
الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ
لَا يَمْلِكُونَ لَكُمْ رِزْقًا
فَابْتَغُوا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الرِّزْقَ
وَاعْبُدُوهُ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ ۗ إِلَيْهِ
تُرْجَعُونَ

***28** That is, “You are not forging idols but a lie. These idols are in themselves a lie. Then your beliefs that they are gods and goddesses, or they are incarnation of God, or His offspring, or His favorites, or intercessors with Him, or that someone of them is bestower of health, or giver of children or jobs, are all lies, which you have invented from your own whims and conjecture. The fact is that they are in no way more than idols, lifeless, powerless and impotent.”

***29** In these few sentences the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) has put together all rational arguments against idol worship. There must necessarily be some reason for making somebody or something a deity. One such reason can be that somebody should be entitled to being a deity due to some personal excellence. Another, that he should be the creator of man, and man should be indebted to him for his existence. Third, that he should be responsible for man’s sustenance, his food and other means of life. Fourth, that man’s future should be linked up with his support and bounty, and man may be afraid that annoying him would mean bringing about his own ruin. The Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) said that none of these four things favored idol worship, but they all favored and demanded pure God worship. Saying that “You worship other than Allah only idols”, he demolished the first argument, for a mere idol could have no excellence to entitle it to be a deity. Then, by saying that “And you invent a falsehood”, he refuted the second argument, and “They have no power to give you provision” destroyed the third reason. Lastly, he said, “To Him you will be brought back” and not to the

idols; therefore, it was not in their power to make or mar your destiny, but in the power of God alone. Thus, after a complete refutation of shirk, the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) made it clear to them that all the reasons for which man could regard somebody as a deity only applied to Allah, Who alone should be worshiped without associating anyone else with him.

18. And if you deny, then certainly nations have denied before you.^{*30} And it is not upon the Messenger except to convey (the message) clearly.

وَإِنْ تَكْذِبُوا فَكَدَّ كَذَبَ أُمَّةٍ
مِّن قَبْلِكُمْ وَمَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ
إِلَّا أَلْبَلُغُ الْمُبِينِ

*30 That is, if you reject my invitation to *Tauhid* and deny my message that you have to return to your Lord and render an account of your deeds, it will not be a new thing. In the history of mankind many Prophets like Noah, Hud, Salih (peace be upon them) have also brought the same teachings, and their peoples denied them likewise. Now you may judge for yourselves as to whether they harmed the Prophets or only themselves.

19. Have^{*31} they not considered how Allah originates creation, then He repeats it. Indeed, that is easy for Allah.^{*32}

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَيْفَ يُبْدِئُ اللَّهُ
الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ
عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

*31 From here to the end of Ayat 23 is a parenthesis, which has been interposed in the story of the Prophet Abraham

(peace be upon him) and addressed to the disbelievers of Makkah. The relevance of this interposition in the story, which is being related for the admonition of the disbelievers, is that they were basically involved in two kinds of deviation: shirk and idol worship, and the denial of the Hereafter. The first of these has been refuted in the Prophet Abraham's (peace be upon him) speech as related above. Now the second is being refuted in these few sentences by Allah Himself.

***32** That is, On the one hand, countless new things come into existence from non existence, and on the other, similar new members continue coming into existence to take the place of the dying members of every species. The polytheists acknowledged that that was all due to Allah's power of creation and invention. They never denied Allah being a Creator, just as the polytheists of today do not do. Therefore, the argument has been based upon what they themselves acknowledged as a reality, as if to say, "How do you think that God, Who, according to your own belief, brings things into existence from non existence, and does not create things just once, but goes on bringing into existence similar things in place of the dying things repeatedly in front of your very eyes, will not be able to raise you back to life after death?" (see E.N. 80 of Surah An-Naml).

20. Say: (O Muhammad)
"Travel in the land and see
how He originated creation,
then Allah will bring forth

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا
كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ اللَّهُ

the later creation. Indeed, Allah has Power over all things.”*33

يُنشِئُ النَّشْأَةَ الْآخِرَةَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

*33 That is, “When you yourselves are witnessing things being created in the first instance by God’s competence and skill, you should understand it well that re-creation shall also take place by the same competence and skill. Such a thing is not beyond His power nor can it be.”

21. He punishes whom He wills, and He has mercy upon whom He wills. And to Him you will be turned back.

يُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَرْحَمُ مَن
يَشَاءُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُقْلَبُونَ

22. And you cannot escape (from Him) in the earth, nor in the heaven.*34 And there is none for you, other than Allah, any friend, nor a helper.*35

وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَمَا
لَكُمْ مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ مِن وَلِيٍّ
وَلَا نَصِيرٍ

*34 That is, you cannot escape Allah’s grasp wherever you may flee. Whether you descend into the depths of the earth or climb into the heights of the sky, you will be apprehended in any case and brought before your Lord. The same thing has been said in Surah Ar-Rahman as a challenge to the jinns and mankind: “O company of jinns and men! If you have the power to escape across the bounds of the earth and heavens, then do escape! You shall

not escape, for it requires a great power,” (Ayat 33).

***35** That is, neither you yourselves have the power that you should escape Allah’s grasp, nor are any of your guardians or patrons or supporters so powerful that they should give you refuge against Allah and save you from His punishment. None in the entire universe can dare rise as a supporter of those who have committed *shirk* and disbelief, or who have refused to submit before divine commands, or who have dared disobey Allah impudently, and raised storms of wickedness and mischief on His earth. And withhold enforcement of the divine decree of torment, or have the nerve to say in God’s court: They are my followers, therefore, whatever they might have done should be forgiven.

23. And those who disbelieve in the signs of Allah and in (their) meeting with Him, it is they who shall despair of My mercy,^{*36} and it is they who will have a painful punishment.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَلِقَائِهِ أُولَئِكَ يَئِسُوا مِنْ
رَحْمَتِي وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
أَلِيمٌ



***36** That is, they have no share in My mercy, and they should entertain no hope whatsoever of getting any share of My mercy. When they denied the revelations of Allah, they themselves gave up their right to benefit by the promises Allah has made to the believers. Then, when they have denied the Hereafter and do not at all believe that one day they will have to stand before their God, it only means that they cherish no hope at all of Allah’s pardon and

forgiveness. After this when they will open their eyes in the Hereafter, against their expectations, and will also see the truth of those signs of Allah, which they had denied, there is no reason why they should expect to receive any share from Allah's mercy.

24. So^{*37} there was no answer of his people except that they said: "Kill him or burn him."^{*38} Then Allah saved him from the fire.^{*39} Indeed, in that are sure signs for a people who believe.^{*40}

فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ
إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَقْتُلُوهُ أَوْ حَرِّقُوهُ
فَأَنْجَاهُ اللَّهُ مِنَ النَّارِ إِنَّ فِي
ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

*37 From here the discourse again turns to the story of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him).

*38 That is, they had no answer to the Prophet Abraham's (peace be upon him) rational arguments. The only answer they gave was: "Cut off the tongue that talks the truth and let not the person live who points out our error and tells us to give it up." The words, "Kill him or burn him", indicate that the whole crowd was unanimous that the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) should be put to death. However, they differed about the method. Some said that he should be killed, and others said that he should be burnt alive, so that no one in future should dare say the sort of the thing he said.

*39 This sentence by itself shows that they had at last decided to burn the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and he was cast into the fire. Here it has only been said that

Allah saved him from the fire; but in Surah Al-Anbiyaa it has been elucidated that Allah commanded: “O fire! Be cool and become safe for Abraham!” (Ayat 69). Evidently, if he was not at all cast into the fire, the command to the fire to become cool and safe would be meaningless. This proves that properties of all things are dependent on Allah’s command and whenever He pleases He can change the property of anything He likes. Normally fire burns and every combustible thing catches fire. But this property of the fire is not of its own acquisition but given by God. And this property has in no way tied up God that He may give no command against it. He is the Master of this fire. He can command it at any time to give up the property of burning. At any time, He can turn a furnace into a bed of roses. But events contrary to the course of nature occur only rarely to serve some great purpose or cause. However, the usual phenomena to which we are accustomed in our daily lives cannot be made an argument to say that Allah’s power has been tied up with these, and nothing unusual can take place even by Allah’s command.

***40** “Indeed, in that are sure signs for a people who believe”. Signs for the believers in this that the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) did not follow the religion of his family, community and country but followed the true knowledge through which he came to know that *shirk* is falsehood and *Tauhid* is the reality. And that he went on exhorting his people to accept the truth and to desist from falsehood in spite of their stubbornness and prejudices. And that he was even prepared to suffer the horrible

punishment by the fire, but was not prepared to give up the truth. And that Allah did not even spare the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), His friend, from the trials and tests. And that when the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) got successfully through the tests set by Allah, then did come Allah's succor, and in such a miraculous way that the bonfire was turned cool for him.

25. And he (Abraham) said: ^{*41} “You have taken only idols other than Allah. The love between you ^{*42} is (only) in the life of the world. Then on the Day of Resurrection you will deny one another, and you will curse one another, ^{*43} and your abode will be the Fire, and you shall not have any helpers.”

وَقَالَ إِنَّمَا اتَّخَذْتُمْ مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ
أَوْثَانًا مَّوَدَّةَ بَيْنِكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُ
بَعْضُكُم بِبَعْضٍ وَيَلْعَنُ
بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا وَمَأْوَنُكُمْ
النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّن نَّصِيرِينَ



***41** The Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) must have said this after his safe deliverance from the fire.

***42** That is, you have built up your collective life on the foundation of idol worship instead of God worship. This can keep you bound together as a nation only to the extent of mundane life. For here in this world people can get together around any creed, true or false. Any kind of agreement and concord on any belief, however wrong and

ill conceived, can become a means of the establishment of mutual friendships, kinships, brotherhoods, and all other religious, social, cultural, economic and political relationships.

***43** That is, the collective life that you have built on the false creed in the world cannot endure in the Hereafter. Only those relationships of love and friendship and cooperation and kinship and mutual regard and esteem will endure there, which have been based on the worship of One God and virtue and piety in the world. All relationships founded on disbelief and shirk and deviation will be severed, and all kinds of love will change into enmity and hatred. The son and the father, the husband and the wife, the saint and the disciple, all will curse each other, and each will blame his deviation on the other, and will say, “This wicked person led me astray: he should be given a double punishment.” This thing has been stated at several places in the Quran. For example, in Surah Az-Zukhruf, it has been said: “Friends on that Day shall become enemies of one another, except the righteous,” (Ayat 67). In Surah Al-Aaraf: “As each generation will be entering Hell, it will curse its preceding generation till all generations shall be gathered together there: then each succeeding generation will say regarding the preceding one; O Lord, these were the people who led us astray; therefore, give them a double chastisement of the Fire,” (Ayat 38). And in Surah Al-Ahzab: “And they will say; Our Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and our great men, and they led us astray from the right path. Lord, give them a doable chastisement and curse

them severely,” (Ayats. 67-68).

26. So Lot believed him.^{*44}
And he said: “Indeed, I shall migrate towards my Lord.^{*45}
Indeed He is the All Mighty, the All Wise.”^{*46}

﴿ فَآمَنَ لَهُ لُوطٌ وَقَالَ إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴾

***44** The context shows that when the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) came out of the fire and spoke the preceding sentences, only Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) from the entire crowd came forward to proclaim his belief and adopt his obedience. It is just possible that many other people also on this occasion might have been convinced of the Prophet Abraham’s (peace be upon him) being a true prophet, but in view of the violent reaction that had been shown openly by the entire community and the government against Abraham’s faith, no one else could muster up courage to affirm faith in such a dangerous truth and follow it. This good fortune fell to the lot of only one man, the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him), the nephew of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), who at last accompanied his uncle and aunt Sarah in their migration also.

Here, the question may arise: Was the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) a disbeliever and a *mushrik* before this, and did he believe only after witnessing the miracle of the Prophet Abraham’s (peace be upon him) emerging safe and sound from the fire? If it is so, can a person who has been a *mushrik* be appointed to prophethood? The answer is this:

Here the Quran has used the words *fa-amana la-hu Lut*, which do not necessarily imply that the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) disbelieved in God before this, or associated other deities with Him. They only show that after this he confirmed the Prophethood of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), and adopted his obedience. Possibly the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) was a young boy then and this might be the first very occasion when he became acquainted with the teachings of his uncle and his prophethood.

*45 That is, "I shall leave my country for the sake of my Lord and go wherever my Lord may take me."

*46 That is, "He possesses the power to help and protect me, and whatever He decides for me will be based on wisdom."

27. And We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob,^{*47} and We placed in his progeny the prophethood and the scripture,^{*48} and We gave him his reward in the world. And indeed, in the Hereafter he is surely among the righteous.^{*49}

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ
وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِ النُّبُوَّةَ
وَالْكِتَابَ وَعَاتَيْنَاهُ أُجْرَهُ فِي
الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ
الصَّالِحِينَ



*47 The Prophet Isaac (peace be upon him) was his son and the Prophet Jacob (peace be upon him) was the grandson. The other sons of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) have not been mentioned here, because from his Midianite descendants only the Prophet Shuaib (peace be

upon him) was appointed a Prophet, and no Prophet was born among his Ishmaelite descendants for 2500 years or so till our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Contrary to this, the descendants of the Prophet Isaac (peace be upon him) continued to be blessed with the prophethood and the Book till the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him).

***48** This covers all the Prophets who were raised from all the branches of the Prophet Abraham's (peace be upon him) progeny.

***49** What is meant to be said is this: The rulers and the learned men and the priests of Babylon who tried to defeat the mission of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and the polytheistic people who had followed their wicked chiefs blindly, have since been blotted out and no trace of them is to be found anywhere in the world, but the person whom they had wanted to annihilate by burning in the fire only because he had proclaimed the word of Allah, and who eventually had to leave his country empty handed, was so blessed by Allah that his name has been well known in the world since the past 4,000 years and will remain so till the Last Day. All the Muslims and the Christians and the Jews unanimously recognize that friend of the Lord of the worlds as their spiritual leader. Whatever guidance mankind has received during the past 40 centuries has been received through this one man and his righteous descendants. The unique reward that he will get in the Hereafter is assured, but the place of honor that he has gained even in this world has not been gained so far by any

of those who have exerted themselves in pursuit of the worldly benefits and advantages.

28. And Lot,^{*50} when he said to his people: “Indeed, you commit lewdness which no one has preceded you (committing it) from among the worlds.”

وَلُوطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ



*50 For comparison, see Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayats 80-84; Surah Hud: Ayats 69-83; Surah Al-Hijr: Ayats 57-79; Surah Al-Anbiyaa: Ayats 71-75; Surah Ash-Shuaraa: Ayats 160-175; Surah An-Naml: Ayats 54 59;. Surah As-Saffat: Ayats 133-138; Surah Al-Qamar: Ayats 33-40.

29. “Do you indeed approach males,^{*51} and rob the wayfarer (travelers), and indulge in indecencies in your assemblies.”^{*52} But his people had no answer except that they said: “Bring upon us the punishment of Allah if you are among the truthful.”

أَإِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ وَتَقْطَعُونَ السَّبِيلَ وَتَأْتُونَ فِي نَادِيكُمُ الْمُنْكَرَ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَأَنْتَنَا بَعْدَ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ



*51 That is, “You satisfy your sex desire with the males.” As stated in Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayat 81, “you gratify your

lust with men instead of women.”

*52 That is, “You do not even hide yourself when you commit this filthy act, but commit it openly in your assemblies, in front of others.” The same has been stated in Surah An-Naml: Ayat 54, thus: “Do you commit the indecency while you see it?”

30. He said: “My Lord, help me against the people who do mischief.”

قَالَ رَبِّ أَنْصُرْنِي عَلَى الْقَوْمِ
الْمُفْسِدِينَ

31. And when Our messengers came to Abraham with the good tidings, *53 they said: “Indeed, we are about to destroy the people of this (Lot’s) habitation. *54 Indeed, its people are wrong doers.”

وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ
بِالْبُشْرَى قَالُوا إِنَّا مُهْلِكُوا أَهْلَ
هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ إِنَّ أَهْلَهَا كَانُوا
ظَالِمِينَ

*53 According to the details given of this in Surah Hud and Surah A1-Hijr, the angels who had been sent to bring the torment on the people of the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him), first came to the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and gave him the good news of the birth of the Prophet Isaac (peace be upon him) and after him of the Prophet Jacob (peace be upon him). Then they told him that they had been sent to destroy the people of Lot (peace be upon him).

*54 “This habitation” refers to the territory of the people of Lot (peace be upon him). The Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) at that time resided in the Palestinian city of

Hebron, now called Al-Khalil. A few miles to the southeast of this city lies that part of the Dead Sea, which was once inhabited by the people of Lot (peace be upon him) and which is now under sea water. It is a low lying area and is clearly visible from the hill country of Hebron. That is why the angels, pointing towards it, had said "We are going to destroy this habitation." (See E.N. 114 of Surah Ash-Shuara).

32. He (Abraham) said: "Indeed, Lot is in there."^{*55}
 They said: "We are best aware of who is in there. We shall surely save him and his household, except his wife, she will be of those who stay behind."^{*56}

قَالَ إِنَّ فِيهَا لُوطًا ۚ قَالُوا
 نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِيهَا
 لَنُنَجِّيَنَّهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا أُمَّرَأَتَهُ
 كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ



^{*55} According to the initial part of this story as related in Surah Hud, the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) at first was perturbed to see the angels in human shape, for he knew that the coming of the angels in human shape was always a prelude to some dangerous mission. Then, when they gave him the good news, his fear was allayed and he came to know that they had been sent to the people of Lot (peace be upon him). Then he began making entreaties of mercy for those people (Surah Hud: Ayats 74-75), but his entreaties were not granted, and it was said: "Do not plead for them any more: your Lord's decree has been issued, and the punishment now cannot be averted," (Ayat 76). After this answer, when the Prophet Abraham (peace be

upon him) lost all hopes of any increase in the respite of Lot's (peace be upon him) people, he became anxious about the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) himself, and said, what has been related here: "Lot (peace be upon him) is there." That is, "If the torment comes down when Lot (peace be upon him) is there, how will he and his household remain safe from it?"

***56** According to Surah Tahrim: Ayat 10, this woman was not faithful to the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him). That is why it was decreed that she too, would be afflicted with the torment in spite of being a Prophet's wife. Most probably when the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) had come to Jordan after the migration and settled there, he might have married among the people living there. But the woman did not believe even after spending a lifetime with him, and her sympathies remained with her own people. As Allah has no consideration for relationships and brotherhoods and every person's case is decided on the basis of his own faith and morality, even being a Prophet's wife did not profit her in any way and she met her doom along with her own people with whom she had remained attached in faith and morality.

33. And that when Our messengers came to Lot, he was distressed because of them, ^{*57} and felt straitened for them. And they said: "Do not fear, nor grieve. ^{*58} Indeed, we will save you and

وَلَمَّا أَنْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا
سَيِّئًا بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذُرْعًا
وَقَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّا
مُنْجُونَكَ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا أُمَّرَأَتَكَ

your family, except your wife, she will be of those who stay behind.”



كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ

***57** The reason for this anxiety and distress was that the angels had come in the shape of handsome, young boys. The Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) was aware of his people's morals. Therefore, he became perturbed at their arrival. His distress was based on what, "If I receive these guests in my house, it will be difficult to save them from the immoral people; if I do not receive them, it will be highly uncivil and unbecoming of the noble people. Moreover, if I do not provide shelter to these travelers, they will stay the night elsewhere, which would mean that I have myself given them away to the wicked people." What happened after this has not been related here. But according to the details given in Surahs Hud, Surah Al-Hijr and Surah Al-Qamar, the people of the city thronged to the Prophet Lot's (peace be upon him) house and insisted that the guests be handed over to them for immorality.

***58** That is, "As for us, you should neither fear that they will in any way be able to harm us, nor be anxious about how you will protect us from them." This was the time when the angels revealed their identity to the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him), and said that they were not men but angels, who had been sent to bring the scourge on his people. According to the elucidation in Surah Hud, when the people were rushing into Lot's (peace be upon him) house and he felt that he could in no way save his guests from them, he cried out: "I wish I had the power to set you

right, or I could find some strong support for refuge,” (Ayat 80). At this time the angels said: “O Lot, we are messengers sent by your Lord; they will not be able to harm you at all,” (Ayat 81).

34. “Indeed, we are about to bring down upon the people of this township a torment from the sky because they have been disobedient.”

إِنَّا مُنْزِلُونَ عَلَىٰ أَهْلِ هَذِهِ
الْقَرْيَةِ رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا
كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. And certainly, We have left of it a clear sign^{*59} for a people who understand.^{*60}

وَلَقَدْ تَرَكْنَا مِنْهَا آيَةً بَيِّنَةً
لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

***59** “A clear sign”: the Dead Sea, which is also called Sea of Lot. The Quran at several places has addressed the disbelievers of Makkah, saying, “A sign of the torment that visited this wicked people on account of their misdeeds still exists on the highway, which you see night and day during your trade journeys to Syria.” (Surah Al-Hijr: Ayat 76; Surah As-Saif: Ayat 137). Today it is being admitted with near certainty that the southern end of the Dead Sea came into being as a result of a violent earthquake when the area in which Sodom, the central city of the people of Lot, was located sank underground. In this part there are still signs of some submerged habitations. Exploratory attempts are being made with the modern diving apparatus but the results are still awaited. (see E. N. 114 of Surah Ash-Shuaraa).

***60** For the Islamic punishment of sodomy, see E.N. 68 of Surah Al-Aaraf.

36. And to Midian (We sent) their brother, Shuaib.^{*61} So he said: “O my people, worship Allah, and hope for the Last Day,^{*62} and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption.”

وَإِلَىٰ مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا
فَقَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ
وَأَرْجُوا الْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَلَا تَعْتَوْا
فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

***61** For comparison, see Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayats 85-93, Surah Hud: Ayats 84-96, Surah Ash-Shuara: Ayats 177-191.

***62** This can have two meanings: (1) “Look forward to the life of Hereafter, and do not think that there is no life after this worldly life, when you will have to render an account of your deeds and be rewarded or punished accordingly.” (2) “Work righteously so as to meet a good end in the Hereafter.”

37. So they denied him,^{*63} then the dreadful earthquake seized them, and they lay (dead), prostrate in their dwelling places.^{*64}

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ
فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ
جَثْمِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

***63** That is, “They did not believe that the Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) was a Messenger of Allah and the teachings he gave were from Allah and that if they rejected him they would be punished by a torment from Allah.”

***64** “Dwelling places”: the whole area and country inhabited by them.

38. And (We destroyed) Aad and Thamud. And indeed (their fate) is manifest to you from their (ruined) dwellings.*⁶⁵ And Satan made their deeds seem fair to them, and turned them away from the (right) path, though they were sensible observers.*⁶⁶

وَعَادًا وَثَمُودًا وَقَدْ تَبَيَّنَ
لَكُمْ مِنْ مَسْكِنِهِمْ
وَزَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَلَهُمْ
فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَكَانُوا
مُسْتَبْصِرِينَ



***65** Every Arab was acquainted with the lands where these two nations had lived. The whole of southern Arabia now known as Ahqaf, Yaman and Hadramaut, was the land of Aad in the ancient times, and the Arabs knew it. The whole area in the north of the Hijaz, from Rabigh to Aqabah and from Madinah and Khaiber to Taima and Tabuk. still abounds with Thamudic monuments, which must have been more prominent than they are today in the time when the Quran was being revealed.

***66** That is, “They were not ignorant and foolish people, but were the most civilized people of their own times. They performed and carried out their worldly duties and chores very carefully and intelligently. Therefore, it cannot be said that Satan deluded them and pulled them on to his way by artifice and deception. Nay, they adopted the way shown by Satan with open eyes and with full understanding because it promised great pleasures and advantages; and they

abandoned the way presented by the prophets because it appeared to be colorless, tasteless and troublesome due to moral restrictions.”

39. And Korah, and Pharaoh and Haman (We destroyed also), and indeed Moses came to them with clear signs (of Allah's Sovereignty), but they were arrogant in the land. And they could not outrun (Us).^{*67}

وَقَرُونِ ۖ وَفِرْعَوْنَ
وَهَامَانَ ۖ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ
مُوسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كَانُوا سَابِقِينَ



***67** That is, “They could not have gotten away and escaped Allah's grasp: they had no power to frustrate and defeat Allah's plans and schemes.”

40. So each one We seized for his sin. Then among them were those upon whom We sent a storm of stones.^{*68} And among them were those who were seized by the blast.^{*69} And among them were those whom We caused the earth to swallow.^{*70} And among them were those whom We drowned.^{*71} And it was not for Allah to wrong them, but they were

فَكُلًّا أَخَذْنَا بِذَنْبِهِ ۖ فَمِنْهُمْ
مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا وَمِنْهُمْ
مَنْ أَخَذَتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ وَمِنْهُمْ
مَنْ خَسَفْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَغْرَقْنَا ۚ وَمَا
كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَٰكِن
كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

being unjust to themselves.^{*72}



***68** That is, Aad who were subjected to a furious windstorm which blew on them for seven nights and eight days continuously.

***69** That is, Thamud.

***70** That is, Korah.

***71** That is, Pharaoh and Haman.

***72** The stories that have been related in the foregoing verses, have been addressed and directed both to the believers and to the disbelievers. To the believers they have been addressed so that they do not feel discouraged and distressed at heart, and keep aloft the banner of the truth firmly and patiently even in the face of the severe persecutions and hardships, and should have full faith in Allah that His succor shall ultimately come, and He will frustrate the designs of the wicked people and make the word of the truth to prevail. On the other hand, these have been addressed to those wicked people also, who in their arrogance were bent upon exterminating the Islamic movement. They have been warned to the effect: "You have formed a wrong opinion about Allah's forbearance and clemency. You think; that His is a lawless Kingdom. If you have not been seized so far for your rebellion and your tyrannies and wicked deeds and have been granted a long respite so that you may reform yourselves, you have inferred that there exists no power whatsoever which can call you to account, and that one can go on doing whatever one likes endlessly on this earth. This misconception will

ultimately lead you to the same doom that has already been met by the peoples of Noah and Lot and Shuaib, (peace be upon them) and experienced by Aad and Thamud, and seen by Korah and Pharaoh.

41. The likeness of those who have taken protectors other than Allah is as the likeness of the spider, who takes (builds) a house. And indeed, the frailest of all houses is the spider's house. If they (only) knew.^{*73}

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ كَمَثَلِ
الْعَنْكَبُوتِ اتَّخَذَتْ بَيْتًا وَإِنَّ
أَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ
الْعَنْكَبُوتِ لَوْ كَانُوا
يَعْلَمُونَ



***73** All the above mentioned nations were involved in shirk, and their belief about their deities was that they were their supporters and helpers and guardians, and had the power to make or mar their destinies. So when they will have won their goodwill by worship and presentation of offerings, they will succor them in need and protect them against calamities and afflictions. But, as shown by the historical events cited above, all their beliefs and superstitions proved to be baseless when their destruction was decreed by Allah. Then no god, and no god incarnate, and no saint or spirit, and no jinn or angel, whom they worshiped came to their rescue, and they met their destruction with the realization that their expectations and beliefs had been false and futile.

After relating these events, Allah is now warning the *mushriks* to the effect: The reality of the toy-house of expectations that you have built on your faith in the powerless servants and imaginary deities, apart from the real Master and Ruler of the universe, is no more than the cobweb of a spider. Just as a cobweb cannot stand the slightest interference by a finger, so will the toy-house of your expectations collapse in its first clash with the scheme of Allah. It is nothing but ignorance that you are involved in the web of superstition. If you had any knowledge of the reality, you would not have built your system of life on baseless props. The fact is that none other than the One Lord of the worlds in this universe is the Owner of power and authority, and His support is the only support which is reliable. “Now whoever rejects *taghut* and believes in Allah has taken a firm support that never gives way. And Allah hears everything and knows everything,” (Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayat 256).

42. Indeed, Allah knows whatever they call upon any thing other than Him. And He is the All Mighty, the All Wise.^{*74}

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ
دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ

*74 That is, Allah knows fully the reality of those beings and things which they have taken as their deities and which they invoke for help. They are absolutely powerless. The Owner of power is only Allah, Who is controlling the system of this universe according to His own wisdom and

design. Another translation of this verse can be: "Allah knows well that of those whom they invoke, apart from Him, are nonentities, and He alone is the All Mighty, the All-Wise."

43. And these similitudes, We put forward them for mankind. And none will understand them except those who have knowledge.

وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَلُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ
وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا الْعَالِمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

44. Allah created the heavens and the earth with truth.*75 Indeed, in that is surely a sign for those who believe.*76

خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً
لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

*75 That is, the system of the universe is based on the truth and not on falsehood. Whoever ponders over this system with an unbiased mind will realize that the earth and the heavens owe their existence to reality and fact and not to superstition and fancy. Here there is no possibility that whatever a person may conceive in his mind and whatever philosophy he may invent out of his personal whim and conjecture should fit in with the system. Here only such a thing can succeed and endure, which is in harmony with the reality and actual fact. A structure that is raised on unreal presumptions and hypotheses will ultimately collapse when it clashes with the reality. The system of the universe clearly testifies that its Creator is One God, and One God alone is its Master and Disposer. If a person

works against this basic reality on the presumption that this world has no God, or that it has many gods, who devour the offerings of their devotees and in return give them a license to do whatever they please and a guarantee to live in peace and happiness, the reality will not change due to his presumptions, but, on the contrary, he himself will some time meet with a grave disaster.

***76** That is, a clear evidence exists in the creation of the earth and the heavens about the truth of *Tauhid* and the refutation of polytheism and atheism, but this evidence is found only by those who accept the teachings of the Prophets of Allah. Those who deny them do not find it even though they see everything.

45. Recite that which has been revealed to you of the Book, and establish prayer.^{*77} Indeed, prayer restrains from lewdness and iniquity.^{*78} And surely the remembrance of Allah is greater.^{*79} And Allah knows what you do.

أَتْلُ مَا أُوْحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ
الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ
الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ
وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ

***77** The address apparently is directed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) but, in fact, it is meant for all the believers. Until now they were being counseled patience and reliance on Allah to brave the extreme trying conditions in which they found themselves, and the persecutions they were being subjected to on account of

their faith. Now they are being told to recite the Quran and establish the Salat as a practical device, for these are the two things which endow a believer with a strong character and a wonderful capacity by which he can not only brave successfully the most violent storms of evil and falsehood but can even subdue them. But man can acquire this power from the recitation of the Quran and the prayer only when he does not remain content with the mere recital of the words but also understands well the Quranic teachings and absorbs them in his soul. And his prayer does not remain confined to physical movements but becomes the very function of his heart and the motive force for his morals and character. The desired quality of the prayer is being mentioned by the Quran itself in the next sentence. As for its recitation, one should know that the recitation which does not reach the heart beyond the throat, cannot even give man enough power to remain steadfast to his faith, not to speak of enabling him to withstand the furies of unbelief. About such people, a *Hadith* says: "They will recite the Quran, but the Quran will not go beyond their throats; they will leave the faith just as the arrow leaves the bow." (Bukhari, Muslim, Muatta). As a matter of fact, the recitation which does not effect any change in a man's way of thinking, and his morals and character, and he goes on doing what the Quran forbids, is not the recitation of a believer at all. About such a one the Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: "He who makes lawful what the Quran has declared unlawful, has not believed in the Quran at all." (Tirmidhi). Such a recitation does not reform and

strengthen a man's self and spirit, but makes him even more stubborn against Allah and impudent before his own conscience, and destroys his character altogether. For the case of the person who believes in the Quran as a divine Book, reads it and comes to know what his God has enjoined, and then goes on violating His injunctions, is of the culprit, who commits a crime not due to ignorance but after full knowledge of the law. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has elucidated this point in a brief sentence, thus: "The Quran is a testimony in your favor as well as against you," (Muslim). That is, "If you follow the Quran rightly, it is a testimony in your favor. Whenever you are called to account for your deeds, here or in the Hereafter, you can produce the Quran as a testimony in your defense, saying that whatever you did was in accordance with this Book. If what you did was precisely according to it, no jurist in the world will be able to punish you, nor will God in the Hereafter hold you accountable for it. But if this Book has reached you, and you have read it and found out what your Lord demands from you, what He enjoins and what He forbids, and then you adopt an attitude opposed to it, then this Book will be a testimony against you. It will further strengthen the criminal case against you in the court of God. Then it will in no way be possible for you to escape the punishment, or receive a light punishment, by making the excuse of ignorance.

***78** This is an important characteristic out of the many characteristics of the prayer, which has been presented here prominently in view of its relevance to the context. To

counter the severe storm of opposition and resistance that the Muslims were experiencing in Makkah, they stood in need of a moral force rather than any material power. To bring about the moral force and develop it suitably two practical devices were pointed out in the first instance, the recitation of the Quran and the establishment of the Salat. Now they are being told that the establishment of the Salat is the means through which they can get rid of those evils in which they themselves had been involved before they embraced Islam and in which the non-Muslim Arabs and the non Arab world around them were involved at that time.

With a little thinking one can easily understand why this special advantage of the prayer has been particularly mentioned here. Evidently, getting rid of the moral evils is not only useful insofar as it is beneficial for those who attain the moral purity, both here and in the Hereafter, but its inevitable advantage is that it gives them unique superiority over those who might be involved in diverse moral evils, and who might be exerting their utmost to sustain the impure system of ignorance, which nourishes those evils, against the efforts of the morally pure people. Indecent and evil acts are those which man by nature abhors, and which have always been held as evil in principle by the people of every community and society, however depraved and perverted practically. The Arab society in the days of the revelation of the Quran was no exception to this. Those people also were aware of the moral virtues and the evils: they valued the good above the

evil and there might be none among them, who regarded the evil as identical with the good, or depreciated goodness. Under such conditions, in a perverted society like that, the emergence of a movement which revolutionized morally members of the same society itself as soon as they came into contact with it, and raised them in character high above their contemporaries, inevitably had widespread effects. The common Arabs could not possibly fail to feel the moral impact of the movement, which eradicated evils and promoted goodness. And could not go on following those who were morally corrupt and were fighting to sustain a system of ignorance which had been nourishing those evils since centuries. That is why the Quran at that time exhorted the Muslims to establish Salat instead of urging them to collect material resources and force and strength that could win over the people's hearts and defeat the enemy without any material force.

The virtue of the prayer that has been mentioned here has two aspects: Its essential and inseparable quality that it restrains from evil and indecent acts, and its desired quality that the one who performs it should, in fact, refrain from evil and indecent acts. As for the first quality the prayer does restrain people from the evils. Anyone who ponders a little over the nature of the prayer will admit that of all the checks and brakes that can be put on man to restrain him from the evils, the prayer can be the most effective. After all, what check could be more effective than this that man should be called upon five times a day for the remembrance of Allah and made to remind himself again and again that

he is not wholly free and independent in this world but is the servant of One God, and his God is He Who is aware of his open as well as hidden acts, even of the most secret aims and intentions of his heart, and a time will surely come when he will have to account for all his deeds before his God. Then he is not only reminded of this but is given practical training at every prayer time that he should not disobey any of his God's commands even secretly. From the time that he stands up for the prayer till its completion man has to perform continuously certain acts in which there is no third person, besides him and his God, who can know whether he has obeyed God's law or, disobeyed it. For instance, if the man's wudu (state of ablutions) has become void and he stands up for the prayer, there can be no one, besides him and God, who will know that he is no longer in the state of wudu. If the man has expressed no intention of the prayer but just goes on performing all the required movements and recites poetry, for instance, instead of the prescribed texts quietly, there is none, besides him and his God who can be aware of the secret that he has not, in fact, performed his prayer at all. Not with standing this, if a person offers the prayer five times a day, fulfilling faithfully all the conditions of the divine law in respect of the cleanliness of the body and dress, and the essentials of the prayer and its recitation, etc. it means that through this prayer his conscience is being awakened to life several times a day, he is being helped to become a responsible and dutiful person, and he is being practically trained that he should, under his own urge of obedience, abide by the law

which he has believed in openly as well as secretly, regardless whether there is any external force to make him abide by it or not, and whether the people of the world have any knowledge of his intentions and deeds or not.

Thus considered, one cannot help admitting that the prayer not only restrains man from the evils and indecencies but, in fact, there is no other method of training in the world which may be so effective as the prayer is in restraining man from the evils. As for the question whether or not man in actual fact refrains from the evils even after attendance at the prayer, this depends upon the man himself, who is undergoing training for self reform. If he has the intention to benefit from it, and endeavors for it, the reformatory effects of the prayer will certainly have their impact on him. Otherwise, evidently, no reformatory device in the world can be effective with a person, who is not prepared to receive any impact of it, or tries to avoid its impact intentionally. This can be explained by an example. The essential quality of food is to nourish the body and develop it. But this advantage can be had only when food is allowed to be assimilated. If a person vomits what he eats after every meal, his food cannot profit him in any way. Just as, keeping such a person in view, one cannot say that food is not nutritious for the body, because so and so is becoming a skeleton in spite of eating food. So, one cannot present the example of an unrighteous performer of the prayer and say that the prayer does not restrain from the evils, because so and so is unrighteous in spite of his prayer. Just as about such a person it will be apt to say that he does not offer the

prayer at all, so about the person who vomits everything he eats, it will be apt to say that he does not eat his food at all. Precisely the same thing has been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) and some great companions and their followers. Imran bin Husain reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “He whose prayer did not restrain him from the evil and indecent acts, offered no prayer at all,” (Ibn Abi Hatim). Ibn Abbas has reported the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: “The prayer which did not restrain a person from the evil and indecent acts, led him further away from Allah.” (Ibn Abi Hatim, Tabarani). A *Hadith* containing the same theme has been reported by Hasan Basri directly from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Another *Hadith* reported on the authority of Ibn Masud is to the effect: “He who did not obey the prayer, offered no prayer at all, and obedience to the prayer is that one should refrain from the evil and indecent acts.” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim). Several sayings to the same effect have been reported on the authority of Abdullah bin Masud, Abdullah bin Abbas, Hasan Basri, Qatadah and Aamash, etc. Imam Jafar Sadiq has said: He who wants to know whether his prayer has been accepted or not, should see how far his prayer has restrained him from the evil and indecent acts. If he has been restrained from the evils, his prayer has been accepted, (Ruh-al Maani).

***79** This can have several meanings: (1) That the remembrance of Allah (i.e. prayer) is a thing of much higher value: it not only restrains from the evils but, over

and above that, it induces people to act righteously and urges them to excel one another in good acts. (2) That Allah's remembrance in itself is a great thing: it is the best of acts: no act of man is greater in value than this. (3) That Allah's remembrance of you is a greater thing than your remembrance of Him. Allah has said in the Quran: "So remember Me: I will remember you." (Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayat 156). Thus, when the servant remembers Allah in the prayer, inevitably Allah also will remember him, and the merit of Allah's remembering his servant is certainly greater than the servant's remembering Allah. Besides these three meanings, there is another subtle meaning also, which the wife of Abud Darda has explained. She says, "Allah's remembrance is not restricted to the prayer, but, its sphere is much vaster. When a man observes a fast, or pays the Zakat or performs a righteous act, he inevitably remembers Allah. That is why the righteous act emanates from him. Likewise, when a man refrains from an evil act when an opportunity exists for it, even this also is the result of Allah's remembrance. Thus, the remembrance of Allah pervades the entire life of a believer.

46. And^{*80} do not argue with the People of the Scripture except it be in (a way) that is better,^{*81} except with those who do wrong among them.^{*82} And say: "We believe in that which has been revealed to us and

وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ
إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ
ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ وَقُولُوا ءَامَنَّا
بِالَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأَنْزَلَ

revealed to you. And our God and your God is One, and we are to Him those who surrender.”*83

إِلَيْكُمْ وَإِلَهُنَا وَإِلَهُكُمْ وَاحِدٌ
وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ



*80 It should be noted that a little below in this Surah the people are being exhorted to migrate. At that time Habash was the only place of safety to which the Muslims could migrate, and Habash in those days was under the domination of the Christians. Therefore, in these verses the Muslims are being instructed as to how they should argue and discuss matters concerning religion with the people of the Book when such an occasion arises.

*81 That is, the discussion should be conducted rationally, in a civilized and decent language, so that the ideas of the other person may be reformed. The preacher's main aim should be to appeal to the addressee's heart, convey the truth to him and bring him to the right path. He should not fight like a wrestler whose only object is to defeat his opponent. He should rather conduct himself like a physician who is ever cautious not to cause the patient's ailment to worsen by any of his own mistakes, and tries to cure him with the least possible trouble. This instruction has been given here especially in connection with the conduct of a discussion with the people of the Book, but is a general instruction pertaining to the preaching of the religion and it has been given at several places in the Quran. For example, "O Prophet, invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and excellent admonition and discuss things with the people in the best manner." (Surah An-

Nahl: Ayat 125). “O Prophet, goodness and evil are not alike, repel evil with what is best. You will see that he, with whom you had enmity, has become your closest friend.” (Surah Ha Mim As-Sajdah: Ayat 34). “O Prophet, repel evil with what is best: We are fully aware of what they utter against you.” (Surah Al-Muminun: Ayat 96). “O Prophet, adopt the way of leniency and forbearance; enjoin what is good and avoid useless discussions with the ignorant people. If Satan ever excites you to anger, seek refuge in Allah.” (Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayat 199-200).

*82 That is, with those who adopt an attitude of wickedness a different attitude may also be adopted according to the nature and extent of their wickedness. In other words, one cannot, and should not adopt a soft and gentle attitude towards all sorts of the people under all circumstances at all time, which might be mistaken for the weakness and meekness of the inviter to the truth. Islam does teach its followers to be polite, gentle and reasonable, but it does not teach them to be unduly humble and meek so that they are not taken for granted by every cruel and wicked person.

*83 In these sentences Allah has provided guidance to the best method of discussion, which the inviters to the truth should adopt. The method is this: “Do not make the error or deviation of the other person the basis and starting point of the discussion, but begin the discussion with those points of truth and justice which are common between you and your opponent. That is, the discussion should start from the points of agreement and not from the points of difference. Then, arguing from the agreed points, the addressee should

be made to understand that, in the matter of the things in which you differ, your stand is in conformity with the agreed points whereas his stand is contradictory to them. In this connection, one should bear in mind the fact that the people of the Book did not deny revelation, prophethood and *Tauhid*, like the polytheists of Arabia, but believed in these realities just like the Muslims. After agreement on these basic things, the main thing that could become the basis of difference between them could be that the Muslim would not believe in the divine scriptures sent down to them and would invite them to believe in the divine Book sent down to themselves, and would declare them disbelievers if they did not believe in it. This would have been a strong basis of their conflict. But the Muslims had a different stand. They believed as true all those Books that were with the people of the Book, and then also had believed in the revelation that had been sent down to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). After this it was for the people of the Book to tell the rational ground for which they believed in one Book sent by Allah and rejected the other. That is why Allah here has instructed the Muslims that whenever they have to deal with the people of the Book, they should first of all present before them this very point of view in a positive manner. Say to them: "We believe in the same God in Whom you believe and we are obedient to Him. We have submitted ourselves to all those commands and injunctions and teachings that have come from Him, whether they were sent down to you, or to us. We are obedient servants of God and not of a country or a

community or a race, that we should submit to God's command when it is sent down in one place and reject it when it is sent down in another place. This thing has been repeated at several places in the Quran and particularly in relation to the people of the Book, it has been presented forcefully. For this, see Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayats 4, 136, 177, 285; Surah Aal-Imran: Ayat 84; Surah An-Nisa: Ayats 136, 150 to 152, 162 to 164; Surah Ash Shuaraa: Ayat 13.

47. And thus We have revealed to you the Book (Quran).^{*84} And those to whom We gave the Scripture (aforetime) believe in it.^{*85} And of these (people) there are some who believe in it.^{*86} And none deny Our revelations^{*87} except the disbelievers.

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ
الْكِتَابَ ۚ فَالَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمْ
الْكِتَابَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمِنْ
هَؤُلَاءِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَمَا
يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الْكَافِرُونَ



***84** This can have two meanings:

(1) Just as We had sent down the Books to the former Prophets, so We have sent down this Book to you; and (2) We have sent down this Book with the teaching that it should be believed in not by rejecting Our former Books but by affirming faith in all of them.

***85** The context itself shows that this does not imply all the people of the Book but only those who were blessed with the right understanding and the knowledge of the divine

scriptures, and were the people of the Book in the true sense. When this last Book of Allah came before them, confirming His earlier Books, they did not show any stubbornness or obstinacy but accepted it sincerely as they had accepted the previous Books.

***86** “These people”: the people of Arabia. What it means to say is: The truth loving people, whether they already possess a divine Book or do not possess any, are affirming faith in it everywhere.

***87** Here, “the disbelievers” imply those people who are not prepared to give up their prejudices and accept the truth, or those who reject the truth because they do not want their lusts and their unbridled freedom to be subjected to restrictions.

48. And you (O Muhammad) did not read before it of any book, nor did you write it with your right hand, for then, those who follow falsehood, might have doubted. ^{*88}

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ
كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكَ إِذَا
لَارْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ



***88** This is the same argument that has already been given in Surahs Yunus and Al-Qasas as a proof of the Prophet’s Prophethood. (See E.N. 21 of Surah Yunus and E.N.’s 64 and 109 of Surah Al-Qasas. For further explanation, see E.N. 107 of Surah An-Nahl, E.N. 105 of Surah Bani Israil, E.N. 66 of Surah Al-Muminun, E.N. 12 of Surah Al-Furqan, and E.N. 84 of Surah Ash-Shuara).

The basis of the argument in this verse is that the Prophet

(peace be upon him) was unlettered. His compatriots and his kinsmen among whom he had spent his whole life, from birth to old age, knew fully that he had never read a book nor ever handled a pen. Presenting this actual fact Allah says: This is a proof of the fact that the vast and deep knowledge of the teachings of the Divine Books, of the stories of the former Prophets, of the beliefs of the various religions and creeds, of the histories of the ancient nations, and the questions of social and moral and economic life, which is being presented through this unlettered man could not have been attained by him through any means but revelation. If he had been able to read and write and the people had seen him reading books and undertaking serious studies, the worshipers of falsehood could have had some basis for their doubts, that he had acquired the knowledge not through revelation but through study and reading. But the fact of his being absolutely unlettered has left no basis whatsoever for any such doubt. Therefore, there can be no ground, except sheer stubbornness, which can be regarded as rational in any degree for denying his Prophethood.

49. But these are clear revelations in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge.*⁸⁹ And none deny Our revelations except the wrong doers.

بَلْ هُوَ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ فِي صُدُورِ
الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَمَا
يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الظَّالِمُونَ

***89** That is, the presentation of a Book like the Quran by

an unlettered person, and the manifestation by him, all of a sudden, of extraordinary qualities of character while nobody ever noticed him making any preparation for these previously, are in fact the clearest signs which serve as pointers to his prophethood for those who are possessed of knowledge and wisdom.” If one reviews the life-story of any great historical personage, one can always discover the factors in his environment, which molded his personality and prepared him for the excellences and qualities that emanated from him in life. There always exists a clear relationship between his environment and the component aspects of his personality. But no source whatever can be discovered in his environment of the wonderful qualities and excellences that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) displayed. In his case, neither in the contemporary Arab society nor in the society of the neighboring countries with which Arabia had any relations can one discover those factors which could have any remote relationship with the component aspects of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) personality. This is the reality on the basis of which it has been asserted here that the Prophet Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) personality is not one sign but a collection of many clear signs. An ignorant person may not see any of these signs but those who are possessed of knowledge have become convinced in their hearts by seeing these signs that he is most certainly a true Prophet of Allah.

50. And they say: “Why signs^{*90} are not sent down

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتٍ

upon him from his Lord.” Say: “The signs are with Allah only, and I am only a plain warner.”

مِنْ رَبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ
اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

***90** That is, miracles by seeing which one may be convinced that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is really a Prophet of Allah.

51. And is it not sufficient for them that We have sent down to you the Book which is recited to them.^{*91}

Indeed, in that is surely a mercy and a reminder for a people who believe.^{*92}

أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِهِمْ أَنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ
الْكِتَابَ يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنْ
فِي ذَلِكَ لَرَحْمَةٌ وَذِكْرَىٰ
لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

***91** That is, “A Book like the Quran has been sent down to you in spite of your being unlettered. Is it not by itself a great miracle which should convince the people of your Prophethood? Do they yet need another miracle after this? The other miracles were the miracles for those who witnessed them. But this miracle is ever present in front of them. It is being recited before them almost daily; they can witness it as and when they like.”

Even after such an assertion and argument by the Quran the audacity of those who try to prove that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was literate is astonishing. The fact, however, is that the Quran here has presented in clear terms the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) being illiterate as a strong proof of his prophethood. The traditions which

lend support to the claim that the Prophet (peace be upon him) could read and write, or had learned reading and writing later in life, stand rejected at first glance, for no tradition opposed to the Quran can be acceptable. Then these traditions in themselves are too weak to become the basis for an argument. One of these is a tradition from Bukhari that when the peace treaty of Hudaibiya was being written down, the representative of the disbelievers of Makkah objected to the word Rasul-Allah being added to the name of the Prophet (peace be upon him). At this the Prophet ordered the writer (Ali, may Allah be pleased with him) to cross out the word Rasul-Allah and write Muhammad bin Abdullah instead. Ali refused to cross out Rasul-Allah. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) took it in his own hand, struck out the word himself and wrote Muhammad bin Abdullah.

But this tradition from Bara bin Azib appears at four places in Bukhari and at two places in Muslim and everywhere in different words:

(1) At one place in Bukhari's Kitab-us-Sulh. The words of this tradition are to the effect: "The Prophet (peace be upon him) told Ali to strike out the words. He submitted that he could not do that. At last, the Prophet (peace be upon him) crossed them out with his own hand."

(2) In the same book the second tradition is to the effect: "Then he, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Ali: Cross out Rasul-Allah. He said: By God, I shall never cross out your name. At last, the Prophet (peace be upon him) took the document and wrote: This is the treaty concluded

by Muhammad bin Abdullah.”

(3) The third tradition, again from Bara bin Azib is found in Kitab-ul-Jizia in Bukhari to the effect: “The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself could not write. He said to Ali: Cross out Rasul-Allah. He submitted: By God, I shall never cross out these words. At this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Show me the place where these words are written. He showed him the place, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) crossed out the words with his own hand.”

(4) The fourth tradition is in Bukhari’s Kitab-ul-Maghazi to the effect: “So the Prophet (peace be upon him) took the document although he did not know writing, and he wrote: This is the treaty concluded by Muhammad bin Abdullah.”

(5) Again from Bara bin Azib there is a tradition in Muslim (Kitab-ul-Jihad) saying that on Ali’s refusal the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself wiped off the words Rasul-Allah.

(6) The second tradition from him in the same book says, “The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Ali: Show me where the word Rasul-Allah is written. Ali showed him the place, and he wiped it off and wrote Ibn Abdullah.

The disparity in the traditions clearly indicates that the intermediary reporters have not reported the words of Bara bin Azib (may Allah be pleased with him) accurately. Therefore, none of these reports can be held as perfectly reliable so that it could be said with certainty that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had written the words “Muhammad bin Abdullah” with his own hand. Probably when Ali, refused to wipe off the word Rasul-Allah, the

Prophet might have himself wiped it off after finding out the place where it was written, and then might have gotten the word Ibn Abdullah substituted by him or by some other writer. Other traditions show that there were two writers who were writing down the peace treaty; Ali and Muhammad bin Maslamah (Fath al-Bari). Therefore, it is not impossible that what one writer did not do was done by the other writer. However, if the Prophet (peace be upon him) actually wrote his name with his own hand, there are plenty instances of this in the world. The illiterate people learn to write their own name although they cannot read or write anything else.

The other tradition on whose basis it has been claimed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was literate, has been reported by Ibn Abi Shaibah and Umar bin Shabbah from Mujahid. It says: "The Prophet (peace be upon him) had learned reading and writing before his death." But in the first place, it is a weak tradition on account of its links as said by Hafiz Ibn Kathir: "It is weak: it has no basis." Secondly, it is weak otherwise also, for if the Prophet (peace be upon him) had really learned reading and writing later in life, it would have become a well known fact. Many of the companions would have reported it, and it would also have been known from which person (or persons) he had learned this. But no one except one man, Aun bin Abdullah, from whom Mujahid heard this, has reported it. And this Aun was not even a companion, but a follower of the companions, who does not at all tell from which companion (or companions) he got this information. Evidently, on the

basis of such weak traditions nothing which contradicts well known facts can become acceptable.

***92** That is, “The revelation of this Book is, without any doubt, a great bounty of Allah, and it contains great admonitions for the people. But only those people can benefit by it are those who believe in it.”

52. Say: “Sufficient is Allah between me and you as a Witness. He knows what is in the heavens and the earth.” And those who believe in falsehood and disbelieve in Allah, they are those who are the losers.

قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ
شَهِيدًا يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ
وَكَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْخَاسِرُونَ

53. And they ask you to hasten on the punishment.^{*93} And if a term had not been appointed, the punishment would assuredly have come to them. And surely, it will come upon them suddenly while they perceive not.

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَوْلَا
أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى لَّجَاءَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ
وَلَيَأْتِيَنَّهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ

***93** That is, “They are challenging you again and again that If you are a true messenger and they are really denying the truth, then you should not delay the torment with which

you threaten them.”

54. They ask you to hasten on the punishment. And indeed, Hell will be encompassing the disbelievers.

يَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَإِنَّ
جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ

55. On the day the punishment shall cover them from above them and from underneath their feet, and it will be said: “Taste what you used to do.”

يَوْمَ يَغْشَاهُمْ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ
فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ
وَيَقُولُ ذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

56. O my slaves, those who believe, indeed, My earth is spacious, so worship Me only.*94

يَعِبَادِي الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّ
أَرْضِي وَاسِعَةٌ فَإِيَّايَ فَاعْبُدُونِ

*94 This is an allusion to the Hijrah, which implies this: if you feel that it is becoming difficult to worship God in Makkah, you may leave it and move to another place where you can live as the true servants of God, for God’s earth is vast. You should serve Allah and not your nation and country. This shows that the real thing is not the nation and the home and the country but the worship of Allah. If at any time the demands of the nation and country’s love clash with the demands of Allah’s worship, it is the time of

trial for the believer's faith. The true believer will worship Allah and spurn the nation and the country and home. The false claimant to the faith will abandon the faith and remain clinging to his nation and his country and home. This verse is clearly indicative of the fact that a true worshiper of God can be a patriot but he cannot be a worshiper of the nation and the country. For him the worship of God is the dearest thing in life for the sake of which he will sacrifice everything else, but with never be prepared to sacrifice it for anything else.

57. Every soul shall taste the death. Then to Us you shall be returned.*95

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ثُمَّ
إِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ



*95 That is, "Do not be anxious for your life: one has to die sooner or later. No one has come to live forever in this world. Therefore, your real problem is not how to save life, but your real problem is how to save your faith, and fulfill the requirements of God worship. You have ultimately to return to Us. If you lost your faith for the sake of saving your life, the result in the Hereafter will be different. But if you lost your life for the sake of saving your faith, the result will be just the opposite. Therefore, you should be anxious only about what you will bring when you return to Us. Will you come with a faith sacrificed for the sake of life, or a life sacrificed for the sake of the faith?"

58. And those who believe and do righteous deeds, We

وَالَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا

will surely give them lofty dwellings in the Gardens underneath which rivers flow, to live therein forever. Excellent is the reward of the workers.*96

الصَّلِحَاتِ لِنُبُوَّتِهِمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ
غُرَفًا تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نِعَمَ أَجْرَ الْعَمَلِينَ



*96 That is, “Even if you remained deprived of all the worldly blessings because of your faith and righteousness and ended up as a total failure from the worldly point of view, you should rest assured that you will be compensated for it; and not only compensated but rewarded excellently.”

59. Those who are patient,*97 and in their Lord put their trust.*98

الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
يَتَوَكَّلُونَ



*97 “Who are patient: who remained steadfast in faith in the face of hardships and afflictions and losses and persecutions; who have endured the consequences of the faith and have not turned away; who have seen the advantages and benefits of abandoning the faith and have not been lured away by them; who have seen the disbelievers and the wrongdoers prosper in the world and have not cast even a stray glance at their wealth and splendor.”

*98 “In their Lord put their trust: who did not put their trust in their possessions and their business and their clans

and tribes but in their Lord; who were prepared to fight every power and endure every danger for the sake of their faith only on the basis of their trust in their Lord irrespective of the worldly means, and left their homes if their faith so demanded; who trusted their Lord that He would not let go waste the rewards of their faith and good works, and were sure that He would succor His believers and righteous servants even in this world and bless them with the best rewards in the Hereafter as well.”

60. And how many of creatures are there that do not carry their provisions. Allah provides for them and for you. And He is the All Hearer, the All Knower. *99

وَكَأَيِّن مِّن دَابَّةٍ لَّا تَحْمِلُ
رِزْقَهَا اللَّهُ يَرْزُقُهَا وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَهُوَ
السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ



*99 That is, “While migrating you should not be worried about your means of livelihood as you should not worry about your life’s safety. For none of the birds and the animals of the land and the sea that you find around yourself carries its provision with it. Allah is providing for all of them; wherever they go they get their provision through Allah’s bounty. Therefore, do not be disheartened by the thought that if you left your homes for the sake of your faith, you would have nothing to eat. Allah will provide for you as well from the sources from which He is providing for the countless of His other creatures.”

Precisely the same thing was taught by the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) to his disciples when he had said:

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the

one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Matthew. 6: 24-34).

The background of these discourses of the Quran and the Gospel is the same. There always comes a stage in the way of the propagation of the truth when the follower of the truth is left with no alternative but to stake his very life

only with trust in Allah, regardless of the support and means of the material world. In these conditions, those who are too calculating about the possibilities of the future and seeking guarantees of the safety of life and assurance of provisions cannot do anything. Indeed, such conditions are changed only by the efforts and power of those who rise fearlessly in face of every danger and are even prepared to risk their very lives. It is all due to their sacrifices that ultimately the Word of Allah is raised high and all other words and creeds stand humbled and subdued before it.

61. And if you ask them,^{*100} “Who created the heavens and the earth, and subjected the sun and the moon (to their appointed work).” They would surely say: “Allah.” Then how are they turned away.

وَلَيْنَ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَسَخَّرَ
الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ
فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

*100 From here the discourse is again directed to the disbelievers of Makkah.

62. Allah enlarges the provision for whom He wills of His slaves and straitens it for whom (He wills). Indeed, Allah is the All Knower of all things.

اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ
عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ
شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

63. And if you ask them, “Who causes water to come

وَلَيْنَ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ نَزَّلَ مِنَ

down from the sky, then with it revives the earth after its death. They would surely say: “Allah.” Say: “All the Praise be to Allah.”*101 But most of them have no sense.

السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِهَا لَيَقُولَنَّ اللَّهُ قُلِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا
يَعْقِلُونَ



*101 Here the word *al-hamdu-lillah* (Praise be to Allah) gives two meanings: (1) “When all this is done by Allah, then He alone is worthy of all praise, and none else”, and (2) “Thank God that you yourselves also admit this.”

64. And the life of this world is nothing but an amusement and play.*102 And indeed, the home of the Hereafter, that is indeed the life, if they (but) knew.*103

وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا
لَهُوٌ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ
الْآخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ لَوْ
كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ



*102 That is “The reality of it is no more than the children’s engaging in a sport and pastime for a while, and then returning home. The one has become a king here, has not become a king in reality but is only playing the king. A time comes when his play ends, and he leaves the royal throne as empty-handed as he was when he had entered the world. Similarly, no phase of life here is enduring and lasting. Every one is playing his part only temporarily for a limited time. Those who are charmed by the short-lived triumphs of this life and are able to collect some means of

enjoyment and pleasure and of glory and grandeur by losing their conscience and faith, are only engaged in a pastime. What will these toys profit them when after amusing themselves with these for some years in the world, they will enter through the gate of death empty handed into the next world of eternal life and find their same allurements to have caused them an everlasting affliction?"

***103** That is, "If these people had known the reality that the life of this world is only a period of preparation for the test, and the real life for man, which is everlasting, is the life Hereafter, they would not have wasted this preparatory period in sport and merry making, but would instead have utilized each moment of it in works conducive to better results in the eternal life of the Hereafter."

65. And when they embark on a ship, they call on Allah, making sincere for Him (their) faith. Then when He brings them safely to land, behold, they ascribe partners (to Him).

فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلِّ دَعَوْا
اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا
نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ



66. So that they will deny for what We have given them, and that they take their enjoyment.^{*104} But soon they will come to know.

لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ
وَلِيَتَمَتَّعُوا^ط فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ



***104** For explanation, see E.Ns 29 and 41 of Surah Al-

Anaam; E.Ns 29 and 31 of Surah Yunus and E.N. 84 of Surah Bani Israil.

67. Have they not seen that We have appointed a secure sanctuary, and that men are being snatched away from all around them.*105 Then in falsehood do they believe, and in the bounty of Allah they disbelieve.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا جَعَلْنَا حَرَمًا
ءَامِنًا وَيُتَخَطَّفُ النَّاسُ مِنْ
حَوْلِهِمْ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ
وَبِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ يَكْفُرُونَ

*105 That is, if the city of Makkah, in whose surroundings they enjoy perfect safety and security, had been made a sacred place by some Lat or Hubal, was it possible for a god or goddess to have secured this place against all sorts of mischief and violence for 2,500 years or so, in a strife-ridden land like Arabia? Who could then keep and maintain its sacredness and sanctity except Us?

68. And who does a greater wrong than he who invents about Allah a lie, or denies the truth when it comes to him.) *106 Is not there in Hell a dwelling for the disbelievers.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ
كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا
جَاءَهُ ۗ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى
لِّلْكَافِرِينَ

*106 That is, “The Prophet (peace be upon him) has made a claim to prophethood, and you have denied him. Now there can be only two alternatives: If the Prophet (peace be upon him) has made a false claim in the name of Allah, there can

be no one more wicked than him, and if you have belied a true Prophet (peace be upon him), there can be no one more wicked than you.”

69. And those who strive in Us, We will surely guide them to Our paths.*107 And indeed, Allah is surely with the righteous.

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِيْنَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ
سُبُلَنَا ۚ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ

*107 The word *mujahadah* has already been explained in E.N: 8 above. There it was said that a person who exerts will exert for his own good (Ayat 6). Here it is being reassured that Allah does not leave alone those who strive in His cause sincerely, even at the risk of a conflict with the entire world, but He helps and guides them and opens for them ways towards Himself. He teaches them at every step the way of winning His approval and goodwill and He shows them the light at every turning point to discriminate between the right way and the wrong ways of life. In short, Allah helps and succors and guides them according to their sincerity and intensity of desire for goodness.





الرُّوم Ar-Rum

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name *Ar-Rum* from the second verse in which the words *ghulibat-ir-Rum* have occurred.

Period of Revelation

The period of the revelation of this Surah is determined absolutely by the historical event that has been mentioned at the outset. It says: “The Romans have been vanquished in the neighboring land.” In those days the Byzantine occupied territories adjacent to Arabia were Jordan, Syria and Palestine, and in these territories the Romans were completely overpowered by the Iranians in 615 A.D. Therefore, it can be said with absolute certainty that this Surah was revealed in the same year, and this was the year in which the migration to Habash took place.

Historical Background

The prediction made in the initial verses of this Surah is one of the most outstanding evidences of the Quran’s being the Word of Allah and the Prophet Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) being a true Messenger of Allah. Let us have a look at the historical background relevant to the verses.

Eight years before the Prophet's advent (peace be upon him) as a Prophet the Byzantine Emperor Maurice was overthrown by Phocus, who captured the throne and became king. Phocus first got the Emperor's five sons executed in front of him, and then got the Emperor also killed and hung their heads in a thoroughfare in Constantinople. A few days after this he had the empress and her three daughters also put to death. The event provided Khusrau Parvez, the Sassanid king of Iran; a good moral excuse to attack Byzantium. For Emperor Maurice had been his benefactor; with his help he was able to get the throne of Iran. Therefore, he declared that he would avenge his godfather's and his children's murder upon Phocus, the usurper. So, he started war against Byzantium in 603 A.D. and within a few years, putting the Phocus armies to rout in succession, he reached Edessa (modern, Urfa) in Asia Minor, on the one hand, and Aleppo and Antioch in Syria, on the other. When the Byzantine ministers saw that Phocus could not save the country, they sought the African governor's help, who sent his son, Heraclius, to Constantinople with a strong fleet. Phocus was immediately deposed and Heraclius was made emperor. He treated Phocus as he had treated Maurice. This happened in 610 A.D., the year the Prophet (peace be upon him) was appointed to prophethood.

The moral excuse for which Khusrau Parvez had started the war was no more valid after the deposition and death of Phocus. Had the object of his war really been to avenge the murder of his ally on Phocus for his cruelty, he would have

come to terms with the new Emperor after the death of Phocus. But he continued the war, and gave it the color of a crusade between Zoroastrianism and Christianity. The sympathies of the Christian sects (i.e. Nestorians and Jacobians, etc.) which had been excommunicated by the Roman ecclesiastical authority and tyrannized for years also went with the Magian (Zoroastrian) invaders, and the Jews also joined hands with them; so much so that the number of the Jews who enlisted in Khusrau's army rose up to 26,000.

Heraclius could not stop this storm. The very first news that he received from the East after ascending the throne was that of the Iranian occupation of Antioch. After this Damascus fell in 613 A. D. Then in 614 A.D. the Iranians occupying Jerusalem played havoc with the Christian world. Ninety thousand Christians were massacred and the Holy Sepulcher was desecrated. The Original Cross on which, according to the Christian belief, Jesus had died was seized and carried to Madain. The chief priest Zacharia was taken prisoner and all the important churches of the city were destroyed. How proud was Khusrau Parvez at this victory can be judged from the letter that he wrote to Heraclius from Jerusalem. He wrote: "From Khusrau, the greatest of all gods, the master of the whole world: To Heraclius, his most wretched and most stupid servant: "You say that you have trust in your Lord. Why didn't then your Lord save Jerusalem from me?"

Within a year after this victory the Iranian armies overran Jordan, Palestine and the whole of the Sinai Peninsula, and

reached the frontiers of Egypt. In those very days another conflict of a far greater historical consequence was going on in Makkah. The believers in One God, under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), were fighting for their existence against the followers of shirk under the command of the chiefs of the Quraish, and the conflict had reached such a stage that in 615 A.D., a substantial number of the Muslims had to leave their homes and take refuge with the Christian kingdom of Habash, which was an ally of the Byzantine Empire. In those days the Sassanid victories against Byzantium were the talk of the town, and the pagans of Makkah were delighted and were taunting the Muslims to the effect: “Look the fire worshipers of Iran are winning victories and the Christian believers in revelation and prophethood are being routed everywhere. Likewise, we, the idol worshipers of Arabia, will exterminate you and your religion.”

These were the conditions when this Surah of the Quran was revealed, and in it a prediction was made, saying: “The Romans have been vanquished in the neighboring land and within a few years after their defeat, they shall be victorious. And it will be the day when the believers will rejoice in the victory granted by Allah.” It contained not one but two predictions: First, the Romans shall be victorious; and second, the Muslims also shall win a victory at the same time. Apparently, there was not a remote chance of the fulfillment of the either prediction in the next few years. On the one hand, there were a handful of the Muslims, who were being beaten and tortured in Makkah,

and even for eight years after this prediction there appeared no chance of their victory and domination. On the other, the Romans were losing more and more ground every day. By 619 A.D. the whole of Egypt had passed into Sassanid hands and the Magian armies had reached as far as Tripoli. In Asia Minor they beat and pushed back the Romans to Bosphorus, and in 617 A.D. they captured Chalcedon (modern, Kadikoy) just opposite Constantinople. The Emperor sent an envoy to Khusrau, praying that he was ready to have peace on any terms, but he replied, "I shall not give protection to the emperor until he is brought in chains before me and gives up obedience to his crucified god and adopts submission to the fire god." At last, the Emperor became so depressed by defeat that he decided to leave Constantinople and shift to Carthage (modern, Tunis). In short, as the British historian Gibbon says, even seven to eight years after this prediction of the Quran, the conditions were such that no one could even imagine that the Byzantine Empire would ever gain an upper hand over Iran. Not to speak of gaining domination, no one could hope that the Empire, under the circumstances, would even survive.

Bidi-sinin, and the word *bid* in Arabic applies to a number upto ten. Therefore, make the bet for ten years and increase the number of camels to a hundred. So, Abu Bakr spoke (may Allah be pleased with him) to Ubayy again and bet a hundred camels for ten years.

In 622 A.D. as the Prophet (peace be upon him) migrated to Madinah, the Emperor Heraclius set off quietly for

Trabzon from Constantinople via the Black Sea and started preparations to attack Iran from rear. For this he asked the Church for money, and Pope Sergius lent him the Church collections on interest, in a bid to save Christianity from Zoroastrianism. Heraclius started his counter attack in 623 A.D. from Armenia. Next year, in 624 A.D., he entered Azerbaijan and destroyed Clorumia, the birthplace of Zoroaster, and ravaged the principal fire temple of Iran. Great are the powers of Allah, this was the very year when the Muslims achieved a decisive victory at Badr for the first time against the mushriks. Thus both the predictions made in Surah Rum were fulfilled simultaneously within the stipulated period of ten years.

The Byzantine forces continued to press the Iranians hard and in the decisive battle at Nineveh (627 A.D.) they dealt them the hardest blow. They captured the royal residence of Dastagerd, and then pressing forward reached right opposite to Ctesiphon, capital of Iran in those days. In 628 A.D. in an internal revolt, Khusrau Parvez was imprisoned and 18 of his sons were executed in front of him and a few days later he died in the prison. This was the year when the peace treaty of Hudaibiya was concluded, which the Quran has termed as “the supreme victory”, and in this very year Khusrau’s son, Qubad II, gave up all the occupied Roman territories, restored the true cross and made peace with Byzantium. In 628 A.D., the Emperor himself went to Jerusalem to install the “holy cross” in its place, and in the same year the Prophet (peace be upon him) entered Makkah for the first time after the Hijrah to perform the

Umra-tul-Qada.

After this no one could have any doubt about the truth of the prophecy of the Quran, with the result that most of the Arab polytheists accepted Islam. The heirs of Ubayy bin Khalaf lost their bet and had to give a hundred camels to Abu Bakr Siddiq. He took them before the Prophet (peace be upon him), who ordered that they be given away in charity, because the bet had been made at a time when gambling had not yet been forbidden by the Shariah; now it was forbidden. Therefore, the bet was allowed to be accepted from the belligerent disbelievers, but instruction given that it should be given away in charity and should not be brought in personal use.

Theme and Subject matter

The discourse begins with the theme that the Romans have been overcome and the people the world over think that the empire is about to collapse, but the fact is that within a few years the tables will be turned and the vanquished will again become victorious.

This introductory theme contains the great truth that man is accustomed to seeing only what is apparent and superficial. That which is behind the apparent and superficial, he does not know. When in the petty matters of life, this habit to see only the apparent and superficial can lead man to misunderstandings and miscalculations, and when he is liable to make wrong estimates only due to lack of knowledge about “what will happen tomorrow”, how stupendous will be his error if he risks his whole life activity by placing reliance only upon what is visible and

apparent with respect to his worldly life as a whole.

In this connection, the signs of the universe which have been presented as evidence to prove the doctrine of the Hereafter are precisely the same which support the doctrine of *Tauhid*. Therefore, from verse 28 onward, the discourse turns to the affirmation of *Tauhid* and the refutation of shirk, and it is stressed that the natural way of life for man is none else but to serve One God exclusively. Shirk is opposed to the nature of the universe as to the nature of man. Therefore, whenever man has adopted this deviation, chaos has resulted. Again here, an allusion has been made to the great chaos that had gripped the world on account of the war between the two major powers of the time, and it has been indicated that this chaos too, is the result of shirk, and all the nations who were ever involved in mischief and chaos in the history of mankind were also mushriks.

In conclusion, a parable has been presented to make the people understand that just as dead earth comes to life, all of a sudden, by a shower of rain sent by God and swells with vegetation and plant life, so is the case with the dead humanity. When God sends a shower of His mercy in the form of revelation and prophethood, it also gives a new life to mankind and causes it to grow and develop and flourish. Therefore: “If you take full advantage of this opportunity, the barren land of Arabia will bloom by Allah’s mercy and the advantage will be yours. But if you do not take advantage of it, you will harm only your selves. Then no regret will avail and no opportunity will be provided to

make amends.”

1. Alif. Lam. Mim.

الم ﴿١﴾

2. The Romans have been defeated.

غَلِبَتِ الرُّومُ ﴿٢﴾

3. In the nearer land,^{*1} and they, after their defeat, will be victorious.

فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ
بَعْدِ غَلِبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ ﴿٣﴾

***1** From what Ibn Abbas and the other companions and their followers have said, it appears that the Muslims' sympathies in this war between Byzantium and Iran were with Byzantium, and of the disbelievers of Makkah were with Iran. This had several reasons. First, the Iranians had given it the color of a crusade between Magianism and Christianity, and, apart from the object of political conquest, they were making it a means of spreading Magianism. In the letter that Khusrau Parvez wrote to the Emperor Heraclius after the conquest of Jerusalem, he had clearly mentioned his victory as a proof of the truth of Magianism. In principle, the Magian creed resembled the polytheistic creed of the people of Makkah, because the Magis too, were disbelievers of *Tauhid*. They believed in two gods and worshiped the fire. That is why the mushriks of Makkah were in sympathy with them. Contrary to them, the Christians, however corrupted their monotheism might be, still regarded belief in One God as the basis of religion, believed in the Hereafter and admitted revelation and prophethood as the source of guidance. Thus, their religion

in principle resembled Islam, and therefore, the Muslims were naturally in sympathy with them, and could not like that a polytheistic people should dominate them. Secondly, the people who believe in a previous prophet before the advent of a new prophet are naturally regarded and counted as Muslims until the message of the new prophet reaches them and they clearly discard it. (see E.N. 73 of Surah Al-Qasas). At that time only five to six years had passed since the Prophet's (peace be upon him) advent as a Prophet and his message had not yet reached outside Arabia. Therefore, the Muslims did not look upon the Christians as disbelievers, but they certainly regarded the Jews as disbelievers because they had rejected the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) to be a Prophet. Thirdly, the Christians from the very beginning had been treating the Muslims with sympathy as already mentioned above in Surah Al-Qasas: Ayats 52-55, and in Surah Al-Maidah: Ayats 82-85, and many of them were even accepting the message of the truth with an open heart. Then, the way the Christian king of Habash had given refuge to the Muslims on their migration there and turned down the demand of the disbelievers of Makkah to return these new Muslims.

4. Within three to nine years. To Allah belongs the command before and after.*² And that day the believers will rejoice.

فِي بَضْعِ سِنِينَ ۗ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ
 قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدِهِ ۗ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ
 الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

*² That is, "When the Iranians became victorious first, it

did not mean that the Lord of the worlds, God forbid, had been humbled and when the Romans will gain victory afterwards, it will not mean that Allah's lost kingdom will be restored to Him. Sovereignty in any case belongs to Allah. Allah gave victory to the side that became victorious first, and Allah will give victory to the side that will gain victory after wards. For no one in his Kingdom can achieve domination solely by his own power. He whom He raises, rises and he whom He causes to fall, falls.”

5. With Allah's help.^{*3} He helps whom He wills. And He is the All Mighty, the Merciful.

بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ^ج يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ^ص
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

*3 Ibn Abbas, Abu Said Khudri, Sufyan Thauri, Suddi and others have stated that the Romans' victory against the Iranians and the Muslims' victory at Badr against the polytheists took place almost at the same time. The Muslims, therefore, were doubly pleased. The same is supported by the histories of Byzantium and Iran. 624 A.D. is the year in which the Battle of Badr was fought and the same is the year in which the Byzantine Emperor destroyed the birth place of Zoroaster and ravaged the principal fire temple of Iran.

6. (It is) the promise of Allah. Allah does not fail in His promise, but most of mankind do not know.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ^ط لَا يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ

7. They know what is apparent of the life of the world, and they are heedless of the Hereafter.*4

يَعْلَمُونَ ظَهْرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ
غَافِلُونَ ﴿٧﴾

*4 That is, “Although there are plenty of signs and evidences which point to the Hereafter, and there is no reason why one should be heedless of it, yet the people are being heedless of it due to their own short sightedness. They only see the apparent and the outward aspect of the worldly life and are unaware of what is hidden behind it; otherwise there has been no slackness on the part of God to warn them of it.”

8. Do they not reflect within themselves.*5 Allah has not created the heavens and the earth, and that which is between them, except with truth and for an appointed term.*6 And indeed, many of mankind are disbelievers in the meeting with their Lord.*7

أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ مَّا
خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ
مُّسَيِّئًا وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ
بِلقاءِ رَبِّهِمْ لَكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨﴾

*5 This in itself is a strong argument for the Hereafter. It means this: “If these people had reflected over their own selves, apart from the external phenomena, they would have found in themselves the arguments which prove the necessity of a second life after the present life. There are

three special characteristics of man which distinguish him from the other creations on the earth:”

(1) The earth and the countless things around it have been subjected for him, and he has been granted vast powers to exploit them.

(2) He has been life free to choose a way of life for himself. He can follow the way of belief or disbelief, obedience or sin, virtue or vice, as he likes. Any way of life, right or wrong, that he chooses, he is helped to follow it and allowed to use and exploit all the means and resources provided by God, whether the way chosen is of God’s obedience or of His disobedience.

(3) An innate moral sense has been placed in him, by which he discriminates between the voluntary and the involuntary actions; he judges the voluntary acts as good and bad, and decides spontaneously that a good act ought to be rewarded and an evil act ought to be punished.

These three characteristics which are found in man’s own self serve as a pointer to the fact that there must be a time when man should be called to account for his deeds, when he should be asked how he used the powers delegated to him over what he had been given in the world, when it should be seen whether he had adopted the right way or the wrong way by use of the freedom of choice given to him, when his voluntary acts should be judged, and good acts be rewarded and evil acts punished. This time inevitably can come only after man’s life-activity has ceased and the account book of his actions closed, and not before it. And this time should necessarily come only when the account

book of not one man or of one nation but of all mankind has closed. For on the passing away of one man or of one nation, the influence that he or it has generated by his or its acts does not cease to operate. The good or bad influence left by him should also be credited to his account. How can accountability be carried out and full rewards and punishments given with justice unless the influences are allowed to run their full course. Thus, man's own self testifies that the position he occupies in the world by itself demands that after his present life there should be another life when a court should be established, his life-record examined justly and every person rewarded or punished according to his deeds.

*6 In this sentence, two more arguments have been given for the Hereafter. It says that if man makes a deep observation of the system of the universe, he will see two things very outstanding about it: First, that the universe has been created with the truth. It is not a plaything of a child, which he might have made to amuse himself, and whose making and un-making might be meaningless. But it is a serious system whose every particle testifies that it has been created with great wisdom, its each component has a law underlying it, and everything in it has a purpose behind it. Man's whole social and economic life and all his sciences and arts are a witness that whatever man has done in the world became possible only because he was able to discover the laws working behind everything and the purpose for which it was made. Had he been placed as a puppet in a lawless and purposeless toy-house, no science and no

civilization and social life could be conceived. Now, how does it stand to reason that the Wise Being Who has created this world with such wisdom and design and Who has placed in it a creation like man, who is endowed with great mental and physical capabilities, powers and authority, freedom of action and choice, moral sense and entrusted with unlimited means and resources of the world, would have created him without a purpose and design? That man would live a full life involving both goodness and evil, justice and injustice, virtue and vice, and end up in the dust, and his good and evil acts will not bear any fruit? That each act of man will influence his own life as well as the lives of thousands of other men like himself and countless other things in the world, for good or for evil, and the whole record of his life-activity will be just set aside after his death, without accountability?

The other thing that becomes apparent after a deep observation of the system of the universe is that nothing here is immortal. Everything has an age appointed for it after attaining which, it dies and expires, and the same is the case with the universe as a whole. All the forces that are working here are limited. They can work only till an appointed term and they have inevitably to run out in time, and this system has to end. In the ancient days the philosophers and scientists who said that the world was eternal and everlasting could have their way, due mainly to lack of knowledge. But modern science almost definitely has cast its vote in favor of the God worshipers in the debate that had been going on since centuries between them

and the atheists regarding the eternal and the temporal nature of the world. Now the atheists are left with no leg to stand on. They cannot claim on the basis of reason and knowledge that the world has existed since eternity and will exist forever and there is going to be no resurrection. The ancient materialistic creed rested on the belief that matter was indestructible, only its form could be changed, but after every change matter remained matter and no increase or decrease occurred in its quantity. Therefore, it was inferred that this material world had neither a beginning nor an end. But now the discovery of the atomic energy has demolished the entire materialistic edifice. Now it has come to light that energy changes into matter, and matter changes back into energy with the result that nothing persists, neither form nor appearance. The second law of Thermodynamics has proved that this material world has neither existed since eternity nor will last till eternity. It certainly began in time and has to end in time. Therefore, it is no longer possible to deny the Hereafter even according to science. And obviously, when science has surrendered, how will philosophy stand to deny the Hereafter?

*7 “Disbelievers in the meeting with their Lord”: disbelieve that they have to appear before their Lord after death.

9. Have they not traveled in the land and seen how was the end of those before them.*8 They were mightier than these in strength, and they tilled

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً

the land^{*9} and built upon it more than that which these have built.^{*10} And their messengers came to them with clear evidences.^{*11} Then it was not Allah who wronged them, but they did wrong to themselves.^{*12}

وَأَثَرُوا الْأَرْضَ وَعَمَرُوهَا أَكْثَرَ
مِمَّا عَمَرُوهَا وَجَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ
بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ
لِيُظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ
يُظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

***8** This is a historical argument for the Hereafter. It means this: The Hereafter has not been denied only by a couple of the people in the world, but a large number of them have been involved in this disbelief in human history. Even there have been entire nations which either denied it altogether or lived heedless of it, or invented such false beliefs about life after death as rendered the concept of the Hereafter meaningless. Then the continuous experience of history reveals that in whatever form the Hereafter has been denied, its inevitable result has been that the people became corrupted morally, they lived irresponsible lives, they transgressed all limits of tyranny and wickedness, which became the cause of the destruction of one nation after the other. Does not this experience of thousands of years of history, which has been traced by human generations successively, prove that the Hereafter is a reality whose denial is fatal to man? Man has come to believe in gravitation only because he has always experienced and seen material things falling to the ground. He has recognized poison to be poison only because whoever took

poison died. Similarly, when the denial of the Hereafter has always led to the corruption of morals for man, is not this experience enough to teach the lesson that the Hereafter is a reality, and to live one's life heedless of it is dangerous?

***9** The words *athar-ul-ard* in the original may either mean to plough the land for cultivation, or to dig the earth for taking out canals, underground water channels, minerals, etc.

***10** This contains an answer to the argument of those who regard mere material progress as the sign of a nation's being righteous. They argue like this: How is it possible that Allah will make fuel of Hell those people who have exploited the resources of the earth on such a large scale, who have constructed wonderful works on the earth and given birth to a grand civilizations? The Quran refutes this argument. Thus, such works of construction have also been built before by many nations on a large scale. Then, have you not seen that those nations have perished along with their civilization and their grand and magnificent works. There is no reason why the Law of God that has so treated in the world the mere material progress of a people lacking the right belief and conduct, will not treat them likewise in the next world and make them fuel of Hell.

***11** That is, they came with such signs as were sufficient for anyone to be convinced of their being the true prophets. The mention of the coming of the prophets in this context implies this: On the one hand, there are evidences in man's own self, and in the universe around him, and in the continuous experience of human history, and, on the other,

there also came such prophets, one after the other, who showed clear signs of their being true prophets and warned (the people) that the Hereafter is sure to come.

*12 That is, the destruction that overtook those nations afterwards, was not due to Allah's being unjust to them but due to the injustice they had done to themselves. The person (or persons) who neither thinks rightly, nor adopts the right attitude by listening to others, will be responsible for his evil end if he meets destruction. God cannot be blamed for this, for God has not only made arrangements for conveying to man the knowledge of the reality through His Books and His Prophets, but also blessed man with the intellectual resources and powers by exploiting which he can always judge the authenticity of the knowledge brought by the Prophets and the Divine Books. Had God deprived man of this guidance and these resources and he had to meet with the consequences of following a wrong way then doubtlessly could God have been blamed for injustice.

10. Then the end of those who had committed evil was evil (worst), because they denied the revelations of Allah and they used to ridicule them.

ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةَ الَّذِينَ أَسَاءُوا
السُّوْأَىٰ أَنْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ
اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. Allah originates the creation, then He will repeat it,^{*13} then to Him you will be returned.

اللَّهُ يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ ثُمَّ
إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١١﴾

*13 Though this thing has been put forward as a claim, it

contains the basis of the claim too. Common sense testifies that the One Who can originate creation, can reproduce the same creation far more easily. The origination of the creation is an actuality which exists before everybody, and the disbelievers and the mushriks also admit that this is the work of Allah alone: “Now it will be clearly absurd on their part to think that God Who has originated this creation, cannot reproduce it.”

12. And the Day when the Hour^{*14} will be established, the criminals will be in despair.^{*15}

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُبْلِسُ
الْمُجْرِمُونَ

*14 “The Hour”: the Hour of returning to Allah and appearing before Him.

*15 The word *ubliso* in the text means to be dumbfounded on account of a sudden shock and despair, to be confounded on finding oneself in a hopeless situation, to stand aghast on finding no means of help and support. When this word is used for a culprit, it depicts a person who is caught red handed, who then finds no way to escape, nor expects to save himself by offering a plea in self defense; therefore, he stands dumb and dejected and depressed.

One should also understand that “the criminals” here does not only imply those people, who have committed murders and thefts and robberies, etc. in the world, but all those who have rebelled against God, refused to accept the guidance and teachings of His Messengers, denied the accountability of the Hereafter, or lived heedless of it, and

have been worshipping others than God in the world, or their own selves, whether or not, besides this basic deviation, they also committed those acts, which are commonly called crimes. Besides, it includes those people also, who in spite of believing in God and His Messengers and the Hereafter, have knowingly disobeyed their Lord and persisted in their rebellious conduct till the end. When these people will suddenly come back to life in the Hereafter, against their expectations, and will find that they are confronted with the second life, which they had denied, or ignored, in their life activity in the world, they will stand dumbfounded as has been depicted in the words: *yublisul-mujrimun*.

13. And there will not be for them among their (alleged) partners any to intercede.^{*16} And they will reject their partners.^{*17}

وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَائِهِمْ
شُفَعَاءُ وَكَانُوا بِشُرَكَائِهِمْ
كَافِرِينَ



***16** “Associates” (*shuraka*) includes three kinds of beings: (1) The angels, prophets, saints, martyrs and the righteous men, to whom the polytheists assigned divine attributes and powers in different ages and whom they worshiped as gods. On Resurrection Day, they will say to their worshipers, “You did whatever you did without our consent, rather against our teachings and guidance. Therefore, we have nothing to do with you. Do not place any hope in us that we will intercede for you before Allah Almighty.”

(2) Inanimate things like the moon, the sun, the planets,

trees, stones, animals, etc. The polytheists worshiped them as gods, prayed to them, but the poor things themselves were unaware that the vicegerent of Allah was worshiping them so humbly and devotedly. Evidently, none of these also will come forward to intercede for him.

(3) The arch-criminals, who by deception and fraud, or by use of force, compelled the servants of God to worship others, e.g. Satan, false religious guides, and tyrants and despots. They themselves will be in trouble there. Not to speak of interceding for others, they will rather try to prove before God that their worshipers and followers were themselves responsible for their crimes, and therefore, they should not be made to bear the burden of their deviation. Thus, the polytheists there will not get any intercession from anywhere.

*17 That is, the polytheists will themselves admit that they had wrongly held them associates of God. They will realize that none of them really had any share in Godhood. Therefore, in the Hereafter they will disown the shirk on which they insist in the world.

14. And the Day when the Hour will be established, that Day they will become separated.*18

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَفَرَّقُونَ



*18 That is, all communities and groups that have been formed in the world on the basis of race, country, language, tribe and clan, and economic and political interests, will break, and the people will be regrouped on the basis of true belief, morality and character. On the one hand, all the

believing and righteous people will be separated from all the nations of mankind and put in one group. And on the other hand, people professing every false ideology and committing every kind of crime in the world will be sorted out from the multitudes of mankind and put into separate groups. In other words, the thing which Islam regards as the real basis of separation and union in the world and which the worshipers of ignorance refuse to accept, will become the basis of separation and union in the Hereafter. Islam says that the real thing which joins men together or divides them is the belief and morality. Those who believe and build the system of life on divine guidance are one community, whether they belong to any race, any country and any region. The two cannot belong to one nation. They can neither walk together on a common path of life in the world, nor can meet with the same end in the Hereafter. From the world to the Hereafter they tread separate paths and have separate destinations. Contrary to this, the worshipers of falsehood have been insisting in every age, and still insist, that mankind should be classified and grouped on the bases of race and country and language. The people who have a common race and country and language should constitute a separate nation, regardless of their religion and belief, and should offer a common front against the other similar nations. And this nation should have such a system of life which should bind the followers of *Tauhid* and the polytheists and the atheists together. The same was the concept of Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab and the chiefs of the Quraish. That is why they accused the Prophet

Muhammad (peace be upon him) again and again of having stirred up divisions in their nation. That is why the Quran is warning that the groups made in the world on wrong basis will ultimately break and mankind will be permanently divided on the basis of the belief and the philosophy of life and morality and character on which Islam wants to build it in the world. The people who do not have a common destination cannot follow a common way of life.

15. Then as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, they shall be made to enjoy^{*19} in the Garden (of delight).^{*20}

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ فَهُمْ فِي رَوْضَةٍ
يُحْبَرُونَ

*19 “A Garden”: A garden of bliss and perfect happiness as a reward and source of everlasting joy.

*20 The word *yuhbarun* in the original implies this: “They will be lodged in it with honor, will remain happy and be provided with every kind of pleasure.”

16. And as for those who disbelieved^{*21} and denied Our revelations, and the meeting of the Hereafter, they shall be brought into the punishment.

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا
بِعَايَتِنَا وَرَلَقَايِ
الْآخِرَةِ
فَأُولَئِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُحْضَرُونَ

*21 One thing here is noteworthy. Good works have been

mentioned as a necessary adjunct of the faith, which will earn one the blissful Garden. But no mention has been made of the evil acts while mentioning the evil end of disbelief. This clearly indicates that disbelief by itself is enough to mar the destiny of a person, whether it is accompanied by the evil act or not.

17. So^{*22} glorify Allah^{*23} when you enter the night and when you enter the morning.

فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ حِينَ تُمْسُونَ
وَحِينَ تَصْبِحُونَ



*22 “So”, here, implies, when you have come to know the good results of belief and righteous acts and the evil consequences of disbelief and denial of the truth, you should adopt the following conduct. It also means: By holding the life Hereafter to be impossible, the polytheists and disbelievers are, in fact, holding Allah to be helpless. Therefore, as against them, you should glorify Allah, and proclaim that He is free from this weakness. This command has been addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and through him to all the believers.

*23 “To glorify Allah” means to proclaim Allah’s being free from and exalted above the defects and faults and weaknesses, which the mushriks ascribe to Him due to their shirk and denial of the Hereafter. The best form of this proclamation and expression is the Prayer. That is why Ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah, Ibn Zaid and other commentators say that here “to glorify” means to offer the prescribed Prayer. A clear indication in favor of this commentary is contained in the verse itself. It lays down

certain definite times for the glorification of Allah. Evidently, if it was meant to instill the belief that Allah is free from all defects and weaknesses, there should be no question of the restriction of the times of the morning and evening, and the early and late afternoon, for a Muslim should always have this belief. Similarly, if it was meant to teach glorifying Allah merely verbally, it should be meaningless to specify the times, for a Muslim should express Allah's glory at all times. Therefore, inevitably the command to glorify Allah with the restriction of the times points to its particular practical form which is none other than the Prayer.

18. And to Him is all the praise in the heavens and the earth, and at the decline of the sun and in the noonday.*²⁴

وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَعَشِيًّا وَحِينَ تُظْهِرُونَ



***24** This verse clearly points to the times of the Fajr (morning), Maghrib (evening), Asr (late afternoon) and the Zuhr (early afternoon) Prayers. Besides this, the other allusions made to the times of the Prayer in the Quran are as follows:

“Establish the Salat from the declining of the sun to the darkness of the night, and be particular about the recital of the Quran at dawn.” (Surah Bani-Israil: Ayat 78).

“Establish the Salat at the two ends of the day and in the early part of the night.” (Surah Hud: Ayat 114).

“And glorify your Lord with His praise before the rising of

the sun and before its setting, and glorify Him again during the hours of the night and at the extremes of the day.” (Surah Ta Ha: Ayat 130).

The first of these verses tells that the times of the Prayer are from the declining of the sun to the darkness of the night (Isha) after which is the time of the morning Prayer (Fajr). In the second verse, the “two ends of the day” imply the times of the morning (Fajr) and the evening (Maghrib) Prayers, and “in the early part of the night” implies the time of Isha. In the third verse, “before the rising of the sun” implies the Fajr time and “before its setting” the Asr time, and “during the hours of the night” implies the times of both the Maghrib and the Isha Prayers; and the “extremes of the day” are three: the morning, the declining of the sun and the evening. Thus, the Quran at different places has pointed to the five Prayer times at which the Muslims the world over offer their Prayers. But, obviously, no one by merely reading these verses could have determined the Prayer times unless the divinely appointed teacher of the Quran, the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself had given guidance to these by his word and deed.

Let us pause a while here and consider the boldness of the deniers of *Hadith*. They make fun of “offering the Prayer”, and say that the Prayer that the Muslims offer today is not at all the thing prescribed by the Quran. They assert that the Quranic injunction to establish the Salat does not mean the offering of the Prayer but establishing the Nizami-Rububiyat (Order of Providence). Ask them: “What is that order of providence which can either be established before

the rising of the sun or after the declining of the sun till the early hours of the night”? And what is that order of providence which is required to be established especially on Fridays? “O believers when you hear the call to the Friday Prayer, hasten to the remembrance of Allah” (Surah Al-Juma: Ayat 9). And what is that special kind of the order of providence for establishing which one has first to wash his face and the hands up to the elbows and the feet up to the ankles and rub his head with wet hands, otherwise he will not establish it? (“O believers, when you stand up to offer the Salat, you must wash your faces and your hands and arms up to the elbows, and rub your heads with wet hands (Surah Al-Maidah: Ayat 6). And what is this peculiarity of this order of providence that one cannot establish it unless he has completely washed himself after sexual intercourse? “O believers, do not offer the Prayer, if you are unclean until you take your bath, except when passing on the way” (Surah An-Nisa: Ayat 43). And what is this odd thing that if he has touched the women, he will have to strike his hands on pure dust and rub thereby his face and hands in case he does not find water, for the purpose of establishing this strange order of providence? (“or if you have touched women and you can find no water, then cleanse yourselves with pure dust: strike your palms on it and rub your hands and faces with it”(Surah An-Nisa: Ayat 43). And what is this amazing order of providence that while on a journey one should establish only half of it? “When you go on a journey, there is no harm if you shorten the Salat” (Surah An-Nisa: Ayat 101). Then, what an odd thing that during a

war half of the soldiers should fall down, carrying their weapons, in order to establish the order of providence behind the Imam, and the other half should stick to their positions and continue fighting the enemy; when the first group has performed one sajdah behind the Imam in its effort to establish the “order of providence” it should go to relieve the other group, which should fall down and start establishing the “order of providence” behind the Imam? “And when you, O Prophet, are among the Muslims and are going to lead them in Salat (in a state of war), let a party of them stand behind you, carrying their weapons with them. When they have made their prostrations, they should fall back, and let another party of them, who have not yet offered their Salat say it with you” (Surah An-Nisa Ayat 102).

All these verses of the Quran clearly indicate that to establish the Salat implies the Prayer that the Muslims offer everywhere in the world today. But the deniers of *Hadith* seem to be bent upon changing the Quran instead of changing themselves. The fact is that unless a person becomes wholly fearless of Allah, he cannot dare play with His Word as these people do. Or, only such a person can engage in a pastime like this with respect to the Quran who believes it is not Allah’s Word, but intends to mislead the Muslims in the name of the Quran. (See E.N. 50 below).

19. He brings out the living from the dead, and He brings out the dead from the living, and He revives the

يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ
الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَيُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ

earth after its death.*²⁵
And thus shall you be
brought out.

بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا
وَكَذَلِكَ
تُخْرَجُونَ

***25** That is, how can that God Who is doing all this perpetually in front of your eyes, be helpless in raising man to life after death? He is causing absolutely dead matter to be discharged from living man and animals. He is ever bringing into existence countless animals and human beings by breathing life into dead matter, whereas the substances themselves which make up the bodies of the living beings are absolutely without life. He is making you witness the phenomenon that wherever water becomes available, lands previously lying barren start blooming and blossoming with animal and vegetable life. In spite of witnessing all this if a person thinks that the God Who is sustaining the universe will be helpless to raise man back to life after death, he is fully devoid of the common sense. His heart does not see the clear realities gleaming from the manifestations which his eyes see.

20. And among His*²⁶ signs is that He created you from dust, then behold, you are human beings scattered (throughout the earth).^{*27}

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ
تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ إِذَا أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ
تَنْتَشِرُونَ

***26** It should be noted that from here to the end of verse 27, the signs of Allah that are being mentioned, on the one hand, point to the possibility and occurrence of the life

Hereafter, in the context of the foregoing discourse. And on the other hand, the same signs also point to the reality that this universe is neither Godless nor under many gods, but One God alone is its Creator, Disposer, Master and Ruler. Thus, this section (Ayats 20-27) is fully connected with the discourse preceding it and the discourse following it.

***27** That is, the stuff from which man has been created is nothing but a few dead substances which are found in the earth, like carbon, calcium, sodium and a few other elements like them. With their combination a wonderful being, called man, has been raised up, and in him have been placed great powers of sentiments, consciousness, and imagination. None of which can be traced back to any of the constituent substances of his physical being. Then, not only has just one man so risen up by a mere accident, but in him has also been placed that wonderful procreative power by which millions and billions of human beings are coming continuously into being bearing the same physical structure and capabilities and possessing countless hereditary and personal characteristics. Therefore, O man! Does your intellect approve that this extremely wise creation has come into being of itself without the creative power of a Wise Creator? Can you say, being in your senses, that making a wonderful design of the creation of man and bringing it into effect and rendering the countless powers of the earth and heavens favorable and subservient to human life could be the result of the thinking and design of many gods? And will you be in your right senses when you think that the God, Who has brought man into being from absolute

nothingness, will not be able to raise the same man back to life after giving him death?

21. And among His signs is that He created for you mates from yourselves^{*28} that you may find tranquility in them,^{*29} and He placed between you love and mercy.^{*30} Indeed, in that are signs for a people who reflect.

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ



***28** That is, the Creator's perfect wisdom is such that He has not created man in one sex only but in two sexes, which are identical in humanity, which have the same basic formula of their figure and form, but the two have been created with different physical structures, different mental and psychological qualities, and different emotions and desires. And then there has been created such a wonderful harmony between the two that each is a perfect counterpart of the other. The physical and psychological demands of the one match squarely with the physical and psychological demands of the other. Moreover, the Wise Creator is continuously creating the members of the two sexes in such a proportion since the dawn of the creation that in no nation and in no region has it ever happened that only boys or only girls may have been born. This is one thing in which human intelligence has absolutely no part to play. Man cannot at all influence the course of nature according to which girls continue to be born with the feminine qualities

and the boys with the masculine qualities, which are perfectly complimentary to each other, nor has he any means by which he may change the proportion in which men and women continue to be born everywhere in the world. The working of this system and arrangement so harmoniously and perpetually in the birth of millions and billions of human beings since thousands of years cannot be accidental either, nor the result of the common will of many gods. This is a clear indication of the reality that One Wise Creator and One only, in the beginning made a most appropriate design of a man and a woman by His infinite Wisdom and Power and then made arrangements that precisely in accordance with that design countless men and countless women should be born along with their separate individual qualities in the right proportion.

***29** That is, this system has not come about by chance, but the Creator has brought it about deliberately with the object that the man should find fulfillment of the demands of his nature with the woman, and the woman with the man, and the two should find peace and satisfaction in association and attachment with each other. This is the wise arrangement which the Creator has made the means of the survival of the human race on the one hand, and of bringing the human civilization into existence on the other hand. If the two sexes had been created on different patterns and designs, and the state of agitation which changes into peace and tranquility only through union and attachment between the two had not been placed in each, the human race might have survived like sheep and goats,

but there was no possibility of the birth of a civilization. Contrary to all other species of animal life; the fundamental factor that has helped create human civilization is that the Creator by His wisdom has placed a desire and a thirst and a lodging in the two sexes for each other, which remains unsatisfied unless the two live in complete attachment and association with each other. This same desire for peace and satisfaction compelled them to make a home together. This same desire brought families and clans into being, and this same desire made social life possible for man. In the development of social life man's mental capabilities have certainly been helpful, but they were not its real motives. The real motivating force was the same longing with which man and woman were endowed and which compelled them to establish the "home". Can anyone, possessed of common sense, say that this masterpiece of wisdom has come about by chance through the blind forces of nature? Or, that it has been arranged so by many gods, and countless men and women have been continuously coming into being with the same natural longing since thousands of years? This is a sign of the wisdom of One Wise Being, and of One only, which the people devoid of common sense only can refuse to acknowledge.

***30** "Love" here means sexual love, which becomes the initial motive for attraction between man and woman, and then keeps them attached to each other. "Mercy" implies the spiritual relationship which gradually develops in the matrimonial life, by virtue of which they become kind,

affectionate and sympathetic towards each other; so much so that in old age, sexual love falls into the background and the two partners in life prove to be even more compassionate towards each other than they were when young. These two are the positive forces which the Creator has created in man to support the initial longing of his nature. That longing and restlessness only seeks peace and satisfaction and brings the man and the woman into contact with each other. After that these two forces emerge and bind the two strangers brought up in different environments so intimately together that the two remain attached to each other through every thick and thin of life. Evidently, this love and mercy which is being experienced by millions and millions of people in their lives, is not anything material, which may be weighed and measured, nor can it be traced back to any of the constituent element of human body, nor the cause of its birth and growth found out in a laboratory. The only explanation of this can be that the human self has been endowed with it by a Wise Creator, Who has done so of His own will to serve a special purpose.

22. And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth,^{*31} and the difference of your languages and your colors.^{*32} Indeed, in that are signs for those of sound knowledge.

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ
وَالْوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

***31** That is, their coming into existence from nothingness and their being established an eternal law, and the functioning in them of innumerable forces in great harmony and equilibrium, contain many signs of the reality that One and One only Creator has brought the entire universe into existence, and He alone is running this grand system. On the one hand, by reflecting over the origin of the initial energy that assumed the form of matter, then the transformation of the matter into so many elements, then the combination of the elements in a wonderful and wise proportion and coming into being of an awe-inspiring system of the universe, and then the functioning of this system since billions of centuries with such regularity and discipline, every unbiased mind will come to the conclusion that all this could not happen by mere chance, without the all-embracing will of an All-Knowing, All-Wise Creator. Then, on the other hand, if one sees that every thing from the earth to the farthest stars in the universe is made up of the same basic elements and the same law of nature is working in it, every intellect, which is not stubborn, will certainly admit that this cannot be the result of the godhead of many gods but there is One God Who is the Creator and Sustainer of this whole universe.

***32** That is, “Although your vocal chords are similar, and there is no difference in the structure of the mouth, the tongue and the brains, yet people speak different languages in different regions of the world. Even in the regions where the same language is spoken, different dialects are spoken from city to city and from town to town. Moreover, the

accent and pronunciation and the style of speech of every person is different from the other. Similarly, although the semen and the formula of your physical structure is the same, yet your colors are so different that, nations apart, even the colors of the two sons of the same parents are not exactly the same. In this verse, attention has been drawn only to two aspects, but if one looks around he will notice an infinite variety everywhere in the world. One will find countless differences in the species of man, animal, plants and other things in spite of the basic uniformity in their different members; so much so that no member of the species is exactly identical with the other. Even the two leaves of a tree are not exactly alike. This shows that the world is not a factory in which automatic machines might be working and turning out things in mass production bearing the stamp of their own separate species. But in this factory there is a Master-Artist at work, Who gives individual attention to everything and produces it on a new design with new embellishments and proportions and qualities, and everything thus produced is unique in its own way. His inventive genius is turning out a new model of everything every moment, and His creative power abhors repeating the same design the second time. Anyone who sees this wonderful phenomenon with open eyes can never be involved in the foolish misconception that the Maker of the universe has gone to sleep after having made it go. This is, on the contrary, a clear proof of the fact that He is ever engaged in His creative activity, and is giving individual attention to each and everything in His creation.

23. And among His signs is your sleep by night and day, and your seeking of His bounty.*33 Indeed, in that are signs for a people who listen.

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ مَنَامُكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ
وَالنَّهَارِ وَابْتِغَاؤُكُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهِ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
يَسْمَعُونَ



***33** “To seek bounty” is to seek the livelihood. Though man generally sleeps at night and works for his living in the day, this is not a law. Many people also sleep in the day and work for their livelihood at night. That is why the night and the day both have been mentioned and it has been said: “In both day and night you sleep as well as work for your livelihood.

This also is a sign which points to the design of the Wise Creator. Furthermore, it also points to the fact that He is not merely a Creator but also extremely Compassionate and Merciful to His creations, and is more anxious than the creation to meet its needs and requirements. Man cannot constantly labor but needs to have a rest of a few hours after every few hours of hard work so as to rebuild energy to take up work again. For this purpose, the Wise and Merciful Creator has not rested content with creating a feeling of fatigue and a desire for rest in man, but has placed in his nature a powerful urge for the sleep, which without his will, even in spite of resistance from him, overpowers him automatically after every few hours of work and wakefulness, and compels him to have a few

hours of rest, and leaves him as soon as the need has been fulfilled. Man has so far been unable to understand the nature and real causes of the sleep. This is something fully innate, which has been placed in the nature and structure of man. Its being precisely according to the requirements of man is enough to testify that it is not anything accidental, but has been provided by a Wise Being in accordance with a purpose and plan. It is based on a clear wisdom and reason and purposefulness. Moreover, the sleep itself testifies that the One Who has placed this compulsive urge in man is a greater well wisher of man than man himself, otherwise man would have deliberately resisted the sleep and endeavored to keep constantly awake and worked continuously hard and thus exhaust not only his work-power but also his vital powers.

Then, by using the word “seeking Allah’s bounty” for the seeking of livelihood, allusion has been made to another series of the signs. How could have man sought and found his livelihood if the innumerable and unlimited forces of the earth and heavens had not been put to work to provide means of the livelihood and supply countless resources for man to seek it in the earth? Not only this. Man could not have exploited these means and resources had he not been given appropriate limbs and suitable physical and mental capabilities for the purpose. Thus the ability in man to seek the livelihood and the presence of the resources of the livelihood outside of him, clearly indicate the existence of a Merciful and Beneficent God. An intellect which is not sick can never presume that all this has happened by chance, or

is the manifestation of the godhead of many gods, or some merciless, blind force is responsible for these bounties and blessings.

24. And among His signs is (that) He shows you the lightning (by way of) fear and hope,^{*34} and He sends down water from the sky, then thereby He revives the earth after its death.^{*35} Indeed, in that are signs for a people who understand.

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ يُرِيكُمْ الْبَرْقَ
خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَيُنزِلُ مِنْ
السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَيُحْيِي بِهِ
الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا إِنَّ
فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
يَعْقِلُونَ



***34** That is, its thunder and lightning give hope that rain will come and help the crops, but at the same time they cause a fear that the lightning may strike somewhere, or heavy rain may fall, which may wash away everything.

***35** This thing, on the one hand, points to the life Hereafter, and on the other, proves that God exists, and there is One God alone, Who is controlling the earth and the heavens. Innumerable creatures of the earth live on the products that come out from the earth. These products depend on the productivity of the earth. The productivity depends on the rain, whether it directly falls on the earth, or its water gathers together on the surface of the earth, or takes the form of underground water channels or springs or wells, or freezes on the mountains and then flows down in the form

of rivers. Then the rain depends on the heat of the sun, the change of seasons, atmospheric changes in temperature, circulation of the winds, and on the lightning, which causes the rain to fall as well as mixes a kind of natural manure in the rainwater. The establishment of a harmony and proportion between different things existing from the earth to the sky, their becoming favorable and subservient to a variety of aims and objects, and their remaining continuously and constantly favorable in perfect harmony for millions of million years cannot be the product of mere chance. Has it all happened without the all-embracing will and plan and wisdom of a Fashioner and Designer? And is it not a proof of the fact that the Creator and Lord of the earth, the sun, the water, the heat and coolness is One and only One?

25. And among His signs is that the heavens and the earth stand firm by His command.^{*36} Then when He summons you, by one call from the earth, behold, you will come out.^{*37}

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ أَنْ تَقُومَ السَّمَاءُ
وَالْأَرْضُ بِأَمْرِهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ
دَعْوَةً مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ إِذَا أَنتُمْ
تَخْرُجُونَ



***36** That is, not only have they come into being by His command, but their continuous existence and the functioning in them of a grand workshop of life constantly is also due to His command. If His command does not sustain them even for a moment, the entire system should break down at once.

***37** That is, it is not at all difficult for the Creator and Controller of the universe to raise you back to life; for this He will have to make no preparation. His one call will be enough to raise and muster together from every corner of the earth all human beings who have been born since the beginning of creation and will be born in the future.

26. And to Him belongs whoever is in the heavens and the earth. All are obedient to Him.

وَلَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
كُلٌّ لَهُ قَانِتُونَ

27. And it is He who originates the creation, then He will repeat it, and that is easier for Him.^{*38} And his is the highest similitude in the heavens and the earth. And He is the All Mighty, the All Wise.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ وَهُوَ أَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ^ج وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَىٰ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ^ج وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

***38** That is, if it was not difficult for Him to create you in the first instance, how can it be difficult for Him to re-create you? Your first creation was not difficult for Him because your present existence is a living proof of that. Now it is simple commonsense that the re-making of a thing should be relatively easier for the one who made it the first time.

28. He sets forth^{*39} for you a parable from your own

ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ مَثَلًا مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ^ص

selves. Do you have any partners, among those whom your right hands possess in that what We have provided for you, so that you are equal therein, (and) you fear them as you fear of yourselves (each other).^{*40}

Thus do We explain the signs in detail to a people who have sense.

هَلْ لَكُمْ مِّنْ مَا مَلَكَتْ
أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَاءَ فِي مَا
رَزَقْنَاكُمْ فَأَنْتُمْ فِيهِ سَوَاءٌ
تَخَافُونَهُمْ كَخِيفَتِكُمْ
أَنْفُسَكُمْ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ
الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ



***39** In the forgoing section, arguments have been given both for *Tauhid* and for the Hereafter; now the discourse turns to only *Tauhid*.

***40** The mushriks, even after admitting that Allah is the Creator and Master of the earth and heavens and all that they contain, held some of His creatures as associates in His attributes and powers, and prayed to them, presented offerings and performed rites of worship before them. Their belief regarding their self-made associates is found in the words of the Talbih that they used to pronounce while going round the Kabah. They said: “Here I am, O Allah, here I am in Thy presence! Thou hast no partner except the partner who is Thy own. Thou art his owner as well as owner of what he owns.” (Tabarani on the authority of Ibn Abbas). Allah has refuted this kind of shirk in this verse. The argument is to this effect: “When you do not make your own slaves partners in your wealth, how do you think and believe that Allah will make His creatures partners in

His Godhead?” (See E.N. 62 of Surah An-Nahl).

29. But those who do wrong follow their (own) desires without knowledge. Then who will guide him whom Allah has sent astray.*41 And for them there will be no helpers.

بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ فَمَنْ يَهْدِي
مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ
نَاصِرِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

*41 That is, when a person neither thinks on the right way by himself, nor is prepared to listen to a well-wisher, his intellect comes under the curse of Allah. After this everything that can help reasonable person to reach the truth, only helps this stubborn and ignorant person to be involved more and more deeply in further deviation and error. This is what has been conveyed in the word “sending astray”. When a truth-loving person invokes Allah for the grace of guidance, Allah creates for him maximum means of the guidance according to the sincerity of his invocation. And when a strayed person insists on his deviation, Allah creates for him the means which mislead him further and further away from the truth.”

30. So*42 set you your face*43 (O Muhammad) towards (this) Faith,*44 inclining to truth. The nature of Allah that upon which He has created mankind.*45 There is no altering in (the

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا
فِطْرَتِ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ
عَلَيْهَا ۚ لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ۚ

laws of) Allah's creation.^{*46}
That is the right religion,^{*47}
but most of the people do not
know.

ذَٰلِكَ
الدِّينُ
الْقَيِّمُ
وَلَكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ
لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ



***42** This “so” implies that when the reality has become clear to you, and you have come to know that none but Allah is the Creator and Master and Sovereign of this universe and of man himself, then inevitably your conduct should be such as indicated in this verse.

***43** “Set your face...truth”: Do not turn your face to any other direction after you have adopted this way of life. Then you should think like a Muslim and your likes and dislikes should be of a Muslim. Your values and standards should be the ones set by Islam and your character and conduct should bear the stamp of Islam, and the affairs of your individual and collective life should be ordered according to the way taught by Islam.

***44** “This faith”: The faith that the Quran presents, in which none but Allah is worthy of worship and obedience, in which none can be held as an associate of Allah in His Divinity, in His attributes and His powers and rights, in which man by his own free will chooses to order his life in accordance with the guidance and law of Allah.

***45** That is, all human beings have been created on the nature that none but One Allah is their Creator and Lord and Deity. You should be steadfast on this nature. If you adopt the attitude of independence, you will be following a

way opposed to your nature, and if you serve and worship another besides Allah, then you will be working against your nature.”

This subject has been explained by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a number of *Ahadith*. According to Bukhari and Muslim, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “Every child who is born, is born on the human nature; it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian, etc. afterwards. Its example is that of an animal which gives birth to complete and sound young ones, none is born with torn and cut off ears, but the mushriks tear their ears afterwards on account of their superstitions of ignorance.”

According to another *Hadith* reported in Musnad Ahmad and Nasai, the Muslims in a war killed the children of the enemy. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to know of it, he became very angry, and said: “What has happened to the people that they have transgressed the limits and killed even the children?” A man said, “Were they not the children of the Mushriks?” The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: “Even the best of your people are the children of the mushriks!” Then he said: “Every living being is born on the nature: then when he becomes able to speak, his parents turn him into a Jew or a Christian.”

In another *Hadith* which has been reported by Imam Ahmad on the authority of Ayad bin Himar-ul-Mujashii, it has been related that one day the Prophet (peace be upon him) said during an address: “My Lord says: I had created all My servants on true faith; then the satans came and led them astray from their faith, and made unlawful what I

had made lawful for them, and commanded them to associate with Me those for whom I have sent down no authority.”

***46** That is, God has made man His servant and created him only for his own service. This natural disposition of man cannot be altered, however hard one may try. Neither can man effect a change in his position of a servant, nor can anything other than God become his God in the real sense. Man may make for himself as many gods as he may please, but the fact remains that he is the servant of none but One God alone. Man by his own folly and ignorance may regard anyone as holder of divine attributes and powers and take any one as the maker and un-maker of his destiny, but the fact of the matter is that neither does anyone other than Allah possess divine attributes nor His authority, nor has anyone else the power to make or mar the destiny of man. Another translation of this verse can be: “Do not affect any alteration in the nature made by Allah.” That is, it is not right to corrupt and spoil the nature on which Allah has created man.

***47** “Right religion”: To remain steadfast on one's true Nature.

31. Turning in repentance to Him,^{*48} and fear Him^{*49} and establish prayer,^{*50} and do not be of those who associate partners (to Him).

❖ مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَقِيمُوا
الصَّلَاةَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ

***48** That is, whoever has adopted an attitude of

independence and freedom and turned away from his true Lord, and whoever has adopted service of another than Allah and proved to be disloyal to his real and true Lord, should desist from this, and return to the service of the One God Whose real servant is he by birth.

***49** That is, you should have the fear that if in spite of being a servant of Allah by birth, you adopted the way of living independent of Him, or served another beside Him, you will have to suffer a severe punishment for rebellion and ingratitude. Therefore, you should avoid every such way of life which earns you the wrath of God.

***50** Both turning to Allah and having fear of His wrath are the acts of the heart. This state of the heart, for its manifestation and stability, inevitably needs a physical act, which they make it known to others in society that so and so has really returned to the service of One Allah alone, and which, at the same time, may go on nourishing and developing the state of piety and devotion in his own self by means of practical experience and discipline. That is why immediately after giving the command for a mental change Allah has given the command for this physical act, i.e. establishment of the Salat. As long as an idea is only an idea in the mind of man, it can neither be stable nor enduring. It may fade away or even change. But when he starts practicing it, the idea takes root in him and goes on increasing in stability and strength with more and more practice; so much so that when it has become a belief it can neither change nor fade away easily. Considered from this viewpoint, no act can be more effective than the offering of

the Prayer regularly five times a day for strengthening piety and fear of God in oneself. The other act, whatever it be, is carried out at intervals, or in different forms on different occasions, but the Prayer is an act, which is performed every few hours in one and the same specific form permanently, in which man has to rehearse over and over again the whole lesson taught him by the Quran about Islam, so that he does not forget it. Furthermore, both the believers and the disbelievers have to know who among the people has given up the way of rebellion and adopted the way of obedience to the Lord. The believers have to know this so that they can form into a community and society and can cooperate with one another in the way of Allah; then as soon as the relationship of any one of them starts showing signs of laxity with respect to the faith and Islam, this should become known to all of them at once. The disbelievers have to know this so that the dormant nature in them wakens up when they see the people from their own kith and kin turning humbly to their real God over and over again, and till their nature wakes up they continue to be awe-stricken when they see the practical enthusiasm of the obedient servants of God. For these two objectives the establishment of the Prayer is the most effective means.

Here, it should be noted that the command for the establishment of the Prayer was given at Makkah at a time when a handful of the Muslims were being severely persecuted by the disbelieving Quraish, and went on being persecuted for another nine years after this. At that time there was no sign of the Islamic government yet in sight. If

the offering of the Prayer was meaningless without the Islamic government, as some ignorant people think, or if the establishment of the Salat did not mean the offering of the Prayer at all but the establishment of Nizami-Rububiyat (order of providence), as the deniers of *Hadith* claim, the Quranic injunction at that stage would have been meaningless. The question is: How did the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Muslims carry out this command for nine years after it had been enjoined?

32. (Or) of those who have divided their religion and have become sects, each faction rejoicing in what they have. ^{*51}

مِنَ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ
وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا
لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ

*51 This is an allusion to the fact that the real way of life for mankind is the same way of nature as elucidated above. This way of life has not evolved from a polytheistic creed to *Tauhid* as thought by those who invent a philosophy of religion on the basis of speculation. But, contrary to this, all the religions found in the world today have appeared because of the corruption of the original way of life. This corruption occurred because different people added their different self made creeds to the natural realities and created separate sects and everyone became a devotee of the additional thing, which was the basis of the separate sect, and gave up the original way of life. Now the only way of attaining true guidance is that one should return to the original reality which was the basis of the true faith, and

rid oneself of all the later additions and excrescences and their devotees. If he still keeps any kind of contact with them, he will only be harming the true faith.

33. And when adversity touches the people, they cry upon their Lord, turning in repentance to Him.^{*52} Then, when He gives them a taste of His mercy, behold, a group among them associate (partners) with their Lord.^{*53}

وَإِذَا مَسَّ النَّاسَ ضُرٌّ دَعَوْا
رَبَّهُمْ مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا أَذَاقَهُمْ
مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ
يُشْرِكُونَ

***52** This is a clear proof of the fact that in the depths of their heart there still exists an evidence of *Tauhid*. Whenever the hopes start crumbling, their hearts cry out from within that the real Ruler of the universe is its Master and His help alone can improve their lot.

***53** That is, they again start presenting offerings before other deities, and claiming that their misfortune has been removed through the help and grace of such and such a saint and shrine.

34. So that they will disbelieve in what We have given them. So enjoy yourselves, then soon you will come to know.

لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ فَتَمَتَّعُوا
فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

35. Or have We sent down to them an authority which then speaks of that which they associate with Him.^{*54}

أَمْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا فَهُوَ
يَتَكَلَّمُ بِمَا كَانُوا بِهِ يُشْرِكُونَ

***54** That is, what authority have do they have to say that the calamities are not averted by God but by the so called saint? Does common sense approve of it? Or, is there any divine Book which says that Allah has delegated His powers to such and such saints, and that they should now be invoked by the people to help them out of difficulties?

36. And when We give the people a taste of mercy, they rejoice therein. And if an evil afflicts them for what their own hands have sent forth, behold, they are in despair. ^{*55}

وَإِذَا أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً فَرِحُوا بِهَا وَإِن تُصِبَّهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَقْنَطُونَ

***55** In the preceding verse the man has been censured for his ignorance, folly and ingratitude. In this verse, he has been censured for puerility and meanness. When a person attains a little wealth and power and respect, and he sees that his business has started flourishing, he forgets that he has been given all this by Allah. He exults at his success and is so puffed up and conceited that he has neither any regard left for Allah nor for the people. But as soon as good luck deserts him, he loses heart and a single stroke of ill-luck so disheartens and frustrates him that he is prepared to do any mean thing, even commit suicide.

37. Do they not see that Allah enlarges the provision

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ

for whom He wills and straitens (for whom He wills). Indeed, in that are signs for a people who believe.*56

لَمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ
لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

*56 That is, the believers can learn how disbelief and shirk affect man's morality and what is the impact of belief in Allah on his morals. The person who sincerely believes in Allah and looks upon Him as the Master of the treasure houses of provisions, can never be involved in meanness, in which those forgetful ones of God are involved. If he is given abundantly he will not be puffed up; he will rather be grateful to Allah, will treat his fellowmen generously and benevolently, and will spend his God given wealth for His sake. On the other hand, he will exercise patience; he will never gamble away his honesty and self respect, but will have hope of Allah's bounty till the last. Such a moral excellence can neither fall to the lot of an atheist nor of a polytheist."

38. So give to the kindred his right, and to the needy, and to the wayfarer.*57 That is best for those who desire Allah's countenance. And such are they who will be successful.*58

فَاعَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ
وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ ذَٰلِكَ
خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ
وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

*57 It has not been said: "Give charity to the relative, the needy and the wayfarer, but their due because this is their right (due to them from you), which you must give them in

any case. You should remember it well that if the real owner of the wealth has given you more than others, your extra wealth is, in fact, the right of others, which has been given to you for your trial so that your Lord may see whether you recognize the rights of others and render their rights to them or not.

Anyone who reflects over this divine command and its real spirit will feel that the way proposed by the Quran for man's moral and spiritual development inevitably envisages the existence of a free society and economy. This development is not possible in a social environment in which the people's rights of ownership are set aside and stifled. The system in which the state assumes ownership of all resources and the government machinery and the entire responsibility of distributing provisions among the people, so much so that neither can an individual recognize the right of the other and render it, nor a person develop a feeling of goodwill for the other after he has received help, is a purely communist system. Such an economic and social system, which is being advocated in our country today under the deceptive name of the "Quranic Order of Providence" (Nizami Rububiyat), is entirely opposed to the Quranic scheme itself, for it suppresses the development of individual morality and formation of character altogether. The Quranic scheme can operate and function only in a society where the individuals own some resources of wealth, possess rights to expend it freely, and then render willingly and sincerely the rights of God and His servants. In such a society alone there can arise the possibility that, on the one

hand, the people may develop individually the virtues of sympathy, kindness and affection, sacrifice, recognition of the rights of others and rendering those rights in the right spirit, and on the other hand, the beneficiaries may develop in their hearts pure feelings of well-wishing, gratitude and thankfulness for the donors. This system only can produce the ideal conditions in which the elimination of evil and the promotion of goodness does not depend on the intervention of a law-enforcing authority but the people's own purity of the self and their own good intentions take up this responsibility.

***58** This does not mean that true success can be attained just by rendering the rights of the needy and the wayfarer and the relative and nothing else is needed to be done for this. But it means that those who do not recognize these rights of others nor render them, will not attain true success. It will be attained by those who render the rights sincerely only for the sake of Allah's goodwill and pleasure.

39. And whatever you give in usury that it may increase in the wealth of people has no increase with Allah.^{*59} And that which you give in charity, seeking the countenance of Allah, then those, they shall have manifold increase.^{*60}

وَمَا ءَاتَيْتُمْ مِّن رِّبَا لِّيَرْبُوَ فِي
 أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلَا يَرْبُوا عِنْدَ
 اللَّهِ وَمَا ءَاتَيْتُمْ مِّن زَكَاةٍ
 تُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
 هُمُ الْمُضْعِفُونَ

***59** This is the first verse revealed in the Quran that

condemned interest. It only says this: “You pay interest thinking that it will cause an increase in the wealth of the money-lender. But actually, in the sight of Allah, interest does not increase the wealth, but the wealth is increased by the payment of the Zakat.” Afterwards, when the commandment prohibiting interest was sent down at Al-Madinah, it was said: “Allah deprives interest of all blessing and develops charity.” (For the later commands, see Surah Aal-Imran: Ayat 130, and Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayats 275 to 281).

This verse has been given two interpretations by the commentators. One section of them says: Here *riba* does not mean the interest which is forbidden by the Shariah, but it means the gift or the present which is given with the intention that the recipient will return it redoubled, or will perform some useful service for the donor, or his becoming prosperous will be beneficial for the donor himself. “This is the view of Ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Dahhak, Qatadah, Ikrimah, Muhammad bin Kaab al-Qurzi and Shabi. Probably this comment has been made by these scholars for the reason that in this verse the only consequence mentioned of the act is that in the sight of Allah such wealth will not increase at all; if, however, it had meant the interest forbidden by the Shariah, it would have been positively said that it will be severely punished by Allah.

The other group differs from this and says that it means the same well known *riba* which has been forbidden by the Shariah. This is the opinion of Hasan Basri and Suddi, and Allama Alusi also has opined that the apparent meaning of

the verse is the same, for *riba*, in Arabic is used in the same meaning. This interpretation has been adopted by the commentator Nisaburi also.

In our opinion also this second interpretation is correct, for the argument given in favor of the first interpretation is not enough for discarding the well known meaning of the word *riba*. In the period when Surah Ar-Rum was sent down, interest had not been forbidden yet. The prohibition was made several years afterwards. The way of the Quran is that it first prepares the minds for the thing that it has to prohibit at a later stage. About wine the only thing said in the beginning was that it is not pure food. (Surah An-Nahl: Ayat 67). Then in Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayat 219, it was said that the harm of its sin is greater than its benefit. Then it was enjoined that the Prayer should not be offered in the state of intoxication. (SURah An-Nisa: Ayat 43). Then, finally, it was prohibited totally. Similarly, about interest here it has been only said that it does not increase the wealth, but the real increase is caused by the Zakat. After this, the compound interest was forbidden (Surah Aal-Imran: Ayat 130); and finally, interest itself was made absolutely unlawful. (Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayat 275).

*60 There is no limit to this increase. The greater the sincerity of intention, the deeper will be the sense of sacrifice. The greater the intensity of desire for Allah's pleasure with which a person spends his wealth in His way, the greater and more handsome will be the rewards that Allah will give to him. According to an authentic *Hadith*, even if a person gives a fig in the way of Allah, Allah will

increase it to the size of Mount Uhud.

40. Allah ^{*61} is He who created you, then He has provided for your sustenance, ^{*62} then He will cause you to die, then He will give you life (again). Are there any of your partners (of Allah) who do anything of that. ^{*63} Praised and Exalted be He above what they associate (with Him).

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ رَزَقَكُمْ
ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ هَلْ
مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ مِنْ
ذَلِكَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ سُبْحَانَهُ
وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

*61 From here again the discourse turns to the theme of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter for the admonition of the disbelievers and the mushriks.

*62 That is, “He provided all the various means in the earth for your sustenance and made such arrangements that everyone should receive something from the circulation of the provision.”

*63 That is, “If those whom you have set up as deities can neither create, nor provide sustenance, nor have power over life and death, nor can raise you back to life after death, then what for have you set them up as your deities?”

41. Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of (the evil of) what the hands of people have earned, that He may make them taste a part of what they have done, that perhaps

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا
كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ
بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَرْجِعُونَ

they may return.*64

*64 This is again an allusion to the war that was going on between Byzantium and Iran, which was telling on the whole of the Middle East. "What the hands of people have earned" means the wickedness and oppression and tyranny, which inevitably appear in human conduct and character as a result of adopting shirk and atheism and ignoring the Hereafter. "Perhaps they may return" means that Allah shows the evil consequences of some of the acts of men in this world before the punishment of the Hereafter so that they understand the reality, feel the error of their conjectures and turn to the righteous belief, which the Prophets of Allah have been presenting before man since the earliest times, and besides adopting which there is no other way of ordering human conduct on sound foundations. This subject has been presented at several places in the Quran, e.g. in Surah At-Taubah: Ayat 126, Surah Ar-Raad: Ayat 31, Surah As-Sajdah: Ayat 21, Surah At-Tur: Ayat 47.

42. Say (O Muhammad): "Travel in the land, then see how was the end of those before." Most of them were associators (with Allah).*65

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ
كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُشْرِكِينَ

*65 That is, "The disastrous war between Byzantium and Iran is not a new thing of its kind. The past history of mankind is full of the accounts of the destruction of great nations. The root cause of the evils that caused the

destruction of those nations was shirk which you are today being admonished to avoid.”

43. So set your face firmly towards the true Faith before there comes a Day from Allah which none can avert it.*⁶⁶ That Day they shall be divided.

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ الْقَيِّمِ مِنْ
قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ مِنْ
اللَّهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصَّدَّعُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

***66** That is, “The Day which neither Allah Himself will avert nor has He given power to anyone else to avert it.”

44. Whoever disbelieves, then upon him is (the burden of) his disbelief.*⁶⁷ And those who do righteousness, then such prepare a place for themselves.

مَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ وَ مَنْ عَمِلَ
صَالِحًا فَلِأَنْفُسِهِمْ يَمْهَدُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

***67** This is a comprehensive sentence which encompasses all those harms which can afflict a disbeliever on account of his disbelief. No list of the harms could be so comprehensive as this.

45. That He may reward those who believe and do righteous deeds of His bounty. Indeed, He does not love the disbelievers.

لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا
يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

46. And among His signs is that He sends the winds as

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ الرِّيَّاحَ

good tidings,^{*68} and to let you taste of His mercy, and that the ships may sail by His command,^{*69} and that you may seek of His bounty,^{*70} and that you may be thankful.

مُبَشِّرَاتٍ وَلِيُذِيقَكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ
وَلِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلُكُ بِأَمْرِهِ
وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ
تَشْكُرُونَ



***68** That is, to give good news of the rain.

***69** This refers to winds, which are helpful in sailing. In ancient times, sailing boats and ships mostly depended on favorable winds and adverse winds were disastrous for them. Therefore, the mention of these winds after the rain bringing winds has been made as a special favor of Allah.

***70** “Seek of His bounty”: To perform trade journeys.

47. And certainly, We sent messengers before you to their own peoples. So they came to them with clear evidences,^{*71} then we took vengeance on those who committed crimes.^{*72} And it was incumbent upon Us to help the believers.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ رُسُلًا
إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَاءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
فَأَنْتَقَمْنَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا
وَكَانَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نَصْرُ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ



***71** That is, “One kind of the signs are those which are scattered in the world around man, which he comes across at every moment of his life, one of which is the system of the circulation of winds, as mentioned in the preceding verse.

The other kinds of the signs are those which the Prophets of Allah brought in the form of the miracles and divine revelations and the extraordinary pure characters and their healthy and life-giving influence on human society. Both kinds of the signs point to the same reality, which is this: The *Tauhid* which the prophets teach is based on the truth. Each of these signs supports the other. The signs of the universe testify to the truth of what the Prophets say, and the signs brought by the Prophets explain the reality being pointed out by the signs of the universe.”

*72 “Who committed crimes”: those who remained blind to these two kinds of the signs and persisted in their denial of *Tauhid* and their rebellion against God.

48. Allah is He who sends the winds so that they raise clouds, then He spreads them along the sky however He wills, and He makes them into fragments, then you see the rain drops coming forth from their midst. Then when He causes it to fall upon whom He wills of His slaves, behold, they do rejoice.

اللَّهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ فَتُثِيرُ
سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ
كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُ كِسْفًا فَتَرَى
الْوَدْقَ تَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ فَإِذَا
أَصَابَ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ
عِبَادِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

49. Although before, that even before it was sent down upon them, they were in despair.

وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ
عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمُبْلِسِينَ

50. Then look at the effects (signs) of the mercy of Allah, how He revives the earth after its death.^{*73} Indeed, that He will give life to the dead. And He is Able to do all things.

فَانظُرْ إِلَىٰ ءَاثِرِ رَحْمَتِ اللَّهِ
كَيْفَ تَحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا
إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ لَمُحْيِ الْمَوْتَىٰ
وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

***73** There is a subtle allusion in the mention of the Prophethood and the rain, one after the other, to the reality that the advent of a Prophet is a blessing for man's moral life even as the coming of the rain proves to be a blessing for his material life. Just as the dead earth awakens to life by a shower of the rain from the sky and starts blooming and swelling with vegetation, so is the morally and spiritually desolate human world quickened to life at the coming down of divine revelation and starts blossoming with moral excellences and virtues. This is the disbelievers' own misfortune that they show ingratitude, and regard the blessing of Prophethood as a portent of death for themselves instead of a good news of life.

51. And if We send a wind, then they see (the crops) turn yellow,^{*74} they would remain thereafter in their disbelief.^{*75}

وَلَيْنَ أَرْسَلْنَا رِيحًا فَرَأَوْهُ مُصْفَرًّا
لَّظَلُّوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ يَكْفُرُونَ

***74** That is, a frosty wind or a heat wave which ruins their

crops after they started flourishing by the shower of rain.

***75** That is, they start cursing God and blaming Him for all their misfortunes and troubles, whereas when God had showered His blessings on them, they had shown ingratitude instead of being grateful to Him. Here again there is a subtle allusion to the theme that when the Messengers of Allah bring the messages of mercy to the people, they do not listen to them and reject the blessing; then when God imposes tyrants and despots upon them in consequence of their disbelief, who persecute them severely, and destroy their humanity, the same people start abusing and blaming God for creating a world full of tyranny and cruelty.

52. So indeed, you (Muhammad) cannot make the dead to hear,^{*76} nor can you make the deaf to hear the call when they show their backs, turning away.^{*77}

فَإِنَّكَ لَا تُسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَلَا
تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَاءَ إِذَا وَلَّوْا
مُدْبِرِينَ



***76** That is, those whose consciences have become dead, whose moral selves have become devoid of life, whose self-worship and stubbornness and obstinacy have destroyed their capacity to understand and accept the truth.

***77** “The deaf”: those who have put locks on their minds and hearts so that they do not understand anything although they hear everything; then, when such people also try that the message of the truth should not at all enter their ears, and they should avoid and keep away from the inviter, nobody can make them hear and understand

anything.

53. And you (Muhammad) cannot guide the blind from their straying.*78 You can make to hear only those who believe in Our revelations so they have submitted.

وَمَا أَنْتَ بِهَادٍ الْعُمَىٰ عَنِ
ضَلَالَتِهِمْ ۗ إِن تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا مَن
يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ



***78** That is, “It is not for the Prophet that he should help and guide the blind by the hand to the right way all through the life. He can only show guidance to the right path. But guiding those whose hearts have been blinded and who do not at all see the way that the Prophet tries to show them, is not within the power of the Prophets.”

54. Allah is He who created you from weakness, then after weakness appointed strength, then after strength appointed weakness and grey hair. He creates what He wills.*79 And it is He who is the All Knowing, the All Mighty.

۞ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ ضَعْفٍ
ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَعْفٍ قُوَّةً
ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعْفًا
وَشَيْبَةً ۗ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ
الْعَلِيمُ الْقَدِيرُ



***79** That is, “The states of childhood and youth and old age have all been created by Him. It is dependent upon His will that He may create whomsoever He pleases weak and whomever He pleases strong. He may give death to

whomsoever He pleases before attaining manhood and whomsoever He pleases in the prime of youth. He may grant a long life and yet keep in sound health whomsoever He pleases and bring to a wretched, agonizing old age after a brimful youth whomever He likes. Man may live in self-conceit and arrogance if he so likes, but he is so helpless in God's powerful grip that he cannot change by any artifice the state that He may place him in."

55. And the Day when the Hour will be established,^{*80} the criminals will swear they had not stayed but an hour,^{*81} thus they used to be deceived (in worldly life).^{*82}

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ
الْمُجْرِمُونَ مَا لَبِثُوا غَيْرَ سَاعَةٍ
كَذَلِكَ كَانُوا يُؤْفَكُونَ

***80** That is, Resurrection, which is being foretold here.

***81** That is, from the time of death till Resurrection. Even if thousands of years might have elapsed since their death they will feel that they had gone to sleep a few hours earlier and then a sudden calamity had roused them from sleep.

***82** That is, "They used to make similar wrong estimates in the world. There also they lacked the realization of reality, and therefore, used to assert that there was going to be no Resurrection, no life-after-death, and no accountability before God."

56. And those who were given the knowledge and faith will say: "Certainly, you have stayed according to the decree of Allah until

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ
وَالْإِيمَانَ لَقَدْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي كِتَابِ

the Day of Resurrection. So this is the Day of Resurrection, but you, you did not know.

اللَّهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْبَعْثِ فَهَذَا يَوْمٌ
الْبَعْثِ وَلَكِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

57. So that Day, their excuses will not benefit those who did injustice, nor will they be asked to seek forgiveness. *83

فِيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِينَ
ظَلَمُوا مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

*83 Another translation can be: “nor it will be required of them to please their Lord”, because they will have lost all opportunity for recourse to repentance and faith and righteous acts, and wasted the time allotted for the test and reached the eve of the announcement of the result.

58. And certainly, We have set forth for mankind, in this Quran, every kind of parable. And if you came to them with a sign, those who disbelieve would surely say: “You are not but following the falsehood.”

وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا
الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ وَلَئِنْ
جِئْتَهُمْ بِآيَةٍ لَيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا مُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. Thus does Allah seal up the hearts of those who

كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ

do not know.

الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

60. So be patient, indeed, the promise of Allah is true.*⁸⁴
And let them not discourage you, those who have no certainty of faith.*⁸⁵

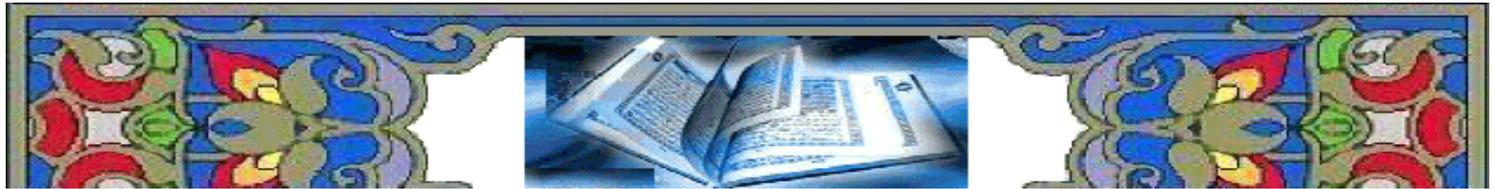
فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَا
يَسْتَخِفُّكَ
الَّذِينَ لَا
يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

***84** The allusion is to the promise made in verse 47 above. There, Allah has mentioned His way of taking vengeance on those criminals who denied and resisted and ridiculed stubbornly the clear signs brought by the Messengers of Allah, and of helping the believers.

***85** That is, “Let not the enemies find you so weak as to suppress you by their uproar, nor to subdue you by their campaign of slander-mongering, nor to dishearten you by their jesting, taunts and derision, nor frighten you by their threats, show of power and persecution, nor allure you by offering baits, nor make you effect a compromise with them on the basis of their appeals in the name of national interests. Instead of this, they should find you so sagacious in the awareness of your objective, so firm in faith and conviction, so resolute in determination, and so strong in character that they should neither be able to subdue you by threats, nor purchase you, nor lure you away by temptation, nor strike any bargain with you in the matter of the faith. This whole theme has been compressed in a short sentence by Allah, saying: “Let not those who lack faith find you light.” Now this is borne out by the firm

evidence of history that the Prophet (peace be upon him) proved to be as invincible and indomitable as Allah wanted His last Prophet to be. Anyone who tried his strength with him in any field and sphere was routed, and eventually the Prophet (peace be upon him) succeeded in bringing about the desired revolution in spite of every kind of opposition and resistance put up by the whole of polytheistic and unbelieving Arabia.”





لُقْمٰن Luqman

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah has been named *Luqman* after *Luqman* the Sage, whose admonitions to his son have been related in Ayats 12-19 of this Surah.

Period of Revelation

A perusal of the subject matter shows that it was revealed in the period when persecution to suppress and thwart the invitation to Islam had begun and every sort of machination had started being employed for the purpose. This is borne out by Ayats 14-15, in which the young converts to Islam have been told that although the rights of the parents are the uppermost after God, they should not listen to them if they prevented them from accepting Islam, or compelled them to revert to the creed of shirk and polytheism. The same thing has been said in Surah Al-Ankabut, which indicates that both these Surahs were sent down in the same period. A study of the style and subject matter of the two Surahs on the whole, however, shows that Surah Luqman was sent down earlier, for one does not see any sign of the antagonism in its background though, contrary to this, while studying Surah Al-Ankabut one can

clearly feel that the Muslims were being severely persecuted during the period of its revelation.

Theme and Subject matter

In this Surah the people have been made to understand the meaninglessness and absurdity of shirk as compared to the truth and reasonableness of *Tauhid*. They have been invited to give up blind imitation of their forefathers, and think with a cool mind the teachings which the Muhammad (peace be upon him) is presenting from the Lord of the worlds, and see with open eyes the manifest signs found in the universe around them and in their own selves, which bear evidence to its truth.

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

1. Alif. Lam. Mim.

آلَم

2. These are revelations of the wise Book.*1

تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ

٢

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

3. A guidance and a mercy for the righteous people.*2

هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٣﴾

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

4. Those who establish the prayer and give the poor-due and have faith with certainty in the Hereafter.*3

الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ
الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ
يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾

*3 It does not mean that the righteous people bear only these three qualities. By using the common epithet of righteous for them, it has been pointed out that they refrain from all those evils which this Book forbids and practice all those good things which this Book enjoins. Then, the three qualities of the righteous person have been especially mentioned in order to show that all other good acts depend on these three things. They establish the Salat which engenders God worship and piety as a permanent habit with them. They pay the Zakat which strengthens the spirit

of sacrifice in them, subdues the love of the world and arouses a desire for the goodwill of Allah. And they believe in the Hereafter, which instills the sense of responsibility and answerability. This does not allow them to live like an animal which is free to graze at will in the pasture, but allows a man who is fully conscious of the fact that he is not independent but the slave of a Master before Whom he is answerable for all his activities of life. Owing to these three qualities, these righteous people are not the kind of the righteous persons who happen to do good just by chance, who may commit evil as often and as freely as they would do good. Contrary to this, these qualities inculcate in them an enduring system of thought and morality owing to which goodness issues forth from them in a regulated and systematic manner, and the evil, if at all committed, is committed just by chance. They do not have any deep-rooted motives, which might be arising from their own system of thought and morality and leading them on to the evil way under their own nature impulse.

5. Those are on guidance from their Lord, and those are the ones who will be successful.*4

أُولَئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

*4 At the time when these verses were sent down, the disbelievers of Makkah thought, and said so openly, that Muhammad (peace be upon him) and those who accepted his message were wasting and ruining their lives. Therefore, it was stated with full force and emphasis: "Those are the ones who will be successful." That is, they

will not ruin themselves as you seem to think in your ignorance, but they in fact are the ones who alone will attain true success, and the utter failures will be those who have refused to adopt this way.

Here the one who regards true success as confined to the world, in the sense of material prosperity, will be fully missing the Quranic concept of it. To understand the real concept of the true success one should study the following verses of the Quran along with the relevant E.Ns: Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayats 2-5, Surah Aal-Imran: Ayats 102, 130, 200, Surah Al-Maidah: Ayats 35, 90, Surah Al-Anaam: Ayat 21, Surah Al-Aaraf; Ayats 7, 8, 157, Surah At-Taubah: Ayat 88, Surah Yunus: Ayat 17, Surah An-Nahl: Ayat 116, Surah Al-Hajj: Ayat 77, Surah Al-Muminun: Ayat 117, Surah An-Nur: Ayat 51, Surah Ar-Rum: Ayat 38.

6. And of mankind is he who^{*5} purchases idle talks,^{*6} that he may mislead from the way of Allah without knowledge,^{*7} and takes it by way of mockery.^{*8} Those, for them will be a humiliating punishment.^{*9}

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْتَرِي لَهْوًا
الْحَدِيثَ لِيُضِلَّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا
أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

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

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

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

would turn the people's attention away from him? Look! I will tell you how to deal with him." Then he left Makkah for Iraq and managed to get from there legends and tales about the kings of Iran and Rustom and Isfandyar and started to arrange tale telling parties to distract the people from the Quran and to absorb them in the tales. The same tradition has been cited by Vahidi in *Asbab un Nazul* on the authority of Kalbi and Muqatil. And according to Ibn Abbas, Nadr had bough singing girls also for the purpose. Whenever he heard that someone was coming under the Prophet's (peace be upon him) influence, he would impose a singing girl on him with the instruction: "Feed him and entertain him with your songs so that he is absorbed in you and distracted from the other side." This was the same device which the arch criminals of the nations have been employing in every age. They try to get the common people so absorbed in fun and sport and musical entertainments in the name of culture that they are left with no time and sense to attend to the serious problems of life, and in their heedlessness they do not even feel what destruction they are being driven to.

The same commentary of *lahv al-hadith* has been reported from a large number of the companions and their immediate followers. Abdullah bin Masud was asked, "What does *lahv al-hadith* mean in this verse?" He said thrice emphatically: "By God! it means singing." (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Shaibah. Hakim, Baihaqi). Similar traditions have been reported from scholars like Abdullah bin Abbas, Jabir bin Abdullah, Mujahid, Ikrimah, Said bin Jubair,

Hasan Basri, and Makhul. Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim and Tirmidhi have related on the authority of Abu Umamah Baheli that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “It is not lawful to buy and sell and trade in singing girls nor is it lawful to take their price.” In another tradition, the last sentence is to the effect: “It is unlawful to eat their price”. Yet another tradition from Abu Umamah is to the effect: To teach music to slave girls and to trade in them is not lawful and their price is forbidden. All these *Ahadith* also elucidate that the verse containing *lahv al-hadith* was sent down in this very connection. Qadi Abu Bakr Ibn alArabi has related in the *Ahkam alQuran* a Hadith from Abdullah bin Mubarak and Imam Malik on the authority of Anas, saying, that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “He who hears the song of a singing girl in a musical concert, will have molten lead poured into his ear on the Day of Judgment” (In this connection, one should also note that the culture of music in those days flourished almost entirely through the slave girls: Free women had not yet become “artists”. That is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) spoke about trading in slave girls, and described their wages and earnings as their price, and used the word *qaynah* for the singing girl, which is specifically used for a slave girl in Arabic).

*7 “Without knowledge” may be connected with “buys” and also “lead astray”. In the first case, it would mean: The ignorant foolish person buys this alluring thing and does not know that he is buying a ruinous thing at the cost of a highly valuable thing. On the one hand, there are the divine

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

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

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

7. And when Our verses are recited to him, he turns away in arrogance as if he had not heard them, as

وَإِذَا تُلِيٰ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا وَلِيٰ
مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَأَن لَّمْ يَسْمَعْهَا

if there were a deafness in his ears. So give him tidings of a painful punishment.

كَأَنَّ فِي أُذُنَيْهِ وَقْرًا فَبَشِّرْهُ
بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٧﴾

8. Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them are the blissful gardens.*¹⁰

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ هُمْ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

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

9. They will abide therein. A promise of Allah in truth. And He is the All Mighty, the All Wise.*¹¹

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ حَقًّا
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١١﴾

*¹¹ That is, “Nothing can withhold Him from fulfilling His promise, and whatever He does is strictly according to the demands of wisdom and justice. The object of mentioning these two attributes of Allah after saying: “This is a true promise of Allah”, is to stress that Allah neither violates

His promise willfully nor is there in this universe any such power as can prevent Him from fulfilling His promise. Therefore, there can be no chance that one may not receive what Allah has promised to give as a reward for faith and righteous deeds. Moreover, Allah's open promise to bestow this reward is entirely based on His wisdom and His justice. He does not misjudge: it cannot be that He may deprive a deserving person of his reward, and reward a non-deserving one instead. The people characterized by true faith and righteous deeds indeed deserve this reward and Allah will bestow this on them only."

10. He^{*12} has created the heavens without pillars that you see,^{*13} and He has set on the earth firm mountains lest it should shake with you,^{*14} and He has dispersed therein every moving (living) creature. And We send down water from the sky, and We cause to grow therein (plants) of every goodly kind.

خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ
تَرَوْنَهَا ۗ وَأَلْقَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ
أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ
دَابَّةٍ ۗ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ
كَرِيمٍ

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

*13 The actual words *bi-ghair i amad-in tarauna-ha* in the text may have two meanings:

(1) "You can see for yourself that they stand without

pillar”); and

(2) “They stand on the pillars which you cannot see”

Ibn Abbas and Mujahid have favored the second meaning, and many other commentators take the first meaning. If the meaning is expressed in terms of the natural sciences of the present day, it can be said that the countless stars and planets in the heaven have been established in their positions and orbits without any visible support and prop: there are no strings and wires which might have tied them together; there are no iron bars which might be withholding them from falling on one another. It is the law of gravitation which is supporting the system. This interpretation is according to the present-day knowledge. It may be that tomorrow some new addition to our knowledge enables us to interpret the reality better.

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

11. This is the creation of Allah. Then show me what those (you worship) other than Him have created.*15

But the wrongdoers are in error manifest.*16

هَذَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فَأَرُونِي مَاذَا
خَلَقَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ ۗ بَلِ
الظَّالِمُونَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

*15 “Those other than” “the beings whom you have set up as your deities, whom you regard as makers and un-makers of your destinies, whom you have been worshiping as such persistently.”

*16 That is, “When they do not point out in this universe any creation of anyone else than Allah, and obviously they cannot, their setting up the non creators as associates in

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

12. And certainly, We^{*17} had given Luqman wisdom, (saying), that give thanks to Allah.^{*18} And whoever gives thanks, so indeed he gives thanks for (the good of) his ownself. And whoever is ungrateful, then indeed, Allah is Free of need, Owner of Praise.^{*19}

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ أَنِ
 أَشْكُرْ لِلَّهِ ۚ وَمَن يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا
 يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ
 اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ



*17 After presenting a rational argument to refute shirk,

the Arabs are being told that this rational point of view is not being presented before them for the first time, but the wise and learned people before them also have been saying the same thing, including their own famous sage, Luqman. Therefore, they cannot refute the Prophet's (peace be upon him) message, saying, "If shirk was an irrational creed, why didn't it strike so to somebody else before?"

Luqman was well known as a wise and learned man in Arabia. He has been mentioned in the poetry of the pre-Islamic poets like Imraul-Qais, Labid, Aasha, Tarafa and others. Some educated Arabs also possessed a collection of the wise sayings of Luqman. According to traditions, three years before the Hijrah the very first person of Al-Madinah to be influenced by the Prophet (peace be upon him) was Suwaid bin Samit. He went to Makkah for Hajj. There the Prophet (peace be upon him) was as usual preaching Islam to the pilgrims coming from different places, at their residences. When Suwaid heard his speech, he submitted, "I have also gotten a thing similar to what you preach," When the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked what it was, he said, "The roll of Luqman." Then on the Prophet's (peace be upon him) insisting, he read out a portion of it, whereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "This discourse is fine, but that which I have is better still." Then he recited the Quran to him, and Suwaid admitted that that was certainly better than the wisdom of Luqman. According to the historians, this person, Suwaid bin Samit, was known by the title of kamil (perfect) in Al-Madinah on account of his ability, bravery, nobility and poetry. But

after his meeting with the Prophet (peace be upon him), when he returned to Al-Madinah. He was killed in the battle of Buath, which was fought some time afterwards. His tribesmen were of the opinion that he had become a Muslim after his meeting with the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Historically, Luqman is a disputed personage. In the dark centuries of ignorance there was no compiled history. The only source of information were the traditions that were being handed down since centuries. According to these, some people thought that Luqman belonged to the people of Aad and was a king of Yaman. Relying on these traditions, Maulana Sayyid Suleman Nadvi has expressed the opinion in the Ard al-Qaran that Luqman was a descendent of the believers who remained safe with the Prophet Hud (peace be upon him) after the destruction of the people of Aad by a divine torment, and he was one of the kings of Yaman when it was ruled by the Aad. But other traditions which have been reported from some learned companions and their immediate followers do not support this view. Ibn Abbas says Luqman was a negro slave, and the same is the opinion of Abu Hurairah, Mujahid, Ikrimah and Khalid ar-Rabi. According to Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari, he belonged to Nirbah. Said bin al-Musayyib says that he was an Egyptian negro. These three sayings closely resemble one another. The Arabs generally called the black people negroes (Habashis) in those days, and Nirbah is the country south of Egypt and north of Sudan. Therefore, calling the same person an Egyptian and

a Nubian and a negro, in spite of the difference in words. is one and the same thing. Then the elucidations made by Suhayli in Raud al-Unuf nd Masudi in Muruj adh-Dhahab also throw some light on the question as to how the wisdom of this Sudanese slave spread in Arabia. They both agree that this person, though originally a Nubian, was an inhabitant of Madyan and Aylah (modern, Aqabah). That is why he spoke Arabic and his wisdom spread in Arabia. Besides, Suhayli also elucidates that Luqman the Sage and Luqman bin Aad were two different persons, and it is not correct to regard them as one and the same man.

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

*18 That is, "The very first demand of the wisdom and knowledge, insight and sagacity, granted by Allah was that

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

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

13. And when Luqman said to his son, while he was advising him: "O my son, do not associate (partners) with Allah.*20 Indeed, association

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ
يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ
إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

(with Allah) is a tremendous wrong.”*21

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

*21 *Zulm* means to deprive someone of his right and to act unjustly. *Shirk* is a grave iniquity because man sets up such beings as equals with his Creator and Provider and Benefactor as have no share whatever in creating him, nor in providing for him, nor in bestowing the blessings on him,

which he is enjoying in the world. There could be no greater injustice than this. The Creator's right on man is that he should worship Him alone, but he worships others and so deprives Him of His right. Then, in whatever he does in connection with the worship of others than Allah, he exploits many things, from his own mind and body to the earth and heavens, whereas, all these things have been created by Allah, the One. And man has no right to use any of them in the worship of any other than Allah. Then, the right of man's own self on him is that he should not debase and involve it in punishment. But when he worships others than his Creator, he debases his self as well as makes it deserving of the punishment. Thus, the entire life of a *mushrik* becomes *zulm* in every aspect and at all times and his every breath becomes an expression of injustice and iniquity.

14. And^{*22} We have enjoined upon man about his parents. His mother carried him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years,^{*23} so give thanks to Me and to your parents. Unto Me is the journeying.

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ
أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفِصْلَهُ
فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي
وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَىٰ الْمَصِيرِ

*23 From these words, Imam Shafei, Imam Ahmad, Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad have drawn the conclusion that the suckling period of the child is two years. If a child has been suckled by the a woman within this period, they will be forbidden for each other for marriage,

but if outside and beyond this period, they will not be so. A saying of Imam Malik also supports this. But Imam Abu Hanifah has proposed the period of two and a half years as a precaution, and has added that the child has been weaned after two years, or even earlier, and it is no longer dependent upon suckling for its food, no woman would be forbidden for him, if she gave him suck after that period. However, if the real food of the child is still milk, suckling during the period will render him and her forbidden for each other in spite of his eating the other food in a more or less quantity. For, the verse does not mean that the child should be suckled necessarily for two years. In Surah Al-Baqarah it has been said: “The mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years, if the fathers desire the suckling to be completed.” (Ayat 233). Ibn Abbas from these words has concluded, and other scholars have agreed with him in this, that the shortest period of pregnancy is six months, for the Quran at another place says: “His bearing (in the womb) and his weaning took thirty months.” (Surah Al-Ahqaf: Ayat 15).

15. And if they strive with you to make you associate with Me (as partners) that of which you have no knowledge,^{*24} then do not obey them, and accompany them in the world kindly, and follow the way of him who turns in repentance to Me.

وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ
تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ
عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبُهُمَا
فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ
مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ

Then to Me will be your return,^{*25} then I shall tell you of what you used to do.^{*26}

فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ



***24** That is, “About whom you have no knowledge that he is My associate.”

***25** “All of you”: the children as well as the parents.

***26** For explanation, see E.Ns 11 and 12 of Surah Al-Ankabut.

16. (Luqman said):^{*27} “O my son, indeed, if it should be (equal to) the weight of a grain of mustard seed, then should be in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth.^{*28} Indeed, Allah is Subtle, Aware.”

يَبْنِيَّ إِنَّهَا إِنْ تَكُ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ
مِّنْ خَرْدَلٍ فَتَكُنْ فِي صَخْرَةٍ أَوْ
فِي السَّمَوَاتِ أَوْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
يَأْتِ بِهَا اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ
خَبِيرٌ



***27** The other admonitions of Luqman are being narrated here to imply that like the basic beliefs, the teachings pertaining to morals that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is presenting, are not anything new in Arabia.

***28** That is, nothing can escape Allah’s knowledge and His grasp. A seed in the rock may be hidden for you, but it is known to Allah. A particle in the heavens may be very distant for you, but for Allah it is very near. A thing lying in the layers of the earth may be lying in darkness for you but for him it is in full light. Therefore, you cannot do

anything good or bad, anywhere or any time, which may remain hidden from Allah. He is not only aware of it, but when the time for accountability comes, He will place before you a full record of each act of yours.

17. “O my son, establish the prayer and enjoin kindness and forbid iniquity, and bear with patience upon whatever may befall you.^{*29} Indeed, that is firmness in (the conduct of) affairs.”^{*30}

يَبْنِي أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَنْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ
ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

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

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

18. “And do not turn your cheek in scorn toward people,^{*31} nor walk in the land exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not love each self-conceited boaster.”^{*32}

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا
تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ
لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ

^{*31} *Tusair* in the original is from *sear*, a disease in the camel’s neck clue to which it keeps its face turned to one side. The idiom implies the attitude of a person who shows arrogance and vanity, turns his face away and treats others

with scant respect.

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

19. “And be moderate in your walking,^{*33} and lower your voice. Indeed, the harshest of all sounds is the voice of the donkey.”^{*34}

وَأَقْصِدْ فِي مَشِيكَ وَأَغْضُضْ
مِنْ صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ
لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ

*33 According to some commentators it means this: “Walk neither fast nor slow but at a moderate pace”, but the context shows that here the pace or the rate of walking is not the question. There is nothing morally wrong with a fast or a slow pace in itself, nor can there be a rule made for it. When a man is in a hurry, he has to walk fast, and there is nothing wrong if one walks slow when walking for pleasure. Even if there is a standard for the moderate pace, it cannot be made a law for every person at all times. What is actually meant by this is to reform the state of the self under which a person walks haughtily. The haughtiness and arrogance of a person inevitably manifests itself in his gait and style of walking, which shows the state of his mind and also the cause of his pride and haughtiness. Wealth, authority, beauty, knowledge, power and such other things cause a man to become proud and vain, and each of these gives him a special style of gait. Contrary to this,

manifestation of humility in the gait is also the result of one or the other morbid mental state. Sometimes the hidden conceit of the self of a man takes on the form of ostentatious humility, piety and godliness and this is shown by his gait; and sometimes man really feels so embittered by the frustrations of the world that he adopts a sick man's gait. What Luqman meant to say is this: "Avoid these states of the mind and self and walk the gait of a simple, honest and noble person, which neither shows any vanity and haughtiness nor weakness nor ostentatious piety and humility."

The taste of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) great companions in this regard can be judged from a few instances. When Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) once saw a man walking with his head hung down, he shouted out to him, saying, "Walk with your head raised up. Islam is not sick." He saw another person walking like a weak, sick man, and said, "Wretch! Do not sully our religion" Both these incidents show that in the sight of Umar religious piety did not at all require that one should walk cautiously, like the sick man and show undue humility by one's gait. Whenever he saw a Muslim walking such a gait, he would have the apprehension that it would misrepresent Islam and would depress the other Muslims. A similar incident was once met with by Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her). She saw a person walking as if run down and exhausted. She asked what was the matter with him. It was said, "He is one of the reciters of the Quran (i.e. a person who remains engaged in reciting and teaching the

Quran and in worship).” At this she said, “Umar was the chief of the reciters of the Quran, but as it was he would walk with a firm foot, and he would speak with force and strength, and he would give a good beating if he had to.” (See E.N. 43 of Surah Bani Israil and E.N. 79 of Surah Al-Furqan).

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

20. Do you not see that Allah has subjected for you whatever is in the heavens*³⁵ and whatever is on the earth, and He has bestowed upon you His favors, apparent and hidden.*³⁶ And among mankind is he who disputes about Allah*³⁷ without knowledge, and without guidance, and without an enlightening Book.*³⁸

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا
فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَهُ ظَهْرًا
وَبَاطِنًا ۗ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُجَادِلُ
فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى
وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُّنِيرٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

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

***36** “Apparent favors” imply those favors which are perceived by man in one way or the other, or are known to him. And the “hidden favors” are those which are neither perceived by him nor are known to him. There are

countless things in man's own body and in the world outside him, which are working in his interest, but man is utterly unaware of the means which his Creator has provided for his protection and safety, for his development and provision of sustenance to him, and for his well-being and happiness. Research of man in the different branches of science is revealing many such favors of God as were hidden from him before. And the favors and blessings which have so far been revealed are insignificant as against those which are still hidden from man.

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

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

21. And when it is said to them: "Follow that which Allah has sent down," they say: "But we shall follow that upon which we found our fathers." Even if Satan has been inviting them to the punishment of the

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ
اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا وَجَدْنَا
عَلَيْهِ ءِآبَاءَنَا ؕ أُولَٰئِكَ
الشَّيْطَانُ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ

blaze.^{*39}

السَّعِيرِ

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

22. And whoever surrenders his face to Allah,^{*40} and he is a doer of good,^{*41} then certainly he has grasped the firm handhold.^{*42} And to Allah will be the outcome of all matters.

وَمَنْ يُسَلِّمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ
وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ
بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ
الْأُمُورِ

***40** “Whoever surrenders his face to Allah”: Who submits himself wholly to the service of Allah, entrusts all his affairs to Him and makes His guidance the law of his entire life.

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

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

23. And whoever disbelieves, let not his disbelief grieve you (O Muhammad).^{*43} To Us is their return, then We shall

وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَلَا يَحْزُنكَ كُفْرُهُ
إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَنُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا

surely inform them of what they used to do. Indeed, Allah is Aware of what is in the breasts (of men).

عَمِلُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ
الصُّدُورِ ﴿٢٣﴾

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

24. We give them comfort for a while, then We shall drag them to a severe punishment.

نُمَتِّعُهُمْ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ نَضْطَرُّهُمْ إِلَىٰ
عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. And if you (O Muhammad) ask them: “Who created the heavens and the earth.” They would certainly say: “Allah.” Say: “All the praises be to Allah.”^{*44} But most of them do not know.^{*45}

وَلِينَ سَأَلْتَهُم مِّنْ خَلْقِ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ
قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

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

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

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

26. To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth.*46 Indeed, Allah, He is Free of need, the Owner of Praise.*47

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

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

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

27. And if all the trees in the earth were to become pens,

وَلَوْ أَنَّمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ

and the ocean (ink), replenished after that with seven (more) oceans, the words of Allah would not be exhausted.*48 Indeed, Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.

أَقْلَمُ وَالْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
سَبْعَةَ أَنْحُرٍ مَّا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَتُ
اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

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

Here, the object is to make man realize that no creature can become a deity and an associate in the works of Allah, Who has brought into being such a vast Universe, Who is administering its affairs and Whose powers and resources are limitless. Not to speak of becoming an associate in the administration of this vast Kingdom, it is not within the power of any creation to obtain a mere nodding acquaintance with the minutest portion of it. How can then

one imagine that one or the other creation can have any share in the divine powers and authority on the basis of which it may answer prayers and make or un-make destinies?

28. Neither creating you all, nor raising you all (from the dead) is but as (the creation and the raising of) a single soul. Indeed, Allah is All Hearer, All Seer. *49

مَا خَلَقَكُمْ وَلَا بَعَثَكُمْ إِلَّا
كَنَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ
بَصِيرٌ



*49 That is, “He is hearing every sound in the universe distinctly at one and the same time, and no sound can absorb his hearing so completely that He may hear no other sound. Likewise, He is seeing the whole universe in each of its details as to thing and event at one and the same time and nothing can absorb His sight so completely that He may see nothing else. The same precisely is the case concerning the creation of men and their re-creation also. He can re-create instantaneously all the men who have been born since the beginning of the creation and will be born till the end of time, His creative power is not absorbed so completely in the creation of one man that He may be unable to create other men at the same time. For Him the creation of one man and of the billions of men, therefore, is equal and one and the same thing.”

29. Have you not seen that Allah causes the night to enter into the day, and causes the day to enter into

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُوَلِّجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي
النَّهَارِ وَيُوَلِّجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ

the night, and has subjected the sun and the moon,^{*50} each running (its course) to an appointed term,^{*51} and that Allah is All Aware of whatever you do.

وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلَّ
يَجْرِي إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَأَنَّ
اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

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

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

30. That is so because Allah, He is the Truth,^{*52} and that what they call besides Him is falsehood,^{*53} and

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا
يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الْبَاطِلُ وَأَنَّ

because Allah, He is the
Sublime, the Great. *54

اللَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ

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

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

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

31. Have you not seen that the ships sail through the sea by the favor of Allah, that He may show you of His signs. *55 Indeed, in that are signs for every steadfast, grateful (person). *56

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ الْفُلُكَ تَجْرِي فِي
الْبَحْرِ بِنِعْمَتِ اللَّهِ لِيُرِيكُمْ
آيَاتِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ

*55 That is, such signs show that all powers rest only with Allah. Man may make as strong and suitable ships for his sea journeys as he likes, and may achieve whatever perfection in marine science and in the related knowledge and experience, these by themselves cannot avail him anything to perform safe voyages especially when confronted by the terrible forces at the sea, unless he is succored by the grace of Allah. As soon as Allah's grace is withdrawn, man immediately realizes how meager and

insufficient are the means and resources and knowledge of the sciences. Similarly, man in the state of peace and security may be a hardened atheist or polytheist, but when his boat loses balance in the storm at sea, even the atheist comes to realize that there is God and the polytheist that there is only One God.

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

32. And when a wave enshrouds them like the canopy, they call to Allah, making their faith sincere for Him. Then when He delivers them to land, then

وَإِذَا غَشِيَهُمْ مَوَّجٌ كَالظُّلَلِ دَعَوُا
اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا
نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ فَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ

some among them follow the middle ways.^{*57} And none denies Our signs except every treacherous ungrateful.^{*58}

وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا كُلُّ خَتَّارٍ كَفُورٍ



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

***58** These two qualities are the antithesis of the two qualities mentioned in the preceding verse. A treacherous person is he who is utterly disloyal and who has no regard

for his promise and pledge, and the ungrateful he who does not acknowledge the good and the gains and the benefits received by him, and even behaves rebelliously towards his benefactor. The people having these qualities return to their disbelief, their atheism and their polytheism without any hesitation as soon as the danger has been averted. They do not admit that they had perceived some signs in their own selves as well as outside themselves of Allah's existence and of His being only One when overwhelmed by the storm, and their invoking Allah was in fact the result of their recognition of the same reality. The atheists among them explain away their act, saying, "It was a weakness which we manifested in the state of confusion and bewilderment, whereas there exists no God, Who might have saved us from the storm: we in fact succeeded in escaping by virtue of such and such a device and means and resources." As for the mushriks, they generally say, "We had the succor and protection of such and such a saint or god and goddess available to us by virtue of which we escaped." Therefore, as soon as they land on the shore, they start giving thanks to these false gods and presenting offerings at their shrines. They do not bother to think that when they had lost hope, there was none beside Allah, the One, whom they might have implored and invoked for help.

33. O mankind: "Fear your Lord and fear a Day when no father shall avail anything for his son, nor shall any son avail

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ أَتَقُؤا رَبَّكُمْ
وَأَخْشَوْا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي وَالِدٌ
عَنْ وَلَدِهِ وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ هُوَ جَارٍ

anything for his father.*⁵⁹
Indeed, Allah's promise is
the truth.*⁶⁰ So let not the
life of the world deceive
you,*⁶¹ nor let the deceiver
(Satan) deceive you about
Allah.”*⁶²

عَنْ وَالِدِهِ شَيْئًا إِنَّ وَعْدَ
اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تُغْرِنَكُمْ الْحَيَاةُ
الدُّنْيَا وَلَا يَغْرِنَكُمْ بِاللَّهِ
الْغُرُورُ



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

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

***61** The life of the world involves the people, who only see

the superficial, in different kinds of misunderstandings. Someone thinks that life and death only belong to this world, and there is no life after this; therefore, whatever one has to do, one should do it here and now. Another one who is lost in his wealth and power and prosperity, forgets his death and gets involved in the foolish idea that his grandees and his power are everlasting. Another one overlooking the moral and spiritual objectives regards the material gains and pleasures in themselves as the only objectives and does not give anything any importance but the standard of living, no matter whether his standard of humanity goes on falling lower and lower as a result thereof. Someone thinks that worldly prosperity is the real criterion of truth and falsehood: every way of life that ensures this is the truth and everything contradictory to it is falsehood. Someone regards this very prosperity as a sign of being Allah's favorite and assumes the law that whoever is leading a prosperous life here is Allah's beloved no matter by what means he might have achieved this prosperity, and whoever is leading a miserable life in the world, even if it be so due to his love of the truth and his uprightness, will live a miserable life in the Hereafter, too. These and other such misunderstandings have been called deceptions of the worldly life by Allah.

*62 *Al-gharur* (the deceiver) may be Satan or a man or a group of them, or even man's own self, or something else. The reason for using this comprehensive and meaningful word in its absolute form without identifying a particular person or thing is that for different people there are

different means that cause them deception. Any particular means or cause that deceived a person to be misled and misguided from the right way to the wrong way, will be *al-gharur* in his particular case.

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

34. Indeed, Allah, with Him is knowledge of the Hour. And He sends down

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ

the rain. And He knows that which is in the wombs. And no soul knows what it will earn tomorrow. And no soul knows in what land it will die. Indeed, Allah is All Knower, All Aware.*63

وَيُنزِّلُ مَا فِي
الْأَرْحَامِ ۗ وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ
مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا ۗ وَمَا
تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٦٣﴾

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

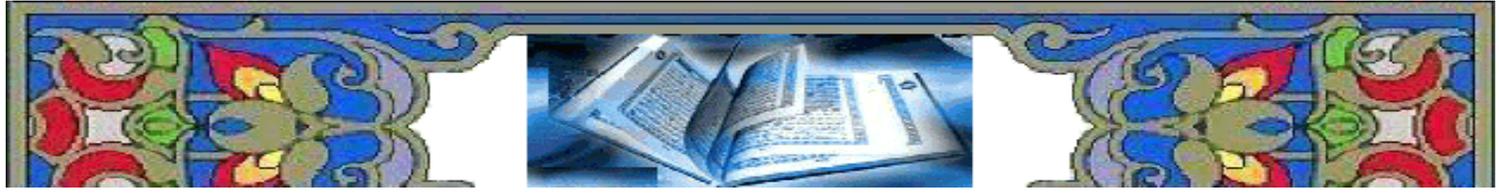
The first sentence: "Allah, with Him is the knowledge of the Hour", is the real answer to the question. The four sentences that follow constitute the argument to support it. The argument means this: "O man, you do not have the knowledge even about those things with which you are most closely and intimately concerned in life. How then can it be possible for you to know as to when will the whole world come to an end? Your prosperity and adversity mainly depend on the rain. But its control and regulation is entirely in the hand of Allah. He sends down the rain whenever and wherever and in whatever measure He

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

Here, another thing also should be understood well, and that is: This verse does not give a list of the unseen and hidden things, which are known to no one but Allah. Here only some of the most apparent things have been pointed out only to serve as an illustration. These are the things with which man is most deeply and intimately concerned, yet he is unaware of them. From this it would be wrong to

conclude that these are the only five unseen and hidden things which are known to no one but Allah. As a matter of fact, *ghaib* applies to every such thing which is hidden from the creation but is in the knowledge of Allah, and such things are countless and limitless. (For a detailed discussion of this, see Surah An-Naml: Ayat 65 and its E.Ns.).





السَّجْدَةَ As-Sajadah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah has been entitled *As-Sajadah* after the theme of *Sajadah* (prostration) as expressed in Ayat 15.

Period of Revelation

From the style of the Surah it appears that it was revealed during the middle Makkah period, more particularly in its initial stage, for one does not find in its background that severity of the persecution and tyranny which one finds in the Surahs revealed in the later stages.

Theme and Topics

The main theme of the Surah is to remove the doubts of the people concerning *Tauhid*, the Hereafter and the prophethood, and to invite them to all these three realities. The disbelievers of Makkah, when they talked of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in private, said to one another, “This person while forging strange things, sometimes, he gives news of what will happen after death. He says: “When you have become dust, you will be called to render your accounts, and there will be Hell and Heaven.” Sometimes he says: “These gods and goddesses and saints

are nonentities: One God alone is the Deity.” And sometimes he says: “The discourses which I recite are not my own but Allah’s Word.” All these are strange things which he presents. The answer to these doubts and misgivings forms the theme and subject matter of this Surah.

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

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

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

Hereafter.

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

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

Then the disbelievers of Makkah have been admonished to the effect: "See the end of the doomed communities of the past by whose ruined habitations you pass during your trade journeys. Would you like to meet the same doom yourself? Do not be deluded by the apparent and superficial. Today you see that no one is listening to Muhammad (peace be upon him) except a few young men and some slaves and poor men, and he is being made the target of curses and ugly remarks from every side. From this you have formed the wrong impression that his mission will fail. But this is only a deception of your eyes. Don't you see the phenomenon in your daily life that a land previously

lying absolutely barren starts swelling with vegetation and plant life everywhere just by a single shower of the rain, though before this no one could ever imagine that under the layers of its soil there lay hidden such treasures of greenery and herbage?”

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

1. Alif. Lam. Mim

الم ﴿١﴾

2. The revelation of the Book in which there is no doubt is from the Lord of the worlds.*1

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ
مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢﴾

*1 Several Surahs of the Quran begin with one or the other such introductory sentence, which is meant to declare at the outset where from this discourse is being issued. This is apparently the same sort of an introductory sentence as an announcer speaks in the beginning of a radio program to tell which radio station he is speaking from. But unlike the ordinary announcement from a radio station, when the extraordinary declaration at the beginning of a Surah is made to the effect that this message is being issued by the Ruler of the Universe, it is not merely meant to specify the origin of the discourse, but, besides, it also puts forward a

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

Here, what has been said is not merely that this Book has been sent down by the Lord of the Worlds, but, besides, it also asserts most forcefully: "It is without any doubt the Book of God: there is absolutely no room for doubt about its having been revealed by Allah." If this assertive sentence is studied in the actual context itself, it will be seen that it contains the argument also along with the assertion, and this argument was not hidden from the people of Makkah before whom the assertion was being made. The whole life of the person presenting it had been spent before them. They had known him before he presented the Book as well as after he had presented it. They knew that the person presenting the Book with that assertion was the most righteous, the most serious and the most pious and virtuous

man of their society. They also knew that until a day before he made the claim to prophethood, no one had ever heard from him those things which he had started presenting suddenly just after his claim to prophethood. They found a marked difference between the diction and style used in the Book and the diction and style used by Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself, in his daily life. They also recognized naturally that one and the same person could not have two styles so different from each other. They were also experiencing the highly miraculous literature being presented in the Book and, being the Arabic speaking people themselves, knew that all their literary men and poets were feeling utterly helpless in producing anything the like of it. They were also not unaware that there was a world of difference between the literary productions and orations of their poets and sorcerers and orators, and the divine discourses being recited before them and the sublimity of the pure themes being presented in them. They did not see in the Book and in the message of the one presenting it any trace whatever of selfishness, which is always present in the work and message of a false claimant to prophethood. They could not find out, however, hard they might have tried, that Muhammad (peace be upon him) by laying claim to Prophethood was trying to secure a certain benefit for himself or his family or his clan and tribe, or that he had any vested interest in the message he gave. Then, they could also see what sort of the people of their society were being drawn to his message and what great revolution was taking place in them as soon as they

came in contact with his invitation. All these things together supported and proved the assertion and claim. That is why in that background it was enough to say that it is, beyond any doubt, a Book that has been sent down by the Lord of the Worlds. No further argument was needed to substantiate the claim.

3. Or do^{*2} they say: “He (Muhammad) has invented it.”^{*3} But it is the truth from your Lord, that you may warn a people to whom no warner has come before you,^{*4} perhaps they will be guided.^{*5}

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ بَلْ هُوَ
الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لِتُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا
أَتَتْهُمْ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَهْتَدُونَ



***2** After the above introductory sentence, the first objection of the polytheists of Makkah, which they raised concerning the Prophethood of the Prophet (peace be upon him), is being dealt with.

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

accusation?

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

***5** That is; “Just, as its being the truth and a revelation

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

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

Here, another question may arise in the minds, which should be answered straightaway. One may ask: When no Prophet had come to the Arabs for hundreds of years before the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), what would be the basis of accountability of the people who had

lived in that age of ignorance? They could not tell guidance from deviation and error. Then, if they had gone astray, how could they be held responsible for their deviation? The answer is this: The detailed knowledge of the true faith might have been lost to those people, but even in that age of ignorance the people were not unaware that the true faith was based on *Tauhid*, and the Prophets had never taught idol-worship to their followers. This truth was also contained in those traditions which the Arabs had received from the Prophets born in their own land, and they were also aware of this through the teachings of the Prophets Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus (peace be upon them) who had been born in the land adjoining their own. In the traditions of Arabia, it was also well known that in the earliest times the Arabs' real religion was the religion of Abraham and that idol-worship had been introduced among them by a person named Amr bin Luhay. In spite of the prevalence of shirk and idol-worship, there were living in different parts of Arabia many such people, who rejected shirk, professed *Tauhid* and openly condemned offering of sacrifices at the shrines of idols. In the age close to the Prophet's own, there had passed people who were known as *Hunafa*. These people publicly professed *Tauhid* as the basis of the faith and declared their dissociation from the religion of the mushriks. Obviously they had received this concept from whatever had remained behind from the influence of the teaching of the Prophets. Moreover, the inscriptions belonging to the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. which have been discovered in Yaman as a result of

modern archaeological research and investigation, reveal that a monotheistic religion existed there in that age, whose followers acknowledged *ar-Rahman* (the All-Merciful) and *Rabb-us-sama walard* (Lord of the heavens and earth) alone as the One and only deity. An inscription, dated 378 A.D. has been found from the ruins of a house of worship, which says that this house of worship has been built for the worship of “God of heavens” or “Lord of heavens”. In an inscription of 465 A.D. there are words which clearly point to the doctrine of *Tauhid*. Similarly, an inscription of 512 A.D. has been discovered at Zabad, a place between the river Euphrates and Qinnasrin, in northern Arabia, bearing the words: *Bismilahu, laizza illa lahu, la shukra, illa lahv*. All this shows that before the advent of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the teachings of the former Prophets had not altogether been forgotten, and there still existed many means which at least reminded man of the truth: “Your God is only One God.” (For further explanation, see E.N. 84 of Surah Al-Furqan).

4. Allah it is^{*6} He who has created the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them in six days. Then He established himself above the Throne.^{*7} You do not have, besides Him, any protecting friend, nor an intercessor. Will you then not remember.^{*8}

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ
أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ
مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُوْنِهِ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَلَا
شَفِيعٍ أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ

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

*7 For explanation, see E.N. 41 of Surah Al-Aaraf, E.N. 4 of Surah Yunus and E.N. 3 of Surah Ar-Raad.

*8 That is, "Your real God is the Creator of the heavens and earth. But you in your folly have set up others than Him as your helpers and supporters in the vast kingdom of this universe. The Creator of this whole universe and whatever it contains is Allah. Here, everything except His own self is created, and Allah has not gone to sleep after having created and made the world go. But He Himself is the Ruler and Sovereign and Sustainer of His kingdom. Then, how senseless are you that you have set up a few of His creatures as the masters of your destinies! If Allah does not help you, none of them has the power to help you. If Allah should seize you, none of them has the power to secure your liberty. If Allah does not permit, none of them has the power to intercede for you before Him."

5. He administers the ordinance from the heavens to the earth, then it ascends to Him in a Day, the measure of which is a thousand years of that

يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى
الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ
كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا

which you count.*9



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

In Surah Al-Maarij (Ayats 1-7), it has been said: “An asker has asked for a torment, (the torment) which must befall the disbelievers. There is none to avert it. It is from that God Who is the Owner of the Steps of Ascent. The angels and the Spirit ascend to His Presence in a day whose measure is fifty thousand years. So, have patience, O

Prophet, a graceful patience! They think it is far off, but We see it near at hand.”

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

6. Such is the Knower^{*10} of the invisible and the visible, the All Mighty,^{*11} the Merciful.^{*12}

ذَلِكَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

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

***11** “The All Mighty”: The One Who is dominant over everything: no power in the universe can hinder Him in His design and will and obstruct His command from being enforced. Everything is subdued to Him and nothing can resist Him.

***12** That is, He is not tyrannous to His creatures but is Gracious and Merciful in spite of being overwhelmingly

dominant and possessor of all power and authority.

7. Who made all things good that He created,^{*13} and He began the creation of man from clay.

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ
وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ



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

8. Then He made his progeny from an extract of despised fluid.^{*14}

ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ
مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ



***14 That is, “In the beginning He created man directly by His own act of creation, and then placed in man himself such a procreative ability that similar men continue being**

produced by his sperm-drop. By one excellent act He gave life and consciousness and intellect to a combination of earthly elements by His creative command so that a wonderful creation like man came into being; by another excellent act He placed in man's own organism such a wonderful machinery for the production of similar more men in the future, whose mode of functioning is highly astonishing and amazing.”

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

upholders of Darwinism. (For further explanation, see E.N. 1 of Surah An-Nisa, E.N. 10 and 146 of Surah Al-Aaraf, and E.N. 17 of Surah Al-Hijr).

9. Then He fashioned him^{*15} and breathed into him of His Spirit,^{*16} and appointed for you hearing and sight and hearts.^{*17} Little is the thanks that you give.^{*18}

ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوْحِهِ
وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ
وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۗ قَلِيلاً مَّا
تَشْكُرُونَ

***15** “Fashioned him”: developed him from a microscopic organism into a full-fledged human being and perfected him with limbs and other organs of the body.

***16** “Spirit” does not merely imply the life because of which a living thing moves, but the essential human characteristic which imbues man with consciousness and thought, discretion and judgment, discernment, and discrimination, by virtue of which he is distinguished from all other earthly creations and becomes possessor of a personality and self and worthy of Allah’s vicegerency. Allah has called this “Spirit” His own either because it belongs to Him alone, and its being attributed to Himself is just like a thing’s being attributed to its master, or because the attributes of knowledge, thought, consciousness, will, judgment, discretion, etc. with which man has been characterized are a reflection to the attributes of Allah. They have not arisen from any combination of matter, but from Allah Himself. Man has received knowledge from Allah’s Knowledge,

wisdom from Allah's Wisdom, and discretion and authority from Allah's Authority. He has not received these from a source which is without knowledge, without wisdom and without discretion and authority. (For further explanation, see E.N. 19 of Surah Al-Hijr).

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

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

***18** That is, "The wonderful human spirit with such excellent qualities has not been given to you so that you may live like the animals in the world and plan life for yourselves as an animal would. You were given the eyes so

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

10. And^{*19} they say: “When we are lost in the earth, will we indeed be created anew.” But they are disbelievers in the meeting with their Lord.^{*20}

وَقَالُوا أَإِذَا ضَلَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 أَإِنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ۚ بَلْ هُمْ
 بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ كَافِرُونَ

^{*19} After answering the disbelievers’ objections about the prophethood and *Tauhid*, now their objection about the Hereafter, which is the third basic belief of Islam, is being dealt with. The conjunction *waw* (and) in the beginning of the verse connects this paragraph with the foregoing theme, as if the sequence were like this: “They say: Muhammad is not Allah’s Messenger,” They say: “Allah is not One and

the only Deity,” and They say: “We shall not be raised back to life after death.”

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

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

11. Say: “The angel of death, who has charge over you, will take your souls, then you shall be brought back to your Lord.”*21

قُلْ يَتَوَفَّيْكُمْ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ
الَّذِي وُكِّلَ بِكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ
تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١١﴾

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

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

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

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

of the seizer.

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

12. And if^{*22} you could see when the criminals will lower their heads before their Lord. (saying): “Our Lord, we have seen and we have heard so send us back, we will do righteous deeds, we do indeed believe.”

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الْمُجْرِمُونَ
نَاكِسُوا رُءُوسِهِمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ
رَبَّنَا أَبْصَرْنَا وَسَمِعْنَا فَارْجِعْنَا
نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا إِنَّا مُوقِنُونَ



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

13. And if We had so willed, We could have given every soul its guidance,^{*23} but the word from Me (about

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَآتَيْنَا كُلَّ نَفْسٍ
هُدًىهَا وَلَٰكِنْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّي

evil doers) will come true, that I will surely fill Hell with the jinns and mankind together.*24

لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ
وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

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

7-9, 27-28, 158, Surah Yunus: Ayat 19, Surah Al-Muminun: Ayats 99-100).

*24 The allusion is to what Allah had said, addressing Satan, at the creation of Adam: In Ayats 69-88 of Surah Suad the whole story of that time has been related. When Satan refused to prostrate himself before Adam and asked for respite till Resurrection in order to seduce mankind, Allah had replied: “The truth is this, and the truth only I speak, that I shall fill Hell with you and all those who follow you from among mankind.”

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

14. So taste (the evil of your deeds) because of your forgetting the meeting of this Day of yours. *25 Surely, We will forget you (too), and taste the everlasting punishment for what you used to do.

فَذُوقُوا بِمَا نَسِيتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ
هَذَا إِنَّا نَسِينَاكُمْ وَذُوقُوا
عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَعْمَلُونَ

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

15. Only those believe in Our revelations who, when they are reminded of them fall down prostrate and

إِنَّمَا يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا الَّذِينَ إِذَا
ذُكِرُوا بِهَا خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا

glorify the praises of their Lord, and they are not arrogant.*²⁶ **AsSajda**

وَسَبِّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُمْ لَا
يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ



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

16. Their sides forsake their beds, they supplicate their Lord in fear and hope.*²⁷ And of that what We have bestowed on them,*²⁸ they spend.

تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنْ
الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا
وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ



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

***28** In the original, *rizq* means lawful provisions. Unlawful

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

17. So no soul knows what is kept hidden for them as comfort of the eyes. A reward for what they used to do.^{*29}

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ
مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ

*29 Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Imam Ahmad have in different ways cited on the authority of Abu Hurairah that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “Allah says: I have made ready for My righteous servants that which has neither been seen by the eye, nor heard by the ear, nor ever conceived by any man.” The same thing has been reported with a little difference in wording by Abu Said Khudri, Mughirah bin Shubah and Sahl bin Saad asSaidi from the Prophet (peace be upon him) and related with authentic links by Muslim. Ahmed, Ibn Jarir and Tirmidhi.

18. Is then he who is a believer like him who is a disobedient.^{*30} They are not equal.^{*31}

أَفَمَن كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا كَمَن كَانَ
فَاسِقًا لَا يَسْتَوُونَ

*30 Here *mumin* (believer) and *fasiq* (sinner) have been used as two contrasting terms. *Mumin* is he who believes in Allah as his Lord and the One and only deity and adopts obedience of the law which Allah has sent down through

His Prophets. Contrary to this, *fasiq* is he who adopts the attitude of *fisq* (disobedience, rebellion, independence and obedience to others than Allah).

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

19. As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them are the Gardens of Retreat.*32 A welcome (in reward) for what they used to do.

أَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ
الْمَأْوَى نُزُلًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



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

20. And as for those who disobeyed, so their refuge is the Fire. Whenever they desire to get out of it, they are brought back into it, and it will be said to them: “Taste the punishment of the Fire that which you used to deny.”

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا فَمَأْوَاهُمُ
النَّارُ كُلَّمَا أَرَادُوا أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا
مِنْهَا أُعِيدُوا فِيهَا وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ
ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ النَّارِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ
بِهَا تَكْذِبُونَ



21. And surely We will make them taste of the nearer

وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ

punishment before the
greater punishment, perhaps
that they will return.*33

الْأَدْنَىٰ دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

*33 “The greater punishment” is the torment of the Hereafter, which will be imposed on the guilty ones in consequence of disbelief and disobedience. “Nearer punishment”, in contrast, implies those calamities which afflict man even in this world, e.g., diseases in the life of individuals, deaths of the near and dear ones, serious accidents, losses, failures, etc. and storms, earthquakes, floods, epidemics, famines, riots, wars and many other disasters, in collective life, which affect hundreds of thousands of the people simultaneously. The reason given for sending these calamities is that the people should take heed even before they are involved in the “greater torment” and give up the attitude and way of life in consequence of which they will have to suffer the greater torment ultimately. In other words, it means this: Allah has not kept man in perfect security in the world so that he may live in full peace, and become involved in the misunderstanding that there is no power above him, which can cause him harm. But Allah has so arranged things that He sends disasters and calamities on individuals as well as on nations and countries from time to time, which give man the feeling that he is helpless and that there is about him an All-Powerful Sovereign Who is ruling His universal kingdom. These calamities remind each individual and groups and nation that there is another Power above them Who is

controlling their destinies. Everything has not been placed at man's disposal. The real Power is in the hand of the Sovereign. When a calamity from Him descends on man, you can neither avert it by any artifice, nor can escape from it by invoking a jinn, or a spirit, or a god or goddess, or a prophet or saint. Considered in this light, these calamities are not mere calamities but warnings of God, which are sent to make man conscious of the reality and to remove his misunderstandings. If man learns a lesson from these and corrects his belief and conduct here in the world, he will not have to face the greater torment of God in the Hereafter.

22. And who does greater wrong than him who is reminded of the signs of his Lord, then he turns away from them.^{*34} Indeed, We shall take vengeance on the criminals.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ
رَبِّهِ ثُمَّ أَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا إِنَّا مِنَ
الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُنْتَقِمُونَ

***34** "The signs of his Lord" include all kinds of the signs. A perusal of all the Quranic verses in this regard shows that these signs are of the following six kinds:

- (1) The signs which are found in everything from the earth to the heavens.
- (2) The sign which are found in man's own creation and in his constitution and body.
- (3) The signs which are found in man's intuition, his unconscious and subconscious mind and in his moral concepts.
- (4) The signs which are found in the continuous experience

of human history.

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

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

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

23. And certainly, We gave Moses the Book, so do not be in doubt of his receiving it,^{*35} and We appointed it a guidance for the Children of Israel.^{*36}

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ
فَلَا تَكُن فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّن لِّقَائِهِ
وَجَعَلْنَاهُ هُدًى لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ



***35** The address apparently is to the Prophet (peace be upon him), but the real addressees are the people who doubted his prophethood and the revelation of the divine Book to him. From here the discourse turns to the same theme that was mentioned in the beginning of the Surah (Ayats 2-3). The disbelievers of Makkah were saying: “No book has come down to Muhammad (peace be upon him) from Allah. He has himself forged it, but claims that it has been sent down by Allah.” The first answer to this was given in the initial verses. This is the second answer. The first thing said in this regard is: “O Prophet, these ignorant people regard it as impossible that a Book should be sent down to you, and want that every other person also should at least be involved in suspicion about it even if he does not reject it altogether. But the revelation of a Book to a servant from Allah is not a novel and new event, which might have occurred for the first time today in human history. Before this, Books have been sent down to several Prophets, the most well-known among these being the Book which was sent down to the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). A Book of the same nature has been sent down to you

now. Therefore, there is nothing odd and strange in this, which may cause doubts in the minds of the people.”

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

24. And We made from among them leaders, guiding by Our command when they were patient.^{*37} And they used to believe with certainty in Our signs.

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَيْمَةً يَهْتَدُونَ
بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا وَكَانُوا
بِعَايَتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ



***37** That is, “Whatever progress the children of Israel made and whatever heights they attained by that Book, was not simply due to the reason that a Book had been sent among them. It was not an amulet that they might have hung around their necks and they might have started

ascending the steps of glory under its good and protective influence. But the glory was the direct result of their firm faith in the revelations of Allah, and of the patience and perseverance that they showed in following the divine commandments. Among the Israelites, the leadership also belonged to only those who were true believers of the Book of Allah and were not tempted at all by the greed of worldly gains and enjoyments. When in their love of the truth they stood firm against every danger, endured every loss and affliction, and exerted their utmost against every hostile force, from the lusts of their own selves to the external enemies of the true faith, then only did they become the leaders of the world. The object is to warn the disbelievers of Arabia that just as the coming of the Book of Allah had decided the destinies of the children of Israel, so will this Book decide the destinies among you. Now only those people will become the leaders, who will believe in it and follow the truth presented by it patiently and resolutely. Those who turn away from it are destined to end up in failure and wretchedness.

25. Indeed, your Lord, He will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection about that wherein they used to differ.*38

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ
يَخْتَلِفُونَ



*38 The allusion is to the differences and schisms in which the children of Israel were involved after they became deprived of the faith and belief and gave up obedience of

their righteous leaders and were given to the worship of the world. One result of this is obvious and before the whole world: they suffer from disgrace and infamy and misfortune; the other result is that which is not known, to the world: it will appear on the Day of Resurrection.

26. Is it not a guidance for them, how many of the generations We have destroyed before them, amid whose dwelling places they do walk.*³⁹ Indeed, in that are signs. Will they not then listen.

أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ يَمْشُونَ فِي
مَسْكِنِهِمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
أَفَلَا يَسْمَعُونَ

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

27. Have they not seen how We drive the water to the barren land, then therewith bring forth crops from which their cattle eat, and they themselves. Will they not then see.*⁴⁰

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَسُوقُ الْمَاءَ إِلَى
الْأَرْضِ الْجُرُزِ فَنُخْرِجُ بِهِ
زَرْعًا تَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ أَنْعَامُهُمْ
وَأَنْفُسُهُمْ أَفَلَا يُبْصِرُونَ

***40** Keeping the context in view it becomes obvious that

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

28. And they say: “When will be this judgment, if you should be truthful.”*41

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْفَتْحُ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ



*41 That is, “You say that Allah’s succor will at last reach you and your rejectors will be struck down by His wrath. Then, tell us: When will this happen? When will judgment be passed between you and us?”

29. Say: “On the day of the judgment, no benefit will it be to those who disbelieve, (if then) they believe, neither will they be reprieved.”*42

قُلْ يَوْمَ الْفَتْحِ لَا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا إِيمَانُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ



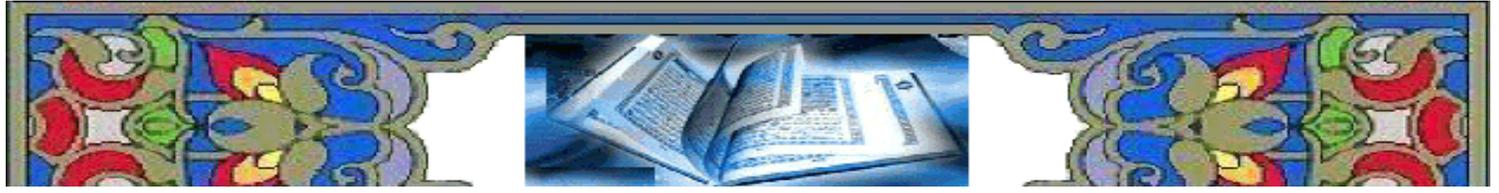
*42 That is, “It is not a thing for which you should feel so impatient and restless. When the torment of Allah comes, you will get no time to mend your ways. Make the best of

the time which is available before the coming of the torment. If you will believe only when you see the torment, it will not avail you anything then.”

30. So withdraw from them (O Muhammad), and await. Indeed, they are waiting (too).

فَاعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَأَنْتَظِرُ إِنَّهُمْ
مُنْتَظِرُونَ





Al-Ahzab الأَحْزَاب

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah derives its name *Al-Ahzab* from verse 20.

Period of Revelation

The Surah discusses three important events which are: the battle of the Trench (or *Al-Ahzab*: the Clans), which took place in Shawwal, A.H. 5; the raid on Bani Quraizah, which was made in Dhil-Qadah, A.H. 5; and the Prophet's (peace be upon him) marriage with Zainab (may Allah be pleased with her), which also was contracted in Dhil-Qadah, A.H. 5. These historical events accurately determine the period of the revelation of this Surah.

Historical Background

The Islamic army's setback in the battle of Uhud (A.H. 3) that resulted from the error of the archers appointed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) so boosted up the morale of the Arab pagans and the Jews and the hypocrites that they started entertaining the hope that they would soon be able to exterminate Islam and the Muslims completely. Their high state of morale can be judged from the events that occurred in the first year after Uhud. Hardly two months

had passed, the tribe of Bani Asad of Najd began to make preparations for a raid on Al-Madinah, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) had to dispatch an expedition under Abu Salamah to counteract them. In Safar A.H. 4 some people of the tribes of Adal and Qarah asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) to send some men to instruct them in Islam. Accordingly six of the companions were allowed to accompany them for the purpose. But when they reached Raji (a place between Rabigh and Jeddah), they summoned Hudhail against them, who killed four of the companions, and took the other two (Khubaib bin Adi and Zaid bin ad-Dathinnah) to Makkah and sold them to the enemy. Then in the same month of Safar, on the request of a chief of Bani Amir, the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent another deputation of 40 (according to others, 70) preachers, consisting of the Ansar young men to Najd. But they were also betrayed. The people of Usayyah and Ril and Dhakwan, tribes of Bani Sulaim, surrounded them suddenly at Bir Maunah and slew all of them. Meanwhile the Jewish tribe of Bani an Nadir of Al-Madinah, getting encouragement, continued to commit breaches of the treaties; so much so that in Rabiul Awwal, A.H. 4, they plotted against the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Then in Jamadi alUla, A.H. 4, Bani Thalbah and Bani Muharib, the two tribes of Bani Ghatafan, started making preparations to attack Al-Madinah and the Prophet (peace be upon him) had to go to punish them. Thus, after their setback at Uhud, the Muslims went on encountering repercussions continuously for seven to eight months.

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

Raids Preceding the Battle of the Trench

The first such step was taken immediately after the battle of Uhud. The very next day when quite a large number of Muslims lay wounded and the martyrdom of the near and dear ones was being mourned in many houses, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself was injured and sad at the martyrdom of his uncle, Hamzah, he called out to the devoted servants of Islam to accompany him in pursuit of the pagans so as to deter them from returning and attacking Al-Madinah again. The Prophet's (peace be upon him) assessment was absolutely correct. He knew that, although the Quraish had retreated without taking any advantage of their almost complete victory, they would certainly regret their folly when they would halt and consider the whole matter coolly on the way, and would return to attack Al-Madinah again. Therefore, he decided to go in pursuit of them, and 630 of the Muslims at once

volunteered to accompany him. When they reached Hamra al-Asad on the way to Makkah and camped there for three days, the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to know through a sympathetic non-Muslim that Abu Sufyan had stayed at Ar-Rauha, 36 miles short of Al-Madinah, with an army of 2,978 strong: they were regretting their error and were, in fact, planning to return and attack Al-Madinah once again. But when they heard that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was coming in pursuit of them with an army, they lost heart and gave up their plan. Thus, not only were the Quraish deterred by this action but the other enemies living around Al-Madinah also realized that the Muslims were being led by a person, who was highly well informed, wise and resolute, and that the Muslims were ever ready to lay down their lives at his command. (See Introduction to Surah Aal-Imran and E.N. 122 thereof).

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

After this came the turn of the Bani an-Nadir. The day they plotted against the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and the secret was disclosed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered them to leave Al-Madinah within ten days

and warned that anyone who remained behind after that would be put to death. Abdullah bin Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites of Al-Madinah, encouraged them to defy the order and refuse to leave Al-Madinah. He even promised to help them with 2,000 men, and assured them that the Bani Ghatafan from Najd also would come to their aid. Accordingly, the Bani an-Nadir sent word that they would not leave no matter what the Prophet (peace be upon him) might do.

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

Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) turned his attention to the Bani Ghatafan, who were preparing for a war against Al-Madinah. He took 400 of the Muslims and overtook them at Dhat ar-Riqah. They were so taken by surprise that they fled their houses without a struggle and took refuge in the mountains.

After this in Shaban A.H. 4, the Prophet (peace be upon him) went forth to Badr to fight Abu Sufyan. At the end of the battle of Uhud, he had challenged the Prophet (peace be

upon him) and the Muslims, saying, “We shall again meet you in combat at Badr next year.” In reply the Prophet (peace be upon him) announced through a companion: “All right: we accept your challenge.” Accordingly, at the appointed time he reached Badr with 1,500 of the Muslims. From the other side, Abu Sufyan left Makkah with an army of 2,000 men, but could not have the courage to march beyond Marr-az-Zahran (modern, Wadi Fatimah). The Prophet (peace be upon him) waited for him at Badr for eight days; the Muslims during these days did profitable business with a trading party. This incident helped more than restore the image of strength of the Muslims that had been tarnished at Uhud. It also made the whole of Arabia realize that the Quraish alone could no longer resist Muhammad (peace be upon him). (Refer to E.N. 124 of Surah Aal-Imran).

This image and position of the Muslims was further strengthened by another event. Dumat al-Jandal (modern, Al-Jauf) was an important place at the border between Arabia and Syria. When the caravans of the Arabs, trading between Iraq in the south and Syria and Egypt in the north, passed that way, they were harassed and looted by the natives. In Rabi al-Awwal, A.H. 5, the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself went to punish them with an army of 1,000 men. They could not muster up courage to come out and fight him and, therefore, fled the place. This caused the whole of northern Arabia to dread the power of Islam, and the tribes began to realize that the great power emerging from Al-Madinah was formidable and could no longer be

resisted by one or a few of the tribes.

The Battle of the Trench

Such were the conditions when the battle of the Trench took place. It was in fact a combined raid by many of the Arab tribes, who wanted to crush the power of Al-Madinah. It had been instigated by the leaders of the Bani an-Nadir, who had settled in Khyber after their banishment from Al-Madinah. They went around to the Quraish and Ghatafan and Hudhail and many other tribes and induced them to gather all their forces together and attack Al-Madinah jointly. Thus, in Shawwal, A.H. 5, an unprecedentedly large army of the Arab tribes marched against the small city of Al-Madinah. From the north came Jews of Bani an-Nadir and Bani Qainuqa who after their banishment from Al-Madinah, had settled in Khaiber and Wadil-Qura. From the east advanced the tribes of Ghatafan, Bani Sulaim, Fazarah, Murrah, Ashja, Saad, Asad, etc. and from the south the Quraish, along with a large force of their allies. Together they numbered from ten to twelve thousand men.

Had it been a sudden attack, it would have been disastrous. But the Prophet (peace be upon him) was not unaware of this in Al-Madinah. His intelligence men and the sympathizers of the Islamic movement and the people influenced by it were present in every tribe, who kept him informed of the enemy's movements. Even before the enemy could reach his city, he got a trench dug out on the north-west of Al-Madinah in six days, and having the Mount Sala their back, took up a defensive position with

3,000 men in the protection of the Trench. To the south of Al-Madinah there were many gardens (even now there are) so that it could not be attacked from that side. To the east there are lava rocks which are impassable for a large army. The same is the case with the south western side. The attack, therefore, could be made only from the eastern and western sides of the Uhud, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had secured by digging a trench. The disbelievers were not at all aware that they would have to counter the trench outside Al-Madinah. This kind of a defensive stratagem was unknown to the Arabs. Thus, they had to lay a long siege in winter for which they had not come prepared.

After this, only one alternative remained with the disbelievers: to incite the Jewish tribe of Bani Quraizah, who inhabited the south eastern part of the city, to rebellion. As the Muslims had entered a treaty with them that in case of an attack on Al-Madinah they would defend the city along with them. The Muslims had made no defensive arrangement there and had even sent their families to take shelter in the forts situated on that side. The invaders perceived this weakness of the Islamic defenses. They sent Huyayy bin Akhtab, the Jewish leader of the Bani an-Nadir, to the Bani Quraizah so as to induce them to break the treaty and join the war. In the beginning, they refused to oblige and said that they had a treaty with Muhammad (peace be upon him) who had faithfully abided by it and given them no cause for complaint. But when Ibn Akhtab said to them, "Look, I have summoned the united

force of entire Arabia against him: this is a perfect opportunity to get rid of him. If you lose it, you will never have another opportunity,” the anti Islamic Jewish mind prevailed over every moral consideration and the Bani Quraizah were persuaded to break the treaty.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) received news of this. He at once told Saad bin Ubadah, Sad bin Muadh, Abdullah bin Rawahah and Khawwat bin Jubair, chiefs of the Ansar, to go and find out the truth. He advised them that if they found Bani Quraizah still loyal to the treaty, they should return and say so openly before the Muslim army; however, if they found that they were bent upon treachery they should only inform him so that the common Muslims would not be disheartened. On reaching there the companions found the Bani Quraizah fully bent on mischief. They told the companions openly, “There is no agreement and no treaty between us and Muhammad.” At this they returned to the Islamic army and submitted their report to the Prophet (peace be upon him), saying, “Adal and Qarah.” That is, “The Quraizah are bent upon doing what the Adal and Qarah had done with the preachers of Islam at Raji.”

This news spread among the Muslims and caused great consternation among them, for they had been encircled and their city had been endangered on the side where there existed no defensive arrangement and where they had also sent their families to take shelter in the forts. This further increased the activities of the hypocrites and they started making psychological attacks to break the morale of the

Muslims. One said, “How strange! We were being foretold that the lands of Caesar and Khosroes would fall to us, but here we are that not one of us can go out even to relieve himself.” Another one asked for permission to leave his post at the Trench so that he could go and protect his own house which was in danger. Another one started making secret propaganda to the effect: “Settle your affair with the invaders yourselves and hand over Muhammad to them.” This was a highly critical hour of trial, which exposed every person who harbored any hypocrisy in his heart. Only the true and sincere Muslims remained firm and steadfast in their resolve and devotion.

In the meantime Nuaim bin Masud, a member of the Ashja branch of the Ghatafan tribe, became a Muslim and came before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and submitted: “No one as yet knows that I have embraced Islam: You can take from me whatever service you please.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: “Go and sow the seeds of discord among the enemy.” So, first of all, Nuaim went to the Quraizah with whom he was on friendly terms, and said to them, “The Quraish and the Ghatafan can become wearied of the siege and go back, and they will lose nothing, but you have to live here with the Muslims. Just consider what will be your position if the matter turns that way. Therefore, I would advise you not to join the enemy until the outsiders should send some of their prominent men as hostages to you.” This had the desired effect upon the Bani Quraizah and they decided to demand hostages from the united front of the tribes. Then he went to the chiefs of the

Quraish and the Ghatafan and said to them, "The Bani Quraizah seem to be slack and irresolute. May be they demand some men as hostage from you, and then hand them over to Muhammad (peace be upon him) to settle their affair with him. Therefore, be very firm and cautious in your dealing with them." This made the leaders of the united front suspicious of Bani Quraizah and they sent them a message, saying, "We are tired of the long siege; let there be a decisive battle; let us, therefore, make a general assault simultaneously from both the sides." The Bani Quraizah sent back the word, saying, "We cannot afford to join the war unless you hand over some of your prominent men to us as hostages." The leaders of the united front became convinced that what Nuaim had said was true. They refused to send hostages. And the Bani Quraizah, on the other side, also felt that Nuaim had given them the correct counsel. Thus, the strategy worked: it divided the enemy against itself.

The siege was prolonged for more than 25 days. It was winter. The supply of food and water and forage was becoming more and more scarce everyday and division in the camp was also a great strain on the state of morale of the besiegers. Then, suddenly one night a severe windstorm accompanied by thunder and lightning hit the camp. It added to the cold and darkness. The wind overthrew the tents and put the enemy in disarray. They could not stand this severe blow of nature. They left the battleground even during the night and returned to their homes. When the Muslims awoke in the morning, there was not a single

enemy soldier to be seen on the battlefield. The Prophet (peace be upon him), finding the battlefield completely empty, said: “The Quraish will never be able to attack you after this, now you will take the offensive.” This was a correct assessment of the situation. Not only the Quraish but the united front of all the enemy tribes had made their final assault against Islam and had failed. Now they could no longer dare invade Al-Madinah; now the Muslims were on the offensive.

Raid on Bani Quraizah

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) returned from the Trench, Gabriel came to him in the early afternoon with the divine command that the Muslims should not lay aside the arms yet but should deal with the Bani Quraizah as well. On receiving this command, the Prophet (peace be upon him) announced: “Everyone who is steadfast in obedience should not offer his Asr Prayer till he reaches the locality of the Bani Quraizah.” Immediately after this, he dispatched Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) with a contingent of soldiers as vanguard towards the Bani Quraizah. When they reached there, the Jews climbed on to their roof tops and started hurling abuses on the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Muslims, but their invectives could not save them from the consequences of their treachery. They had committed breach of the treaty right at the most critical moment of the war, joined hands with the invaders and endangered the entire population of Al-Madinah. When they saw the contingent of Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), they thought that they had come only

to overawe them. But when the whole Islamic army arrived under the command of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself and laid siege to their quarters, they were very frightened. They could not stand the severity of the siege for more than two or three weeks. At last, they surrendered themselves to the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the condition that they would accept whatever decision Saad bin Muadh, the chief of the Aus, would give. They had accepted Saad as their judge because in the pre-Islamic days the Aus and the Quraizah had been confederates and they hoped that in view of the past ties he would help them quit Al-Madinah as had happened in the case of the Bani Qainuqa and the Bani an-Nadir before. The people of the Aus themselves wished that Saad treat their previous allies leniently. But Saad had just experienced and seen how the two Jewish tribes, who had been allowed to leave Al-Madinah previously, had instigated the other tribes living around Al-Madinah and summoned the united front of ten to twelve thousand men against the Muslims. He was also aware how treacherously this last Jewish tribe had behaved right on the occasion when the city was under attack from outside and threatened the safety of the whole of its population. Therefore, he decreed that all the male members of the Quraizah should be put to death, their women and children taken prisoners, and their properties distributed among the Muslims. The sentence was carried out duly. When the Muslims entered their strongholds they found that the treacherous people had collected 1,500 swords, 300 coats of mail, 2,000 spears and 1,500 shields in

order to join the war. If Allah's succor had not reached the Muslims, all this military equipment would have been used to attack Al-Madinah from the rear right at the time when the polytheists were making preparations for a general assault on the Muslims after crossing the Trench. After this disclosure there remained no doubt that the decision of Saad concerning those people was absolutely correct.

Social Reforms

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

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

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

This concept, however, could not be rooted out by merely passing a legal order, saying, The adopted son is not the real son. The centuries old prejudices and superstitions cannot be changed by mere word of mouth. Even if the people had accepted the command that these relations were not the real relations, they would still have looked upon marriage between the adopted mother and the adopted son, the adopted brother and the sister, the adopted father and the daughter, and the adopted father-in-law and the daughter-in-law odious and detestable. Moreover, there

would still exist some freedom of mixing together freely. Therefore, it was inevitable that the custom should be eradicated practically, and through the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. For no Muslim could ever conceive that a thing done by the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself, and done by him under Allah's command, could be detestable. Therefore, a little before the battle of the Trench, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was inspired by Allah that he should marry the divorced wife of his adopted son, Zaid bin Harithah (may Allah be pleased with him), and he acted on this command during the siege of the Bani Quraizah. The delay probably was caused for the reason that the prescribed waiting period had not yet ended, and in the meantime the Prophet (peace be upon him) had to become busy in the preparation for war.

Storm of Propaganda at the Marriage of Zainab

As soon as the marriage was contracted, there arose a storm of propaganda against the Prophet (peace be upon him). The polytheists, the hypocrites and the Jews, all were burning with jealousy at his triumphs which followed one after the other. The way they had been humbled within two years after Uhud, in the battle of the Trench, and in the affair of the Quraizah, had made them sore at heart. They had also lost hope that they could ever subdue him on the battlefield. Therefore, they seized the question of this marriage as a god sent for themselves and thought they would put an end to his moral superiority, which was the real secret of his power and success. Therefore, stories were concocted that Muhammad (peace be upon him), God

forbid, had fallen in love with his daughter-in-law, and when the son had come to know of this, he divorced his wife, and the father married his daughter-in-law. The propaganda, however, was absurd on the face of it. Zainab was the Prophet's (peace be upon him) first cousin. He had known her from childhood to youth. So, there could be no question of his falling in love with her at first sight. Then he himself had arranged her marriage with Zaid under his personal influence, although her whole family had opposed it. They did not like that a daughter of the noble Quraish should be given in marriage to a freed slave. Zainab herself was not happy at this arrangement. But everyone had to submit to the Prophet's command. The marriage was solemnized and a precedent was set in Arabia that Islam had raised a freed slave to the status of the Quraishite nobility. If the Prophet (peace be upon him) had in reality any desire for Zainab, there was no need of marrying her to Zaid, he himself could have married her. But in spite of all this, the shameless opponents invented stories of love, spread them with great exaggeration and publicized them so vehemently that even some Muslims also began to accept them as true.

Preliminary Commandments of Hijab

The fact that the tales invented by the enemies also became topics of conversation among the Muslims was a clear sign that the element of sensuality in society had crossed all limits. If this malady had not been there, it was not possible that minds would have paid any attention whatever to such absurd and disgusting stories about a righteous and pure

person like the Prophet (peace be upon him). This was precisely the occasion when the reformative commandments pertaining to the law of Hijab were first enforced in the Islamic society. These reforms were introduced in this Surah and complemented a year later in Surah An-Nur, when a slander was made on the honor of Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her). (See Introduction to Surah An-Nur).

Domestic Affairs of the Prophet

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

The first problem was that economically the Prophet (peace be upon him) at that time was in straitened circumstances. During the first four years he had no source of income whatsoever. In A.H. 4 after the banishment of the Bani an-Nadir, a portion of their evacuated lands was reserved for his use by the command of Allah, but it was not enough for his family's requirements. On the other hand, the duties of the office of prophethood were so onerous that they were absorbing all his energies of the mind and body and heart and every moment of his time, and he could not make any effort at all for earning his livelihood. In conditions such as these when his wives happened to disturb his mental peace

because of economic hardships, he would feel doubly strained and taxed.

The other problem was that before marrying Zainab, he had four wives already in the houses: Saudah, Aishah, Hafsa, and Umm Salamah. Zainab (may Allah be pleased with them all) was his fifth wife. At this the opponents raised the objection, and the Muslims also started entertaining doubts, that as for others it had been forbidden to keep more than four wives at a time, but how the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself had taken a fifth wife also.

Subject Matter and Topics

These were the questions that were engaging the attention of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Muslims at the time Surah Al-Ahzab was revealed.

A perusal of the theme and the background shows that the Surah is not a single discourse which was sent down in one piece but it consists of several injunctions and commandments and discourses, which were sent down, one after the other, in connection with the important events of the time, and then were put together in one Surah. Its following parts stand out clearly distinguished from one another:

Ayats 1-8. These Ayats Seem to have been sent down before the Battle of the Trench. Their perusal, keeping the historical background in view, shows that at the time of their revelation Zaid had already divorced Zainab. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was feeling the necessity that the concepts and customs and superstitions of ignorance

concerning the adoption of the son should be eradicated, and he was also feeling that the delicate and deep sentiments the people cherished about the adopted relations merely on emotional grounds would not be rooted out until he himself took the initiative to eradicate the custom practically. But at the same time he was hesitant and considering seriously that if he married the divorced wife of Zaid, the hypocrites and the Jews and the mushriks who were already bent on mischief would get a fresh excuse to start a propaganda campaign against Islam. This was the occasion of the revelation of Ayats 1-8.

Ayats 9-27. In these Ayats an appraisal has been made of the battle of the Trench and the raid against the Bani Quraizah. This is a clear proof that these verses were sent down after these events.

Ayats 28-35. The discourse contained in these Ayats consists of two parts. In the first part, Allah has given a notice to the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who were being impatient of the straitened circumstances, to the effect: "Choose between the world and its adornments, or Allah, His Prophet and the Hereafter. If you seek the former, you should say so openly: you will not be kept back in hardship even for a day, but will be sent off gracefully. And if you seek the latter, you should cooperate with Allah and His messenger and bear patiently." In the second part, initial steps were taken towards the social reforms whose need was being felt by the minds molded in the Islamic pattern themselves. In this regard, reform was started from the house of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself and

his wives were commanded to avoid behaving and conducting themselves in the ways of the pre Islamic days of ignorance, to remain in their houses with dignity, and to exercise great caution in their conversation with the other men. This was the beginning of the commandments of hijab.

Ayats 36-48. These Ayats deal with the Prophet's (peace be upon him) marriage with Zainab. In this section the opponents' objection about this marriage have been answered; the doubts that were being created in the minds of the Muslims have been removed; the Muslims have been acquainted with the Prophet's (peace be upon him) position and status; and the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself has been counseled to exercise patience on the false propaganda of the disbelievers and the hypocrites.

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

Ayats 50-52. In these Ayats a special regulation of marriage has been laid down for the Prophet (peace be upon him), which points out that he is an exception to the several restrictions that have been imposed on the other Muslims in regard to marital life.

Ayats 53-55. In these Ayats the second step was taken towards social reform. It consists of the following injunctions: Restriction on the other men to visit the houses of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) wives; Islamic etiquette concerning visits and invitations; the law that only the near relatives could visit his wives in their houses; as

for the other men, they could speak to or ask them a thing from behind a curtain; the injunction that the Prophet's (peace be upon him) wives were forbidden for the Muslims, and should be regarded as their mothers; and none could marry any of them after him.

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

Ayat 59. In this Ayat the third step for social reform was taken. All the Muslim women were commanded that they should come out well covered with the outer garments and covering their faces whenever they came out of their houses for a genuine need.

Ayats 60-73. After this, to the end of the Surah the hypocrites and other foolish and mean people have been rebuked for the propaganda that they were carrying on at that time against Islam and the Muslims.

1. O Prophet,^{*1} fear Allah and do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites. Indeed, Allah is All Knower, All Wise.^{*2}

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُطِعِ
الْكَافِرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا



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

***2** In the very first sentence, in the beginning of the discourse, Allah removed all the apprehensions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), as if to say: “We know better what is useful and beneficial for our religion and what is not. We know what would be wise and what unwise in this regard. Therefore, you should not behave in a manner

which would suit the disbelievers and the hypocrites, but you should behave in a manner which is according to Our Will. You should fear Us and not the disbelievers and the hypocrites.”

2. And follow that which is revealed to you from your Lord. Indeed, Allah is Aware of what you do.*3

وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ
رَبِّكَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿٢﴾

*3 This sentence is addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) as well as to the Muslims and the opponents of Islam. It means: “If the Prophet (peace be upon him) earns defamation by acting according to the command of Allah, and bears patiently the attacks of the enemy on his honor, his devoted and sincere services will not remain hidden from Allah. The state of the Muslims who remain steadfast in their loyalty to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and of those who are involved in doubts and suspicions will be known to Allah. And Allah will also not remain unaware of the attempts of the disbelievers and the hypocrites who try to defame the Prophet (peace be upon him).”

3. And put your trust in Allah. And Allah is sufficient as Trustee.*4

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ
بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٣﴾

*4 The addressee of this sentence is again the Prophet (peace be upon him). He is being instructed to the effect: “Carry out the duty that is being entrusted to you with full

confidence in Allah, and do not care at all even if the whole world turns hostile against you.” When a man comes to know with certainty that a certain command has been given by Allah, he should have the satisfaction that his whole well being and his good lies in its compliance. Then, it is not for him to see and understand its wisdom, but he should carry it out with full confidence in Allah. Allah is enough for him that the servant should entrust all his affairs to Him. He is enough for his guidance as well as help, and He alone is also responsible that the one working under His guidance should never meet with evil consequences.

4. Allah has not made for any man two hearts within his body.*⁵ And He has not made your wives, those whom you divorce by zihar, your mothers.*⁶ And He has not made your adopted sons your (true) sons.*⁷ That is (merely) your saying by your mouths. And Allah says the truth, and He guides to the (right) path.

مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِّنْ قَلْبَيْنِ فِي جَوْفِهِ، وَمَا جَعَلَ أَزْوَاجَكُمْ أُمَّي تَظَاهِرُونَ مِنْهُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ، وَمَا جَعَلَ أَدْعِيَاءَكُمْ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ، ذَٰلِكُمْ قَوْلُكُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ، وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ يَهْدِي السَّبِيلَ ﴿٤﴾

*⁵ That is, one and the same person cannot be a believer and a hypocrite, truthful and false, wicked and righteous, at one and the same time. He does not have two hearts in this chest that one should have sincerity in it and the other fearlessness of God. Therefore, a man can have only one

kind of character at a time: either he will be a believer or a hypocrite, a disbeliever or a Muslim. Now if you call a believer a hypocrite, or a hypocrite a believer, it will not change the reality. The true character of the person will inevitably remain the same.

*6 *Zihar* is a term in Arabic. In old days when an Arab; in the heat of a domestic quarrel, would say to his wife: “Your back for me is as the back of my mother,” it was thought that the woman was no longer lawful for him because he had compared her to his mother. About this Allah says: “A woman does not become a man’s mother just because he has called her his mother or compared her to his mother. His mother is the woman who bore him. Only his calling his wife his mother cannot change the reality.” (See Surah Al-Mujadalah: Ayats 2-4).

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

5. Call them (adopted sons) by (the names of) their fathers, that is more just with Allah.*8 Then if you do not know their fathers, then they are your brothers in the faith and your friends.*9 And there is no blame upon you for that in which you make a mistake, but what your hearts deliberately intend.*10

أَدْعُوهُمْ لِأَبَائِهِمْ هُوَ أَقْسَطُ
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا
ءَابَاءَهُمْ فَاِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ
وَمَوَالِيكُمْ وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ
جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا أَخْطَأْتُمْ بِهِ
وَلَكِنْ مَا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ

And Allah is Forgiving,
Merciful.*11

وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

*8 The first reform introduced in connection with the implementation of this command was that Zaid, the adopted son of the Prophet (peace be upon him), began to be called Zaid bin Harithah, after his real father, instead of Zaid bin Muhammad. Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Nasai have related this tradition from Abdullah bin Umar that in the beginning the people called him Zaid bin Muhammad. After the revelation of this verse they began calling him Zaid bin Harithah. Moreover, after this revelation it was forbidden that a person should assign his parentage to any other man than his own real father. Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Daud have related on the authority of Saad bin Abi Waqqas that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Paradise is forbidden for the one who called himself son of another person than his own father."

Other traditions bearing on the subject have been related in *Ahadith*, which have regarded this as a heinous sin.

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

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

for it.”

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

6. The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves,^{*12} and his wives are (as) their mothers.^{*13} And those of blood relationship among each other are closer in the Book (decree) of Allah than the (other) believers and the emigrants, except that you should do kindness to your friends.^{*14}

That has been written in the Book.

النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ
أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ
وَأُولُوا الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ
بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ مِنَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ إِلَّا
أَنْ تَفْعَلُوا إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَآئِكُمْ مَعْرُوفًا
كَانَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ

مَسْطُورًا

***12** That is, the relationship of the Prophet (peace be upon him) with the Muslims and of the Muslims with the Prophet (peace be upon him) is of a superior nature, over and above all human relationships. No other relationship is in any way comparable with the relationship that exists between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the believers. The Prophet (peace be upon him) is more compassionate and

affectionate and a greater well-wisher of the Muslims than their own parents, even their own selves. Their parents and their wives and children can harm them, can treat them in a selfish manner and mislead them, can make them commit errors and mistakes, can push them into Hell, but the Prophet's (peace be upon him) case is different: he will do for them only that which results in and leads to their eternal well-being and enduring happiness. They can commit follies resulting in their own ruin and disaster, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) will wish for them only that which is beneficial and useful for them. And when it is so, the Prophet (peace be upon him) also has a right on the Muslims that they should regard him dearer than their own parents, their own children, even their own selves. They should love him more than anything and anybody else in the world; should prefer his judgment and opinion to their own and should submit to every command that he gives.

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

***13** On the basis of the special relationship mentioned above, another characteristic of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is that his wives are forbidden to the Muslims just like their own real mothers although their adopted mothers are in no sense their real mothers. This thing is peculiar only to the person of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and of no

other man in the world.

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

Another noteworthy point in this connection is that according to the Quran, this status accrues to all the wives (may Allah be pleased with them all) of the Prophet (peace be upon him), among whom Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) is also included. But, when a section (of the Muslims) made Ali and Fatimah and their children (may Allah be pleased with them all) the center of their faith and made the whole system of religion revolve around them, and made Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her), along with many other companions, the target of curse and abuse, this verse became a hindrance for them, for according to it every person who claims to be a believer has to acknowledge her as his mother. Consequently, to overcome this difficulty a strange claim was made to the effect: The Prophet (peace be upon him) had given Ali (may Allah be

pleased with him) the authority that after his death he could allow any of his wives he liked to retain her position of the wife and divorce any other on his behalf. Abu Mansur Ahmad bin Abu Talib Tabrasi has written this in Kitab al-Ihtijaj and Suleman bin Abdullah al-Bahrani has related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) “O Abul Hasan: this honor will last till the time that we remain steadfast on obedience to Allah. Therefore, you may divorce any of my wives, who after me disobeys Allah by revolting against you, and deprive her of the honor that belongs to the mothers of the faithful.”

This is a false-tradition even according to the principles of reporting *Hadith*. But if one studies Ayats 28-29 and 51-52 of this very Surah Al-Ahzab, one finds that this tradition goes against the Quran as well. For after the revelation of the “verse of the option” (Ayat 29), the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) right of divorce against those of his wives who chose to remain with him through every difficulty had been curtailed. For further explanation, see E.Ns 42 and 93 below.

Moreover, if an unbiased person only uses his common sense and considers this tradition carefully, he will find that it is utterly absurd and highly derogatory in respect to the Prophet (peace be upon him). The rank and position of the Messenger of Allah is very high and exalted. It cannot even be expected of an ordinary man that he would think of divorcing his wife after his death, and on leaving the world, would authorize his son-in-law to divorce her on his behalf

if there arose a dispute between him and her in the future. This shows what regard these sectarians have for the honor and reverence of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and even for the divine law.

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

7. And when We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you (O Muhammad) and from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus, son of Mary. And We took from them a solemn covenant.*15

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ
وَمِنكَ وَمِنْ نُوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَمُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ
وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُم مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا



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

(1) He has appointed for you the same way of life which he appointed for Noah and which (O Muhammad) We have now revealed to you, and which We had already enjoined on Abraham and Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them), stressing : Establish this Way and be not divided in it. (Surah Ash-Shura: Ayat 13).

(2) And remember that Allah had made the covenant with the people who had been given the scripture, and enjoined: You shall spread the teachings of the Book among the people and shall not conceal them.” (Surah Aal-Imran:

Ayat 187).

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

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

(5) Keep in mind the blessing Allah has bestowed on you and do not forget the solemn covenant which He made with you, when you said, We have heard and submitted.” (Surah Al-Maidah: Ayat 7)

The reason why Allah is reminding of this covenant in this context is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was feeling hesitant to break the custom of ignorance in respect of the adopted relations due to the apprehension that the enemies of Islam would put him to a disadvantage. He was feeling shy time and again at the thought: The question is of marrying a woman. I may take this initiative with the purest intention only for the sake of a social reform, but the enemies will certainly say that I have done so for the purpose of satisfying my desires, and I am in fact trying to deceive others under the guise of a reformer. That is why Allah assures him, saying: “You are a Prophet appointed by Us. Like all other Prophets, you are also bound in the covenant that you will carry out whatever command We give and instruct others to follow it. Therefore, you should not bother at all about taunts and derision by others, do not

be afraid and feel shy of others, and carry out without hesitation the service that We want to take from you.”

A section of the people think that this covenant is the covenant that was taken from all the Prophets and their communities, who came before the Prophet (peace be upon him), to the effect that they would believe in the Prophet who came afterwards and cooperate with him. On the basis of this interpretation they claim that the door to Prophethood is still open after the Prophet (peace be upon him). And this covenant has also been taken from the Prophet (peace be upon him), that his followers will believe in the prophet who will come after him. But the context in which the verse occurs is explicit that this interpretation is absolutely wrong, There is no occasion whatever in the context to indicate that other prophets will also come after the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers should believe in them. If the verse is read in this sense, it becomes irrelevant and incoherent. Moreover, there is no indication in the words of the verse to show which covenant is implied here. Therefore, to find out the nature of the covenant, we shall have to turn to other verses of the Quran in which mention has been made of the covenants taken from the Prophets. Now, if only one sort of the covenants had been mentioned in the entire Quran, i.e., the covenant that the people shall believe in the prophets coming afterwards, it would be correct to think that here also the covenant implied the same covenant. But anyone who has studied the Quran with an open mind knows that it has mentioned many covenants, which were taken from the Prophets and

their followers. Therefore, only that covenant from among the different covenant would be implied here, which fitted in with the context here, and not the one which was altogether irrelevant. Such wrong interpretations reveal the mentality of the people who wish to draw no guidance from the Quran but want to reinterpret it instead.

8. That He may ask the truthful about their truth.^{*16} And He has prepared for the disbelievers a painful punishment.^{*17}

لَيْسَ لَ الصَّادِقِينَ عَنْ صِدْقِهِمْ
وَأَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا



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

*17 To understand the theme of Ayats 1-8 fully, these should be read together with Ayats 36-41 of this Surah.

9. O you who believe,^{*18} remember Allah's favor upon you when armies came to (attack) you, then We sent upon them a wind and armies, whom you did not see.^{*19} And Allah is All Seer of what you do.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ
اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَاءَتْكُمْ جُنُودٌ
فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا وَجُنُودًا لَمْ
تَرَوْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ



*18 In Ayats 9-27, an appraisal has been made of the battle

of the Trench and the raid against the Bani Quraizah. These were revealed at the end of the raid. One should keep the details of these events in view as given in the introduction above.

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

10. When they came at you from above you and from below you,^{*20} and when the eyes grew wild (in fear) and the hearts reached the throats, and you were imagining about Allah vain thoughts.

إِذْ جَاءُوكُم مِّن فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ
أَسْفَلَ مِنكُمْ وَإِذْ زَاغَتِ
الْأَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ
الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ الظُّنُونَا



*20 It may mean: The enemies came upon you from every side, and also that those coming from Najd and Khaiber

came from above and those coming from Makkah from below you.”

11. There, the believers were tried and were shaken with a severe shaking. ^{*21}

هَنَالِكَ ابْتُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ
وَزُلْزِلُوا زِلْزَالًا شَدِيدًا ﴿١١﴾

***21** “The believers”: All those who accepted the Prophet (peace be upon him) as Allah’s Messenger and became included among his followers, which comprised both the true believers and the hypocrites. In this paragraph Allah has made mention of the Muslim community as a whole. In the following three paragraphs the attitude of the hypocrites has been commented upon, and the next two deal with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the true believers.

12. And when the hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease said: “Allah and His Messenger did not promise ^{*22} us except delusion.”

وَإِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ
فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ مَا وَعَدَنَا
اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ﴿١٢﴾

***22** That is, “Promises to the effect that the believers will get Allah’s support and succor and will be helped to attain victory in the end.”

13. And when a party of them said: “O people of Yathrib, there is no stand (possible) for you, so turn back.” ^{*23} And a group

وَإِذْ قَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَا أَهْلَ
يَثْرِبَ لَا مَقَامَ لَكُمْ فَارْجِعُوا
وَيَسْتَعِذُّنَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ النَّبِيَّ

of them sought permission of the Prophet, saying: "Indeed, our homes lie open (to the enemy)."^{*24} And they lay not open.^{*25} They did not intend except to flee.

يَقُولُونَ إِنَّ بُيُوتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ وَمَا هِيَ بِعَوْرَةٍ إِن يُرِيدُونَ إِلَّا فِرَارًا



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

***24** That is, when the Bani Quraizah also joined the invaders, the hypocrites had a good excuse for defection and they started asking the Prophet (peace be upon him) for leave to go and protect their houses and families, which, they said, had been endangered, whereas at that time the Prophet (peace be upon him) was responsible for the defense and protection of all the people of Al-Madinah. After the treachery of the Quraizah it was for the Prophet (peace be upon him) to devise plans for the protection of the city and its people and not of the soldiers of the army individually.

***25** That is, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had already made arrangements for protection against the danger, which were a part of the collective scheme of defense being implemented by him as commander of the Islamic forces. Therefore, there was no immediate danger in the face of which these people could justifiably make such an excuse.

14. And if (the enemy) had entered upon them from its (city) sides, then they had been exhorted to treachery,^{*26} they would have done it, and not hesitated over it except little.

وَلَوْ دَخَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ أَقْطَارِهَا
ثُمَّ سِيلُوا الْفِتْنَةَ لِأَتَوْهَا وَمَا
تَلَبَّتُوا بِهَا إِلَّا يَسِيرًا ﴿١٤﴾

***26** “Exhorted to treachery”: Urged by the disbelievers to join them to vanquish the Muslims after entering the city as conquerors.

15. And certainly, they had made a covenant with Allah before not to turn their backs. And a covenant with Allah had to be questioned.^{*27}

وَلَقَدْ كَانُوا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ
قَبْلُ لَا يُؤَلُّونَ الْأَدْبَرَ وَكَانَ
عَهْدُ اللَّهِ مَسْئُولًا ﴿١٥﴾

***27** That is, they had felt regret at the weakness they had shown on the occasion of the battle of Uhud and pledged to Allah that they would compensate for their error in any trial that they would confront in the future. But Allah cannot be deceived by empty words. He puts to one or the other test everyone who makes a pledge with Him so that his sincerity of intention or otherwise is found out.

Therefore, just after two years of the battle of Uhud, He made them confront an even more serious danger and discovered how far they were sincere in their pledge.

16. Say: “Fleeing will never benefit you if you flee from death or killing, and then you will not dwell in comfort except a little while.”*28

قُلْ لَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمْ الْفِرَارُ إِنْ
فَرَرْتُمْ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ أَوْ الْقَتْلِ
وَإِذَا لَا تُمْتَعُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

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

17. Say: “Who is he who can protect you from Allah if He intends harm for you, or intends mercy for you.” And they will not find, for themselves, besides Allah, any friend, nor helper.

قُلْ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ
اللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ سُوءًا أَوْ أَرَادَ
بِكُمْ رَحْمَةً وَلَا تَجِدُونَ لَهُمْ مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا

18. Certainly, Allah knows those who create hindrance (in the war efforts) among you, and those (hypocrites) who say to their brothers: “Come to us.”*29 And they do not come to the battle

﴿ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الْمَعْوِقِينَ مِنْكُمْ
وَالْقَائِلِينَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ هَلُمَّ إِلَيْنَا
وَلَا يَأْتُونَ الْبَأْسَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴾

except a little.

***29** That is, abandon this Prophet (peace be upon him) and do not become involved in dangers and afflictions only for the sake of the faith and truth. Live a life of ease and comfort as we do.

19. Being miserly (of their help) towards you.^{*30} Then when the fear comes, you will see them looking to you with their eyes rolling like one who is fainting by death. Then, when the fear departs, they will smite you with sharp tongues, in greed for good (from the spoil of war).^{*31} Those have not believed, so Allah has rendered their deeds worthless.^{*32} And that is easy for Allah.^{*33}

أَشِحَّةً عَلَيْكُمْ فَإِذَا جَاءَ الْخَوْفُ
رَأَيْتَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ تَدْوُرُ
أَعْيُنُهُمْ كَالَّذِي يُغْشَىٰ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ
الْمَوْتِ فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ الْخَوْفُ
سَلَقُوكُمْ بِاللِّسَانِ حِدَادٍ
أَشِحَّةً عَلَى الْخَيْرِ أُولَٰئِكَ لَمْ
يُؤْمِنُوا فَأَحْبَطَ اللَّهُ أَعْمَلَهُمْ
وَكَانَ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا



***30** “Being miserly”: Those who are not at all willing to spend their energies, their time, their wealth, etc. in any way in which the true believers are spending whatever they have. Not to speak of exerting themselves and braving the dangers, they do not want to cooperate with the believers in anything with an open heart.

***31** Lexically, this verse has two meanings:

(1) When you return victorious from a war, they receive you warmly, and try to impress you with a sweet tongue

that they too are sincere believers and they too have made their contribution to promote the cause of Islam, and therefore, they deserve a share from the booty.

(2) If victory is attained, these people show great powers of the tongue at the time of the division of the spoils and make great demands for their shares, recounting their services for the cause of Islam.

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

worship and other good deeds are worthless.

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

20. They think that the (invading) hosts have not (yet) gone. And if the hosts should advance, they would wish if they were in the deserts among the wandering Arabs, asking for the news about you. And if they were among you, they would not fight, except a little.

تَحْسَبُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ لَمْ يَذْهَبُوا
وَإِنْ يَأْتِ الْأَحْزَابُ يَوَدُّوا لَوْ
أَنَّهُمْ بَادُونَ فِي الْأَعْرَابِ
يَسْأَلُونَ عَن أَنْبَائِكُمْ وَلَوْ
كَانُوا فِيكُمْ مَا قَتَلُوا إِلَّا
قَلِيلًا

21. Certainly, there is for you in the Messenger of Allah ^{*34} a good example for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and who remembers Allah much. ^{*35}

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ
أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا
اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ
كَثِيرًا

***34** In view of the context in which this verse occurs, the object of presenting the Prophet's (peace be upon him) conduct and way of life as a model was to teach a lesson to the people, who had been motivated by considerations of selfish interests and personal safety on the occasion of the

battle of the Trench. They are being addressed, as if to say: “You claimed to be the believers and Muslims and followers of the Messenger (peace be upon him). You should have seen how the Messenger (peace be upon him), whose followers you claimed to be, conducted himself on the occasion. If the leader of a group is himself a seeker of personal security, is lazy and indolent, gives preference to personal interests to everything else, and is ever ready to flee danger, it would be reasonable to expect manifestation of such weakness from his followers. But here the case was different. The Prophet (peace be upon him) endured along with others every toil and labor that he asked others to endure, and endured more than others; there was no trouble which others might have experienced and he himself did not. He was among those who dug the trench, and endured hunger and other afflictions just as the common Muslims did. He did not leave the battlefield even for a moment during the siege nor retreated an inch. After the betrayal of the Bani Quraizah his own family had also been exposed to danger even as the families of the other Muslims were. He did not make any special arrangement for his own and his family’s protection, which did not exist for others. He was always in the forefront to offer maximum sacrifices for the great objectives for which he was constantly asking others to make sacrifices. Therefore, whoever made a claim of being his follower should have followed the practical example set by the leader.

This is the meaning of the verse in the context here. But its words are general and there is no reason why it should be

confined to these meanings only. Allah does not say that only in this respect His Messenger's (peace be upon him) life is a model for the Muslims to follow, but has regarded it as a model absolutely. Therefore, the verse demands that the Muslims should take the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life as a model for themselves in every affair of life and should mold their character and personality according to it.

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

22. And when the believers^{*36} saw the (invading) hosts. They said: "This is what Allah and His Messenger had promised us, and Allah and His Messenger had spoken the truth."^{*37} And it did not increase them except in faith and submission (to Allah).^{*38}

وَلَمَّا رَأَى الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ
قَالُوا هَذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ وَصَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ
وَمَا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا إِيمَانًا وَتَسْلِيمًا

***36** After drawing attention to the model of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Allah now presents the model of his companions so that the character of the false claimants to faith and of the sincere followers of the Messenger (peace be upon him) is clearly contrasted.

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

***37** Here, one should keep verse 12 in view. There it was said that when the hypocrites and the people with diseased hearts found themselves surrounded by a huge force of ten to twelve thousand men from the front and by the Bani Quraizah from behind, they openly started saying: “The promises that Allah and His Messenger had made with us were nothing but a delusion. We were promised that if we believed in Allah’s religion, His succor would be at our back and we would rule Arabia and the world outside and all the wealth of Caesar and Chosroes will be ours, but here we are that the whole of Arabia is bent upon exterminating us, and there is no sign yet of the armies of the angels in sight, who would save us and protect us against this grave calamity.” Now they are being told: “One meaning of the promise of Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) was that which was understood by these false claimants to faith. The other meaning is that which is understood by the sincere and true Muslims. When they saw the storms of

danger gathering, they too remembered the promises of Allah, but these promises did not mean that as soon as they affirmed the faith they would overwhelm and subdue the whole world without the slightest effort, and the angels would come to perform their coronation, but the promises actually meant that they would have to pass through severe trials, endure extreme hardships and afflictions, offer supreme sacrifices; then only will Allah bless them with His grace and they will be granted successes of the world and the Hereafter, which Allah has promised to His believing servants.

“Do you think that you will enter Paradise without undergoing such trials as were experienced by the believers before you? They met with adversity and afflictions and were so shaken by trials that the Prophet of the time and his followers cried out: When will Allah’s help come?”

“Yes, Allah’s help is near.” (Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayat 214).

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

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

Here, one should fully understand that faith and resignation is indeed a quality of the self which is put to trial and test at every command and demand of the faith. At every step in life man comes across situations where the faith either enjoins something or forbids something, or requires one to make sacrifices of life and wealth and time and desires of the self. At every such occasion the faith and conviction of the person who deviates from obedience will suffer decline and the faith and conviction of him who submits to the command and demand will be strengthened and enhanced. Although in the beginning a man becomes a believer and Muslim only by embracing the fundamental creed (*Kalimah*) of Islam, yet his state of faith does not remain static but is open to both deterioration and development. Decline in sincerity and the spirit of obedience causes it to deteriorate; so much so that constant retrogression may cause the person to reach the last limits of the faith where the slightest move backward may turn him from a believer to a hypocrite. Contrary to this, the more sincere a person is, the more perfect his obedience and the greater his devotion and dedication to the cause of the true faith, the stronger and more sound will he grow in faith and may even attain the supreme rank of the truthful. But this increase and decrease in the faith has only the moral significance which can be judged and reckoned by none but Allah. As for the man, faith is simply the act of affirmation by which a Muslim enters Islam and is regarded as a Muslim as long as he remains steadfast to it. In this regard, we cannot say that so and so is half a

Muslim, or one third a Muslim, and another one a double Muslim or a triple Muslim. Likewise, in legal rights the Muslims are equal and alike. It cannot be that one is regarded a greater believer and given more rights and another one a lesser believer and given less rights. In these aspects there can be no question of the increase and decrease in the faith, and in fact, in this very sense has Imam Abu Hanifah said: “faith in Islam neither increases nor decreases.”

23. Among the believers are men who have been true to what they covenanted with Allah. So, of them are some who have fulfilled their vow (have been martyred), and of them are some who are still waiting.^{*39} And they have not altered (commitment) by any alteration.

مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا
عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّن
قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَنْتَظِرُ
وَمَا بَدَّلُوا تَبْدِيلًا



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

24. That Allah may reward the men of truth for their truth, and punish the hypocrites if He wills, or relent toward them. Indeed, Allah is

لَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الصَّادِقِينَ
بِصِدْقِهِمْ وَيُعَذِّبُ
الْمُنَافِقِينَ إِنْ شَاءَ أَوْ يَتُوبَ

Forgiving, Merciful.

عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا
رَحِيمًا

25. And Allah drove back those who disbelieved in their rage, they gained no advantage. And Allah sufficed for the believers in the fighting. And Allah is All Strong, All Mighty.

وَرَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِغَيْظِهِمْ
لَمْ يَنَالُوا خَيْرًا ۚ وَكَفَى اللَّهُ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْقِتَالَ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
قَوِيًّا عَزِيزًا

26. And He brought down those who supported them among the people of the Scripture from their fortresses,^{*40} and cast into their hearts terror. A group (of them) you killed, and you made captives a group.

وَأَنْزَلَ الَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوهُمْ مِّنْ أَهْلِ
الْكِتَابِ مِنْ صِيَاصِيهِمْ وَقَذَفَ
فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ ۚ فَرِيقًا
تَقْتُلُونَ وَتَأْسِرُونَ فَرِيقًا

***40** That is, Jews of the Bani Quraizah.

27. And He caused you to inherit their land and their houses and their wealth, and a land you have not trodden. And Allah is Able to do all things.

وَأُورَثَكُمْ أَرْضَهُمْ وَدِيَارَهُمْ
وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ وَأَرْضًا لَّمْ تَطُؤُوهَا
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرًا

28. O Prophet (Muhammad),^{*41} say to your wives: “If you should desire the life of the world and its adornment, then come, I will make a provision for you and send you off (by divorce), a graceful sending.”

يَأَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِأَزْوَاجِكَ إِنْ
كُنْتُنَّ تُرِدْنَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
وَزِينَتَهَا فَتَعَالَيْنَ أُمَتِّعْكُنَّ
وَأُسْرِحْكِنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا



***41** The verses from here to 35 were revealed in the period contiguous to the battle of the Trench and the raid on Bani Quraizah, whose background we have touched upon in the Introduction to this Surah. According to a tradition related in Muslim on the authority of Jabir bin Abdullah, “One day when Abu Bakr and Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) visited the Prophet (peace be upon him), they saw that his wives were sitting around him and he was quiet. Addressing Umar, he said: They are sitting around me as you see: they are asking for money for household expenditure.” At this both the companions rebuked their daughters and said, “Why do you embarrass the Prophet (peace be upon him) and demand from him that which he does not have.” This event shows how economically hard pressed the Prophet (peace be upon him) was at that time, and how distressed and embarrassed he was feeling at his wives’ demand for domestic expenditure during the period when a bitter conflict was going on between Islam and paganism.

29. “And if you should desire Allah and His Messenger and the abode of the Hereafter, then indeed, Allah has prepared for those who do good amongst you an immense reward.”*42

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُرِيدُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
وَالدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ
لِلْمُحْسِنَاتِ مِنْكُنَّ أَجْرًا
عَظِيمًا



*42 At the time when this verse was revealed, the Prophet (peace be with him) had four wives with him: Saudah, Aishah, Hafsa and Umm Salamah. He had not yet married Zainab. (may Allah be pleased with them all). (Ibn Arabia Ahkam ai-Quran. Egyptian Edition, 1958, vol. III, pp. 512-13). When this verse was revealed, he first spoke to Aishah, and said: “I ask you a thing; do not be hasty in answering; consult your parents, then decide.” Then he told her of Allah’s command and recited this verse. She replied: “Should I consult my parents about this?” I seek Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter. After this he went to each of his wives and asked the same thing and each one gave the same reply as had been given by Aishah. (Musnad Ahmad, Muslim, Nasai).

This is termed *takhyir*, i.e. to give the wife the option to decide for herself whether she would stay in wedlock or would separate from the husband. This was obligatory for the Prophet (peace be with him) because he had been commanded by Allah to offer such an option to his wives. If a lady from among the wives had opted to separate, she would not have separated automatically but would have

been separated by the Prophet (peace be with him), as is clear from the words in the previous verse: “I will make a provision for you and send you off (by divorce), a graceful sending.” But the Prophet (peace be with him) would certainly have separated her because as a Prophet it would not behoove him not to honor the word. After divorce apparently the lady would have stood excluded from the category of the wives, and she would not be forbidden to any other Muslim; for she would have chosen divorce from the Prophet (peace be with him) only for the sake of the world and its adornments of which she had been given the choice, and obviously the option could not be exercised in case she was forbidden to re-marry. On the other hand, the intention of the verse also seems that the Prophet (peace be with him) was not left with any authority to divorce the wives who chose Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter in preference to the world. For, *takhyir* had only two sides: if a wife opted for the world, she would be divorced; if she opted for Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter, she would not be divorced. Obviously, if a lady chose one alternative, the other would become forbidden in her case by itself.

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

(1) Once a husband has given this choice to a wife, he can neither withdraw it nor stop her from exercising it.

However, it is not necessary that the woman must exercise it. She may choose to remain in wedlock with the husband, or may prefer to separate, or may opt nothing and let the right of divorce be annulled.

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

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

making a response, or turns her attention to something else which indicates that she does not want to make a response, she forfeits the right invested in her and her choice no longer remains. This is the opinion of Umar, Uthman, Ibn Masud, Jabir bin Abdullah, Atta, Jabir bin Zaid, Mujahid, Shabi, Nakhai, Imam Malik, Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Shafei, Imam Auzai, Sufyan Thauri and Abu Thaur. The other opinion is that her exercise of the choice is not confined to that sitting but she can exercise it even afterwards. This opinion is held by Hasan Basri, Qatadah and Zuhri (may Allah be pleased with them all).

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

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

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

(a) If the husband has said: “Your business is in your own hand,” and the woman responds clearly to the effect that she would opt for separation, it would amount to an

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

(b) If the husband gives the woman the option to separate with the words: “You have the option,” and the woman opts for separation in clear words, it will amount to one reversible divorce according to the Hanafites even if the husband had the intention of giving option for three divorces. However, if the husband has clearly given option for three divorces, the three divorces will take place only on the woman’s exercise of the option for divorce. According to Imam Shafei, if at the time of giving the option, the husband had the intention of divorce, and the woman opts for separation, it will amount to one reversible divorce. According to Imam Malik, it will amount to three divorces in case the wife had been enjoyed; in case she had not been enjoyed, the husband’s claim to have intended only one divorce will be admitted.

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

(7) If after the husband has given the option for separation, the woman chooses to remain in wedlock, no divorce will take place at all. This is the opinion of Umar, Abdullah bin Masud, Aishah, Abu ad-Darda, Ibn Abbas and Ibn Umar, and the same has been adopted by majority of the jurists. When Masruq asked Aishah about this, she replied: “The Prophet (peace be with him) had given his wives the option and they chose to continue to live as his wives. Then, was it deemed to be a divorce?” The opinion of Ali and Zaid bin Thabit that has been reported in this regard is that one reversible divorce will take place. But according to another tradition these two great companions also held the opinion that no divorce will take place at all. (May Allah be pleased with them all).

30. O wives of the Prophet, whoever of you should commit manifest lewdness, for her the punishment would be doubled,^{*43} And that is easy for Allah.^{*44}

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النِّبِيُّ مَنْ يَأْتِ مِنْكُنَّ
بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِيْنَةٍ يُضَعَفْ لَهَا
اَلْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ ۚ وَكَانَ
ذٰلِكَ عَلٰى اَللّٰهِ يَسِيْرًا

***43** This does not mean that there was, God forbid, any chance of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) wives committing an indecency, but this was meant to make them realize that they were the mothers of the Muslims;

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

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

31. And whoever of you is submissive to Allah and His Messenger, and does righteous deeds. We shall give her, her reward twice over,^{*45} and We have prepared for her a noble provision.

وَمَنْ يَقْنُتْ مِنْكُمْ لِلَّهِ
وَرَسُولِهِ وَتَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا نُؤْتِيهَا
أَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهَا رِزْقًا
كَرِيمًا

*45 The reason for giving a double punishment for a sin and a double reward for a good work is that those whom Allah honors with a high rank in society generally become the leaders of men and the majority of the people follow them for good or for evil. Thus, their evil does not remain

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

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

32. O wives of the Prophet, you are not like any other women.*⁴⁶ If you fear (Allah), then do not be soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire, And speak customary speech.*⁴⁷

يٰۤاَيُّهَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ
مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ ۚ اِنْ اَتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا
تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي
فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا
مَّعْرُوفًا



*⁴⁶ The verses from here to the end of the paragraph are those with which the commandments of hijab were

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

As for the sentence, "You are not like any other women," it also does not mean that the other women should come out in full makeup and should talk to the other men

coquettishly and flirt with them, but “as for you, you should not adopt such a conduct.” The style, to the contrary, is such as if a gentleman would tell his child, “You are not like the common children of the street: you should not use abusive language.” From this no sensible person would ever conclude that the speaker regarded only his own child using abusive language as bad; as for others he would not mind if they used abusive language.

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

About such a manner of speech Allah clearly says that this does not behoove a woman who has any fear of God in her heart and desire to avoid evil. In other words, this is the way and manner of the wicked and unchaste woman’s speech and not of the believing pious woman’s speech: If this verse is read together with verse 31 of Surah An-Nur, in which Allah says: “They should not stamp the ground in walking lest their hidden decoration is revealed,” the intention of the Lord clearly seems to be that the women should not attract other men by their voice or the jingle of their ornaments unnecessarily, and if at all they have to speak to the other men, they should speak to them in an un-

affected tone and manner. That is why it is forbidden for the woman to pronounce the call to the Prayer. Moreover, if a woman is attending a congregational Prayer and the Imam commits a mistake, she is not permitted to say Subhan-Allah like the males but should only tap her hands to call the imam's attention to the error.

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

33. And stay in your houses,^{*48} and do not display yourselves like the displaying (of fineries of women) of the former times of ignorance.^{*49} And establish the prayers,

وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ
تَبْرُجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ وَأَقِمْنَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ

and give the poor due, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah only intends to remove from you abomination, O people of the household (of the Prophet), and purify you, a thorough purification.*50

وَأَطِيعَنَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ
اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ
أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا



*48 The word *qarna* in the original is derived from *qarar* according to some lexicographers and from *waqar* according to others. In the first sense, it will mean: “settle down, stick firmly” and in the second sense: “live peacefully, sit with dignity.” In both the cases the verse means to impress that the woman’s real sphere of activity is her home; she should carry out her functions within that sphere peacefully, and she should come out of the house only in case of a genuine need. This meaning is clear from the words of the verse itself and the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) Ahadith also impress it even more forcefully. Hafiz Abu Bakr Bazzar has related on the authority of Anas that the women made a submission to the Prophet (peace be upon him), saying: “All kinds of virtues have been secured by the men: they fight and accomplish great deeds in the way of Allah. What should we do that we may also get a reward equal to that of the warriors?” The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: “The one who sits in her house from among you; will attain the reward of the warriors.” What he meant was: The warrior can fight confidently and with full peace of the mind in the way of

Allah only when he is sure that all is well at home. His wife is there to look after the house and the children, and there is no cause for him to worry that she will betray him in his absence. The woman who will provide him this satisfaction and peace of the mind will be an equal partner with him in his fighting though she will be sitting back at home. According to another tradition that Bazzar and Tirmidhi have related on the authority of Abdullah bin Masud, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “The woman must remain veiled and concealed. When she comes out of her house, Satan stares at her. And she is closer to Allah’s mercy when she is inside her house.” (See E.N. 49 of Surah An-Nur).

In the presence of such a clear and express command of the Quran, it is not at all permissible that the Muslim women should seek membership of the councils and parliaments; that they should run after social activities outside the house; that they should work side by side with men in the government offices, should get education along with boys in the colleges, serve as nurses in the male wards of hospitals, should be employed as hostesses in the airplanes and rail cars, and should be sent abroad for education and training. The greatest argument that is given in support of the permissibility of the women’s outdoor activities is that Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) had taken part in the battle of the Jamul. But the people who present this argument perhaps do not know what was Aishah’s own opinion in this regard. Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Hanbal has related in his Zawa id az-Zuhd and Ibn Mundhir, Ibn

Abi Shaibah and Ibn Saad in their own books the tradition from Masruq, saying that when Aishah during her recitation of the Quran would reach this verse (*wa qarna fi buyut-i kunna*), she would start crying involuntarily; so much so that her head-wrapper would become wet, for this reminded her of the error that she had committed in the battle of the Jamul.

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

The word *tabarruj* in Arabic means to become manifest and appear openly before others. The Arabs use the word *baraj* for every conspicuous and elevated object. A *burj* (tower) is so called because of its prominence and elevation. A sailing-boat is called *barijah*, because its sails become visible from a distance. The word *tabarruj* when used in respect of a woman will have three meanings: (1) that she should show the charms of her face and body before the people. (2) That she should display the adornments of her dress and ornaments before others. (3) That she should make herself conspicuous by her gait and figure and coquetry. The same explanation of this word has been given by the leading lexicographers and commentators. Mujahid, Qatadah and Ibn Abi Nujaih say: *Tabarruj* means to walk in a vain, alluring and coquettish manner. Muqatil says: It means a woman's displaying of her necklaces, ear-rings and bosom. Al-Mubarrad says: That a woman should reveal her adornments which she should conceal. Abu Ubaidah comments: This that a woman should make herself

conspicuous by display of her body and dress to attract the attention of men.

The word *jahiliyyat* has been used at three other places in the Quran besides this, in Surah Aal-Imran: Ayat 154, where about those who shirk fighting in the way of Allah, it has been said: "They began to cherish about Allah thoughts of Ignorance *Uahiljyyat*, which were void of the truth. And in Surah Al-Maidah: Ayat 50, where about those who want to be judged by their own law instead of the law of Allah, it has been said: "Do they desire to be judged by the laws of ignorance (*Jahiliyyat*)?" and in Surah Al-Fath: Ayat 26, where the prejudice of the people of Makkah due to which they did not permit the Muslims to perform Umrah, has been called as "the haughty spirit of paganism (*jahiliyyat*). According to a *Hadith* once Abu ad-Darda in the heat of a quarrel abused another person in respect of his mother. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) heard of it, he remarked: You still have *jahiliyyat* in you. According to another *Hadith* the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Three things show *jahiliyyat*: to taunt the lineage of another person, to take omens from the movement of the stars, and to mourn over the dead. All these customs show that *jahiliyyat* in the Islamic terminology is every such conduct which goes against Islamic culture and civilization and Islamic morality and etiquette and Islamic way of thinking and behavior. Thus, *jahiliyyat al-ula* would mean all those evils in which the Arabs of the pre-Islamic days and the people of the entire world were involved.

This explanation makes it abundantly clear that what Allah

forbids women is to move out of their houses showing off their physical charms and beauty. He instructs them to stay in their houses because their real sphere of activity is their home and not the world outside. However, if they have to move out of the house for an outdoor duty, they should not move out as the women used to do in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance. For it does not behoove the women of a Muslim society to walk out fully embellished to make their face and figure conspicuous by adornments and tight-fitting or transparent dresses, and to walk coquettishly. These are the ways of ignorance which Islam does not approve. Now everybody can see for himself whether the culture which is being made popular in our country is the culture of Islam, according to the Quran, or the culture of ignorance.

***50** The context in which this verse occurs makes it manifest that the word *ahl al-bait* (people of the house) here implies the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him), because the address begins with: “O wives of the Prophet,” and they are the addressees in the whole discourse preceding it as well as following it. Moreover, the word *ahl al-bait* in Arabic is used precisely in the sense in which the word “household” is used in English, which includes both a man’s wife and children. No one would exclude the wife from the “household.” The Quran itself has used this word at two other places besides this, and at both the wife is included in its sense, rather as the most important member of the family. In Surah Hud, when the angels give the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) the good news of

the birth of a son, his wife exclaims: “Shall I bear a child now when I have grown too old, and this husband of mine has also become old?” The angels say: “What! Are you surprised at Allah's decree, O people of Abraham's household? Allah's mercy and blessings are upon you.” In Surah Al-Qasas, when the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) reaches the Pharaoh's house as a suckling, and the Pharaoh's wife is in search of a suitable nurse for the child, the Prophet Moses' (peace be upon him) sister says, “Shall I tell you of a household whose people will bring him up for you and look after him well?” Thus, the Arabic idiom and the usage of the Quran and the context of this verse, all point clearly to the fact that the Prophet's (peace be upon him) wives as well as his children are included in his *ahl al-bait*; rather the more correct thing is that the verse is actually addressed to the wives and the children become included in the household only because of the sense of the word. That is why according to Ibn Abbas and Urwah bin Zubair and Ikrimah, the word *ahl al-bait* in this verse implies the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

But if somebody says that the word *ahl al-bait* has been used only for the wives and none else can be included in it, it will also be wrong. Not only this that the word “household” includes all the members of a man's family, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) has himself explained that this includes even himself. According to Ibn Abi Hatim, once when Aishah was asked about Ali, she said, “Do you ask me about the person who was among the most loved ones of the Prophet and whose wife was the Prophet's

(peace be upon him) daughter and most beloved to him?" Then she related the event when the Prophet (peace be upon him) had called Ali and Fatimah and Hasan and Husain (may Allah be pleased with them all) and covered them all with a sheet of cloth and prayed: "O Allah, these are my household, remove uncleanness from them and make them pure." Aishah says, "I said: I also am included among your household (i.e. I may also be covered under the sheet and prayed for)." Thereupon the Prophet replied: "You stay out: you, of course, are already included." A great many Ahadith bearing on this subject have been related by traditionalists like Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ahmad, Ibn Jarir, Hakim, Baihaqi, etc. on the authority of Abu Said Khudri, Aishah, Anas, Umm Salamah, Wathilah bin Aqsa and some other companions, which show that the Prophet (peace be upon him) declared Ali and Fatimah and their two sons as his *ahl al-bait*. Therefore, the view of those who exclude them from the *ahl al-bait* is not correct. Similarly the view of those people also is not correct, who, on the basis of the above cited Ahadith, regard the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as excluded from his *ahl al-bait*. In the first place, anything which has been clearly stated in the Quran cannot be contradicted on the basis of a Hadith. Secondly, these Ahadith also do not have the meaning that is put on them. As related in some traditions that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not cover Aishah and Umm Salamah under the sheet of cloth which he put on the four members of his family, does not mean that he had excluded those ladies from his "household." But it

means that the wives were already included in *ahl al-bait*, because the Quran, in fact, had addressed them as *ahl al-bait*. The Prophet (peace be upon him), however, thought that the apparent words of the Quran might cause somebody the misunderstanding about these members that they were excluded from the *ahl al-bait*. Therefore, he felt the need for clarification in their case and not in the case of his wives.

A section of the people have not only misconstrued this verse to the extent that they have made the word *ahl al-bait* exclusively applicable to Ali and Fatimah and their children to the exclusion of the wives, but have gone even further and concluded wrongly from its words “Allah only intends to remove uncleanness from you and purify you completely”, that Ali and Fatimah and their children are infallible like the Prophets of Allah. They say that “uncleanliness” implies error and sin, and, as Allah says, these *ahl al-bait* have been purified of this, whereas the words of the verse do not say that uncleanness has been removed from them and they have been purified. But the words are to the effect: “Allah intends to remove uncleanness from you and purify you completely.” The context also does not tell that the object here is to mention the virtues and excellences of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) household. On the contrary, they have been advised here what they should do and what they should not, because Allah intends to purify them. In other words, they have been told that if they adopted such and such an attitude and way of life, they will be blessed with

cleanliness, otherwise not. However, if the words “Allah intends to remove uncleanness from you” are taken to mean that Allah has made them infallible, then is no reason why all the Muslims who perform their ablutions before offering the Prayer are not held as infallible, because about them also Allah says: “But Allah wills to purify you and complete His blessings upon you.” (Surah Al-Maidah: Ayat 6).

34. And remember what is recited in your houses of the revelations of Allah,*51 and wisdom. Indeed, Allah is Subtle,*52 Well Acquainted.

وَأَذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَى فِي
بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَالْحِكْمَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ
لَطِيفًا خَبِيرًا



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

know by any other means than you.”

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

*52 “Well Acquainted”: “Knower of even the most secret

and hidden things.”

35. Indeed,^{*53} men who surrender (to Allah), and women who surrender (to Allah),^{*54} and men who believe and women who believe,^{*55} and men who obey and women who obey,^{*56} and men who speak the truth and women who speak the truth,^{*57} and men who are patient and women who are patient,^{*58} and men who are humble and women who are humble,^{*59} and men who give alms and women who give alms,^{*60} and men who fast and women who fast,^{*61} and men who guard their modesty and women who guard (their modesty),^{*62} and men who remember Allah much and women who remember,^{*63} Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward.^{*64}

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ
وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ
وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ
وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ
وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ
وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ
وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ
وَالْحَافِظِينَ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ
وَالذَّاكِرِينَ وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ
اللَّهُ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ
لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا



*53 Presentation of this theme immediately after the foregoing paragraph contains a subtle allusion to the fact that the instructions given above to the Prophet's (peace be

upon him) wives are not exclusively meant for them but the Muslim society as a whole should reform itself in accordance with them.

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

***55** Who are believing: Whose obedience is not merely outward, nor unwilling but who sincerely regard the guidance given by Islam as based on the truth. Whose faith is that the way shown by the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the only right and straight way. And in following which alone lies their true success. That which has been declared as wrong by Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him) is certainly wrong. And that which has been declared as right by Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him) is certainly right. Also, psychologically and intellectually, they do not regard as improper any injunction that has been enjoined by the Quran and Sunnah, and do not remain on the lookout to change it somehow to suit their own desires or mold it according to the current trends of the world, avoiding at the same time the blame that they have effected a change in the command given by Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him). The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) has described the true state of faith in a *Hadith* in these words: “He who reconciled himself to Allah as his Lord and to Islam as his way of Life and to Muhammad as his

Messenger, has the true taste of faith.” (Sahih Muslim).

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

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

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

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

***58** That is, they patiently and steadfastly bear and face all the obstacles, dangers, difficulties and losses that they might have to encounter in following the right way taught by Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and in establishing Allah’s religion in the world; no fear and no temptation and no desire of the self can succeed in diverting them from the right way.

***59** That is, they are free from pride, vanity and haughtiness: they have full understanding of the reality that they are servants and they have no other position than

that of servitude. Therefore, their hearts as well as their bodies remain bowed before Allah, dominated by fear of Him. They never display the attitude which is the hallmark of the lives of those who are fearless of God and are involved in arrogance. From the sequence it appears that the mention of *Khushu* (expression of humility) in particular along with the general attitude of the fear of God implies the Prayer, for the mention of the practice of charity and fast has been made just after it.

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

***61** This includes both the obligatory and the voluntary fasts.

***62** This has two meanings:

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

***63** Remember Allah much means that one should mention Allah's name in one way or other at all times in every

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

This, in fact, is the essence of the Islamic life. For all other acts of worship there is a prescribed time when they are performed, and one is free when one has performed them. But this is the worship which has no special time; it has to be performed constantly so that it links up the man's life with Allah and His service permanently. The other worships and religious acts themselves also become meaningful only when the heart of man remains inclined to Allah not only at the time when the act is actually being carried out but at all times when the tongue is uttering

Allah's name constantly. In such a state as this worship and religious acts develop and flourish in a man's life precisely in the same manner as a plant grows in a congenial climate and environment. Contrary to this, the example of the religious services and worships which are carried out only on special times and occasions in the life which is devoid of this constant remembrance of Allah is of the plant which has been planted in an un-congenial climate, and which is growing only due to the special attention and care of the gardener. This very thing has been explained by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a *Hadith*, thus: Muadh bin Anas Juhani relates that a person asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah, "Who among those who fight in the way of Allah will get the highest reward?" He replied: "The one who remembers Allah the most." The man asked: "Who among the observers of the fast will get the highest reward?" He replied: "The one who remembers Allah the most." The man then asked the same question about the performer of the Prayer, the payer of the Zakat and charities and the performer of Hajj and the Prophet (peace be upon him) in every case gave the same answer, saying: He who remembers Allah the most. (Musnad Ahmad).

***64** This verse plainly tells what qualities and characteristics are of real worth in the sight of Allah. These are the basic values of Islam which have been compressed into one sentence. As regards these, there is no difference between the man and woman. However, as for their life activity, the two sexes have separate spheres to function. The males have to function in some particular spheres and

the females in some others. But if they possess these qualities and characteristics equally, Allah will raise them to equal ranks and bless them with equal rewards. It will in no way affect their rank and reward if one carried out household chores and the other performed the duties of caliphate and enforced the *Shariah* injunctions; one raised children in the house and the other went to the battlefield and fought for the sake of Allah and His religion.

36. And^{*65} it is not for a believing man, nor a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter (for them), that they should (thereafter) have any option in their affair. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, then certainly he has strayed in error manifest.^{*66}

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا
قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ
يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ
وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ
ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا



*65 From here begin the verses which were revealed in connection with the Prophet's (peace be upon him) marriage with Zainab (may Allah be pleased with her).

*66 Ibn Abbas, Qatadah, Ikrimah and Muqatil bin Hayyan say that this verse was revealed at the time when the Prophet (peace be upon him) proposed to Zainab for Zaid, and Zainab and her relatives did not agree. According to Ibn Abbas, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) made the proposal, Zainab said, "I am better than him in lineage." Ibn Saad says that she also said, "I do not

approve him for myself. I am a Quraishite by birth. The same sort of disapproval was expressed by her brother, Abdullah bin Jahsh, because Zaid was a freed slave of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Zainab was the daughter of his paternal aunt, Umainah bint Abdul Muttalib. They did not like the Prophet (peace be upon him) to propose a girl of a noble Quraishite family, who was none other than his own first cousin, for his freed slave. At this, this verse was sent down and on hearing it Zainab and all her relatives yielded to the proposal at once. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) married them, paid ten diners and 60 dirhams from his own pocket as dower on behalf of Zaid, provided the bridal dress and sent some articles of food for domestic use.

Though this verse was revealed on a special occasion, the injunction given in it is the cardinal principle of the constitutional law of Islam, and it applies to the entire Islamic system of life. According to it no Muslim individual or nation, or institution, or court or parliament or state, is entitled to use its own freedom of opinion in a matter in which Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him) have already given a decision. To be a Muslim means to surrender one's freedom of opinion and action before Allah and His Messenger. It would be a contradiction in terms if a person or a nation claimed to be Muslim and then reserved for itself the freedom of choice and action. No sensible person can think of combining the two contradictory attitudes together. The one who desires to remain a Muslim will inevitably have to bow down to the

command of Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him), and the one who is not inclined to bow will have to admit that he is not a Muslim. If he does not admit he will be regarded as a hypocrite both by God and by the people even though he might proclaim to be a Muslim at the top of his voice.

37. And when you^{*67} said to him (Zaid)^{*68} upon whom Allah has bestowed favor, and upon whom you (O Muhammad) have done favor: “Keep your wife to yourself, and fear Allah.”^{*69}

And you concealed in yourself that which Allah was about to make manifest, and you feared the people, while Allah has more right that you should fear Him.^{*70} So when Zaid had fulfilled his desire of her,^{*71} We gave her to you in marriage,^{*72} so that (henceforth) there may be no difficulty upon believers in respect of wives of their adopted sons, when they have performed the necessary formality (of release) from them.^{*73} And the command of

وَإِذْ تَقُولُ لِلَّذِي أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَأَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ
زَوْجَكَ وَاتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَتُخْفَى فِي
نَفْسِكَ مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ وَتَخْشَى
النَّاسَ وَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَاهُ
فَلَمَّا قَضَى زَيْدٌ مِنْهَا وَطَرًا
زَوَّجْنَاكَهَا لِكَيْ لَا يَكُونَ عَلَى
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرَجٌ فِي أَزْوَاجِ
أَدْعِيَائِهِمْ إِذَا قَضَوْا مِنْهُنَّ وَطَرًا
وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا

Allah must be fulfilled.

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

***68** It refers to Zaid as has been mentioned clearly below. In order to understand how Allah and the Prophet (peace be upon him) had favored him, it is necessary here to relate his story briefly. He was the son of Harithah bin Shurahbil, a person of the Kalb tribe, and his mother, Suda bint Thalabah, was from the Bani Maan, a branch of the Tay

tribe. When he was eight years old, she took him along to her parents. There the people of Bani Qain bin Jasn raided their camp, plundered their goods and took some men prisoners including Zaid. Then they sold Zaid at the fair of Ukiiz near Taif. His buyer was Hakim bin Hizam, a nephew of Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her). Hakim brought him to Makkah and presented him to his paternal aunt. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) married Khadijah, he found Zaid in her service and was so impressed by his good manners and conduct that he asked her to give Zaid to him. Thus, this fortunate boy entered the service of the best of men, whom Allah, after a few years, was going to appoint a Prophet (peace be upon him). Zaid at that time was 15 years old. Afterwards, when his father and uncle came to know that their child was at Makkah, they came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and requested him to return him in exchange for a payment. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "I shall call the boy and leave it to him whether he would like to go with you or stay with me. If he chose to go, I would take no payment but would let him go with you. However, if he chose to stay back, I am not the one who would send away a person who would like to stay with me." They said, "This is perfectly right and just. Please ask the boy." The Prophet (peace be upon him) called Zaid and asked him: "Do you know these two gentlemen?" He said, "Yes, this is my father and this is my uncle." The Prophet (peace be upon him) then said, "Well, you know them as well as me. You have the choice to go with them, or stay with me if you so

desire.” He said, “I have no wish to leave you and go with anyone else.” His father and uncle said: “Zaid, will you prefer slavery to freedom, and choose to stay with others in preference to your parents and family?” He replied, “After what I have seen of this person, I cannot prefer anything else of the world over him.” Hearing this reply, the father and uncle of Zaid were reconciled to his remaining with the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) set Zaid free immediately and proclaimed before a gathering of the Quraish in the Kabah, “Bear witness that hence forth Zaid is my son: he will receive inheritance from me and I from him.” Thereafter, he began to be called Zaid bin Muhammad by the people. All this happened before the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) advent as a Prophet. Then, when he was blessed with Prophethood by Allah, there were four persons who accepted his claim to it without a moment’s hesitation as soon as they heard of it from him. They were Khadijah, Zaid, Ali and Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with them all). Zaid was 30 years old then, and had already spent 15 years in the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) service. In the fourth year after Hijrah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) married him to his first cousin Zainab, paid her dower on his behalf and provided them with necessary articles for setting up the house.

This is to what Allah has alluded in the verse, saying: “Upon whom Allah has bestowed favor, and upon whom you (O Muhammad) have done favor.”

*69 These words were said when the relations between Zaid and Zainab had become very strained, and after making

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

***70** Some people have misconstrued this sentence to mean this: The Prophet (peace be upon him) desired to marry Zainab and wanted that Zaid should divorce her. But when Zaid came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said that he wanted to divorce his wife, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stopped him from this only half heartedly. At this Allah said: "You were keeping hidden in your heart that which Allah intended to reveal." The real meaning, however, is contrary to this. If this the sentence is read with verses 1, 2, 3 and 7 of this Surah, one can clearly see that in the very days when bitterness was increasing between Zaid and his wife, Allah had hinted to His Prophet (peace be upon him) that when Zaid had divorced his wife, he would have to marry the divorced lady. But since the Prophet (peace be upon him) knew what it meant to marry the divorced wife of the adopted son in the contemporary Arab society, and that too at a time when apart from a handful of the Muslims the entire country had become jealous of him,

he was hesitant to take any step in that direction. That is why when Zaid expressed his intention to divorce his wife, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him, “Fear Allah and do not divorce your wife.” What he meant by this was that Zaid should not divorce his wife so that he was saved from facing the trial, otherwise in case the divorce was pronounced he would have to comply with the command, and thus provoke a severe storm of criticism and vilification against himself. But when the Prophet (peace be upon him) deliberately forbade Zaid to divorce his wife so that he himself might be saved from what he feared would cause him defamation, Allah found this below the high position that He wanted His Prophet to enjoy, whereas Allah intended to effect a great reform through this marriage of the Prophet. The words “And you feared the people, while Allah has more right that you should fear Him,” clearly point to the same theme.

The same explanation of this verse has been given by Imam Zain-ul-Aabedin Ali bin Husain (may Allah be pleased with him). He says, Allah had indicated to His Prophet (peace be upon him) that Zainab would be included among his wives. But when Zaid complained about her to him, the Prophet (peace be upon him) admonished him to fear Allah and keep his wife. At this Allah said to His Prophet, “I had informed you that I would give Zainab you to in marriage. But when you were forbidding Zaid to divorce his wife, you were hiding that which Allah was going to reveal.” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir on the authority of Ibn Abi Hatim).

Allama Alusi in his *Ruh-al-Maani* has also given the same

meaning of it. He says, “This is an expression of displeasure on abandoning the better course, which was that the Prophet (peace be upon him) should have kept quiet, or should have told Zaid to do as he liked. The displeasure amounted to this: “Why did you tell Zaid to keep his wife, whereas I had informed you beforehand that Zainab would be included among your wives?”

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

***72** These words are explicit that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had married Zainab not because of any personal desire but under the command of Allah.

***73** These words clearly indicate that Allah accomplished this social reform through the Prophet (peace be upon him) to effect a great change which could not be enforced by any other means. There was no way to put an end to the wrong customs that had become prevalent in Arabia in respect of the adopted relations but that Allah’s Messenger himself should take initiative to abolish them. Therefore, Allah

arranged this marriage not for the sake of adding a wife to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) household but for enforcing an important social change.

38. There is no blame for the Prophet in that which Allah ordained for him.*74 That was Allah's way with those who passed away before. And the command of Allah is pre-ordained decree.*75

مَا كَانَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ مِنْ حَرَجٍ
فِيمَا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَهُ سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي
الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ
اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَّقْدُورًا

***74** These words show that for the other Muslims such a marriage is just permissible but for the Prophet (peace be upon him) it was a duty which Allah had imposed on him.

***75** That is, for the Prophets it has always been a law that whatever command they receive from Allah, they have to act on it as a duty which they cannot in any case avoid. When Allah enjoins something on His Prophet (peace be upon him), he has to accomplish it even if the entire world is deadly opposed to it.

39. Those who convey the message of Allah and fear Him, and do not fear anyone except Allah. And sufficient is Allah as a Reckoner.*76

الَّذِينَ يُبَلِّغُونَ رِسَالَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَيَخْشَوْنَ اللَّهَ وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ أَحَدًا إِلَّا
اللَّهَ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا

***76** The words in the text have two meanings:
(1) That Allah is enough to counter every fear and danger;
and,

(2) that Allah is enough to take account: none else but Allah should be feared for accountability.

40. Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets. And Allah has knowledge of everything.*77

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا



*77 This one sentence was at the root of all those objections which the opponents were raising in connection with this marriage of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

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

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

The point was stressed by saying: "and (he is) the seal of the Prophets." That is, not to speak of a Messenger, no

other Prophet would be raised after him, who could make up for a possible deficiency in the enforcement of a reform in the law and society that might have been left un-enforced in his time. Therefore, it had become all the more necessary that he should himself root out the custom of ignorance.

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

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

41. O you who believe, remember Allah with much remembrance.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ
ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا

42. And glorify Him morning and evening.*78

وَسَبِّحْهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا

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

43. He it is who sends blessings upon you, and His angels (ask Him to bless you), that He may bring you out from darkness into the light. And He is ever Merciful to the believers.*79

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّي عَلَيْكُمْ
وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ
الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَكَانَ
بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا

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

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

44. Their salutation the day when they shall meet Him will be, Peace.^{*80} And He has prepared for them a generous reward.

تَحِيَّتُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَلْقَوْنَهُ سَلَامٌ
وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَرِيمًا

***80** This can have three meanings:

(1) That Allah will Himself receive them with: Peace be

upon you, as has been stated in Surah Ya Sin: Ayat 58: “they have been greeted with “peace” from the Merciful Lord.”

(2) That the angels will greet them, as stated in Surah An-Nahl: Ayat 32: “This is the reward for those pious people whose souls are received in a pure state by the angels, who welcome them, saying: ‘Peace be upon you, enter into Paradise as the reward of your good deeds.’”

(3) That they will greet one another among themselves, as stated in Surah Yunus: Ayat 10, thus: “Therein their prayer will be Glory to Thee, O Lord, and their greeting: Peace be to you, and the burden of their hymn: Praise is for Allah alone, Lord of the universe.”

45. O Prophet, ^{*81} indeed We have sent you as a witness, ^{*82} and a bearer of good tidings, and a warner. ^{*83}

يَأَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَهِيدًا
وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا



^{*81} After admonishing the Muslims, Allah now addresses a few words of consolation to His Prophet (peace be upon him), as if to say: “We have blessed you with such and such a high rank and raised you to an exalted place of honor. Your opponents will not be able to harm you in any way by their propaganda campaign of slander and calumny. Therefore, you should not take their mischief to heart, nor give any weight to their propaganda. You should continue doing the duties of your mission, and let them utter whatever nonsense they like.” Along with this, incidentally, the other people, both the believers and the unbelievers, also have been told that the person they have to deal with is

not an ordinary man but a great personality, whom Allah has raised to the highest ranks of honor and glory.

***82** The meaning of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) being a "witness" is very vast. It includes three kinds of evidence:

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

(2) Practical evidence: That is, the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his own life should practically demonstrate all that he has been commissioned to present before the world. His

life should be free from every shade of that which he calls evil, and his own character should clearly reflect that which he calls good; he should be the foremost in carrying out what he regards as obligatory, and most cautious in refraining from what he calls sinful. He should exert his utmost to enforce the code of life which he calls divine. His own character and conduct should bear out how sincere and truthful he is in his invitation; and his own self should be such a model of his teaching that anyone who sees him should know what kind of a man he wants to produce by the faith to which he invites the world, what kind of a character he wants to instill in him and what system of life he wants to be established through him in the world.

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

From this one can have an idea of how great a responsibility had Allah placed upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) by raising him to the position of a “witness”, and how great should be the personality worthy of that high position. Evidently, there has been no slackness whatever on the part of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the

matter of giving evidence with regard to the faith, verbally as well as practically. That is why in the Hereafter, he will be able to testify that he had made the truth plain to the people, and that is how Allah's argument will be established against them; otherwise, if, God forbid, there had been any slackness on the part of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in providing evidence, he could neither be a witness against them in the Hereafter nor could any case be established against the deniers of the truth.

Some people have tried to give a different interpretation to the word witness. They say that the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Hereafter will bear witness to the acts and deeds of the people. From this they conclude that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is watching and witnessing the acts of all the people; otherwise he could not bear the witness. But according to the Quran this interpretation is absolutely wrong. The Quran tells us that Allah has arranged a different system for recording the acts of the people. For this purpose His angels are preparing the conduct book of every person. (See Surah Qaf: Ayats 17-18, and Surah Al-Kahf: Ayat 49). After this He will make the people's own limbs also to bear witness against them, (Surah Ya Sin: Ayat 65, Aurah Ha Mim As-Sajdah: Ayats 20-21). As for the Prophets, they are not to testify to the acts of the people, but to give evidence to prove that they had conveyed the truth to the people. The Quran clearly says:

On the Day when Allah will assemble all the Messengers, He will ask: What was the response you received? They will

answer: We have no knowledge. You alone have the full knowledge of all that is hidden. (Surah Al-Maidah: Ayat 109).

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

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

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

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

This shows that on the Day of Resurrection the Prophet's (peace be upon him) evidence in its nature will not be any different from the evidence for bearing which the Prophet's (peace be upon him) community and the witnesses in regard to every other community will be summoned. Evidently, if it be an evidence in regard to the acts, then the omnipresence of all of them also becomes necessary. And if these witnesses will be called to give

evidence to confirm that the Creator's message had reached His creation, inevitably the Prophet (peace be upon him) also will be called upon to give a similar evidence.

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

*83 One should note that a person's giving the good news of a good end for belief and righteous acts and the warning of an evil end for disbelief and evil acts, in his personal

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

46. And as one who invites to Allah by His permission,^{*84} and an illuminating lamp.

وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا



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

rebellion against Allah Himself precisely as resistance to a government official when he is performing official duty is regarded as hostile to the government itself.

47. And announce good tidings to the believers, that they will have from Allah a great bounty.

وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ
فَضْلًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٤٧﴾

48. And do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and disregard their persecution, and put your trust in Allah. And Allah is sufficient as Trustee.

وَلَا تُطِعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ
وَدَعْ أَذُنَهُمْ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ
وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٤٨﴾

49. O you who believe, when you marry believing women and then divorce them before you have touched them,^{*85} then there is no waiting term upon them, for you to count regarding them. So provide for them and send them off, a graceful sending.^{*86}

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا نَكَحْتُمُ
الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ طَلَقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ
قَبْلِ أَنْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ فَمَا لَكُمْ
عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ عِدَّةٍ تَعْتَدُونَهَا
فَمَتِّعُوهُنَّ وَسَرَّحُوهُنَّ سَرَاحًا
جَمِيلًا ﴿٤٩﴾

*85 This sentence is explicit that the word *nikah* here has been used for the contract of marriage only. The lexicographers have greatly disputed over the real meaning of the Arabic word *nikah*. One group of them says that as a

word it is common both for intercourse and for the contract of marriage. The second group says that in its meaning it is common for both. The third group opines that its real meaning is the contract of marriage and for intercourse it is used only figuratively. And the fourth group expresses the opinion that its real meaning is intercourse and for the contract of marriage it is used only figuratively. Each group has cited Arabic poetry in support of its view. But Raghīb Isfahānī has emphatically asserted this: “The real meaning of the word *nikah* is contract of marriage; it has been used for intercourse metaphorically. It is impossible that its real meaning be intercourse and may have been used for the contract of marriage only metaphorically.” The argument he gives is that all the words that have been actually coined for intercourse in Arabic, or in other languages of the world, are obscene and vulgar. No gentleman would like to utter them in a civilized gathering. Therefore, it is not possible that a society should use the word which has actually been coined for this act for marriage as a metaphor. For conveying this meaning only chaste words have been used in every language of the world and not obscene words.

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

*86 This is a unique verse which was sent down probably in

the same period respecting some case of divorce, and so inserted in this context. This shows that it was sent down after the preceding and before the following discourse. Below is given a summary of the legal injunctions that have been derived from this verse:

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

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

intercourse could be possible), waiting-period will have to be observed if divorce is pronounced after it, and the waiting-period would be annulled only in case divorce was pronounced before they have had the seclusion.

(3) The annulment of the waiting-period in case of divorce before the event of seclusion means that in this case the man forfeits his right to take the woman back as his wife, and the woman becomes entitled to marry anyone she likes immediately after the divorce. But it should be borne in mind that this applies only to the divorce which is pronounced before the event of the seclusion. If a woman's husband dies before having the seclusion, the waiting-period that has to be observed after death will not be annulled, but she will have to pass the same waiting-period of four months and ten days as is obligatory for a married woman in normal conditions. (*Iddat* is the waiting-period before the expiry of which a divorced woman or a widow is forbidden to remarry).

(4) The words "then there is no waiting term upon them," show that the waiting-period is a right of the man on the woman. But it does not mean that this is only the man's right. It, in fact, includes two other rights as well: the right of the children, and the right of Allah or of the law. The man's right is on the basis that he has the right to take the woman back as his wife during the period, and also on the basis that the proof of the parentage of his children, which depends on the woman's being pregnant or otherwise, becomes established in the waiting-period. The reason for including the right of the children is that the proof of a

child's parentage is necessary for the establishment of his legal rights, and his moral status also depends on this that his parentage should not be doubtful. The reason for including the right of Allah (or the right of the law) is that even if the people and their children become heedless of their rights, the divine law requires that their rights should be protected. That is why even if a man gives a warrant to a woman that after his death or after obtaining divorce from him, there will be no waiting-period binding on her from him, the divine law will in no case annul it.

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

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

(7) Ibn Abbas, Said bin al-Musayyib, Hasan Basri, Ali bin al-Husain (Zain al-Abidin), Imam Shafei and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal have deduced from the words, “when you marry, and then divorce” that divorce takes effect only when marriage has been contracted. Divorce before the contract of marriage is without effect. Therefore if a person says, “If I marry such and such a woman, or a woman of such and such a tribe or nation, or any other woman, she is divorced,” it will be an absurd and meaningless thing; no divorce can take effect from this. The following *Ahadith* are presented in support of this view:

“The son of Adam is not entitled to use his power of divorce in respect of that which he does not possess.” (Ahmad, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah). And: “There is no divorce before marriage.” (Ibn Majah). But a great number of the jurists hold that this verse and these *Ahadith* apply in the case when a man says to a woman, who is not his wife, “You have divorce on you,” or “I divorce you.” Saying such a thing is no doubt absurd, and is of no legal consequence, but if he says, “If I marry you, you are divorced,” this is not divorcing before the marriage, but the person is in fact declaring his intent that when the woman is married to him, she will stand divorced. Such a declaration cannot be absurd and without effect, but, as a matter of fact, whenever the woman is married to him, divorce will fall on her. The jurists who hold the view have further differed as to what extent this kind of divorce will have effect.

Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Muhammad and Imam Zufar hold that divorce will take place in any case whether a

person specifics a woman or a tribe or a nation, or talks generally so as to say. “Any woman whom I marry is divorced.” Abu Bakr al-Jassas has cited the same opinion also from Umar, Abdullah bin Masud, Ibrahim Nakhai, Mujahid and Umar bin Abdul Aziz (may Allah show mercy to them all).

Sufyan Thauri and Uthman al-Batti say that divorce will take place only in case the person says, “If I marry such and such a woman, she is divorced.”

Hasan bin Salih, Laith bin Saad and Amir ash-Shabi, say that such a divorce will take place even if something is said in general terms provided that a particular class of the people has been mentioned; for instance, if the person has said. “If I marry a woman of such and such a family, or such and such a tribe, or such and such city or country or nation, she is divorced.”

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

50. O Prophet, indeed We have made lawful for you your wives to whom you have given their dowries,^{*87} and

يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَحْلَلْنَا لَكَ
أَزْوَاجَكَ الَّتِي آتَيْتَ

those whom your right hand possesses of those whom Allah has given to you as captives of war. And the daughters of your paternal uncle, and the daughters of your paternal aunts, and the daughters of your maternal uncle, and the daughters of your maternal aunts who emigrated with you, and a believing woman if she give herself to the Prophet, and if the Prophet desires to marry her,^{*88} a privilege for you only, not for the other believers.^{*89} We certainly know what We have enjoined upon them about their wives and those whom their right hands possess, that there should be no difficulty upon you.^{*90} And Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful.

أَجُورَهُنَّ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ
 مِمَّا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ وَبَنَاتِ
 عَمِّكَ وَبَنَاتِ عَمَّتِكَ وَبَنَاتِ
 خَالِكَ وَبَنَاتِ خَالَتِكَ الَّتِي
 هَاجَرْنَ مَعَكَ وَامْرَأَةً مُؤْمِنَةً
 إِنْ وَهَبَتْ نَفْسَهَا لِلنَّبِيِّ إِنْ أَرَادَ
 النَّبِيُّ أَنْ يَسْتَنْكِحَهَا خَالِصَةً
 لَكَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ قَدْ
 عَلِمْنَا مَا فَرَضْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِي
 أَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ
 لِكَيْلَا يَكُونَ عَلَيْكَ حَرَجٌ
 وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

***87** This, in fact, is an answer to the objection of the people who said that Muhammad (peace be upon him) forbade others to keep more than four wives at a time but had himself taken a fifth wife. This objection was raised because at the time the Prophet (peace be upon him) married

Zainab, he already had four wives with him:

(1) Saudah, whom he had married in the 3rd year before the Hijrah,

(2) Aishah, whom he married in the 3rd year before the Hijrah but who came to live with him in Shawwal, A.H. 1,

(3) Hafsa, whom he married in Shaban, A.H. 3, and,

(4) Umm Salamah, whom he married in Shawwal. A.H. 4.

Thus, Zainab was his fifth wife.

May Allah be pleased with them all.

Here Allah has answered the objection of the disbelievers and the hypocrites, as if to say, O Prophet, We have made lawful for you all these five wives whom you have married by giving them their dowers. In other words, the answer means this: “It is We who have imposed the restriction of four wives on others, and it is also We ourselves who have made Our Prophet an exception to the restriction. When We could impose the restriction, We could also make the exception.”

Also, about this answer one should note that it was not meant to satisfy the disbelievers and the hypocrites but those Muslims to whom the opponents of Islam were trying to impart evil suggestions. Since they believed that the Quran is Allah’s speech and has been sent down in Allah’s own words, Allah declared through a clear and decisive verse that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had not made himself an exception from the general law about four wives of his own accord, but the exception in regard to him had been decreed by Allah.

*88 Besides making the fifth wife lawful for the Prophet,

Allah in this verse also granted him the permission to marry a few other kinds of the women:

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

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

it is permissible even to marry one's real niece, i.e. daughter of one's brother or sister.

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

*89 If this sentence is taken to be related with the preceding sentence, it will mean that it is not permissible for any Muslim to take in marriage a woman who gives herself to him, without paying her the dower; and if it is taken to be related with the whole preceding passage, it will imply that the concession to marry more than four wives is only reserved for the Prophet (peace be upon him), not for the other Muslims. This verse also shows that certain commandments are specifically meant for the Prophet (peace be upon him) to follow and are not applicable to the other Muslims. A study of the Quran and Sunnah reveals several such commandments. For example, the Tahajjud prayer was obligatory for the Prophet (peace be upon him) but is voluntary for the Ummah. It is unlawful for him and

his family to receive charities though it is not so for others. The inheritance left by him cannot be divided; as for the inheritance left by others relevant commandments have been given in Surah An-Nisa. Keeping of more than four wives was made lawful for him though he was not enjoined to do equal treatment with them. He was permitted to marry a woman who gave herself to him without any dower, and after his death his wives were forbidden for the Ummah. None of these privileges could be enjoyed by any other Muslim. Another special thing that the commentators have mentioned in this regard is that it was forbidden for the Prophet (peace be upon him) to marry a woman from among the people of the Book though it is lawful for the Muslims to do so.

***90** This is the reason why Allah made the Prophet (peace be upon him) an exception to the general rule. “That there should be no difficulty (restraint) upon you.” does not mean that he was, God forbid, a very lustful person, and therefore, he was permitted to marry several wives so that he might not feel any hindrance due to the restriction to four wives. This meaning will be understood only by the person who, blinded by prejudice, forgets that the Prophet (peace be upon him) at the age of 25 married a lady who was 40 years old, and lived a happy, contented married life with her for full 25 years. Then, when she died, he married another old lady Saudah, who remained his only wife for the next four years. Now, no sensible and honest person can imagine that when he became over fifty-three he was suddenly filled with lust and needed to have more and more

wives. In fact, in order to understand the meaning of “no restraint”, one should, on the one hand, keep in view the great task whose responsibility Allah had placed on the Prophet (peace be upon him), and on the other hand, understand the conditions and circumstances under which he had been appointed to accomplish the great task. Anyone who understands these two things with an unbiased mind, will certainly realize why it was necessary to grant him freedom in respect of the wives and what hindrance was there for him in the restriction to four wives.

The task entrusted to the Prophet (peace be upon him) was that he should mold and chisel by all-round education and training an uncouth, uncultured nation which was not uncivilized only from the Islamic point of view but from a general viewpoint as well, into a highly civilized, refined and virtuous nation. For this purpose an unbiased mind will certainly realize why it was necessary to grant him freedom in respect of the wives and what hindrance was there for him in the restriction to four wives.

For this purpose it was not enough only to train men but the training of the women was also equally necessary. However, the principles of social life and civilization which he had been appointed to teach forbade free mixing of the sexes together, and it was not possible for him to impart direct training to the womenfolk without violating this rule. Therefore, for imparting education to the women the only alternative left for him was that he should marry several women of different ages and mental capabilities and should prepare them by education and training to become his

helpers, and then employ them to give religious instructions to the young, middle-aged and old women of the city and desert and teach them the new principles of morality and civilization.

Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had also been appointed to abolish the system of life of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance and replace it with the Islamic system of life practically. For the accomplishment of this task a conflict was inevitable with those who upheld the system of ignorance, and this conflict was being encountered in a country where the tribal system of life was prevalent with all its peculiar customs and traditions. Under these conditions, besides other devices, it was also necessary that the Prophet (peace be upon him) should marry in different families and clans in order to cement many ties of friendship and put an end to enmities. Thus, the selection of the ladies whom he married was to some extent determined by this object besides their personal qualities. By taking Aishah and Hafsa as wives he further strengthened and deepened the relations with Abu Bakr and Umar. Umm Salamah was the daughter of the family to which Abu Jahl and Khalid bin Walid belonged, and Umm Habibah was the daughter of Abu Sufyan. These marriages neutralized the enmity of these families to a large extent; so much so that after Umm Habibah's marriage Abu Sufyan never confronted the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the battlefield. Safiyyah, Juwairiah and Raihanah belonged to Jewish families. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) married them after setting them free, the hostile Jewish

activities against him subsided. For according to the Arab traditions when the daughter of a clan or tribe was married to a person, he was regarded as the son-in-law of not only the girl's family but of the entire tribe, and it was disgraceful to fight the son-in-law.

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

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

This also brings out the error of the view of those people who think that polygamy is permissible only under special personal requirements and apart from these there can be no other object for which it may be permissible. Evidently, the reason for the Prophet (peace be upon him) to marry more wives than one was not that the wife was sick, or barren, or that he had no male child, or that there was the question of the bringing up of some orphans. Without these restrictions, he married all his wives either in view of the educational requirements, or for the reformation of society, or for political and social objectives. The question is, when Allah Himself has not kept polygamy restricted to a few particular needs, which are being mentioned these days and the Messenger of Allah took several wives for many purposes other than these, how is another person entitled to

propose some restrictions in the law and then claim that he is imposing these in accordance with the Shariah? As a matter of fact, the root cause for the imposition of these restrictions is the Western concept that polygamy is an evil in itself. That very concept has given rise to the idea that this unlawful thing can become lawful only in case of extreme circumstances. Now, however hard one may try to label this imported concept with Islam artificially, it is entirely alien to the Quran and Sunnah and the whole Muslim literature.

51. You (O Muhammad) may put aside whom you will of them, and take to yourself whom you will. And whomever you desire of those whom you had set aside (temporarily), there is no blame upon you. That is more suitable, that it may be cooling of their eyes, and they may not grieve, and they may be pleased with what you have given them, all of them.^{*91} And Allah knows what is in your hearts. And Allah is Knower, Forbearing.^{*92}

﴿ تَرْجِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ مِنْهُمْ وَتَعْوَىٰ
إِلَيْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَمَنْ أَبْتَغَيْتَ
مِمَّنْ عَزَلْتَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكَ
ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ تَقَرَّ أَعْيُنُهُنَّ وَلَا
يَحْزَنَنَّ وَيَرْضَيْنَ بِمَا
ءَاتَيْتَهُنَّ كُلُّهُنَّ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا
فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا
حَلِيمًا ﴾

***91** This verse was meant to relieve the Prophet (peace be upon him) of the domestic worries and anxieties so that he

could carry out his duties with full peace of mind. When Allah clearly gave him the power and the authority to treat any of his wives as he liked, there remained no chance that those believing ladies would trouble him in any way, or would create complications for him by their mutual rivalries and domestic squabbles. But in spite of having this authority from Allah the Prophet (peace be upon him) meted out full justice to his wives. He did not prefer one to the other and would visit each of them regularly by turns. Only Abu Razin from among the traditionalists has said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) visited only four of his wives, Aishah, Hafsah, Zainab and Umm Salamah by turns and no turn had been fixed for the other wives. But all other traditionalists and commentators contradict this and prove by authentic traditions that even after having this authority the Prophet (peace be upon him) visited all his wives in turn and treated there alike. Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai, Abu Daud and others have reported on the authority of Aishah that even after the revelation of this verse the Prophet's (peace be upon him) practice was that whenever he wanted to visit any of us, his wives, on the turn of another wife, he would first ask her permission for it. Abu Bakr al-Jassas relates from Urwah bin Zubair that Aishah told him, "As to our rants the Prophet (peace be upon him) never preferred any of us to the other, although it seldom happened that he did not visit all his wives on the same day, but he never touched a wife unless it was her day by turn." And this also is a tradition from Aishah that during his last illness when it became difficult for him to move about he

asked for his other wives' permission to stay with her, and only on their approval he passed his last days in her apartment. Ibn Abi Hatim has cited this from Imam Zuhri that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is not known to have deprived any of his wives of her turn. To this only Saudah was an exception, who on account of her advanced age had willingly surrendered her turn in favor of Aishah.

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

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

52. It is not lawful for you (to marry other) women after this, nor that you change them for other wives even though their beauty attracts you,^{*93} except those (captives) whom your right hand possesses.^{*94} And Allah is ever a Watcher over all things.

لَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ النِّسَاءَ مِنْ بَعْدُ
وَلَا أَنْ تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجٍ وَلَوْ
أَعْجَبَكَ حُسْنُهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا
مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رَقِيبًا

***93** This has two meanings:

- (1) "No other woman except those made lawful to you in verse 50 above, is any more lawful to you" and,
- (2) "When your wives have become pleased and ready to

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

***94** This verse explains why one is permitted to have conjugal relations with one’s slave-girls besides the wedded wives, and there is no restriction on their number. The same thing has also been stated in Surahs An-Nisa, Ayat 3, Al-Muminun, Ayat 6, and Al-Maarij, Ayat 30. In all these verses the slave-girls have been mentioned as a separate class from the wedded wives, and conjugal relations with them have been permitted. Moreover, Ayat 3 of Surah An-Nisa lays down the number of the wives as four, but neither has Allah fixed the number of the slave-girls in that verse nor made any allusion to their number in the other relevant verses. Here, of course, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is being addressed and told: “It is no more lawful for you to take other women in marriage, or divorce any of the present wives and take another wife in her stead; slave-girls, however, are lawful.” This shows that no restriction has been imposed in respect of the slave girls.

This, however, does not mean that the divine law has provided the rich an opportunity to purchase as many slave-girls as they like for their carnal indulgence. This is in fact how the self-seeking people have exploited and abused the law. The law had been made for the convenience of the people; it had not been made to be abused. One could, for instance, similarly abuse the law concerning marriage. The

Shariah permits a man to marry up to four wives and also gives him the right to divorce his wife and take another one. This law had been made in view of man's requirements and needs. Now, if a person, merely for the sake of sensual enjoyment, were to adopt the practice of keeping four wives for a time and then divorcing them to be replaced by another company of them, it would be abusing the provisions of the law, for which the person himself would be responsible and not the Shariah. Likewise the Shariah has allowed that the women who are captured in war and whose people do not exchange them for Muslim prisoners of war nor ransom them, may be kept as slave-girls, and gave the persons to whom they are assigned by the government the right to have conjugal relations with them so that they do not become a moral hazard for the society. Then, as it was not possible to determine the number of the prisoners of war, legally also it could not be determined how many slave girls a person could keep at a time. The sale of the slaves and slave-girls was also allowed for the reason that if a slave or a slave-girl could not do well with a master, he or she could be transferred to another person so that the same person's permanent ownership did not become a cause of unending torture for both the master and the captive. The Shariah made all these laws keeping in view human conditions and requirements for the convenience of men. If these have been made a means of sexual enjoyment and luxury by the rich, it is they who are to blame for this and not the Shariah.

53. O you who believe, do not enter the houses of the Prophet except when you are permitted for a meal,^{*95} without waiting for its preparation. But when you are invited, then enter,^{*96} and when you have eaten, then disperse. And linger not for conversation.^{*97} Indeed, that would cause annoyance to the Prophet, and he is shy of (asking) you (to go). And Allah is not shy of the truth. And when you ask them (Prophet's wives) of anything, so ask them from behind a curtain. That is purer for your hearts and for their hearts.^{*98} And it is not (right) for you that you cause harm to the Messenger of Allah,^{*99} nor that you should marry his wives after him,^{*100} ever. Indeed, that would be with Allah an enormity.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا
تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ
يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَى طَعَامٍ غَيْرٍ
نَظَرِينَ إِنَّهُ وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ
فَادْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوا
وَلَا مُسْتَعْسِينَ لِحَدِيثٍ إِنَّ
ذَلِكَ كَانَ يُؤْذَى النَّبِيَّ
فَيَسْتَحْيِ مِنْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا
يَسْتَحْيِ مِنْ الْحَقِّ وَإِذَا
سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَسْأَلُوهُنَّ
مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ
لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ وَمَا كَانَ
لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
وَلَا أَنْ تَنْكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ مِنْ
بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا

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

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

house only but the rules were in the beginning enforced in that model household so that they become general rules of etiquette in the houses of the other Muslims as well.

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

***98** This is the verse which is called "the verse of the veil". Bukhari has related on the authority of Anas that before the coming down of this verse, Umar had made a suggestion several times to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the effect: O Messenger of Allah, all sorts of the people,

good and bad, come to visit you. Would that you commanded your wives to observe *hijab*. According to another tradition, once Umar said to the holy wives, “If what I say concerning you is accepted, my eyes should never see you.” But since the Prophet (peace be upon him) was not independent in making law, he awaited divine revelation. At last, this command came down that except for the *mahram* males (as being stated in Ayat 55 below) no other man should enter the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) houses, and whoever had to ask some thing from the ladies, should ask for it from behind a curtain. After this command curtains were hung at the doors of the apartments of the wives, and since the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) house was a model for the Muslims to follow, they too hung curtains at their doors. The last sentence of the verse itself points out that whoever desire that the hearts of the men and women should remain pure, should adopt this way.

Now whosoever has been blessed with understanding by Allah can himself see that the Book which forbids the men and women to talk to each other face to face and commands them to speak from behind a curtain because “That is purer for your hearts and for their hearts,” could not possibly permit that the men and women should freely meet in mixed gatherings, educational and democratic institutions and offices, because it did not affect the purity of the hearts in any way. For him who does not want to follow the Quran, the best way would be that he should disregard its commands and should frankly say that he has

no desire to follow it. But this would be the height of meanness that he should violate the clear commandments of the Quran and then stubbornly say that he is following the spirit of Islam which he has extracted. After all, what is that spirit of Islam which these people extract from sources outside the Quran and the sunnah?

***99** The allusion is to the false allegations that were being made in those days against the Prophet (peace be upon him), and some weak-minded Muslims also were joining the disbelievers and the hypocrites in doing this.

***100** This is the explanation of what has been said in verse 6: “The Prophet’s wives are mothers of the believers.”

54. Whether you reveal a thing or conceal it, so indeed, Allah is ever All Knower of everything. ^{*101}

إِنْ تُبْدُوا شَيْئًا أَوْ تَخْفَوْهُ فَإِنَّ
اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا



***101** That is, “If a person entertains an evil thought in his heart against the Prophet (peace be upon him), or harbors an evil intention about his wives, it will not remain hidden from Allah, and he will be punished for it.”

55. There is no blame upon them (your wives if they appear) before their fathers, nor their sons, nor their brothers, nor their brothers’ sons, nor their sisters’ sons, ^{*102} nor their

لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِنَّ فِي آبَائِهِنَّ وَلَا
أَبْنَائِهِنَّ وَلَا إِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَلَا أَبْنَاءِ
إِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَلَا أَبْنَاءِ أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ وَلَا
نِسَائِهِنَّ وَلَا مَا مَلَكَتْ

own women,^{*103} nor those
their right hands possess
(female slaves).^{*104} And fear
Allah. Indeed, Allah is ever
Witness over all things.^{*105}

أَيْمَنُهُنَّ وَأَتَقِينَ اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا



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

***103** For explanation, see E. N. 43 of Surah An-Nur.

***104** For explanation, see E. N. 44 of Surah An-Nur.

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

56. Indeed, Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. ^{*106} O you who have believed, send blessings upon him and salute him with a worthy salutation. ^{*107}

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ
عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا
تَسْلِيمًا



***106** Allah's sending His blessings on His Prophet, means this: Allah is very kind to His Prophet (peace be upon him): He praises him, blesses his work, exalts his name, and showers His mercy on him. Blessings of the angels, means: They love the Prophet (peace be upon him) most dearly and pray to Allah to bless him with the highest ranks, cause his religion and Shariah to flourish and exalt him to the laudable position. One can clearly see from the context, why this thing has been said here. This was the time when the enemies of Islam were making all sorts of false allegations against the Prophet (peace be upon him) in order to satisfy their jealousy on the success of faith. By sullyng him, they thought they would destroy his moral influence through which Islam and the Muslims were gaining more and more ground every day. Such were the conditions when Allah sent down this verse, as if warn the people: "However hard the disbelievers and the hypocrites and the polytheists might try to vilify and slander My Prophet (peace be upon him) with a view to frustrating his mission, they are bound to suffer disgrace and humiliation in the end, for I am kind to him, and the angels, who are

administering the entire universe, are his supporters and admirers. His enemies cannot gain anything by their condemnation of him because I am exalting his name and My angels are adoring him constantly. They cannot harm him by their mean machinations when My mercy and blessings are with him, and My angels pray for him day and night to the effect: “O Lord of the worlds, raise Muhammad (peace be upon him) to even higher ranks and make his religion flourish and prosper.”

***107** In other words, it means this: O people, who have found the right path through Muhammad (peace be upon him), the Messenger of Allah, you should recognize his true worth and be grateful to him for his great favors to you. You were lost in the darkness of ignorance, he afforded you the light of knowledge. You had become morally bankrupt, he raised you high on the moral level so that the people now feel envious of you. You had sunk to barbarism and savagery, he adorned you with the most refined human civilization. The disbelievers everywhere have turned his enemies only because he has done you these favors; otherwise personally he has not done any harm to anyone. Therefore, the inevitable demand of your gratitude to him is that you should regard him with an equal, or even greater love than the malice and grudge these people display against him; that you should show a greater attachment to him than the hatred these people show towards him; that you should praise and adore him even more fervently than they condemn him; that you should wish him well even more heartily than they wish him ill,

and pray for him just as the angels do day and night, saying: “O Lord of the worlds: Just as Your Prophet has done us countless and endless favors, so do You also show him endless and limitless mercy, raise him to the highest ranks in the world and bless him with the greatest nearness to Yourself in the hereafter.”

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

The word *salam* also has two meanings: (1) To be secure from every kind of affliction and fault and defect; and (2) to be at peace and refrain from opposing the other person. Therefore, one meaning of *sallimu taslima* in regard to the Prophet (peace be upon him) is: “You should pray for his well-being and security,” and another meaning is: “Cooperate with him with all your heart and mind; refrain

from opposing him and obey him most faithfully and sincerely.”

When this command was sent down, several of the companions said to the Prophet (peace be upon him), “O Messenger of Allah, you have taught us the method of pronouncing salam i.e. of saying *as-salamu alaika ayyuhannabiyyu wa rahmatullahi wa barakat-u-hu* in the Prayer, and *as-salamu alaika ya Rasul-Allah* as a greeting, but what is the method of sending *Salat* on you?” In response to this, the methods of pronouncing *Salat* and *darud* that the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught to many people on different occasions are as follows:

Kaab bin Ujrah: *Allahumma salli ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama sallaita ala Ibrahim wa ala al-i Ibrahim irmaka Hamidum-Majid, wa barik ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama barakta ala Ibrahim wa ala al-i Ibrahim innaka Hamid-um-Majid.*

This *darud* with a little difference in wording has been reported by Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Imam Ahmad, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Abdur Razzaq, Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Jarir on the authority of Kaab bin Ujrah.

Ibn Abbas: From him also the same *darud* as given above has been reported with a slight difference. (Ibn Jarir).

Abu Humaid Saidi: *Allahumma salli ala Muhammad-in wa azwaji-hi wa dhurriyati-hi kama sallaita ala Ibrahim wa ala al-i Ibrahim wa barik ala Muhammad-in wa azwaji-hi wa dhurriyat-hi kama barakta ala al-i Ibrahim irmaka Hamid-um-Majid.* (Malik, Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai, Abu

Daud, Ibn Majah).

Abu Masud Badri: *Allahumma salli ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama sallaita ala Ibrahima wa ala al-i Ibrahima wa barik ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama barakta 'ala Ibrahima fil- alamin innaka Hamid-um-Majid* (Malik, Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Nasai Ahmad, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Habban, Hakim).

Abu Said Khudri: *Allahumma salli ala Muhammad-in abdika wa rasuli-ka kama sallaita 'ala Ibrahima wa barik 'ala Mahammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama ba rakta ala Ibrahim.* (Ahmad, Bukhari, Nasai, Ibn Majah).

Buraidah al-Khuzai: *Allahumm-ajal Salataka wa rahmataka wa barakati-ka ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama Ja altaha ala Ibrahima innaka Hamid-um-Majid.* (Ahmad, Abd bin Humaid, Ibn Marduyah).

Abu Hurairah: *Allahumma salli ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in wa barik ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama sallaita wa barakta ala Ibrahima wa ala al-i Ibrahim fil-alamin innaka Hammid-um-Majid.* (Nasai).

Talhah: *Allahumma salli ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama sallaita ala Ibrahima innaka Hamid-um-Majid wa barik ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama barakta ala Ibrahima innaka Hamid-um-Majid.* (Ibn Jarir).

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

First, in all these the Prophet (peace be upon him) tells the Muslims that the best way of sending *darud* and *Salat* on

him is that they should pray to Allah, saying, “O God: send *darud* on Muhanunad.” Ignorant people who do not possess full understanding of the meaning intermediately raise the objection: “How strange that Allah commands us to send darud on His Prophet (peace be upon him), but we, in return, implore Allah that He should send it.” The fact, however, is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has instructed the people, as if to say, “You cannot do full justice to sending of *darud* and *Salat* on me even if you want to. Therefore, pray only to Allah to bless me with *Salat*.” Evidently, the Muslims cannot raise the ranks of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Allah only can raise them; the Muslims cannot repay the Prophet (peace be upon him) for his favors and kindness, Allah only can adequately reward him for this; the Muslims cannot attain any success in exalting the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) name and promoting the cause of religion unless Allah favors them with His help and succor. So much so that the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) love can be impressed in our hearts only by Allah’s help; otherwise Satan can turn us away from him by every kind of evil suggestions and suspicions. May Allah protect us from this! Therefore, there is no other way of doing full justice to sending of *darud* and *salat* on the Prophet (peace be upon him) than that we should supplicate Allah to send *salat* on him. The person who says: *Allahumma salli ala Muhammad-in*, in fact, admits his helplessness before Allah, and says: “O God: it is not in my power to send *salat* on Your Prophet (peace be upon him) as it should be sent. I, therefore, implore You to send it on

my behalf and take from me whatever service You will in this regard.”

Secondly, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not want to have this prayer reserved for only himself but included his followers and his wives and offspring also. The meaning of the wives and offspring is obvious. As for the word *aal* it does not merely denote the people of the Prophet's household, but it applies to all those people who follow him and adopt his way. Lexically, there is a difference between the words *aal* and *ahl*. By the *aal* of a person are understood all those people who are his companions, helpers and followers, whether they are related to him or not, and his *ahl* are those who are related to him, whether or not they are his companions and followers. The Quran has used the word *aal-Firaun* at fourteen places but nowhere has it been used to mean the people of Pharaoh's household only; everywhere it implies all those who sided with him in the conflict against the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). (For example, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 49-50, Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 11, Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 130, Surah Al-Mumin, Ayat 46). Thus, from *aal-Muhammad* is excluded every such person who is not on the way of Muhammad (peace be upon him), whether he be a member of his household, and in it is included every such person, who is following in his footsteps, whether he is not even distantly related to him by blood. However, those members of the Prophet's household who are related to him by blood and are also his followers are most worthy to be regarded as *aal-Muhammad*.

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

That it is an Islamic practice to send *darud* on the Prophet (peace be upon him), that it is commendable to pronounce it when the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) name is mentioned, that it is a *Sunnah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to recite it in the Prayer in particular, is agreed upon by all the scholars. There is also a consensus that it is obligatory to pronounce the *darud* on the Prophet (peace be upon him)

upon him) at least once in a lifetime, because Allah has clearly commanded it, but apart from this there are differences among the scholars regarding it.

Imam Shafei holds the view that it is obligatory to recite *salat* on the Prophet during *tashahhud* in the final sitting of the Prayer, for without it the Prayer would be void. Ibn Masud, Abu-Masud Ansari, Ibn Umar and Jabir bin Abdullah from among the companions, Shabi, Imam Muhammad bin Baqir, Muhammad bin Kab al-Qurzi and Muqatil bin Hayyan from among the immediate followers of the companions, and Ishaq bin Rahwayah from among the jurists also held the same opinion, and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal also had adopted the same in the end.

Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik and the majority of the scholars hold that the pronouncing of the *Salat* is obligatory only once in a life time. It is just like the *Kalimah*: whoever affirmed the divinity of Allah and the Prophethood of the Messenger of Allah once in a lifetime carried out his duty. Likewise, the one who pronounced the *darud* and *salat* once in his lifetime would be deemed to have done his duty of pronouncing the *darud* on the Prophet (peace be upon him). After it, it is neither obligatory (*fird*) to recite the *Kalimah* nor the *darud*.

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

Still another group holds the view that it is *wajib* to pronounce the *darud* in every supplication. Some others say that it is *wajib* to pronounce it whenever the Prophet's (peace be upon him) name is mentioned, and according to

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

mentioned before him” (Tirmidhi).

As to whether it is permissible to use the words *Allahumma salli ala* so and so, or *sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*, or similar other words for others than the Prophet (peace be upon him), it is disputed. One group of the scholars of whom Qadi Iyad is most prominent holds it as absolutely permissible. Their argument is this: Allah Himself has used the word *salat* in respect of those who were not prophets at several places in the Quran, e.g. in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 157, Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 103, Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 43. Similarly, the Prophet (peace be upon him) also prayed for those who were not prophets using the word *salat*) on several occasions. For example, he prayed for a companion, thus: *Allahumma salli ala al* Abi Aufa; on the request of Jabir bin Abdullah’s wife, he said: *Sallallahu alaihi wa ala zaujiki*. Then concerning those who came with the Zakat money, he would say: *Allahumma salli alaihim*. Praying for Saad bin Ubadah he said: *Allahumma ajal salataka wa rahmataka ala al-i* Saad bin Ubadah. And about the soul of the believer the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave the news that the angels prayed for him, thus: *Sallallahu alaika wa ala jasadika*. However, the majority of the Muslim scholars opine that it was correct for Allah and His Messenger but not so for the Ummah. They say that it has become a convention with the Muslims to use *salat-o-salam* exclusively for the Prophets. Therefore, it should not be used for those who are not prophets. On this very basis Umar bin Abdul Aziz once wrote to one of his governors, saying: “I hear that some preachers have started using the

word *salat* in respect of their patrons and supporters in the manner of *salat alan-Nabi*. As soon as you receive this letter, stop them from this practice and command them to use *salat* exclusively for the Prophets and remain content with the prayer for the other Muslims." (Ruh al-Maeni). Most scholars also hold that using the words *sallallahu alaihi wa sallam* for any other Prophet than the Prophet (peace be upon him) is not correct.

57. Indeed, those who cause harm to Allah and His Messenger, Allah has cursed them in the world and the Hereafter, and He has prepared for them a humiliating punishment.*108

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا
مُهِينًا



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

58. And those who cause harm to believing men and believing women, for what they have not earned (deserved) have certainly

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ بَغَيْرِ مَا كَتَبُوا
فَقَدْ أَحْتَمَلُوا بُهْتَنَا وَإِنَّمَا

born on themselves the
burden of a slander^{*109} and
a manifest sin.

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

59. O Prophet, say to your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw close round them their outer garments.^{*110} That will be better so that they may be recognized and not be harmed.^{*111} And Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful.^{*112}

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ
وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلْبِيبِهِنَّ
ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

*110 *Jilbab* is a large sheet and *adna* is to draw close and wrap up, but when this word is used with the associating particle *ala*, it gives the meaning of letting something down from above. Some modern translators, under the influence of the West, have translated this word “to wrap up” so as to avoid somehow the command about covering of the face. But if Allah had meant what these gentlemen want to construe, He would have said: *yudnina ilai-hinna* and not *yudnina alai-hinna*. Anyone who knows Arabic knows that *yudnina alai-hinna* cannot merely mean “wrapping up.” Moreover, the words *min jalabib-i hinna* also do not permit of this meaning. It is obvious that the preposition *min* here signifies a part of the sheet, and also that wrapping up is done by means of a whole sheet and not merely by a part of it. The verse, therefore, clearly means: “The women should wrap themselves up well in their sheets, and should draw and let down a part of the sheet in front of the face.”

This same meaning was understood by the major commentators who lived close to the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Ibn Jarir and Ibn al-Mundhir have related that Muhammad bin Sirin asked Ubaidah as-Salmani the meaning of this verse. (Ubaidah had become a Muslim in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) but had not been able to visit him. He came to Madinah in the time of Umar and settled down there. He was recognized as equal in rank with Qadi Shuraih in jurisprudence and judicial matters). Instead of giving a verbal reply Ubaidah put on his sheet and gave a practical demonstration by covering his head and forehead and face and an eye,

leaving only the other eye uncovered. Ibn Abbas also has made almost the same commentary. In his statements which have been reported by Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Marduyah, he says: “Allah has commanded the women that when they move out of their houses for an outdoor duty, they should conceal their faces by drawing and letting down over themselves a part of their sheets, keeping only the eyes uncovered.” The same explanation of this verse has been given by Qatadah and Suddi.

All the great commentators who have passed after the period of the companions and their immediate followers have given the same meaning of this verse. Imam Ibn Jarir Tabari, in his commentary of this verse, says: “The respectable women should not look like the slave-girls from their dress when they move out of their houses, with uncovered faces and loose hair; they should rather draw and let down over them a part of their sheets or outer-garments so that no evil person may dare molest them.” (Jamial Bayan, vol. xxii, p. 33).

Allama Abu Bakr al-Jassas says: “This verse points out that the young woman has been commanded to conceal her face from the other men; when moving out of the house she should cover herself up well to express chastity and purity of character so that people of doubtful character do not cherish any false hope when they see her.” (Ahkam al-Quran, vol. iii, p. 458).

Allama Zamakhshari says: “It means that they should let down a part of their sheet over themselves, and should cover their faces and wrap up their sides well.” (Al-

Kashshaf, vol. ii, p. 221). Allama Nizamuddin Nishapuri says: “That is, they should let down a part of the sheet over them: in this verse, the women have been commanded to cover the head and face.” (Gharaib al-Quran, vol. xxii, p. 32).

Imam Razi says: “What is mean is that the people may know that they are not promiscuous women. For the woman who covers her face, though the face is not included in the *satar*, cannot be expected to uncover her *satar*, which is obligatory to cover before the other man. Thus, everyone will know that they are modest and virtuous women who cannot be expected to do anything indecent.” (Tafsir Kabir. vol. vi, p 591)

Incidentally, another thing that is proved by this verse is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had several daughters, for Allah Himself says: “O Prophet, enjoin your wives and daughters.” These words absolutely refute the assertion of those people who without any fear of God make the claim that the Prophet had only one daughter, Fatimah, and the other daughters were not from his own loins but by the former husbands. These people are so blinded by prejudice that they do not even bother to consider what crime they are committing by denying the parentage of the children of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and what severe punishment will await for them in the Hereafter. All authentic traditions concur that from Khadijah the Prophet (peace be upon him) had not one daughter, Fatimah, but three other daughters as well. The Prophet’s earliest biographer, Muhammad bin Ishaq, after

mentioning his marriage with Khadijah, says; “She was the mother of all the Prophet’s children except Ibrahim. Prophet Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) children with Khadijah were Qasim, Tahir, Tayyib, Zainab, Ruqayyah, Fatimah and Umm Kulthum and.” (Ibn Hisham, vol. 1, p. 202).

The famous genealogist, Hashim bin Muhammad bin as-Saib al-Kalbi, states: “The first born child to the, Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah before his call to Prophethood was Qasim, then Zainab was born to him, then Ruqayyah, then Umm Kulthum.” (Tabaqat Ibn Saad, vol. 1, p. 133). Ibn Hazam writes in Jawami asSirah that from Khadijah the Prophet (peace be upon him) had four daughters, the eldest being Zainab, then Ruqayyah, then Fatimah and then Umm Kulthum (pp. 38-39). Tabari, Ibn Saad, Abu Jafar Muhammad bin Habib (author of Kitab al-Muhabbar) and Ibn Abd al-Bart (author of Kitab al-Istiab) state on the strength of authentic sources that before her marriage with the Prophet (peace be upon him), Khadijah had two husbands, Abu Halah Tamimi by whom she had a son named Hind bin Abu Halah, and Atiq bin Aidh Makhzumi, by whom she had a daughter named Hind. Then she was married to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and all the genealogists agree that from his loins she had the four daughters as stated above. (see Tabari, vol. ii, p. 411: tabaqat Ibn Saad, vol. viii, pp. 14-16; Kitab al-Muhabbar, pp. 78, 79, 452; .9l-Isti'ab, vol. ii, p. 718). All these statements are authenticated by the Quranic declaration that the Holy Prophet had not one but several

daughters.

***111** “May be recognized”: may be recognized to be noble and chaste women from their simple and modest dress, and not women of ill repute from whom some wicked person could cherish evil hopes. “May not be harmed”: will not be teased but let alone.

Let us pause here for a while and try to understand what spirit of the social law of Islam is being expressed by this Quranic command and what is its object which Allah Himself has stated. Before this in Surah An-Nur, Ayat 31, the women have been forbidden to display their adornments before others except such and such men and women, and “also that they should not stamp their feet on the ground lest their hidden decoration (ornaments) should be known.” If that command is read with this verse of Al-Ahzab it becomes obvious that the intention of the command for the woman to cover herself well with the sheet here is to conceal her adornments from others. And, evidently, this purpose can be fulfilled only if the sheet or the outer-garment itself is simple; otherwise wrapping up oneself with a decorated and attractive sheet will defeat the purpose itself. Besides, Allah does not only command the woman to conceal her adornment by covering herself with the sheet, but also enjoins that she should let down a pan of the sheet over herself. No sensible person can take any other meaning of this command than that it requires to conceal the face along with the concealment of the adornments of the body and dress. Then, Allah Himself states the reason for enjoining the command, saying: “This

is an appropriate way by adopting which the Muslim women will be recognized and will remain safe from trouble.” Evidently, this instruction is being given to those women who regard flirtation and stares and evil advances by men as annoying and troublesome and not as enjoyable, who do not want to be counted among ill-reputed, immodest society girls, but wish to be known as chaste and modest domestic women. To such noble and pious women Allah says: If you really wish to be known as good women, and the men’s lustful attention is not pleasurable but embarrassing for you, then you should not come out of your houses in full makeup like the newlywed brides so as to display your beauty and physical charms before the greedy eyes of the people, but the best way for this would be that you should come out in a simple sheet fully concealing your adornments and covering your face and walking in a manner that even the jingle of your ornaments does not attract attention. The woman who applies herself to makeup and does not step out of the house until she has fully embellished and decorated herself with every adornment cannot have any other intention that to become the center of attention of all the men, whom she herself allures. After this if she complains that the greedy looks of the people cause embarrassment to her, and she does not wish to be known as a “society woman” and a “popular lady”, but wants to live as a chaste housewife, it will be nothing but a fraud. It is not the word of the mouth of a person that determines his intention, but his real intention is manifested in his act and mode of behavior. Therefore,

the act of the woman who appears before the other then attractively itself shows what motivates her behavior. That is why the mischievous people cherish the same hopes from her as can be cherished from such a woman. The Quran tells the women: “You cannot be chaste women and society women at one and the same time. If you want to live as modest, chaste women, you will have to give up the ways that are conducive to becoming society women only, and adopt the way of life that can be helpful in becoming chaste women.”

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

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

60. If the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease^{*113} and those who spread false news in the city^{*114} do not cease, We will

لَئِن لَّمْ يَنْتَهِ الْمُنَافِقُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ
وَالْمُرْجِفُونَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ

surely incite you against them, then they will not be able to stay in it as your neighbors except a little while.

لَنُغْرِيَنَّكَ بِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَا
يُجَاوِرُونَكَ فِيهَا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

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

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

61. Accursed, wherever they are found, they shall be seized and slain mercilessly.

مَلْعُونِينَ أَيْنَمَا
تُقْفُوا أَخِذُوا وَقْتِلُوا تَقْتِيلًا

62. That was the way of Allah with those who passed away before. And you will not find any change in the way of Allah.*115

سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا
مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ
تَبْدِيلًا



***115** That is, “This is a permanent law of Allah’s Shariah that in an Islamic society and state such mischief-mongers are never given an opportunity to flourish and prosper. Whenever the system of society and state is established on divine law, such people will be warned to mend their ways and if they still persisted in their evil ways they would be severely dealt with and exterminated.”

63. People ask you about the Hour.*116 Say: “The knowledge of it is with Allah only.” And what will make you understand, it may be that the Hour is near.

يَسْأَلُكَ النَّاسُ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ قُلْ
إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا
يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ تَكُونُ
قَرِيبًا



***116** The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) was generally asked this question by the disbelievers and the hypocrites. By this they did not mean to obtain any knowledge but they did so out of fun and jest. As a matter of fact, they did not believe in the coming of the Hereafter at all; they regarded its concept as an empty threat only. They did not ask about the time of its coming so that they could set their affairs right, but what they really meant was: “O Muhammad

(peace be upon him), we have been doing everything to frustrate your mission, and you have not been able to do any harm to us so far; now let us know as to when will Resurrection take place when we will be taken to task by Allah.”

64. Indeed, Allah has cursed the disbelievers, and has prepared for them a flaming fire.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَاَعَدَّ لَهُمْ
سَعِيْرًا ﴿٦٤﴾

65. They will abide therein forever. They will find neither a protector, nor a helper.

خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا اَبَدًا ۗ لَا يَجِدُوْنَ
وَلِيًّا وَّلَا نٰصِيْرًا ﴿٦٥﴾

66. The Day their faces will be turned over in the Fire, they will say: “Oh, would that we had obeyed Allah and had obeyed the Messenger.”

يَوْمَ تُقَلَّبُ وُجُوْهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ
يَقُوْلُوْنَ يٰلَيْتَنَا اَطَعْنَا اللّٰهَ
وَاَطَعْنَا الرَّسُوْلًا ﴿٦٦﴾

67. And they will say: “Our Lord, indeed we obeyed our chiefs and our great ones, and they led us astray from the (right) way.”

وَقَالُوْا رَبَّنَا اِنَّا اَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا
وَكِبَرَاءَنَا فَاَضَلُّوْنَا السَّبِيْلًا ﴿٦٧﴾

68. “Our Lord, give them double the punishment and curse them with a great curse.”*117

رَبَّنَا ءَاتِهِمْ ضِعْفَيْنِ مِنَ
الْعَذَابِ وَالْعَنَّهُمْ لَعْنًا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٦٨﴾

***117** This thing has been stated at several places in the Quran. For instance, see Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayat 187; Surah An-Naziat: Ayats 42-46; Surah Saba: Ayats 3-5; Surah Al-Mulk: Ayats 24-27; Surah Al-Mutaffifin: Ayats 10-17; Surah Al-Hijr: Ayats 2-3; Surah Al-Furqan: Ayats 27-29; Surah Ha Mim As-Sajdah: Ayats 26-29.

69. O you who believe,^{*118} do not be as those who caused harm to Moses, then Allah cleared him of what they said. And he was honorable in the sight of Allah.^{*119}

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا لَا تَكُوْنُوْا
كَالَّذِيْنَ ءَاذَوْا مُوسٰى فَبَرَّاهُ ۗ اَللّٰهُ
مِمَّا قَالُوْا ۗ وَكَانَ عِنْدَ ۙ اَللّٰهِ
وَجِيْهًا

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

***119** In other words, it means: “O Muslims, do not behave like the Jews. You should not behave towards your Prophet (peace be upon him) as the children of Israel behaved

towards the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him).” The Israelites themselves admit that the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was their greatest benefactor. Whatever they achieved as a nation was only due to him: otherwise in Egypt they would have been doomed to a worse fate than that of the Shudras in India. But how the Israelites treated the greatest benefactor of theirs can be judged by a cursory glance at the following places of the Bible: Exodus, 5: 20-21, 14: 12, 16: 2-3, 17: 3-4. Numbers, 11:1-15, 14:1-10, 16 (the whole chapter), 20: 1-5.

The Quran by referring to this ingratitude of the children of Israel, warns the Muslims, so as to say: “Refrain from adopting this same attitude towards Muhammad (peace be upon him); otherwise you should be ready to face the same fate as the Jews.”

This same thing was said by Prophet (peace be upon him) himself on several occasions. Once he was dividing some goods among the Muslims. When the people dispersed, a man said; “Muhammad in this division has shown no regard for Allah and the Hereafter.” Abdullah bin Masud heard this remark and told the Prophet (peace be upon him) what had been said concerning him that day. He replied, “May Allah show mercy to Moses (peace be upon him): he was maligned even more severely, but he showed patience.” (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Abu Daud).

70. O you who believe, fear Allah, and speak words directed to the right.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا



71. He will make righteous for you your deeds, and He will forgive you your sins. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, then certainly he has attained a great achievement.

يُصَلِّحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ
لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا



72. Indeed, We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined to undertake it, being afraid thereof, and man undertook it. He was indeed unjust, ignorant.*120

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ
فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ
مِنَهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ
ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا



***120** In the end, Allah wants man to realize his real position in the world; if in that position he regarded the life of the world as mere fun and sport and adopted a wrong attitude carelessly, he would only be working for his own doom. Here, the word “*amanat*” (trust) implies *khilafat* (caliphate) which, according to the Quran, man has been granted in the earth. The inevitable result of the freedom given to man to choose between obedience and disobedience, and the powers and authority granted him over countless creations for using that freedom, is that he himself be held responsible for his voluntary acts and should deserve rewards for his righteous conduct and suffer punishment

for his evil conduct. Since man has not attained these powers by his own efforts but has been granted these by Allah, and he is answerable before Allah for their right or wrong use, these have been described by the word *khilafat* at other places in the Quran, and by *amanat* here.

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

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

“Lord, we find our good and our convenience only in remaining as Your powerless servants: we do not find courage to ask for the freedom to disobey and do justice to it, and then suffer Your punishment in case we cannot do justice to it.” Likewise, it is also quite possible that before

this present life Allah might have given another kind of existence to mankind and summoned it before Himself, and it might have willingly undertaken to accept the delegated powers and authority. We have no rational argument to regard this as impossible. Only such a person, who might have made a wrong estimate of his mental and intellectual powers and capabilities, can think of regarding it as impossible.

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

“I want to invest someone of My creation with the power that being a subject of My Kingdom, it may acknowledge My Supremacy and obey My commands of its own free will; otherwise it will also have the power to deny Me, even rebel against Me. After giving him this freedom I shall so conceal Myself from him as if I did not exist at all. And to exercise this freedom I shall invest him with vast powers, great capabilities, and shall give him dominion over countless of My creations so that he may raise any storm that he may in the universe. Then I shall call him to account at an appointed time. The one who will have misused the freedom granted by Me, will be made to suffer a most terrible punishment; and the one who will have adopted My obedience in spite of all chances and

opportunities for disobedience, will be raised to such high ranks as no creation of Mine has ever been able to attain. Now tell, which of you is ready to undergo this test?" Hearing this discourse a hush might have prevailed for a while all through the universe. Then one huge creation after the other might have bowed down and submitted that it should be excused from the severe test. Then, at last, this frail creation might have risen and submitted: "O my Lord, I am ready to undergo this test. I shall brave all the dangers inherent in the freedom and independence only in the hope that I shall be blessed with the highest office in Your Kingdom if I pass the test."

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

73. So that Allah may punish hypocrite men and hypocrite women, and idolatrous men and idolatrous women. And

لِيُعَذِّبَ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ
وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ
وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ وَيَتُوبَ اللَّهُ عَلَى

that Allah may accept
repentance from the believing
men and the believing
women. And Allah is ever
Forgiving, Merciful.

الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ۗ وَكَانَ
اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا





سَبَا Saba

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

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

Period of Revelation

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

Theme and Subject Matter

The Surah deals with those objections of the disbelievers, which they were raising against the Prophet's (peace be upon him) message of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter, and about his Prophethood itself, mostly in the form of absurd allegations and taunts and mockery. These objections have been answered, sometimes by citing them and sometimes without citing them, and the discourse itself shows which

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

1. All the praises be to Allah, to whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.^{*1} His is all the praises in the Hereafter,^{*2} and He is

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَهُ
الْحَمْدُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ

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

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

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

2. He knows what goes into the earth, and what comes forth from it, and what

يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلْجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا
يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنْ

descends from the heaven,
and what ascends into it. And
He is the Most Merciful,
the Oft Forgiving.*4

السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا وَهُوَ
الرَّحِيمُ الْغَفُورُ

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

3. And those who disbelieve say: “The Hour will not come to us.”*5 Say: “Yes, by my Lord, it will surely come to you.*6 (Allah is) the Knower of the unseen.” Not absent from Him is an atom’s weight, in the heavens, nor in the earth, nor less than that, nor greater, except it is in a clear Book.*7

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَأْتِينَا
السَّاعَةُ قُلْ بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّي
لَتَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ لَا
يَعْرُبُ عَنْهُ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا
أَصْغَرُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرُ
إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ

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

***6** The use of the attribute “Knower of the unseen” for Allah while swearing by him by itself points to the fact that the coming of Resurrection is certain, but no one knows except Allah, Knower of the unseen, when exactly it will come. This same theme has been explained at different places in the Quran in various ways. For details, see Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayat 187, Surah TaHa: Ayat 15, Surah Luqman: Ayat 34, Surah Al-Ahzab: Ayat 63, Surah Al-Mulk: Ayats 25-26, Surah An-Naziyat: Ayats 42-44.

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

4. That He may recompense those who believe and do righteous deeds. Those, theirs is forgiveness and an honorable provision.

لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ هُم
مَغْفِرَةٌ ۖ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٤﴾

5. And those who strive against Our revelations to frustrate them, those, for them will be a severe painful punishment. *8

وَالَّذِينَ سَعَوْا فِي
ءَايَاتِنَا
مُعْجِزِينَ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ هُم
عَذَابٌ
مِّن رَّجْزٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٥﴾

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

forgiveness and a bounteous provision, and for those who strive and act antagonistically in order to discredit and defeat Allah's religion, there will be a torment of the worst kind. This makes it manifest that he who believes sincerely will not be deprived of forgiveness even though he may not get a bounteous provision owing to some flaw or weakness in his deeds. And the one who is a disbeliever but who does not adopt an attitude of enmity and antagonism towards the true faith, will not be able to avoid the torment but he will be saved from the worst torment.

6. And those who have been given knowledge see that what is revealed to you from your Lord is the truth, and it guides to the path of the All Mighty, the Owner of Praise.*⁹

وَيَرَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ الَّذِي
 أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ هُوَ
 الْحَقُّ وَيَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطِ
 الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿٦﴾

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

7. And those who disbelieve say: "Shall we direct you to a man who will inform you (that) when you have become dispersed in dust with a complete dispersal, that you

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَلْ نَدُوكُمْ
 عَلَى رَجُلٍ يَنْبِئُكُمْ إِذَا مُزِّقْتُمْ
 كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ إِنَّكُمْ لَفِي خَلْقٍ

will (then) be (raised) in a new creation.”

جَدِيدٍ ﴿٧﴾

8. “Has he invented a lie about Allah, or is there a madness in him.”*10 But those who do not believe in the Hereafter will be in punishment and far error.*11

أَفْتَرَىٰ عَلَىٰ اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَمْ بِهِ
جِنَّةٌ ۗ بَلِ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِالْآخِرَةِ فِي الْعَذَابِ وَالضَّلَالِ

الْبَعِيدِ ﴿٨﴾

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

*11 This is the first answer to their charge. It means: “O foolish people, it is you who have lost your reason. For you do not listen to the one who is informing you of the truth

and are recklessly galloping on the way that leads to Hell. But the height of your stupidity is that you are calling the one who is anxious for your salvation, a mad peron.”

9. Do they not then see at what is before them and what is behind them of the heaven and the earth. If We should will, We could cause the earth swallow them, or cause a piece of the heaven fall upon them. *12

Indeed, in that is a sign for every slave who turns (to Allah) repentant. *13

أَفَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ
وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ
وَالْأَرْضِ إِن نَّشَاءُ نَحْصِفْ بِهِمْ
الْأَرْضَ أَوْ نُسْقِطَ عَلَيْهِمْ كِسْفًا
مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ إِن فِي ذَٰلِكَ
لَآيَةٌ لِّكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُّنبِئٍ

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

back to life. With the same body and soul. The answer given above covers all these three aspects, and contains a severe warning as well.

The details of the theme contained in these brief sentences are given below:

(1) If you ever had observed this earth and the heavens with clear sightedness, you would have seen that it is not a plaything nor has its creation come into being by accident. Everything in this universe points to the fact that it has been created by an All-Powerful Being with great wisdom. In such a wise system it would be highly absurd to think that somebody could be left to live an irresponsible and unaccountable life after he had been given the faculties of intellect and discrimination and authority.

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

(3) Your opinion and judgment about the Creator of the universe that it will be impossible for Him to resurrect the dead, is strange. The bodies of the men who die may utterly decay and disintegrate and be scattered but nevertheless remain within the bounds of this very universe and do not go anywhere outside its bounds. Then it is not at all difficult for the God Who has created this earth and the heavens to

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

*13 That is, the person who is neither prejudiced nor obstinate and stubborn, but is a sincere seeker of guidance from his God, can learn many lessons from the observation

of the earth and heavens; but the one whose heart is turned away from God, will see everything in the universe, but will never perceive any sign pointing to the truth.”

10. And certainly, We bestowed bounty on David from Us,^{*14} (saying), “O mountains, glorify (Allah) with him, and the birds (also).”^{*15} And We made the iron soft for him.

﴿ وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا دَاوۡدَ مِنَّا فَضۡلًا
ط يَجِبَالُ اُوۡبٰى مَعَهُ وَالطَّيۡرُ ط
وَاَلنَّٰلُ لَهُ اَلْحَدِيۡدَ ﴾

***14** This is an allusion to the countless favors with which Allah had blessed the Prophet David (peace be upon him). He was an ordinary young man of the tribe of Judah, living at Bethlehem. In a campaign against the Philistines he slew the giant Goliath, the great enemy of Israel, and suddenly grew in esteem of the Israelites. With this event began his rise to prominence; so much so that after the death of Saul he was first elected king of Judah in Hebron, and then a few years later he was made king over all the tribes of Israel. He took Jerusalem and made it the capital of the kingdom of Israel. It was under his leadership that for the first time in history a God-worshipping kingdom was established, whose boundaries extended from the Gulf of Aqabah to the western banks of the River Euphrates. In addition to these favors, he was further graced with Divine bounties in the form of knowledge and wisdom, and the qualities of justice and mercy and devotion to the truth. (For details, see E.N. 273 of Surah Al-Baqarah and E.N. 7 of Surah Bani Israil).

***15 For this refer to Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 79 and E.N. 71 thereof.**

11. (Saying): “That make suits of armor and set in proper measure^{*16} the links (of it), and work you righteousness. Indeed, I see of what you do.”

أَنْ أَعْمَلَ سَبِغَتْ وَقَدَّرَ فِي
السَّرْدِ وَأَعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا إِنِّي
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

***16 For this refer to Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 80 and E.N. 72 thereof.**

12. And (We subjected) the wind for Solomon, its morning (was journey of) a month, and its evening (journey of) a month,^{*17} and We caused the fount of copper to gush forth for him.^{*18} And among the jinn, those who worked before him by the permission of his Lord.^{*19} And whoever deviated of them from Our command, We caused him taste of the punishment of the flaming Fire.

وَلَسَلِمْنَ الرِّيحَ غُدُوها شَهْرٌ
وَرَوَاحُها شَهْرٌ وَأَسَلْنَا لَهُ عَيْنَ
الْقِطْرِ وَمِنَ الْجِنَّ مَنْ يَعْمَلُ
بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهٖ وَمَنْ يَزِغْ
مِنْهُمْ عَنَّا نُنزِقْهُ مِنْ
عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ

***17 For this refer to Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 81 and E.N. 74 thereof.**

***18 Some former commentators have taken this to mean that a spring from the earth had erupted for the Prophet**

Solomon (peace be upon him) from which molten copper flowed out instead of water. But another interpretation of this verse can be that in the time of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) the work of melting and molding copper for different uses was done on a very large scale and the same has been referred to here as the flowing of a spring of molten copper for him. (See E.N. 74 of Surah Al-Anbiya).

*19 The question whether the jinns who had been subdued to the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) were human beings of the mountain tribes or really the jinns who are well known by this name as the hidden creation has been discussed in detail in our commentary of Surah Al-Anbiya and Surah An-Naml. (See E.N. 75 of Surah Al-Anbiya and E.Ns 23, 45 and 52 of Surah An-Naml).

13. They worked for him what he desired, of the shrines, and statues,^{*20} and basins like wells, and immovable heavy cooking-pots.^{*21} “Work you, O family of David, in gratitude.”^{*22} And few of My slaves are grateful.

يَعْمَلُونَ لَهُ مَا يَشَاءُ مِنْ
مَّحْرِبٍ وَتَمَثِيلٍ وَجِفَانٍ
كَالْجَوَابِ وَقُدُورٍ رَّاسِيَتٍ
أَعْمَلُوا ءَالَ دَاوُدَ شُكْرًا وَقَلِيلٌ
مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّاكِرِينَ

*20 The word *tamatheel* in the text is the plural of *timthal*, which in Arabic is used for every such thing as is made to resemble a natural thing, whether it is a human being, an animal, a tree, a flower, a river, or some inanimate object.

Timthal is the name of every artificial thing which may have been made to resemble something made by God. (Lisan al-Arab). *Timthal* is every such picture which may have been made to resemble the likeness of something else, whether living or dead.” (The commentary, Al-Kashshaf). On this basis the statement of the Quran does not necessarily imply that the images made for the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) were the pictures or images of human beings and animals. They might have been floral designs or natural landscape or different kinds of decorations with which the Prophet Solomon might have decorated his buildings and works.

The misunderstanding has been created by some commentators who have stated that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) had gotten the pictures of the Prophets and the angels made for himself. They took such things from the Israelite traditions and then explained them saying that in the former *Shariahs* it was not forbidden to make the pictures. But while accepting and citing these traditions without question, these scholars did not keep in mind the fact that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) was a follower of the Mosaic law and in that law making of the pictures and images of human beings and animals was also forbidden as it is in the *Shariah* of Muhammad (peace be upon him). And they also did not remember that because of the enmity which a section of the Israelites bore against the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him), they have accused him of crimes like polytheism, idolatry, sorcery and adultery. Therefore. one should not

place reliance on the Israelite traditions and accept anything about this great Prophet, which might contradict any Shariah enjoined by God. Everyone knows that all the Prophets who came after the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) till the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) among the Israelites were the followers of the Torah, and none of them had brought forth a new law, which might have abrogated the law of the Torah. Now the Torah clearly enjoins repeatedly that making of the pictures and images of human beings and animals is absolutely forbidden.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.” (Exod. 20: 4) “Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, nor rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it.” (Levit. 26: 1).

“Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female. The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air. The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth.” (Deut. 4: 16-18).

“Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place.” (Deut. 27: 15).

In the face of these clear and express injunctions how can it be accepted that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him)

might have employed the jinns to make pictures and images of the Prophets and the angels for him? And how can this thing be admitted on the authority of the statements of the Jews who accuse the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) of idolatry due to his love for polytheistic wives? (Kings, oh. 11).

However, the Muslim commentators, while citing the Israelite traditions, had made it clear that in the Shariah of Muhammad (peace be upon him) this thing is forbidden; therefore, it is no more lawful for anybody to make pictures and images in imitation of the Prophet Solomon. But some people of the modern time, who want to make photography and carving of idols lawful in imitation of the West, took this verse of the Quran as an argument for themselves. They argue like this: “When a Prophet of Allah has done this and Allah Himself has mentioned this act of the Prophet in His Book, and has expressed no disapproval of it either, it must be lawful.”

This argument of these followers of the West is wrong for two reasons. First, the word *tamateel* that has been used in the Quran does not explicitly give the meaning of the human and animal pictures, but it applies to the pictures of lifeless things as well. Therefore, only on the basis of this word, it cannot be concluded that it is lawful to make the human and animal pictures according to the Quran. Secondly, it is established by a large number of the Ahadith, which have been reported through authentic chains of transmitters, and commonly reported by many authorities, that the Prophet (peace be upon him)

absolutely forbade the making and keeping of the pictures of the living things. In this connection, we reproduce below the authentic traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the verdicts given by the eminent companions:

(1) Mother of the faithful, Aishah has reported that Umm Habibah and Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with them all) had seen a church in Habash, which had pictures in it. When they mentioned this before the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said: “The custom among those people was that when a pious man from among them died, they would build a house of worship at his grave and would make his pictures in it. On the Day of Resurrection, these people will be among the most wretched creatures in the sight of Allah.” (Bukhari: Kitab as-Salat, Muslim: Kitab al-Masajid; Nasai: Kitab al-Masajid).

(2) Abu Huzairah has reported that the messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah has cursed the maker of pictures. (Bukhari: Kitab al-Buyu, Kitab at-Talaq, Kitab al-Libas).

(3) Abu Zurah says, “Once when I entered a house along with Abu Hurairah, I saw that a painter was making pictures at the top. Thereupon, Abu Hurairah said, “I have heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say: Allah says who could be more wicked than the one who tries to create a thing like My creation? Let them, if they can, create a seed or an ant.” (Bukhari: Kitab al-Libas; Musnad Ahmad. According to the tradition in Muslim, this was the house of Marwan).

(4) Abu Muhammad Hudhali has reported on the authority of Ali (may Allah be pleased with him): The Prophet (peace

be upon him) was present at a funeral prayer when he said: “Who from among you would go to Al-Madinah and demolish every idol that he sees, and level down every grave that he sees, and blot out every picture that he sees.” A man said that he would go. So he went but came back without carrying out the task due to fear of the people of Al-Madinah. Then Ali submitted that he would go, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) allowed him to go. Ali went, then came back and said: I have demolished every idol and leveled down every grave and blotted out every picture. Thereupon the Prophet said: “Now if any one made any of these things, he would be denying the teaching sent down on Muhammad (peace be upon him).” (Musnad Ahmad; Muslim: Kitab al-Janaiz; Nasai: Kitab al-Janiz also contain a tradition on the same subject).

(5) Ibn Abbas has reported: “And he who made a picture would be chastised and compelled to breathe the soul into it, which he will not be able to do.” (Bukhari: Kitab al-Ta bir, Tirmidhi: Abwab al-Libas; Nasai: Kitab az-Zinah; Musnad Ahmad).

(6) Saeed bin al-Hasan says: “I was sitting with Ibn Abbas when a man came and said: O Ibn Abbas, I am a man who earns his living with his hand, and my profession is to make these pictures. Ibn Abbas replied: I shall say to you the same that I have heard from the Prophet (peace be upon him). I have heard this from him that Allah will chastise the one who makes pictures, and will not leave him till he breathes the soul into it, and he will never be able to breathe the soul into it. At this the man was much upset

and his face turned pale. Ibn Abbas said: “Well, if you have to make the pictures, make of this tree, or of something which is lifeless.” (Bukhari: Kitab al-Buyu; Muslim: Kitab al-Libas; Nasai: Kitabal-Zinah; Musnad Ahmad).

(7) Abdullah bin Masud has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “On the Day of Resurrection the ones to be most severely punished by Allah would be the painters of the pictures.” (Bukhari: Kitab al-Libas; Muslim: Kitab al-Libas; Nasai; Kitab al-Zinah; Musnad Ahmad).

(8) Abdullah bin Umar has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Those who paint the pictures will be punished on the Day of Resurrection. They will be asked to put life into what they have made. (Bukhari: Kitab al-Libas; Muslim: Kitab al-Libas; Nasai; Kitab al-Zinah; Musnad Ahmad).

(9) Aishah says that she bought a cushion in which pictures had been painted. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) came and stood at the door and did not enter. I said: “I repent before God of any sin that I may have committed.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked: “What is this cushion for?” I said: “This is here so that you may sit and may recline on it.” He said: “The painters of these pictures will be chastised on the Day of Resurrection: they will be asked to put life into what they have made; and the angels (i.e. the angels of mercy) do not enter a house which has pictures in it.” (Bukhari: Kitab al-Libas; Muslim: Kitab al-Libas; Nasai: Kitab az-Zinah; Ibn Majah: Kitab at-Tajarat; Muwatta: Kitabal-Istidhan).

(10) Aishah says: “Once the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to my house, and I had hung a curtain which had pictures on it. The color of his face changed.” Then he took hold of the curtain and tore it and said: “Those who try to create like the creation of Allah will be among those who will be severely punished by Allah on the Day of Resurrection.” (Muslim: Kitab al-Libas; Bukhari: Kitab al-Libas; Nasai: Kitab az-Zinah).

(11) Aishah says: “Once the Prophet (peace be upon him) came back; from a journey and I had hung a curtain at my door, which had the pictures of winged horses on it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded me to remove it and I removed it.” (Muslim: Kitab al-Libas, Nasai: Kitab al-Zinah).

(12) Jabir bin Abdullah says: The Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited keeping of the pictures in the house and also forbade that somebody should make pictures. (Tirmidhi: Abwab al-Libas).

(13) Ibn Abbas has related on the authority of Abu Talhah Ansari: “The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that the angels (i.e. of mercy) do not enter a house where there is a dog, nor where there is a picture. (Bukhari: Kitabal-Libas).

(14) Abdullah bin Umar says: Once Gabriel promised to pay the Prophet (peace be upon him) a visit, but the time passed and he did not come. The Prophet (peace be upon him) felt troubled and came out of his house and met him. When he complained to him, he (Gabriel) replied: “We do not enter a house where there is a dog or a picture.” (Bukhari: Kitab al-Libas).

Several Traditions on this subject have been related by Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Imam Malik and Imam Ahmad on the authority of several companions.

As against these, there are some other traditions which allow some exceptions regarding the pictures. For example, according to a tradition of Abu Talhah Ansari, it is permissible to hang the curtain of a cloth which has pictures embroidered on it. (Bukhari: Kitab al-Libas); and according to Aishah's tradition, when she tore a cloth having pictures on it and made a cushion from it to be spread on the floor, the Prophet did not forbid it. (Muslim: Kitab al-Libas); and Salim bin Abdullah bin Umar's tradition that the prohibition is of the picture which is displayed and installed prominently and not of the one which is used as a carpet: (Musnad Ahmad). But none of these traditions contradicts the traditions which have been cited above. None of these sanctions the making and painting of the pictures. They only tell that if a person has a piece of cloth having pictures on it, how he should use it. In this regard, the tradition of Abu Talhah Ansari cannot at all be accepted because it contradicts many other authentic traditions in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) not only forbade use of cloth having pictures on it as a curtain but even tore it into pieces. Moreover, Abu Talhah Ansari's own practice that has been reported in Tirmidhi and Muwatta, in this regard, was that he did not even like to use a piece of cloth which had pictures on it, as a carpet, not to speak of hanging it as a curtain.

As for the traditions related by Aishah and Salim bin Abdullah, they only permit that if a picture is not placed prominently out of respect and esteem but is used as a carpet disrespectfully and is trodden under the feet, it could be tolerable. After all, how can these traditions be cited for obtaining sanction for the culture which regards the art of painting and portrait making and sculpture as an enviable achievement of the human civilization, and wants to popularize it among the Muslims?

The code of practice that the Prophet (peace be upon him) left for his Ummah with regard to the pictures can be seen from the conduct and practice of the eminent companions, which they adopted in this regard. The admitted principle of law in Islam is that the authentic and reliable Islamic law is that which the Prophet (peace be upon him) enjoined during the latter part of his life after it had passed through gradual and preliminary injunctions and exceptions. And after the Prophet (peace be upon him) the eminent companions' practice and persistence on a particular way is a proof that he left the Ummah on that way. Now let us see how these holy and pious people treated and regarded the pictures.

Umar said to the Christians: "We do not enter your churches because there are pictures in them." (Bukhari: Kitab as-Salat).

Ibn Abbas would sometimes offer his Prayer in the church, but not in a church which had pictures in it. (Bukhari; Kitab as-Salam).

Abu al-Hayyaj al-Asadi says: Ali said to me: "Should I not

send you on the same mission on which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had sent me? And it is this that you should not leave any idol that you should not break, and you should not leave any grave that you should not level down, and you should not leave any picture that you should not blot out.” (Muslim: Kitab al-Janaiz; Nasai: Kitab al-Janeiz).

Hanash al-Kinani says: Ali said to his chief of the police: “Do you know on what mission I am going to send you? On the mission on which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had sent me, that you should blot out every picture and level down every grave.” (Musnad Ahmad).

This very established law of Islam has been accepted and acknowledged by the jurists of Islam and regarded as an article of the Islamic law. Thus, Allama Badruddin Aini writes with reference to Tauhid.

“Our elders (i.e. the Hanifite jurists) and other jurists say that making the pictures of a living thing is not only unlawful but strictly forbidden and a major sin, whether the maker has made it for a purpose where it would be held with contempt or for some other use and purpose. The making and painting of the picture anyway is unlawful, because it is an attempt to create like the creation of Allah. Likewise. The making of pictures whether on the cloth, or on the carpet, or on a coin, or on a utensil, or on a wall, is in any case unlawful. However, making the pictures of something else, for instance, of a tree, etc. is not forbidden. Whether the picture casts a shadow or not is immaterial. The same is the opinion of Imam Malik, Sufyan Thauri,

Imam Abu Hanifah, and other scholars. Qadi Iyad says that the dolls of girls are an exception, but Imam Malik; disapproved of even buying them.” (Umdat al-Qari vol. xxii p. 70). Imam Nawawi has elucidated this same view in greater detail in his commentary of Muslim. Please refer to Sharh Nawawi, Egyptian Ed., vol. xiv, pp. 81-82).

This is then the injunction about the making of pictures. As regards the use of the pictures made by others, Allama Ibn Hajar has cited the views of the jurists of Islam as follows: “Ibn Arabi, the Malikite jurist, says that the consensus of opinion is that the picture that casts a shadow is unlawful, whether it is regarded with contempt or not. Only the dolls of girls are an exception.” Ibn Arab; also says that the picture which does not cast a shadow but which persists (as in the printed form, unlike the reflection of a mirror) is also unlawful, whether it is regarded with contempt or not. However, if its head is cut off, or its limbs or parts are separated, it may be used. Imam al-Harmayn has cited a verdict according to which a curtain or a cushion having pictures on it may be used, but the picture hung on the wall or ceiling is forbidden, for it would show respect and esteem for it, while the picture on the curtain or cushion, on the contrary, would be held with contempt. Ibn Abi Shaibah has related on the authority of Ikrimah that the scholars among the immediate followers of the companions held the opinion that the picture’s being on the carpet or cushion is disgraceful for it; they also opined that the picture hung prominently is unlawful, but the one trodden under the feet is permissible. The same opinion has been

cited from Ibn Sirin, Salim bin Abdullah, Ikrimah bin Khalid and Said bin Jubair.” (Fath al-Bari, vol. X, p. 300). The details given above clearly show that the forbidding of the pictures is not a controversial or doubtful matter in Islam, but it is an established article of the law according to the express instructions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the practice of the companions and the unanimous verdicts of the jurists of Islam, which cannot be changed by the hairsplitting of the people influenced by the alien cultures.

In this connection, certain other things should also be understood so that there remains no misunderstanding in this regard.

Some people try to make a distinction between a photograph and a painting, whereas the Shariah forbids the picture itself and not any process or method of making pictures. There is no difference between a photograph and a painting: they are both pictures. Whatever difference is there between them is due to the method of making them, and in this regard the Shariah injunctions make no difference between them.

Some people give the argument that the picture was forbidden in Islam in order to put an end to idol worship. As there is no such danger now, this injunction should be annulled. But this argument is absolutely wrong. In the first place, nowhere in the traditions has it been said that the pictures have been made unlawful in order to avoid the danger of shirk and idol worship. Secondly, the assertion that shirk and idol worship have been eradicated from the

world is also baseless. Today in the IndoPak subcontinent itself there are millions of idol worshippers and polytheists. Shirk is being practiced in different regions of the world in different ways. The Christian people of the Book also are worshipping the images and portraits of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) and Mary and other saints; so much so that even a large number of the Muslims also are involved in the evil of worshipping others than God.

Some people say that only those pictures which are polytheistic in nature should be forbidden, i.e. pictures and images of those persons who have been made gods. As for the other pictures and images there is no reason why they should be forbidden. But the people who argue like this, in fact, become their own law givers instead of deriving law from the commandments and instructions of the Law-Giver. They do not know that the picture does not become the cause of polytheism and idol worship only but has become the cause of many other mischief in the world, and is becoming so even today. The picture is one of those major means by which the aura of greatness of the kings, dictators and political leaders has been impressed upon the minds of the common people. The picture also has been used extensively for spreading obscenity and today this mischief has touched heights unknown to previous history. Pictures have also been used for sowing discord and hatred and for creating mischief between the nations and for misleading the masses in different ways. Therefore, the view that the Law-Giver forbade the picture only in order to eradicate idol worship is basically wrong. The Law-

Giver has absolutely forbidden pictures of the living things. If we are not our own law givers but are the followers of the Law-Giver, we should desist from this accordingly. It is not at all lawful for us that we should propose from ourselves a basis for a particular injunction and then, on the basis of it, should declare some pictures lawful and some as unlawful. Some people refer to some apparently harmless kinds of pictures and say that there could be no danger from these: they could not cause the mischief of shirk, obscenity, political propaganda or other evils; therefore, they should not be forbidden. Here again the people commit the same error: they first propose a cause and a basis for an injunction, and then argue that when the cause is not found in a particular forbidden thing, it should not be forbidden. Furthermore, these people also do not understand the rule of the Islamic Shariah that it does not make vague and ambiguous boundaries between the lawful and the unlawful from which a man may not be able to judge when he is within the bounds and when he has crossed them; but it draws a clear line of demarcation which every person can see like the broad daylight. The demarcation in respect of the picture is absolutely clear: pictures of living things are unlawful and of the lifeless things lawful. This line of demarcation does not admit any ambiguity. The one who has to follow the injunctions can clearly know what is permissible for him and what is not. But, if some pictures of the living things had been declared lawful and some unlawful, no list of the two kinds of the pictures however extensive, would have made the boundary between the

lawful and the unlawful clear, and the case of many pictures would still have remained ambiguous as to whether they were within the bounds of lawfulness or outside them. This is similar to the Islamic injunction about wine that one should completely abstain from it, and this marks a clear limit, But, if it had been said that one should abstain from such a quantity of wine as intoxicates, it would be impossible to demarcate between the lawful and the unlawful , and no one would have been able to decide what quantity of wine he could drink; and where he had to stop. (For a further discussion, see Rasail-o-Masail, Part 1, pp. 152-155).

*21 This gives an idea of the generous and large scale hospitality practiced by the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him). Big bowls like troughs had been arranged to serve as containers of food for the guests and heavy cooking pots were meant for cooking food for thousands of the people at one and the same time.

*22 “Grateful”: work like grateful servants. The mere verbal thankfulness of a person who acknowledges only verbally the favors done by the benefactor but uses them against his will is meaningless. The truly grateful person is he who acknowledges the favors with the tongue as well as uses and employs the favors according to the will of the benefactor.

14. Then, when We decreed death for him, nothing informed them (jinn) of his death except a creeping

فَلَمَّا قَضَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَوْتَ مَا دَهِمَّهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَوْتِهِ إِلَّا دَابَّةٌ

creature of the earth, which gnawed away his staff. So when he fell down, the jinn saw clearly^{*23} that if they had known the unseen, they would not have remained in the humiliating punishment.^{*24}

الْأَرْضِ تَأْكُلُ مِنْسَأَتَهُ فَلَمَّا
خَرَّ تَبَيَّنَتِ الْجِنُّ أَنْ لَوْ كَانُوا
يَعْلَمُونَ الْغَيْبَ مَا لَبِثُوا فِي
الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ ﴿٤٤﴾

***23** Another meaning of the sentence can be: "The true state and condition of the jinns became clear and exposed. "According to the first meaning, it will mean: "The jinns realized that their claim to have the knowledge of the unseen was wrong." According to the second, it will mean: "The people who thought that the jinns possessed the knowledge of the unseen, came to know that they had no such knowledge."

***24** Some modern commentators have interpreted it as follows: As the Prophet Solomon's (peace be upon him) son, Rehoboam, was unworthy and given to luxurious living and surrounded by flatterers, he could not sustain the heavy burden of responsibility that fell on his shoulders after the death of his great father. A short time after his succession, the kingdom collapsed, and the frontier tribes (i.e. of the jinns), whom the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) had subdued by his mighty power, rebelled and broke away. But this interpretation does not at all conform to the words of the Quran. The scene depicted by the words of the Quran is somewhat like this: Death came to the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) in a state when he was

standing or sitting with the support of a staff. His body stood in place due to the staff, and the jinns continued to perform their duties and services, thinking that he was living. At last, when the wood louse started eating away the staff and it became hollow from within, the Prophet Solomon's (peace be upon him) body fell down; then the jinns realized that he had died. After all, why should this clear and unambiguous description of the event be construed to mean that the wood louse implied the unworthiness of the Prophet Solomon's son, and the staff implied his power and authority and the falling down of his body implied the disintegration of his kingdom? Had Allah meant to say all this, there was no shortage of the words in the vast Arabic language. The Quran, in fact, has nowhere used such enigmatic language. How could the common Arabs, who were its first addressees, have solved this riddle?

Then, the most absurd part of this interpretation is that according to it the jinns imply the people of the frontier tribes whom the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) had subdued to perform certain services under him. The question is, which of these tribes had claimed to have the knowledge of the unseen, and whom did the mushriks regard as the knower of the unseen? A person who reads the last words of the verse with open eyes can himself see that jinn here necessarily implies a group of beings who either had themselves made a claim to have the knowledge of the unseen, or who, the people believed, had the knowledge of the unseen; and the secret of this group's

being ignorant and unaware of the unseen became disclosed when they continued to serve the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) under the impression that he was living, whereas he had died. This statement of the Quran was enough to induce an honest person to revise his this opinion that the jinn imply the frontier tribes, but the people who feel shy of admitting the existence of the hidden creation called the jinn before the materialistic world still insist on this interpretation of theirs in spite of the plain meaning of the Quran.

At several places in the Quran Allah tells that the mushriks of Arabia regarded the jinns as the associates of Allah, and as His children, and used to seek their refuge: “They set up the jinns as partners with Allah. whereas He has created them.” (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 100). “And they have invented a blood-relationship between Allah and the jinns.” (Surah As-Saffat, Ayat 158). “And that, some people from among the men used to seek refuge with some people from among the jinns.” (Surah Al-Jinn, Ayat: 6).

One of their beliefs was that they regarded the jinns as the knower of the unseen and hidden. and used to turn to them to obtain knowledge of the hidden things. Allah has related this event here in order to repudiate this belief and to make the Arabs realize that they are following the false creeds of ignorance without any valid reason, whereas the fact is that these beliefs are absolutely baseless. (For further explanation, see E.N. 63 below).

15. Certainly, there was for Sheba^{*25} a sign in their

لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَا فِي مَسْكِنِهِمْ آيَةٌ

dwelling place.*²⁶ Two
gardens*²⁷ on the right and
the left. "Eat of the provision
of your Lord and be
grateful to Him." A fair
land and a Lord, Oft
Forgiving.

جَنَّاتٍ عَن يَمِينٍ وَشِمَالٍ
كُلُوا مِن رِّزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا
لَهُ ۗ بَلَدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَرَبُّ غَفُورٌ

*25 To understand the continuity of the subject matter one should keep in view the theme as expressed in Ayats 1-9. There it has been pointed out that the pagans of Arabia regarded the coming of the Hereafter as irrational, and declared openly that the Messenger (peace be upon him) who was presenting this doctrine was either a mad man or deliberately was fabricating falsehood. In reply to this, Allah first gave some rational arguments, which we have elaborated in E.Ns 7, 8 and 12 above. Then in Ayats 10-21 the story of the Prophets David and Solomon and of Saba has been related as an historical argument, which is meant to impress the reality that the history of the human species on the earth itself testifies to the law of retribution. If man studies his own history carefully, he will see that this world is not a lawless kingdom, which might be functioning blindly, but it is being ruled by an All-Hearing and All-Seeing Being, Who treats and deals with His grateful servants in one way and with the ungrateful and thankless people in quite another way. If one wants one can learn this lesson from the same history that in the Kingdom of God which has such a character, goodness and evil cannot have one and the same result. The necessary demand of its

justice is that a time must come when goodness should be fully rewarded and evil fully punished.

*26 That is, a sign of this that whatever they have is the gift of some one else and not of their own creation, and a sign of this that the one worthy of their service and worship and gratitude is that God who has blessed them with these favors and not those who have no share in bestowing these, and a sign of this that their wealth is not imperishable but can perish even as it has been amassed.

*27 This does not mean that there were only two gardens in the whole country, but that the entire land of Saba was like a garden. Wherever a man stood, he could see a garden on his right and a garden on his left.

16. Then they turned away,^{*28} so We sent upon them the flood of Iram,^{*29} and We replaced their two gardens with two gardens bearing bitter fruit, the tamarisks, and something of sparse lote trees.^{*30}

فَاعْرَضُوا فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَيْلَ
الْعَرَمِ وَبَدَّلْنَاهُمْ بِجَنَّتَيْهِمْ جَنَّتَيْنِ
ذَوَاتِ أَكُلٍ خَمْطٍ وَأَثَلٍ وَشَيْءٍ
مِّنْ سِدْرٍ قَلِيلٍ ﴿١٦﴾

*28 That is, they adopted the way of disobedience and ingratitude instead of obedience and gratefulness.

*29 The word *arim* as used in *sayl al-arim* in the text is derived from the South Arabic word *ariman*, which stands for a dam. In the ancient inscriptions that have been unearthed in the ruins of the Yaman, this word has been commonly used in this meaning. For example, in an inscription dated 542 or 543 A.D. which Abraha, the

Abyssinian governor of the Yaman, had gotten installed after the repairs to the great dam of Maarib, this word has been used repeatedly in the meaning of a dam. Therefore, *sayl al- arim* implies a flood that comes when a dam breaks. *30 That is, as a result of the flood that came after the dam burst, the whole land was laid waste. The canals which the Sabaeans had dug out by building dams between the mountains were ruined and the irrigation system destroyed. Then the same land which had been like a garden before became a jungle of wild growth and no eatable plants were left in it except the small plume like fruit of the lote bushes.

17. That is, We requited them because of their ingratitude. And do We requite except the ungrateful.

ذٰلِكَ جَزَيْنٰهُمْ بِمَا كَفَرُوْا
وَهَلْ نُجْزِيْ اِلَّا الْكٰفِرِيْنَ

18. And We placed between them and the towns which We had blessed, (many) visible towns. And We made the stages (of journey) between them easy.*31 (Saying): “Travel in them (both) by night and day, safely.”

وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ الْقُرَى الَّتِي
بَرَكَتْنَا فِيْهَا قُرًى ظَاهِرَةً
وَقَدَّرْنَا فِيْهَا السَّبِيْرَ سِيْرًا فِيْهَا
لَيَالِيْ وَاَيَّامًا ءَامِنِيْنَ

*31 “Towns which We had blessed”: The lands of Syria and Palestine, which have been generally mentioned in the Quran by this title. For instance, in Surah Al-Aaraf, Atyat 137, Surah Bani-Israil, Ayat 1, Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 71,

81. "Visible towns": Habitations situated on the highway and not inside the country. It may also mean that the habitations were not very far apart but contiguous so that as the outlying areas of one habitation came to an end those of the other started coming into view.

"And We made the stages (of journey) between them easy" implies that from the Yaman to the borders of Syria the whole journey passed through inhabited lands, and the distances between one station and another were known and determined. That makes the distinction between the journey through inhabited land and the journey through uninhabited desert area. In the desert the traveler continues to travel as long as he wills and halts when tired. Contrary to this, in settled areas as the distance between one habitation and the other is well known, the traveler can plan beforehand when he would break his journey, where he would have his midday rest and when he would stay for the night.

19. So they said: "Our Lord, lengthen distances between our journeys."^{*32} And they wronged themselves, so We made them tales. And We dispersed them, a total dispersion.^{*33} Indeed, in that are signs for every steadfast, grateful.^{*34}

فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا بَعِدْ بَيْنَ أَسْفَارِنَا
وَوَظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ
أَحَادِيثَ وَمَزَّقْنَاهُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ
شَكُورٍ



*32 They may not have prayed thus in so many words. As a

matter of fact, whoever is ungrateful to Allah for His blessings, tells Allah, as if to say that he is not worthy of those blessings. Likewise, the nation which abuses the bounties of Allah, in fact, prays to Him, as if to say, “Our Lord, withdraw Your blessings from us, we are not worthy of these.” Moreover, the words in the text also seem to suggest that the Sabaean perhaps regarded their large population as a calamity for themselves, and they also wanted like the other foolish people that their population should fall.

***33** That is, the people of Saba were so dispersed in all directions that their dispersion became proverbial. Even today when the Arabs have to mention the complete dispersion of any people they refer to the people of Saba as an example. When Allah caused His blessings to be withdrawn from them, the different tribes of the Sabaean started leaving their homes and migrating to other parts of Arabia. The Banu Ghassan went to settle in Jordan and Syria, the Aus and Khazraj in Yathrib, and the Khuzaah in Tihamah near Jeddah. The Azd left for Uman and the Bani Lakhm and Judham and Kindah were also forced to give up their homes for other places. Thus, the Sabaean ceased to exist as a nation and became a mere legend.

***34** In this context the “steadfast and grateful” implies every such person (or persons) who does not lose his balance after he has received blessings from Allah, nor exults at prosperity, nor becomes heedless of God Who has blessed him with these. Such a person can learn great lessons from the history of those people who adopted the

way of disobedience after attaining opportunities for progress and prosperity and ultimately met with their doom.

20. And certainly, Satan did prove true his thought about them, so they follow him, except a group of the believers. ^{*35}

وَلَقَدْ صَدَّقَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِبْلِيسُ ظَنَّهُ
فَاتَّبَعُوهُ إِلَّا فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ



***35** History shows that in ancient times there lived among the Sabaeans a small group of the people, who believed in one God, apart from all other gods. The inscriptions that have been discovered in the ruins of Yaman as a result of modern archaeological research point to the existence of this small element. Some inscriptions of the period about 650 B.C. indicate that at several places in the kingdom of Saba there existed such houses of worship as were exclusively meant for the worship of *dhu-samavi* or *dhu-samaavi* (i.e. *Rabb as-samaa*: Lord of the heavens). In some places this Deity has been mentioned as *Malikan dhu-samavi* (the King who is the Owner of the heavens). This remnant of the Sabaeans continued to live in Yaman for centuries afterwards. Thus, in an inscription of 378 A.D. there is also mention of a house of worship built in the name of *Ilah dhu-semevi*. Then, in an inscription dated 465 A.D. the words are; *Bi-nasr wa rida ilah-in baal samin wa ardin* (i.e. with the help and support of that God who is the Owner of the heavens and the earth). In another inscription of the period dated 458 A.D., the word *Rahman* has been

used for the same God, the actual words being *bi-rida Rahmanan* (i. e. with the help of Rahman).

21. And he (Satan) had no authority over them, except that We might know (make evident) him who believes in the Hereafter, from him who is in doubt about it.^{*36} And your Lord is Guardian over all things.^{*37}

وَمَا كَانَ لَهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ
سُلْطٰنٍ اِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ
بِالْآخِرَةِ مِمَّنْ هُوَ مِنْهَا فِي شَكٍّ
وَرَبُّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيظٌ



***36** That is, Iblis did not have the power to have forcibly misled these people to the way of God's disobedience although they had wanted to adopt His obedience. Allah had only given him the power that he may seduce and mislead them and make all such people his followers, who may like to follow him of their own accord. And Iblis was provided these opportunities for seduction so that the believers of the Hereafter were distinguished from those who entertained doubts about its coming.

In other words, this divine statement makes the truth explicit that nothing in this world other than belief in the Hereafter can ensure man's adherence to the right way. If a man disbelieves that he is to be raised back to life after death and has to render an account of his deeds before his God, he will certainly be misled and go astray, for he will never be able to develop in himself the sense of responsibility which alone can make him adhere to the right way. That is why the artifice of Satan by which he

ensnares man is that he makes him heedless of the Hereafter. The one who escapes this satanic enticement can never agree that he should sacrifice the interests of his real everlasting life to the interests of the transient life of the world. On the contrary, the one who disbelieves in the Hereafter under the evil influence of Satan, or at least entertains doubts about it, can never be induced to withdraw from the cash bargain being made in this world only due to the apprehension that it might cause loss in some later life. Whoever has gone astray in the world, has gone astray only due to the denial of the Hereafter, or some suspicion about it; and whoever has adopted righteousness has done so because his righteous deeds have issued from his belief in the Hereafter.

***37** To understand fully the allusions made in the Quran to the history of the Sabaeans, one should also keep in view the information that has been obtained through other historical sources about this nation.

Historically, Saba was a great nation of Southern Arabia, which comprised some large tribes. Imam Ahmad, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Abd al-Barr and Tirmidhi have related from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that Saba was the name of an Arab, from whose race issued the following tribes of Arabia: Kindah, Himyar, Azd, Ash ariyyin, Madhhij, Anmar (with its two branches: Khatham and Bajilah), Amilah, Judham, Lakhm and Ghassan.

Since antiquity this Arabian nation has been well known to the rest of the world. Ur inscriptions of 2500 B.C. mention it by the name of Sabom. Then in the Babylonian and

Assyrian inscriptions and also in the Bible it has been mentioned several times. (See, for instance, Psalms 72:15; Jeremiah 6: 20; Ezekiel 27:22, 38: 13; Job 6: 19). The Greek and Roman historians and the geographer Theophrastus (288 B.C.) have mentioned it continuously for many centuries of the Christian era since before Jesus (peace be upon him).

Its home was the south-western corner of the Arabian peninsula, now called al-Yaman. Its rise to prominence started in 1100 B.C. In the time of the Prophets David and Solomon (peace be upon them) the Sabaeans had become world famous as a wealthy people. In the beginning they were a sun-worshipping nation. Then, when their queen affirmed faith at the hand of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) 965-926 B.C., probably most of them became Muslims. But then in some unknown later period they again began to worship gods and goddesses like Almaqah (the moon-god), Athtar (Venus), Dhat Hamim, Dhat Badan (the sun-god), Harmatam or Harimat and many others. Almaqah was their chief deity, and the kings made claim to the people's obedience as representatives of this deity. Many inscriptions have been unearthed in the Yaman, which show that the whole land abounded in the temples of these gods, especially of Almaqah, and thanks giving services for them were held at every important event.

As a result of the modern archaeological researches about 3,000 inscriptions have been discovered, which throw a good deal of light on the history of this nation. Besides these, if the information yielded by the Arabian

traditionists and the Roman and Greek historians is compiled, a detailed history of this nation can be prepared. According to this information the following are the important periods of its history:

(1) **The Pre-mid-seventh Century Period:** In this period Mukarrib was the title of the Sabaean kings. Probably a synonym of Muqarrib, it signified that the kings regarded themselves as the link between men and gods; or, in other words, they were the priest-kings. Their capital was Sirwah, whose ruins are found at a day's journey to the west of Maarib, and are now called al-Kharibah. The foundations of the great Maarib dam were laid in this period: then the different kings extended it from time to time.

(2) **650 B. C. to 115 B. C.:** In this period the Sabaean kings discarded Mukarrib and adopted the title of Malik (king), which signified that theocracy was replaced by secular kingship. They left Sirwah and made Maarib their capital and extended it in every way. This place lay 3900 feet above the sea, and is some 60 miles east of Sana. Even today its ruins bear evidence that it was once the centre of a highly civilized nation.

(3) **115 B.C. to 300 A.D:** In this period the Sabaean kingdom fell under the domination of the tribe of Himyar, a more numerous tribe of Saba. They discarded Maarib and made their central place Raydan their capital, which later became known as Zafar. Its ruins can still be seen on a circular hill near the modern city of Yarim. Close by it there resides a small tribe by the name of Hinmar, perhaps

the remnant of the great nation which was once well known throughout the world for its glory and grandeur. In the same period the word Yamanat and Yamanaat began to be used for the first time for a part of the kingdom, which gradually became Yaman and the name of the entire land, which extends from Asir to Aden and from Bab al-Mandab to Hadramaut. During this very period the decline of the Sabaean began.

(4) 300 A.D. to the rise of Islam: This is the period of the Sabaea's destruction. They started fighting civil wars, which provided occasion for external intervention. This resulted in the decline in their trade and their agriculture and even loss of political freedom. Taking advantage of the internal conflicts between the Himyarites and other tribes, the Abyssinians occupied the Yaman and ruled it briefly from 340 A.D. to 378 A.D. Then, though political freedom was restored, breaches began to appear in the great dam of Maarib, which in 450 or 451 A.D. led to the catastrophe occasioned by the bursting of the dam as has been referred to in verse 16 above. Although after it till the time of Abraha the dam was extensively repaired, the population that had dispersed could not be brought back, nor could the ruined system of irrigation and agriculture be restored. In 523 A.D., dhu-Nuwas, the Jewish king of the Yaman, carried out the great massacre of the Christians of Najran, which has been referred to in the Quran under *ashab al-ukhdud* (Surah Al-Burooj, Ayat 4). In retaliation, the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia invaded Yaman and occupied the entire land. Later the Abyssinian governor of

Yaman, Abrahah, in a bid to put an end to the central position of the Kabah and to bring the entire western Arabia into the sphere of the Byzantine Abyssinian influence invaded Makkah in 570 or 571 A.D., a few days before the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Abyssinian army was completely destroyed as alluded to under *ashab il-feel* (Surah Al-Feel, Ayat 1) in the Quran. At last, in 575 A.D. Yaman fell to the Iranians; their rule came to an end in 628 A.D. when their governor Badhan embraced Islam.

The Sabaeans owed their prosperity to two main factors: agriculture and commerce. They had developed their agriculture by means of a wonderful irrigation system unknown in the ancient world except in Babylon. There were no natural rivers in their land; in the rainy season small hill-torrents rose on which they had built dams every where in the country and collected water in small lakes from which they had taken out canals to water their lands. This had virtually turned the whole country into a vast garden as mentioned in the Quran. The largest reservoir was the lake which had been formed by the construction of a dam on the opening in the Jabal Balaq near Maarib. But when Allah caused His favors to be turned away from them, the great dam burst in the mid-fifth century A.D. and the resulting floods went on breaking one dam after the other on the way, destroying the entire irrigation system, which could never again be restored.

For commerce the Sabaeans had been blessed by God with the most favorable geographical position of which they took

full advantage. For more than a thousand years they monopolized the means of trade between the East and the West. On the one hand, they received silk from China, spices from Indonesia and Malabar, fabrics and swords from India, negro slaves, monkeys, ostrich feathers and ivory from East Africa at their ports, and on the other, they transported this merchandise to the Egyptian and Syrian marts, to be supplied onward to Rome and Greece. Besides, they themselves were great producers of frankincense and myrrh and other perfumes, which were in great demand in Egypt and Syria and in Rome and Greece.

Two great routes existed for this international trade: the sea route and the land route. The maritime trade remained in the Sabaean's control for more than a thousand years for they alone knew the mysteries of the Red Sea monsoons, breakers and rocks and the anchorages, and no other nation could risk navigation through these dangerous waters. Through this maritime route they took their trade goods to the harbors of Jordan and Egypt. The land routes from Aden and Hadramaut joined at Maarib, from where a highway led to Petra through Makkah, Jeddah, Yathrib, Al-Ula, Tabuk and Aylah, forking at the northern end to Egypt and Syria. Along this land route, a number of Sabaean colonies had been established right from the Yaman to the borders of Syria, as mentioned in the Quran, and trade caravans passed by these day and night. The signs of many of these colonies still exist on this route from which the Sabaean and the Himyarite inscriptions are being discovered.

After the first century after Jesus (peace be upon him) Sabaeen trade began to suffer a decline. When the Greek, and then the Roman, kingdoms were established in the Middle East, the citizens began complaining of the high prices that the Arabian traders were charging for the oriental goods because of their monopoly, and urged their governments to take the initiative to break their supremacy in the sea trade. Thus, in the beginning, Ptolemy II (985-246 B.C.), the Greek ruler of Egypt, reopened the Nile-Red Sea canal originally dug by Pharaoh Sesostris some seventeen centuries ago. Consequently, it was through this canal that the Egyptian fleet entered the Red Sea for the first time, but it could not succeed much against the Sabaeans. When Egypt fell to the Romans they brought a stronger merchant marine into the Red Sea and put a naval fleet at its back. The Sabaeans could not withstand this force. Consequently, the Romans set up their trade colonies at every seaport, arranged supplies for the ships and also stationed their military troops wherever possible. At last, the time came when Aden passed under the military occupation of the Romans. In this connection, the Roman and the Abyssinian kingdoms also entered secret pacts against the Sabaeans, which ultimately deprived this nation of its political freedom as well.

After losing control over maritime trade the Sabaeans were left with trade over the land route only, but many factors combined to gradually break its back too. First, the Nabataeans ousted them from all the colonies of the upper Hejaz and Jordan, from Petra to Al-Ula. Then in 106 A.D.

the Romans put an end to the Nabataean kingdom and captured all the Syrian and Jordanian territories up to the Hejaz. After this Abyssinia and Rome jointly tried to ruin the Sabaean trade completely by taking advantage of their internal conflicts. That is why the Abyssinians intervened in the Yaman again and again, till at last they brought the entire land under their occupation.

Thus, Allah's wrath caused this nation to be toppled from the heights of glory and prosperity into oblivion from which they were never able to rise again. There was a time when the Greeks and the Romans felt tempted when they heard of the legendary wealth of these people. Strabo writes, "The Sabaean use gold and silver utensils and even the ceilings, walls and doors of their houses are bedecked with ivory, gold, silver and jewels." Pliny says, "The entire wealth of Rome and Persia is flowing into Sabaean hands. They are the richest people of the world today, and their fertile land abounds in gardens, crops and cattle."

Artemidorus says, "These people roll in luxury. They burn cinnamon, sandalwood and other sweet smelling wood as fuel." Likewise, other Greek historians relate that the passengers passing by their shores can smell the perfumes of their land in the merchant ships at sea. For the first time in history they built a skyscraper, called the castle of Ghumdan, on the hill top in Sana. This citadel, according to the Arab historians, a twenty storey building, each storey being 36 feet high. Thus did they prosper and enjoy life as long as Allah favored them with His bounties. At last, when they transgressed all limits in their ingratitude, the

Almighty Allah also withdrew His attention, and they were so utterly destroyed as if they had never existed at all.

22. Say (O Muhammad):^{*38}

“Call upon those whom you assert besides Allah.^{*39} They do not possess an atom’s weight in the heavens, nor in the earth, and they do not have in them any share, nor is there for Him from among them any supporter.”

قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِّنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ
مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا هُمْ فِيهِمَا مِنْ
شِرْكِ وَمَا لَهُ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ ظَهِيرٍ



***38** Until now the *mushriks*’ wrong notions about the Hereafter have been dealt with. From here the discourse turns to the refutation of shirk itself.

***39** That is, Allah makes and un-makes the destinies of individuals and nations and kingdoms in ways as you have seen from the stories of the Prophets David and Solomon (peace be upon them) and the people of Saba. Now, you may invoke, if you so like, these self-made gods of yours to see whether they also possess the power to change someone’s good fortune into misfortune and misfortune into good fortune.

23. And intercession does not benefit with Him except for him whom He permits.^{*40} Until when, fear is banished from their

وَلَا تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا
لِمَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُزِعَ
عَنْ قُلُوبِهِمْ قَالُوا مَاذَا قَالَ

hearts, they say: “What has your Lord said.” They say: “The truth.” And He is the Sublime, the Great.*41

رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ
الْكَبِيرُ



*40 That is, not to speak of owning something, or being a partner in the ownership of something, or being a helper of Allah in any way, there exists no one in the universe, who of his own accord, may intercede for someone before Allah. You are involved in the misunderstanding that there are some beloved ones of God, or some such powerful personalities, who can force and press God to accept their intercession, whereas the fact is that no one will dare utter a word of recommendation there without Allah’s permission. Only such a one will be able to make his submissions who is permitted by Allah to do so, and will intercede for him alone for whom permission for intercession is granted. (To understand the distinction between the Islamic concept of intercession and the polytheistic concept, see Surah Yunus, Ayats 3, 18; Surah Hud, Ayats 76, 105; Surah TaHa, Ayat 109; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 28; Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 76).”

*41 Here a graphic picture has been drawn of the time when, on the Day of Resurrection, an intercessor will be seeking permission to intercede on behalf of someone. It presents this scene: “After submitting the application for permission, both the intercessor and the person for whom intercession is being provided are awaiting the reply in a state of restlessness and awe. At last, when the permission is granted and the person perceives satisfaction in the face of

the intercessor, he feels a little comforted and asks the intercessor: “What has your Lord said?” The intercessor says, “The truth”: permission has been granted. What is meant to be impressed is this: “O foolish people! Such will be the awe of the great court of Allah! How dare you entertain the notion that anybody will have you forgiven by his own power, or dare behave stubbornly and tell Allah: These are my favorites: they will have to be forgiven!”

24. Say: “Who provides you from the heavens and the earth.” Say: “Allah.”^{*42} And indeed, we or you are assuredly upon guidance or in error manifest.”^{*43}

قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلِ اللَّهُ
وَإِنَّا أَوْ إِيَّاكُمْ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى أَوْ
فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

*42 There is a subtle gap between the question and the answer. The addressees were the mushriks who not only did not disbelieve in the existence of Allah but also knew and believed that the keys of the provisions are in His hand. But in spite of this they also held others as Allah’s associates in His work. Now when they were confronted with the question: Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth, they were put in a tight corner. If they mentioned another besides Allah, they would say a thing contrary to their own and their people’s creed. If they showed stubbornness and said such a thing, they feared that their own people would immediately refute them. And if they acknowledged that Allah alone is their Sustainer,

they would immediately be confronted with the next question: Then, why and what for have you made these others as your gods? When Allah is the Sustainer, why should these others be served and worshipped? Thus they stand confused and bewildered. Neither can they say that Allah alone is the Sustainer nor that another god is the sustainer. When the questioner sees that they do not make any answer, he himself answers his question and says, Allah.

***43** This sentence contains an important point of the wisdom of preaching. The logical conclusion of the question and answer cited above would be that the one who serves and worships Allah should be on right guidance and the one who worships others beside Him should be misguided. Therefore, apparently, the conclusion should have been: “Then, we are rightly guided and you are misguided.” But such a plain and straight reply, although correct and true, would not have been a wise thing from the point of view of preaching. For when a person is addressed and told plainly that he is misguided and the speaker claims to be rightly-guided himself, he will become obdurate and will never be inclined to accept and acknowledge the truth. As the Messengers of Allah are not sent only for the sake of speaking the plain truth, but are also entrusted with the duty of reforming the wrongdoers as tactfully as possible. Allah has not asked His Prophet (peace be upon him) to tell them plainly, after the question and answer, that they are all misguided and that he alone is rightly-guided. Instead of this, it was said: Tell them: it has become clear that we

regard as our Deity only Him Who is the Sustainer, and you have taken as deities those who are not sustainers. Now, it is not possible that both you and we should be on right guidance simultaneously. Only one of us can be rightly-guided, and the other inevitably will be misguided. Now it is for you to consider and judge who is being proved by reason to be in the right and who in the wrong.

25. Say: “You will not be asked about what we committed, and we will not be asked about what you do.”*44

قُلْ لَا تَسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا أَجْرَمْنَا
وَلَا نَسْأَلُ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

*44 The about question had already made the listeners to think seriously, This additional sentence was meant to make them think even more seriously, as if to say, “It is in our own interest individually that we should consider and decide the question of guidance and misguidance rightly. For if we are misguided, we shall ourselves bear the consequences of our error; you will not be held answerable for it. Therefore, it is in our own interest that we should consider seriously, before adopting a creed, that we are not following a wrong way. Likewise, you also should think seriously for your own sake, not for our sake in any way, and make sure that you are not investing your life’s capital in a false creed. For if you committed an error in this regard, you would be harming only your own selves and not us.

26. Say: “Our Lord will bring us together, then He

قُلْ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا رَبُّنَا ثُمَّ يَفْتَحُ

will judge between us with truth. And He is the Judge, All-knowing.”*45

بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَهُوَ الْفَتَّاحُ
الْعَلِيمُ

*45 This is the last and the strongest motive for the consideration of which the listeners' attention has been invited. It means to impress: The thing is not only that there is the difference of the truth and the falsehood between you and us, but that both we and you have to be presented before our Lord, the Being who knows the truth and is also fully aware of the affairs of each of us. There before Him not only will this thing be decided who, between you and us, was in the right and who in the wrong, but this issue also will be settled how we made every possible effort to make the truth plain to you, and how you opposed and resisted us in your antagonism to the truth.

27. Say: “Show me those whom you have joined to Him as partners.*46 Nay, but He is Allah, the All Mighty, the All Wise.”

قُلْ أَرُونِي الَّذِينَ أَلْحَقْتُمْ بِهِ
شُرَكَاءَ كَلَّا بَلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

*46 That is, before you take the great risk due to your reliance on these deities, just tell me here who among them is so powerful as to arise in the court of Allah as your supporter and save you from His punishment.

28. And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) except to all mankind as a bringer of good tidings, and a

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ
بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ

warner. But most of mankind do not know.*47



النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

*47 That is, you have not been sent as a Prophet for the people of this city, or this country, or this age alone, but for the people of the entire world and for all times, but your compatriots do not recognize your worth and they do not realize how great a person has been raised among them as a Prophet (peace be upon him) and how uniquely they have been blessed by Allah.

The fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has not been appointed a Prophet only for his own country or for his own age but for all mankind till Resurrection, has been stated at several places in the Quran. For instance:

“And this Quran has been revealed to me that I should thereby warn you and all those whom it may reach.” (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 19).

“O Prophet, say: O mankind, I am a Messenger to all of you from Allah.” (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 158).

“O Prophet, We have sent you to be a real blessing for all the people of the world.” (Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 107).

“Highly blessed is He Who has sent down Al-Furqan to His servant so that he may be a warner to all mankind.” (Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 1).

The same thing has been stated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a number of Ahadith in different ways. For example:

“I have been sent to all mankind, the black as well as the white.” (Musnad Ahmad: Marwiyat Abu Musa Ashari).

“I have been sent to the mankind all together, whereas

every Prophet before me was sent only to his own people.” (Musnad Ahmad: Marwiyat Abdullah bin Amr bin Aas). “Before me every Prophet was specifically sent to his own people; but I have been sent for all mankind.” (Bukhari and Muslim: From traditions related by Jabir bin Abdullah).

“My appointment as a Prophet and Resurrection are like this. Saying this the Prophet (peace be upon him) raised his two fingers.” (Bukhari and Muslim). What he meant by this was: “Just as no third finger intervenes between these two fingers, so there is no prophethood between me the and Resurrection. After me there will be Resurrection only, and I shall be the Prophet till Resurrection.”

29. And they say: “When is this promise (to be fulfilled) if you should be truthful.”*48

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ
 إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

*48 That is, “When will the time come about which you say: Our Lord will gather you together, then He will judge between us rightly? We have been denying you persistently and opposing you openly for so long. Why is not then the judgment being passed against us?”

30. Say (O Muhammad): “For you is the promise of a Day which you cannot postpone for an hour, nor can you hasten.”*49

قُلْ لَكُمْ مِيعَادُ يَوْمٍ لَا
 تَسْتَخِرُونَ عَنْهُ سَاعَةً وَلَا
 تَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

*49 In other words, the reply means: Allah’s judgments are

not subject to your whims that He should be bound to do a thing at the time which you have fixed for it. He carries out His designs only according to His own discretion. You cannot understand how long is mankind to be allowed to function in this world in the scheme of Allah, how many individuals and how many nations are to be put to the test in different ways, and what will be the right time for the Day of Judgment and summoning mankind of all ages for rendering their accounts. All this will be accomplished only at the time which Allah has fixed for it in His scheme of things. Your demands can neither hasten it on by a second nor your supplications can withhold it by a second.

31. And those who disbelieve say: "We will never believe in this Quran, nor in that before it." *50 And if you could see when the wrongdoers will be made to stand before their Lord. Returning the word (blame) on one to another. Those who were oppressed (in the world) will say to those who were arrogant: "If (it was) not for you, we would have been believers." *51

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ
نُؤْمِنَ بِهَذَا الْقُرْآنِ وَلَا
بِالَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذِ
الظَّالِمُونَ مَوْقُوفُونَ عِنْدَ
رَبِّهِمْ يَرْجِعُ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ
الْقَوْلَ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ
أَسْتَضْعَفُوا لِلَّذِينَ أَسْتَكْبَرُوا
لَوْلَا أَنْتُمْ لَكُنَّا مُؤْمِنِينَ

*50 The allusion is to the pagans of Arabia, who did not believe in any divine Book.

***51** That is, the common people who are following their leaders, chiefs, saints and rulers blindly, and are not prepared to listen to any word of advice from a well-wisher against them. When the same people will see the actual reality and will also remember how their religious leaders used to misrepresent things, and when they will realize what doom they are going to meet on account of following their leaders, they will turn on them, and say, “O wretched people, you led us astray: you are responsible for all our afflictions. Had you not misguided us, we would have listened to the Messengers of Allah and believed in what they said.

32. Those who were arrogant will say to those who were oppressed: “Did we drive you away from the guidance after it had come to you. But you were criminals.” ^{*52}

قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ
اسْتَضَعُوا أَنَحْنُ صَدَدْنَاكُمْ
عَنِ الْهُدَىٰ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَكُمْ بَلْ
كُنْتُمْ مُجْرِمِينَ



***52** That is, they will say: We had no power by which a few of us could have compelled hundreds of thousands of the people like you to follow us. If you had the will to believe, you could have deposed us from leadership and power and authority and government. In fact, you were our army, you were the source of our wealth and power. But for your offerings and gifts and taxes we should have been paupers. Had you not sworn allegiance to us, we could not have flourished as saints even for a day. Had you not

appreciated and applauded us as leaders, we would have remained unknown. Had you not become our army and fought against the whole world for our sake, we could not have ruled over a single individual. Now why don't you admit that you yourselves did not want to follow the way that the Messengers had presented before you. You were the slaves of your own lusts and desires, and the demands of your selves could not be fulfilled by the righteous way of life presented by the Messengers but by what we presented before you. You were heedless of the lawful and the unlawful and craved for the luxuries of life, which we only could provide you. You were in search of such guides as could give you the license to commit any sin, any crime, and take on themselves the responsibility to have you forgiven by God, in exchange for gifts. You wanted to listen to such religious scholars only who could please you by proving every kind of shirk and every innovation in religion and every lust of your self to be the very truth. You needed such forgers who could invent a new religion by altering the religion of God after your desires. You wanted to follow such leaders who could help you become prosperous in this world, no matter how you fared in the Hereafter. You wished to have such rulers who were immoral and dishonest so that under their patronage you also could have the freedom to indulge in any sin, any immorality. Thus, you and we were equal partners in the bargain. Now you cannot delude anyone by saying that you were absolutely innocent and that we had spoiled and corrupted you against your will.

33. And those who were oppressed will say to those who were arrogant: “But (it was your) plotting by night and day, when you commanded us to disbelieve in Allah and set up rivals to Him.”*53 And they will confide regret when they see the punishment. And We shall put shackles on the necks of those who disbelieved. Can they be requited except what they used to do.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُوا لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا بَلْ مَكَرُ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ إِذِ تَأْمُرُونَنَا أَنْ نَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَنَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ أُنْدَادًا ۗ وَأَسْرُوا النَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا رَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ وَجَعَلْنَا الْأَغْلَلَ فِي آعْنَاقِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۗ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



***53** In other words, the common people’s reply will be: “How can you hold us as equal partners in this responsibility? Do you also remember what sort of trickeries and deceptions and false propaganda you practiced and what efforts you used to make to tempt and entice the people day and night. It is not just that you presented the world before us and we were allured, but this is also a fact that you used to befool us by your frauds and deceptions and each one of you brought a new bait every day to tempt and lure the simple people.”

The Quran has made mention of the dispute between the religious guides and their followers at different places in different ways. For details, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 38-39; Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 21; Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 63;

Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayats 66-68; Surah Al-Mumin, Ayats 47-48; Surah HaMim Sajdah, Ayat 29.

34. And We did not send into a township any warner except its affluent people said: “Indeed, in that with which you have been sent, we are disbelievers.”*54

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا
قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ
بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

*54 That the message of the Prophets was first of all opposed and resisted by the well-to-do people who possessed wealth and influence and authority. This has been stated at many places in the Quran. For instance, see Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 123; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 60, 66, 75, 88, 90; Surah Hud, Ayat 27; Surah Bani-Israil, Ayat 16; Surah Al-Muminun, Ayats 24, 33 to 38, 46, 47; Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayat 23.

35. And they said: “We are more in wealth and children, and we shall not be punished.”*55

وَقَالُوا نَحْنُ أَكْثَرُ أَمْوَالًا
وَأَوْلَادًا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

*55 Their reasoning was: “We are greater favorites of Allah than you. That is why He has favored us with the blessings of which you are deprived, or have received them in lesser measure. Why should Allah have given us all these provisions and wealth and power, had He not been pleased with us? Now, how can we believe that Allah Who is showering us with all kinds of His blessings here will punish us in the Hereafter? He will punish only those who are deprived of His favors here,”

This misunderstanding of the world-worshippers has also been mentioned at several places in the Quran and refuted. For instance, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 126, 212; Surah At-Taubah, Ayats 55, 69; Surah Hud, Ayats 3, 27; Surah Ar-Raad, Ayats 26; Surah Al-Kahf, Ayats 34 to 43; Surah Maryam, Ayats 73 to 77; Surah TaHa, Ayat 131; Surah Al-Muminun, Ayats 55 to 61; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayat 111; Surah Al-Qasas, Ayats 76 to 83; Surah Ar-Rum, Ayat 9; Surah Al-Muddaththir, Ayats 11-26: Surah Al-Fajr, Ayats 15 to 20.

36. Say: "Indeed, my Lord extends the provision for whom He wills, and restricts (it for whom He wills). But most of the mankind do not know."*56

قُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن
يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

*56 They do not understand the wisdom on which the system of the distribution of provisions is based in the world, and are thus involved in the misunderstanding that whoever is being given abundantly is a beloved of Allah and whoever is being given sparingly is under His wrath. The fact, however, is that if a person looks around with open eyes he will see that in most cases the people with filthy and repulsive character are prosperous, and many good and noble people, who are known and recognized as morally pure, are found living in poverty. Now, how can a sensible person say that Allah dislikes the people of pure character and favors the wicked wrongdoers?

37. And it is not your wealth, nor your children that will bring you nearer to Us in position, except he who believes and does righteous deeds (he draws near).^{*57}

Then those, theirs will be twofold reward for what they did, and they will be in high mansions in security.^{*58}

وَمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ بِآتِي
تُقَرِّبُكُمْ عِنْدَنَا زُلْفَىٰ إِلَّا مَنْ
ءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَأُولَٰئِكَ
لَهُمْ جَزَاءُ الْوَضْعِ بِمَا عَمِلُوا
وَهُمْ فِي الْغُرُفَاتِ ءَامِنُونَ



***57** This can have two meanings and both are correct:

(1) That which brings the people nearer to Allah is not wealth and children but faith and righteous deeds; and,
(2) wealth and children can become a means of nearness to Allah only for that believing, righteous person, who spends his wealth in the way of Allah and tries to make his children God-conscious and righteous by good education and training.

***58** Here also is a subtle allusion that their blessing shall be imperishable, and their reward endless. For one cannot enjoy with full satisfaction of the heart a reward which is likely to perish or withdrawn suddenly at any time.

38. And those who strive against Our verses, to frustrate (them), they will be brought into the punishment.

وَالَّذِينَ يَسْعَوْنَ فِي آيَاتِنَا
مُعْجِزِينَ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ
مُحْضَرُونَ



39. Say: “Indeed, my Lord extends the provision for whom He wills of His slaves, and restricts (it) for him (He wills).^{*59} And whatever you spend of anything, so He will compensate it. And He is the best of providers.”^{*60}

قُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ
يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهُ
وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَهُوَ
يُخْلِفُهُ^ط وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ



***59** The repetition of this theme is meant to impress this: The abundance or restriction of the provisions is connected with Allah’s will, not with His pleasure and approval. Under the will of Allah every good or evil person is receiving his provision. Both, those who believe in Him and those who do not believe, are getting their provisions. Neither is abundance of the provisions a proof that one is Allah’s favorite servant nor is its restriction a sign that one is under His wrath. Under His will a wicked and dishonest person prospers, although wickedness and dishonesty are disliked by Allah. On the contrary, under the same divine will a truthful and honest man suffers losses and undergoes hardships although these qualities are liked by Allah. Hence, the person who regards the material gains and benefits as the criterion for the good and evil is grossly mistaken. The real criterion is Allah’s pleasure and approval which is attained through the moral qualities liked and approved by Him. With these qualities if a person gets the worldly blessings as well, it will certainly be Allah’s bounty for which he should be grateful to Him. But if from

the moral point of view a person is Allah's rebel and is disobedient to Him and in spite of that is being favored with worldly blessings, it would mean that he is preparing himself for a strict accountability and a most severe punishment.

*60 Sustainer, Creator, Inventor, Donor and many other such attributes are in fact the attributes of Allah, but are metaphorically applied to men also. For example, about a person we may say, He provided a job for so-and-so, or he made or invented such and such a thing, or he made a gift to so-and-so. Accordingly, Allah has used the word *Khair ar Raziqin* (the Best of Providers) for Himself. It means to impress the fact that Allah is the best of providers among all those about whom you think that they are in any way connected with arranging the provisions.

40. And the Day He will gather them all together, then He will say to the angels: "Did these people used to worship you."*61

وَيَوْمَ تَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يَقُولُ
لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ أَهْتُولَاءِ إِيَّاكُمْ كَانُوا
يَعْبُدُونَ



*61 Since the earliest times the polytheists in every age have been looking upon the angels as gods and goddesses and carving their idols and worshipping them. One has been regarded as the god of rain, another of lightning and another of wind; one is the goddess of wealth, another of knowledge and another of life and death. About this Allah says that on the Day of Resurrection the angels will be asked: Were you being worshipped as deities by these

people? This question is not meant merely to find out the truth, but to ask: Did you approve of their worship? Did you tell the people that you were their deities, so they should worship you? Or, did you wish that the people should do obeisance to you? This question will not only be asked of the angels but of all those beings who have been worshipped as gods in the world. In Surah Al-Furqan it has been said: “On that Day (Allah) will gather all these people together as well as their deities, whom they worship beside Allah. Then he will ask them: Did you mislead these servants of Mine, or did they themselves go astray? (Ayat 17).

41. They (angels) will say: “Glorified be You. You (alone) are our benefactor instead of them.*62 But they used to worship the jinn. Most of them were believers in them.”*63

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ أَنْتَ وَلِيُّنَا مِنْ
 دُونِهِمْ بَلْ كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ
 الْجِنَّ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنُونَ



*62 That is, they will answer: You are Pure and Exalted far above that another should be made a partner in Godhead with you. We have no connection with these people. We are not responsible for them nor for what they did. We are Your servants only.

*63 In this sentence, jinn implies the satans among the jinns. The answer means: Apparently these people worshipped us, by mentioning our names and by making our images according to their imaginations. But, in fact,

they did not worship us but worshipped the satans, for the satans only had shown them the way that they should regard others than Allah as fulfillers of their needs, and should make offerings before them.

This verse clearly brings out the error of the view of those people who take the word *jinn* to mean the dwellers of the mountains and deserts and rural areas. Can a sensible person imagine, on the basis of this verse, that the people used to worship the dwellers of the mountains and the deserts and the villages and believed in them? This verse also throws light on another meaning of *ibadat*. It shows that *ibadat* is not mere worship and service, but it also implies carrying out somebody's orders and obeying him without question. Even if one curses another (as one curses Satan) but at the time follows his way, one would be performing his *ibadat*. For other examples, see Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 117-119; Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 60; Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 31; Surah Maryam, Ayat 42; Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 63.

42. So today, no power shall they have, one of you over another, to benefit, nor to harm. And We shall say to those who did wrong: "Taste the punishment of the Fire that which you used to deny."

فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يَمْلِكُ بَعْضُكُمْ
لِبَعْضٍ نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا وَنَقُولُ
لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ
النَّارِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ

43. And when Our verses are recited to them as clear evidence, they say: “This (Muhammad) is not except a man who wants to hinder you from that which your fathers used to worship.” And they say: “This is not except a lie, invented.” And those who disbelieve say of the truth when it has come to them: “This is not except an obvious magic.”

وَإِذَا تُلِيٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايٰتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ
 قَالُوۡا مَا هٰذَا اِلَّا رَجُلٌ يُّرِيۡدُ
 اَنْ يُّصَدِّكُمْ عَمَّا كَانُۡوۡا يَعْبُدُوۡنَ
 ءَاۡبَاؤَكُمۡ وَّقَالُوۡا مَا هٰذَا اِلَّا
 اِفْكٌ مُّفْتَرٰى ۚ وَقَالَ الَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡا
 لَلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاۡءَهُمۡ اِنْ هٰذَا اِلَّا
 سِحْرٌ مُّبِيۡنٌ

44. And We had not given them any books which they could study, and We had not sent to them, before you, any warner.*64

وَمَا ءَاتَيْنٰهُمْ مِّنْ كِتٰبٍ
 يَّدْرُسُوۡنَهَا ۗ وَمَا اَرْسَلْنَا اِلَيْهِمْ
 قَبْلَكَ مِنْ نَّذِيۡرٍ

*64 That is, neither a book from God has come to them before this nor a messenger, who might have taught them to worship and serve others than God. Therefore, they are denying the invitation to *Tauhid* given by the Quran and Muhammad (peace be upon him) due to sheer ignorance, and not on the basis of any knowledge. They have in fact no authority for this.

45. And those before them denied, and these (people)

وَكَذَّبَ الَّذِيۡنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَمَا

have not attained a tenth of what We had given them (of old), yet they denied My messengers. Then how (terrible) was My denial.*65

بَلَّغُوا مِعْشَارَ مَا ءَاتَيْنَهُمْ
فَكُذَّبُوا رُسُلِي فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ



*65 That is, the people of Makkah have not attained even one-tenth of the power and grandeur and prosperity that was possessed by those people. But just see how they went to their doom ultimately and their power and wealth could not avail them anything, when they refused to believe in the realities presented before them by the Prophets, and founded their system of life on falsehood.

46. Say (O Muhammad): “I only admonish you on one thing. That you stand up for Allah (seeking truth), by twos and individually, then reflect, there is no madness in your companion (Muhammad).” *66 He is not except a warner to you before a severe punishment.*67

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَعْظَمُ بِوَحْدَةٍ أَنْ
تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ مِثْلِي وَفِرَادَى ثُمَّ
تَتَفَكَّرُونَ مَا بِصَاحِبِكُمْ مِنْ
جِنَّةٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ لَكُمْ بَيْنَ
يَدَيْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ ﴾



*66 That is, free yourselves of selfish interests and whims and prejudices and consider this sincerely for the sake of Allah: consider this singly as well as jointly in two and three and four in an objective manner and consider it well and deeply. What after all can be the reason that the person

whom you call a madman today was, until yesterday, being looked upon as a very wise man among you? The incident that happened a little before his appointment to Prophethood is well known among you. When after the reconstruction of the Kabah the different clans of the Quraish were going to clash among themselves on the question as to who should place the Black Stone in the wall, you yourselves had unanimously agreed to accept Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the arbitrator, and he had settled the question amicably to the entire satisfaction of all concerned. Now, how is it that you have started calling the same person mad, whose wisdom and sagacity has been thus tested and experienced by your whole nation? What is it if not stubbornness? Do you really mean the same that you say with your tongues?

*67 That is, do you call him mad only for this reason? Do you regard someone wise who finds you following the path of ruin and applauds you. Do you regard someone mad who warns you beforehand of the coming of a disaster and shows you the way to safety and well-being?

47. Say: "Whatever I might have asked of you of payment, so it is yours.*68 My reward is not but from Allah. And He is Witness over all things."*69

قُلْ مَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ مِنْ أَجْرٍ فَهُوَ لَكُمْ إِنَّ أَجْرِي إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ



*68 Another meaning of this can be: "I do not ask anything but your well-being: My only recompense is that you should be reformed." This thing has been expressed at

another place thus; “O Prophet, say to them: I do not ask of you any recompense for this: I only ask of the one, who will, to adopt the way of his Lord.” (Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 57).

*69 That is, “The accusers may say whatever they like but Allah knows everything. He is a witness that I am a selfless person. I am not perforating this mission for any selfish motive.”

48. Say: “Indeed, my Lord inspires with the truth.*70 (He is) the Knower of the unseen.”

قُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَّامُ
الْغُيُوبِ

*70 The words *yaqdhifu bil-haqq* give two meanings:
(1) He inspires me with the knowledge of the truth by revelation. and,
(2) He is making the truth to prevail. He is crushing falsehood by means of the truth.

49. Say: “The truth has come, and falsehood can neither create (anything), nor resurrect.”

قُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَمَا يُبْدِي
الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيدُ

50. Say: “If I go astray, I shall stray only against myself, and if I am guided, so it is because of what my Lord has revealed to me. Indeed, He is Hearer, Near.*71

قُلْ إِنْ ضَلَلْتُ فَإِنَّمَا أَضِلُّ عَلَى
نَفْسِي وَإِنِ اهْتَدَيْتُ فَبِمَا
يُوحَىٰ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ
قَرِيبٌ

***71** From this verse some people of the modern age have argued thus: According to it the Prophet (peace be upon him) also could go astray: rather used to go astray. That is why Allah has made the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself say: “If I have gone astray, I am myself responsible for this. And I am on right guidance only when my Lord sends down revelation (i.e. verses of the Quran) to me.” By this wrong interpretation these unjust people in fact want to prove that the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) life was, God forbid, a combination of guidance and error, and Allah had made him confess this before the disbelievers lest one should adopt his obedience completely, taking him to be wholly on right guidance. The fact however is that whoever considers the theme in its correct context will know that here the words, if I have gone astray, are not meant to give the meaning that the Prophet (peace be upon him) actually used to go astray, but it means: “If I have gone astray, as you accuse that I have, and my claim to Prophethood and my this invitation to Tauhid are the result of the same deviation, as you seem to imagine, then the burden of my going astray, will be on me alone; you will not be held responsible for it. But if I am on right guidance, as in fact I am, it is because I receive revelation from my Lord, by virtue of which I have obtained the knowledge of the guidance. My Lord is near at hand and is hearing everything. He knows whether I have gone astray or I am on right guidance from Him.”

51. And if you could see when they will be terrified, then

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ فَزِعُوا فَلَا فَوْتَ

there will be no escape, and they will be seized from a place nearby.*72

وَأَخِذُوا مِنْ مَّكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ ﴿٥١﴾

*72 That is, “On the Day of Resurrection, every culprit will be seized in a way as though he lay in hiding close by. As he will try to flee, he will be seized immediately.”

52. And they will say: “We do believe (now) in it.”*73 And how could be for them receiving (of faith) from a place so far off.*74

وَقَالُوا ءَأَمْنَا بِهِ وَأَنَّى لَهُمُ
التَّنَافُوسُ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٥٢﴾

*73 “We do believe (now) in it”: “We believe in the message presented by the Messenger in the world.”

*74 That is, “They should have believed when they lived in the world; they have come a long way away from it. After having arrived in the next world how can they get a chance to repent and believe?”

53. And certainly, they did disbelieve in it before. And they (used to) conjecture about the unseen from a place far off.*75

وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَيَقْدِفُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ
بَعِيدٍ ﴿٥٣﴾

*75 That is, they used to charge the Messenger (peace be upon him) and the believers with false accusations and used to taunt and mock his message. Sometimes they said he was a sorcerer or a madman; sometimes they ridiculed Tauhid and the concept of the Hereafter; sometimes they invented the story that someone has taught him everything; and

sometimes they said that the believers had started following him only on account of folly and ignorance.

54. And a barrier will be set between them and what they desire, as was done for people of their kind before. Indeed, they were in suspicious doubt.*76

وَحِيلَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ
كَمَا فُعِلَ بِأَشْيَاعِهِمْ مِّن قَبْلُ
إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا فِي شَكٍّ مُّرِيبٍ

*76 As a matter of fact, no one adopts shirk and atheism and denial of the Hereafter by conviction, nor can he, for conviction comes from knowledge. And no one has the knowledge that there is no God, or that many others have a share in divine authority, or that there should be no Hereafter. Thus, whoever has adopted these beliefs in the world, has raised a structure on mere conjecture, which has no basis except doubt and suspicion, and this suspicion has led him to sheer error. Consequently, they doubted God's existence, they doubted the truth of *Tauhid*, they doubted the coming of the Hereafter; so much so that they made this doubt their faith and did not listen to the Prophets and expended and wasted their entire lifetime indulging in a wrong creed and wrong way of life.



فَاطِر Faatir

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The word *Faatir* of the first very verse is the title given to this Surah, which simply means that it is a Surah in which the word *Faatir* has occurred. The other name is *Al-Malaika*, which also occurs in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

The internal evidence of the style shows that the period of the revelation of this Surah is probably the middle Makkan period, and specially that part of it when antagonism had grown quite strong and every sort of mischief was being adopted to frustrate the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Subject Matter and Theme

The discourse is meant to warn and reprove to the people of Makkah and their chiefs for their antagonistic attitude that they had adopted towards the Prophet's (peace be upon him) message of *Tauhid*, as if to say: O people, the message to which this Prophet (peace be upon him) is calling you is to your own advantage. Your anger, your tricks and machinations against it and your conspiracies

and designs to frustrate it are not directed against him but against your own selves. If you do not listen to him, you will be harming your own selves, not him. Just consider and ponder over what he says. There is nothing wrong in it. He repudiates shirk. If you look around carefully, you will realize that there is no basis for shirk in the world. He presents the doctrine of *Tauhid*. If you use your common sense, you will come to the conclusion that there is no being, beside Allah, Creator of the Universe, which might possess divine attributes and powers and authority. He tells you that you have not been created to be irresponsible in this world, but you have to render an account of your deeds before your God, and that there is a life after the life of this world when everyone will meet the consequences of what he has done here. If you think a little, you will see that your doubts and your astonishment about it are absolutely baseless. Don't you see the phenomenon of the reproduction of creation day and night. How can then your own recreation be impossible for that God who created you from an insignificant sperm drop? Doesn't your own intellect testify that the good and the evil cannot be alike? Then think and judge for yourselves as to what is reasonable, should the good and the evil meet with the same fate and end up in the dust, or should the good be requited with good and the evil with evil? Now, if you do not admit and acknowledge these rational and reasonable things and do not abandon your false gods, and wish to continue living only as irresponsible people in the world, the Prophet (peace be upon him) will not lose anything. It is only you

yourselves who will suffer the consequences. The Prophet's (peace be upon him) only responsibility was to make the truth plain to you, which he has done.

In this connection, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been consoled again and again, as if to say: When you are doing full justice to the preaching of your mission, you do not incur any responsibility for those who persist in their error and do not accept and follow the right way. Furthermore, he has also been consoled to the effect: You should neither grieve on account of those who do not want to believe, nor consume yourself with the thought of how to bring them to the right path. Instead of this, you should pay your full attention to those who are inclined to listen to you.

The believers, in this connection, have also been given the good news so that they may feel strengthened and encouraged and remain steadfast on the path of the truth with full faith in the promises made by Allah.

1. All praises be to Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, who appointed the angels messengers^{*1} having wings two, and three and four.^{*2} He increases in creation what He wills.^{*3} Indeed, Allah is Able to do all things.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا
أُولَى أَجْنِحَةٍ مَّثْنَى وَثَلَاثَ وَرُبْعَ
يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

*1 This can have two meanings:

(1) That these angels perform the service of communicating messages between Allah and His Prophets.

(2) That it is the duty of these angels to convey and enforce the commands of Allah Almighty throughout the universe.

The object is to impress this truth: The position of the angels whom the polytheists have made their gods and goddesses is no more than of obedient servants of Allah, the One. Just as the servants of a king run about for the implementation of his orders, so do these angels fly about in the service of the real Sovereign of the Universe. These servants have no authority of their own; All powers rest with Allah, Who is the real Sovereign.

*2 We have no means of knowing what is the nature of the wings of these angels. But when Allah has used this word, which in human language is used for the wings of birds, instead of any other words, to express and depict the truth, one can certainly conclude that this very word of our language is nearest to the actual meaning. The mention of two and three and four pairs of the wings shows that different angels have been granted different degrees of powers by Allah. They have been equipped with different powers of speed and efficiency as demanded by the nature of service for which they are employed.

*3 These words show that the number of the wings of the angels is restricted to four, but Allah has provided some angels with more wings than four. According to a Hadith related by Abdullah bin Masud, the Prophet (peace be upon him) once saw the Angel Gabriel with six hundred wings. (Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi). Aishah relates that the

Prophet (peace be upon him) had seen Gabriel twice in his real form: he had six hundred wings and had covered the entire horizon (Tirmidhi).

2. Whatever Allah opens to mankind of mercy, then none can withhold it. And whatever He withholds, then none can release it thereafter.*⁴ And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.*⁵

مَا يَفْتَحِ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَحْمَةٍ
فَلَا مُمْسِكَ لَهَا وَمَا يُمْسِكُ
فَلَا مُرْسِلَ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَهُوَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

*⁴ This is also meant to remove the misunderstanding of the polytheists, who believed that from among the servants of Allah, someone gave them the provision, someone the children and someone health to their patients. All these superstitions of shirk are baseless, and the pure truth is just that whatever of mercy reaches the people, reaches to them only through Allah Almighty's bounty and grace. No one else has the power either to bestow it or to withhold it. This theme has been expressed at many places in the Quran and the *Ahadith* in different ways so that man may avoid the humiliation of begging at every door and at every shrine and may realize that making or marring of his destiny is in the power of One Allah alone and of none else.

*⁵ "He is the All-Mighty": He is dominant and the owner of Sovereignty: none can stop His judgments from being enforced. Also "He is All-Wise": every act of His is based on wisdom. When He gives somebody something He gives because it is demanded by wisdom, and when He withholds

something from somebody, He withholds it because it would be against wisdom to give it.

3. O mankind, remember Allah's favor upon you.*6

Is there any creator other than Allah who provides for you from the heaven and the earth. There is no god except Him. So how are you turning away.*7

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ
عَلَيْكُمْ ؕ هَلْ مِنْ خَلْقٍ غَيْرِ اللّٰهِ
يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ
لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۗ فَاَنۡفِ
تُؤۡفَكُوۡنَ

*6 “Remember Allah's favor upon you”: Do not be ungrateful: do not forget that whatever you have, has been given by Allah. In other words, this sentence is meant to warn that whoever worships other than Allah, or regards a blessing as a favor done by other than Allah, or thanks other than Allah for a favor received, or prays to other than Allah for the grant of a blessing, is ungrateful.

*7 There is a subtle gap between the first and the second sentence, which is being filled by the context itself. To understand this, one may visualize the scene like this: The polytheists are being addressed. The speaker asks the audience: “Is there another creator beside Allah, who might have created you, and might be arranging provisions for you from the earth and heavens?” After this question the speaker waits for the answer. But there is no reply from anywhere. No one replies that there is another one beside Allah, who is their creator and sustainer. This by itself

shows that the audience also believe that there is none beside Allah, who could be their creator and sustainer. Then the speaker says: “If so, then He alone can also be the Deity and no one else. How have you been so deceived? Why have you taken these others as your deities, when Allah alone is your Creator and Sustainer?”

4. And if they deny you (O Muhammad),*⁸ then certainly messengers were denied before you. And to Allah return all matters.*⁹

وَإِنْ يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ
رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ
الْأُمُورُ

*⁸ “If they deny”: If they do not believe that there is no one worthy of worship but Allah, and accuse you of having made a false claim to Prophethood.

*⁹ That is, it is not for the people to give the verdict that whomsoever they call a liar should in fact become a liar. The judgment rests with Allah. He shall in the end decide who was the liar, and shall bring the real liars to their evil end.

5. O mankind, indeed, the promise of Allah is true.*¹⁰ So let not deceive you the life of the world,*¹¹ and let not deceive you the great deceiver (Satan) concerning Allah.*¹²

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ
فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا
يَغُرَّنَّكُم بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ

*¹⁰ “The promise” implies the promise of the Hereafter to which allusion was made in the preceding sentence, saying:

“And to Allah return all matters.”

*11 “Let not deceive you”: Deceive you that the world is an end in itself: that there is no Hereafter when one will have to render an account of one’s deeds: or that even if there is the Hereafter, the one who is enjoying life here will enjoy life there, too.

*12 “Great deceiver”: Satan, as is evident from the next sentence. And “deceive you concerning Allah” means:

(1) That he should make some people believe that Allah does not exist at all.

(2) Involve others in the misunderstanding that Allah after having once created the world, has retired and has now practically nothing to do with the universe any more.

(3) Delude others into believing that Allah no doubt is running the universe, but He has taken no responsibility of providing guidance to man: therefore, revelation and prophethood are a mere deception.

(4) Give still others the false hope that since Allah is All-Forgiving and All-Merciful. He will forgive one whatever sins one might have committed, and that He has some beloved ones too: if one remains attached to them, success and salvation are assured.

6. Indeed, Satan is an enemy for you, so take him as an enemy. He only invites his faction that they may become (the dwellers) of the blazing Fire.

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ
عَدُوًّا ۚ إِنَّمَا يَدْعُوا حِزْبَهُ
لِيَكُونُوا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٦﴾

7. Those who disbelieve,^{*13} theirs will be a severe punishment. And those who believe and do righteous deeds, theirs will be forgiveness and a great reward.^{*14}

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ
وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ
كَبِيرٌ

***13** “Those who disbelieve”: those who will refuse to believe in this invitation of Allah’s Book and His Messenger.

***14** That is, Allah will overlook their errors and will reward them for their good deeds not merely with what they will just deserve but much more richly and generously.

8. Then^{*15} is he to whom the evil of his deed has been made fair seeming, so he deems it good.^{*16} Then indeed, Allah sends astray whom He wills, and guides whom He wills. So do not let yourself perish over them in regret.^{*17} Indeed, Allah is Aware of what they do.^{*18}

أَفَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَآهُ
حَسَنًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ فَلَا تَذْهَبُ
نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَاتٍ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ

***15** Verses 3-7 were addressed to the common people. In this paragraph mention has been made of the standard bearers of error and deviation, who were exerting their utmost to frustrate and defeat the mission of the Prophet

(peace be upon him).

***16** That is, one kind of perverted person is he who commits evil but knows and understands that he is committing evil. Such a person can be reformed by counsel and advice, and sometimes his own conscience also pricks and brings him to the right path, for his habits only are perverted, not his mind. But there is another kind of a person whose mentality has been perverted, who has lost the discrimination between good and evil, for whom the life of sin has become alluring and lustrous, who abhors good and takes evil for civilization and culture, who regards goodness and piety as things of the past, and sinfulness and wickedness as progressiveness, and for whom guidance becomes error and error becomes guidance. Such a person is not amenable to any advice and any admonition. He neither takes warning from his own follies nor listens to a well wisher. It is useless to waste ones time and energy for the reformation of such a person. Instead, the inviter to the truth should turn his attention towards those whose consciences may still be alive and who may still be inclined to listen to the truth.

***17** The insertion of the words “Then indeed, Allah sends astray whom He wills, and guides whom He wills” between the preceding and this sentence, clearly gives the meaning that Allah deprives, of the grace of guidance, those who become so perverted mentally, and leaves them to wander aimlessly in the ways in which they themselves wish to remain lost. After making the Prophet (peace be upon him) realize this fact Allah exhorts him to the effect: It is not

within your power to bring such people to the right path; therefore, have patience in their regard. Just as Allah is indifferent about them, so should you also avoid being unduly anxious about their reformation.

Here, one should bear in mind two things very clearly. First, the people being mentioned here were not the common people, but the chiefs of Makkah, who were employing every falsehood, every fraud and every trick to defeat the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him). These people were, in fact, not involved in any misunderstanding about the Prophet (peace be upon him). They knew well what he was calling them to and what were the evils and moral weaknesses which they themselves were striving to maintain. After knowing and understanding all this, they had firmly resolved not to let him succeed in his object. And for this purpose they did not feel any hesitation in using any mean or petty device. Now, evidently the people who deliberately and after annual consultation invent a new falsehood every next day and spread it against a person, can deceive the whole world but as for themselves they know that they are the liars and that the person whom they have accused is free of every blame. Then, if the person against whom the false propaganda is being made also does not react and respond in a way opposed to truth and righteousness, the unjust people also cannot help realizing that their opponent is a truthful and honest man. If in spite of this the people do not feel ashamed of their misconduct and continue to oppose and resist the truth with falsehood, their conduct itself testifies that they are

under Allah's curse and they can no longer discriminate between good and evil.

Secondly, if Allah had only meant to make Prophet (peace be upon him) understand the supreme truth, He could have secretly made him aware of this. There was no need to proclaim it openly in the revelation. To mention it in the Quran and to proclaim it to the world was in fact meant to warn the common people that the leaders and the religious guides whom they were following blindly were the people of perverted mentality, whose mean conduct was itself an evidence that they were under the curse of Allah.

*18 This sentence in itself contains the threat that a time is coming when Allah will punish them for their misdeeds. When a ruler says that he is fully aware of the misdeeds of a culprit, it does not only mean that the ruler has the knowledge of his misconduct, but it necessarily contains the warning that he will certainly punish him for this.

9. And Allah it is who sends the winds so that they raise up the clouds, then We drive them to a dead land, then We revive therewith the earth after its death. As such will be the Resurrection.*19

وَاللَّهُ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيحَ فَتُثِيرُ
سَحَابًا فَسُقْنَهُ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ
فَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا
كَذَٰلِكَ النُّشُورُ

*19 That is, these ignorant people think that the Hereafter is impossible. That is why they are living under the delusion that they may do whatever they like in the world, the time will never come when they will have to appear before their

God and render an account of their deeds. But this is no more than a delusion. On the Day of Resurrection, the dead men of all ages will suddenly rise back to life at one call of Allah just as the dead earth comes back to life at one shower of the rain and the roots, lying dead for ages, become green and start sprouting up from the layers of the earth.

10. Whoever desires honor (through power), then to Allah belongs all the honor.*²⁰ To Him ascend good words, and the righteous deeds does He exalt.*²¹ And those who plot evil deeds,*²² for them will be a severe punishment. And the plotting of those, it will perish.

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعِزَّةَ فَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ
جَمِيعًا ۗ إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ
الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ
وَالَّذِينَ يَمْكُرُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ لَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ۖ وَمَكْرُ أُولَٰئِكَ
هُوَ يَبُورُ

*²⁰ It should be noted that whatever the chiefs of the Quraish were doing against the Prophet (peace be upon him), they were doing it for the sake of their honor and dignity. They thought that if the Prophet (peace be upon him) succeeded in his mission, their greatness and glory would fade away, their influence would die out and their honor among the Arabs would be ruined. At this it is being said: The honor that you have attained for yourselves by your disbelief and rebellion against Allah is a false honor, which is destined to be ruined. The real and enduring

honor, which can never suffer debasement, can be attained only through service of Allah. If you turn sincerely and faithfully to Him, you will attain it. And if you turn away from Him, you are bound to live an abject and wretched life.

***21** This is the real means of attaining the honor. In the sight of Allah, the false, vicious and mischievous can never rise and flourish. In His sight only such a word can rise and flourish which is honest and pure and is based on the truth, and in which a righteous creed and a correct point of view may have been expressed and presented. Then the thing which makes the pure word to rise and prosper is the action which conforms to it. Wherever the word is pure but the action is opposed to it, the purity of the word suffers a blemish. The mere extravagant rise of the tongue does not exalt a word: the power of the righteous action is needed to exalt and raise it high.

Here, one should also note that the Quran presents the righteous word and the righteous action as interdependent. No action can be righteous merely on the basis of its external and apparent form unless it has a righteous creed behind it. And no righteous creed can be reliable unless it is supported and confirmed by a person's action. For instance, if a person says that he regards Allah, the One, alone as his Deity, but worships others than Allah in practical life, his action belies his word. If a person says that he regards the wine as unlawful but drinks it, his mere word can neither be acceptable to the people nor deserve approval in the sight of Allah.

***22** “Those who plot evil”: Those who propagate false and evil words by means of cunning tricks, deceit and deceptive reasoning, and do not feel any hesitation in employing any device, however mean and depraved, to frustrate and defeat the word of the truth.

11. And Allah^{*23} created you from dust, then from a sperm drop,^{*24} then He made you pairs (male and female). And no female conceives, nor gives birth, except with His knowledge. And no one grows old who grows old, nor is it lessened of his life, but it is in a Book.^{*25} Indeed, that is easy for Allah.^{*26}

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ
نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَمَا
تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أَثْقَىٰ وَلَا تَضَعُ إِلَّا
بِعِلْمِهِ وَمَا يُعَمَّرُ مِنْ مُعَمَّرٍ
وَلَا يُنْقَصُ مِنْ عُمُرِهِ إِلَّا فِي
كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ



***23** From here again the discourse is directed to the common people.

***24** That is, man in the first instance was created from the dust directly. Then his race was perpetuated through the sperm-drop.

***25** That is, it is pre-ordained for everyone who is born in this world how long he will live. If a person lives a long life, he does so by Allah’s decree, and if another one lives a short life, he too lives so by Allah’s decree. Some ignorant people give the argument that in the past the death rate of

the newly born children used to be high, and now it has been checked by the advancement of the medical science. And the people used to live short lives in the past, now due to better medical facilities the life span has increased. But this argument could be presented in refutation of the Quranic argument only when it could be ascertained that Allah, for instance, had preordained a two year life for a certain person, and the modern medical facilities have enhanced it by a day. If a person has no such knowledge, he cannot refute this Quranic statement on any rational grounds. Only on the basis of the statistics that the death rate among children has fallen, or that the people now are living longer lives, it cannot be argued that man has now become able to change the decrees of Allah. Rationally it is not impossible that Allah might have fixed different life spans for the people born in different periods, and this might also be Allah Almighty's decree that man in such and such an age would be granted curative power to treat such and such diseases, and in such and such a period man would be given greater means for longevity.

*26 That is, it is not at all difficult for Allah to give commands and pass judgments about each individual of His countless creations when He possesses detailed and perfect knowledge about them.

12. And the two seas are not alike.*27 This, fresh, sweet, good to drink, and this (other) bitter, salty. And from each you eat

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْبَحْرَانِ هَذَا
عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ سَائِغٌ شَرَابُهُ
وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ وَمِنْ كُلِّ

fresh meat,^{*28} and extract the ornament that you wear.^{*29} And you see the ship cleaving them (the seawaters as they sail), that you may seek of His bounty, and that you may give thanks.

تَأْكُلُونَ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا
وَتَسْتَخْرِجُونَ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا
وَتَرَى الْفُلَّ فِيهِ مَوَاحِرَ
لِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ
تَشْكُرُونَ



***27** That is, the body of water in the oceans, and the body of water in the rivers and springs and lakes.

***28** “Fresh meat”: Meat of water animals.

***29** That is pearls and corals and, in some rivers, diamonds and gold.

13. He causes to pass the night into the day and He causes to pass the day into the night.^{*30} And He has subjected the sun and the moon, each running its course for a term appointed.^{*31} That is Allah, your Lord, His is the sovereignty. And those whom you call upon instead of Him do not possess (so much as) the membrane of a date seed (a blade of grass).^{*32}

يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُوجِ
النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ
وَالْقَمَرَ كُلًّا يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ
مُسَمًّى ذَٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ
الْمَلَكُ وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ
دُونِهِ مَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْ قِطْمِيرٍ



***30** That is, the light of the day starts diminishing and the

darkness of the night increasing gradually so as to cover up everything completely. Likewise, towards the end of the night, in the beginning, a streak of the light appears on the horizon, and then the bright day dawns.

*31 “Subjected ”: means subjected to a law.

*32 The word *qitmir* in the original means the thin skin that covers the stone of the date fruit; but what is meant to be said is that the gods of the mushriks do not own anything whatever. That is why we have translated it “a blade of grass”, which is an insignificant thing.

14. If you call upon them, they do not hear your call. And if they heard, they would not respond to you.*33 And on the Day of Resurrection they will deny your association.*34

And none can inform you like Him who is the All Knower.*35

إِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا
دُعَاءَكُمْ وَلَوْ سَمِعُوا مَا
اسْتَجَابُوا لَكُمْ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
يَكْفُرُونَ بِشِرْكِكُمْ وَلَا يُنَبِّئُكَ
مِثْلُ خَبِيرٍ



*33 This does not mean that they cannot tell aloud, in answer to your prayer whether your prayer has been accepted or not, but it means that they cannot take any action on your supplications. If a person sends his application to someone who is not a ruler, his application miscarries. For, the person to whom it has been sent, who has no authority whatever: he can neither reject it nor accept it. However, if the same application is sent to the one who is really a ruler, one or the other action will certainly

be taken on it.

***34** That is, they will plainly say: We had never told them that we are Allah's associates and that they should worship us. On the contrary, we were not at all aware that they regarded us as Allah's associates and were invoking us for help. None of their prayers has reached us, nor has any of their gifts and offerings.

***35** "All-Knower": Allah Almighty Himself. It means this: The other person can at the most refine shirk and prove the powerlessness of the gods of the polytheists by rational arguments only, but We are directly aware of the absolute truth. We are telling you, on the basis of knowledge, that all those whom the people believe to be possessing some powers in Our Godhead are absolutely powerless. They have no authority whatsoever by which they might do somebody good or harm. And We know this directly that on the Day of Resurrection, these gods of the mushriks will themselves refute their shirk.

15. O mankind, you are those in need^{*36} of Allah. And Allah, He is Self Sufficient, Praiseworthy.^{*37}

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ
إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ



***36** That is, you should not remain under the delusion that Allah stands in need of your help. If you do not accept Him as God, His Godhead will fail, and if you do not serve and worship Him, He will incur some loss. Nay, but the fact is that you stand in need of Him. You cannot remain alive for

a moment if He does not keep you alive, and does not provide you with the means by which you remain alive in the world and function. Therefore, when you are told to adopt His service and obedience, it is not because Allah stands in need of it, but because upon it depends your own success here as well as in the Hereafter. If you do not do so, you will be harming your own selves only, and not Allah in any way.

*37 The word *Ghani* implies that He is the Owner of everything: He is Self-sufficient and Independent of all. He does not stand in need of anyone's help. The word *Hamid* implies that He is Self-Praiseworthy: someone may praise Him, or may not, but He alone is worthy of *hamd* (praise and gratitude). These two attributes have been used together because one would be *ghani* even if one did not do any good to anyone by one's wealth. In such a case one would be *ghani* but not *hamid* One will be *hamid* only in case one does not draw any benefit for oneself but benefits others in every way from the treasures of his wealth and resources. Since Allah is perfect in these two attributes, it has been said: "He is not just *Ghani* (self-sufficient) but such *Ghani* as is worthy of every kind of praise and gratitude, for He is fulfilling your needs as well as the needs of all other creatures.

16. If He wills, He could take you away, and bring forth a new creation.

إِنْ يَشَاءُ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِمَخْلُوقٍ

17. And that is not difficult for Allah.*38

وَمَا ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ ﴿١٧﴾

*38 That is, you are not enjoying life on Allah's earth solely by dint of your own power and might. He has the power to remove you from here in no time and raise another people to take your place. Therefore, you should understand your true worth, and should desist from adopting the conduct which has been causing the downfall of the nations. When Allah wills to send someone to his doom, there is no one in the universe, who can stop Him and withhold His decree from being enforced.

18. And no bearer of burdens shall bear another's burden.*39 And if a heavy laden calls for (help with) his load, nothing of it will be lifted, even if he be of near kin.*40 You can warn only those who fear their Lord unseen, and establish prayer.*41 And he who purifies himself, then he purifies only for (the benefit of) his own self. And to Allah is the journeying.

وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ۗ
وَإِنْ تَدْعُ مُثْقَلَةٌ إِلَىٰ جِمْلِهَآ لَا
يُحْمَلْ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا
قُرْبَىٰ ۗ إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ الَّذِينَ
يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ
وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ ۗ وَمَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ
فَإِنَّمَا يَتَزَكَّىٰ لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ
الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٨﴾

*39 "Burden": the burden of the responsibilities of actions. It means: In the sight of Allah every one is responsible for

his own actions and for no one else's. There is no possibility that Allah will place the burden of one man's responsibility upon the other, nor is there the possibility that a person will take the burden of another's responsibility upon himself and get himself seized for the crime committed by the other. This thing has been said here because the polytheist kinsmen and relatives of the people who were embracing Islam in Makkah, used to urge them, saying, Give up Islam and return to your ancestral faith. We take the responsibility of any punishment etc. on ourselves.

***40** In the preceding sentence, Allah's law of justice has been enunciated, according to which He will not seize any person for the sin committed by another, but will hold everyone responsible for his own sin. In this sentence the Muslims have been told: Those who urge you to give up faith and commit evil on the assurance that they will take on themselves the burden of your sins on the Day of Resurrection, are in fact giving you a false hope. When Resurrection comes and the people see what fate they are going to meet in consequence of their misdeed, everyone will be concerned only about himself. Brother will turn away from brother and father from son, and no one will be prepared to take even an atom's weight of another's burden on himself.

***41** In other words, your warnings cannot have any effect on obstinate and stubborn people. Your admonitions can bring only such people to the right path who have fear of God in their hearts and who are inclined to bow before their real Master.

19. Not alike are the blind and the seeing.

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ



20. Nor (are alike) the darkness, nor the light.

وَلَا الظُّلْمَتُ وَلَا النُّورُ



21. Nor (are alike) the shade, nor the sun's heat.

وَلَا الظِّلُّ وَلَا الحَرُّورُ



22. And not alike are the living, nor the dead.^{*42} Indeed, Allah makes to hear whom He wills. And you cannot make hear those who are in the graves.^{*43}

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَحْيَاءُ وَلَا
الْأَمْوَاتُ^ج إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسْمِعُ مَنْ
يَشَاءُ^ط وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مِّنْ فِي
الْقُبُورِ



***42** In these comparisons the present and the future of a believer and a disbeliever have been contrasted. There is a person who has closed his eyes to the realities and does not care to see as to what truth the whole system of the universe and his own existence itself are pointing. There is the other person, whose eyes are open and who clearly sees that everything outside and inside himself bears evidence to the Unity of God and to man's answerability before him. There is a person, who is wandering blindly in the superstitions of ignorance and the darkness of presumptions and speculations, and is not inclined to benefit by the light of the candle lit by the Prophet. There is the other person,

whose eyes are open and who, as soon as the light spread by the Prophet appears before him, comes to realize that all the ways being followed by the polytheists and the disbelievers and the atheists lead to destruction, and the way to success is only that which has been shown by the Messenger of God. Now how can it be possible that the attitude of the two persons be the same in the world and the two may follow one and the same path together? And how can this also be possible, either that the two should meet the same end and should both end up in the dust after death? Neither should one be punished for his wrongdoings, nor the other be rewarded for his righteous conduct. The sentence, “the cool shade and the heat of the sun are not alike” points to the same fate. The one will be provided shelter under the shade of Allah’s mercy and the other will burn in the fire of Hell. Thus, the notions that the two will ultimately meet the same end, is utterly false. In the end, the believer has been likened to the living and the stubborn disbeliever to the dead. That is, the believer is he whose feeling, understanding and perception are alive and whose conscience is making him aware of the distinction between the good and the evil every moment. Contrary to this, the person who has been, wholly lost in the prejudices of disbelief is even worse than the blind person who is wandering about in darkness. Nay, he is like a dead person who has no sense or feeling left in him.

***43** That is, as for the powers of Allah, they are unlimited. He can even make the stones to hear. But it is not within the power of the Messenger to make those people to listen to

him whose consciences have become dead and whose ears deaf to every call to the truth. He can only make those people to hear him, who are inclined to listen to every reasonable thing.

23. You are not but a warner.*44

إِنَّ أَنْتَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ

“44 That is, your only duty is to warn the people and nothing else. If even after this a person does not come to his senses, and remains lost in his deviations, you are not to blame for that, for you have not been entrusted with the duty of making the blind to see and the deaf to hear.

24. Indeed, We have sent you with the truth, a bearer of good tidings and a warner. And there was not a nation but that there had passed in them a warner.*45

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا
وَإِنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ



*45 That there has been no community in the world for whose guidance Allah did not appoint the Prophets. This has been stated at several places in the Quran. In Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 7, it was said: “Every people has its guide”. In Surah Al-Hijr, Ayat 10: “O Prophet, We have already sent Messengers before you among many of the ancient peoples”. In Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 36: “We sent to every community a Messenger” and in Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayat: 208: “We have never destroyed a habitation unless it had its warners to administer admonition”. But, in this connection, one should note two things so that there remains no misunderstanding. First, one and the same

Prophet is enough for the lands to which his message may reach. It is not necessary that Prophets be sent to every separate habitation and to every separate community. Second, no new Prophet needs to be sent as long as the message and teaching and guidance given by a previous Prophet remains safe and intact. It is not necessary that a separate Prophet be sent for every race and every generation.

25. And if they deny you, then certainly, those before them have denied. Their messengers came to them with clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty),^{*46} and with the Scriptures, and with the enlightening Book.^{*47}

وَإِنْ يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ
الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ جَاءَتْهُمْ
رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
وَبِالْزُبُرِ
وَبِالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ ﴿٢٥﴾

***46** "Clear proofs": Proofs which clearly testified that they were Allah's Messengers.

***47** "Scriptures" probably consisted of good counsels and moral precepts and "the Book" comprised a complete code of the law.

26. Then I seized those who disbelieved, then how (terrible) was My reproach.

ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَكَيْفَ
كَانَ نَكِيرِ ﴿٢٦﴾

27. Do you not see that Allah sends down water from the sky, then We produce therewith fruits of

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ ثَمَرَاتٍ

divers colors. And in the mountains are tracts, white and red of divers colors, and raven-black.

مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهَا وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ
جُدَدٌ بَيْضٌ وَحُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ
أَلْوَانُهَا وَغَرَابِيبُ سُودٌ

28. And among people and beasts and cattle of divers colors, in like manner.*48 Only those fear Allah, among His slaves, who have knowledge.*49 Indeed, Allah is All Mighty, Oft Forgiving.*50

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالْدَّوَابِّ
وَالْأَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ
كَذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ
عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ
غَفُورٌ

*48 This is meant to impress that in the universe created by Allah nowhere is there homogeneity and uniformity; there is variety everywhere. From the same earth and by the same water different kinds of trees are appearing. Even the two pieces of the fruit of the same tree are not uniform in color and size and taste. In the same mountain one will see a variety of colors and a great difference in the material composition of its different parts. Even among human beings and animals one will not see two offspring of the same parents exactly alike. If a person seeks uniformity of the temperaments and dispositions and mentalities in this universe and is bewildered at the differences which have been alluded to in verses 19-22 above, it will be his own

perception and understanding to blame. This same variety and difference, in fact, point to the reality that this universe has been created by a Wise Being with great wisdom; its Maker is a Unique Creator and a Matchless Fashioner, Who does not have the same model of everything before Him, but has a variety of countless and limitless designs of everything. Then if one ponders over the differences in human temperaments and minds, in particular, one will see that it is not a mere accident, but in fact the masterpiece of the wisdom of creation. If all human beings had been created with the uniform temperaments and desires and feelings and inclinations and ways of thinking, and no room had been left for any difference, it would have been absolutely useless to bring about a new creation like man in the world. When the Creator decided to bring into existence a responsible creation, a creation having power and authority, the necessary inevitable demand of the nature of the decision was that room for all sorts of differences should be provided in its nature and structure. This is the main proof of the fact that the creation of man is not the result of an accident, but the result of a wonderful and wise plan and design. And obviously, wherever there is a wise plan and design, there must necessarily be a Wise Being working behind it, for the existence of wisdom without a Wise Being would be un-imaginable.

***49** That is, the more a person is unaware of the attributes of Allah, the more he will be fearless of Him. Contrary to this, the more a person is aware and conscious of Allah's powers, His knowledge, His wisdom, His vengeance and His

omnipotence and His other attributes, the more he will fear His disobedience. Thus, in fact, knowledge in this verse does not imply knowledge of academic subjects like philosophy and science and history and mathematics, etc. but the knowledge of divine attributes, no matter whether one is literate or illiterate. The one who is fearless of God is illiterate merely as regards to this knowledge even if he has all the knowledge of the world. And the one who knows the attributes of God and fears Him in his heart, is learned even if he is illiterate. In the same connection, one should also know that in this verse the *ulama* does not imply the scholars in the technical sense, who are termed as religious scholars because of their knowledge of the Quran and Hadith and Fiqh and philosophy. They will prove true to this verse only when they possess fear of God in their hearts. The same thing has been said by Abdullah bin Masud, thus: Knowledge is not due to much narration of Hadith but due to much fear of Allah. And also by Hassan Basri, thus: The scholar is he who fears Allah though he has not seen Him, and turns to what is approved by Him and keeps away from what makes Him angry.

***50** That is, He is All-Mighty, and therefore, can seize the disobedient as and when He likes: no one can escape His grasp. But He is All-Forgiving also and is, therefore, giving respite to the wrongdoers.

29. Indeed, those who recite the Book of Allah, and establish prayer, and spend of that which We have

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ
وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا

bestowed on them, secretly and openly, they hope for a trade gain that will never perish.

رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً
يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّن تَبُورَ

30. That He may pay them in full their wages, and increase them of His bounty.^{*51} Indeed, He is Forgiving, Responsive.^{*52}

لِيُوفِّيَهُمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدَهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ
شَكُورٌ

***51** This kind of conduct and practice of the believers has been likened to a trade bargain because in trade a man invests his money and labor and capabilities in the hope that he will not only get his capital back and his wages for the time and energy spent but in addition some profit as well. Likewise, a believer also invests his wealth and his time and his labor and capabilities in carrying out Allah's commands and in His service and worship and in the struggle to promote the cause of His religion in the hope that he will not only get his full rewards for it but Allah will bless him with much more from His bounty as well. But there is a great difference between the two kinds of bargains. In the worldly trade bargains there is the risk of loss also along with the hope of profits. Contrary to this, in the bargain that a sincere servant makes with his God there is no risk of any loss whatever.

***52** That is, Allah's relation with the sincere believers is not that of a miserly master who checks his servant on trivialities and brings all his services and loyalties to naught

on account of a minor error. But Allah is the Most Beneficent and Generous Master. He overlooks the errors of His obedient servant and appreciates whatever service he might be able to render.

31. And what We have revealed to you (O Muhammad) of the Book, it is the truth, confirming what was before it.^{*53} Indeed, Allah is All Aware, Seer of His slaves.^{*54}

وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ مِنَ
الْكِتَابِ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا
بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِعِبَادِهِ لَخَبِيرٌ
بَصِيرٌ



***53** It means: This Book is not presenting anything new which might be opposed to the teaching brought by the former Prophets, but it is presenting the same eternal truth which all the Prophets have been presenting from the very beginning.

***54** The object of mentioning these attributes of Allah here is to arouse the people to the aims and ideals in which their true well being lies, to the principles which alone can afford the right guidance and to the rules and regulations which are precisely in accordance with them. None can know these except Allah, because He alone is aware of the nature of His servants and its demands, and He alone watches over their well-being and affairs. The people do not know their own selves as much as their Creator knows them. Therefore, the truth is that, and can only be that, which He has taught by revelation.

32. Then We made to inherit

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ

the Book to those whom We have chosen of Our slaves.*55

So among them are those who wrong themselves. And among them are those who follow a middle course. And among them are those foremost in good deeds, by Allah's permission. That is what is the great bounty.*56

أَصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا فَمِنْهُمْ
ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ
وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ إِذَنْ
اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ
الْكَبِيرُ



*55 This implies the Muslims, who have been sorted out from all mankind so that they may become heirs to the Book of Allah, and convey its message to others after the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Though this Book has been presented before all human beings, those who accepted it in the first instance, were chosen for the honor to become heirs to a great Book like the Quran and the trustees of the teaching and guidance imparted by a great Messenger like the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

*56 That is, All these Muslims are not alike but are divided into three classes:

(1) Those unjust to themselves: They are those who believe sincerely and honestly that the Quran is the Book of Allah and Muhammad (peace be upon him) the Messenger of Allah, but in practical life they do not fully follow the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger. They are believers but sinful; culprits but not rebellious; weak of faith but not hypocritical and unbelieving at heart.

Therefore, although they are unjust to themselves, they have been included among the chosen servants of God and among the heirs to the Book; otherwise, obviously the rebels and the hypocrites and the unbelieving people could not be so treated and honored. This class of the believers has been mentioned first of All because they are most numerous among the Muslims.

(2) Those following the middle course: They are the people who fulfill the obligations of this inheritance to some extent but not fully. They are obedient as well as erring. They have not left their self altogether free but try as best as they can to turn it to God's obedience. However, at times they give it undue freedom and become involved in sin. Thus, their life becomes a combination of both the good and the evil actions. They are less numerous than the first group but more than the third; that is why they have been mentioned second.

(3) Those excelling in good deeds: They are the people of the first rank among the heirs to the Book, and they are the ones who are doing full justice to the inheritance. They are in the forefront in following and adhering to the Book and the Sunnah; in conveying the message of God to His servants, in offering the sacrifices for the sake of the true faith, and in every pious and good work. They are not the ones who would commit a sin deliberately, but if they happened to commit a sin inadvertently, they would be filled with remorse as soon as they became conscious of it. They are less numerous than the people of the first two groups, and therefore, have been mentioned last, although

they merit the first place in the matter of doing justice to the heritage of the Book of Allah.

As for the sentence, “the great bounty”, if it is related with the last sentence, it would mean that to excel in good deeds is the great bounty, and the people who excel in good deeds are the best of the Muslim community. And if it is taken to be related with the first sentence, it would mean that to be a heir to the Book of Allah and to be chosen for this heritage is the great bounty, and the people who have been so chosen on account of their faith in the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are the best among the human beings created by Allah.

33. Gardens of Eden, which they will enter.^{*57} They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and pearl, and their garments therein (will be) silk.

جَنَّتْ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُحَلَّوْنَ
فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَلُؤْلُؤًا
وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِيرٌ

***57** One section of the commentators has held the view that this sentence is related with the two sentences immediately preceding it. That is, the ones who excel in good deeds are the best of the people and they alone will enter the Gardens. As for the first two groups, nothing has been stated about them so that they became worried concerning their fate and try to improve their lot. This view has been presented by Allama Zamakhshari forcefully and supported by Imam Razi.

But the majority of the commentators opine that it is related with the whole preceding discourse, which means

that all the three classes of the ummah shall eventually enter Paradise, whether without accountability, or after the accountability, whether remaining secure from every punishment, or after receiving some punishment. This commentary is supported by the Quranic context, for a little below about those who are contrasted with the heirs of the Book, it has been said: “And for those who have disbelieved, there is the fire of Hell.” This shows that there is Paradise for all those who have believed in the Book, and Hell for all those who have refused to believe in it. The same has been supported by the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which Imam Ahmad, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Tabarani, Baihaqi and some other traditionalists have related on the authority of Abu ad-Darda. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Those who have excelled in good works shall enter Paradise without accountability; and those who are following the middle course, shall be subjected to accountability; but their accountability shall be light. As for those who have been unjust to themselves, they shall be detained throughout the long period of Resurrection and accountability (*mahshar*). Then Allah shall cover them also with His mercy. And they are the ones who will say: Thanks to Allah Who has removed sorrow from us.

In this Hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) has himself given a complete commentary of the verse under discussion, and stated separately the end to be met by each of the three groups of the believers. The light accountability for the ones following the middle course means this: The

disbelievers will be punished for their disbelief as well as for each single crime and sin of theirs separately, but, contrary to this, the good and bad deeds of the believers who come with both the good and evil deeds will be judged on the whole: they will not be rewarded for each good deed and punished for each evil deed separately. As for those who will be detained throughout the period of Resurrection and accountability because they had been unjust to themselves, it means: They will not be thrown into Hell, but will be sentenced to be detained till the rising of the court. In other words, they will be exposed to all the severities and rigors of the lengthy Day of Resurrection (and God alone knows how lengthy it will be) till Allah Almighty will turn to them in His mercy and command at the rising of the court that they too be admitted into Paradise. The traditionists have cited several sayings to the same effect from many companions like Umar, Uthman, Abdullah bin Masud, Abdullah bin Abbas, Aishah, Abu Said Khudri and Bara bin Azib. And obviously, the companions could not have said any such thing in such matters unless they had heard it from the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. But from this one should not form the impression that those who have been unjust to themselves from among the Muslims will only be sentenced to be detained till the rising of the court, and none of them will go to Hell at all. Several crimes have been mentioned in the Quran and Hadith, whose perpetrator will go to Hell in spite of his faith. For instance, Allah Himself has declared that the believer who kills another believer willfully shall go to Hell. Likewise,

Hell has been mentioned as the punishment of those people also who violate the provisions of the divine law of inheritance. Those who devour interest even after its prohibition have been declared to be the dwellers of Hell. Besides these, some other major sins have also been mentioned in Hadith, whose perpetrator shall go to Hell.

34. And they will say: “All the praises be to Allah, who has removed grief (sorrow) from us.^{*58} Indeed, Our Lord is Forgiving, Bounteous.”^{*59}

وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ
عَنَّا الْحَزْنَ إِنَّ رَبَّنَا لَغَفُورٌ
شَكُورٌ

***58** “Sorrow”: Sorrow of every kind: sorrows and griefs and worries of the world and of the Hereafter with regard to the final end. It means: Now we have nothing to worry about: now there can be no question of any sorrow and trouble afflicting us here.

***59** That is He has forgiven us our errors, has appreciated whatever little provision of deeds we had brought and blessed us with His Paradise as a reward.

35. “He who has lodged us in an eternal abode by His grace.^{*60} There will not touch us in it any fatigue, nor will touch us in it weariness.”^{*61}

الَّذِي أَحَلَّنَا دَارَ الْمُقَامَةِ مِنْ
فَضْلِهِ لَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا نُصَبٌ
وَلَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا لُغُوبٌ

***60** That is, the world was a stage in our journey of life, which we have crossed, and the plain of Resurrection also is a stage of the same journey, which we have also crossed.

Now we have reached a place which is our eternal abode: we have not to go elsewhere from here.

***61** In other words, all our toils and afflictions have come to an end. Now we do not have to perform any work here in carrying out which we might have to experience any rigor or hardship and after carrying out which we might be fatigued.

36. And those who disbelieve, ^{*62} for them is the fire of Hell. Neither will it be decreed on them that they should die, nor will its punishment be lightened for them. Thus do We recompense every ungrateful.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ
لَا يُقْضَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ فَيَمُوتُوا وَلَا
يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِهَا
كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي كُلَّ كَافِرٍ

***62** “Who disbelieved”: Who have refused to believe in the Book which Allah has sent down on Muhammad (peace be upon him).

37. And they will cry for help therein. (saying): “Our Lord, bring us out, we will do righteous deeds, other than what we used to do.” Did We not grant you a life (long enough), so could have remembered therein, whoever wanted to remember. ^{*63} And the warner had come to you. So taste,

وَهُمْ يَصْطَرِحُونَ فِيهَا رَبَّنَا
أَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا غَيْرَ
الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ ۗ أَوَلَمْ
نُعْمِرْكُمْ مَا يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهِ مَنْ
تَذَكَّرَ وَجَاءَكُمْ النَّذِيرُ فَذُوقُوا

then for wrongdoers there is no helper.

فَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ نَصِيرٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

***63** This implies every such age of life in which a person may be able to distinguish between good and evil, truth and falsehood, if he likes to, and turn to right guidance instead of deviation, if he wishes. If a person has died before attaining such an age, he will not be called to any account according to this verse. However, the one who has attained this age will certainly be held answerable for his actions. Then, as long as he lives after attaining this age and gets more and more opportunities for choosing and adopting the right path, his responsibility also will increase accordingly; so much so that the one who does not adopt right guidance even in old age will have no chance left for making any excuse. This same thing has been reported by Abu Hurairah and Sahl bin Saad as-Saidi in a Hadith, saying: "The one who lives a short life has an excuse to offer, but there is no room for making an excuse for him who lives for 60 years or more." (Bukhari Ahmad, Nasai, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim).

38. Indeed, Allah is Knower of the unseen of the heavens and the earth. Indeed, He is Knower of what is in the breasts.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ غَيْبِ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. He it is who has made you successors upon the earth.^{*64} So whoever disbelieves, upon

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ

him will be his disbelief.*65
 And does not increase for the disbelievers, their disbelief, with their Lord except in hatred. And does not increase for the disbelievers, their disbelief, except in loss.

وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكَافِرِينَ كُفْرَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا مَقْتًا وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكَافِرِينَ كُفْرَهُمْ إِلَّا خَسَارًا



***64** This can have two meanings:

- (1) Now He has settled you on His earth after the passing away of the previous generations and nations.
- (2) The powers and authority that He has given to you over different things in the earth are not meant to make you the owners of these things but are meant to enable you to function as the representatives of their real Owner.

***65** If the previous sentence is taken to mean that you have been made successors to the previous nations, this sentence would mean this: The one who did not learn any lesson from the fate of the previous nations and adopted the conduct of disbelief due to which those nations have gone to their doom, will himself see the evil end of his folly. And if the sentence is taken to mean this that Allah has delegated to you powers and authority as His vicegerents in the earth, this sentence would mean: He who forgot this position of vicegerency and became independent, or he who adopted service of someone else, apart from his real Master, would see the evil end of his rebellious conduct himself.

40. Say: "Have you seen your associates of yours

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ شُرَكَاءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ

(gods) ^{*66} to whom you call upon besides Allah. Show me what they have created of the earth, or do they have any share in the heavens.” Or have We given them a book so they are on clear proof there from. ^{*67} But the wrongdoers do not promise one another except delusion. ^{*68}

تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أُرُونِي مَاذَا
خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ
فِي السَّمَوَاتِ أَمْ آتَيْنَهُمْ كِتَابًا
فَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْهُ ۚ بَلْ إِنْ
يَعِدُّ الظَّالِمُونَ بَعْضُهُمْ
بَعْضًا إِلَّا غُرُورًا

***66** “Associates of yours”, because they are not in fact the associates of Allah, but the ones whom the polytheists themselves have made associates of Allah.

***67** That is, do they possess a written sanction from Us in which We might have indicated that We have given such and such persons the powers to heal the sick, or to get jobs for the jobless, or to fulfill needs of the needy, or that We have made such and such beings Our representatives in such and such parts of the earth and now it is in their hands to make or mar the destinies of the people of those parts; therefore, Our servants now should pray to them and present gifts and offerings before them, and for whatever blessings they receive they should thank those demigods only? If you possess any such sanction, produce it. And if you have no such sanction, you should consider on what grounds you have invented these polytheistic creeds and practices. When you are asked as to what sign is there in the heavens and the earth that may point to your self

invented gods as being God's associates, you cannot point out any. When you are asked to produce any divine sanction from any Book of Allah, or from your own possession, or from the possession of your self-invented gods, which may testify to God's having Himself delegated to them those powers which you assign to them, you do not produce any. What then is the basis of your these creeds and concepts? Are you the owners of the divine rights and powers that you may assign and distribute them to whomsoever you please?

***68** That is, these religious guides, saints, priests, sorcerers, preachers and attendants of shrines and their agents are fooling the people for selfish motives, and are concocting stories to give them false hopes that if they became the followers of such and such personalities, apart from God, they would have all their wishes and needs fulfilled in the world, and all their sins, no matter-how grave and numerous, forgiven by Allah in the Hereafter.

41. Indeed, Allah holds the heavens and the earth, lest they move away (from their places). And if they were to move away, there is no one that could hold them after Him.^{*69} Indeed, He is Forbearing, Oft Forgiving.^{*70}

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُمْسِكُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ أَنْ تَزُولَا ۗ وَ لِيْنَ زَالَتَا
إِنْ أَمْسَكَهُمَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنْ
بَعْدِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا ﴾



***69** That is, this limitless universe is being sustained by

Allah alone. No angel, or jinn, or prophet, or saint can sustain it. Not to speak of sustaining the universe these helpless creatures do not even have the power to sustain their own selves. Each one of them is entirely dependent on Allah Almighty for his birth and survival every moment. To think that any one of them has any share in the attributes and powers of divinity is sheer folly and deception.

***70** That is, it is Allah's Clemency and Forbearance that He is not seizing the culprits immediately in punishment in spite of All kinds of disobedience which are being shown towards Him.

42. And they swore by Allah, their most binding oath, that if a warner came to them they would surely be more guided than any of the nations.^{*71} Yet, when a warner came to them, it did not increase them except in aversion to the truth.

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ
لَئِن جَاءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ لَّيَكُونُنَّ
أَهْدَىٰ مِنْ إِحْدَى الْأُمَمِ فَلَمَّا
جَاءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ مَّا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا
نُفُورًا



***71** Before the advent of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the same thing used to be said by the Arabs, in general, and by the Quraish, in particular, when they witnessed the moral degeneration of the Jews and the Christians. Mention of this saying of theirs has also been made in Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 156-157 and in Surah As-Saffat, Ayats 167-169.

43. Arrogance in the land and plotting of the evil. And the evil plot does not encompass except its own people. Then, are they awaiting (anything) except the way (fate) of the former peoples.^{*72} So you will never find in the way of Allah any change. And you will never find in the way of Allah any alteration.

أَسْتِكْبَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَكْرَ السَّيِّئِ وَلَا تَحِقُّ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئِ إِلَّا بِأَهْلِهِ فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا سُنَّتَ الْأَوَّلِينَ فَلَن تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا وَلَن تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا



***72** That is, this Law of Allah that the nation which repudiates its Prophet, is destroyed should be applied in their case as well.

44. Have they not traveled in the land and seen how was the end of those before them. And they were mightier than these in power. And Allah is not such that anything escapes Him in the heavens, nor in the earth. Indeed, He is All Knowing, All Omnipotent.

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَكَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعْجِزَهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيمًا قَدِيرًا



45. And if Allah were to seize the people for what they earned, He would not leave on its (earth) surface a living creature, but He reprieves them unto an appointed term. Then when their term comes, then indeed Allah is ever All Seer of His slaves.

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِمَا
كَسَبُوا مَا تَرَكَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهَا
مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَى
أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ بَصِيرًا



يَسَ Yaseen

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the two letters *ya-seen* of the alphabet with which it begins.

Period of Revelation

A study of the style shows that it was either revealed during the last stage of the middle Makkan period, or it is one of those Surahs, which were revealed during the last stage of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) stay at Makkah.

Subject Matter and Theme

The object of the discourse is to warn the Quraish of the consequences of not believing in the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and of resisting and opposing it with tyranny, ridicule and mockery. The aspect of the warning is dominant and conspicuous although along with repeatedly giving the warnings, arguments also have been given for the correct understanding by the people.

Arguments have been given for three things.

(1) For *Tauhid*, from the signs of the universe and from common sense.

(2) For the Hereafter, from the signs of the universe, from

common sense and from man's own existence itself.

(3) for the Prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), from the fact that he was facing all kinds of hardships in the preaching of his message without any selfish motive, and from this that whatever he was inviting the people to was rational and reasonable, accepting which was in the people's own interest.

On the strength of these arguments, themes of reprobation, reproof and warning have been presented repeatedly in a highly forceful manner, so that hearts are shaken up and those which have any capacity for accepting the truth left in them should not remain unmoved.

Imam Ahmad, Abu Daud, Nasai, Ibn Majah and Tabarani have related on the authority of Maqil bin Yasar that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Surah ya-seen is the heart of the Quran. This is similar to describing the Surah Al-Fatiha as the Umm-al-Quran (the essence or core of the Quran), because Al-Fatihah contains the sum and substance of the teaching of the whole Quran. The Surah ya-seen has been called the throbbing heart of the Quran because it presents the message of the Quran in a most forceful manner, which breaks the inertness and stirs the spirit of man to action.

Again Imam Ahmad, Aba Daud and Ibn Majah have related from the same Maqil bin Yasar that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Recite Surah ya-seen to the dying ones among you. The object is not only to revive and refresh the whole Islamic creed in the mind of the dying person but also bring before him, in particular, a complete

picture of the Hereafter so that he may know what stages he would have to pass through after crossing the stage of this worldly life. In view of this, it would be desirable that along with the recitation of the Surah ya-seen its translation also is made for the benefit of the person who does not know Arabic so that the purpose of the admonition is duly fulfilled.

1. Ya Seen.^{*1}

يس ١

*1 Ibn Abbas, Ikrimah, Dahhak, Hasan Basri and Sufyan bin Uyainah have opined that it means, “O man”, or “O person”. Some other commentators have regarded it as an abbreviation of “Ya Sayyid” as well, which, according to this interpretation, would be an address to the Prophet (peace be upon him).

2. By the Quran, full of wisdom.

وَالْقُرْآنِ الْحَكِيمِ ٢

3. Indeed, you (O Muhammad) are from among the messengers.^{*2}

إِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ٣

*2 To begin a discourse like this does not mean that the Prophet (peace be upon him), God forbid, had some doubt about his Prophethood, and Allah had to say this in order to reassure him of it. But the reason is that the disbelieving Quraish at that time were most vehemently refusing to believe in his Prophethood. Therefore, Allah at the very beginning of the discourse has said: You are indeed one of the Messengers, which implies that the people who deny your Prophethood are misled and mistaken. To further

confirm the same, an oath has been taken by the Quran and the word “wise” has been used as an epithet of the Quran, which means this: An obvious proof of your being a Prophet is this Quran, which is full of wisdom. This itself testifies that the person who is presenting such wise revelations is most surely a Messenger of God. No man has the power to compose such revelations. The people who know Muhammad (peace be upon him) can never be involved in the misunderstanding that he is himself forging these discourses, or reciting them after having learned them from another man. For further explanation, see Surah Yunus, Ayats 16-17, 37-39; Surah Bani-Israil, Ayat 88; Surah An-Naml, Ayat 75; Surah Al-Qasas, Ayats 44-46, 85-87; Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayats 49-51; Surah Ar-Rum, Ayats 1-5 and the relevant E.Ns.

4. On a straight path.

عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

5. (Revelation) sent down by the All Mighty, the Merciful.*³

تَنْزِيلَ الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٥﴾

*³ Here, two of the attributes of the Sender of the Quran have been mentioned. First, that He is All-Mighty; second, that He, is All-Merciful. The first attribute is meant to impress the reality that the Quran is not the counsel of a powerless preacher, which if you overlook or ignore, will not bring any harm to you; but this is the Edict of that Owner of the Universe, Who is All-Mighty, Whose decrees cannot be withheld from being enforced by any power, and Whose grasp cannot be avoided by anyone. The second

attribute is meant to make one realize that it is all due to His kindness and mercy that He has sent His Messenger for your guidance and instruction and sent down this great Book so that you may avoid errors and follow the right path which may lead you to the successes of the world and the Hereafter.

6. That you may warn a people whose forefathers were not warned, so they are heedless.*4

لَتُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أُنذِرَ ءَابَاؤُهُمْ
فَهُمْ غَافِلُونَ

*4 Another translation can be: You should warn the people of the same of which their forefathers had been warned, because they live in heedlessness. If the first meaning, as given above in the text, is taken, the forefathers would imply the forefathers of the immediate past, for in the ancient time several Prophets had appeared in Arabia. And if the second meaning is adopted, it would imply this: Revive and refresh the message that had been conveyed to the forefathers of this nation by the Prophets in the past, for these people have forgotten it. Obviously, there is no contradiction between the two translations, and, as to meaning, each is correct in its own place.

A doubt may rise here: How could the forefathers of a nation to whom no warner had been sent at a particular time in the past, be held responsible for their deviation at that time? The answer is: When Allah sends a Prophet in the world, the influence of his message and teaching spreads far and wide, and is handed down by one generation to the other. As long as this influence remains

and there continue arising among the followers of the Prophet such people as keep his message of guidance fresh, the period of time cannot be said to be without the guidance. And when the influence of the Prophet's teaching dies out, or the teaching is tampered with, the appointment of another Prophet becomes inevitable. Before the advent of the Prophet (peace be upon him) the influence of the teachings of the Prophets Abraham, Ishmael, Shuaib and Moses and Jesus (peace be upon all of them) could be seen everywhere in Arabia and from time to time there had been arising among the Arabs, or coming from outside, men, who revived their teachings. When the influence was about to die out, and the real teaching was also distorted, Allah raised the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and made such arrangements that his message can neither be wiped out nor tampered with. (For further explanation, see E. N. 5 of Surah Saba).

7. Certainly, the word has proved true against most of them, so they will not believe.*5

لَقَدْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَى أَكْثَرِهِمْ
فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

*5 This is about those people who were being obstinate and stubborn with regard to the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and had made up their minds not to listen to him at all. This is because: They have already deserved the torment; therefore, they do not believe. It means: The people who do not heed the admonition, and persist in their denial and hostile attitude to the truth in spite of the final warning from Allah conveyed through the Prophets, are

themselves overwhelmed by the evil consequences of their misdeeds and deprived of every opportunity to believe. The same thing has been expressed more clearly in verse 11 below: You can only warn him who follows the admonition and fears the Merciful God though he cannot see Him.

8. Indeed, We have put on their necks shackles reaching to chins, so they are made stiff-necked.*6

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ أَغْلَالًا
فَهِيَ إِلَى الْأَذْقَانِ فَهُمْ
مُقْمَحُونَ

*6 “Shackles” in this verse implies their own stubbornness which was preventing them from accepting the truth. “Reaching to chins” and “so they are made stiff-necked” implies the stiffness of the neck which is caused by pride and haughtiness. Allah means to impress this: We have made their obstinacy and stubbornness the shackles of their neck, and their pride and haughtiness has made them so stiff-necked that they will not pay heed to any reality, however clear and evident it may be.

9. And We have put before them a barrier, and behind them a barrier, then We have covered them up, so they cannot see.*7

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ سَدًّا
وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا فَأَغْشَيْنَاهُمْ
فَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ

*7 Setting a barrier before them and a barrier behind them, means that the natural result of their stubbornness and pride is that they neither learn any lesson from their

past history nor ever consider the consequences of the future. Their prejudices have so covered them from every side and their misconceptions have so blinded them that they cannot see even those glaring realities which are visible to every right-thinking and unbiased person.

10. And it is the same to them whether you warn them or you do not warn them, they will not believe.*8

وَسَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَأَنْذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

*8 This does not mean that it is futile to preach, but it means: Your preaching reaches every kind of people. Some of them are the ones mentioned above, and some others those who are being mentioned in the next verse. When you come across the people of the first kind and you see that they continue to persist in their denial, pride and antagonism, you should leave them alone, but at the same time you should not feel disheartened so as to give up your mission, for you do not know exactly where among the multitudes of the people are those sincere servants of God, who would heed your admonition and fear God and turn to the right path. The real object of your preaching, therefore, should be to search out and collect this second kind of the people. You should ignore the stubborn people and gather this precious element of the society about you.

11. You can only warn him who follows the reminder (Quran), and fears the Beneficent, unseen. So give him good tidings of

إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الذِّكْرَ وَخَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ الْغَيْبَ فَبَشِّرْهُ

forgiveness, and a noble reward.

بِمَغْفِرَةٍ وَأَجْرٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿١١﴾

12. Indeed, it is We who give life to the dead, and We have recorded what they send before, and they leave behind.*⁹ And of all things, We have taken account in a clear Book.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ
وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَءَاثَرَهُمْ
وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ
مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾

***9** This shows that three kinds of the entries are made in the conduct-book of men. First, whatever a person does, good or bad is entered in the divine register. Second, whatever impressions a man makes on the objects of his environment and on the limbs of his own body itself, become recorded, and all these impressions will at one time become so conspicuous that man's own voice will become audible and the whole history of his ideas and intentions and aims and objects and the pictures of all of his good and bad acts and deeds will appear before him. Third, whatever influences he has left behind of his good and bad actions on his future generation, on his society and on mankind as a whole, will go on being recorded in his account as far as they reach and as long as they remain active and operative. The full record of the good and bad training given by him to his children, the good or evil that he has spread in the society, and its impact on mankind as a whole, will go on being maintained till the time that it goes on producing good or evil results in the world.

13. And put forth to them a similitude, the dwellers of the habitation, when the messengers came to them.*10

وَأَضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا أَصْحَابَ
الْقَرْيَةِ إِذْ جَاءَهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ



*10 The early commentators, generally, have expressed the opinion that the habitation implies the Syrian city of Antioch, and the messengers mentioned here were the ones sent by the Prophet Jesus for the preaching of his message there. Another thing that has been mentioned in this connection is that Antiochus was the king of this land at that time. But historically this story which Ibn Abbas, Qatadah, Ikrimah, Kaab Ahbar and Wahb bin Munabbih, and others have related on the basis of unauthentic Christian traditions is baseless. There have been 13 kings of the Seleucid dynasty named Antiochus who reigned in Antioch, and the rule of the last king of this name, rather the rule of this dynasty itself, came to an end in 65 B.C. At the time of the Prophet Jesus, the whole land of Syria and Palestine, including Antioch, was under the Romans. Then, no proof is forthcoming from any authentic tradition of the Christians that the Prophet Jesus might himself have sent any of his disciples to Antioch for preaching his message. On the contrary, the Acts of the Apostles (N.T.) shows that the Christian preachers had reached Antioch for the first time a few years after the event of the crucifixion. Now, evidently, the people who were neither appointed messengers by Allah nor sent by His Messenger cannot be

regarded as messengers of Allah by any interpretation even if they might have travelled for the purpose of preaching of their own accord. Moreover, according to the Bible, Antioch was the first city where the non-Israelites embraced Christianity in large numbers and where the Christian faith met with great success; whereas the habitation mentioned by the Quran was some such habitation which rejected the invitation of the messengers, and was consequently punished with a divine torment. History also does not bear any evidence that Antioch was ever afflicted with a destruction, which might be regarded, as the result of denying the Prophethood.

On account of these reasons it cannot be accepted that the habitation implies Antioch. The habitation has neither been clearly determined in the Quran nor in any authentic Hadith. The identity of the messengers also is not known through any authentic means nor the time when they were appointed. To understand the purpose for which the Quran is narrating this story here, it is not necessary to know the names of the habitation and the messengers. The object is to warn the Quraish, as if to say: You are following the same path of stubbornness, prejudice and denial of the truth as had been followed by the people of that habitation, and are preparing yourselves to meet the same doom as was met by them.

14. When We sent to them two, so they denied them both, so We reinforced with a third, so they said: "Indeed,

إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ

we are messengers to you.”

فَقَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ مُرْسَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

15. They (people) said: “You are not but mortals like us,^{*11} and the Beneficent has not revealed anything,^{*12} you do not but lie.”

قَالُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُنَا وَمَا أَنْزَلَ الرَّحْمَنُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَكْذِبُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

***11** In other words, what they wanted to say was: Since you are human beings, you cannot be the messengers of God. The same was the view of the disbelievers of Makkah. They also said: Muhammad cannot be a messenger because he is a man. They say: What sort of a Messenger is he that he eats food and moves about in the streets. (Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 7). And the unjust people whisper to one another, saying: This man is no more than a human being like yourselves. What, will you then be enticed by this sorcery while you perceive it. (Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 3). The Quran refutes this erroneous notion of the people of Makkah and says that it is not any new kind of ignorance which these people are displaying, but all the ignorant people since the earliest times have been involved in the misunderstanding that a human being cannot be a messenger and a Messenger cannot be a human being. When the chiefs of the people of the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) had rejected his Prophethood, they had said the same thing: This person is no more than a human being like yourselves. By this he purely intends to obtain superiority over you. Had Allah willed, He would have sent

down angels. Since the time of our forefathers we have never heard (that a human being should come as a Messenger). (Surah Al-Mominoon, Ayat 24).

The people of Aad had said the same about the Prophet Hud (peace be upon him): This person is no more than a human being like yourselves, for he eats of what you eat and drinks of what you drink. Now if you submit to a human being like yourselves, you will indeed be the losers. (Surah Al-Mominoon, Ayats 33-34).

The people of Thamud also said the same about the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him): Shall we follow a man from among ourselves? (Surah Al-Qamar, Ayat 24). And the same thing happened with almost every Prophet that the disbelievers said: You are no more than a human being like ourselves, and the Prophets always replied: It is true that we are no more than human beings like you, but Allah shows His favor to anyone of His servants He pleases. (Surah Ibrahim, Ayats 10-11).

Then the Quran says that this very notion of ignorance has been preventing the people from accepting guidance in every age, and the same has been the cause of every nation's downfall. Has not the news reached to you of those who had disbelieved before this, and then tasted the evil results of their deeds. And in the Hereafter there awaits them a painful torment. They deserved this fate because their Messengers came to them with clear signs, but they said: Shall human beings show us guidance. So they refused and turned away. (Surah At-Taghabun, Ayats 5-6).

Whenever guidance came before the people, nothing

prevented them from believing in it except this (excuse): they said: Has Allah sent a human being as His messenger? (Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 94).

Then the Quran says explicitly that Allah has always sent human beings as the Messengers and a human being alone can be a Messenger for the guidance for mankind and not an angel, or a supernatural being: And We sent before you also human beings as Messengers to whom We revealed (Our message). If you (O objectors) have no knowledge of this, you may ask those who have the knowledge. We did not give them such bodies as could survive without food nor were they immortal. (Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 7-8).

“All the Messengers whom We sent before you also ate food and moved about in the streets. (Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 20). O Prophet, say to them: Had angels settled on the earth and moved about in peace, We would certainly have sent an angel as a messenger to them. (Surah Bani-Israil, Ayat 95).

*12 This is another notion of ignorance in which the disbelievers of Makkah were involved. In it are also involved the so-called rationalists of today and in it have been involved the deniers of revelation and Prophethood of every age since the earliest times. These people have held the view that Allah does not send down any revelation at all for the guidance of man. He is only concerned with the affairs of the heavens: He has left the affairs and problems of man to be resolved by man himself.

16. They said: “Our Lord knows that we are messengers to you.”

قَالُوا رَبُّنَا يَعْلَمُ إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ لَمُرْسَلُونَ



17. “And (it is) not upon us except a clear conveyance.”*13

وَمَا عَلَيْنَا إِلَّا الْبَلَّغُ الْمُبِينُ



*13 That is, our duty is only to convey to you the message that Allah has entrusted us with. Then it is for you to accept it or reject it. We have not been made responsible to make you accept it forcibly, And if you do not accept it, we shall not be seized in consequence of your disbelief, You will yourselves be answerable for your crimes.

18. They (people) said: “Indeed, we see an evil omen from you, if you do not desist, we will surely stone you, and there will surely touch you from us a painful punishment.”*14

قَالُوا إِنَّا تَطَيَّرْنَا بِكُمْ لَئِن لَّمْ تَنْتَهُوا لَنَرْجُمَنَّكُمْ وَلَيَمَسَّنَّكُمْ

مِنَّا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ



*14 What they meant was: You are an evil omen for us. Our gods have become angry with us on account of what you have been saying against them. Now whatever calamity is befalling us is only because of you. Precisely the same thing used to be said by the disbelievers and the hypocrites of Arabia concerning the Prophet (peace be upon him): If they suffer a loss, they say: this is because of you. (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 77). That is why at several places in the Quran these people have been told that in the ancient times people also used to say such things of ignorance in regard to their Prophets. The people of Thamud said to their Prophet: We regard you and your companions as a sign of bad omen. (Surah An-Namal, Ayat 47). And the same was

the attitude of the people of Pharaoh: Whenever a good time came, they would say: This is but our due, and when there was a hard time, they would ascribe their calamities to Moses (peace be upon him) and his companions. (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 130).

19. They (messengers) said: “Your evil omens be with you.^{*15} Is it because you are reminded (of truth). But you are a people transgressing all bounds.”^{*16}

قَالُوا طَائِرُكُمْ مَعَكُمْ أَإِن
ذُكِّرْتُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ
مُسْرِفُونَ

*15 That is, no one is an evil omen for another. Everyman’s augury is hanging around his own neck. If a person sees an evil, it is because of his own self; and if he sees a good, it is also because of his own self. We have fastened the augury of every man to his own neck. (Surah Bani-Israil, Ayat 13).

*16 That is, you in fact want to avoid the good and you like the deviation instead of the guidance. Therefore, instead of determining the truth and falsehood by means of an argument, you are making these false pretenses on account of your superstitious whims.

20. And there came from the farthest end of the city a man, running. He (man) said: “O my people, follow the messengers.”

وَجَاءَ مِنْ أَقْصَا الْمَدِينَةِ رَجُلٌ
يَسْعَى قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوا
الْمُرْسَلِينَ

21. “Follow those who do not ask of you (any) wages,

اتَّبِعُوا مَنْ لَا يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَجْرًا وَهُمْ

and they are rightly
guided.”*17

مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

*17 That servant of God, in this one sentence, put together all the arguments required for determining the genuineness of Prophethood. The genuineness of a Prophet can be determined by two things. First, his word and deed; second, his being selfless. What the person meant to say was this: First, whatever these people are saying is perfectly reasonable, and their own character also is pure; second, no one can prove that they are calling the people to this faith on account of a selfish motive. Therefore, there is no reason why they should not be listened to. By citing this reasoning of the person the Quran set a criterion before the people of how to judge and determine the genuineness of the Prophethood of a Prophet, as if to say: The word and deed of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) bear full evidence that he is on the right path. Then, no one can point out any selfish motive or interest behind his struggle of preaching his message. Therefore, there is no reason why a sensible person should reject what he presents.

22. “And what is for me
(that) I should not worship
Him (Allah) who created me,
and to whom you will be
returned.”*18

وَمَا لِي لَا أَعْبُدُ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي
وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

*18 This sentence has two parts. The first part is a masterpiece of reasoning, the second of the wisdom of preaching. In the first part he says: To worship the Creator is the demand of both reason and nature; it would be highly

unreasonable that one should worship those who have not created him and should deny to be the servant of Him Who has created him. In the second part he warns his people to the effect: All of you ultimately have to die and return to that God adoption of Whose service you object to. Therefore, you should consider for yourselves as to what goodness you could expect by turning away from Him.

23. “Shall I take besides Him gods, if the Beneficent should intend me any harm, their intercession will not avail me anything, nor can they save me.”*¹⁹

ءَأَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِهِ ءَالِهَةً إِن
يُرِدُنِ الرَّحْمَنُ بِضُرٍّ لَّا تُغْنِي عَنِّي
شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُنْقِذُونِ



*¹⁹ That is, they are neither such favorites of God that even if I commit grave crimes, He will forgive me on their recommendation, nor are they so powerful that they should be able to rescue me if God may please to punish me.

24. “Indeed, I would then be in error manifest.”*²⁰

إِنِّي إِذَا لَفِيَ ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ



*²⁰ If I make them my gods in spite of knowing all this.

25. “Indeed, I have believed in your Lord,*²¹ so listen to me.”

إِنِّي ءَامَنْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ فَاسْمَعُونِ



*²¹ This sentence again contains a subtle point of the wisdom of preaching. Saying this the man made the people realize: The Lord in Whom I have believed is not merely

my Lord but your Lord, too. I have committed no error by believing in Him, but you, in fact, are certainly committing an error by not believing in Him.

26. It was said (to him):
“Enter paradise.”*22 He said:
“Would that my people
knew.”

قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ ^ط قَالَ يَلَيْتَ
قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ

*22 That is, immediately following his martyrdom, the man was given the good news of Paradise. As soon as he entered the next world through the gate of death, there were the angels to receive him, and they gave him the good news that Paradise was awaiting him. The commentators have disputed the meaning of this sentence. Qatadah says: Allah admitted him into Paradise straight away and he is living in it and receiving his sustenance. And Mujahid says: This was told him by the angels as a good news; he will enter Paradise on the day of Resurrection along with the other believers.

27. “For that my Lord has forgiven me, and He has made me among the honored.”*23

بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ
الْمُكْرَمِينَ

*23 This is a specimen of the high morality of the believer, He had no ill will or feeling of vengeance in his heart against the people who had just killed him so that he should invoke Allah against them. Instead, he was still wishing them well. After death the only wish that he cherished was: Would that my people could know the good end that I have met, and could learn a lesson from my death, if not from

my life, and adopt the righteous way. The noble person did not wish Hell for his murderers but wished that they should believe and become worthy of Paradise. The same thing has been commended in the Hadith: He wished his people well when living as well as when dead.

Allah has narrated this event in order to warn the disbelievers of Makkah to the effect: Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his believing companions are also your well-wishers just as the believer was of his people. They do not cherish any ill-will or feeling of vengeance against you in spite of your persecutions of them. They are not your enemies but enemies of your deviation and error. The only object of their struggle against you is that you should adopt the right way.

This verse also is one of those verses which clearly prove the existence of *barzakh*. This shows that the period of time between death and Resurrection is not a period of non-existence altogether, as some ignorant people think. But in this period the spirit lives without the body, speaks and hears speech, has feelings and desires, feels happy and unhappy, and also continues to be concerned about the people of the world. Had it not been so, the believer would not have been given the good news of Paradise after death, and he could not have wished that his people became aware of his good end.

28. And We did not send down upon his people after him any host from the heaven, nor do We send down

﴿ وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ مِن
بَعْدِهِ مِنْ جُنْدٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ ﴾

(such a thing).

وَمَا كُنَّا مُنْزِلِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

29. It was not but one shout, then behold, they were extinct. *24

إِنْ كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً
فَإِذَا هُمْ خَامِدُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

*24 These words contain a subtle satire. In their arrogance and pride of power and their strong antagonism towards the true faith, they thought they would annihilate the three Prophets and their followers, but, contrary to their plot, they were themselves annihilated by only one stroke of the divine punishment.

30. How regretful for the servants. There did not come to them any messenger except that they used to ridicule him.

يَحْسِرَةٌ عَلَى الْعِبَادِ مَا يَأْتِيهِمْ
مِّن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ
يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. Have they not seen how many of the generations We have destroyed before them, Indeed, they will not return to them. *25

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ
مِّنَ الْقُرُونِ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لَا
يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

*25 That is, they were annihilated so completely that not a trace of them was left behind them. No one in the world even remembers them today. Their civilization as well as their race has become extinct.

32. And indeed, each of them, all will be brought before Us.

وَإِنْ كُلُّ لَمَّا جَمِيعٌ لَدَيْنَا
مُحْضَرُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

33. And^{*26} a sign for them is the dead earth.^{*27} We bring it to life, and We bring forth from it grains, so from it they eat.

وَأَيُّهُمْ أَلْأَرْضُ الْمَيِّتَةُ
أَحْيَيْنَاهَا وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا حَبًّا
فَمِنْهُ يَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

***26** Until now the disbelieves of Makkah were being warned and reproved for their denial of the truth and their attitude of antagonism which they had adopted towards the Prophet (peace be upon him). Now the discourse turns to the basic thing which was the actual cause of the conflict between them and the Prophet (peace be upon him), i.e. the doctrine of Tauhid and the Hereafter, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was presenting and the disbelievers were refusing to accept. In this connection, some arguments have been given, one after the other, to make the people ponder over the realities, as if to say: Observe these phenomena of the universe, which are ever present before you. Do they not point to the same reality, which this Prophet is presenting before you?

***27** "A sign": A sign that Tauhid is the truth and shirk the falsehood.

34. And We have placed therein gardens of date palm and grapes, and We have

وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا جَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ
وَأَعْنَابٍ وَفَجَّرْنَا فِيهَا مِ

caused to gush forth therein
water springs.

الْعُيُونِ
٣٤

35. That they may eat of
the fruit thereof, and
their hands did not make
it.*28 Will they not then
give thanks.*29

لِيَأْكُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ وَمَا
عَمِلَتْهُ أَيْدِيهِمْ أَفَلَا
يَشْكُرُونَ
٣٥

*28 Another translation of this sentence can be: So that they may eat fruits thereof and what their own hands make. That is, the artificial kinds of food, which the people prepare from the natural products, e.g. bread, curry, jam, pickles, sauces and countless other things.

*29 In these brief sentences the vegetable and plant life of the earth has been presented as an argument. Man is eating the products of the earth day and night and regards this as very ordinary. But if he considers it seriously, he will see that the growth of rich crops and lush green gardens from the dry earth and the flow of the springs and rivers is not a simple thing, which might be happening of itself, but there is a great wisdom and power and providence which is working behind it. Consider the reality of the earth. The substances of which it is composed do not possess any power of their own for growth. All these substances individually as well as after every sort of combination, remain inorganic, and thus do not possess any sign of life. The question is: How did it become possible for plant life to emerge from the lifeless earth? If one looks into it, one will see that there are some important factors without whose

provision beforehand life here could not have come into existence.

First, in particular regions of the earth, on its outer surface, a layer was arranged of many such substances, which could serve as food for vegetation. This layer was kept soft so that the roots of the vegetation could spread in it and suck food.

Secondly, a system of irrigation was arranged on the earth in different ways so that the food elements could get dissolved in water and absorbed by the roots.

Thirdly, the atmosphere was arranged around the earth which protects it against the calamities of the sky, becomes a means of the rainfall, and possesses gases which are necessary for the life and growth of the vegetation.

Fourthly, a relationship was established between the sun and the earth so as to provide proper temperature and suitable seasons for the vegetation.

With the provision of these main factors (which in themselves are combinations of countless other factors), the coming to life of the vegetation becomes possible. After arranging the suitable conditions the seed of each species of the vegetation was so constituted that as soon as it received favorable soil, water, air and season, vegetable life should begin stirring within it. Besides, inside the same seed a system was so arranged that from the seed of every species a plant precisely of the same species should grow with all the characteristics of its own species and heredity. Then, in addition to this, another wonderful thing was done. Vegetation was not created in twenty, or fifty, or a hundred kinds but in countless species, and they were so made that

they should fulfill the requirements of food, medicine and clothing and innumerable other needs of the countless kinds of animals and man, who were to be brought into being after the vegetation on the earth.

Anyone who ponders over this wonderful arrangement, if he is not stubborn and prejudiced, will himself testify that all this could not have come about by itself. There is certainly a wise plan underlying it, according to which harmonies and relationships of the soil, water, air and season with respect to the vegetation, and harmonics and relationships of the vegetation with respect to the needs and requirements of animals and human beings have been determined, keeping in view the finest detail. No sensible person can imagine that these universal, all-embracing relationships could be a mere accident. This same subtle arrangement points to the fact that this cannot be the work of many gods. This is, and can only be the work of One God, Who is the Creator and Lord of the earth, water, air, sun, vegetation, animals and mankind. If each of these had a separate god, it cannot be imagined that such a comprehensive and universal plan with such deep and wise relationship and harmony could be produced, and should have continued to work with such regularity for millions upon millions of years.

After giving these arguments for Tauhid, Allah says: Do they not then give thanks? That is: Are these people so thankless and ungrateful that they do not render thanks to that God Who has provided all this for their survival, but thank others for the blessings and favors done by Him? Are

they so wretched that instead of bowing before Him they bow before the false gods, who have not created even a blade of grass for them?

36. Glory be to Him^{*30} who created all the pairs of what the earth grows, and of their own (human) kind (male and female), and of that which they do not know.^{*31}

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ
كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ وَمِنْ
أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

***30** Glory be to Him: He is free from every defect and fault, from every error and weakness, and that another one should be His associate and partner in His work. The Quran has generally used these words when refuting polytheistic beliefs, because every belief of shirk is, in fact, an imputation of some defect, some weakness and some fault to Allah. When a person says that Allah has an associate, he in fact, thinks that either Allah is incapable of running and ruling His Kingdom alone, or He is under compulsion to make another His associate in His work. Or, some other beings are so powerful in themselves that they are interfering in God's administration and God is putting up with their interference. Or, God forbid, Allah has the weaknesses of the worldly kings, due to which He is surrounded by an army of ministers, courtiers, flatterers and beloved princes or princesses, and thus many powers of Godhead have become divided among them. Had there been no such notions of ignorance about Allah in the minds, there could be no question of any idea of shirk in the world. That is why it has been stated again and again in the Quran

That Allah is free from and exalted far above those defects and faults and weaknesses which the mushriks ascribe to Him.

***31** This is still another argument for Tauhid. Here again certain realities of daily experience have been mentioned and it is suggested that man observes these day and night but does not ponder over them seriously, whereas they contain signs and pointers to the reality. The coming together of the man and woman is the cause of man's own birth. Procreation among the animals also is due to the combination between the male and the female. Also about vegetation, man knows that the law of sex is working in it. Even among the lifeless substances when different things combine with one another, a variety of compounds come into existence. The basic composition of matter itself has become possible due to the close affinity between the positive and the negative electric charges. This law of the pairs which is the basis of the existence of the entire universe, contains in itself such complexities and finenesses of wisdom and workmanship, and there exist such harmonies and mutual relationships between the members of each pair that an objective observer can neither regard it as the result of an accident, nor can he believe that many different gods might have created these countless pairs and matched their members, one with the other, with such great wisdom. The members of each pair being a perfect match for each other and coming into being of new things with their combination itself is an explicit argument of the Creator's being One and only One.

37. And a sign for them is the night, We withdraw from it the (light of) day, then behold, they are in darkness.*32

وَأَيَّةٌ لَهُمْ اللَّيْلُ نَسَخْنَا مِنْهُ
النَّهَارَ فَإِذَا هُمْ مُظْلَمُونَ

*32 The alternation of the night and day also is one of those realities which man does not regard as worthy of much attention only because it is a phenomenon of daily occurrence and experience; whereas if he considers how the day passes and how the night falls, and what is the wisdom in the passing of the day and in the falling of the night, he will himself realize that this is an obvious sign of the existence of an All-Powerful and All-Wise Allah and of His being One and only One. The day cannot pass and the night cannot fall until the sun hides from the earth. The great regularity which is found in the alternation of the day and night was not possible unless the sun and the earth were bound in one and the same relentless system. Then the deep relationship which exists between the alternation of the day and night and the other creations on the earth clearly points to the fact that this system has been established deliberately by a Being with perfect wisdom. The existence on the earth, of the men and animals and vegetation, and even of water and air and different minerals, is in fact, the result of placing the earth at a particular distance from the sun, with the arrangement that the different parts of the earth should go on successively coming before the sun and hiding from it at definite intervals. If the distance of the earth from the sun had been a little longer, or a little

shorter, or there had been a perpetual night on one side of it and a perpetual day on the other, or the alternation of the day and night had been much faster or much slower, or sometimes the day had appeared suddenly and sometimes the night without any system, no life could be possible on this planet, and even the form and appearance of the inorganic substances would have been much different from what it is now. If the hearts are not blinded, one can clearly perceive in this system the working of a God, Who willed to bring into being this particular kind of creation on the earth and then established relevance, harmonies and relationships between the earth and the sun precisely in accordance with its needs and requirements. If a person regards the concept of the existence of God and His Unity as far removed from reason, he should think for himself and see how much farther removed should it be from reason to ascribe this wonderful creation to many gods, or to think that all this has happened automatically under some deaf and blind law of nature. When a person who can accept without question these latter unreasonable explanations, only on the basis of conjecture and speculation, says that the existence of a system and wisdom and purpose is not a sufficient proof of the existence of God, it becomes difficult for us to believe whether such a person really feels the need and necessity of a rational proof, sufficient or insufficient in any degree whatever, for accepting any concept of creed in the world.

38. And the sun runs on its fixed course for a term (or to

وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا^ج

its place of rest).^{*33} That is the decree of the All Mighty, the All Knowing.

ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ



***33** “Place of rest” may either mean the place where the sun will ultimately come to a halt, or the time when it will come to a halt. The true meaning of this verse can be determined only when man has attained the full and exact knowledge of the realities of the universe. But man’s knowledge is such that it has been changing in every age and what he seems to know today might change tomorrow. The people of the ancient times on the basis of their observations of the sun believed that it was moving round the earth. Then after further research and observation the view became that the sun was stationary and all the planets of the solar system were revolving round it. But this theory also did not last long. The later observations revealed that not only the sun but all the stars are also moving in a particular direction, at speeds of 10 to 100 miles per second. About the sun the modern astronomers hold the view that it is moving at a speed of 20 kilometers (about 12 miles) per second along with its whole family of the planets. (See Star and Sun in Encyclopedia Britannica).

39. And the moon, We have appointed for it phases until it returns (appears) like the old dried curved date stalk.^{*34}

وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَّرْنَاهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ

عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ



***34** That is, the phases of the moon go on changing throughout the month. It begins as a crescent, then goes on waxing every day till it becomes the full moon on the 14th

of the month. Then it starts waning every day till at last it returns to its original shape of the crescent. The same has been happening for millions of years with perfect regularity, and no change has ever occurred in the phases of the moon. That is why one can always calculate and find out exactly in what phase the moon will be on a particular day. If the movement of the moon had not been bound in a system, estimation of its phases would not have been possible.

40. It is not allowable for the sun to reach the moon,^{*35} nor does the night overtake the day.^{*36} And each, in an orbit, is floating.^{*37}

لَا الشَّمْسُ يُنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ
الْقَمَرَ وَلَا أَلَيْلٌ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ
وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ

***35** This sentence can have two meanings and both are correct.

(1) The sun does not have the power that it should draw the moon into itself, or enter its orbit and collide with it.

(2) The sun cannot appear in the times which have been appointed for the rising and appearing of the moon. It is not possible that the sun should suddenly appear on the horizon when the moon is shining at night.

***36** Nor does this happen either that the night should approach before the appointed period of the day comes to an end, and should start spreading its darkness suddenly during the time when the day is meant to spread its light.

***37** The word *falak* in Arabic is used for the orbit of the planets, and it gives a different meaning from the word

sama (sky). The sentence, “Each in an orbit is floating” points to four realities.

(1) That not only the sun and the moon but all the stars and planets and celestial bodies are moving.

(2) The *falak*, or orbit, of each one of them is separate.

(3) That the orbits are not moving with the stars in them, but the stars are moving in the orbits.

(4) That the movement of the stars in their orbits is similar to the floating of something in a fluid.

These verses are not intended to describe the realities of astronomy, but are meant to make man understand that if he looks around himself, with open eyes, and uses his common sense, he will find countless and limitless proofs of the existence of God and His Unity, and he will not come across a single proof of atheism and shirk. The vastness of the solar system in which our earth is included is such that its parent body, the sun, is 300,000 times bigger than the earth, and its farthest planet Neptune is at least 2,793 million miles distant from the sun. However, if Pluto is taken as the farthest planet, it revolves 4,600 million miles away round it. Notwithstanding this vastness, the solar system occupies a very insignificant part of a huge galaxy. The galaxy which includes our solar system has about 3,000 million suns in it, and its nearest sun is so distant from our earth that its light takes about four years to reach us. Then this galaxy also is not the whole universe. According to the investigations made so far, it has been estimated that it is one of about 2,000,000 spiral nebulae, and the nearest nebula is about a million light years away from the earth.

As for the farthest celestial bodies which are visible through the modern instruments, their light reaches the earth in about 100 million years. Even now it cannot be claimed that man has seen the whole universe. It is a small part of the Kingdom of God which man has yet been able to observe. It cannot be predicted how far and deep man will yet be able to see with greater and more efficient means of observation at his disposal.

All the information that has been gathered so far about the universe proves that this whole world is made up of the same substance of which our tiny earthly world is made, and the same law is working in the universe which is working in the world of our earth; otherwise it was not at all possible, that man should have made observations of the very distant worlds from the earth, measured their distances and estimated their movements. Is it not a clear proof of the fact that this whole universe is the creation of One God and the Kingdom of One Ruler? Then from the order and the wisdom and the excellence of workmanship and the deep relationships which are found in the hundreds of thousands of the galaxies and in the millions and billions of the stars and planets revolving in them no sensible person can imagine that all this has come about automatically. Is it possible that there should be no administrator behind this order and system, no sage behind this wisdom, no designer behind this design and work of art, and no planner behind this planning?

41. And a sign for them
is that We carried their

وَأَيُّهُمْ أَنَا حَمَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتِهِمْ فِي

offspring in the laden
vessel.*38

أَلْفُكِ الْمَشْحُونِ ﴿٤١﴾

*38 “A laden vessel”: the Ark of the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him). As to boarding of the progeny of man in it, it means that although apparently a few companions of the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) had boarded it, in reality all human beings who are to be born till Resurrection were boarding it; all the rest of mankind had been drowned in the flood, all later human beings are the children of those who were rescued in the Ark.

42. And We have created for them from the likes of it that which they ride.*39

وَخَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِنْ مِثْلِهِ مَا يَرْكَبُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

*39 This indicates that the first vessel ever to be made in the world was the one made by the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him). Before that time man did not know any method of crossing the rivers and the seas. This method was first of all taught by Allah to the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him), and when some servants, of Allah were rescued in it from the flood, their future generations started making boats and ships for their sea journeys.

43. And if We will, We could drown them, then there would be no help for them, neither would they be saved.

وَإِنْ نَشَاءُ نُغْرِقْهُمْ فَلَا صَرِيحَ لَهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْقَذُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

44. Except it be a mercy from Us and as comfort for a while.*40

إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَمَتَاعًا إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

***40** The signs until now were mentioned as arguments for Tauhid. This sign has been mentioned to make man realize that whatever powers he has been given over the forces of nature, have been given him by Allah and are not of his own acquirement. And whatever methods he has discovered of exploiting these forces; have been discovered also through the guidance of Allah and not solely by himself. Man did not have the power and strength to have subdued these great forces by his own power, nor the capability to have discovered the secrets of nature himself and known the methods of taking service from them. Then he can use and employ the forces over which he has been given control by Allah only till the time that Allah wills them to remain subdued to him. For when Allah wills otherwise the same forces which were serving man turn against him suddenly and he finds himself utterly helpless before them. To call man's attention to this reality, Allah has presented the case of the sea journey only as an example. The whole human race would have perished in the flood had Allah not taught the method of making the vessel to the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) and had his followers not boarded it. Then the scattering of the human race over the whole earth became possible only because the people learned the principles of building vessels from Allah and became able to cross the rivers and oceans. But from that humble beginning till today in spite of making great strides in the art of building huge ships and attaining every possible perfection in the science of navigation, man cannot claim that he has brought the rivers and the oceans fully

under his control and power. Even today the water of God is still in God's own power alone and whenever He wills He drowns man along with his ships in it.

45. And when it is said to them, fear of what is before you and what is behind you,^{*41} that you may receive mercy.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّقُوا مَا بَيْنَ
أَيْدِيكُمْ وَمَا خَلْفَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُرْحَمُونَ

*41 "What is behind you": Which the peoples before you have seen and experienced.

46. And there does not come to them any sign from among the signs of their Lord, except that they are turning away from it.^{*42}

وَمَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ مِنْ آيَاتِ
رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ

*42 "Signs": Verses of the divine Book by which man is admonished, and the signs which are found in the universe and in man's own self and in his history which serve as abject lessons for man, provided he is inclined to learn any lesson.

47. And when it is said to them, spend of that which Allah has provided for you, those who disbelieve say to those who believe: "Shall we feed those whom, if Allah had willed, He would have

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا
رَزَقَكُمْ اللَّهُ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْطَعِمُ مَنْ لَوْ
يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ أَطَعَمَهُدَّ إِنَّ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا

fed. You are not except in manifest error.”^{*43}

فِ ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٤٧﴾

***43** This means to show that disbelief has not only blinded their intellect but has destroyed their moral sense, too. They neither have the right thought about Allah nor do they adopt the right attitude towards the people. They react adversely to every admonition, follow a perverse philosophy in respite of every deviation and immorality and have a ready-made pretense for escape from every good.

48. And they say:^{*44} “When will this promise be (fulfilled), if you are truthful.”^{*45}

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

***44** After Tauhid the other question about which a dispute was raging between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the disbelievers was the question of the Hereafter. Rational arguments about this have been given in the end of the discourse. Here, before giving the arguments, the Hereafter has been depicted with all its horrors so that the people should know that what they are refusing to believe in cannot be averted by their denial, but they have to meet and experience it one day inevitably.

***45** The question did not mean that they wanted to know the exact date of the coming of the Hereafter, and if, for instance, they were told that it would take place on such and such a date in such and such a month and year, their doubts would have been removed and they would have believed in it. Such questions, in fact, were put as a challenge only for the sake of argument. What they meant

to say was that there would be no Resurrection whatever, as if to say: You are threatening us with Resurrection without rhyme or reason. That is why in reply it has not been said that Resurrection will take place on such and such a day, but that it shall come and shall be accompanied by such and such horrors.

49. They do not await except one shout, which will seize them while they are disputing.*46

مَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً
تَأْخُذُهُمْ وَهُمْ يَخِصِّمُونَ

*46 That is, the Resurrection will not take place piecemeal so that the people may leisurely watch its coming, but it will come all of a sudden when the people will be engaged in their daily business and they will have no idea whatever that the end of the world had approached. There will be a terrible blast and everyone will fall dead at the spot.

Abdullah bin Amr and Abu Hurairah have related a Hadith from the Prophet (peace be upon him) saying: The people will be walking on the roads as usual, will be buying and selling in the markets, will be disputing matters in their assemblies, when suddenly the Trumpet shall be sounded. Thereupon the one who was buying cloth would collapse and he would not have the time to put down the cloth from his hand; the one who was filling a cistern to water his animals would not have the time to water; and the one who was going to eat, would not have the time to lift the morsel to his mouth and Resurrection will take place.

50. Then they will not be able to make bequest, nor

فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ تَوْصِيَةً وَلَا إِلَىٰ

will they return to their household.

أَهْلِهِمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

51. And the trumpet will be blown, then behold, they will rush forth from the graves to their Lord.*47

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَإِذَا هُمْ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَنْسِلُونَ

***47** For the explanation of the blowing of the Trumpet, see E.N. 78 of Surah TaHa. As for the length of the interval between the first blowing of the Trumpet and its second blowing, we have no information. The interval may be of hundreds and thousands of years. Abu Hurairah has related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Israfil has put the Trumpet to his mouth and is looking up to the divine Throne, awaiting orders for blowing it. The Trumpet will be blown thrice.

On the first blowing, called *nafakhat al-faza*, everything in the earth and heavens will be struck with terror. On the second blowing, called *nafakhat as-Saaq*, everyone will fall down dead. Then, when none shall remain except Allah, the One, the Everlasting, the earth will be changed altogether and will be spread flat and smooth without a crease or wrinkle on it. Then Allah will administer a rebuke to His Creation, whereupon everyone will rise at the spot where he had fallen dead, on the changed earth, and this will happen on the third blowing of the Trumpet called *nafakhat al qiyam li-Rabbil-Alamin*. This is supported by several allusions in the Quran also.

For example, see Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 48; Surah TaHa,

Ayats 105-108, and the E.Ns thereof.

52. They will say: “Woe upon us, who has raised us up from our place of sleep.”^{*48} This is what the Beneficent did promise, and the messengers spoke truth.^{*49}

قَالُوا يَنْوِيْلَنَا مَنْ بَعَثَنَا مِنْ
مَرْقَدِنَا هَذَا مَا وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ
وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلُونَ

***48** That is, at that time they will not realize that they had been dead and had been raised back to life after a long period, but they will be thinking that they had fallen asleep, and had been woken up suddenly by some terrible catastrophe, and were running away from it. (For further details, see Surahs TaHa, Ayat 103; Al-Hajj, Ayats 1-2).

***49** Here, it is not clear as to who will give this answer. It may be that they themselves would realize after some time to their horror that it was the same thing of which the Messengers of God used to inform them and they used to belie them. It may also be that the believers will remove their misunderstanding and tell them that it was not waking up from sleep but the second life after death. And it may also be that they will understand this from the general conditions prevailing on the Day of Resurrection and the angels might tell them this.

53. It will be not be but one shout, then behold, they will be brought together before Us.

إِنْ كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً
فَإِذَا هُمْ جَمِيعٌ لَدَيْنَا مُحْضَرُونَ

54. So this Day^{*50} no soul will be wronged in anything, nor will you be recompensed except for what you used to do.

فَالْيَوْمَ لَا تُظَلَّمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا وَلَا
تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ
تَعْمَلُونَ

***50** This is what Allah will tell the disbelievers and the polytheists, the sinners and the culprits, when they will be presented before Him.

55. Indeed, the dwellers of the Paradise on that Day will be busy in joyful things.^{*51}

إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمَ فِي
شُغْلٍ فَكِهِونَ

***51** To understand this one should remember that the righteous believers will not be withheld in the Plain of Resurrection, but in the very beginning they will be sent to Paradise without accountability, or after a mild reckoning, because their record will be clean. There will be no need to keep them waiting during the hearing by the Court. Therefore, Allah will tell the culprits, who will be required to render their accounts, in the Plain of Resurrection: Look! the righteous people whom you used to mock and regard as foolish in the world, are today enjoying the pleasures of Paradise because of their wisdom, and you, who in your own judgment were very prudent and sagacious, are being condemned to accountability for your misdeeds.

56. They and their spouses, in pleasant shade, reclining

هُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ فِي ظِلِّ عَلَى

on adorned couches.

الْأَرَائِكِ مُتَّكِنُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

57. For them are fruits therein, and for them whatever they ask for.

لَهُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَهُمْ مَا يَدْعُونَ

﴿٥٧﴾

58. Peace, the word from the Lord, Most Merciful.

سَلَامٌ قَوْلًا مِّن رَّبِّ رَحِيمٍ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. Stand you apart, this Day, O you criminals. ^{*52}

وَأَمْتَرُوا الْيَوْمَ أَيُّهَا الْمَجْرِمُونَ

﴿٥٩﴾

***52** This can have two meanings:

(1) Get you apart from the righteous believer; for in the world even if you belonged to the same community and the same clan and the same brotherhood, here you have no connection and relationship left with them.

(2) Get you apart from one another: now you can no longer remain a group. All your parties have been disbanded. All your relations and connections have been severed. Now each of you will be held answerable in your personal capacity for your actions and deeds.

60. Did I not ordain for you, O Children of Adam, that you should not worship the Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.

﴿ أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ

عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٦٠﴾

61. And that you worship Me.
That is the straight path.*53

وَأَنْ أَعْبُدُونِي ۚ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ
مُسْتَقِيمٌ

*53 Here again Allah has used *ibadat* (worship) in the sense of *itaat* (obedience). This subject has already been explained above in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 172; Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 117, Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 121, 137, Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 31; Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 22; Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 52; Surah Maryam, Ayat 42, Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 63 and E.N. 63 of Surah Saba. In this connection, the fine explanation given of it by Imam Razi in his Tafsir Kabir is also noteworthy. He writes: Do not worship Satan means: Do not obey him, the reason being that only falling prostrate before him is not forbidden, but following him and obeying his commands also is forbidden; therefore, *itaat* (obedience) is *ibadat* (worship). After this, the Imam raises the question: If *ibadat* means *itaat*, then have the Muslims been commanded to worship the Prophet and the rulers in the verse: *Atiullahi wa ati-ur-rasula wa ulil-amri min-kum*? He himself answers it thus: If obedience to them is in accordance with the commands of Allah, it will be Allah's worship (*ibadat*) and His obedience (*itaat*). Did not the angels fall prostrate before Adam in obedience to Allah's command? This was nothing but worship of Allah. Obedience of the rulers will be their worship only in cases where they are obeyed in matters in which Allah has not given leave to obey them. Then he writes: If a person comes to you and commands you to do something, you should see

whether his command is in accordance with the command of Allah or not. If it is not, Satan is with him; and if you obeyed him in this, you worshiped him and his Satan. Likewise, if your self urges you to do something, you should see whether it is permissible to do it according to the Sahariah or not. If it is not permissible, your self is Satan itself, or Satan is with it. If you obeyed him, you in fact became guilty of worshiping him. Further on, he writes: But there are different degrees of the worship of Satan. Sometimes it so happens that a man does a work and his limbs and his tongue also join him in this, and his heart also cooperates. At another time it so happens that a man uses his limbs to do a work but his heart and tongue do not cooperate in this. Some people commit a sin while their heart is disagreeable and their tongue is invoking Allah for forgiveness, and they confess that they are committing an evil. This is Satan's worship with external limbs. There are other people who commit a crime with a cool mind and express pleasure and satisfaction with the tongue also. Such people are the worshipers of Satan from outside as well as from inside. (Tafsir Kabir, vol. VII, pp. 103-104).

62. And certainly, he did lead astray a great multitude of you. Did you not then understand.*⁵⁴

وَلَقَدْ أَضَلَّ مِنْكُمْ جِبِلًّا كَثِيرًا
أَفَلَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْقِلُونَ

*54 That is, If you had been deprived of reason and you had served your enemy instead of your Lord, you could have the reason to offer an excuse. But you, in fact, had been blessed with reason by Allah and you were using it to

advantage in all the affairs of the world, and you had been warned by Allah through the Prophets as well, yet, when you were deceived by your enemy and he succeeded in leading you astray, you could not be excused from the responsibility of your folly.

63. This is Hell which you were promised.

هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ
تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

64. Burn therein this Day, for what you used to disbelieve.

أَصْلَوْهَا الْيَوْمَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

65. That Day, We shall seal up their mouths, and their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will bear witness as to what they used to earn.^{*55}

الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَىٰ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ
وَتُكَلِّمُنَا أَيْدِيهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ
أَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

^{*55} This command will be given in respect of the stubborn culprits, who will refuse to confess their crimes, will belie the witnesses, and will also not acknowledge the genuineness of their conduct-book. Then will Allah Almighty command: Well, stop your babbling. Just see what your own limbs say about your misdeeds. In this connection, here only the evidence to be given by the hands and the feet has been mentioned. But at other places it has

been said that their eyes and their ears and their tongues, and the very skins of their body, will tell how they had been employed in the world. They should not forget the Day when their own tongues and their own hands and feet will bear testimony to their misdeeds. (Surah An-Noor, Ayat 24) Then, when all will have reached there, their ears and their eyes and their very skins will bear witness against them concerning what they had been doing in the world. (Surah HaMim-Sajdah, Ayat 20). The question arises: On the one hand, Allah says: We shall seal their mouths, and on the other hand, in the verse of Surah An-Noor, He says: Their tongues will bear testimony against them. How can these two things be reconciled? The answer is: To seal the mouths means to deprive them of their power of speech. That is, after this they will not be able to say whatever they like with their tongue. The testimony of their tongues means that their tongues themselves will tell how the wicked people had used them, what blasphemies and lies they had been made to utter, what mischief they had invented and what falsehoods they had been made to say on different occasions.

66. And if We willed, We could have obliterated their eyes, then they would struggle for the way, then how could they have seen.

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَطَمَسْنَا عَلَىٰ أَعْيُنِهِمْ
فَأَسْتَبَقُوا الصِّرَاطَ فَأَنَّى
يُبْصِرُونَ

67. And if We willed, We could have deformed them in

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَمَسَخْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ

their places, so they would not be able to proceed, nor could they return.*56

مَكَانَتِهِمْ فَمَا اسْتَطَعُوا
مُضِيًّا وَلَا يَرْجِعُونَ

*56 After depicting the scene of Resurrection, the people are being warned to this effect: The Resurrection may seem yet far off to you, but even if you consider seriously your life in this world of which you are so proud, you will see how helpless you are in the powerful grip of Allah. Your eyes by virtue of whose sight you are carrying out all your obligations in the world can be blinded at one command of Allah. Your legs on whose strength you are showing all this activity can become paralyzed as and when Allah wills. As long as the powers and capabilities granted by Allah continue to function, you remain lost in the arrogance of your self, but as soon as one of them fails to function, you come to understand how helpless you are.

68. And he to whom We bring to old age, We reverse him in creation.*57 So will they not understand.

وَمَنْ نُعَمِّرْهُ نُنَكِّسْهُ فِي الْخَلْقِ
أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ

*57 "Reverse him in creation," means that in old age Allah turns him back to the state of childhood. He becomes unable to stand and walk without the help and support of others; he is fed by others; he urinates and defecates in bed; talks childishly and is laughed at by others. In short, towards the end of life he returns to the same state of weakness with which he had started life in this world.

69. And We have not taught him (Muhammad) poetry, nor would it be fitting for him.^{*58} This is not but a Reminder and a clear Quran.

وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي
لَهُ^ج إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ وَقُرْآنٌ
مُّبِينٌ

***58** This is a rejoinder to the disbelievers, who slighted the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his message by branding him a poet when he preached Tauhid and talked of the Hereafter, life-after-death, and Hell and Heaven. (For further explanation, see Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 224-227 and the E.Ns thereof).

70. That it may give warning to him who is living,^{*59} and that the word may be fulfilled against the disbelievers.

لِيُنذِرَ مَنْ كَانَ حَيًّا وَيَحِقَّ
الْقَوْلُ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

***59** Every living person means: Every person who is capable of thinking and understanding, who is not like a stone, which neither hears nor understands nor moves from its place however rationally and sympathetically one may explain the distinction between the truth and falsehood and give admonition before him.

71. Have they not seen that We have created for them, of what Our own hands have made,^{*60} the cattle, so that they are their owners.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا خَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِمَّا
عَمِلَتْ أَيْدِينَا أَنْعَامًا فَهُمْ لَهَا
مَالِكُونَ

***60** The word “hands” has been used metaphorically for Allah. This does not mean that, God forbid, Allah has a body and He works with the hands like human beings, but it means to impress that Allah has made these things Himself, and none else has any share in the matter of their creation.

72. And We have subdued them (cattle) unto them, so some of them they have for riding, and some of them they eat.

وَذَلَّلْنَاهَا لَهُمْ فَمِنْهَا رَكُوبُهُمْ وَمِنْهَا يَأْكُلُونَ



73. And for them therein are benefits and drinks. So will they not be grateful.^{*61}

وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ وَمَشَارِبٌ أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ



***61** It is ingratitude to regard a blessing as a gift of someone other than the donor, to be grateful to another for it, and to cherish the hope of receiving it or to seek it from another than the donor. Likewise, it is also ingratitude that one should use a blessing against the will of the donor. Therefore, a mushrik or a disbeliever or a hypocrite or a sinful person cannot be regarded as a grateful servant of God when he utters words of thankfulness only with the tongue. The disbelievers of Makkah did not deny that the cattle had been created by Allah; none of them said that the other deities had any hand in their creation. But despite knowing all this when they paid homage to their deities for the blessings granted by Allah, presented offerings before them and prayed to them for more blessings and offered

sacrifices for their sake, their verbal gratitude became meaningless. That is why Allah has regarded them as guilty of ingratitude and thanklessness.

74. And they have taken besides Allah (other) gods, that they may be helped.

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ءِالِهَةً
لَعَلَّهُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

75. They are not able to help them, and they will be brought forward as a troop against those^{*62} (who worshipped them).

لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُمْ
جُنْدٌ مُحْضَرُونَ

*62 That is, the poor false gods themselves are dependent upon their worshipers for their survival and their safety and their needs. But for their multitudes they could not survive as gods even for a day. These people are behaving as their humble servants. They are setting up and decorating their shrines; they carry out propaganda for them; they fight and quarrel with others for their sake. Then only are they recognized as gods. They are not the real God, Who, whether someone recognizes Him or not, is ruling over the whole universe by His own might and authority.

76. So let not their speech grieve you (O Muhammad). Indeed, We know what they conceal and what they proclaim.^{*63}

فَلَا يَحْزُنكَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِنَّا نَعْلَمُ
مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ

*63 The address is to the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Here the allusion is to the campaign of vilification which the chiefs of the disbelievers of Makkah were carrying on against him. They knew in their hearts and acknowledged in their private assemblies that the charges they brought against him were absolutely baseless. In order to create suspicions against him in the minds of the people, they branded him a poet, sorcerer, magician, madman, etc. But their consciences recognized, and they also acknowledged before one another, that whatever they were uttering was false, which they were forging only to frustrate his mission. That is why Allah says to His Prophet: Do not grieve at their absurd and meaningless talk. Those who are opposing and resisting the truth with falsehood shall ultimately meet with failure in this world and see their evil end in the Hereafter, too.

77. Has^{*64} not man seen that We created him from a sperm drop. Then behold, he is an open adversary.^{*65}

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ
نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُّبِينٌ



***64** Here the disbelievers' question cited in verse 48 above, is being answered by reason and argument. The question: When will the threat of Resurrection be carried out? had not been asked with a view to find out the exact date of the coming of the Hereafter. But they asked it because they thought it was impossible, rather irrational, that human beings would be raised back to life after death. That is why, in reply to their question, arguments are being given for the

possibility of the Hereafter.

According to the traditions related by Ibn Abbas, Qatadah and Said bin Jubair, one of the chiefs of Makkah, on this occasion, came up with a rotten bone of a dead person, from the graveyard. He broke and crushed it into pieces before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and scattering its particles in the air, said: O Muhammad, you say that the dead will be raised back to life. Tell us who will give life to these decayed and rotten bones? The answer was given immediately in the form of these verses.

***65** That is, We caused the sperm-drop which contained nothing but the basic germ of life to develop to an extent that it started moving and eating like the animals. Furthermore, it has developed such powers of intellect and reasoning and disputation and speech, which are not possessed by any animal; so much so that now he dares stand up as an adversary before his Creator!

78. And he puts forth for Us a similitude,^{*66} and forgets his own creation.^{*67} He says: “Who will revive the bones while they have rotted away.”

وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ
قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظْمَ وَهِيَ
رَمِيمٌ



***66** That is, he regards Us powerless and weak like the creation, and thinks that just as man cannot raise the dead back to life, so also can't We.

***67** “Forgets his own creation”: Forgets that We created the basic germ of life from dead matter, which became the means of his creation; then We caused the germ to develop

to such an extent that now he stands before Us as a disputant.

79. Say: "He will revive them who produced them the first time. And He is Knower of every creation."

قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنْشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ
مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ

80. He who produces for you fire out of the green tree, then behold, you kindle from it.*68

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ
الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا فَإِذَا أَنْتُمْ مِنْهُ
توقِدُونَ

*68 It either means that He has placed the inflammable matter in the green trees due to which people kindle fire from the pieces of wood. Or, it is an allusion to the *markh* and *afar* trees, whose green branches the Arabs struck against each other to produce the sparks. In ancient times the Bedouins used this method of kindling the fire and might even be using the same today.

81. Is not He, who created the heavens and the earth Able to create the likes of them. Yes, and He is surely the Supreme Creator, All Knowing.

أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ بِقَدِيرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ
مِثْلَهُمْ بَلَىٰ وَهُوَ الْخَلَّاقُ الْعَلِيمُ

82. Indeed, His command, when He intends a thing, is that He says to

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ

it. "Be," and it is.

يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٨٢﴾

83. So glory be to Him in whose hand is the dominion of all things. And unto Him you will be brought back.

فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِي فِي يَدَيْهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾





الصَّافَّت As-Saffat

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The name is derived from the word *was-saffat* with which the Surah begins.

Period of Revelation

The subject matter and the style show that this Surah probably was revealed in the middle of the Makkan period, or perhaps in the last stage of the middle Makkan period. The style clearly indicates that antagonism is raging strong in the background and the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions are passing through very difficult and discouraging circumstances.

Subject Matter and Theme

The disbelievers of Makkah have been severely warned for their attitude of mockery and derision with which they were responding to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) message of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter and for their utter refusal to accept and acknowledge his claim to Prophethood. In the end, they have been plainly warned that the Prophet (peace be upon him) whom they are mocking and ridiculing will overwhelm them in spite of

their power and they will find the army of Allah encamping in the very courtyards of their houses (verses 171-179). This notice was given at a time when there appeared no chance whatever of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) success and triumph. The Muslims (who have been called Allah's army in these verses) were being made the target of severe persecution. Three fourth of their population had already emigrated and hardly 40 to 50 of the companions were left with the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Makkah who were experiencing all sorts of the excesses with utter helplessness. Under such circumstances, in view of the apparent conditions, no one could believe that the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the handful of his ill equipped companions would ultimately attain dominance. The people rather thought that the new movement would end and be buried in the ravines of Makkah. But hardly 15 to 16 years had passed when on the conquest of Makkah precisely the same thing happened of which the disbelievers had been forewarned.

Along with administering warnings, Allah in this Surah has done full justice also to the theme of inducement and instruction in a balanced way. Brief but impressive arguments have been given about the validity of the doctrines of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter. Criticism has been made of the creed of the *mushrikin* to show the absurdity of their beliefs. They have been informed of the evil consequences of their deviations, which have been contrasted with the splendid results of the faith and righteous acts. Then, in continuation of the same,

precedents from past history have been cited to show how Allah had been treating His Prophets and their followers: how He has been favoring His faithful servants and punishing their deniers and rejectors.

The most instructive of the historical narratives presented in this Surah is the important event of the pious life of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), who became ready to sacrifice his only son as soon as he received an inspiration from Allah. In this there was a lesson not only for the disbelieving Quraish, who waxed proud of their blood relationship with him, but also for the Muslims who had believed in Allah and His Messenger. By narrating this event they were told what was the essence and the real spirit of Islam, and how a true believer should be ready to sacrifice his everything for the pleasure and approval of Allah after he has adopted it as his faith and creed.

The last verses of the Surah were not only a warning for the disbelievers but also a good news for the believers who were passing through highly unfavorable and discouraging conditions on account of their supporting and following the Prophet (peace be upon him). In these verses they were given the good news that they should not be disheartened at the hardships and difficulties they had to encounter in the beginning, for in the end they alone would attain dominance, and the standard bearers of falsehood, who appeared to be dominant at the time would be overwhelmed and vanquished at their hands. A few years later the turn the events took, proved that it was not an empty consolation but an inevitable reality of which they

had been foretold in order to strengthen their hearts.

1. By those (angels) ranged in ranks.

وَالصَّافَّتِ صَفًّا
١

2. And those (angels) who drive away with strength.

فَالزَّجْرَاتِ زَجْرًا
٢

3. And those (angels) who recite the reminder.*¹

فَالتَّلِيَّتِ ذِكْرًا
٣

*1 The majority of the commentators agree that all these three groups imply the groups of the angels, and the same explanation of it has been reported from Abdullah bin Masud, Ibn Abbas, Qatadah, Masruq Said bin Jubair, Ikrimah, Mujahid, Suddi, Ibn Zaid and Rabi bin Anas. Some commentators have given other commentaries also, but this commentary is more in keeping with the context. The words “range in ranks” refer to the fact that all the angels who are administering the affairs of the universe, are the humble servants of Allah, and are ever ready to carry out any service and implement any of His commands. This theme has been further repeated in verse 165 below, where the angels say with regard to themselves: “We are the ranged servants (of Allah).”

As for “drive away with strength”, some commentators think that it refers to those angels who drive the clouds and arrange the rainfall. Although this meaning is not incorrect either, the meaning which is more relevant to the following context is that among these angels there is also a group of those, who scold and curse the disobedient people and the culprits, and this scolding and cursing is not merely verbal

but it rains on human beings in the form of natural disasters and calamities.

“To recite the reminder” implies that among these angels there are also those, who perform the service of admonition in order to draw the people’s attention to the truth. This, they do by bringing about natural calamities from which the heedful take heed, and by bringing down the teachings to the Prophets, and in the form of revelations with which the pious men are blessed through them.

4. Indeed, your Lord is surely One (Real Deity).^{*2}

إِنَّ إِلَهَكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ

^{*2} This is the truth to impress which an oath has been taken by the angels bearing the above-mentioned qualities. In other words, what is meant to be said is: The whole system of the universe which is functioning in the service of Allah, and all those manifestations of this universe which bring the evil consequences of deviation from the service of Allah before men, testify that the “Deity” of men is One and only One.”

The word “*Ilah*” applies to two meanings.

- (1) The Deity who is actually being served and worshiped.
- (2) The Deity who, in reality, is worthy of being served and worshiped.

Here, the word “*Ilah*” has been used in the second meaning, for, as far as the first meaning is concerned, men have adopted many other deities. That is why we have translated *Ilahas* the Real Deity.

5. Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever

رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا

is between them, and Lord^{*3}
of the sun's risings.^{*4}

بَيْنَهُمَا رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ

***3** The truth that has been conveyed in these verses is: The Master and Ruler of the Universe is the Real Deity of men. He alone can be, and should be the Deity. It would be utterly irrational that the Rabb (i.e. Master, Ruler, Guardian and Sustainer) of the man should be one but his Ilah (Deity) another. The basic reason for worship is that man should naturally bow down before and acknowledge the superiority of him who can bring him harm and good, who can fulfill his needs and requirements, who can make or mar his destiny and has power over his life and survival itself. If man understands this, he will automatically understand that to worship the one who has no power and not to worship Him Who has All the powers are both against reason and nature. The One who alone is worthy of worship is He who possesses the powers. As far as the powerless beings are concerned, they are neither worthy of worship, nor is it in any way profitable to worship and pray to them, for it is not in their power to take any action whatsoever on man's petitions and prayers. To bow before them humbly and to petition them would be as foolish and meaningless an act as to bow before and petition another one who has himself gone before a ruler to make obeisance and submit his petitions.

***4** The sun does not always rise at the same point but at a different point every day. Moreover, it does not rise at one and the same time for the whole world but rises at different times for the different parts of the earth. That is why the

plural “*mashariq*” (Easts) has been used to indicate the different points at which the sun rises according to the season of the year. The corresponding word “*magharib*” (West) has not been used because *Mashariq* itself points to *Magharib*. However, in *Surah Al-Maarij*, the word *magharib* also has been used along with *mashariq*: *Rabb-al-mashariqi wal-magharib*.

6. Indeed, We have adorned the nearest (lower) heaven with ornament, the stars.*5

إِنَّا زَيْنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِزِينَةِ
الْكَوَاكِبِ

*5 “Lower heaven”: The nearest heaven which can be seen with the naked eye, without the help of a telescope. The worlds beyond which can be seen through the telescopes of different powers, and the worlds which have not so far been observed through any means, are the distant heavens. In this connection, one should also note that “*sama*” is not something definite and determined, but man generally has been using this word and its other synonyms for the heavens since the earliest times.

7. And as guard against every rebellious devil.*6

وَحِفْظًا مِّنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ مَّارِدٍ

*6 That is, heaven is not merely empty space so that anyone who likes may enter it, but it has been fortified strongly, and its different regions have been bounded by such strong barriers that it is impossible for any rebel satan to exceed them. Every star and planet in the universe has its own

circle and sphere escaping from which is as difficult as entering it. With the naked eye one can only see empty space, but, in reality, there are countless regions in space which have been even more strongly fortified and protected than they could be by steel walls. One can imagine and estimate the strength of these barriers by the difficulties man is experiencing in the way of reaching the moon, which is our nearest neighbor in space. Similar difficulties prevent the other creation of the earth, the jinns, from ascending towards the heavens.

8. They may not listen to the highest chiefs (angels) and they are pelted from every side.

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ إِلَى الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى
وَيُقَذَّفُونَ مِنْ كُلِّ جَانِبٍ ﴿٨﴾

9. Outcast, and for them is a constant punishment.

دُحُورًا ۖ وَهُمْ ^طعَذَابٌ وَاصِبٌ ﴿٩﴾

10. Except him who snatches (some words) by theft, then follows him a flame, piercing.*7

إِلَّا مَنْ خَطِفَ الْخَطْفَةَ فَأَتْبَعَهُ
شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ ﴿١٠﴾

*7 To understand this one should keep in view the fact that, in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), soothsaying was in great vogue in Arabia. The soothsayers used to make predictions, give news of the unseen, tell the whereabouts of the lost properties and articles, and the people used to visit them to know the events of their past and future lives. These soothsayers claimed that they had some jinns and

satans under their control who brought them all sorts of news. In this environment when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was appointed to Prophethood, and he began to recite the verses of the Quran, which described the past history and contained news of the future, and also stated that an angel brought him these verses, his opponents immediately branded him a soothsayer and started telling others that, like the other soothsayers, he too was associated with a satan, who brought him news from the heavens, which he presented as revelations from Allah. To refute this accusation, Allah says: The satans have no access to heaven. They have no power to hear the conversations of the angels and bring its news for others. If by chance a little of it enters the ear of a satan, and he tries to bring it down, he is followed by a flashing flame. In other words, it means: The grand system of the universe, which is functioning under the agency of the angels has been firmly guarded and secured against any interference of the satans. Not to speak of interfering in it, they do not even have the power to obtain any kind of information about it. (For further explanation, see Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 17-18 and the E.Ns thereof).

11. Then ask them “Are they stronger as a creation, or those (others) whom we have created.”*⁸ Indeed, We created them (mankind) from a sticky clay.*⁹

فَأَسْتَفْتِهِمْ أَهْمٌ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ
مَنْ خَلَقْنَا إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِنْ
طِينٍ لَّازِبٍ

*⁸ This is an answer to the suspicions of the disbelievers of

Makkah, which they presented about the Hereafter. They thought that the Hereafter was not possible, for it is impossible that the dead men should be recreated. In answer to it, Allah presents arguments for the possibility of the Hereafter and asks: If you think that the recreation of the dead men is a very difficult task which We do not have the power to accomplish, do you think it is easy to create the earth and the heavens and the countless things that they contain? Why don't you use your common sense? Do you think that God for Whom it was not at all difficult to create this great universe and Who has created you in the first instance, will not have the power to create you once again?

***9** That is, man is not a difficult thing to make. He has been created from clay, and can again be created from the same clay. "Created them from sticky clay" means that the first man was created directly from the clay and then his race was perpetuated by means of the sperm drop. It also means that every man has been created from the sticky clay, for the whole substance of man's body is obtained from the earth. The sperm drop of which he is created is a product of the food, and all the substances which make up his physical being, from the time he is conceived till his death, are also supplied by the food. The source of the food, whether animal flesh or vegetable, is ultimately the same earth which, in combination with water produces corn and vegetables and fruit to become food for man, and nourish the animals, which supply milk and flesh for the use of man.

Thus, the basis of the argument is: Man could not be living

today if the earth and clay had not become the source of life for him. And if it is possible today to create life in it, as your own existence is a clear and definite pointer to this possibility, why should it be impossible to bring about your re-creation from the same earth tomorrow.

12. But you wonder while they mock.

بَلْ عَجِبْتَ وَيَسْخَرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

13. And when they are reminded, they do not pay heed.

وَإِذَا ذُكِّرُوا لَا يَذْكُرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

14. And when they see a sign, they ridicule.

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا آيَةً يَسْتَسْخِرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

15. And they say: "This is not but obvious magic."^{*10}

وَقَالُوا إِن هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٥﴾

***10** That is, this person is talking of the world of magic in which the dead will rise, and will be produced before a court and sent to Heaven and Hell, or it may also mean: This person is talking like a madman. What he talks is a clear proof that somebody has worked magic on him; otherwise a sensible person could not talk such things.

16. "When we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we indeed be resurrected."^{*11}

أَإِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظْمًا
أَإِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

***11** That is, Allah can make of you whatever He likes. When He willed, you came into being forthwith; when He wills, you will die at one command by Him; and then

whenever He wills, His one command will raise you back to life.

17. “And our fathers of old.”

أَوَّابًاؤُنَا أَلَّؤُونَو ١٧

18. Say (O Muhammad):
“Yes and you will be humiliated.”

قُلْ نَعَمْ وَأَنْتُمْ دَاخِرُونَ ١٨

19. So it will be only one shout, then behold they will be seeing.*12

فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ فَإِذَا هُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ١٩

*12 That is, when the time comes for this, it will not be difficult to reestablish the whole world. Just a single shout will be enough to make the people to wake up. Here, the word “shout” is very meaningful. It depicts the Resurrection as though the people who had died since the beginning of the creation till the last Day were lying asleep, and a sudden command to them to wake up will cause them to rise up all at once.

20. And they will say:
“woe to us, this is the Day of Judgment.”

وَقَالُوا يَوَيْلَنَا هَذَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ٢٠

21. This is the Day of Judgment, that which you used to deny.*13

هَذَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ ٢١

*13 It may be that this is said by the believers, or by the angels; or it may be, as it were, the common expression of

the conditions prevailing in the plain of Resurrection or it may as well be another reaction of the people themselves. That is, they may be saying in their hearts. In the world, you lived in a way as if no Day of Judgment would ever come. Now you have come to your doom. This is the same Day that you used to deny.

22. (It will be said to the angels): “Assemble the unjust people,^{*14} and their companions^{*15} and what (gods) they used to worship.”^{*16}

﴿ أَحْشُرُوا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
وَأَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ ﴾



***14** “The unjust people” does not only imply those who committed injustices in the world, but as a Quranic term *zalamo* implies to every such person, who might have adopted the way of rebellion and disobedience against Allah.

***15** The word “*azwaj*” in the original text might also imply their wives, who were their associates in this rebellion, and also all those people who were rebellious and disobedient like them. Moreover it may also mean that the culprits of different categories will be gathered together in separate groups.

***16** “gods” here implies two kinds of the gods.

(1) Those men and satans who themselves desired that the people should worship them instead of Allah.

(2) Those idols and trees and stones, etc., which have actually been worshiped in the world.

The first kind of the gods will be included among the

culprits themselves and will be led to Hell for punishment. The other kind of them will be thrown into Hell along with their worshipers so that they constantly feel ashamed of and continue to regret their follies. Besides, there is also a third kind of the gods, who have been worshiped in the world, but without their own consent and knowledge. They rather forbade the people to worship anyone but Allah, e.g. the angels, prophets and saints. Obviously, this kind of the gods will not be included among the gods who will be driven to Hell along with their worshipers.

23. “Instead of Allah, so lead them to the path to Hellfire.”

مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَأَهْدُوهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. “And stop them, indeed, they are to be questioned.”

وَقِفُوهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ مَسْئُولُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. “What is (matter) with you, you do not help each other.”

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنَاصَرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. But that day they shall make submission.^{*17}

بَلْ هُمْ الْيَوْمَ مُسْتَسْلِمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

*17 The first sentence will be addressed to the culprits, and the second to the common spectators, who will be watching the scene of the culprits’ departure for Hell. This sentence itself tells of the general conditions at the time. It tells how the haughty and stubborn culprits of the world will be moving towards Hell meekly and without showing any resistance. Somewhere some kind will be seen being

pushed about, and no one from among his courtiers will come forward to rescue “his majesty”. Somewhere some conqueror of the world and some dictator will be moving away in humiliation and disgrace, and his brave army itself will deliver him for the punishment. Somewhere some saint or some holy father will be seen being thrown into Hell, and no one of his disciples will bother to save him from disgrace. Somewhere some leader will be trudging helplessly towards Hell, and those who used to glorify and applaud him in the world will turn away their eyes from him. So much so that the one who was ever prepared to sacrifice everything for the beloved in the world, will feel least concerned to save him from his plight. By depicting this scene Allah wants to impress how the relationships of man with man, which are based on rebellion against Allah in the world, will break in the Hereafter, and how the pride of those who are involved in arrogance and conceit here will be ruined.

27. And they will turn to one another, (mutually) questioning.

وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ

28. They will say: “Indeed, you used to come at us from the right side.” *18

قَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَأْتُونَنَا عَنِ الْيَمِينِ

*18 The word *yameen* in Arabic is used for several meanings. It may mean use of the force, or well-wishing, or swearing of an oath. Accordingly, the verse would mean.

- (1) You compelled us into following error and deviation.
 (2) You deceived us by posing as our well-wishers.
 (3) You swore oaths to satisfy us that what you were presenting was the very truth.

29. They will say: “But you yourselves were not believers.”

قَالُوا بَل لَّمْ تَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ



30. “And we had no authority over you. But you were transgressing people.”

وَمَا كَانَ لَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ
 بَلْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا طَٰغِينَ



31. “So the word of our Lord has come true upon us. Indeed, we will taste (punishment).”

فَحَقَّ عَلَيْنَا قَوْلُ رَبِّنَا إِنَّا
 لَذَٰئِقُونَ



32. “So we misled you, indeed we were (ourselves) astray.”*19

فَاغْوَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّا كُنَّا غٰوِينَ



*19 For explanation see E.Ns 51, 52, 53 of Surah Saba.

33. Then indeed they, that Day, will share in the punishment.*20

فَإِنَّهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ فِي الْعَذَابِ
 مُشْتَرِكُونَ



*20 That is, the followers as well as the guides, misleaders as well as the misled, all shall suffer the same torment. Neither will the followers’ excuse be heeded that they did not go astray but had been led astray, nor the guides’

excuse accepted that the people themselves were not desirous of following the right way.

34. Indeed, that is how We deal with the criminals.

إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَفْعَلُ بِالْمُجْرِمِينَ



35. Indeed, when it was said to them: “There is no god but Allah,” they were arrogant.

إِنِّهِمْ كَانُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ



36. And they said: “Shall we abandon our gods for a poet, madman.”

وَيَقُولُونَ أَيَّنَا لَتَارِكُوا ءَالِهَتِنَا لِشَاعِرٍ مَّجْنُونٍ



37. But he has come with the truth, and he confirms the messengers (before him).^{*21}

بَلْ جَاءَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَدَّقَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ



***21 Confirmation of the Messengers has three meanings and all the three are implied here.**

(1) That he had not opposed any former Messenger so that the believers of that Messenger could have a rational ground of prejudice against him; he had rather confirmed all the former Messengers sent by God.

(2) That he had not brought any new or novel thing, but he had presented the same that the former Messengers of God had been presenting from the very beginning.

(3) That he truly fulfilled and corresponded to the predictions that the former Messengers had made

concerning him.

38. Indeed, you are going to taste the painful punishment.

إِنَّكُمْ لَذَائِقُوا الْعَذَابِ الْأَلِيمِ



39. And you will not be recompensed except for what you used to do.

وَمَا تَجْزُونَ إِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ

تَعْمَلُونَ



40. Except the slaves of Allah, sincere.

إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلِصِينَ



41. Those, for them is a provision, determined.*22

أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ رِزْقٌ مَّعْلُومٌ



*22 “A provision, determined”: A provision all of whose characteristics have been made known to them, which they are sure to receive, about which they have also the full satisfaction that they will continue to receive it forever, and about which there is no apprehension that they may or may not get it at some time.

42. Fruits, and they shall be honored.*23

فَوَاكِهُ^ص وَهُمْ مُكْرَمُونَ



*23 In this there is also a subtle allusion to the fact that, in Paradise, the food will be provided not to serve as food but for pleasure and delight. That is, the food there will not be meant to replenish the bodily deficiencies through diet, for no deficiency whatever will occur in the body in that eternal life, nor will man have appetite, for appetite is caused by the process of assimilation in the body, nor will

the body demand food for its survival. That is why the word *fawakih* has been used for the different kinds of food in Paradise, which contains the sense of taste and pleasure more than that of nutrition.

43. In the gardens of delight.

فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٤٣﴾

44. On couches facing one another.

عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

45. Circulating among them^{*24} a cup^{*25} from a gushing spring.^{*26}

يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِكَأْسٍ مِّن مَّعِينٍ ﴿٤٥﴾

***24** Here it has not been mentioned as to who will take these cups of wine round to the dwellers of Paradise. This has been stated at other places. And there will go round to them young boys, exclusively appointed for their service, who will be as lovely as well-guarded pearls. (Surah At-Toor, Ayat 24). They will be attended by brisk-moving boys who will forever remain boys. If you saw them, you would think they were pearls, scattered. (Surah Ad-Dahr, Ayat 19). Then, its further details are found in the traditions related by Anas and Samurah bin Jundub from the Prophet (peace be upon him), according to which: The children of the mushrikin will be attendants of the dwellers of Paradise. (Abu Daud Tayalisi, Tabarani, Bazzar). Though these traditions are weak as regards their links of transmitters, there are several other Ahadith which mean that children who died young, before attaining maturity, will go to Paradise. Ahadith also show that the children

whose parents are blessed with Paradise will live with them so as to be a comfort of the eyes for them. This leaves behind those children whose parents will not go to Paradise. Thus, with regard to them, it seems reasonable that they will be made the attendants of the dwellers of Paradise. (For a detailed discussion of this, see Fath ul-Bari and Umdat ul-Qari: Kitab ul-Janaiz, Bab; Maqila fi-aulad il-mushrikin; Rasail-o-Masail, vol. iii, pp. 177-187).

*25 Here the word *kaas* (cup) only has been used and there is no mention of the wine. But in Arabic the use of *kass* always implies wine. The cup which contains milk or water, instead of wine, or is empty, is not called *kaas*. The word *kaas* is used for a cup only when it contains wine.

*26 That is, it will not be the kind of wine that is extracted from rotten fruit and corn in the world, but it will flow naturally from fountains like canals. In Surah Muhammad, the same thing has been described more clearly, thus: And canals will be flowing in it of wine which will be delightful for the drinkers. (verse 15).

46. White, delicious to the drinkers.

بِيضَاءَ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ
٤٦

47. No headache in it, nor are they intoxicated from it.*27

لَا فِيهَا غَوْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ عَنْهَا
يُنزَفُونَ
٤٧

*27 That is, the wine of Paradise will be free from both the evils which are found in the wine of the world. The wine of the world, first of all, afflicts man with its stink; then it embitters his taste, upsets his stomach, affects his mind and

causes illusion; then it affects the liver and spoils the health generally. Then, when the intoxication is gone, it leaves behind other ill-effects on the body. Its other evil is that man gets drunk with it, talks nonsense and brawls. This is how the wine affects man's mind and reason. Man suffers both these evil effects of the wine only for the sake of delight and pleasure. Allah says that the wine of Paradise will certainly afford and give full pleasure and delight, but it will be free from the kinds of the evils that go with the worldly wine.

48. And with them will be those of modest gaze,^{*28} with lovely eyes (restraining their looks).^{*29}

وَعِنْدَهُمْ قَاصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ عِينٌ



*28 Probably, these will be the girls who died before attaining the age of discretion in the world, and whose parents did not deserve to enter Paradise. This can be said on the basis of analogy that just as the boys similarly placed will be appointed for the service of the dwellers of Paradise, and they will ever remain boys, so will the girls be made the houris and they will ever remain young and beautiful. The correct knowledge, however, is with Allah.

*29 “Restraining their looks”: Restraining their looks from everyone except their husbands.

49. (Pure) as they were eggs, well protected.^{*30}

كَأَنَّهُنَّ بَيْضٌ مَّكْنُونٌ

*30 The words of the text actually mean this: As if they were the hidden or well preserved eggs. The commentators have given different interpretations of these words, but the

correct commentary is the one which Umm Salamah has related from the Prophet (peace be upon him). She says that when she asked the Prophet (peace be upon him), the meaning of this verse, he said: Their delicacy and elegance and tenderness will be like the thin skin which is there between the shell of the egg and its fleshy part. (Ibn Jarir).

50. Then they will turn to one another, (mutually) questioning.

فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ
يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

51. A speaker of them will say: "Indeed, I had a friend."

قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ إِنِّي كَانَ لِي قَرِينٌ
﴿٥١﴾

52. Who would say: "Are you indeed of those who believe."*31

يَقُولُ أَأِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُصَدِّقِينَ
﴿٥٢﴾

*31 That is, were you also one of those credulous people who put their faith in an irrational and impossible thing like life-after-death.

53. "That when we are dead and become dust and bones, shall we indeed be recompensed."

أَإِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظْمًا
أَإِنَّا لَمَدِينُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

54. He will say: "Do you want to look."

قَالَ هَلْ أُنْتُمْ مُّطَّلِعُونَ
﴿٥٤﴾

55. Then he will look and see him in the midst of the Hellfire.

فَاطَّلَعَ فَرَّاءُهُ فِي سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ



56. He will say: “By Allah, you had almost ruined me.”

قَالَ تَاللَّهِ إِنْ كِدْتَ لَتُرْدِينِ



57. “And if it had not been for the favor of my Lord, I would have been among those brought forth (to Hell).”^{*32}

وَلَوْلَا نِعْمَةُ رَبِّي لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِينَ



***32** This shows how powerful will be man’s hearing, seeing and speaking powers in the Hereafter. Sitting in Paradise he bends his head a little and is able to see a person, who is undergoing torment thousands of miles away in Hell, without the agency of a television set. Then, they not only just see each other, but also commune with each other directly without the medium of the telephone or radio and they speak and hear each other over vast distances.

58. “Are we then not to die.”

أَفَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَيِّتِينَ



59. “Except our first death, and we shall not be punished.”^{*33}

إِلَّا مَوْتَتَنَا الْأُولَىٰ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ



***33** The style clearly shows that while speaking to his friend in Hell, the dweller of Paradise suddenly starts talking to himself. He speaks these three sentences in a way as if he

found himself in a state much better than that he ever expected and imagined for himself, and now being beside himself with wonder and joy he is engaged in a sort of soliloquy. In such a state the speaker does not speak to an addressee, nor the questions he asks are meant to find out something from somebody, but in this state the man's own feelings find expression through his tongue. The dweller of Paradise, while speaking to the dweller of Hell, suddenly starts feeling how he has been favored by good fortune: now there is neither death nor any torment: all troubles and distresses have come to an end and he has been blessed with immortality. Under this very feeling he exclaims: Well are we not to die any other than our first death? Are we not to be punished?

60. Indeed, this is the supreme success.

إِنَّ هَذَا هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

61. For the like of this, then, let the workers work.

لِمِثْلِ هَذَا فَلْيَعْمَلِ الْعَامِلُونَ

62. Is that better as a welcome, or the tree of Zaqqum.*³⁴

أَذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ نُزُلًا أَمْ شَجَرَةُ

الزَّقُومِ

*³⁴ Zaqqum is a tree of the cactus species found in Tihamah. It is bitter in taste, obnoxious in smell and sheds a milk like juice when cut or broken.

63. Indeed, We have made it a trial for the wrongdoers. *35

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهَا فِتْنَةً لِلظَّالِمِينَ

*35 That is, on hearing this, the disbelievers get a new opportunity to taunt the Quran and mock the Prophet (peace be upon him). They ridicule it saying: Listen another strange thing: A tree will grow in the blazing fire of Hell.

64. Indeed, it is a tree that grows out of the bottom of Hell.

إِنَّهَا شَجَرَةٌ تَخْرُجُ فِي أَصْلِ
الْجَحِيمِ

65. The shoots of its fruit as if it was heads of the devils. *36

طَلْعُهَا كَأَنَّهُ رُءُوسُ الشَّيَاطِينِ

*36 Nobody should have the misunderstanding that since no one has seen the head of Satan, it was no use likening the buds of zaqqum to it. This is, in fact, an imaginative kind of the simile, and is employed in the literature of every language. For example, in order to give an idea of the rare beauty of a woman, it is said she is a fairy, and in order to describe her ugliness, it is said that she is a hag or a demon. Likewise, a pious-looking person is described as an angel and a dreadful-looking person as a devil.

66. Then indeed, they will eat from it, then they fill their bellies with it.

فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يَكْلُونُ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ مِنْهَا
الْبُطُونَ

67. Then indeed, for them is, upon it, a drink of boiling water.

ثُمَّ إِنَّ لَهُمْ عَلَيْهَا لَشَوْبًا مِّنْ
حَمِيمٍ

68. Then indeed, their return will be surely to Hellfire.^{*37}

ثُمَّ إِنَّ مَرْجِعَهُمْ لَإِلَى الْجَحِيمِ

***37** This shows that when the dwellers of Hell will be in distress due to hunger and thirst, they will be driven to the side where there would be the zaqqum trees and the springs of boiling water. When they will have eaten and drunk, they will be brought back to Hell.

69. Indeed, they found their fathers astray.

إِنَّهُمْ أَفْوَاءٌ أَبَاءَهُمْ ضَالِّينَ

70. So they hastened (to follow) in their footsteps.^{*38}

فَهُمْ عَلَىٰ ءَاثَرِهِمْ يُرْعَوْنَ

***38** That is, they never used their own common sense to see whether the way their forefathers had been following was right or wrong; they just blindly adopted the way that they found others following.

71. And certainly, before them, most of the ancients went astray.

وَلَقَدْ ضَلَّ قَبْلَهُمْ أَكْثَرُ
الْأَوَّلِينَ

72. And certainly, We sent among them warners.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِمْ مُّنذِرِينَ

73. Then see how was the end of those who were warned.

فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الْمُنذَرِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾

74. Except for the slaves of Allah, sincere.

إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلِصِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾

75. And certainly,^{*39} Noah called Us,^{*40} so We are the best of responders.

وَلَقَدْ نَادَانَا نُوحٌ فَلَنِعْمَ
الْمُجِيبُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

***39** This theme is related with the preceding sentences. A study of them shows why these stories are being narrated here.

***40** This refers to the prayer that the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) had at last made to Allah Almighty, being disappointed with his people, after having preached the true faith to them for a very long period of time, without much success. This prayer has been related in Surah Al-Qamar, thus: He called out to his Lord, saying: I am overcome: take now Thy vengeance. (verse 10).

76. And We saved him and his household from the great affliction.^{*41}

وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ
الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٦﴾

***41** That is, from the severe distress that was being caused to him on account of the continuous opposition and antagonism of a wicked and cruel people. This also contains

a subtle allusion that just as the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) and his companions were saved from the great distress, so We will also ultimately save the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions from the great distress that is being caused to them by the people of Makkah.

77. And We made his progeny, those remaining (on the earth).^{*42}

وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُ هُمُ الْبَاقِينَ

*42 This can have two meanings.

(1) That the progeny of the people who were opposing the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) was made extinct and the Prophet Noah's progeny alone was allowed to survive.

(2) That the whole human race was made extinct, and only the Prophet Noah's progeny was allowed to inhabit the earth after that. The commentators generally have adopted this second meaning, but the words of the Quran are not explicit in this regard and no one knows the reality except Allah.

78. And We left (a mention) of him among later generations.

وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ

79. Peace be upon Noah among the people of the world.^{*43}

سَلَامٌ عَلَى نُوحٍ فِي الْعَالَمِينَ

*43 That is there is none in the world today, who would talk evil of the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him). After the flood till today the world has been praising and speaking well of him for thousands of years.

80. Indeed, thus do We reward the righteous.

إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ



81. Indeed, he was among Our believing slaves.

إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ



82. Then We did drown the others.

ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا الْأَخْرِينَ



83. And indeed, among his (Noah) kind was Abraham.

وَإِنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ لَإِبْرَاهِيمَ



84. When he approached his Lord with a sound heart.*44

إِذْ جَاءَ رَبَّهُ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ



*44 “Approached his Lord”: Turned to his Lord sincerely and exclusively; “with a sound heart”: With a heart that was free from all kinds of moral evils and weaknesses of faith, free from every trace of unbelief and shirk, doubt and suspicion, from every feeling of disobedience and rebellion, from every crookedness, confusion and complexity, and free from every evil inclination and desire, and a heart that neither cherished any malice and jealousy and ill-will against anyone, nor had any evil intention.

85. When he said to his father and his people: *45 “What is it that which you worship.”

إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَاذَا



تَعْبُدُونَ

*45 For further details of this story of the Prophet

Abraham (peace be upon him), see Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 72-90; Surah Maryam, Ayats 41-60; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 51-75; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 69-89; Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayats 16-17 and the E.Ns thereof.

86. “Is it a falsehood, gods besides Allah that you desire.”

أَيْفَاً ءِإِلَهَةً دُونَ اللَّهِ تُرِيدُونَ



87. “Then what is your opinion about the Lord of the worlds.”*46

فَمَا ظَنُّكُمْ بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ



*46 That is, why have you formed such a wrong view of Allah? Do you think that the gods that you yourselves have carved out from wood and stone can be like Him, or can be His associates in his attributes and rights? And are you involved in the misunderstanding that you will somehow manage to escape His punishment after you have indulged in such blasphemy?

88. Then*47 he glanced a glance at the stars.*48

فَنظَرَ نَظْرَةً فِي النُّجُومِ



*47 The reference is to a particular incident the details of which have been given in Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 71-73 and Surah Al-Ankabut, AYats 16-27.

*48 Ibn Abi Hatim has cited a saying of the famous commentator Qatadah, an immediate follower of the companions, to the effect that the Arabic idiomatic expression, “glanced a glance at the stars,” means that he pondered deeply, or that he started thinking seriously. Allama Ibn Kathir has preferred this same view, and this is

also supported by the common observation: when a person is confronted by a problem that needs serious consideration, he looks upward or to the sky for a while, and then makes a reply, after due consideration.

89. Then he said: "Indeed, I am sick."*49

فَقَالَ إِنِّي سَقِيمٌ

*49 This is one of those three things concerning which it is said that the Prophet Abraham had told three lies in his life, whereas it should be ascertained before declaring it a lie, or anything contrary to fact, whether the Prophet Abraham at that time was not suffering from any illness, and therefore, he had made this excuse only as a pretense. If there is no proof, there is no reason why it should be regarded as a lie. For a detailed discussion, please refer to E.N. 60 of Surah Al-Anbiya and Rasail-o-Masail, vol. II, pp. 35 to 39. (A book by Abul Aala Moududi).

90. So they turned away from him, departing.*50

فَتَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ مُدْبِرِينَ

*50 This sentence by itself shows the real state of the affairs. It appears that the people might be going to some fair of theirs. The family of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) might have also asked him to accompany them. He might have excused himself, saying that he was indisposed, and therefore, could not go. Had it been something contrary to fact, the people of the house would have said: You look perfectly normal: you are making a false excuse. But when they accepted his excuse and left him behind, it clearly shows that the Prophet Abraham must at that time be suffering from cough and cold or some

other such visible illness on account of which the people of the house agreed to leave him behind.

91. Then he turned to their gods and said: “Do you not eat.”*51

فَرَاحَ إِلَىٰ ءِالِهَتِهِمْ فَقَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٩١﴾

*51 This shows that there were different kinds of food placed before the idols in the temple.

92. “What is (matter) with you that you do not speak.”

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

93. Then he turned upon them, striking with his right hand.

فَرَاحَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضَرْبًا بِالْيَمِينِ ﴿٩٣﴾

94. Then they came towards him, hastening.*52

فَأَقْبَلُوا إِلَيْهِ يَزْفُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

*52 Here the story has been told in brief. According to the details given in Surah Al-Anbiya, when they returned and found all their idols broken to pieces in the temple, they started making investigations. Some people said that a young man, called Abraham, had been talking such and such things against idol-worship. At this the multitude demanded that he should be immediately seized and brought before them. Therefore, a group of the people went running to him and brought him before the multitude.

95. He said: “Do you worship what you (yourselves) carve.”

قَالَ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مَا تَنْحِتُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

96. “And Allah created you and what you do.”

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

97. They said: “Build for him a building, then throw him into the blazing fire.”

قَالُوا أَبْنُوا لَهُ بُيُوتًا فَأَلْقُوهُ فِي

الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٩٧﴾

98. So they intended against him a plot, then We made them the lowest.*53

فَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ

الْأَسْفَلِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾

*53 The words in Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 69 are to the effect, We commanded: O fire, be cool and become safe for Abraham. And in Surah Al-Ankbut, Ayat 24, it has been said: Then Allah saved him from the fire. This proves that those people had actually thrown the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) into the fire, and then Allah had rescued him from it safe and sound. The words of the verse, “So they intended against him a plot, then We made them the lowest” cannot be taken to mean that they had only intended to throw the Prophet Abraham into the fire but could not carry their plan into effect; but when these words are read with the verses cited above, the meaning becomes plain that they had wanted to kill him by casting him into the fire but could not do so, and the Prophet Abraham’s miraculous escape proved his superiority and the polytheists were humbled by Allah. The real object of relating this incident is to warn the people of the Quraish to this effect: The way that you have adopted is not the way of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), whose descendants you claim yourselves to be, but his way is the one being presented by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be

upon him). Now, if you plot against him in order to defeat him and frustrate his mission, as the people of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had done against him, you alone will be defeated in the end, because you cannot defeat Muhammad (peace be upon him).

99. And he said:^{*54} “Indeed, I am going to my Lord,^{*55} He will guide me.”

وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي
سَيِّدِينَ

***54** The Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) said these words on his departure after he had been delivered safe from the fire and had decided to leave the country.

***55** It mean: I am leaving my home and country for the sake of Allah, for my people have turned hostile to me only because of my turning to Him exclusively; otherwise there was no worldly dispute between them and me because of which I might have had to leave my country. Moreover, I have no place of refuge in the world, to which I may turn. I am leaving my home with full faith and trust only in Allah: I shall go wherever He leads me.

100. “My Lord, grant me (offspring) from the righteous.”^{*56}

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

***56** This prayer by itself shows that the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) at that time was childless. From the details given at other places in the Quran, it becomes clear that he had left his country with only one wife and one nephew (the Prophet Lot). Therefore, he naturally desired that Allah should bless him with a righteous child, who

could be a source of comfort and consolation for him in a foreign land.

101. So We gave him good tidings of a gentle son. ^{*57}

فَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِغُلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾

***57** From this one should not understand that this good news was given to him immediately following his prayer. In the Quran itself, at another place, this saying of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) has been related: All praise be to Allah who has given mesons like Ishmael and Isaac in my old age. (Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 39). This proves that there was an interval of many years between the prayer and this good news. The Bible says that at the birth of the Prophet Ishmael, the Prophet Abraham was 86 years old (Gen. 16: 16) and at the birth of the Prophet Isaac a hundred years. (Gen. 21: 5).

102. Then when he (his son) reached the age to walk with him, he (Abraham) said: “O my son, I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you, ^{*58} so look, what do you think.” ^{*59} He said: “O my father, do that which you are commanded. ^{*60} You shall find me, Allah willing, of the steadfast.”

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَبْنَئِي
إِنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْنَحُكَ
فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَى ۗ قَالَ يَتَأَبْتِ
أَفْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ ۖ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن
شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

***58** One should note that the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had dreamed that he was sacrificing his son and not that he had sacrificed him. Although at that time he

understood the dream to mean that he should sacrifice his son and on that very basis, he became ready to sacrifice him, with a cool mind, yet the fine point that Allah had in view in making him see the dream has been explained by Himself in verse 105 below.

***59** The object of asking this of the son was not that he would carry out Allah's command only if he agreed, otherwise not, but the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), in fact, wanted to find out how righteous, in actual reality, was his child for whom he had prayed to Allah. If the son himself was found to be ready to lay down his life for the sake of Allah's approval and pleasure, it would mean that the prayer had been fully granted, and the son was not his offspring in the natural way only but was morally and spiritually also a true son.

***60** The words clearly tell that the son had not taken the dream of his Prophet father to be a mere dream but a command from Allah. Had it not been a command actually, it was necessary that Allah should have explicitly or implicitly stated that the son of Abraham (peace be upon him) had mistaken it for a command. But the whole context is without any such allusion. On this very basis, there is the Islamic belief that the dream of the Prophets is never a mere dream, it is also a kind of revelation. Obviously, if a thing, which could become such a fundamental principle in the divine Shariah, had not been based on reality, but had been a mere misunderstanding, it was not possible that Allah should not have refuted it. It is impossible for the one who believes the Quran to be Allah's Word, to accept that

such an error and omission could emanate from Allah also.

103. Then, when they had both surrendered (to Allah), and he had laid him down upon his forehead.*⁶¹

فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ ﴿١٠٣﴾

*⁶¹ That is, the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) did not make his son lie flat on his back but made him lie prostrate lest while slaughtering him the sight of his face should arouse compassion and love and make him shaky. Therefore, he wanted to use the knife from under the throat.

104. And We called out to him:*⁶² “O Abraham.”

وَنَدَيْنَاهُ أَنْ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ ﴿١٠٤﴾

*⁶² One section of the grammarians says that here “and” has been use to mean “then”; thus, the sentence would be: When the two had submitted themselves (to Allah) and Abraham had flung his son down on his brow, then We called out. But another section of them says that here the answer to the word “when” has been omitted and left for the listener to fill; for it was better to leave such an indescribable thing to the imagination instead of expressing it in words. When Allah might have seen that the old father who had gotten a son after long earnest prayers, has become ready to sacrifice him only for His pleasure and approval; and the son also had become ready to get slaughtered, His infinite Mercy might have been aroused at the sight, and the Master might have felt great love for the father and son. All this can only be imagined. No words would ever describe the scene adequately.

105. “Certainly, you have fulfilled the dream.”*63
Indeed, thus We reward the righteous.*64

قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرَّءْيَا إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ
نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ



*63 That is, “We did not make you see in the dream that you had actually slaughtered your son and he had died, but that you were slaughtering him. That vision you have fulfilled. Now, it is not Our will to take the life of your child. The actual object of the vision has been fulfilled by your submission and preparation to sacrifice him for Our sake.”

*64 That is, We do not subject the people who adopt the righteous way to trials in order to involve them in trouble and distress and affliction just for the sake of it, but these trials are meant to bring out their excellencies and to exalt them to high ranks. And then We deliver them safe and sound from the dilemma in which We place them for the sake of the trial. Thus, your willingness and preparation to sacrifice your son is enough to entitle you to be exalted to the rank that could be attained only by the one who would actually have slaughtered his son for Our approval and pleasure. Thus, We have saved the life of your child as well as exalted you to this high rank.

106. Indeed, this was a manifest trial.*65

إِنَّ هَذَا هُوَ الْبَلَاءُ الْمُبِينُ



*65 That is, the object was not to get your son slaughtered through you but to test you to see that you did not hold

anything of the world dearer than Us.

107. And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.*66

وَفَدَيْنَاهُ بِذَبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾

*66 “A great sacrifice”: A ram, as mentioned in the Bible and the Islamic traditions, that Allah’s angel presented at the time before the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), so that he should sacrifice it instead of his son. This has been called “a great sacrifice” because it was to serve as a ransom from a faithful servant like Abraham for a patient and obedient son like Ishmael, and Allah made it a means of fulfilling the intention of an unprecedented sacrifice. Another reason for calling it “a great sacrifice” is that Allah made it a tradition till the Day of Resurrection that all the believers should offer animal sacrifice on the same date in the entire world so as to keep fresh the memory of the great and unique event signifying faithfulness and devotion.

108. And We left (a mention) of him among later generations.

وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

109. Peace be upon Abraham.

سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

110. Thus do We reward the righteous.

كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١١٠﴾

111. Indeed, he was among Our believing slaves.

إِنَّهُ مِنَّا عَبْدِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

﴿١١١﴾

112. And we gave him the good tidings of Isaac, a prophet from among the righteous.

وَوَشَّرْنَاهُ بِإِسْحَاقَ نَبِيًّا مِّنَ
الصَّالِحِينَ

113. And We bestowed blessings upon him and upon Isaac.*⁶⁷ And of their progeny are those who do good and those who clearly wrong themselves.*⁶⁸

وَبَارَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ إِسْحَاقَ
وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا مُحْسِنٌ وَظَالِمٌ
لِّنَفْسِهِ مُبِينٌ

***67** Here, the question arises: Who was the son whom the Prophet Abraham had gotten ready to offer as a sacrifice, and who had willingly offered himself to be slaughtered as a sacrifice? The first answer to this question is given by the Bible; and it is this:

And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: . . . Take now thy son thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” (Gen. 22: 1-2).

In this statement, on the one hand, it is being said that Allah had asked for the offering of the Prophet Isaac, and on the other, that he was Abraham’s only son, whereas the Bible itself, at other places, conclusively states that the Prophet Isaac was not the only son of the Prophet Abraham. Consider the following statements of the Bible:

Now Sarai, Abram’s wife bore him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

And Sarai said unto Abraham, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abraham hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abraham's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abraham had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived. (Gen .16: 1-4).

And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael. (16: 11).

And Abraham was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abraham. (16: 16).

And God said unto Abraham: As for Sarai thy wife, I will bless her and give thee a son also of her, and thou shalt call his name Isaac, which Sarai shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. And Abraham took Ishmael his son and every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him. And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. (Gen. 17: 15-25).

And Abraham was one hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. (Gen. 21: 5).

This brings out the contradictions of the Bible. It is evident that for 14 years the Prophet Ishmael was the only son of the Prophet Abraham. Now if the offering had been asked

of the only son, it was not of Isaac but of Ishmael, for he alone was the only son; and if the offering of Isaac had been asked, it would be wrong to say that the offering of the only son had been asked.

Now let us consider the Islamic traditions, and they contain great differences. According to traditions cited by the commentators from the companions and their immediate followers, one group of them is of the opinion that the son was the Prophet Isaac, and this group contains the following names:

Umar, Ali, Abdullah bin Masud, Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib, Abdullah bin Abbas, Abu Hurairah, Qatadah, Ikrimah, Hasan Basri, Said bin Jubair, Mujahid, Shabi, Masruq, Makhul, Zuhri, Ata, Muqatil, Suddi, Kaab Ahbar, Zaid bin Aslam, and others.

The other group says that it was the Prophet Ishmael, and this group contains the names of the following authorities:

Abu Bakr, Ali, Abdullah bin Umar, Abdullah bin Abbas, Abu Hurairah, Muawiyah, Ikrimah, Mujahid, Yusuf bin Mahran, Hasan Basri, Muhammad bin Kaab al-Qurzi, Shabi, Said bin al-Musayyab, Dahhak, Muhammad bin Ali bin Husain (Muhammad alBaqir), Rabi bin Anas, Ahmed bin Hanbal, and others.

When compared, the two lists will be seen to contain several common names. This is due to the reason that from the same person two different views have been reported. For example, from Abdullah bin Abbas, Ikrimiah has related the saying that the son was the Prophet Isaac, but from him again Ata bin Abi Rabah relates: The Jews claim

that it was Isaac, but the Jews tell a tie. Likewise. from Hasan Basri, one tradition is to the effect that the Prophet Isaac was the son meant to be made the offering, but Umar bin Ubaid says that Hasan Basri had no doubt regarding that the son whom the Prophet Abraham had been commanded to offer as a sacrifice was the Prophet Ishmael (peace be upon him).

This diversity of tradition has resulted in the diversity of opinion among the scholars of Islam. Some of them e.g. Ibn Jarir and Qadi Iyad, have expressed the firm opinion that the son was the Prophet Isaac. Others, like Ibn Kathir have given the verdict that it was the Prophet Ishmael. There were others who are uncertain and wavering, e.g. Jalaluddin Suyuti. However, a deep inquiry into the question establishes the fact that the son intended to be offered as a sacrifice was the Prophet Ishmael. The following are the arguments:

(1) As stated by the Quran above, at the time of his emigration from the country, the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had prayed for a righteous son and in answer to it, Allah had given him the good news of a clement boy. The context shows that this prayer was made at a time when he was childless, and the boy whose good news was given was his first-born child. Then, this also becomes obvious from the Quranic story that when the child grew up to boyhood, he was inspired to offer him as an offering. Now, it is established beyond any doubt that the Prophet Abraham's first-born son was the Prophet Ishmael and not the Prophet Isaac. The Quran itself has stated the order

between the two sons, thus: All praise be to Allah who has given me sons like Ishmael and Isaac in my old age. (Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 39).

(2) The words used in the Quran with regard to the Prophet Isaac while giving the good news of his birth are: And they gave him the good news of the birth of a son, possessing knowledge, (alim). (Surah Az-Zariyat, Ayat 28) Do not be afraid: We give you the good news of a son, possessing knowledge. (Surah Al-Hijr, Ayat 53). But the son, the good news of whose birth has been given here; has been called a clement (*haleem*) son. This shows that the two sons had distinctive qualities, and the offering had been asked of the clement son and not of the son possessing knowledge.

(3) Along with giving the good news of the birth of the Prophet Isaac in the Quran, the good news of the birth of a grandson like Jacob was also given: Then We gave her the good news of Isaac, and after Isaac of Jacob. (Surah Hud, Ayat 71). Now obviously, if about the son along with the news of whose birth the news of a worthy son to be born to him had also been given, the Prophet Abraham was shown a vision that he was sacrificing him, he would never have understood that he was being inspired to offer that very son as an offering. Allama Ibn Jarir contends that the Prophet Abraham might have been shown this vision at a time when Jacob had already been born to the Prophet Isaac. But this is, in fact, a very weak reply to the argument. The Quran says: When the boy became able to work with his father, then he was shown the vision. Anyone who reads these

words with an unbiased mind will have the image of an 8 to 10 years lad before him. No one can imagine that these words had been used about a young man having children.

(4) Allah, at the end of the story, says: We gave him the good news of Isaac, a Prophet among the righteous. This clearly shows that it was not the same son, whom he had been inspired to offer as a sacrifice; but before this the good news of some other son had been given; then when he grew up and became able to work with his father, it was commanded to sacrifice him. Afterwards, when the Prophet Abraham came through this test successfully, he was given the good news of the birth of another son, the Prophet Isaac (peace be upon them all). This order of the events conclusively proves that the son whom the Prophet Abraham had been commanded to sacrifice was not Isaac but another son who had been born several years before him. Allama Ibn Jarir rejects this express argument, saying that in the beginning only the good news of the birth of the Prophet Isaac had been given. Then, when he became ready to be sacrificed for the sake of Allah's approval and pleasure, it was rewarded in the form of the good news of his Prophethood. But this reply to the argument is weaker still. If it had really been so, Allah would not have said: We gave him the good news of Isaac, a Prophet among the righteous, but: We gave him the good news that this same son of yours would be a Prophet among the righteous.

(5) Authentic traditions confirm that the horns of the ram which was slaughtered as a ransom for the Prophet Ishmael remained preserved in the Kabah till the time of Abdullah

bin Zubair. Afterwards when Hajjaj bin Yusuf besieged Ibn Zubair in the Kabah and demolished the Kabbah, the horns were also destroyed. Both, Ibn Abbas and Amir Shabi testify that they had seen the horns in the Kabah. (Ibn Kathir). This is a proof of the fact that the event of the sacrifice had taken place in Makkah and not in Syria, and concerned the Prophet Ishmael. That is why a relic of it had been preserved in the Kabah built by the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael.

(6) The Arab traditions confirmed that this event of the sacrifice had taken place in Mina (near Makkah), and it was not only a tradition but practically also it had been a part of the Hajj rites for centuries. Even until the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) people used to offer the animal sacrifice in Mina at the place where the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had offered the sacrifice. Afterwards, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was raised as a Prophet, he also maintained and continued the same tradition. Even till today sacrifices are offered in Mina on the 10th of Dhil-Hajj. This continual practice of 4,500 years or so is an undeniable proof of the fact that the heirs to the tradition of sacrifice made by the Prophet Abraham have been the descendants of the Prophet Ishmael and not of the Prophet Isaac. There has never been any such tradition among the descendants of the Prophet Isaac according to which the whole community might have offered the sacrifice at one and the same time and regarded it as a continuation of the sacrifice made by the Prophet Abraham.

In the face of such arguments it appears strange how the idea of the Prophet Isaac's being the son offered as the sacrifice spread among the Muslim community itself. If the Jews might have tried to attribute the honor to their ancestor, the Prophet Isaac, by depriving the Prophet Ishmael of it, it would be understandable.

But the question is: How did a large number of the Muslims come to accept this wrong notion? A very satisfactory answer to this question has been given by Allama Ibn Kathir in his commentary. He says: The reality is known to Allah alone but it appears that all the sayings (in which the Prophet Isaac has been mentioned as the son offered as a sacrifice) are related from Kaab Ahbar. This man, when he became a Muslim in the time of Umar, used to relate before him the contents of the ancient Jewish and Christian scriptures, and Umar would hear them. On this basis, the other people also began to listen to him, and started relating every mixture of the truth and falsehood that they heard from him, whereas this Ummah did not stand in need of anything whatever from the store of his knowledge and information.

This thing is further explained by a tradition from Muhammad bin Kaab al-Kurzi. He says that once during his presence the question whether the son offered as a sacrifice was the Prophet Isaac or the Prophet Ishmael arose before Umar bin Abdul Aziz. Among them at that time was a person who had been a Jewish scholar but had become a sincere Muslim afterwards. He said, "O Commander of the Faithful! By God it was Ishmael, and

the Jews know it, but claim on account of their jealousy of the Arabs that it was the Prophet Isaac. (Ibn Jarir). When the two things are put side by side, it becomes evident that actually it was the Jewish propaganda that spread among the Muslims who have always been unbiased in scholastic literary matters, a large number of them accepted the statements of the Jews as a historic truth, which they presented as historical traditions with reference to the ancient scriptures, and did not realize that these were based on prejudice instead of knowledge.

*68 This sentence throws light on the real object for which this event of the Prophet Abraham's sacrifice has been related here. From the race of his two sons arose two great nations in the world. First, the children of Israel, from whose house two major religions (Judaism and Christianity) emerged, which dominated and won over large human populations. Second, the children of Ishmael, who were the religious leaders and guides of all the Arabs at the time of the revelation of the Quran, and the tribe of Quraish of Makkah at that time held the most important position among them. Whatever eminence these two branches of the offspring of the Prophet Abraham attained became possible only on account of their connection and relation with the Prophet Abraham and his two illustrious sons; otherwise, God alone knows how many such families have arisen in the world and been assigned to oblivion. Now, Allah relates the most glorious event of the history of this family and makes both its branches realize that whatever honor and eminence they have attained in the

world, has been due actually to the great traditions of God-worship and sincerity and obedience, which were set by their ancestors, the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac (may peace be upon them all). He tells them: The great blessings which We bestowed on them, were not bestowed arbitrarily and haphazardly. We did not just pick out a person and his two sons blindly and blessed them, but they gave definite proofs of their loyalty and faithfulness to their real Master and then became deserving of His favors. Now, you cannot become entitled to those favors merely on the basis of your pride of descent, for We shall see who among you is righteous and who is wicked and then deal with him accordingly.

114. And certainly, We bestowed favor upon Moses and Aaron.

وَلَقَدْ مَنَّا عَلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ
وَهَارُونَ

115. And We saved them and their people from the great distress.^{*69}

وَنَجَّيْنَاهُمَا وَقَوْمَهُمَا مِنْ
الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ

***69** “A great distress”: the distress in which they were involved at the hands of Pharaoh and his people.

116. And We helped them so that they became the victors.

وَنَصَرْنَاهُمْ فَكَانُوا هُمُ الْغَالِبِينَ

117. And We gave them the Scripture making things

وَأَاتَيْنَاهُمَا الْكِتَابَ الْمُسْتَبِينَ

clear.

١١٧

118. And We guided them to the right path.

وَهَدَيْنَهُمَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

١١٨

119. And We left (a mention) of them among later generations.

وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِمَا فِي الْأَخْرَبِ

١١٩

120. Peace be upon Moses and Aaron.

سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ

١٢٠

121. Indeed, thus do We reward the righteous.

إِنَّا كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي
الْمُحْسِنِينَ

١٢١

122. Indeed, they were among Our believing slaves.

إِنَّهُمْ مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

١٢٢

123. And indeed, Elias was from among the messengers.*70

وَإِنَّ إِلْيَاسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

١٢٣

***70** The Prophet Elias (peace be upon him) was from among the Israelite Prophets. He has been mentioned only twice in the Quran, here and in Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 85.

The present-day scholars have determined his period between 875 and 850 B.C. He was an inhabitant of Gilead, which in ancient days was the territory now under the northern districts of the modern state of Jordan, to the south of the River Yarmuk. In the Bible he has been mentioned as Elijah the Tishbite. Here is briefly his life story.

After the death of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) the Israelite kingdom was broken up into two parts mainly due to the unworthiness of his son, Rehoboam. One part which consisted of Jerusalem and southern Palestine remained with the descendants of the Prophet David (peace be upon him), while in the second, which comprised northern Palestine, an independent state by the name of Israel was established with Samaria as its capital. Although conditions in both the states were very bad, the state of Israel, from the very beginning, followed the path of depravity due to which the evils of polytheism and idol-worship and tyranny and wickedness went on increasing and multiplying in it endlessly; so much so that when Ahab, the king of Israel, married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Sidon (Lebanon), the mischief reached its extremity. Under the influence of this polytheistic princess Ahab himself became a polytheist. He built a temple and altar to Baal in Samaria, tried his very best to introduce and popularize Baal-worship instead of the worship of One God, and consequently, offerings began to be made publicly in the name of Baal in the Israelite towns and cities.

This was the time when the Prophet Elijah (peace be upon

him) appeared on the scene. He came from Gilead and gave Ahab a notice that in consequence of his sins, the land of Israel would go without rain, even without the dew. This word of the Prophet of Allah proved to be literally true and there fell no rain in Israel for thee and a half years. At last, Ahab came to his senses and he sought the Prophet Elijah's help. But Elijah, before praying for the rain, thought it necessary to make the distinction between Allah, Lord of the worlds, and Baal plain before the people of Israel. For this purpose, he commanded that the priests of Baal would make an offering in the name of their deity, and he also would make an offering in the name of Allah, Lord of the worlds, in front of the assembled people. Then the one whose offering would be consumed by a fire from heaven, without the agency of the human hand, the truth of his deity would be established beyond doubt. Ahab accepted this proposal. Thus, 850 of the priests of Baal assembled on Mt. Carmel to answer the challenge given by the Prophet Elijah. In this encounter the Baal worshipers were defeated, and the Prophet Elijah proved that Baal was a false god, and the real God is the One God alone who had appointed him as His Prophet. After this, Elijah got the priests of Baal slaughtered in front of the same assembly of the people; then he prayed for the rain, and his prayer was immediately answered and the whole land of Israel was saturated with water.

But, despite these miracles, Ahab could not shake off the influence of his polytheistic wife. Jezebel turned hostile to the Prophet Elijah and she hoped that he would be put to

death just as the Baal worshipers had been put to death. Under the circumstances the Prophet Elijah was compelled to leave the country and he remained lodged in a cave at the foot of Mt. Sinai for several years. The lamentation that he made to Allah, on this occasion, has been related in the Bible, in these words:

The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. (I Kings, 19: 10).

About the same time Jehoram, the ruler of the Jewish state of Jerusalem, married the daughter of Ahab, the king of Israel, and under her polytheistic influence the same evils that had spread in Israel also began to spread in Judah. The Prophet Elijah carried out his prophetic duty again and wrote a letter to Jehoram, the following words of which have been reported in the Bible:

Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father, because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah. But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself: Behold, with a great plague will the Lord smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods: And thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day. (2 Chronicles, 21: 12-15).

Whatever the Prophet Elijah had prophesied in this letter proved true. First, the kingdom of Jehoram was destroyed by the external invaders, and the enemies even carried away his wives, then he himself died of the disease of the bowels.

A few years later the Prophet Elijah again went to Israel and constantly tried hard to bring Ahab, and after him his son, Ahaziah, to the right path, but the evil that had taken root in the house of the royal family of Samaria could not be eradicated. At last, due to the curse of the Prophet the family of Ahab met its doom, and then Allah recalled his Prophet from the world.

For details, see the following books of the Bible: I Kings, chs. 17, 18, 19, 21; 2 Kings, chs. 1, 2; 2 Chronicles, ch. 21.

124. When he said to his people: “Will you not fear (Allah).”

إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ

125. “Will you call upon Baal^{*71} and forsake the best of creators.”

أَتَدْعُونَ بَعْلًا وَتَذَرُونَ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِينَ

***71** Lexically, *baal* means master, chief and possessor. This word was also used for husband, and has been used in this sense at several places in the Quran itself, e.g. in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 228; Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 127; Sura Houd, Ayat 72 and Surah An-Noor, Ayat 31. However; in the ancient times the Semetic nations used it in the meaning of deity or lord; they had even given the name of Baal to a special god. The chief male god of the Phoenicians, in

particular, was Baal and their chief goddess was Ashtoreth, his wife. The scholars differ as to whether Baal meant the sun or Jupiter, and Ashtoreth the moon or Venus. In any case, historically it is certain that Baal worship was prevalent from Babylon to Egypt throughout the Middle East, and the polytheistic communities of the Lebanon and Syria and Palestine, in particular, had become its devotees. When the Israelites settled in Palestine and Jordan after they came out from Egypt, they started contracting marriage and other social relations with the polytheistic nations round about them, in violation of the strict prohibitive injunctions of the Torah, the disease of idol-worship began to spread among them, too. According to the Bible, this moral and religious decline had started appearing among the Israelites soon after the death of Joshua, son of Nun, who was the first caliph of the Prophet Moses:

And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtoreth. (Judges, 2: 11-13).

And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites and Hivites, and Jebusites. And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. (Judges, 3: 5-6).

At that time worship of Baal had so deeply affected the Israelites that, according to the Bible, in one of their habitations a public altar had been built at which offerings were made to Baal. A God-worshiping Israelite could not

bear the sight; so he pulled down the altar one night. Next morning a great multitude of the people gathered together and demanded that the man who had cast down the altar be put to death. (Judges, 6:25-32). This evil, at last, was put to an end by Samuel, Saul and the Prophets David and Solomon (peace be upon them). They not only reformed the Israelites generally but also eradicated polytheism and idol worship from their kingdom. But after the death of the Prophet Solomon the mischief was again revived and the Israelite state of northern Palestine was swept away in the flood of Baal-worship.

126. “Allah, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers.”

اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ
الْأَوَّلِينَ

١٢٦

127. So they denied him, then indeed, they will be brought forth (to the punishment).

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ

١٢٧

128. Except the slaves of Allah, sincere.^{*72}

إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلِصِينَ

١٢٨

***72** That is, only those people will be made an exception from the punishment, who did not belie the Prophet Elijah (peace be upon him), and whom Allah chose from among the nation for His worship.

129. And We left (a mention) of him among later generations.^{*73}

وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ

١٢٩

***73** The treatment that the Israelites meted out to the Prophet Elijah (peace be upon him) in his life has been referred to above, but after his death they became so enamored of him that they held him in the highest esteem and reverence after the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). They formed the belief that Elijah (peace be upon him) had been taken up alive into heaven by a whirlwind (2 Kings, ch. 2), and that he will come back to the world again. Thus, in Malachi (O.T.) it is written:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. (4: 5).

At the time the Prophets John and Jesus (peace be upon them) appeared, the Jews were awaiting the advent of these three men: the Prophet Elias, the Christ and “that Prophet” (i.e. Muhammad). When the ministry of the Prophet John began and he slatted baptizing the people, the Jews sent priests to him to ask, “Are you the Christ?” And he said that he was not the Christ. Then they asked, “Are you Elias?” And he answered that he was not Elias; then they asked, “Are you that Prophet?” And he answered that he was not “that Prophet” either. Thereupon they said, “If you are neither the Christ, nor Elias, nor that Prophet, why do you then baptize?” (John, 1: 19-26). Afterwards when the name of the Prophet Jesus spread among the people, the Jews thought that perhaps the Prophet Elias had come. (Mark, 6: 14-15). Even among the disciples of Jesus themselves the idea was common that Elias the Prophet would come, but Jesus removed their misunderstanding, saying, Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but

have done unto him whatever they listed. Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist and not of Elias who had appeared eight hundred years earlier. (Matthew. 11: 14; and 17: 10-131).

130. Peace be upon Elias. ^{*74}

سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ إِيَّاسِينَ

***74** The words in the original are: *Salam-un ala El-ya-sin*. Some commentators say that El-ya-sin is the other name of the Prophet Elias, just as Abraham is the other name of the Prophet Ibrahim; some others say that different versions of the Hebrew names were prevalent among the Arabs, e.g. one and the same angel was called Michal and Michail and Michain. The same has been the case with the name of the Prophet Elias also. In the Quran itself the same mountain has been called Toor Sina and Toor Sinin.

131. Indeed, thus do We reward the righteous.

إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ



132. Indeed, he was among our believing slaves.

إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ



133. And indeed, Lot was among the messengers.

وَإِنَّ لُوطًا لَّمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ



134. When We saved him and his household, all.

إِذْ نَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ



135. Except old woman among those who remained behind. ^{*75}

إِلَّا عَجُوزًا فِي الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

***75** This implies the wife of the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him), who did not migrate with her illustrious husband, but remained behind with her people and was punished.

136. Then We destroyed the others.

ثُمَّ دَمَّرْنَا الْأَخْرِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

137. And indeed, you pass by (ruins of) them in the morning.

وَإِنَّكُمْ لَتَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مُصْبِحِينَ ﴿١٣٧﴾

138. And at night, ^{*76} do you not then have sense.

وَبِاللَّيْلِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾

***76** The reference is to the mined habitations of the people of Lot by which the Quraishite merchants passed day and night during their trade journeys to Syria and Palestine.

139. And indeed, Jonah was among the messengers. ^{*77}

وَإِنَّ يُونُسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾

***77** This is the third place where the Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) has been mentioned in the Quran. Before this he has already been mentioned in Surah Yunus and Surah Al-Anbiya. (For reference, please see Surah Yunus, Ayat 98 and Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 87-88 and E.Ns thereof).

140. When he fled to the laden ship. ^{*78}

إِذْ أَبَقَ إِلَى الْفُلِّ الْمَشْحُونِ ﴿١٤٠﴾

***78** The word *abaqa* in Arabic is used for the flight and escape of a slave from his master's house.

141. Then he drew lots, so he was among those rejected.

فَسَاهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِينَ



142. Then the fish swallowed him while he was blameworthy. ^{*79}

فَالْتَقَمَهُ الْحُوتُ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ



***79** This is what one understands from a study of these sentences:

(1) The vessel which the Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) boarded was already overloaded.

(2) Lots were drawn in the vessel probably at a time when during the voyage it was felt that the lives of the passengers had been endangered due to the overloading; therefore, lots were cast to pick out a person to be thrown overboard.

(3) The lot fell on the Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him), and so he was thrown into the sea and a fish swallowed him.

(4) The Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) was so afflicted because he had fled and abandoned the place of his mission without the permission of his Master (Allah Almighty). This meaning is confirmed by the word *abaqa* as has been explained in E.N. 78 above, and also by the word *muleem*. Muleem is a blameworthy person, who becomes worthy of blame by himself because of his sin and error, whether somebody else blames him for it or not. (Ibn Jarir).

143. Then if he had not been of those who glorify (Allah).^{*80}

فَلَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ



***80** It has two meanings and both are implied:

(1) That the Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) was not of the people who are heedless of God, but was of those who glorify and adore Allah constantly and perpetually.

(2) That when he went inside the fish, he turned to Allah alone and glorified Him. In Surah Al-Anbiya it has been said: He invoked Us from the depths of the darkness, saying: There is no god but You: Glory be to You: I am indeed blameworthy. (verse 87).

144. He would have remained in its belly until the day they are raised.^{*81}

لَلْبَيْتِ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ



***81** This does not mean that the fish would have lived till Resurrection and the Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) would have remained alive in its belly till then, but that the fish's belly would have become his grave till Resurrection. The famous commentator Qatadah has given this same meaning of this verse. (Ibn Jarir).

145. Then We cast him on a desert shore while he was sick.^{*82}

فَنَبَذْنَاهُ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ سَقِيمٌ



***82** That is, when the Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) confessed his fault, and began to glorify Allah like a true

and sincere believer, the fish spat him up on the beach by Allah's command. The beach was a bare plain, without any vegetation on it, or anything to provide him shade, or any means of food.

Here, the rationalists have been heard expressing the misgiving that it is impossible for a man to come out alive from the belly of a fish. But, towards the end of the last century, an event took place near the sea-shores of England (the center of this so-called rationalism), which belies this claim. In August, 1891, some fishermen went to the high sea to hunt whales in a ship called Star of the East. There they injured a great fish which was 20 feet long, 5 feet wide and weighed a hundred tons, but during the struggle the fish swallowed a fisherman, James Bartley, in front of the very eyes of his companions. Next day the same fish was found dead on the sea. The fishermen hauled it up on board and when they cut open its belly, James Bartley came out alive. He had remained in the fish's belly for full 60 hours. (Urdu Digest, February, 1964). Obviously, when such a thing is possible in normal circumstances naturally, why should it be impossible under abnormal conditions as a miracle of God?

146. And We caused to grow above him a tree of gourd.*83

وَأَنْبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِّنْ يَّقْطِينٍ



*83 The Arabic word *yaqteen* applies to a tree which does not stand on a stem but grows and spreads like a creeper, e.g. a pumpkin, cucumber, water-melon, etc. In any case, a

creeper was produced miraculously, so that its leaves should provide shade to the Prophet Jonah and its fruit should serve him both as food and as shade.

147. And We sent him to a hundred thousand or more.^{*84}

وَأَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَى مِائَةِ أَلْفٍ أَوْ
يَزِيدُونَ

***84** The mention of a hundred thousand people or more does not mean that Allah had any doubt about their number, but it means that a casual observer would have estimated the population to be more than a hundred thousand people in any case. Probably it was the same place which the Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) had left and fled. After his departure when the people of the place saw the scourge approaching, they believed. But this was only a kind of repentance which was accepted and the scourge averted. Now, the Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) was again sent to them so that the people should believe in him as a Prophet and become Muslims formally. To understand this, one should keep in view verse 98 of Surah Yunus.

148. So they believed, then We gave them comfort for a while.^{*85}

فَعَامَنُوا فَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ

***85** Some people have taken exception to what we have written concerning this story of the Prophet Jonah in our commentary of Surahs Yunus and Al-Anbiya. It would therefore be proper that we should reproduce here the explanations given by the other commentators in this

regard.

The famous commentator Qatadah in his commentary of verse 98 of Surah Yunus says: There has been no habitation which disbelieved and might have believed after the arrival of the scourge, and then might have been left unpunished. The only exception were the people of the Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him). When they searched for their Prophet and did not find him, and felt that the scourge had approached near at hand, Allah put repentance in their hearts. (Ibn Kathir, vol. II, p. 433).

Commenting on the same verse Allama Alusi says: The Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) had been sent to the people of Nineveh in the land of Mosul. They were polytheistic people. The Prophet Jonah invited them to believe in Allah the One, and to give up idol-worship. They refused to believe and belied him. Jonah gave them the news that they would be visited by a scourge after three days and he left the place at midnight before the expiry of the three days. Then, in the day time when the scourge approached and the people realized that they would all perish, they began to search for the Prophet but did not find him. At last, they took their families and their cattle and came out in the desert and expressed belief and repentance. So, Allah showed them mercy and accepted their prayer. (Ruh al-Ma'ani, vol. XI, p. 170).

Commenting on verse 87 of Surah Al-Anbiya, Allama Alusi writes: The Prophet Jonah's (peace be upon him) forsaking his people in anger was an act of migration, but he had not been commanded to do so. (Ruh al-Ma'ani, vol. xvii, p. 77).

Then he explains the meaning of the sentence, “*Inna kun-tu min-az-zalimin*”, of Jonah’s prayer, thus: That is, I was blameworthy in that I hastened to migrate, against the way of the Prophets, before receiving the command for it. This was, in fact, a confession of his sin and expression of repentance so that Allah might remove his affliction. (Ruh al-Maani, vol. xvii, p. 78).

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi’s note on this verse is: He became angry with his people when they did not believe, and forsook them, and did not return to them of his own accord when the scourge had been averted, and did not await Our command for the migration. (Bayan ul-Quran).

Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani writes in his note on this verse: Vexed at the misconduct of his people he left the city in anger and did not await the divine command and threatened the people that they would be visited by a torment after three days. *Inni kun-tu min az-Zalimin*: He confessed his error that he had made haste and left the habitation without awaiting Allah’s command.

Explaining these verses of Surah Saaffat, Imam Razi writes: The Prophet Jonah’s (peace be upon him) fault was that when Allah threatened to destroy the people who had belied him, he thought that the scourge would inevitably befall them. Therefore, he did not show patience and abandoned his mission and left the place, whereas he ought to have continued the work of his mission, for there was a possibility that Allah might not destroy those people. (Tafsir Kabir, vol. vii, p. 158).

Explaining the verse *Idh abaqa*, Allama Alusi writes:

“Literally, *abaqa* means the escape of a slave from his master’s house. Since Jonah had run away from his people without Allah’s leave, the word has been rightly used about him. Then he writes: When the third day came, the Prophet Jonah left the place without Allah’s permission. Thus, when his people did not find him, they came out along with their young and old people and their cattle, and they implored Allah and begged for His forgiveness and Allah forgave them. (Ruh al-Maani, vol. xxii, p. 13).

Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani has explained the words *wa huwa mulim*, thus: The accusation against him was that he had left the city because of an error of judgment, without awaiting the divine command, and even specified the day for the coming of the scourge.

Then Maulana Shabbir Ahmad’s note on verse 48 of Surah Al-Qalam is: Do not be perplexed and agitated with regard to the deniers like the Man of the Fish (i.e. the Prophet Jonah).” And about the sentence: *wa huwa makzum* of the same verse, he writes: That is, he was full of anger against his people, so he prayed for the torment, rather foretold it, in fretful haste.

These explanations by the commentators clearly show that there were three offenses on account of which the Prophet Jonah was made to suffer Allah’s displeasure:

- (1) That he himself fixed the day of the torment, whereas Allah had not made any declaration in this regard.
- (2) That he emigrated from the city even before the day came; whereas a Prophet should not leave the place of his mission until Allah commands him to do so.

(3) That he did not return to his people after the torment had been averted from them.

149. So ask them^{*86} “Are there daughters for your Lord, and for them are sons.”^{*87}

فَاسْتَفْتِهِمُ أَلرَّبِّكَ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَهُمُ
الْبُنُونَ



*86 Another theme starts from here. In the preceding theme that started from verse 11, the Quraish had been put this question: Ask them: what is more difficult: their own creation or of those things that We have created? Now, they are being asked this second question. The object of the first question was to warn the disbelievers of their deviation because of which they regarded life-after-death and the meting out of rewards and punishments as impossible, and therefore, mocked the Prophet (peace be upon him) for it. Now they are being asked this second question to warn them of their ignorance due to which they attributed children to Allah and would join anybody with Allah in any relationship they liked on mere conjecture.

*87 Traditions show that in Arabia the tribes of Quraish, Juhainah, Bani Salimah, Khuzaah, Bani Mulaih, etc. held the belief that the angels were Allah’s daughters. This belief of their ignorance has been referred to at several places in the Quran, e.g. in Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 117; Surah An-Nahl, Aytas 57-58; Surah Bani-Israil, Ayat 40; Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayats 16, 19; Surah An-Najm, Ayats 21-27.

150. “Or did We create the angels as females while they were witnesses.”

أَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِنثًا وَهُمْ
شَاهِدُونَ



151. Behold, indeed it is of their falsehood that they say.

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ مِّنْ إِفْكِهِمْ لَيَقُولُونَ



152. “Allah has begotten,” and indeed they are the liars.

وَلَدَ اللَّهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ



153. He has chosen daughters over sons.

أَصْطَفَى الْبَنَاتِ عَلَى الْبَنِينَ



154. What is (the matter) with you. How do you judge.

مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ



155. Then will you not remember.

أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ



156. Or is there for you a clear authority.

أَمْ لَكُمْ سُلْطٰنٌ مُّبِينٌ



157. Then bring your scripture if you are truthful.*88

فَاتُوا بِكِتَابِكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ

صٰدِقِينَ



***88** That is, there can be only two bases for regarding the angels as the daughters of Allah. Either such a thing could be said on the basis of observation, or the one who asserted it should possess a divine book in which Allah Himself might have stated that the angels were His daughters. Now, if those who held such belief could neither make a claim to have observed such a thing nor did they possess any divine book that might contain such a thing, there could be no

greater stupidity than this that one should base his religious belief on mere conjecture, and attribute to Allah, Lord of the worlds, such things as were patently ridiculous.

158. And they have invented between Him and the jinn a kinship,^{*89} and certainly the jinn know that they will be brought forth (before Him).

وَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجِنَّةِ نَسَبًا
وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتِ الْجِنَّةُ إِنَّهُمْ
لَمُحْضَرُونَ

***89** Though the word used is *al-jinnah* instead of *al-malaikah*, some major commentators have opined that here the word jinn has been used for *malaikah* in its literal sense (of hidden creation); *malaikah* (angels) also are, in reality, a hidden creation, and the following theme also demands that *al-jinnah* here be taken in the sense of *al-malaikah*.

159. Glorified be Allah from what they attribute (to Him).

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ

160. Except the slaves of Allah, sincere.

إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلِصِينَ

161. So indeed, you and whatever you worship.^{*90}

فَإِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ

***90** Another translation of this verse can be: Therefore, you and your worship: on this you cannot tempt into mischief anyone except him. According to this second translation, the meaning would be: O you who have gone astray, by this worship that you are performing before us, and regarding us as the children of Allah, Lord of the worlds, you cannot tempt us into mischief. By this you can only beguile a fool

who might be working for his own doom. So, we refuse to fall into the trap that you have set for us.

162. You cannot turn (anyone) against Him.

مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ بِفِتْنِينَ ﴿١٦٢﴾

163. Except those who are to burn in Hell.

إِلَّا مَنْ هُوَ صَالِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٦٣﴾

164. There is not among us any except he has a known position.^{*91}

وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُومٌ ﴿١٦٤﴾

***91** That is, not to speak of being Allah's children, we do not have the power to exceed in any way or degree the place and position and status appointed for each of us by Allah.

165. And indeed, we (angels) are those who set the ranks.

وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّافُونَ ﴿١٦٥﴾

166. And indeed, we (angels) are those who glorify (Allah).

وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْمُسَبِّحُونَ ﴿١٦٦﴾

167. And indeed, they (disbelievers) used to say.

وَإِنْ كَانُوا لَيَقُولُونَ ﴿١٦٧﴾

168. If only we had a reminder from the former people.

لَوْ أَنَّ عِنْدَنَا ذِكْرًا مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٦٨﴾

169. Surely, we would have been slaves of Allah, sincere.^{*92}

لَكِنَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمَخْلَصِينَ ﴿١٦٩﴾

***92** This same thing has already been mentioned in Surah Fatir, Ayat 42.

170. Yet they disbelieve in it, then soon they shall know.

فَكَفَرُوا بِهِ^ص فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ



171. And certainly, Our word has gone forth for Our slaves, the messengers.

وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا
الْمُرْسَلِينَ



172. That indeed, they would be those helped.

إِنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ الْمَنْصُورُونَ



173. And that indeed Our host (army), they would be the victors.*⁹³

وَإِنَّ جُنَدَنَا لَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ



*⁹³ Allah's army: implies the believers who obey Allah's Messenger and side with him. This also includes those unseen powers by which Allah helps the followers of the truth.

This help and domination does not necessarily mean that in every age every Prophet of Allah and his followers must attain political dominance, but this dominance has many forms, one of which is political rule as well. Wherever the Prophets of Allah did not attain any such dominance, they did establish their moral superiority even in those places. The nations which did not accept their message and adopted a way contrary to their teachings were ultimately doomed to destruction. Whatever philosophies of error and misguidance the people invented and whatever corrupt and evil practices of life they enforced died out ultimately after they had their sway for some time. But the truths preached

by the Prophets of Allah for thousands of years have been unalterable before as they are unalterable today. No one has been able to disprove them in any way.

174. So withdraw from them (O Muhammad) for a while.

فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١٧٤﴾

175. And watch them, then soon they shall see (the punishment).^{*94}

وَأَبْصِرْهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٧٥﴾

***94** That is, it will not take long when they will see their defeat and your victory with their own eyes. This proved to be true as it had been foretold. Hardly 14 to 15 years had passed after the revelation of these verses when the pagans of Makkah witnessed the Prophet (peace be upon him) enter their city as a conqueror, and then a few years later the same people saw that Islam had overwhelmed not only Arabia but the mighty empires of Rome and Iran as well.

176. Then do they seek to hasten on Our punishment.

أَفِعْدَابِنَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿١٧٦﴾

177. Then when it descends into their courtyard, then evil will be the morning of those who were warned.

فَإِذَا نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ فَسَاءَ صَبَاحُ الْمُنْذَرِينَ ﴿١٧٧﴾

178. And withdraw from them (O Muhammad) for a while.

وَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١٧٨﴾

179. And watch, then soon they shall see (the punishment).

وَأَبْصِرْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٧٩﴾

180. Glorified be your Lord,
the Lord of Majesty, from
that which they attribute (to
Him).

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا
يَصِفُونَ



181. And peace be upon the
messengers.

وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ



182. And praise be to Allah,
Lord of the worlds.

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ





ص Suad

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the alphabetic letter *Suad* with which it begins.

Period of Revelation

As will be explained below, according to some traditions this Surah was revealed in the period when the Prophet (peace be upon him) had started calling the people openly to Islam in Makkah, and this had caused great alarm among the chiefs of the Quraish. If this be true, its period of revelation would be about the 4th year of the Prophethood. According to some other traditions, it was revealed after Umar's embracing Islam, and this happened, as is well known, after the migration to Habash. Another chain of the traditions shows that the event which occasioned the revelation of this Surah took place during the last illness of Abu Talib. If this be correct, the period of its revelation would be the 10th or 11th year of the Prophethood.

Historical Background

Here is a resume of the traditions related by Imam Ahmad, Nasai, Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Ibn Abu Hatim, Muhammad bin Ishaq and others:

When Abu Talib fell ill, and the Quraish chiefs knew that his end was near, they held consultations and decided to approach the old chief with the request that he should solve the dispute between them and his nephew. For they feared that if Abu Talib died and then they subjected Muhammad (peace be upon him) to a harsh treatment, after his death, the Arabs would taunt them, saying: They were afraid of the old chief as long as he lived, now that he is dead they have started maltreating his nephew. At least 25 of the Quraish chiefs including Abu Jahl, Abu Sufyan, Umayyah bin Khalaf, Aas bin Wail, Aswad bin al-Muttalib, Uqbah bin Abi Muait, Utbah and Shaibah went to Abu Talib. First, they put before him their complaints against the Prophet (peace be upon him) as usual, then said: We have come to present before you a just request and it is this: let your nephew leave us to our religion, and we shall leave him to his. He may worship whomever he may please: we shall not stand in his way in this matter; but he should not condemn our gods, and should not try to force us to give them up. Please tell him to make terms with us on this condition. Abu Talib called the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: Dear nephew, these people of your tribe have come to me with a request. They want you to agree with them on a just matter so as to put an end to your dispute with them. Then he told him about the request of the chiefs of the Quraish. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Dear uncle: I shall request them to agree upon a thing which, if they accept, will enable them to conquer the whole of Arabia and subject the non-Arab world to their

domination. Hearing this, the people were first confounded; they did not know how they should turn down such a proposal. Then, after they had considered the matter, they replied: You speak of one word: we are prepared to repeat ten others like it, but please tell us what it is. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *La ilaha ill-Allah*. At this they got up all together and left the place saying what Allah has narrated in the initial part of this Surah.

Ibn Saad in his *Tabaqat* has related this event just as cited above, but, according to him, this did not happen during Abu Talib's last illness but at the time when the Prophet (peace be upon him) had started preaching Islam openly, and the news of the conversion of one person or the other was being heard almost daily in Makkah. In those days the Quraish chiefs had led several deputations to Abu Talib and had asked him to stop Muhammad (peace be upon him) from preaching his message, and it was with one of those deputations that this conversation had taken place.

Zamakhshari, Razi, Nisaburi and other commentators say that this deputation went to Abu Talib at the time then the chiefs of the Quraish had been upset at Umar's embracing Islam; but no reference to its basis is available in any book of the traditions, nor have these commentators cited the source of their this information. However, if it be true, it is understandable. For, the unbelieving Quraish had already been bewildered to see that the person who had arisen from among themselves with the message of Islam had no parallel in the entire tribe as regarded nobility, purity of character, wisdom and seriousness. Moreover, his right

hand man and chief supporter was a man like Abu Bakr, who was well known in and around Makkah as a gentle, righteous and brilliant man. Now when they might have seen that a brave and resolute man like Umar also had joined them, they must have felt that the danger was growing and becoming intolerable.

Subject Matter and Topics

The Surah begins with a review of the aforesaid meeting. Making the dialogue between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the disbelievers the basis, Allah says that the actual reason with those people for their denial is not any defect in the message of Islam but their own arrogance, jealousy and insistence on following the blind. They are not prepared to believe in a man from their own clan as a Prophet of God and follow him. They want to persist in the ideas of ignorance which they have found their ancestors following. And when a person exposes their this ignorance and presents the truth before them, they are alarmed and regard it as an oddity, rather as a novel and impossible thing. For them the concept of Tauhid and the Hereafter is not only an unacceptable creed but also a concept which only deserves to be ridiculed and mocked.

Then, Allah, both in the initial part of the Surah and in its last sentences, has precisely warned the disbelievers, as if to say: The man whom you are ridiculing today and whose guidance you reject will soon overpower you, and the time is not far when in this very city of Makkah, where you are persecuting him, he will overwhelm you completely.

Then describing nine of the Prophets, one after the other,

with greater details of the story of the Prophets David and Solomon (peace be upon them); Allah has emphasized the point that His Law of Justice is impartial and objective, that only the right attitude of man is acceptable to Him, that He calls to account and punishes every wrongdoer whoever he may be. And that He likes only those people who do not persist in wrongdoing but repent as soon as they are warned of it, and pass their life in the world keeping in mind their accountability in the Hereafter.

After this, the final end that the obedient servants and the disobedient people will meet in the Hereafter, has been depicted and two things have been especially impressed on the disbelievers.

(1) That the leaders and guides whom the ignorant people are following blindly in the world, on the way of deviation, will have reached Hell even before their followers in the Hereafter, and the two groups will be cursing each other there.

(2) That the disbelievers will be amazed to see that there is no trace whatsoever in Hell of the believers whom they used to regard as contemptible in the world and will themselves be involved in its torment.

In conclusion, mention has been made of the story of Adam and Iblis (Satan), which is meant to tell the disbelieving Quraish that the same arrogance and vanity which was preventing them from bowing before Muhammad (peace be upon him) had prevented Iblis also from bowing before Adam. Iblis felt jealous of the high rank God had given to Adam and became accursed when he disobeyed His

command. Likewise, you, O people of Quraish, are feeling jealous of the high rank God has bestowed on Muhammad (peace be upon him) and are not prepared to obey him whom God has appointed His messenger. Therefore, you will be doomed ultimately to the same fate as will be met by Satan.

1. Saud.^{*1} By the Quran, full of admonition.^{*2}

صَ وَالْقُرْآنِ ذِي الذِّكْرِ

*1 Although like all other enigmatic letters (*muqattaat*), it is also difficult to determine the meaning of the letter *Suad*, yet the interpretation of it given by Ibn Abbas and Dahhak is quite plausible. According to them, it implies: *Sadiqun fi-qauli-hi*, or *Sadaqa Muhammadun*: Muhammad (peace be upon him) is truthful: whatever he says is the very truth.

*2 The words *dhidh-dhikr* of the text can have two meanings:

- (1) *Dhi sharaf*: the noble Quran.
- (2) *Dhi at-tadhkir*: the Quran which is full of admonition, or the Quran which serves as a reminder, or arouses a heedless person.

2. But those who disbelieve are in false pride and dissension.^{*3}

بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي عِزَّةٍ وَشِقَاقٍ



*3 If the interpretation given of *suad* by Ibn Abbas and Dahhak is accepted, the sentence would mean this: By this noble Quran, or by this Quran which is full of admonition, Muhammad (peace be upon him) is presenting the truth, but the people who persist in their denial, are in fact,

involved in arrogance and stubbornness. And if *Suad* is taken as one of those enigmatic letters whose meaning cannot be determined, then the answer to the oath is omitted, which is indicated by “but” and the sentence following it. The meaning then would be: The reason for the denial of these disbelievers is not that the religion which is being presented before them is unsound, or that Muhammad (peace be upon him) has shown some slackness in the matter of presenting the truth before them, but their own boasting and bragging, their haughtiness and stubbornness, and this is borne out by this Quran itself, which is full of admonition. Every unbiased person who studies it will admit that full justice has been done in it to the task of making the people understand the truth.

3. How many a generation have We destroyed before them, so they cried out, and it was no longer a time for escape.

كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ قَرْنٍ
فَنَادَوْا وَوَلَاتَ حِينَ مَنَاصٍ ﴿٣﴾

4. And they wonder that a warner has come to them from among themselves,^{*4} and the disbelievers say: “This is a wizard,^{*5} a liar.”

وَعَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنْذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ
وَقَالَ الْكٰفِرُونَ هٰذَا سٰحِرٌ
كٰذِبٌ ﴿٤﴾

*4 That is, they are so foolish that when a man from their own kind and from their own clan and brotherhood, whom they knew well, was appointed to warn them, they wondered at it, whereas it would have been strange if some

other kind of creature had been sent down from heaven to warn human beings, or an utter stranger had arisen among them suddenly and started functioning as a prophet. In that case they would have been perfectly justified to say: What an odd thing! How can this strange creature know our conditions and feelings and requirements that he should guide us? How can we test and find out the truth about the stranger who has suddenly arisen among us and know whether he is trustworthy or not? And how can we decide whether we should or should not believe in him when we have not judged and seen his character and personality?

*5 The disbelievers used the word *sahir* (wizard, sorcerer, magician) for the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the sense that whoever came in contact with him was so influenced by him that he would become his follower like a possessed person. He would least mind severing of his connections with others or incurring material losses. The father would give up the son and the son would give up the father. The wife would separate from the husband and the husband would separate from the wife. One would at once be prepared to leave his country if so required. One would even be ready to pass through the severest persecutions for the sake of the faith. (For further details, see Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 3 and E.N. 5 thereof).

5. “Has he made the gods One God. Indeed, this is an astounding thing.”

أَجَعَلَ الْأَلِهَةَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عُجَابٌ



6. And the leaders among them went about*⁶ (saying): “Go on, and remain patient over your gods. Indeed, this is a thing*⁷ intended (against you).”^{*8}

وَأَنْطَلَقَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ آمَشُوا
وَأَصْبِرُوا عَلَىٰ ءِالِهَتِكُمْ إِنَّ هَذَا
لَشَيْءٌ يُرَادُ

*6 The allusion is to the chiefs who got up and left Abu Talib when they had heard what the Prophet (peace be upon him) said.

*7 “This thing”: the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) asking them to affirm faith in *La-ilaha ill-Allah* so as to overpower both Arabia and the adjoining lands.

*8 What they meant to say was this: Muhammad has some vested interests. He is extending this invitation to us in order to subjugate us and rule us as his subjects.

7. “We have not heard of this among the people of latter days.*⁹ This is not but an invention.”

مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي الْأَمَلَةِ الْأَخْرَةِ
إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا آخْتَلَقُ

*9 That is, there have been our own elderly people in the recent past. There are Christians and Jews also living in our land and in the adjoining lands; and there are the Zoroastrians abounding in Iran and Iraq and eastern Arabia. None of them has ever preached that man should only believe in One Allah, Lord of the worlds, and in none else beside Him. No one can remain content with One God only. Everyone believes in the beloved ones of Allah also. They are All paying obeisance to them, making offerings at their shrines and praying for fulfillment of their needs and

requirements. From one place people get children and from another provisions of life, and from yet another whatever they pray for. The whole world believes in their powers and capabilities, and those who have benefited from them tell how the needs of the people are being met and their difficulties being removed through their help and grace. Now this man is telling us a queer thing which we had never heard before. He says that none of these holy men has any share in Godhead and that Godhead wholly belongs only to Allah.

8. “Has the reminder been sent down to him from among us.” But they are in doubt about My reminder,^{*10} But they have not yet tasted My punishment.

أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا بَلْ
هُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِّنْ ذِكْرِي بَلْ لَّمَّا
يَذُوقُوا عَذَابِ

*10 In other words Allah says: Muhammad, these people are not belying you but Me. As for your truthfulness, they had never doubted it before. Now that they are doubting it, it is because of My Admonition. Now that I have entrusted to you the mission of admonishing them, they have started doubting the truthfulness of the very person whose righteousness and piety they used to swear by. The same theme has also been discussed in Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 33 and E.N. 21 thereof.

9. Or do they have the treasures of the mercy of your Lord, the All Mighty, the Bestower.

أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّكَ
الْعَزِيزِ الْوَهَّابِ

10. Or is theirs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. Then let them ascend up through (any) means (to the heavens).^{*11}

أَمْ لَهُمْ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَلْيَرْتَقُوا
فِي الْأَسْبَابِ ﴿١٠﴾

***11** This is an answer to this saying of the disbelievers: Was he the only (fit) person among us to whom Allah's admonition should have been sent down? Allah says: It is for Us to decide whom We should choose and appoint as a Prophet and whom We should not. These people do not possess any power and authority to exercise choice in this regard. If they wish to attain such an authority, they should try to reach the divine Throne in order to obtain control over the office of sovereignty of the Universe, so that revelation should come down on him whom they regard as deserving their mercy and not on him whom We regard as fit for it. This theme has occurred at several places in the Quran, because the unbelieving Quraish again and again said: How did Muhammad (peace be upon him) become a Prophet? Did Allah find no better man among the principal leaders of the Quraish worthy of this office? (See Surah Bani-Israil, Ayat 100; Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayats 31-32).

11. A small host, that will be defeated there, from among the factions (of disbelievers).^{*12}

جُنُودٌ مَّا هُنَالِكَ مَهْزُومٌ مِّنَ
الْأَحْزَابِ ﴿١١﴾

***12** "There" implies the city of Makkah. That is, the time is coming when these people shall be humbled and routed in

the very place where they are opposing and mocking you. Then, they will be standing, with heads hung down, before the same man whom they despise and refuse to recognize as a Prophet of Allah.

12. The people of Noah denied before them, and Aad, and Pharaoh of the stakes.*13

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَعَادٌ
وَفِرْعَوْنُ ذُو الْأَوْتَادِ

*13 The use of *dhul-autad* (of the stakes) for Pharaoh is either in the sense that his kingdom was very strong as though a stake were firmly driven into the ground, or for the reason that wherever his large armies camped, pegs of the tents were seen driven into the ground on every side, or because he would torture and punish at the stakes anyone with whom he was angry. And possibly the stakes may imply the pyramids of Egypt which seem to be driven into the earth like the stakes.

13. And Thamud, and the people of Lot, and the dwellers of the wood. those were the factions.

وَتَمُودُ وَقَوْمُ لُوطٍ وَأَصْحَابُ
لَيْكَةِ أُولَئِكَ الْأَحْزَابُ

14. Not one (of them) but denied the messengers, so My penalty was justified.

إِنْ كُلٌّ إِلَّا كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ
فَحَقَّ عِقَابٌ

15. And these (disbelievers) do not await but one shout, for it there will be no

وَمَا يَنْظُرُ هَتُوْلَاءِ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً

delay.*¹⁴

وَاحِدَةً مَّا لَهَا مِنْ فَوَاقٍ ﴿١٥﴾

*14 That is, only a single blast of the torment will be enough to annihilate them; no other will be needed for the purpose. Another meaning of the sentence can be: After this they will get no more relief and no more respite.

16. And they say: “Our Lord, hasten to us our fate before the Day of Reckoning.”*¹⁵

وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا عَجِّلْ لَنَا قِطْنَآ
قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٦﴾

*15 That is, Allah’s torment will be so severe and terrible as mentioned above, but just consider the behavior of these foolish people. They are telling the Prophet mockingly: Do not put off our affairs till the Day of Reckoning with which you are threatening us, but settle our account just now.: Whatever punishment is to be inflicted on us should be inflicted immediately.

17. Be patient over what they say,*¹⁶ and remember Our slave David,*¹⁷ a man of might.*¹⁸ Indeed, He was ever turning in repentance (toward Allah).

أَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاذْكُرْ
عَبْدَنَا دَاوُدَ ذَا الْأَيْدِ ۗ إِنَّهُ
أَوَّابٌ ﴿١٧﴾

*16 The allusion is to the absurd conversation of the disbelievers of Makkah, as narrated above, to the effect that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was a sorcerer and a liar, and to their objection whether he was the only fit person in the sight of Allah to be appointed as a Messenger, and to their some accusation that he had vested interest in

preaching the doctrine of Tauhid to the people and not any religious mission.

***17** “Remember Our servant David”. It would mean: There is a lesson in this story for these people. Or it would mean: The remembrance of this story will help you too, to have patience. As the narrative is meant to serve both purposes, comprehensive words have been used as contain both meanings. (For the story of the prophet David (peace be upon him), see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 251; Surah Bani-Israil, Ayat 55; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 78-81; Surah An-Naml, Ayat 15 and the E.Ns thereof, and E.Ns 14 to 16 of Surah Saba).

***18** The words in the original are: *dhal-ayd* (possessor of the hands). The word “hand” is used metaphorically for strength and power not only in Arabic but in other languages also. When as an attribute of the Prophet David (peace be upon him) it is said that he was a "possessor of the hands", it will necessarily mean that he possessed great powers. These powers may mean the physical strength which he displayed during his combat against Goliath, military and political power by which he crushed the neighboring idolatrous nations and established a strong Islamic empire, moral strength by which he ruled like a poor king and always feared Allah and observed the bounds set by Him, and the power of worship by virtue of which, besides his occupations in connection with rule and government and fighting in the cause of Allah, he fasted every alternate day and spent a third of the night in worship according to a tradition of Bukhari. Imam

Bukhari in his History has related, on the authority of Abu-Darda, that whenever the Prophet David (peace be upon him) was mentioned, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say: He was the greatest worshiper of God.

18. Indeed, We subjected the mountains to hymn praises with him at nightfall and sunrise.

إِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهُ
يُسَبِّحُنَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِشْرَاقِ

19. And (so did) the birds assembled. All turning to Him.*19

وَالطَّيْرَ مَحْشُورَةً كُلٌّ لَهُ أَوَابٌ

*19 For explanation, see Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 79 and E.N. 71 thereof.

20. And We made his kingdom strong and gave him wisdom and decisive speech.*20

وَشَدَدْنَا مُلْكَهُ
وَأَتَيْنَاهُ
الْحِكْمَةَ وَفَصَّلَ الْخِطَابِ

*20 That is, he was never ambiguous in speech but clear and forthright. Whatever problem he talked about he would lay bare its basic points, and would clearly and precisely determine the real issue under question, and would pass a decisive judgment." This quality is not attained by a person unless he is granted wisdom, understanding and mastery of language of the highest degree.

21. And has there come to you the news of the litigants.

وَهَلْ أَتَاكَ نَبُؤُا الْخَصْمِ إِذْ

When they climbed over the wall into the royal chamber.*21

تَسَوَّرُوا الْمِحْرَابَ ﴿٢١﴾

*21 The object why the Prophet David (peace be upon him) has been mentioned here is to relate the story that begins from here; the object of mentioning his sterling qualities in the introduction was only to point out the high caliber of the Prophet David (peace be upon him) with whom this incident took place.

22. When they entered to David, he was terrified of them.*22 They said: “Do not fear. (We are) two litigants, one of us has wronged the other, so judge between us with truth, and do not be unjust, and guide us to the right path.”

إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَىٰ دَاوُدَ فَفَزِعَ مِنْهُمْ
قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ خَصْمَانِ بَغِي
بَعْضُنَا عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فَأَحْكُم بَيْنَنَا
بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تُشْطِطْ وَاهْدِنَا إِلَىٰ
سَوَاءِ الصِّرَاطِ ﴿٢٢﴾

*22 He was alarmed because the two men had appeared in the private quarters of the ruler of the land suddenly, by climbing over the wall, instead of going before him by the proper entrance.

23. “Indeed, this my brother,*23 has ninety and nine ewes while I have one ewe. So he said, hand it over to me, and he overpowered me in speech.”*24

إِنَّ هَذَا أَخِي لَهُ تِسْعٌ وَتِسْعُونَ
نَعْجَةً وَلِيَ نَعْجَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ فَقَالَ
أَكْفَلْنِيهَا وَعَزَّنِي فِي الْخِطَابِ ﴿٢٣﴾

*23 “Brother” does not mean a real brother but a brother-in-faith and a member of one’s own clan.

*24 To understand what follows one should note that the complainant did not say that the other person had taken away his only ewe and added it to his own ewes, but said that he was asking for it, and since he was a powerful person he had prevailed over him in the matter and he could not reject his demand, being a weak and poor man.

24. He (David) said: “He has certainly wronged you in asking your ewe to his ewes.^{*25} And indeed, many partners oppress one another, except those who believe and do righteous deeds, and there are few of them.” And David guessed that We had tried him, and he sought forgiveness of his Lord, and he fell down prostrate and turned in

repentance.^{*26} **AsSajda**

قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَلَمَكَ بِسُؤَالِ
نَعَجَتِكَ إِلَىٰ نِعَاجِهِ ۗ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا
مِّنَ الْخُلَطَاءِ لَيَبْغِي بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ
بَعْضٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ وَقَلِيلٌ مَّا هُمْ ۗ وَظَنَّ
دَاوُدُ أَنَّمَا فَتَنَّهٗ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ
وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَأَنَابَ ﴿٢٤﴾

*25 Here, one should not doubt that the Prophet David (peace be upon him) gave his decision after hearing only what one party had to say. The fact of the matter is that when the respondent kept quiet at the complaint of the complainant and said nothing in defense it by itself amounted to a confession by him. That is why the Prophet David (peace be upon him) came to the conclusion that the

facts of the case were the same as the complainant had stated.

***26** There is a difference of opinion as to whether it is obligatory to perform a sajdah (prostration) on this occasion or not. Imam Shafai says that it is not obligatory, for this is only a Prophet's repentance; but Imam Abu Hanifah has opined that prostration here is obligatory. The traditionalists have related three traditions from Ibn-Abbas in this regard. According to Ikrimah, Ibn Abbas said: This is not one of those verses on the recitation of which prostration is obligatory, but I have seen the Prophet (peace be upon him) prostrating himself on this occasion. (Bukhari, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Musnad Ahmad). The second tradition which Saeed bin Jubair has related from Ibn Abbas is to the effect: The Prophet (peace be upon him) prostrated himself in Surah Suad and said: The Prophet David (peace be upon him) had prostrated himself in order to express his repentance and we prostrate ourselves as a token of gratitude, because his repentance was accepted. (Nasai) In the third tradition that Mujahid has related from him, he says: Allah has commanded the Prophet (peace be upon him), in the Quran: These were the ones whom Allah had shown the right way; therefore, you should follow their way. (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 90). Now, since David was a Prophet and he had prostrated himself on this occasion, the Prophet (peace be upon him) also prostrated himself here only to follow his way. (Bukhari). These three are the statements of Ibn Abbas. Abu Said Khudri says: The Prophet (peace be upon him) once recited

Surah Suad in his address, and when he came to this verse, he descended from the pulpit and performed a prostration and the audience also did the same along with him. Then, on another occasion, he recited this same Surah and when the people heard this verse, they were ready to perform the prostration. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: This is the repentance of a Prophet, but I see that you have gotten ready to perform the prostration. Saying this he descended from the pulpit and prostrated himself and the people also did the same. (Abu Daud). Although these traditions do not provide any absolute argument to prove that it is obligatory to perform the prostration here, yet they prove at least that because the Prophet (peace be upon him) generally performed a prostration on this occasion, it is in any case commendable to prostrate here.

Another thing that one notices in this verse is that Allah has used the words *kharra rakian* (fell in ruku) here, but all the commentators agree that this implies *kharra sajid-an* (fell in sajdah: prostration). On this very basis, Imam Abu Hanifah and his companions have expressed the opinion that one may perform only a *ruku* instead of a *sajdah*, when one recites or hears being recited a verse requiring a *sajdah* in the Prayer or outside it. For when Allah has used the word *ruku* to imply *sajdah*, it becomes obvious that *ruku* can represent *sajdah*. Imam Khattabi, a Shafeite jurist, also holds the same opinion, Though this opinion in itself is sound and reasonable, we do not find any precedent in the practices of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions that they might have been content with

performing a *ruku* only instead of a *sajdah* on a verse requiring a *sajdah*. Therefore, one should act upon the view only when there is an obstruction in performing the *sajdah*; it would be wrong to make it a practice, Imam Abu Hanifah and his companions themselves also did not intend that it should be made a practice; they only ruled that it was permissible.

25. So We forgave him that. And indeed, for him is a nearness to Us, and a good place of return (Paradise).^{*27}

فَغَفَرْنَا لَهُ ذَٰلِكَ وَإِنَّ لَهُ
عِندَنَا لَازْفَىٰ وَحُسْنَ مَّآبٍ



***27** This shows that the Prophet David (peace be upon him) had certainly committed an error, and it was an error which bore some resemblance with the case of the ewes. Therefore, when he gave a decision on it, he at once realized that he was being put to the test. But the nature of the error was not such as could not be forgiven, or if forgiven, it would have deposed him from his high rank. Allah Himself says: When he fell down prostrate and repented, he was not only forgiven but his high rank in the world and the Hereafter also remained unaffected.

26. “O David, indeed, We have made you a successor in the earth, so judge between mankind with truth, and do not follow desire for it will mislead

يَدَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي
الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ
بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَىٰ فَيُضِلَّكَ

you from the way of Allah.” Indeed, those who go astray from the way of Allah, shall have a severe punishment because they forgot the Day of Reckoning.*28

عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
يَضِلُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ بِمَا نَسُوا يَوْمَ
الْحِسَابِ



*28 This is the warning that Allah gave to the Prophet David (peace be upon him) on accepting his repentance along with giving him the good news of exalting his rank. This by itself shows that the error that he had committed contained an element of the desires of the flesh; it also pertained to the abuse of power and authority; and it was an act which was unworthy of a just and fair-minded ruler. We are confronted with three questions here:

- (1) What was the error that the Prophet David committed?
- (2) Why has Allah made only tacit allusions to it instead of mentioning it openly and directly?
- (3) What is its relevance to the present context?

The people who have studied the Bible (the Holy Book of the Jews and Christians) are not unaware that in this Book the Prophet David (peace be upon him) has been accused clearly of committing adultery with the wife of Uriah the Hittite and then marrying her after having Uriah intentionally slain in a battle. It has also been alleged that this same woman, who had surrendered herself to the Prophet David (peace be upon him), while being another man's wife, was the mother of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him). This story is found with all its details in

chapters 11 and 12 of the Second Book of Samuel in the Old Testament. It had been included in it centuries before the revelation of the Quran. Any Jew or Christian who read his Holy Book anywhere in the world, or heard it read, was not only aware of this story but also believed in it as true. It spread through them, and even in the present time no book is written in the West on the history of the Israelites and the Hebrew religion, in which this charge against the Prophet David (peace be upon him) is not repeated. This well known story also contains the following:

And the Lord sent Nathan onto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee

out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. (2 Samuel, chapter 12: 1-9).

When this story was so well known among the people there was no need that a detailed account of it should have been given in the Quran, nor is it the way of Allah to mention such things openly in His Holy Book. That is why only tacit allusions have been made to it here as well as pointed out what the actual event was and what the people of the Book have turned it into. The actual event as one clearly understands from the aforesaid statement of the Quran was:

The Prophet David (peace be upon him) had only expressed this desire before Uriah (or whatever be the name of the man) that he should divorce his wife; as this desire had been expressed not by a common man but by an illustrious king and a great Prophet before a member of the public, the man was finding himself constrained to yield to it even in the absence of any compulsion. On this occasion, before the man could act as the Prophet David had desired, two righteous men of the nation suddenly made their appearance before David and presented before him this matter in the form of an imaginary case. At first, the

Prophet David thought it was a real case, and so gave his decision after hearing it. But as soon as he uttered the words of the decision, his conscience gave the warning that the parable precisely applied to the case between him and the person, and that the act which he was describing as an injustice had issued forth from his own person. As soon as he realized this, he fell down prostrate, repented and reversed his decision.

The question, as to how this event took the ugly shape as related in the Bible, also becomes obvious after a little consideration. It appears that the Prophet David (peace be upon him) had come to know of the unique qualities of the woman through some means and had started thinking that she should be the queen of the country instead of being the wife of an ordinary officer. Overwhelmed by the thought he expressed the desire before her husband that he should divorce her. He did not see any harm in it because it was not looked upon as anything improper among the Israelites. It was an ordinary thing among them that if a person happened to like the wife of another, he would freely request him to give her up for him. Nobody minded such a request, and often it so happened that friends would divorce their wives for each other's sake of their own accord, so that the other may marry her. However, when the Prophet David (peace be upon him) expressed this desire, he did not realize that the expression of such a desire could be without compulsion and coercion when expressed by a common man, but it could never be so when expressed by a king. When his attention was drawn to this

aspect of the matter through a parable, he gave up his desire immediately, and the thing was forgotten. But afterwards when, without any desire or planning on his part, the woman's husband fell martyr on the battlefield, and he married her, the evil genius of the Jews started concocting stories and this mischievous mentality became even more acute after a section of the Israelites turned hostile to the Prophet Solomon. (Please see E.N. 56 of Surah An-Naml). Under these motives the story was invented that the Prophet David (peace be upon him), God forbid, had seen Uriah's wife washing herself from the roof of his palace. He had her called to his house and committed adultery with her and she had conceived. Then he had sent Uriah on the battle-front to fight the children of Ammon, and had commanded Joab, the army commander, to appoint him in the forefront of the battle where he should be killed. And when he was killed, he married his widow, and from the same woman the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) was born. The wicked people described all these false accusations in their Holy Book, so that they should go on reading it generation after generation and slandering the two most illustrious men of their community, who were their greatest benefactors after the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him).

A section of the commentators of the Quran has almost entirely accepted these tales that have reached them through the Israelites. They have dropped only that pan of these traditions in which mention has been made of the accusation of adultery against the Prophet David and the

woman's having conceived. The rest of the story as found in the traditions reproduced by them is the same as it was well known among the Israelites. Another group of the commentators has altogether denied that any such act was ever committed by the Prophet David (peace be upon him), which bore any resemblance with the case of the ewes. Instead of this, they have put forward such interpretations of this story as are wholly baseless, unauthentic and without relevance to the context of the Quran itself. But among the Muslim commentators themselves there are some who have accepted the truth and the facts of the story through the clear references made to it in the Quran. Here are, for instance, some of their views:

Both Masruq and Saeed bin Jubair have related this saying of Abdullah bin Abbas: The only thing that the Prophet David (peace be upon him) did was that he expressed his desire before the woman's husband that he should give up his wife for him. (Ibn Jarir).

Allama Zamakhshari writes in his commentary Al-Kashshaf: The way Allah has narrated the story of the Prophet David (peace be upon him) indicates that he had only expressed his desire before the man that he should leave his wife for him.

Allama Abu Bakr al-Jassas has expressed the opinion that the woman was not the other man's wedded wife but was only his betrothed. The Prophet David (peace be upon him) had also asked for the same woman's hand in marriage. This earned him Allah's displeasure, for he had asked for her hand in spite of the fact that another man had already

asked for her hand, and the Prophet David (peace be upon him) already had several wives with him in his house. (Ahkamul-Quran). Some other commentators also have expressed the same opinion, but this does not entirely conform to what the Quran has said. The words of the suitor as related in the Quran are to the effect: I have only one ewe; he says: Give this ewe also in my charge. The Prophet David (peace be upon him) also said the same thing in his decision: This person has certainly wronged you in demanding your ewe to be added to his ewes. This parable could apply to the case between the Prophet David (peace be upon him) and Uriah only in case the woman was the latter's wife. Had it been the case of asking for the woman's hand when another man had already asked for her hand, the parable would have been like this: I desired to have an ewe, and this man said: leave this also for me.

Qadi Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi has discussed this question in detail in his Ahkamal-Quran and concluded: What actually happened was just that the Prophet David (peace be upon him) asked one of his men to leave his wife for him and made this demand seriously. The Quran does not say that the man gave up his wife on this demand and the Prophet David (peace be upon him) then married her and the Prophet Solomon was born of her womb. What displeased Allah was that he asked the woman's husband to leave her for him. This act, even if otherwise lawful, was unworthy of the office of Prophethood; that is why he earned Allah's displeasure and was admonished.

This commentary fits in well with the context in which this

story has been told. A little consideration of the context shows that it has been related in the Quran on this occasion for two objects. The first object is to exhort the Prophet (peace be upon him) to patience, and for this purpose he has been addressed and told: Have patience on what these people say against you, and remember Our servant David (peace be upon him). That is: You are being accused only of sorcery and lying, but Our servant David (peace be upon him) was even accused of adultery and having a person killed willfully, by the wicked people: therefore, bear up against what you may have to hear from these people. The other object is to warn the disbelievers to the effect: You are committing all sorts of excesses in the world with impunity, but the God in Whose Godhead you are committing these misdeeds does not spare anyone from being called to account. Even if a favorite and beloved servant of His happens to commit but a minor error, He calls him to strict accountability. For this very object the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been asked: Tell them the story of Our servant David (peace be upon him), who was a man of high character, but when he happened to commit sin, We did not even spare him but condemned him severely.

In this regard, there is another misunderstanding which must also be removed. The suitor in his parable said that his brother had 99 ewes and he had only one ewe, which he was demanding from him. From this one gets the idea that perhaps the Prophet David (peace be upon him) had 99 wives, and by having another he wanted to make their

number 100. But, in fact, it is not necessary that every minor part of the parable should be literally applicable to the case between the Prophet David (peace be upon him) and Uriah the Hittite. In common idiom the numbers ten, twenty, fifty, etc. are mentioned to express plurality and not to indicate the exact number of something. When a man tells another that he has told him something ten times over, he only means to stress that he has been told that thing over and over again. The same is also true here. By means of the parable the suitor wanted the Prophet David (peace be upon him) to realize that he already had several wives with him, and even then he desired to have the only wife of the other man. This same thing has been cited by the commentator Nisaburi from Hasan Basri: The Prophet David (peace be upon him) did not have 99 wives: this is only a parable (For a detailed and well-reasoned discussion of this story, see our book Tafhimat, vol. II, pp. 29.44).

27. And We did not create the heaven and the earth and whatever is between them without purpose.^{*29} That is the assumption of those who disbelieve. Then woe to those who disbelieve from the Fire.

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَطِلًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ ظَنُّ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۖ فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
مِنَ النَّارِ



***29** That is, We have not created anything in the world merely in sport and fun so that it may be without any wisdom and purpose and justice, and there may occur no

result from any act, good or bad. This is the conclusion of the preceding discourse as well as an introduction to the following theme. The object of this statement as a conclusion to the discourse is to impress the following truth: Man has not been left to wander about at will in the world, nor is this world a lawless kingdom that one may do here whatever he likes with impunity. As an introduction to the following theme, the sentence is meant to say: The person who does not believe in the meting out of the rewards and punishments, and thinks that both the good and the evil people will ultimately end up in the dust after death and that nobody will be called to account, nor will anyone be rewarded for good or punished for evil, in fact, regards the world as a plaything and its Creator a senseless player, and thinks that by creating the world and man in it, the Creator of the Universe has committed a useless thing. The same thing has been stated in different ways at several places in the Quran, e.g. Did you think that We created you without any purpose, and that you would never be brought back to Us? (Surah Al-Muminun, Ayat 115).

We have not created the heavens and the earth and whatever lies between them merely in sport: We have created them with the truth, but most of them do not know. For the resurrection of them all the appointed time is the Day of Decision. (Surah Ad-Dukhan, Ayat 38-40).

28. Or shall We treat those who believe and do righteous deeds as those who spread corruption in the

أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِينَ فِي

earth, or shall We treat those who fear as the wicked.*30

الأَرْضِ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الْمُتَّقِينَ كَالْفُجَّارِ



*30 That is, do you think it is reasonable and fair that both the pious and the wicked should be treated alike in the end? Do you regard this concept as satisfying that the pious man should not get any reward for his piety and the wrongdoer should not receive any punishment for his sins? Obviously, if there is to be no Hereafter, and there is to be no accountability and no rewards and no punishments for human acts, it negates both Allah's wisdom and His justice, and the entire order of the Universe becomes a blind order. On this assumption there remains no motive for doing good and no deterrent against evil. God forbid, if the Godhead of God should be such a lawless kingdom, the one who leads a pious life in the face of all kinds of hardships in the world and endeavors to reform the people, would be a foolish person, and the one who gains benefits by committing all kinds of excesses and enjoys sinful pleasures of life, would be a wise man.

29. (This is) a Book*31 that We have sent down to you, full of blessing, that they may ponder its verses, and that those of understanding may reflect.

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ



*31 The Quran has been called a blessed Book in the sense that it is highly useful for man. It gives him the best

guidance to improve and reform his life. By following it he has only to gain and nothing to lose.

30. And We bestowed on David, Solomon.*32 An excellent slave, Indeed, he was ever turning in repentance (toward Allah).

وَوَهَبْنَا لِذَاوُدَ سُلَيْمَانَ نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ إِنَّهُ رَوَّابٌ

*32 The Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) has been mentioned already at the followings places: Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 102; Surah Bani-Israil, Ayat 5; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 78-82; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 15-44; Surah Saba, Ayats 12-14.

31. When there were presented before him, in the afternoon, trained horses, well bred.*33

إِذْ عُرِضَ عَلَيْهِ بِالْعَشِيِّ الصَّافِنَاتُ الْجَيَادُ

*33 The words *as-safinat-ul-jiyad* in the original imply the horses, which are very calm and quiet when they stand, and very fast moving when they run.

32. So he said: "Indeed I did love the good things*34 over the remembrance of my Lord." Until (the sun) was hidden into the veil (of darkness).

فَقَالَ إِنِّي أَحْبَبْتُ حُبَّ الْخَيْرِ عَن ذِكْرِ رَبِّي حَتَّى تَوَارَتْ بِالْحِجَابِ

*34 The Arabic word *khair* in the text is used for abundance of wealth as well as for horses metaphorically. As the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) had kept

these horses for fighting in the way of Allah, he called them *khair*.

33. (He said): “Return them to me.” Then he began to pass his hand over (their) legs and necks. ^{*35}

رُدُّوْهَا عَلَيَّ فَطَفِقَ مَسْحًا
بِالسُّوقِ وَالْأَعْنَاقِ

***35** There is a difference of opinion among the commentators about the translation and commentary of these verses.

One section of them interprets them as follows:

The Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) became so absorbed in reviewing the horses and watching their races, that he forgot to offer his Asr Prayer, or according to some others, to perform certain devotions that he used to perform before the sunset. Then when the sun went down, he commanded that the horses be brought back, and when they came back, the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) started slashing them with the sword, or in other words, slaughtering them as a sacrifice to Allah, because they had caused him to become heedless of the remembrance of Allah. Accordingly, the verses have been translated thus: And he said: I so preferred the love of this wealth that I became heedless of the remembrance (the Asr Prayer, or the special devotions) of my Lord till (the sun) went down (behind the veil of the west). (Then he commanded:) bring them back, (and when the horses came back) he began to stroke their shanks and necks (with the sword). Although this commentary has been given by some major commentators, it is not plausible for the reason that in this

the commentator has to add three things from himself, which have no basis whatsoever. In the first place, he has to assume that the Prophet Solomon's Asr Prayer was lost in the occupation, or some special devotions that he used to perform at that time, whereas the words of the Quran are only to the effect: I so preferred this wealth that I became heedless of the remembrance of my Lord. In these there is no ground for taking any word for the Asr Prayer or the special devotions. Secondly, he also assumes that the sun set, whereas there is no mention of the sun whatsoever. On the contrary, when one reads the words *hatta tawarar bil-hijab* (when they disappeared from sight) one's mind automatically turns to *as-safinat ul jiyad* (well-bred horses) which have been mentioned in the preceding verse. Thirdly, he also has to assume that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) did not simply stroke the shins and necks of the horses with the hand but stroked them with the sword, whereas the Quran does not contain the words *mashan-bis-saif* or any other pointer from which stroking may be taken to mean stroking with the sword. We have a fundamental difference with this kind of the commentary. In our opinion, only in four cases it would be right to interpret the words of the Quran in other than their normally accepted meaning:

- (1) Either there should be a pointer to it in the words of the Quran itself; or
- (2) There should be an allusion to it at some other place in the Quran; or
- (3) An explanation of it should be afforded by some

authentic Hadith; or

(4) It should have some other reliable source, e.g. if it pertains to history, there should be an historical evidence to support it. If it pertains to the manifestations of the universe, there should be authentic scientific knowledge to substantiate it. And if it pertains to the *Shariah* values, the sources of Islamic law should explain it. In the absence of any of these, we do not think it is right to invent a story on the basis of one's own imagination and add it to the words of the Quran.

One section of the commentators has differed a little from the above translation and commentary. They say that the pronoun in both *hatta tawarat bil-hijab* and *ruddu-ha alayya* turns only to the sun. That is, when the Asr Prayer was lost and the sun went down behind the veil of the west, the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) said to the workers of destiny: Turn the sun back so that the Asr time comes back for me to offer the Prayer. So, the sun retreated and he performed his Prayer. But this commentary is even more unacceptable than the previously mentioned one not because Allah is powerless to bring the sun back, but because Allah has made no mention of it anywhere. On the contrary, if such a wonderful miracle had actually been worked for the sake of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him), it would certainly be worthy of mention. Moreover, if the extraordinary event of the returning of the sun after having set had actually taken place; the history of the world would never be without it. In support of this commentary these commentators present some Ahadith also in order to

prove that the returning of the sun after having set is not a rare event that happened only once, but it has happened several times. There is the mention of bringing the sun back in connection with the Prophet's (peace be upon him) Ascension (miraj); the sun was also brought back on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench for the Prophet (peace be upon him), and also for Ali, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was sleeping with his head in Ali's lap and his Asr Prayer was lost: then the Prophet (peace be upon him) had prayed for the return of the sun and it had returned. But the reasoning from these traditions is even weaker than the commentary in support of which they have been presented. Ibn Taimiyyah has proved as fabricated the tradition about Ali after a detailed discussion of its chains and transmitters. Imam Ahmad says it has no basis, and Ibn Jauzi says that it is without any doubt a forged tradition. The tradition of the sun's being brought back on the occasion of the battle of the Trench also is weak according to some traditionalists and fabricated according to others. As far as the tradition regarding the event of the Ascension is concerned, the truth about it is that when, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was describing what had happened in the Night of Ascension, before the disbelievers of Makkah, they asked for a proof of it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied that on the way from Jerusalem he had seen a caravan at such and such a place, which had met with such and such an accident. When asked as to when that caravan would reach Makkah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) named the day. When the day came, the people

of the Quraish waited for the caravan all day till the sun began to set. On this occasion the Prophet prayed that the sun should not set till the caravan had arrived. So, the caravan actually arrived before the sunset. Some reporters even have stated that the day on that occasion had been enhanced by an hour, and the sun had stood still for that long. The question is: Are such traditions sufficient evidence for the proof of such an extraordinary event? As we have said above, the returning of the sun, or its standing still for an hour, is no ordinary event. Had such an event actually taken place, it would have become well known the world over. Its mention and narration could not remain restricted to only a few reporters.

The third section of the commentators interprets these verses as any unbiased person would interpret them from these words. According to this commentary, what actually happened was this: When a squadron of fine, well bred horses was presented before the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him), he said: I love this wealth not for the sake of personal glory or desire but for the cause of raising the Word of my Lord. Then he ordered that the horses run a race, and they disappeared from sight. Then he ordered that they be brought back, and when they were brought back, according to Ibn Abbas: He started passing his hand on their necks and shanks with love. This same commentary is correct in our opinion, because it corresponds to the words of the Quran, and for the sake of the full meaning, nothing needs to be added to it, which may neither be in the Quran, nor in any authentic Hadith,

nor in the Israelite history.

Besides, one should also note that Allah has narrated this event immediately after using epithets like *nim al-abd*, *innahu awwab* (an excellent servant, who turned to His Lord over and over again) for the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him). This clearly shows that the object is to relate this message: Behold, what a good servant of Ours he was! He loved the means of kingly pomp and glory not for the sake of the world but for Our sake! After watching and reviewing his grand cavalry, he did not boast of his power and grandeur like the worldly rulers but even at that time he remembered only Us.

34. And certainly, We tried Solomon, and set on his throne a body, then he repented. ^{*36}

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا سُلَيْمَانَ وَأَلْقَيْنَا عَلَى كُرْسِيِّهِ جَسَدًا ثُمَّ أَنَابَ

*36 In view of the contest, the real object here is to relate this event; the preceding verses are an introduction to it. Just as above this, first the Prophet David (peace be upon him) was praised, then the event narrated by which he was put to temptation, then it was said that Allah Almighty does not spare even such a beloved servant from accountability, then about his noble nature it was said that as soon as he was warned of the temptation, he repented and bowed before Allah and withheld himself from the act, so also here the sequence is like this: First, the Prophet Solomon's (peace be upon him) high rank and his deep sense of devotion has been mentioned, then it is said that he was also put to the test, then it has been stated that when a mere

body was placed on his throne, he immediately felt warned on his error, and pleading the forgiveness of his Lord, withdrew from the act, because of which he was involved in the temptation. In other words, Allah by means of these two stories wants to impress two things upon the reader simultaneously:

(1) Not to speak of the common men, even high-ranking Prophets were not spared from His strict accountability; and,

(2) The right attitude for man is not to brag and feel proud after committing an error, but to bow down humbly before his Lord as soon as he realizes his sin. It was the result of this attitude that Allah not only forgave the mistakes of those illustrious men but blessed them with still more favors and kindness.

Here, the question again arises as to what was the temptation in which the Prophet Solomon was involved; what is the meaning of placing a mere body on his throne, and what was the nature of the warning on the occurrence of which he repented? In reply to this the commentators have adopted four different points of view:

One section of them has related a long story whose details are disputed, but their resume is this: The error committed by the Prophet Solomon was either that one of his wives continued to worship the idols in the palace for forty days and he remained unaware of it, or that he remained confined to his residence for a few days and did not attend to redressing of the oppressed people's grievances. For this he was punished as follows: A satan somehow made away

with his ring by which he ruled over the jinns, men and wind. As soon as he lost the ring he was deprived of his powers and he remained wandering from place to place for forty days; in the interval the satan continued to rule in the guise of Solomon. The placing of a mere body on Solomon's throne implied this very satan, who had sat on his throne. Some people have gone to the extent to say that during that period even the chastity of the women in the royal household did not remain safe from the satan. At last from his conduct the ministers and the chiefs and the scholars of the court began to doubt that he was not Solomon. Therefore, when they opened the Torah before him, he fled. On the way the ring fell from his hand in the sea, or he cast it into the sea himself, and a fish swallowed it. Then, somehow the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) came by the fish. When in order to cook it, he cut open its belly, he found his ring in it. Then, no sooner did he get the ring than the jinns and men presented themselves humbly before him. This whole story, from the beginning to the end, is nonsensical and absurd, which the converts from among the Jews and Christians took from the Talmud and other Israelite traditions and spread it among the Muslims. It is strange that some of our well known scholars took these traditions as authentic and cited them as the explanation of the allusions of the Quran, whereas neither is there any truth in Solomon's ring, nor could his glorious works be attributed to any ring, nor had the satans been given the power that they might disguise themselves as Prophets and mislead the people, nor can it be imagined

about Allah that He would punish a Prophet for an error in such a manner as to enable a satan to corrupt and destroy a whole community, disguised as a prophet. The Quran itself repudiates this commentary. In the verses that follow Allah says: When Solomon met with the trial, and he asked Our forgiveness for it, then We subdued the wind and the satans to him. But, on the contrary, according to the above commentary, the satans were already under his control by virtue of the ring. It is strange that the scholars who have made this commentary did not care to consider what the subsequent verses say.

The second section of them says that a son was born to the Prophet Solomon after twenty years. The satans feared that if he became king after Solomon, they would continue to remain slaves as they were under him. Therefore, they plotted to kill him. When Solomon came to know of this plot, he hid the child in the clouds so that he was brought up there. This was the temptation in which he was involved. He placed reliance on the protection of the clouds instead of having trust in Allah. For this he was punished in this way that the child died and fell on his throne as a mere body. This tale also is baseless and is expressly against the Quran, for in this also it has been assumed that the winds and satans were already under the Prophet Solomon's control, whereas the Quran in clear words has stated their subjection to be an event that took place after the trial.

The third section says that the Prophet Solomon one day swore that he would go in to his 70 wives that night, and from each a warrior would be born, who would fight in the

cause of Allah, but while he said this he did not say: *Insha Allah*: if Allah so wills. Consequently, only one wife conceived and from her also a defective child was born, whom the midwife brought and placed on his throne. This Hadith has been reported by Abu Harairah from the Prophet (peace be upon him) and it has been related by Bukhari and Muslim and other traditionists in several ways. In Bukhari itself this tradition has been related at different places in different ways. At one place the number of the wives has been stated as 60 and at others 70 or 90 or 99 or 100. As far as the chains of the transmitters are concerned, most of the traditions have strong chains, and their authenticity cannot be disputed from the point of view of the principles of reporting. But the subject-matter of the Hadith is patently against reason, and proclaims aloud that such a thing could not have been said by the Prophet (peace be upon him), as reported. But, on the contrary, he might have probably mentioned it as an example of the foolish and nonsensical tale-telling of the Jews, and the hearer might have misunderstood that the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself had stated it as an event. To force the people to accept such traditions only on the strength of their chains of transmitters would be making religion a matter of mockery and jest. Everyone can calculate for himself that even in the longest night of winter the interval between the "Isha" and the Fajr Prayers cannot be of more than ten to eleven hours. If the minimum number of the wives be 60, it would mean that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) went on having intercourse with them continuously for 10

to 11 hours that night at the rate of six wives per hour, without having a moment's rest. Is it practically possible? And can it be expected that the Prophet (peace be upon him) might have related it as an event? Then in the Hadith nowhere has it been said that the body that had been placed on Solomon's throne, as stated in the Quran, implied the malformed child. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had narrated this event as a commentary of this verse. Furthermore, though it is understandable why the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) asked for Allah's forgiveness on the birth of the child, one fails to understand why, along with the prayer for forgiveness, he prayed: My Lord, grant me a kingdom as may belong to no one else after me.

Another commentary which Imam Razi has preferred is this: The Prophet Solomon was afflicted with a serious disease, or on account of an impending danger his body had been reduced to a mere skeleton. But this commentary also does not conform to the words of the Quran. The Quran says: We put Solomon to the test and placed a mere body on his throne. Then he turned (to Allah). From these words no one can understand that the mere body implied the body of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) himself. They clearly show that putting to the test implied some error that he happened to commit. On this, the way he was given the warning was that a mere body was placed on his throne, and when he realized his error he turned to Allah.

As a matter of fact, this is one of the most difficult places of the Quran, and we do not find any indisputable ground for

giving a definite and absolute commentary of it. But if the words of the Prophet Solomon's prayer: My Lord, forgive me, and grant me a kingdom as may belong to no one else after me, are read in the light of the Israelite history, it appears that probably he cherished in his heart the desire that his son should succeed him on the throne so that His kingdom and sovereignty should continue in his own race after him. This same thing has been called a temptation for him by Allah, and he realized this when his heir Rehoboam grew up into an unworthy young man, whose ugly manners clearly foretold that he would not be able to sustain the mighty kingdom of the Prophets David and Solomon (peace be upon them) even for a few days. Placing a mere body on his throne probably means that the son whom he wanted to succeed him on the throne, was an unworthy person. Therefore, he restrained his desire, asked for Allah's forgiveness and prayed that the kingdom should end with him, and he would curb his desire to have it continued in his dynasty. The Israelite history also shows the same thing. The Prophet Solomon did not make any will about his successor, nor made it binding for the people to obey a particular person. After him his ministers put Rehoboam on the throne, but not long afterwards ten tribes of Israel took northern Palestine and broke away, and only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to the throne of Jerusalem.

35. He said: "My Lord, forgive me and bestow on me sovereignty, such as shall not belong to any

قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَهَبْ لِي مُلْكًا
لَا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِّنْ بَعْدِي

after me. Indeed, You are the Bestower.”

إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ﴿٣٥﴾

36. So We subjected to him the wind, it blew by his command gently wherever he intended. ^{*37}

فَسَخَّرْنَا لَهُ الرِّيحَ تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِهِ
رُخَاءً حَيْثُ أَصَابَ ﴿٣٦﴾

***37** For explanation, see Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 81 and E.N. 74 thereof. However, there is one thing which requires further explanation here. In Surah Al-Anbiya where mention has been made of subjecting the wind for the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him), it has been described as the strongly blowing wind, but here “it blew by his command gently wherever he intended”. This means that the wind in itself was strong and violent as is needed for moving the sailing-ships but it had been made gentle for the Prophet Solomon in the sense that it blew whither-so-ever he wanted it to blow for his commercial fleets.

37. And the devils, every builder and diver.

وَالشَّيْطَانِ كُلِّ بَنَاءٍ وَغَوَّاصٍ

﴿٣٧﴾

38. And others linked together in chains. ^{*38}

وَأَخْرَيْنَ مُقَرَّنِينَ فِي الْأَصْفَادِ

﴿٣٨﴾

***38** For explanation, see Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 82; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 17, 39 and the E.Ns thereof. The satans imply the jinns, and the satans linked in chains imply the serving satans, who were fettered and imprisoned as a

punishment for making mischief. It is not necessary that the fetters and chains in which those satans were bound might be made of iron and they might appear as bound in them like the human prisoners. In any case, they were imprisoned in a manner that they could neither escape nor were able to commit further mischief.

39. (We said): “This is Our gift, so bestow you, or withhold, without reckoning.”*39

هَذَا عَطَاؤُنَا فَامْنُنْ أَوْ أَمْسِكْ

بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

*39 This verse can have three meanings:

(1) This is Our unlimited gift: You have the authority to give of it freely to whomsoever you like and keep it from whomsoever you like.

(2) This is Our gift: You may give of it to whomsoever you like and keep it from whomsoever you like, you will not be called to account for giving it or keeping it from the people.

(3) Another meaning of it given by some commentators is: The satans have been placed entirely under your control: you may set free whomsoever you like and restrain whomsoever you like. You will not be held accountable for this.

40. And indeed, he has a place of nearness to Us, and an excellent resort.*40

وَإِنَّ لَهُ عِنْدَنَا لَزُلْفَىٰ وَحُسْنَ

مَقَابٍ

*40 Here, the object is to tell that just as a servant's arrogance causes Allah's displeasure and wrath, so does his humility earns Allah's pleasure and approval for him. If a

servant commits an error and becomes even more arrogant when warned, he is led to the same fate as is being mentioned in connection with the story of Adam and Satan below. Contrary to this, if a servant happens to commit an error and he repents and bows down before his Lord humbly, he is blessed with such bounties as the Prophets David and Solomon (peace be upon them) were blessed with. The prayer that Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) had made after seeking Allah's forgiveness, was literally fulfilled and Allah actually granted him a kingdom as had neither been granted to anyone before him nor bestowed on anyone after him. Having control over the winds and the jinns is an extraordinary power, which has been granted only to the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) and to none else in human history.

41. And remember Our slave Job,^{*41} when he called upon his Lord (saying): Indeed, the devil has afflicted me with distress and torment.”^{*42}

وَأَذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا أَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَى
رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الشَّيْطَانُ
بِنُصَبٍ وَعَذَابٍ

*41 This is the fourth place in the Quran where the Prophet Job (peace be upon him) has been mentioned. Before this he has been mentioned in Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 163; Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 84 and Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 83-84. For the details about him, please see E.Ns 76 to 79 of Surah Al-Anbiya.

*42 This does not mean that Satan has afflicted me with illness and brought distress upon me, but it means: The

affliction of the severities of illness, the loss of property and wealth, and the desertion of the near and dear ones is not so great a torment and trouble for me as the temptation of Satan, who is exploiting my condition to despair me of my Lord and wants that I should turn ungrateful to Him and become desperate and impatient. This meaning of the lamentation of the Prophet Job (peace be upon him) is preferable for two reasons:

(1) According to the Quran, Allah has granted Satan only the power of temptation. He has not given him the power to afflict with illness the worshipers of Allah and compel them to deviate from the way of service and obedience by causing them physical ailments.

(2) In Surah Al-Anbiya when the Prophet Job (peace be upon him) puts before Allah his complaint about illness and disease, he does not mention Satan at all, but says only: I have been afflicted with the disease and You are most Merciful.

42. (It was said): “Strike ground with your foot. This is a (spring for) cool bath and drink.”*43

أَرْكُضْ بِرِجْلِكَ ^ط هَذَا مُغْتَسِلٌ
بَارِدٌ وَشَرَابٌ

*43 That is, as soon as he stamped his foot on the ground, a spring gushed forth by Allah’s command, drinking from which and washing with which was the remedy of the Prophet Job’s (peace be upon him) disease. Most probably he was suffering from some skin disease. According to the Bible also: Satan smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. (Job, 2: 7).

43. And We bestowed on him his household and the like thereof along with them,^{*44} a mercy from Us, and a reminder for those of understanding.^{*45}

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ ذُرِّيَّتَهُ وَأَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُم مَّعَهُمْ
رَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَذِكْرًا لِأُولِي
الْأَلْبَابِ

***44** Traditions show that during this illness everyone except his wife had deserted the Prophet Job (peace be upon him); even his children had turned away. To this Allah has alluded, saying: When We granted him health, the whole family returned to him, and then We granted him even more children.

***45** That is, in it there is a lesson for an intelligent man. Neither should man forget God and become arrogant in good times nor despair of Him in bad times. Good fortune and misfortune are entirely in the Power of Allah, the One. If He wills He can change the best times of man into the worst times and the worst into the best. Therefore, a wise person should trust in Him alone in all sorts of circumstances and should pin all his hopes on Him.

44. “And take in your hand a handful of straw and smite with it, and do not break your oath.”^{*46} Indeed, We found him patient, an excellent slave. Indeed, He was ever turning in repentance (toward Allah).^{*47}

وَخُذْ بِيَدِكَ ضِعْفًا فَأَضْرِبْ بِهِ
وَلَا تَحْنُثْ إِنَّهُ وَجَدَنهُ صَابِرًا
نَعَم الْعَبْدُ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ

***46** A careful study of these words shows that the Prophet

Job (peace be upon him) during illness had been annoyed with somebody (according to traditions, his wife) and sworn to beat him or her by giving so many stripes. When Allah restored him to health and the anger of the illness was gone, he became worried as how to fulfill the oath. For if he carried out the oath, he would be inflicting pain on an innocent person, and if he did not, he would be committing the sin of breaking the oath. Allah took him out of the difficult situation by the command: Take a broom containing as many sticks of straw as the number of the stripes you had sworn to give; then strike the person just once with the broom so as both to fulfill your oath and to avoid giving undue trouble to the person concerned.

Some jurists hold the view that this concession was specially meant for the Prophet Job (peace be upon him), and some others think that other people also can take advantage of it. The first view has been cited by Ibn Asakir from Abdullah bin Abbas and by Abu Bakr al-Jassas from Mujahid, and Imam Malik also held the same view. The second view has been adopted by Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Abu Yusuf, Imam Muhammad, Imam Zufar and Imam Shafei. They say that if a person, for instance, has sworn to give his servant ten stripes, and afterwards combines ten whips and strikes him only once in a way that some part of each whip strikes him, his oath will be fulfilled.

Several Ahadith show that the Prophet (peace be upon him), in order to inflict the prescribed punishment on a fornicator who was too ill or too weak to receive a hundred

stripes, also adopted the method taught in this verse. Allama Abu Bakr al-Jassas has related a tradition on the authority of Saeed bin Saad bin Ubadah to the effect that a person from the tribe of Bani Saidah happened to commit fornication, and he was a sick man and a mere skeleton. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded: Take a branch of the palm tree with a hundred twigs on it and strike him therewith once and for all. (Ahkam al Quran). In Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Tabarani, Abdur Razzaq and other collections of Hadith, there are several Ahadith supporting it, which conclusively proves that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had devised this very method for inflicting the prescribed punishment on a sick or weak person. However, the jurists lay the condition that some part of every twig or piece of straw must strike the culprit, and even if only one stroke, it must also hurt the culprit; that is, it is not enough just to touch him but he must be struck with it.

Here the question also arises that if a person has sworn to do something and afterwards he comes to know that it is improper then what should he do? There is a tradition from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the effect that in such a case one should do only that which is better, and the same is the atonement for the oath. Another tradition from him says that one should do something good instead of the improper thing and should atone for his oath. This verse supports this second tradition, for if keeping oneself from an improper thing had been the atonement for the oath, Allah would not have told the Prophet Job (peace be upon

him) to strike the broom once and fulfill his oath, but would have said: Do not do this improper thing, and your restraint itself is the atonement for your oath.

This verse also shows that it is not necessary to carry out immediately what one has sworn to do. The Prophet Job (peace be upon him) had sworn an oath in the state of illness, and fulfilled it after complete recovery, and not immediately even after the recovery.

Some people have regarded this verse as an argument for practicing pretense under the Shariah. No doubt it was a pretense which the Prophet Job (peace be upon him) had been taught but it had been taught not for evading anything obligatory but for avoiding an evil. Therefore, in the Shariah those pretenses only are lawful, which are adopted to remove injustice and sin and evil from one's own self or from another person, otherwise practice of pretense is highly sinful if it is employed for the purpose of making the unlawful as lawful, or evading the obligatory duties and righteous acts. For a person who practices pretense for such impious objects, in fact, tries to deceive God. For example, a person who transfers his wealth to another before the completion of a year on it, only for the purpose of evading payment of the Zakat on it, not only evades an obligatory duty, but also thinks that Allah will get deceived by this trickery and will consider him as relieved of his duty. The jurists who have mentioned such pretenses in their books, do not mean that one should practice them in order to evade the Shariah obligations, but they mean to point out that a judge or ruler cannot take to task a person

who escapes the consequences of a sin under a legal cover for his affair is with Allah.

*47 The Prophet Job (peace be upon him) has been mentioned in this context to impress the reader that when the righteous servants of Allah are afflicted with hardships and calamities, they do not complain of their distress to Allah but endure the tests and trials set by Him patiently and invoke only Him for help. They do not despair of God and do not turn to others for help if their distress is not removed after making invocations to God for some time, but they believe that whatever they will get, they will get only from Allah. Therefore, they remain hopeful of His mercy, no matter how long they might have to suffer the distress. That is why they are honored and blessed with the favors and bounties with which the Prophet Job (peace be upon him) was honored and blessed in his life. So much so that if they get involved in a moral dilemma due to a state of agitation, Allah shows them a way out of it in order to save them from evil, as He showed a way to the Prophet Job (peace be upon him).

45. And remember Our slaves, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, those of strength and vision.*48

وَأَذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ
وَيَعْقُوبَ أُولَى الْأَيْدِي
وَالْأَبْصِرِ



*48 The actual words in the text mean: Those who possessed the hands and the insights. The hand, as we have explained above, implies power and capability. To describe

these Prophets as “men of great power and insight” means that they were practical men. They possessed great power to obey Allah and to abstain from sin, and they had made great efforts for raising the Word of Allah in the world. “Insight” does not mean eye-sight but the vision of the heart and mind. They could see and recognize the truth. They did not live like the blind in the world, but they walked the straight path of guidance, in the full light of knowledge, with open eyes. In these words, there is a subtle allusion to this also that the people who commit evil, and have gone astray, are in fact, deprived of the hands as well as the eyes. He only, who works in the cause of Allah, possesses the hands, and he, who distinguishes between the light of the truth and the darkness of falsehood, only possesses the eyes.

46. Indeed, We chose them for a pure quality, the remembrance of the abode (of Hereafter).^{*49}

إِنَّا أَخْلَصْنَاهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ
ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ

*49 That is, the real cause for their success and eminence was that there was nothing of worldliness in their character. All their efforts, mental and physical, were directed towards the Hereafter. They remembered it themselves and urged others also to remember it. That is why Allah exalted them to such high ranks as have never been attained by those who remained absorbed in earning worldly wealth and prosperity. In this regard, one should also keep in view the subtle point that Allah here has only used the word *ad-dar* (that abode, or the real abode) for the

Hereafter. This is meant to impress the truth that this world is no abode for man, but only a passage and a rest house, which man has to leave in any case. The real abode is the abode of the Hereafter. He who works to adorn that abode is the man of insight and such a one should inevitably be a commendable person in the sight of Allah. As for him who in order to adorn his transitory abode in this rest house behaves in a way as to ruin his real abode in the Hereafter is foolish and naturally cannot be liked by Allah.

47. And Indeed, they are with Us, of the chosen, the excellent.

وَإِنَّهُمْ عِنْدَنَا لَمِنَ الْمُصْطَفَيْنَ
الْأَخْيَارِ ﴿٤٧﴾

48. And remember Ishmael, and Elisha,^{*50} and Dhul Kifl.^{*51} And all are among the excellent.

وَأَذْكُرْ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ وَكُلٌّ مِنَ الْأَخْيَارِ ﴿٤٨﴾

***50** The Prophet AlYasa (peace be upon him) has been mentioned only twice in the Quran, in Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 86 and here, without any detail about him. Only his name appears in the chain of the Prophets. He was one of the major Prophets of Israel, belonged to Abel Meholah, a place on the river Jordan, and is well known as Elisha among the Jews and Christians. When the Prophet Elijah (peace be upon him) had taken refuge in the Sinai peninsula, he was commanded to return to Syria and Palestine for some important works, one of which was to prepare the Prophet Elisha for his successor-ship.

Accordingly, when the Prophet Elijah came to his town, he found Elisha ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth. The Prophet Elijah passed by him and cast his mantle upon him, and he left the oxen and followed him. (I Kings, 19:15-21). He remained under training with him for 10 to 12 years. Then, when Allah recalled Elijah, he was appointed Prophet in his place. (2 Kings, oh.2). The Second Book of the Kings gives a detailed account of the Prophet Elisha (chs, 2 to 13), which shows that when the Israeli state of northern Palestine got lost in polytheism, idol-worship and moral evils, Elisha a pointed Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, king of Israel against the royal dynasty due to whose misdeeds those evils had spread in Israel. Jehu not only put an end to Baal-worship, but also condemned to death every member of the wicked family, including its children. But in spite of this reformist revolution the evils that had taken root in Israel could not be completely eradicated, and after the death of the Prophet Elisha they assumed enormous proportions; so much so that the Assyrians began to invade Samaria whenever they pleased. (For details, see E.N. 7 of Surah Bani-Israil and E.Ns 70, 71 of Surah As-Saaffat).

*51 Dhul-Kifil also has been mentioned only twice in the Quran, in Surah Al Anbiya, Ayat 85 and here. For our research about him see E.N. 81 of Surah Al-Anbiya.

49. This is a reminder. And indeed, for the righteous is a good place of return (Paradise).

هَذَا ذِكْرٌ وَإِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ لَحُسْنَ

50. Gardens of Eden, whose gates will be opened for them.*52

جَنَّتِ عَدْنٍ مُفْتَحَةً لَهُمْ
الْأَبْوَابُ

*52 The words *mufattahat-al-lahum-ul-abwab* may have several meanings:

(1) They will go about in the Gardens (Paradise) freely without any hesitation.

(2) No effort will have to be made to open the gates of Paradise, they will open automatically as soon as they will have the desire to enter them.

(3) The angels appointed for keeping Paradise will open the gates for them as soon as they see them. This third meaning has been expressed more clearly at another place in the Quran, thus: When they arrive there, and its gates shall already have been opened, its keepers will say: Peace be upon you, you have fared well, enter here to dwell for ever. (Surah Az-Zumar, Ayat 73).

51. Reclining within them, they will call therein for abundant fruit and drinks.

مُتَكِّينَ فِيهَا يَدْعُونَ فِيهَا
بِفِكَهَةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ وَشَرَابٍ

52. And with them will be those of modest gaze, of equal age.*53

وَعِنْدَهُمْ قَاصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ
أُتْرَابٌ

*53 “Of equal age” may mean that they will be of equal age among themselves, and also that they will be of the same age as their husbands.

53. This is that you are promised for the Day of Reckoning.

هَذَا مَا تُوْعَدُونَ لِيَوْمِ
الْحِسَابِ

54. Indeed, this is Our provision, which will never come to an end.

إِنَّ هَذَا لَرِزْقُنَا مَا لَهُ مِنْ نَفَادٍ

55. This (is so). And indeed, for the transgressors there will be an evil place of return.

هَذَا وَإِنَّ لِلطَّٰغِينَ لَشَرَّ
مَآبٍ

56. Hell, where they will burn, an evil resting place.

جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَوْنَهَا فَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ

57. This (is so). Then let them taste it, a boiling fluid and dirty wound discharges.^{*54}

هَذَا فَلْيَذُوقُوهُ حَمِيمٌ وَغَسَّاقٌ

***54** Several meanings of the word *ghassaq*, as used in the original, have been given by the lexicographers:

(1) Any moisture that is discharged by the body in the form of pus, blood, or mixture of pus and blood, etc. and this includes tears as well.

(2) Something extremely cold.

(3) Something stinking and giving out offensive smell. However, the word is generally used in the first meaning only, though the other two meanings also are correct

lexically.

58. And other (torments) of its type, various kinds.

وَأَخْرُ مِنْ شَكْلِهِ أَزْوَاجٌ
٥٨

59. This is a troop entering with you, no welcome for them. They will indeed burn in the Fire.

هَذَا فَوْجٌ مُّقْتَحِمٌ مَعَكُمْ لَا
مَرْحَبًا بِهِمْ إِنَّهُمْ صَالُوا النَّارِ
٥٩

60. They will say: “Nay but you, no welcome for you. You (our leaders) brought this upon us (by your misleading). So evil is this place to stay in.”

قَالُوا بَلْ أَنْتُمْ لَا مَرْحَبًا بِكُمْ
أَنْتُمْ قَدَّمْتُمُوهُ لَنَا فَبِئْسَ
الْقَرَارُ
٦٠

61. They will say: “Our Lord, whoever brought this upon us, so increase for him a double punishment in the Fire.”

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا مَنْ قَدَّمَ لَنَا هَذَا
فَزِدْهُ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا فِي النَّارِ
٦١

62. And they will say: “What is (the matter) with us that we do not see men whom we used to count among the worst.”*55

وَقَالُوا مَا لَنَا لَا نَرَى رِجَالًا
كُنَّا نَعُدُّهُمْ مِّنَ الْأَشْرَارِ
٦٢

*55 This implies the believers whom the disbelievers used to look down upon as bad people in the world. It means: They will look around bewildered and will find only

themselves and their guides in Hell but will find no trace of those people of whom they used to talk disparagingly in the world, and whom they used to mock in their meetings for talking about God, the Messenger and the Hereafter.

63. “Did we take them as ridicule, or have (our) eyes failed to perceive them.”

أَتَّخَذْنَهُمْ سِخْرِيًّا أَمْ زَاغَتْ
عَنَّهُمُ الْأَبْصَارُ ﴿٦٣﴾

64. Indeed, that is very truth, the disputing of the people of the Fire.

إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَحَقٌّ تَخَاصُمُ أَهْلِ النَّارِ ﴿٦٤﴾

65. Say (O Muhammad):^{*56} “I am only a warner,^{*57} and there is no god but Allah, the One, the All Prevailing.”

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا مُنذِرٌ وَمَا مِنِّي إِلَهٌ
إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿٦٥﴾

***56** Now the discourse turns to the same theme with which it began. One should read it with verses 1-14 in order to understand the meaning fully.

***57** In verse 4 it was said: The people wonder that a warner from among themselves has come to them. Here it is being said: Tell them: I am only a warner. That is: I do not command an army that I may forcibly pull you from a wrong way and put you on the right way. If you do not listen to me and do not accept my message, you will only be causing a loss to yourselves. If you like to remain ignorant, you may continue to be heedless, for you will see your end yourselves.

66. Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them, the All Mighty, the Oft Forgiving.

رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا
بَيْنَهُمَا الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفَّارُ ﴿٦٦﴾

67. Say: “That is a tremendous news.”

قُلْ هُوَ نَبَأٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٦٧﴾

68. “From which you turn away.”*58

أَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

*58 This is the answer to what the disbelievers said in verse 5: Has he made just One God in place of all the gods? This is indeed a strange thing. It means: You may frown and scowl as you like, but this is a reality of which I am informing you, and your frowning and scowling cannot change it.

This answer not only contains the statement of the truth, but it also contains the argument for it. The mushriks said: Deities are many of whom one is Allah also. How is it that you have done away with all other deities and kept only One Allah? In answer it was said: The real Deity is One Allah alone, for He is dominant over everything: He is the Owner of the earth and the heavens, and everything in the Universe belongs to Him. Every being other than Him, whom you have set up as other gods in the Universe, is dominated and subdued before Him; therefore, the subservient beings cannot be associates in the Godhead of the Dominant and All-Mighty God. Therefore, there is no ground for which they may be regarded as deities.

69. (Say to them): “I had no knowledge of the exalted

مَا كَانَ لِي مِنْ عِلْمٍ بِالْمَلَأِ

chiefs (angels) when they disputed (about the creation of Adam).”

الْأَعْلَىٰ إِذْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

70. “It has not been revealed to me except that I may be a clear warner.”

إِن يُوحَىٰ إِلَىٰ إِلَّا أَنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٧٠﴾

71. When your Lord said to the angels: ^{*59} “Indeed, I am going to create a mortal from clay.” ^{*60}

إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ إِنِّي خَلِقُ بَشَرًا مِّن طِينٍ ﴿٧١﴾

***59** This is the explanation of the dispute referred to about, and the dispute implies Satan’s dispute with God, as becomes evident from the verses that follow. In this regard, one should bear in mind the fact that “the exalted” implies the angels, and the dialogue between Allah and Satan was not direct but it took place through some angel. Therefore, no one should have the misunderstanding that Allah also was included among the exalted ones. This story has already been narrated at the following places: Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 30-39; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 11-25; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 26-44; Surah Bani Israil, Ayats 61-65; Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 50; Surah TaHa, Ayats 116-126.

***60** Lexically, *bashar* means a gross body whose surface is bare and uncovered by anything else. After the creation of man this word has been used for man himself, but mentioning him by the word *bashar* before his creation and making him from clay clearly means: I am about to make an image of clay, which will be without any feathers and

hair, etc. whose skin will not be covered by wool or hair or feathers like the skin of other animals.

72. “So when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My soul,^{*61} then fall down before him in prostration.”^{*62}

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾

*61 For explanation, see Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 29-30, and E.N. 16 of Surah As-Sajdah.

*62 For explanation, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 34; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 11 and the E.Ns thereof.

73. So the angels prostrated, all of them together.

فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾

74. Except Iblis. He was arrogant and became among the disbelievers.^{*63}

إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ اسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾

*63 For explanation, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 34; Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 50 and the E.Ns. thereof.

75. He (Allah) said: “O Iblis, what prevented you from prostrating to that which I created with My hands.^{*64} Were you arrogant, or were you of the high exalted.”

قَالَ يَبْنَؤُوسُ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِإِيْدِي ۗ أَأَسْتَكْبَرْتَ أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْعَالِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

***64** These words have been used to point out the honor, rank and glory bestowed on man by his Creator. In other words, Allah did not get man created through his angels but created him by Himself because his creation was a highly noble task. Therefore, what is meant to be said is: What has prevented you from prostrating yourself before him whom I have made directly Myself?

The words *be-yadaiia* (both hands) probably are meant to refer to the fact that this new creation combines in itself two important aspects of Allah's power of creation:

(1) That man has been given an animal body on account of which he belongs to the animal kingdom.

(2) That on account of the Spirit breathed into him, he has been characterized with qualities which place him in honor and merit above all earthly creations and creatures.

76. He said: "I am better than him. You created me from fire, and created him from clay."

قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ ط خَلَقْتَنِي مِن
نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ ﴿٧٦﴾

77. He said: "Then get out of it,^{*65} for indeed you are outcast."^{*66}

قَالَ فَأَخْرَجْ مِنْهَا فإِنَّكَ رَجِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾

***65** "Out of it": From the place where Adam was created and where the angels were commanded to bow down before Adam, and where Iblis committed disobedience of Allah.

***66** Lexically, the word *rajim*, as used in the original, means "cast off" or "smitten"; in common usage it is used for the person, who has been thrown down from a place of honor

***68** This does not mean: I will not lead Your chosen servants astray, but it means: I shall have no power over Your chosen servants.

84. He (Allah) said: “Then the truth is, and the truth I speak.”

قَالَ فَالْحَقُّ وَالْحَقَّ أَقُولُ
٨٤

85. “That I will surely fill Hell with you^{*69} and those who follow you of them, all together.”^{*70}

لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكَ وَمِمَّن
تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ
٨٥

***69** “With you” is not only addressed to Iblis but to the whole species of satans. That is, Iblis and his whole army of the satans who will be joining him in misleading mankind till Resurrection.

***70** This entire story has been related in answer to this saying of the chiefs of the Quraish: Was he the only (fit) person among us to whom Allah’s admonition should have been sent down? Its first answer was the one given in verses 9-10, saying: Are you the owners of the treasures of the mercy of your Mighty and Bounteous Lord? And does the kingdom of the heavens and the earth belong to you, and is it for you to decide as to who should be appointed God’s Prophet and who should not be appointed? In the second answer the chiefs of the Quraish have been told: Your jealousy, your pride and arrogance against Muhammad (peace be upon him) are similar to the jealousy and arrogance of Iblis against Adam (peace be upon him). Iblis had also refused to acknowledge the right of Allah to appoint anyone He pleased as His vicegerent, and you are

also refusing to acknowledge His right to appoint anyone He pleases as His Messenger. Iblis disobeyed the command to bow down before Adam, and you are disobeying the command to follow Muhammad (peace be upon him). Your resemblance with him does not end here, but your fate also will be the same as has been pre-ordained for him, i.e. the curse of God in the world and the fire of Hell in the Hereafter.

Besides, in connection with this story, two other things also have been stressed:

(1) Whoever is disobeying Allah in this world, is in fact, falling a prey to Iblis, his eternal enemy, who has resolved to mislead and misguide mankind since the beginning of creation.

(2) The one who disobeys Allah on account of arrogance and persists in His disobedience is under His wrath: such a one has no forgiveness from Him.

86. Say (O Muhammad): “I do not ask of you for this any payment,^{*71} and I am not of the impostors.”^{*72}

قُلْ مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ
وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِينَ

***71** That is, I am a selfless person: I have no vested interest in preaching this message.

***72** That is, I am not one of those who arise with false claims for the sake of vanity and pose to be what actually they are not. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has not been made to say this merely for the information of the disbelievers of Makkah but this is testified by his whole life which he lived among the same people for forty years

before his advent as a Prophet. Every child of Makkah was a witness that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was not an impostor. Never had anybody from among the people of Makkah ever heard anything from him which might have caused somebody the doubt that he aspired to be a great man and was planning and scheming for that end.

87. It is not except a reminder for all mankind.

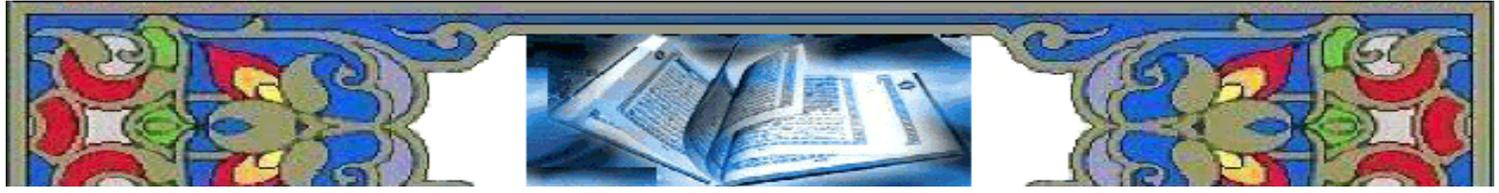
إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

88. And you will surely know (truth of) its news after a while.*73

وَلَتَعْلَمَنَّ نَبَأَهُ بَعْدَ حِينٍ ﴿٨٨﴾

*73 That is, those of you who live will see for themselves within a few years that what I am saying is fulfilled. Those who die will come to know as soon as they pass through the gate of death that the truth is the same which I am preaching.





الزُّمَر Az-Zumur

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah derives its name from verses 71 and 73 in which the word *zumar* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

In verse 10 *wa ardullah-i-wasi atun*: and Allah's earth is vast, there is abundant evidence that this Surah was revealed before the migration to Habash. Some traditions provide the explanation that this verse was revealed in respect of Jafar bin Abi Talib and his companions when they made up their mind to emigrate to Habash (Ruh al-Maani, vol. xxii, p. 226).

Theme and Subject matter

The entire Surah is a most eloquent and effective address which was given some time before the emigration to Habash, in an environment filled with tyranny and persecution, ill-will and antagonism at Makkah. It is a sermon whose addressees mainly are the unbelieving Quraish, although here and there the believers also have been addressed. In it the real aim of the invitation of Muhammad (peace be upon him) had been enunciated,

which is this: Man should adopt Allah's servitude sincerely, and should not pollute his God worship with the service of any other. Presenting this cardinal principle in different ways over and over again, the truth of Tauhid and the excellent results of accepting it, and the falsehood of shirk and the evil consequences of following it have been explained in a most forceful way. And the people have been exhorted to give up their wrong way of life and return to the mercy of their Lord. In this very connection, the believers have been instructed, as if to say: If a place has become narrow for the worship and service of Allah, His earth is vast. You may emigrate to some other place in order to save your faith. Allah will reward you for your patience. On the other hand, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been encouraged, so as to say: Tell the disbelievers plainly that they may do whatever they like, but their persecutions and tyrannies will never deter you from the way of Islam; that they may go on doing their best to obstruct your way, but you will continue to perform your mission in spite of the adverse conditions and circumstances.

1. The revelation of the Book (Quran) is from Allah, the All Mighty, the All Wise.*¹

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ
الْحَكِيمِ

*1 This is a brief introduction to the Surah which only stresses the point that the Quran is not Muhammad's (peace be upon him) word, as the disbelievers assert, but it is Allah's Word, which He Himself has sent down. Along

with this, two of Allah's attributes have been mentioned to warn the listeners of two realities so that they do not underestimate this Word but understand its full importance:

(1) That Allah Who has sent it down, is All-Mighty; that is, He is so powerful that no power can prevent His will and decisions from being enforced and none can dare resist Him in any way.

(2) That He is All-wise; that is, the guidance He is giving in this Book, is wholly based on wisdom, and only an ignorant and foolish person can turn away from it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 1 of Surah As-Sajdah).

2. Indeed, We have sent down the Book to you (Muhammad) with truth,^{*2} so worship Allah, being sincere to Him in religion.^{*3}

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ
بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ
الدِّينَ



*2 That is, it contains nothing but the truth, and there is no element of falsehood in it.

*3 This is a very important verse which states the real objective of the message of Islam. Therefore, one should not pass over it superficially, but should try to understand its meaning and intention. It has two basic points:

(1) That the demand is to worship Allah.

(2) That the demand is of such worship as may be performed by making religion exclusively Allah's.

Ibadat is derived from *abd*, and this word is used as an antonym of freeman for the slave and bondsman in Arabic.

Accordingly, *ibadat* contains two meanings:

(1) Worship and devotion.

(2) Humble and willing obedience, as is borne out by the well known and authoritative Arabic Lexicon, *Lisan al-Arab*. Thus, according to the authentic lexical explanation, the demand is not only of Allah's worship but also of willing and sincere obedience to His commands and laws.

The Arabic word *deen* contains several meanings:

(1) Domination and sovereignty, rule and political power and authority to enforce one's decisions on others.

(2) Obedience, compliance with commands and servitude.

(3) The practice and the way that a man follows.

In view of these three meanings, *deen* in this verse means: The way of life and attitude which a man adopts after acknowledging the supremacy and accepting the obedience of another; and to worship Allah making one's religion exclusively His. This means that one should refrain from combining another's worship with the worship of Allah, but should worship Allah alone, should follow His guidance alone, and should comply with His commands and injunctions only.

3. Is it not for Allah, the pure religion.*⁴ And those who take protectors besides Him, (they say): "We do not worship them but that they may bring us near to Allah."*⁵ Indeed, Allah will judge

أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ
وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ
أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا
إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ

between them concerning that wherein they differ.*6

Indeed, Allah does not guide him who is a liar, ingrate.*7

بَيْنَهُمْ فِي مَا هُمْ فِيهِ
تَخْتَلِفُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي
مَنْ هُوَ كَذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ

*4 This is an actual fact and reality, which has been presented as an argument for the above demand. It means: You should worship Allah, making *deen* exclusively His, for it is only Allah's right that He should be obeyed and worshiped sincerely and exclusively. In other words, there is no one else who may deserve to be worshiped so that he also should be served and worshiped besides Allah and his commands and laws also obeyed. If a person serves someone else, apart from Allah, sincerely and exclusively, he does it wrong. Likewise, if he combines the worship of someone else with his worship of Allah, this also is against the truth. The best commentary of this verse is the Hadith which Ibn Marduyah has related from Yazid ar-Raqashi. He says: A person asked the Prophet (peace be upon him): We give away our wealth so that we become well-known. Shall we get a reward for this? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: No. He asked: What, if one has the intention both of Allah's reward and of reputation in the world? The Holy Prophet replied: Allah does not accept any deed unless it is performed exclusively for His sake. After this he recited this same verse.

*5 The disbelievers of Makkah said and the polytheists the world over generally say the same: We do not worship

other beings regarding them as our creators: the Creator is only Allah, and He alone is the real Deity; but He is too high for us to have access to Him. Therefore, we make these saintly beings a means to convey our prayers and our petitions to Allah.

***6** One should understand it well that unity and concord is possible only through Tauhid: there can be no unity through shirk. The polytheists the world over have never agreed as to which beings are the definite means of access to Allah. Some people have taken some particular gods and goddesses as the means, but even among them there is no agreement on all the gods and goddesses; some others have taken the moon, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, etc. as the means, and they also are not agreed as to which of them holds what rank and which is the real means of approach to Allah. Some others have taken the dead saints as the means, but they also differ widely about them: one believes in one saint and another in another. The reason is that the belief about these different beings is neither based on any knowledge, nor has Allah ever sent down a list telling that such and such persons are His special favorites; therefore, they only should be made the means to have access to Him. This is a creed which has spread among the people only on account of superstitions and whims and blind imitation of the elders. Hence the differences.

***7** Here, Allah has used two words for these people, *kazib* (liar) and *kaffar* (denier). They have been called *kazib* because they have falsely invented this creed by themselves, and then they spread falsehood among others. As for

kaffar. it has two meanings:

(1) A stubborn disbeliever, i.e. the people who insist on their false creed even after the doctrine of Tauhid has come before them.

(2) Ungrateful for blessings, i.e. they are receiving all kinds of blessings from Allah, but are thanking those other beings about whom they have assumed that these blessings are reaching them through their agency and influence.

4. If Allah had intended to take a son, He could have chosen from what He created,^{*8} whatever He willed. Be He glorified. He is Allah, the One, the Omnipotent.^{*9}

لَوْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا
لَأَصْطَفَىٰ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ^ج
سُبْحَانَهُ^ط هُوَ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ
الْقَهَّارُ



*8 That is, it is just impossible that Allah should have begotten a son. The only possibility is that Allah should choose someone for Himself; and whomever He chooses will inevitably be from among the creatures, for everything in the world, apart from Allah, is His creation. Now, evidently, however exalted and chosen a creature might be, it cannot have the position of the offspring. For between the Creator and the created there exists a great disparity of nature and essence and character, and parenthood necessarily demands that there should be the unity of nature and essence between a father and his offspring. Besides, one should also bear in mind the point that the words: "If Allah had intended to take a son, He could have

chosen from what He created” themselves give the meaning that Allah has never intended so. Here the object is to impress that not to speak of taking a son, Allah has never even intended so.

***9** The following are the arguments by which the doctrine of parenthood has been refuted:

First, that Allah is free from every defect and fault and weakness. Obviously, children are needed by the one who is defective and weak. The one who is mortal and stands in need of them, so that his progeny should continue to live after him in the world. Likewise, he who adopts a son does so either because he feels the need of having an heir, being childless himself, or he adopts a son being overpowered by love of somebody. Attributing such human weaknesses to Allah and forming religious creeds on their basis is nothing but ignorance and shortsightedness.

The second argument is that Allah in His essence and Being is unique. He is not a member of a species, whereas, evidently, offspring must necessarily belong to a species. Furthermore, there can be no concept of offspring without marriage, and marriage can take place only between homogeneous individuals. Therefore, the one who proposes offspring for the Unique and Matchless Being like Allah, is ignorant and foolish.

The third argument is that Allah is Omnipotent, i.e. whatever is there in the world is subdued to Him and is held in His powerful grasp. No one in this Universe has any resemblance with Him in any way or degree on account of which it may be imagined that he has a relation with Allah.

5. He created the heavens and the earth with truth.*¹⁰ He wraps the night over the day and wraps the day over the night. And He has subjected the sun and the moon. Each running (on a fixed course) for an appointed term. Is not He the All-Mighty, the Oft Forgiving.*¹¹

خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
بِالْحَقِّ يُكَوِّرُ اللَّيْلَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ
وَيُكَوِّرُ النَّهَارَ عَلَى اللَّيْلِ
وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ
يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُّسَيَّءٍ أَلَا هُوَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفَّورُ

*¹⁰ For explanation, see Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 19; Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 3; Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayat 44, and the E.Ns thereof.

*¹¹ That is, He is All-Mighty: if He wills to punish you, no power can resist Him. But it is His kindness that He does not seize you forthwith in spite of your arrogant and insolent behavior, but He goes on giving you respite after respite. Here, Allah's making no haste in seizing people in punishment and His giving them respite has been called forgiveness.

6. He created you from a single soul, then He made from him his mate,*¹² and He has provided for you from the cattle eight kinds.*¹³ He creates you in the wombs of your mothers,

خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ ثُمَّ
جَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ
مِّنَ الْأَنْعَامِ ثَمَنِيَةَ أَزْوَاجٍ
يَخْلُقُكُمْ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ

creation after creation, in
three veils of darkness.*14
Such is Allah, your Lord,*15
His is the sovereignty.*16
There is no god except
Him.*17 So how are you
turned away.*18

خَلَقًا مِّنْ بَعْدِ خَلْقِ فِي ظُلْمَتٍ
ثَلَاثٍ ذَٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ
الْمُلْكُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَأَنَّى
تَصْرَفُونَ



*12 This does not mean that first He created the human beings from Adam and then created his wife, Eve. But here, instead of the chronological order, there is the order of presentation, examples of which are found in every language. For instance, we say, “Whatever you did today is known to me, and whatever you did yesterday is also in my knowledge.” This cannot mean that what happened yesterday has happened after today.

*13 That is, the camel, cow, sheep and goat, whose four males and four females together make eight heads of cattle.

*14 The three dark veils are: the belly, the womb and the caul or membrane enclosing the fetus.

*15 “Your Lord”: your Master, Ruler and Providence.

*16 That is, all powers and authority rest with Him and it is He Who is ruling over the whole Universe.

*17 In other words, the reasoning is this: When Allah alone is your Lord and His is the sovereignty, then inevitably your Deity also is He. How can another be your deity when he has neither any share in providence nor any role in sovereignty? After all, how can it be reasonable for you to take others as your deities when Allah alone is the Creator

of the heavens and the earth, when Allah alone has subjected the sun and the moon for you, when He alone brings the day after the night and the night after the day, and when He alone is your own Creator and Lord as well as of all animals and cattle?

***18** These words need deep consideration. It has not been said: “How are you turning away?” but “How are you turned away?” That is, there is someone else who is misleading you, and being thus deceived you do not understand such a simple and reasonable thing. The other thing which by itself becomes evident from the style is: The word “you” is not addressed to the agents but to those who were turning away under their influence. There is a subtle point in this which can be understood easily after a little thought. Those who were working to turn away others (from the right way) were present in the same society and were doing whatever they could openly and publicly. Therefore, there was no need to mention them by name. It was also useless to address them, for they were trying to turn away the people from the service of Allah, the One, and entrapping them for the service of others, and keeping them entrapped for selfish motives. Obviously, such people could not be made to see reason by argument, for it lay in their own interest not to understand and see reason, and even after understanding they could hardly be inclined to sacrifice their interests. However, the condition of the common people who were being deceived and cheated was certainly pitiable. They had no interest involved in the business; therefore, they could be convinced by reasoning

and argument, and after a little understanding they could also see what advantages were being gained by those who were showing them the way to other deities, after turning them away from Allah. That is why the address has been directed to the common people, who were being misguided rather than those few who were misguiding them.

7. If you disbelieve, then indeed, Allah is free from need of you.*19 And He does not approve disbelief for His slaves.*20 And if you are grateful, He is pleased with it for you.*21 And no laden soul will bear another's load.*22

Then to your Lord is your return, then He will surely inform you of what you used to do. Indeed, He is Aware of what is in the breasts (of people).

إِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ
عَنْكُمْ وَلَا يَرْضَىٰ لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ
وَإِنْ تَشْكُرُوا يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا
تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ
رَبِّكُمْ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا
كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ
الصُّدُورِ



*19 That is, your disbelief cannot cause any decrease or deficiency in His Kingdom. He will be God if you believe in Him, and He will still be God if you deny Him. He is ruling over His Kingdom by His own power. Your believing or denying Him does not affect His Sovereignty in any way. According to Hadith (Muslim), Allah says: O My servants, if all of you, the former and the latter, the men and the jinns, become like the heart of a most sinful person among you, it will cause no deficiency whatever in My Kingdom.

***20** That is, He does not approve, not for any interest of His own but for the interest and benefit of the servants themselves that they should disbelieve, for disbelief is harmful for them. Here, one should bear in mind the fact that Allah's will is one thing and His approval and pleasure another. Nothing in the world can happen against Allah's will, but many things can happen against His approval, and are happening day and night. For example, the dominance of the tyrants and the wicked in the world, the existence of thieves and robbers, the presence of murderers and adulterers, are possible only because Allah has made room for the occurrence of these evils and the existence of these criminals in the scheme of things ordained by Him. Then He provides opportunities also of committing evil just as He provides opportunities to the good of doing good. Had He made no room for these evils and had provided no opportunities of committing wrongs to the evildoers, no evil would have ever occurred in the world. All this is based on Allah's will. But the occurrence of an act under divine will does not mean that Allah's approval also goes with it. This may be explained by an example. If a person tries to obtain his living only by lawful means, Allah provides him his living through those means. This is His will. But providing for the thief or the robber or the corrupt person under the will does not mean that Allah also likes stealing and robbery and taking of bribes. Allah says the same thing here, as if to say: If you want to disbelieve, you may do so. We will not stop you from this nor make you believe forcibly. But We do not approve that you should deny your

Creator and Provider, being His servants, for it is harmful for yourselves. Our Godhead is not harmed and affected by it in any way.

***21** The word *shukr* (gratitude) has been used here as against *kufr* (disbelief) instead of *Iman* (belief). This by itself shows that *kufr* is, in fact, ingratitude and disloyalty, and faith is the necessary requirement of gratitude. The person who has any feeling of the favors of Allah Almighty, cannot adopt any other way than that of belief and faith. Therefore, gratitude and faith are correlatives. Wherever there is gratitude there will be faith also. On the contrary, wherever there is disbelief, there will be no question of gratitude at all, for gratitude along with disbelief is meaningless.

***22** It means this: Each one of you is himself responsible for his deeds. If a person adopts disbelief in order to please others, or to avoid their displeasure, those others will never bear the burden of his disbelief, but will leave him to bear his own burden. Therefore, anyone who comes to know that disbelief is wrong and belief is right, should give up the wrong attitude and adopt the right attitude, and avoid making himself liable for Allah's punishment by associating himself with his family or brotherhood or nation.

8. And when adversity touches man,^{*23} he calls upon his Lord, turning to Him (repentant).^{*24} Then when He bestows upon him a favor

❖ وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَا رَبَّهُ مُنِيبًا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَّلَهُ نِعْمَةً مِّنْهُ نَسِيَ مَا كَانَ يَدْعُوًّا

from Himself, he forgets that for which he called upon before,^{*25} and he sets up rivals to Allah^{*26} to mislead (others) from His way.^{*27} Say: “Enjoy your disbelief for a little while. Indeed, you are of the companions of the Fire.”

إِلَيْهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَجَعَلْ لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا
لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ قُلُوبًا تَمَتَّعَ
بِكُفْرِكَ قَلِيلًا إِنَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ
النَّارِ



***23** “The man”: the disbeliever who adopted the way of ingratitude.

***24** That is, at that time he does not remember those other deities whom he used to invoke in good times; but he despairs of them all and turns only to Allah, Lord of the worlds. This is a clear proof of the fact that in the depths of his heart he has the feeling that all other deities are helpless, and the realization that Allah alone is the possessor of all powers and authority lies buried and hidden deep in his mind.

***25** That is, he again forgets the bad times when abandoning all other deities he was invoking only Allah, the One.

***26** That is, he again starts serving others: he obeys them, prays to them and makes offerings before them.

***27** That is, he is not content with his own self having gone astray, but also leads others astray, telling them that the affliction which had befallen him, had been averted by the help of such and such a pious man or saint, or god and goddess. Thus, many other people also put their faith in

these deities besides Allah, and are further misled as the ignorant and foolish people describe their experiences before them.

9. Is he, who is obedient in the hours of the night, prostrating and standing, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord, (like one who disbelieves). Say: “Are those who know equal with those who do not know.”*28 Only those of understanding will pay heed.

أَمَّنْ هُوَ قَنِتٌ ءِإِنَاءَ أَلِيلِ
سَاجِدًا وَقَائِمًا تَحَذِرُ الْآخِرَةَ
وَيَرْجُوا رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ ۗ قُلْ هَلْ
يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُوا
الْأَلْبَابِ

*28 It should be noted that two kinds of the men are being contrasted here. First, those who turn to Allah when a calamity befalls them, but worship others than Allah normally. Second, those who have made it their permanent way of life to obey Allah and worship and serve Him, and their worshipping Him in solitude during the night is a proof of their sincerity. The first kind of the men have been called ignorant by Allah, even if they might have devoured whole libraries. And the second kind of the men have been called the learned, even if they might be illiterate. For the real supremely important thing is the knowledge of the truth and man's action according to it, and on this depends his true success. Allah asks: How can these two be equal? How can they possibly follow the same way together in the

world, and meet with the same end in the Hereafter?

10. Say: “O My slaves who have believed, fear your Lord.*²⁹ For those who do good in this world there is good,*³⁰ and Allah’s earth is spacious.*³¹ Indeed, those who are patient will be given their reward in full, without reckoning.”*³²

قُلْ يٰٓعِبَادِ ٱللّٰهِ ٱتَّقُوا
رَبَّكُمْ ۚ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ
ٱلدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ ۗ وَٱرْضُ ٱللّٰهَ
وَٱسْعَةً ۗ إِنَّمَا يُوفَّى الصّٰبِرُونَ
أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿١٠﴾

***29** That is, do not rest content with belief but follow it up with piety and fear of God. Act according to what Allah has enjoined and avoid what He has forbidden and live in the world fearing His accountability.

***30** Good and well-being both of this world and of the Hereafter.

***31** That is, if one city, territory or land has become difficult for the worshipers of Allah, they may emigrate to another place where they may not have to face any such hardship.

***32** Those who brave all kinds of hardships and persecutions in following the way of God-worship and piety but do not abandon the way of the truth. This also includes those people who emigrate to other countries and experience hardships in the foreign land for the sake of religion and faith, and those also who continue to face every kind of temptation and calamity firmly and patiently in the land where they are being persecuted.

11. Say (O Muhammad):
“Indeed, I am commanded to
worship Allah, ^{*33} sincere to
Him in religion.”

قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ
مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ ﴿١١﴾

***33** That is, my mission is not only to exhort others but also to practice what I preach to myself. First, I follow the way which I call others to follow.

12. “And I am commanded to be first of those who surrender.”

وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

13. Say: “Indeed I fear, If I should disobey my Lord, the punishment of a great Day.”

قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي
عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾

14. Say: “Allah (alone) do I worship, sincere to Him in my religion.”

قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْبُدُ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ دِينِي ﴿١٤﴾

15. “So worship what you will besides Him.” Say: “Indeed, the losers are those who will lose themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection. Is that not the manifest loss.”^{*34}

فَاعْبُدُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِهِ
قُلْ إِنَّ الْخَاسِرِينَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَهْلِيَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
أَلَا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٥﴾

*34 Bankruptcy is loss of a person's capital and failure of his business so that he is unable to pay his debts in full. This same metaphor Allah has used here for the disbelievers and polytheists, The sum total of whatever man has gotten in this worldly life, his intellect, body, powers, capabilities, means and opportunities is, in fact, the capital which he invests in the business of the worldly life. If a person invested all this capital on the hypothesis that there is no God, or that there are many gods, whose servant he is, and that he is not accountable to anyone, or that someone else will rescue him on Judgment Day, it would mean that he made a losing bargain and lost all his capital. This is his first loss. His second loss is that in everything that he did, on the basis of the wrong hypothesis, he went on wronging himself and many other men, and the coming generations and many other creatures of Allah, throughout his life. Thus, he got into countless debts, but has no money with which he may fully pay his debts. Over and above this, he has not only himself incurred this loss, but has caused the same loss to his children and near and dear ones and friends and fellow countrymen by his wrong education and training and wrong example. It is these three losses together which Allah has called *khusran-i-mubin* (utter bankruptcy) in this verse.

16. They shall have above them, coverings of fire, and beneath them coverings (of fire). That is with what Allah does warn His slaves. "O My

لَهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ مِّنَ النَّارِ
وَمِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ مِّنَ النَّارِ يُخَوِّفُ
اللَّهُ بِهِ عِبَادَهُ يَتَّقُونَ

slaves, then fear Me.”



17. And those who put away false gods lest they should worship them,^{*35} and turn in repentance to Allah, for them are good tidings. So give good tidings to My slaves.

وَالَّذِينَ أَجْتَنَبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ أَنْ
يَعْبُدُوهَا وَأَنَابُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ لَهُمُ
الْبُشْرَىٰ ج فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ ١٧

***35** *Taghut* is from *tughyan* and means rebellion. If someone is called *taghut* (rebellion) instead of *taghi* (rebel), it would mean that he is a rebel incarnate. For example, if a person is called *husn* (beauty) instead of *hasin* (beautiful), it would mean that he has reached perfection in beauty. The deities other than Allah have been called *taghut* because it is rebellion to worship others besides Allah, but the one who has others worship him, is a rebel of the worst kind. (For further explanation, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 256, Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 60, 76, Surah An-Naml, Ayat 36 and the E.Ns thereof).

18. Those who listen to the word then follow the best of it.^{*36} Such are those whom Allah has guided, and such are those who possess understanding.

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ
فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ ج وَأُولَئِكَ
الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ ط وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ١٨

***36** This verse can have two meanings:

(1) That they do not follow every voice but ponder over

what every man says and accept only what is right and true.

(2) That they do not try to give a false meaning to what they hear but adopt its good and righteous aspects.

19. Is then one against whom the word of punishment justified (to be guided).^{*37} Can you then save him who is in the Fire.

أَفَمَنْ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ
أَفَأَنْتَ تُنقِذُ مَنْ فِي النَّارِ ﴿١٩﴾

***37** That is, the person who has made himself worthy of Allah's punishment and about whom Allah has already decided that he will be punished.

20. But those who have feared their Lord, for them are chambers, above them chambers built high, underneath which rivers flow. A promise of Allah. Allah does not fail in (His) promise.

لَكِنِ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ
غُرْفٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهَا غُرْفٌ مَّبْنِيَةٌ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَعَدَّ
اللَّهُ لَا يَخْلِفُ اللَّهُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿٢٠﴾

21. Have you not seen that Allah sends down water from the sky and causes it to flow as water-springs in the earth,^{*38} then He produces thereby crops of varying colors, then they wither, then you see them

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنْبِيعَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا
مُّخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيَجُ فَتَرَهُ

turned yellow, then He makes them chaff. Indeed, in that is a reminder for those of understanding.^{*39}

مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ حُطْمًا إِنَّ
فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرٍ لِّأُولِي
الْأَلْبَابِ

***38** The word *yanaabi* in the text is comprehensive and applies to all the three sources of water.

***39** That is, a man of understanding learns this lesson from it that the life of this world and its adornments are all transitory. The end of every spring is autumn. The fate of every youth is weakness and death. And every rise has a fall. Therefore, this world is not something of which one should be charmed and enamored so as to forget God and the Hereafter and should conduct himself here in a manner as to ruin his Hereafter, only for the sake of enjoying the short lived pleasures of this world. Then a man of understanding also learns this lesson from these phenomena that the spring and autumn of this world are only under Allah's control. Allah allows to grow and prosper whomsoever He wills and ruins and lays waste whomsoever He wills. Neither it is in anybody's power to stop the growth of someone whom Allah wills to grow, nor has anyone the power to save him from destruction whom Allah wills to destroy.

22. So is he whose breast Allah has opened to Islam,^{*40} then he is upon a light from his Lord (like him who in

أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ
لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ

darkness).^{*41} So woe to those whose hearts are hardened^{*42} against remembrance of Allah. Those are in manifest error.

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبِهِمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرِ
اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

***40** “Whose breast... Islam”: Whom Allah helps to learn a lesson from these realities and to be satisfied with Islam as based on the truth. Opening of a man’s breast for something is, in fact, a state in which there remains no anxiety or ambiguity or suspicion and doubt in his mind about the thing, nor has he the feeling of any danger and loss in accepting and adopting it, but he decides with full satisfaction of the heart that it is the truth; therefore, he must follow it whatever be the consequences. Having made such a decision when a person adopts the way of Islam, he obeys whatever command he receives from Allah and His Messenger willingly and with pleasure, without any hesitation. He accepts whatever beliefs and ideas, rules and regulations he comes across in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (peace be upon him) as if they were the voice of his own heart. He does not feel any compunction on giving up an unlawful gain, because he believes that it was no gain for him at all; it was rather a loss from which Allah saved him by His grace. Likewise, even if he incurs a loss while following the way of righteousness, he does not feel sad about this but bears it with patience and regards it as an ordinary loss as compared to the loss of turning away from the way of Allah. The same is his behavior on confronting dangers. He

believes that there is no other way for him, which he may follow in order to avoid the danger. The straight way of Allah is only one, which he has to follow in any case. If there is a danger in following it, let it be.

***41** “Upon a light from his Lord”: In the light of the knowledge of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (peace be upon him), by the help of which he sees clearly at every step which is the straight path of the truth among the countless by-paths of life.

***42** As against the opening of the breast there can be two other states of man’s heart:

(1) The state of narrowing of the breast and squeezing of the heart; and in this state there still remains some room for the truth to permeate it.

(2) The state of hardening or petrifying of the heart; in this there is left no room whatever for the truth to permeate. About this second state Allah says that the person who reaches such a stage is totally ruined. This means that if a person becomes inclined to accept the truth, even though with an unveiling and squeezed heart, there remains some possibility for him to be redeemed. This second theme becomes obvious from the style and tenor of the verse itself, though Allah has not stated it directly. For the real intention of the verse was to warn those who were bent upon stubbornness in their antagonism towards the Prophet (peace be upon him) and had made up their mind not to listen to him at all. For this they have been warned, as if to say: You take pride in this stubbornness of yours, but, as a matter of fact, there cannot be a greater

misfortune and unworthiness of man than that his heart should become even more hardened, instead of becoming soft, when he hears Allah being mentioned and the admonition sent by Him.

23. Allah has sent down the best statement, a Book (Quran), its parts resembling each other,^{*43} repeating. Shiver from it the skins of those who fear their Lord (when hear it). Then soften their skins and their hearts at the remembrance of Allah. That is the guidance of Allah, He guides therewith whom He wills. And whomever Allah sends astray, for him there is no guide.

اللَّهُ نَزَلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا
مُتَشَابِهًا مَّثَانِي تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ
جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ
تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ
اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ
مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَنْ يُضَلِّ اللَّهُ فَمَا
لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ



***43** That is, there is no contradiction and disagreement between them. The whole Book, from the beginning to the end, projects one and the same aim, one and the same belief, and one and the same system of thought and action. Each of its parts confirms and supports and explains the other themes; and there is perfect consistency in it both in meaning and in style.

24. Is then he who will confront with his face the worst of the punishment on the Day of Resurrection

أَفَمَنْ يَتَّقِي بِوَجْهِهِ سُوءَ
الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۚ وَقِيلَ

(like him who is saved).^{*44}
And it will be said to the wrongdoers: “Taste what you used to earn.”^{*45}

لِلظَّالِمِينَ ذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ
تَكْسِبُونَ



***44** One takes a blow on his face only when he is absolutely helpless and powerless, otherwise until one has some power to resist, he goes on receiving the blows on the other parts of his body but saves his face. Therefore, here the extreme state of helplessness of a person has been depicted, saying that he will receive the severe punishment on his face.

***45** The word *kasab*, in the Quranic terminology, implies one's desecrating and earning a reward and punishment in consequence of his actions and deeds. The real earning of a doer of good is that he becomes worthy of Allah's reward, and the earning of the evil-doer is the punishment that he will receive in the Hereafter.

25. Those before them denied, so the punishment came upon them from where they did not perceive.

كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَأَتَتْهُمْ
الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ



26. So Allah made them taste humiliation in the life of the world. And the punishment of the Hereafter will be greater, if they only knew.

فَأَذَاقَهُمُ اللَّهُ الْخِزْيَ فِي الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ
لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ



27. And certainly, We have put forth for mankind in this Quran all kinds of similitude, that they might remember.

وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا
الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

28. An Arabic Quran,^{*46} without any deviance,^{*47} that they might fear (Allah).

قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا غَيْرَ ذِي عِوَجٍ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

***46** That is, it has not been sent down in a foreign language so that the people of Makkah and Arabia should stand in need of a translator or interpreter, but it is in their own language, which they can understand directly.

***47** That is, there is nothing of double-dealing in it so that a common man should find it difficult to understand, but everything has been presented in it in a straightforward manner, from which everyone can know what this Book states as wrong and why, what it states as right and on what ground, what it wants the people to accept and what it wants them to reject, and what it enjoins and what it forbids.

29. Allah puts forth a similitude, a man belonging to many disputing partners, and a man (belonging) exclusively to one man. Are the two equal in similitude.^{*48} Praise be to

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلًا فِيهِ
شُرَكَاءُ مُتَشَاكِسُونَ وَرَجُلًا
سَلَمًا لِرَجُلٍ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيَانِ مَثَلًا
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ۚ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا

Allah.^{*49} But most of them do
not know.^{*50}

***48** Allah in this parable has explained the difference between shirk and Tauhid and the impact each has on human life so clearly that it is not possible to put across such a vast theme so concisely and effectively in other words. Everyone will admit that the person who has many masters, each one pulling him to himself, and the masters are also so ill-tempered that no one spares him time in his service to obey the other, and no one rests content only with threatening and cursing him if he fails to carry out his command from among the contradictory commands of the other masters, but is bent upon punishing him, his life would certainly be in great anguish. On the contrary, the person, who is the slave or servant of only one master, would be living a life of ease and comfort because he will not have to serve and seek the pleasure of another master. This is such a straightforward thing which does not need deep consideration for its understanding. After this it remains no longer difficult for a person to understand that the peace of mind and satisfaction that accrue to him from the service of One God, can never accrue from the service of many gods.

Here, it should be understood well that the parable of many ill-tempered and contesting masters cannot apply to the images of stone, but it only applies to living masters, who practically give contradictory commands to man and keep pulling him to themselves in actual reality. One such master sits in his own self, which presents before him desires of

every kind and compels him to fulfill them. Other countless masters are there in the house, in the family, in the brotherhood, in the society, among the religious guides and the rulers and legislators, in the business and economic circles and among the dominant powers of civilization whose contradictory demands and requirements keep on pulling man to themselves at All times; then any god whose demand he fails to fulfill in any way, does not let him go unpunished in his own circle. However, each one's instrument of punishment is different. Someone causes a heart-break, another takes offense, another humiliates, another boycotts, another bankrupts, another makes a religious or a legal attack. Man has no other way of being saved from this anguish and agony but to adopt the way of Tauhid and become the slave of One God, and throw off the yoke of servitude of every other god.

Adoption of the Way of Tauhid also has two forms, which lead to different results:

First, that an individual should decide to become the servant of One God individually but his environment is hostile. In this case the external conflict and his anguish and agony might increase, but if he has adopted the way sincerely, internal peace and satisfaction will necessarily accrue. He will turn down every such desire of the self as goes against the divine commands, or whose fulfillment may clash with the demands of God-worship. He will also reject every such demand of the family, society, nation, government, religious guides and economic powers that conflicts with the divine law. Consequently, he might have

to face extreme hardships, rather he will surely face, but his heart will have full satisfaction that he is fulfilling the demand of the servitude of that God Whose servant he actually is, and that those whose servant he is not, have no right on him, because of which he may have to serve them against the command of his God. No power of the world can deprive him of this satisfaction of the heart and peace of mind; so much so that even if he has to go to the gallows for its sake, he will go to it with a clear conscience, and he will have no compunction as to why he did not save his life by bowing before the false gods.

The second form is that the whole society be established on the basis of the Tauhid imbining the principles of morality, civilization, culture, education, religion, law, social custom, politics, economics in every sphere of life as a creed, which the Master of the Universe has given through His Book and His Messenger. The law should declare as a crime everything which God's religion has declared sinful and the government administration should try to eradicate the same. The system of education and training should prepare the minds and character to avoid the same. The same should be condemned from the religious pulpit, and regarded as vicious and forbidden in every economic enterprise. Likewise, everything that Allah's religion has declared as good and virtuous should be protected and defended by the law, developed by the administrative forces, impressed in the minds and instilled in character by the entire system of education and training, infused from the religious pulpit, admired by the society and followed by

it practically and enforced in every economic enterprise. This is how man can attain to perfect internal and external peace and satisfaction, and all the doors to material and spiritual progress are thrown open, for the conflict in it between God-worship and the worship of others would be reduced to the minimum.

Although Islam invites every single individual to adopt Tauhid as his creed and to worship Allah alone, braving every danger and hardship, even in the absence of the established order, it cannot be denied that Islam's ultimate aim and object is to establish this second order. And the same has been the objective of the endeavors of all the Prophets to bring into existence a community of the Muslims who should follow Allah's religion collectively, free from the domination and influence of unbelief and the unbelievers. No one, unless he is unaware of the Quran and the Sunnah and senseless, can say that the objective of the Prophets' struggle has been only the faith and obedience of the individual, and that it has never been their aim to enforce and establish Islam in the society and state.

*49 Here, in order to understand the real significance of *al-hamdu-lillah* (praise be to Allah), one should visualize this scene. After presenting the above question before the people the speaker observed a pause so that the opponents of Tauhid could give an answer to it if they had any. Then, when they could not give any answer, and from nowhere it was said that both were equal, the speaker said: *Al-hamdu-lillah*: Thank God that you too appreciate the difference between the two situations and none among you can dare

say that slavery to many masters is better than slavery to one master, or that both are equal.

***50** That is, you fully understand and appreciate the difference between slavery to one master and slavery to many masters, but when you are made to understand the difference between God-worship and the worship of many gods, you show lack of understanding.

30. Indeed, you will die and indeed, they will die. ^{*51}

إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

***51** There is a subtle gap between the preceding sentence and this, which can be filled by every intelligent person himself by a little consideration of the context. It contains this theme: You are making every effort to make the people understand a simple thing in a simple way, but they are not only showing stubbornness with regard to what you say and rejecting it but are also bent upon harming you in order to suppress the manifest truth. Well, neither you are immortal nor they. Both you and they have to die one day. then, each of you will experience his own end.

31. Then indeed, on the Day of Resurrection, before your Lord you will dispute.

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

32. So who does greater wrong than him who utters a lie against Allah, and denies the truth when it has come to him. Is not in Hell the home for

﴿ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَذَبَ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَذَّبَ بِالصِّدْقِ إِذْ جَاءَهُ ۗ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى

disbelievers.

لِّلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

33. And he who has brought the truth and has confirmed it, such are those, the righteous.*52

وَالَّذِي جَاءَ بِالصِّدْقِ وَصَدَّقَ بِهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ

﴿٣٣﴾

***52** It means this: As to who will receive punishment in the trial before Allah on the day of Resurrection, you should note it well that the punishment inevitably will be inflicted on those wicked people who invented a false creed that there were also other associates with Allah, who had a share in His Being, authority, powers and rights, and worse than that, when the truth was presented before them, they not only paid no heed to it, but, on the contrary, treated the one who presented it as an impostor. As far as the person who came with the truth, and those who affirmed faith in him, are concerned there can obviously be no question of their receiving any punishment from the court of Allah.

34. They will have whatever they desire with their Lord.*53
That is the reward of those who do good.

هُم مَّا يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

***53** One should note that the words used here are *inda-rabbi-him* (with their Lord) and not *fil-jannah* (in Paradise), and obviously man reaches in the presence of his Lord just after death. Therefore, the intention of the verse seems to be: Not only after entering Paradise but

right from the time of death till his entry into Paradise Allah will treat the righteous believer in the same kind manner. The believer will certainly desire to be saved from the torment of *barzakh*, from the severities of the Day of Resurrection and Judgment, from the humiliation of the Plain of Gathering and from the punishment of his errors and shortcomings, and Allah Almighty will fulfill all his desires.

35. That Allah may remove from them the worst of what they did, and reward them their due for the best of what they used to do.^{*54}

لِيُكَفِّرَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي
عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ
الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

***54** The people who believed in the Prophet (peace be upon him) had happened to commit most heinous sins, both ideological and moral, in the days of ignorance, and after affirmation of the faith the good that they did was not only that they gave up the falsehood they had been professing and accepted the truth that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had presented, but in addition, they had performed the best righteous acts in morality, devotion and in their dealings with others. Allah says: The worst deeds that they had committed in the days of ignorance will be wiped off from their account, and they will be rewarded for the best of their deeds found in their conduct book.

36. Is not Allah sufficient for His slave (Muhammad). And they frighten you with

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ

those (whom they worship) other than Him.^{*55} And whom Allah sends astray, then for him there is no guide.

وَمُخَوِّفُونَكَ بِالَّذِينَ مِنْ
دُونِهِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ
مِنْ هَادٍ

***55** The disbelievers of Makkah used to say to the Prophet (peace be upon him): You behave insolently in respect of our deities and utter rude words against them. You do not know how powerful they are and what miraculous powers they possess. Anybody who dishonored them was ruined. If you also do not desist from what you say against them, you too will be annihilated.

37. And whomever Allah guides, so for him there is no misleader. Is not Allah All Mighty, the Owner of Retribution.^{*56}

وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ
مُضِلٍّ أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِعَزِيزٍ ذِي
أَنْتِقَامٍ

***56** That is, this also is a result of their lack of guidance that the foolish people esteem highly the power and honor of their deities but they never think that Allah also is All-Mighty and they can also be punished for insulting Him by the shirk they are committing against Him.

38. And if you ask them: “Who created the heavens and the earth.” Surely, they will say: “Allah.” Say: “Then have you thought what you

وَلَيْنَ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ

call upon besides Allah, if Allah intended some harm for me, could they remove from me His harm, or if He intended some mercy for me, could they restrain His mercy.” Say: “Sufficient for me is Allah. In Him trust those who put their trust.”*57

اللَّهُ قُلْ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَنِيَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ هَلْ
هُنَّ كَاشِفَاتُ ضُرِّهِ أَوْ أَرَادَنِي
بِرَحْمَةٍ هَلْ هُنَّ مُمْسِكَتُ
رَحْمَتِهِ قُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
يَتَوَكَّلُ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ

*57 Ibn Abi Hatim has related from Ibn Abbas that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The person who desires that he should become most powerful among men should repose his trust in Allah. And the person who desires that he should become the wealthiest among men should have more trust in that which is with Allah than that which is in his own hand. And the person who desires that he should become most honorable among men should fear Allah All-Mighty.

39. Say: “O my people, work according to your position.*58 Indeed, I (too) am working. So soon you will come to know.”

قُلْ يٰقَوْمِ اَعْمَلُوا عَلٰى
مَا كَانَتْكُمْ اِىْنِ عَمَلٍ فَسَوْفَ
تَعْلَمُونَ

*58 That is, you may go on doing what you can in order to harm me and do not give me any respite.

40. "To whom will come a disgracing punishment, and on whom will descend an everlasting punishment."

مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ مُخْزِيهِ وَيَحِلُّ
عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

41. Indeed, We sent down to you (Muhammad) the Book for mankind in truth. Then whoever is guided, it is for his soul. And whoever goes astray, so he goes astray only for his detriment. And you are not a warder over them. *59

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ لِلنَّاسِ
بِالْحَقِّ ^ص فَمَنْ أَهْتَدَى
فَلِنَفْسِهِ ^ص وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا
يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ^ص وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ
بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿٤١﴾

*59 That is, it is not for you to bring them to the right path. Your only duty is to present the right path before them. If they prefer to remain astray after that, you are not responsible for it.

42. Allah takes away the souls at the time of their death. And those who do not die (He takes their souls) during their sleep. *60 Then He keeps those (souls) for which He has decreed death, and sends the others for a term appointed. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who reflect. *61

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا ^ص
وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا
فِيْمَسِكُ ^ص الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا
الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ ^ص الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ
أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ^ج إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ
لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

*60 Taking the souls during sleep, implies the suspension of the powers of feeling and consciousness, understanding and will.

*61 By this Allah wants every man to realize how life and death are entirely in His own hand. No one has the guarantee that he will certainly get up alive in the morning when he goes to sleep at night. No one knows what disaster could befall him within a moment, and whether the next moment would be a moment of life for him or of death. At any time, while asleep or awake, in the house or outside it, some unforeseen calamity, from inside his body or from outside, can suddenly cause his death. Thus, man who is so helpless in the hands of God, would be foolish if he turned away from the same God or became heedless of Him.

43. Or have they taken others besides Allah as intercessors.*62 Say: "Even though they do not have power over anything, and have no understanding."

أَمْ آتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاءَ
قُلْ أَوْلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَمْلِكُونَ
شَيْئًا وَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ



*62 That is, in the first place, these people have foolishly presumed that there are some beings who wield great influence with Allah, and whose intercession is never turned down, whereas there is no proof of their being intercessors at all, nor has Allah ever said that they hold such a position with Him, nor did these beings themselves ever claim that they would use their influence with Allah and help them out in every case. Another folly of these people is that they have ignored the real Master and have

believed the imaginary beings to be all powerful who deserve to receive all their devotion and dedication.

44. Say: “To Allah belongs intercession entirely.*⁶³ His is the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. Then to Him you will be returned.”

قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ جَمِيعًا ۗ لَهُ مُلْكُ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ
تُرْجَعُونَ

*⁶³ That is, not to speak of getting his intercession granted, no one has the power to stand before Allah as an intercessor. The right to grant or not to grant anyone the permission to intercede with Him exclusively rests with Allah. Then He may allow intercession for whomever He may please and forbid for whomever He may please. (For understanding the difference between the Islamic concept of intercession and the polytheistic concept, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 255; Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 51; Surah Yunus, Ayats 3, 18; Surah Hud, Ayat 105; Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 11; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 73, 84; Surah TaHa, Ayats 109-110; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 23; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayat 76, and the E.Ns thereof and E.N. 40 of Saba.

45. And when Allah, the One is mentioned, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter are filled with disgust. And when those (whom they worship) besides Him are mentioned, behold, they rejoice.*⁶⁴

وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْمَأَزَّتْ
قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِالْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ
دُونِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ

***64** This evil is common to almost all polytheistic people of the world, and even some unfortunate Muslims also suffer from it, They profess with the tongue that they believe in Allah, but when One Allah alone is mentioned before them, their faces are distorted, and they say: This man certainly does not believe in the saints and holy men, that is why he talks of Allah and Allah alone. And if others besides Allah are mentioned, they are delighted, and their faces brighten up with joy. Their this attitude shows as to who is the actual object of their love and esteem. Allama Alusi, in his commentary Ruh al-Maani, has related his own experience here. He says: One day I saw that a man was invoking the help of a dead saint in his affliction. I said: O bondsman of Allah, invoke Allah, for He Himself says: If My servants ask you, O Prophet, concerning Me, tell them I am quite near to them. I hear and answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls to Me, (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 186), Hearing this, the man became angry. The people told me afterwards that he said: This man is a denier of the saints. And some others heard him also say: The saints answer the prayers more promptly than does Allah.

46. Say: “O Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, You will judge between Your slaves about that wherein they used to differ.”

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ عَلِيمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِي مَا
كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ



47. And if that those who did wrong had what is in earth all together and the like of it with it. they would offer it to ransom (themselves) thereby from the worst of the punishment on the Day of Resurrection. And there will become apparent to them from Allah what they had not been reckoning.

وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ
لَافْتَدَوْا بِهِ مِنْ سُوءِ الْعَذَابِ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَبَدَا لَهُمْ مِنَ
اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَحْتَسِبُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

48. And there will become apparent to them the evils that which they earned, and they will be encircled by that which they used to ridicule.

وَبَدَا لَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا
وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ
يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

49. Then ^{*65} when an affliction touches man, he calls upon Us, then when We bestow on him a favor from Us. He says: "This is given to me only because of (my) knowledge."^{*66} Nay, but it is a trial, but most of them do not know. ^{*67}

فَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَانَا
ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَّلْنَاهُ نِعْمَةً مِنَّا قَالَ
إِنَّمَا أُوتِيتهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ بَلْ هِيَ
فِتْنَةٌ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

***65 "The man": the one who has aversion to Allah and whose face is distorted on hearing Allah alone being**

mentioned.

***66** This sentence can have two meanings:

(1) That Allah knows that I am worthy of this blessing. That is why He has given me All this, otherwise He would not have blessed me if I had been an evil and wicked person in His sight.

(2) That I have attained to this by virtue of my ability.

***67** People ignorantly think that whoever is being blessed by Allah in some way is being so blessed necessarily on account of his worth and ability and that the same is a sign or proof of his being a favorite in His sight. Whereas the fact is that whoever is being given something here, is being given it for the sake of a trial by Allah. This is a means of the test, and not any reward for ability, otherwise many able and worthy people would not be living in poverty and many unworthy people would not be rolling in prosperity. Likewise, these worldly blessings are not a sign of one's being a favorite with Allah either. Everyone can see that many good people whose goodness is unquestionable are living in hardships in the world, and many wicked people whose evil-doing is well known are enjoying the pleasures of life. Now, can a sensible man take the affliction of the one and the life of ease and comfort of the other as an argument to say that Allah hates the good man and prefers the bad man.

50. Certainly, the same was said by those before them. So it did not avail them (anything) whatever they

قَدْ قَاهَا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَمَا
أَغْنَى عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

had earned.*68



*68 That is, when they were seized for evil-doing, the ability of which they were so proud, did not avail them anything, and this also became known that they were not Allah's favorites. Evidently, if their earning had been due to their capability and their being favorites with Allah, they would not have been seized for evil-doing at all.

51. Then the evils of what they earned overtook them. And those who did wrong among these (people), will be overtaken by the evils of that which they earned. And they will not be able to escape.

فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا
وَالَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ
سَيُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا
وَمَا هُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ

52. Do they not know that Allah extends the provision for whom He wills, and straitens (it for whom He wills).*69 Indeed, in that are signs for the people who believe.

أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ
الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّ فِي
ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ



*69 That is, the abundance or restriction of the provisions is based on another law of Allah, which has some other wisdom. The distribution of the provisions does not at all depend on man's worthiness and ability, or on his being a favorite of Allah, or for being under His wrath. (For details, see Surah At-Taubah, Ayats 55, 69, 85; Surah

Younus, Ayat 17; Surah Hud, Ayats 3, 27; Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 26; Surah Al-Kahf, Ayats 34-36; Surah TaHa, Ayats 131-132; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 105; Surah Al-Mumin: Introduction and Ayats 55-56; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayat 111; Surah Al-Qasas, Ayats 78, 89 and the E N. thereof. and E.Ns 54 to 60 of Surah Saba).

53. Say: “O My slaves^{*70} who have transgressed against themselves. Do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.”^{*71}

﴿ قُلْ يَاعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴾



***70** Some commentators have given a strange interpretation to these words. They say that Allah Himself has commanded the Prophet (peace be upon him) to address the people as “My servants” therefore, all men are the servants of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This interpretation is no interpretation at all but a worst distortion of the meaning of the Quran and indeed tampering with the Word of Allah. If this interpretation were correct, it would falsify and negate the whole Quran. For the Quran, from the beginning to the end, establishes the concept that men are the servants of Allah alone, and its whole message revolves around the point that they should serve none but One Allah alone. The Prophet (peace be

upon him) himself was Allah's servant. Allah had sent him not as *rabb* (sustainer, providence) but as a Messenger so that he should himself serve Him and teach the other people also to serve Him alone. After all, how can a sensible person believe that the Prophet (peace be upon him) might have one day stood up before the disbelieving Quraish of Makkah and made the sudden proclamation: You are in fact the slaves of Muhammad and not of al-Uzzah and ash-Shams. (We seek Allah's refuge from this).

***71** The address here is to all mankind. There is no weighty argument to regard only the believers as the addressees. As has been observed by Allama Ibn Kathir, to address such a thing to the common men does not mean that Allah forgives all sins without repentance, but Allah Himself has explained in the following verses that sins are forgiven only when the sinner turns to Allah's worship and service and adopts obedience to the message sent down by Him. As a matter of fact, this verse brought a message of hope for those people who had committed mortal sins like murder, adultery, theft, robbery, etc. in the days of ignorance, and had despaired whether they would ever be forgiven. To them it has been said: Do not despair of Allah's mercy; whatever you might have done in the past, if you sincerely turn to your Lord's obedience, you will be forgiven every sin. The same interpretation of this verse has been given by Ibn Abbas, Qatadah, Mujahid and Ibn Zaid. (Ibn Jarir, Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi). For further explanation, see Surah Al-Furqan, Ayats 70-71 and the E.Ns thereof.

54. “And turn in repentance to your Lord, and surrender to Him, before there comes upon you the punishment, then you will not be helped.”

وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوا لَهُ
مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ
لَا تُنصَرُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

55. “And follow the best^{*72} of what is sent down to you from your Lord, before there comes upon you the punishment suddenly, while you do not perceive.”

وَاتَّبِعُوا أَحْسَنَ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُم
مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ مِّن قَبْلِ أَن
يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ بَغْتَةً وَأَنتُمْ
لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

***72** “To follow the best aspect of the Book of Allah” means that one should carry out the commands Allah has given and refrain from what He has forbidden, and learn lessons from what He has brought out in the parables and narratives. As against this, the one who turns away from Allah’s commands, indulges in the forbidden things, and does not heed His admonitions, follows the worst aspect of the Book of Allah, i.e. that aspect which the divine Book has declared as the most evil.

56. Lest a soul should say: “Alas, woe to me, over what I neglected (my duty) in regard to Allah, and I was indeed among those who mocked.”

أَن تَقُولَ نَفْسٌ يٰحَسْرَتِيْ أَعْلَىٰ
مَا فَرَّطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ اللَّهِ وَإِن
كُنْتُ لَمِنَ السَّخِرِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

57. Or should say: “If Allah had guided me, I would have been among the righteous.”

أَوْ تَقُولَ لَوْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هَدَانِي
لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

58. Or should say, when he sees the punishment: “If only I had another chance, then I could be among the righteous.”

أَوْ تَقُولَ حِينَ تَرَى الْعَذَابَ لَوْ
أَنَّ لِي كَرَّةً فَآكُونَ مِنْ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. Yes, certainly there came to you My revelations, so you denied them and were arrogant, and you were among the disbelievers.

بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَاءَتْكَ آيَاتِي فَكَذَّبْتَ
بِهَا وَاسْتَكْبَرْتَ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ
الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾

60. And on the Day of Resurrection you will see those who lied against Allah, their faces blackened. Is there not in Hell an abode for the arrogant.

وَيَوْمَ أَلْقِيَمَةَ تَرَى الَّذِينَ
كَذَّبُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَجُوهُهُمْ
مُسْوَدَّةٌ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى
لِّلْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

61. And Allah will deliver those who feared Him to their places of success (Paradise). Evil shall not touch them, nor shall they grieve.

وَيُنَجِّي اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا
بِمَفَازَتِهِمْ لَا يَمَسُّهُمُ السُّوءُ
وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

62. Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is Guardian over all things.*73

اللَّهُ خَلِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ ﴿٦٢﴾

***73** That is, He did not just create the world and then left it alone, but He is constantly guarding and watching over everything. Just as everything in the world came into being by His act of creation so everything is living and surviving by His leave, and flourishing and functioning only under His protection and care.

63. To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth. And those who disbelieve in the revelations of Allah, such are those who are the losers.

لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

64. Say (O Muhammad,): “Do you order me to worship other than Allah, O you ignorant ones.”

قُلْ أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَأْمُرُونِي أَعْبُدُ أَيُّهَا الْجَاهِلُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

65. “And certainly, it has been revealed to you, and to those before you. If you associate (with Allah), your deeds will surely be in vain,*74 and you will surely be among the losers.”

وَلَقَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكَ لَئِن أَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾

***74** That is, no act which is performed along with shirk will be adjudged as a righteous act, and no one who, being a mushrik, performs many acts as good acts in his personal judgment, will deserve any reward for them, and his whole life work will be deemed to have gone waste.

66. “But worship (only) Allah, and be among the grateful.”

بَلِ اللَّهِ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُن مِّنَ
الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

67. And they have not appraised Allah with His true appraisal.^{*75} While the entire earth shall be in His grasp on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens shall be folded up in His right hand.^{*76} Glorified is He and High Exalted above what they associate as partners (to Him).^{*77}

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ
وَالْأَرْضُ جَمِيعًا قَبْضَتُهُ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ وَالسَّمَوَاتُ مَطْوِيَّاتٌ
بِيمِينِهِ ۗ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا
يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

***75** That is, they have no conception of the greatness and glory of Allah; they have never tried to understand how high is the position of the Lord of the Universe and how insignificant are the beings whom these foolish people have made associates in Godhead and worthy of their worship.

***76** This is a figurative way of describing the complete control and authority of Allah over the earth and heavens. Just as a man encloses a small ball in the hollow of his hand with perfect ease, or a person rolls up an handkerchief in

his hand without any difficulty, so will all men (who fail to conceive the greatness and glory of Allah) see with their own eyes, on the Day of Resurrection, that the earth and the heavens are like an ordinary ball and a small scroll in the hand of Allah. Traditions have been related in Musnad Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Ibn Jarir and others, on the authority of Abdullah bin Umar and Abu Hurairah, that once during a sermon the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited this verse and then said: Allah will hold the heavens and the earths (i.e. the planets) in His grasp and will roll them about in such a way as a child rolls a ball, and will say: I am God, the One: I am the King: I am the All-Mighty, Owner of glory: Where are the kings of the world? Where are the tyrants? Where are the arrogant? Saying these words he started so shaking that we feared that he might topple over along with the pulpit.

*77 That is, there is no comparison whatever between Allah's greatness and glory and the insignificance of those who are associated with Him in Godhead.

68. And the trumpet will be blown,^{*78} and will fall dead whoever is in the heavens and whoever is in the earth, except him whom Allah wills. Then it will be blown a second time, then behold, they will be standing, looking on.^{*79}

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا
مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيهِ
أُخْرَىٰ فَإِذَا هُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ

***78** For the explanation of *Thoor* (Trumpet), see Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 73; Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 48; Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 99; Surah TaHa, Ayats 102-103; Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 1; Surah Al-Momioon, Ayat 101; Surah An-Naml, Ayat 87 and the E,Ns thereof.

***79** Here, mention has been made of the Turmpet's being blown only twice. Besides, in Surah An-Naml there is the mention of another blowing of the Trumpet before these two, on hearing which everything in the earth and the heavens will be struck with terror (verse 87). On this very basis, the Ahadith mention that the Trumpet will be blown thrice:

(1) *Nafakhat al-Fazaon*, hearing which everything will be struck with terror.

(2) *Nafakhat as-Saaq*, on which everyone will fall down dead,

(3) *Nafakhat al-qiyam li-Rabbit-alamin*, i.e. the Trumpet on the blowing of which all dead men will return to life and arise from their graves to present themselves before their Lord.

69. And the earth will shine with the light of its Lord, and the Book will be set up, and the prophets and the witnesses^{*80} will be brought forward, and it will be judged between them with truth, and they will not be wronged.

وَأَشْرَقَتِ الْأَرْضُ بِنُورِ رَبِّهَا
وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ وَجِيءَ
بِالنَّبِيِّينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَقُضِيَ
بَيْنَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

***80** “The witnesses”: those who will bear witness to the effect that the Message of Allah had been conveyed to the people as well as those who will bear witness to the acts and deeds of the people. It is not necessary that these witnesses will be only human beings. The angels, the jinns, the beasts, men’s own limbs, their dwelling places and the trees and stones, will all be included among the witnesses.

70. And each soul will be paid in full for what it did. And He is best Aware of what they do.

وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ
 وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

71. And those who disbelieved will be driven to Hell in groups. Until, when they reach it, its gates will be opened.^{*81} And its warders will say to them: “Did there not come to you messengers from among yourselves, reciting to you the revelations of your Lord and warning you of the meeting of this Day of yours.” They will say: “Yes.” But the word of punishment has been justified against the disbelievers.

وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ
 زُمَرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا فَتُحْتَفَتُ
 أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ
 يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُونَ
 عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمْ
 وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا
 قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن حَقَّتْ كَلِمَةُ
 الْعَذَابِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧١﴾

***81** That is, the gates of Hell will not have already been opened but will be opened on their arrival there just as the

gate of a prison is opened on the arrival of the culprits and is closed as soon as they have entered it.

72. It will be said (to them): “Enter you the gates of Hell to abide therein.” So (what) an evil abode for the arrogant.

قِيلَ ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى
الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾

73. And those who feared their Lord will be led to the Garden in groups. Until, when they reach it, and its gates will be opened, and its warders will say to them: “Peace be upon you. You have done well, so enter it to abide eternally.”

وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَى
الْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا
وَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ
خَزَنَتُهَا سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طِبْتُمْ
فَادْخُلُوهَا خَالِدِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾

74. And they will say: “Praise be to Allah, who has fulfilled for us His promise, and has made us inherit the land.*82 We can dwell in the Garden wherever we will.”*83 So bounteous is the reward of workers.*84

وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي
صَدَقَنَا وَعَدَّهُ وَأَوْرَثَنَا الْأَرْضَ
نَتَّبِعُ مِنْ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ
فَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾

***82** For explanation, see Surah Ta Ha, Ayats 106-107, 124; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 106-107 and the E.Ns thereof.

***83** That is, the Paradise which has been granted to each of

us, is now our property and we possess full rights over it.

***84** Maybe this is said by the dwellers of Paradise, or maybe this sentence is added by Allah to what the dwellers of Paradise will say.

75. And you will see the angels surrounding the Throne from all round, glorifying the praises of their Lord. And it will be judged between them with truth, and it will be said: “All the Praises are for Allah, the Lord of the worlds.”^{*85}

وَتَرَى الْمَلَائِكَةَ حَافِينَ مِنْ
حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ
رَبِّهِمْ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَقِيلَ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

***85** That is, the entire Universe will proclaim the praises of Allah All-Mighty.





Al-Mumin

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name *Al-Mumin* from verse 28, implying thereby, that it is a Surah in which Al-Mumin (the Believer of Pharaoh's people) has been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

According to Ibn Abbas and Jabir bin Zaid, this Surah was revealed consecutively after Surah Az-Zumar, and its present position in the order of the Surahs in the Quran is the same as its chronological order.

Background of Revelation

There are clear indications in the subject matter of this Surah to the conditions in which it was revealed. The disbelievers of Makkah at that time were engaged in two kinds of the activities against the Prophet (peace be upon him). First, they were creating every kind of suspicion and misgiving in the minds of the people about the teaching of the Quran and the message of Islam and about the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself by starting many disputes and discussions, raising irrelevant objections and bringing ever new accusations and the Prophet (peace be upon him) and

the believers were tired of trying to answer them. Second, they were preparing the ground for putting an end to the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. They were devising one plot after the other, and on one occasion had even taken the practical steps to execute a plot. Bukhari has related a tradition on the authority of Abdullah bin Amr bin Aas saying that one day when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was offering his Prayer in the precinct's of the Kabbah, suddenly Uqbah bin Abi Muait, rushed forward and putting a piece of cloth round his neck started twisting it so as to strangle him to death. Abu Bakr, who happened to go there in time, pushed him away. Abdullah says that when Abu Bakr was struggling with the cruel man, he was saying words to the effect: Would you kill a man only because he says: Allah is my Lord? With a little variation this event has also been mentioned in Ibn Hisham, Nasai and Ibn Abi Hatim.

Theme and Topics

Both aspects of this have been clearly stated at the very outset, and then the whole following discourse is a most effective and instructive review of them.

As an answer to the conspiracies of murder, the story of the believer of the people of Pharaoh has been narrated (verses 23-55) and through this story three different lessons have been taught to the three groups:

1. The disbelievers have been admonished: Whatever you intend to do anything against Muhammad (peace be upon him), the same that the Pharaoh with his might intended against the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), would you

like to meet with the same fate with which he met by plotting such conspiracies?

2. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his followers have been taught the lesson: These wicked people may apparently be very strong and powerful and you may be very weak and helpless against them, yet you should rest assured that the might of that God Whose Word you are trying to raise high is superior to every other power. Therefore, you should only seek Allah's refuge in response to every and any dreadful threat that they utter against you, and then keep yourself busy, after this, in fearlessly performing your mission. The God worshiper has only one answer to every threat of the tyrant: I have taken refuge in my Lord and your Lord against every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning. (verse 27). Thus, if you go on performing your mission fearlessly of every danger and with full trust in God, His succor will ultimately reach you, and the Pharaohs of today shall be doomed just as the Pharaohs of yesterday. Till that time you will have to face and bear patiently every wave of persecution and tyranny that may be directed against you.

3. Besides these two, there was a third group of the people also in the society, who had been convinced in their hearts that the truth was only on the side of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and that the disbelieving Quraish were being unjust and cruel. But in spite of the conviction they were watching quietly and were unconcerned about the conflict between the truth and falsehood. Allah here has aroused their conscience as if to

say: When the enemies of the truth have openly plotted, in front of your very eyes, it would be a sad reflection on you if you still remained indifferent. Under such conditions, unless a person's conscience has become dead, he should rise and perform the duty, which a righteous man from among the courtiers of Pharaoh himself had performed at a time when the Pharaoh had made up his mind to kill the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). The circumstances that prevent you from raising your voice had also obstructed the way of the believer, but he had full faith in Allah and disregarded all expediency; then note that the Pharaoh was not able to do him any harm.

Now as for the conspiracies, which were continuing in Makkah day and night to defeat the truth: On the one hand, arguments have been given to prove the doctrines of Tauhid and the Hereafter as true, which were the real basis of the dispute between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the disbelievers, and it has been stated plainly and openly that the disbelievers are wrangling over those truths without any knowledge. On the other hand, the motives which were the real cause of the Quraishite chiefs' conflict against the Prophet (peace be upon him) have been exposed. Apparently they were trying to have the common people believe that they had some genuine objections against the teaching of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his claim to prophethood. That is why they were not prepared to listen to him. But, in fact, this was their struggle for power. In verse 56, they have been openly warned, so as to say: The real cause of your denial is your

arrogance and vanity. You think that if you acknowledge the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him), your power and authority will come to an end. That is why you are straining every nerve to frustrate and defeat him.

In the same connection, the disbelievers have been warned again and again to the effect: If you do not desist from wrangling against the revelations of Allah, you will be doomed to the same fate as the nations of the past. Much worse torment awaits you in the Hereafter. Then you will repent, but it will be too late.

1. Ha. Meem.

حَم

2. The revelation of the Book (Quran) is from Allah, the All Mighty, the All Knower.

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ
الْعَلِيمِ

3. The Forgiver of sin, and the Acceptor of repentance, the Stern in punishment, the Bountiful. There is no god except Him. Unto Him is the journeying.*1

غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ
شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّوْلِ لَا
إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

*1 This is the introduction to the discourse. By this the listener has been forewarned to the effect: What is being presented before you is not the word of an ordinary being but of that God Who has infinite power. After this, some of Allah's attributes have been mentioned, one after the other, which bear a deep relevance to the following theme:

First, that He is All-Mighty, i.e. He is Dominant over

everything. His every decree concerning anybody is always enforced; none can fight Him and win; none can escape His grasp. Therefore, a person who expects to be successful after turning away from His command and expects to frustrate His Message after having a dispute with Him is himself foolish. Such notions are only deceptions.

Second, that He is All-Knowing, i.e. He does not say anything on mere conjecture, but has the direct knowledge of everything. Therefore, whatever information He gives about the supernatural realities is true, and the one who does not accept it is following nothing but ignorance. Likewise, He knows in what lies the true success of man and what rules and laws and commands are necessary for his well being. His every teaching is based on wisdom and correct knowledge, which does not admit of any error. Therefore, if a person does not accept His guidance, he only wants to follow the path of his own ruin. Then, nothing from the acts and deeds of man can remain hidden from Him, so much so that He even knows the intentions of man, which are the real motives of his deeds. Therefore, man can never escape His punishment.

The third attribute is that He is Forgiver of sin and Acceptor of repentance. This attribute brings hope and causes inducement, which has been mentioned so that the people who have led lives of sin, should not despair but should reform themselves with the hope that if they refrained from their behavior even now, they could still be redeemed by Allah's mercy. Here, one should understand well that forgiving of sins and accepting of repentance are

not necessarily one and the same thing, but in most cases Allah forgives sins even without the repentance. For example, a person commits errors as well as does good and his good acts become the means of forgiveness for his mistakes, whether or not he had opportunity to show repentance for the errors, but might even have forgotten them. Likewise, all the troubles and hardships and diseases and calamities that afflict man and cause him grief in the world, serve as penance for his mistakes. That is why mention of forgiveness of sins has been made separately from the acceptance of repentance. But one should remember that the concession of forgiveness of errors without repentance only refers to those believers, who are free from defiance and who committed sins due to human weakness and not persistence in pride and sin.

The fourth attribute is that He is stern in punishment. By this the people have been warned that just as Allah is Merciful for those who adopt the way of His service, so He is stern for those who adopt an attitude of rebellion against Him. When a person (or persons) transgresses the limits where he can still deserve pardon and forgiveness from Allah, then he becomes worthy of His punishment, and His punishment is so dreadful that only a fool would persist in his wrongdoing.

The fifth attribute is that He is Bountiful, i.e. He is Generous and Beneficent. All creatures are being showered with His blessings and favors every moment, whatever the servants are getting, they are getting only through His bounty and beneficence.

After these five attributes, two realities have been stated expressly:

(1) That none but Allah is the Deity, no matter how many false gods the people might have set up.

(2) That to Him everyone must return. There is no other deity which can call the people to account and reward or punish them.

Therefore, if somebody makes someone else his deity, apart from Him, he will himself face the consequences of his folly.

4. None disputes concerning the signs of Allah^{*2} except those who disbelieve,^{*3} so do not be deceived by their strutting in the land.^{*4}

مَا يُجَادِلُ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلَا يَغْرُرُكَ تَقْلِيمُهُمْ
فِي الْبَلَدِ

^{*2} To dispute: means using crooked arguments in reasoning, raising irrelevant objections, isolating a word or a sentence from its context, subjecting it to hair-splitting and making it the basis of doubts and accusations, misconstruing words from their true sense and intention so that neither should one understand the meaning oneself nor let others understand it. Such a way of dispute is adopted only by those whose difference of opinion is based on ill-will and malice. If a well-intentioned opponent disputes a point, he does so for the sake of arriving at the truth, and wants to be satisfied through discussion whether his own point of view is correct. Such a discussion is engaged in quest of truth and not for refutation. Contrary to this, the real

purpose of the malicious opponent is not to understand anything, nor to help others to understand, but to degrade and humiliate the other man. He joins a discussion only with the intention that he would not let the other man carry his point. That is why he never faces the real problems but launches his attacks only on the irrelevant issues.

***3** Here, the word *kufir* has been used in two meanings: for ingratitude and for denial of the truth. According to the first meaning, the sentence would mean: As against the revelations of Allah this sort of behavior is adopted only by those who have forgotten His bounties and who have even lost the feeling that it is by His bounty that they are flourishing. According to the second, it would mean: This sort of behavior is adopted only by those who have turned away from the truth and are determined not to accept it. From the context it becomes obvious that here the disbeliever does not imply every non-Muslim, for a non-Muslim who disputes a point in good faith for the sake of understanding Islam, and who tries to grasp thoroughly those things which he finds hard to follow, although a non-Muslim technically, yet that which has been condemned in this verse does not apply to him.

***4** There is a gap between the previous sentence and this, which has been left for the listener to fill. From the context and style it becomes evident that those who adopt the attitude of disputation as against the revelations of Allah Almighty, can never escape the punishment. Therefore, they shall inevitably meet their doom. Now, if one sees that those people, even after adopting such an attitude, are

strutting about, their business is flourishing, their governments functioning in a grand style and they are enjoying the good things of life, one should not be misled into thinking that they have escaped Allah's punishment, or that war against Allah's revelations is a sport which can be adopted as a pastime and its evil consequences warded off easily. This, in fact, is a respite which they have been granted by Allah. Those who abuse this respite for doing more mischief are indeed preparing for an ignominious end.

5. The people of Noah denied before them, and the factions after them. And every nation plotted against their messenger to seize him, and they disputed falsely to refute thereby the truth. Then I seized them. So how (awful) was My penalty.

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ
وَالْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ وَهَمَّتْ
كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ بِرَسُولِهِمْ لِيَأْخُذُوهُ
وَجَدَلُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا
بِهِ الْحَقَّ فَأَخَذْتَهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ

عِقَابٍ

6. And thus was justified the word of your Lord upon those who disbelieved, That they are companions of the Fire.*5

وَكَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ
عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ

النَّارِ

*5 That is, the torment that seized them in the world was

not their final punishment, but Allah has also decreed that they shall go to Hell. Another meaning can be: Just as the nations of the past have gone to their doom, so will those people also who are committing disbelief go to Hell, according to the fixed decree of Allah.

7. Those (angels) who carry the Throne and those around it glorify the praises of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness for those who believe (saying):^{*6} “Our Lord, You comprehend all things in mercy and knowledge,^{*7} so forgive those who repent and follow your way,^{*8} and save them from the punishment of Hell.”^{*9}

الَّذِينَ تَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَّحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ



^{*6} This thing has been said for the consolation of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) companions, who were feeling greatly discouraged at the impudence and rebellious attitude of the disbelievers of Makkah as against their own helplessness, as if to say: Why do you feel grieved at what these mean and worthless people say? You have the support of the angels who bear the divine Throne and of those who stand around it. They are interceding with Allah

for you. The mention of the angels who bear the divine Throne and of those who stand around it, has been made, instead of the common angels, to impress the fact that not to speak of the common angels of divine kingdom, even the angels who are the pillars of this kingdom, being nearest in rank and station to Allah, bear deep sympathy and regard for you. Then the words: They affirm faith in Him and ask forgiveness for the believers, show that the relationship of the faith is the real relationship, which has joined the heavenly creatures and the earthly creatures together, and which has induced sympathy and esteem in the angels stationed around the Throne for the mortal humans inhabiting the earth, who affirm faith in Allah just like them. The angels affirming the faith in Allah does not mean that they could disbelieve, and they adopted belief instead of disbelief, but it means that they believe in the sovereignty of Allah, the One, alone there is no other being that may be commanding them and they submit before it in utter obedience. When the same attitude and behavior was adopted by the human believers, a strong relationship of cherishing a common creed and faith was established between them and the angels in spite of the great disparity in species and remoteness in rank and station.

*7 That is, the weakness, lapses and errors of Your servants are not hidden from You. You indeed know everything, but like Your knowledge, Your Mercy also is infinite. Therefore, forgive the poor creatures in spite of knowing their errors. Another meaning can be: Forgive by Your Mercy all those about whom by knowledge You know that

they have repented sincerely and have, in reality, adopted Your way.

*8 To forgive and to save from the torment of Hell are although not related, and there seems to be no need to mention the other when one has been mentioned, this style, in fact, reflects the deep interest the angels have in the believers. It is customary that when a person who is deeply involved in a matter, finds an opportunity to make submissions before a judge, he presents the same petition humbly over and over again, in different ways, and does not rest content with making the petition just once.

*9 And save those who have given up disobedience and rebellion, adopted obedience and followed the way which You Yourself have shown.

8. “Our Lord, and make them enter the gardens of Eden which you have promised them,^{*10} and whoever was righteous^{*11} among their fathers, and their spouses, and their offspring. Indeed, You are the All Mighty, the Wise.”

رَبَّنَا وَأَدْخِلْهُمْ جَنَّاتِ عَدْنِ
الَّتِي وَعَدْتَهُمْ وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ
ءَابَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ
إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

*10 Here again there is the same state of solicitude as referred to in E.Ns above. Obviously, forgiving and saving from Hell by itself amounts to admitting to Paradise. And then soliciting Allah for granting the believers the same Paradise which He Himself has promised them, seems to be unnecessary, but the angels are so earnest in their desire of

well-being for the believers that they go on repeating their good wishes for them although they know that Allah will certainly bless them with these favors in the Hereafter.

*11 That is. join with them their parents and their wives and children for the comfort of their eyes. This same thing Allah Himself has stated as among the blessings which the believers will be granted in Paradise. For this see Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 23 and Surah At-Toor, Ayat 21. In the verse of Surah At-Toor, there is also the explanation that if a person will deserve a higher rank in Paradise, which his parents will not deserve, he will not be lowered in rank to be joined with them but Allah will raise them to join him in the higher station.

9. “And save them from the evils^{*12} (of their deeds). And whomever You save from the evils of that Day,^{*13} then certainly You have given him mercy. And that is the supreme success.”

وَقِهِمُ السَّيِّئَاتِ ۚ وَمَنْ تَقِ
السَّيِّئَاتِ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمْتَهُ ۚ
وَذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

*12 The word *sayyiat* (evils) is used in three different meanings and all three are implied here:

- (1) False beliefs, perverted morals and evil deeds.
- (2) Consequences of deviation and evil deeds.
- (3) Calamities, disasters and suffering in this world, or in *barzakh*, or on the Day of Resurrection. The object of the angels' prayer is that they be saved from everything which may be evil for them.

*13 “Evils of that Day” implies the dread and terror of the

Day. deprivation of the shade and every other comfort, severity of accountability, the ignominy of exposing every secret of life before all mankind, and other humiliations and hardships which the guilty ones will experience in the Hereafter.

10. Indeed, those who disbelieve will be informed: “Allah’s aversion was greater (towards you in the worldly life) than your aversion against yourselves (today) when you were called to the faith, but you disbelieved.”*14

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنَادَوْنَ
لَمَقْتُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ مَقَّتِكُمْ
أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِذْ تُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى
الْإِيمَانِ فَتَكْفُرُونَ

*14 That is, when the disbelievers will see on the Day of Resurrection that they had committed a grave folly by founding their entire life-work on polytheism and atheism, denial of the Hereafter and opposition to the Messenger. And due to that folly they were now doomed to that evil end. They will bite at their fingers and will curse themselves fretfully. At that time the angels will proclaim to them: Today you are being angry with yourselves, but in the world when the Prophets of Allah and the other good people invited you to the right path to save you from this evil end, you turned down their invitation, Allah’s wrath against you then was even greater.

11. They will say: “Our Lord, you have made us die twice, and you have made us live twice,*15 so we confess

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَتْنَا
وَأَحْيَيْتَنَا أَتْنَيْنِ
فَاعْتَرَفْنَا

our sins.*¹⁶ So is there any way to get out.”*¹⁷

بِدُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَىٰ خُرُوجٍ مِّن سَبِيلٍ



*15 This same thing has already been mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 28. It implies this: How can you disbelieve in Allah? He granted you life when you were lifeless; then He will give you death and then will again raise you back to life. The disbelievers do not deny the first three of these conditions, because they are perceptible and therefore un-deniable. But they refuse to accept the occurrence of the fourth condition, for they have not yet experienced it, and only the Prophets have foretold it. On the Day of Resurrection when the fourth condition will also be practically experienced by them, then they will acknowledge that the same which the Prophets had foretold had actually happened.

*16 That is, we confess that we made a grave mistake when we denied this after life; our life was filled with sins when we followed falsehood.

*17 That is, is there any possibility now that our confession of sins be accepted and we be rescued from this state of torment in which we have been seized?

12. (It will be said): “That (fate) of yours is because, when Allah, the One, was called upon, you disbelieved. And if some partner was joined to Him, you believed.

ذَٰلِكُمْ بِأَنَّهُ إِذَا دُعِيَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ كَفَرْتُمْ وَإِنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ تَوَمَّنُوا فَالْحُكْمُ لِلَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ

So the judgment is with Allah, the Most High, the Great.”*18

الْكَبِيرِ
١٢

*18 That is, the Judgment now rests entirely with that God alone, Whose Godhead you did not acknowledge, and those others whom you persistently regarded as associates and partners in the powers of Godhead, have no share whatsoever in the judgment. (For a full understanding of this point, please see verse 45 of Surah Az-Zumar and its E.N. 64). This sentence by itself gives the meaning that there would be no possibility of any way out for the disbelievers from the state of torment, for they did not only deny the Hereafter but they had aversion to their Creator and Sustainer, and they were not satisfied until they had associated others with Him.

13. He it is who shows you His signs,*19 and sends down for you provision from the sky.*20 And none pays heed except him who turns repentant.*21

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ
وَيُنزِلُ لَكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ رِزْقًا
وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُنِيبُ

*19 Signs imply those signs which point to the great truth that the Fashioner, Ruler and Administrator of the Universe is One and only One God.

*20 Provision here implies the rain, for every kind of the sustenance that man gets in the world, depends ultimately on the rainfall. Allah presents this one single sign out of His countless signs, as if to draw the people's attention to the fact: If you only consider and ponder over the arrangement

of this one thing, you will understand that the concept being presented in the Quran of the administration of the Universe, is true. This arrangement could exist only if the Creator of the earth and its creatures and of water and air and the sun and the heat and cold was only One God, and this arrangement could continue to exist for millions and millions of years with perfect regularity only if the same Eternal God caused it to exist continually. And the One Who brought this arrangement into existence could only be an All-Wise and All-Merciful Lord, Who along with creating men, animals and vegetables in the earth, also created water precisely according to their needs and requirements, and then made these wonderful arrangements for transporting and spreading that water to different parts of the earth with perfect regularity. Now, who can be more unjust than the one who sees all this and yet denies God, or associates some other beings also with Him in Godhead?

***21** That is, a person who has turned away from God and whose intellect has been clouded and corrupted by heedlessness or prejudice, cannot learn any lesson from any sign. He will see with his animal eyes that the winds blew, the clouds gathered, the lightning thundered and flashed and the rain fell; but his human eyes will never perceive why all this happened, who caused it, and what rights He has on him.

14. So call upon Allah, (being) sincere to Him in religion,^{*22} and even if the

فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ

disbelievers dislike.

الدِّينَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

***22** For the explanation of making one's religion sincerely Allah's, see E.N. 3 of Surah Az-Zumar.

15. The Exalter of Ranks,^{*23} the Lord of the Throne.^{*24} He places the inspiration of His command upon whom He wills of His slaves,^{*25} that He may warn of the Day of Meeting.^{*26}

رَفِيعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ يُلْقِي
الرُّوحَ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ
مِنْ عِبَادِهِ لِيُنذِرَ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ



***23** That is, He is exalted far above all the creations of the world. Anything that exists in the universe, whether an angel or a prophet or a saint, or borne other creation, may be very exalted and superior to other creations, but it cannot be imagined to have a station anywhere near the highest rank and position of Allah, not to speak of its being an associate in His attributes and powers and authority.

***24** That is, He is King and Ruler of the whole universe, and Master of the Throne of the Kingdom of the universe. (For explanation, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 54 and E.N. 41 thereof; Surah Younus, Ayat 3; Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 2; Surah TaHa, Ayat 5 and the E.Ns thereof).

***25** "The inspiration" implies Revelation and Prophethood. (For explanation, see Aurah An-Nahl, Ayat 2; Surah Bani-Israil, Ayat 85 and the E.Ns thereof). And the words: "He places the inspiration of His command upon whom He wills of His slaves" mean this: Nobody has a monopoly over the

bounties of Allah. Just as no one has a right to object as to why was so and so given beauty, and so and so was given extraordinary powers of memory or intelligence, so also no one has the right to object as to why so and so only was chosen to be a prophet and why a person of some one's own choice was not made a prophet.

***26** "The Day of Meeting": The Day when all mankind, jinn and satans will be gathered together before their Lord simultaneously and the witnesses of their acts and deeds also will be present to bear the witness.

16. The Day when they will come forth, not a thing of them being hidden from Allah. Whose is the sovereignty this day.*27 It is Allah's, the One, the Almighty.

يَوْمَ هُمْ بَارِزُونَ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَىٰ
اللَّهِ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ لِّمَنِ الْمُلْكُ
الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ

***27** That is, though in the world many vain and self-conceited people publicly proclaimed to be the kings and sovereigns, whose, in fact, is the Kingdom today? Who is the Owner of the powers and authority and Whose is the command? If a person hears these words in his right senses, he will be filled with terror, no matter how mighty a king or dictator he might be posing himself to be, and will immediately come to his senses. Here the mention of an historical event will not be out of place. When the Samanid ruler, Nasr bin Ahmad (301-331 A.H.), entered Nishapur, he held a court and after ascending the throne desired that the proceedings be started with recitation from the Quran.

At this an elderly pious man came forward and recited this very section of this Surah. When he came to this verse, Nasr was struck with awe; he descended the throne trembling, took off the crown and fell down in prostration, saying: O my Lord, Kingdom is Thine, not mine!

17. This Day shall every soul be recompensed for what it earned. No injustice (shall be done) today.*28
Indeed, Allah is swift in reckoning.*29

الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا
كَسَبَتْ لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

*28 That is, none shall be wronged in any way whatsoever today. It should be noted that in respect of recompense, injustice can have several forms:

- (1) A person may deserve a reward but he is not given it.
- (2) He is given a lesser reward than what was due to him.
- (3) He is given a punishment although he is not liable to any punishment.
- (4) The one who is liable to punishment is not given any punishment.
- (5) The one who is liable to a lesser punishment is given a greater punishment.
- (6) The oppressor goes free.
- (7) One is seized for the sin committed by another.

What Allah means to say is that none of these different kinds of injustices will be allowed to take place in His Court.

*29 It means: it will take Allah no time to do the reckoning. Just as He is providing for every creature of the universe

simultaneously and He is not so occupied in providing for one that He may have no time to provide for others, and just as He is seeing everything in the universe simultaneously, and hearing everything simultaneously, is managing every small and big affair simultaneously, and nothing absorbs His attention so completely that He may be unable to give attention to others, at the same time, so He will subject to reckoning every single individual simultaneously and the hearing of one case will not make Him so occupied as to render Him unable to hear other countless cases at the same time. Then in His Court no delay will also be allowed to take place due to any difficulty in the investigation of the facts of the case and the availability of the witnesses. The Judge of the Court will Himself be aware of all the facts directly. Each party in every case will stand completely exposed before Him and clear undeniable evidence of the events and deeds, with each minor detail, will come forward without any delay. Therefore, each case will be settled and decided instantaneously.

18. And warn them of the Day of the approaching (doom),^{*30} when the hearts will leap up to the throats, to choke (them). For the wrongdoers there will not be any friend,^{*31} nor intercessor who will be obeyed.^{*32}

وَأَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْأَازِفَةِ إِذِ
الْقُلُوبُ لَدَى الْحَنَاجِرِ كَظْمِينٍ
مَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَلَا
شَفِيعٍ يُطَاعُ

***30** In the Quran the people have been made to realize again and again that Resurrection is not far off but has approached near at hand, and can take place any moment. In Surah An-Nahal, Ayat 1, it has been said: Allah's judgment has come, so do not clamor for hastening it. In Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 1: The time of the reckoning of the people has drawn near, and yet they are turning away in heedlessness. In Surah Al-Qamar, Ayat 1: The Hour of Resurrection has drawn near and the moon has split asunder. And in Surah An-Najm, Ayat 57: That which is coming is near at hand, none but Allah can avert it. All this is meant to warn the people to the effect that they should not become fearless of Resurrection thinking it to be yet far away, but should mend their ways and reform themselves at once.

***31** The word *hameem* as used in the original implies such a friend of a person as is aroused to action when he sees him being beaten, and rushes forward to protect and save Him.

***32** This thing has been said to refute the concept of intercession held by the disbelievers. As a matter of fact, the wicked people will have no intercessor at all, for permission to intercede, if at all granted, can be granted only to the righteous servants of Allah, and Allah's righteous servants can never make friends with the disbelievers, polytheists and sinners so that they should even think of intruding on their behalf to save them. But as the disbelievers have generally held, and still hold, the belief that the saints, whose disciples they are, will not allow that they go to Hell, but will see that they are forgiven.

Therefore, it has been said: There will be no such intercessor there who may have to be listened to, and whose recommendation Allah may have to accept necessarily.

19. He knows the traitor of the eyes, and that which the breasts conceal.

يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي
الْصُّدُورُ ﴿١٩﴾

20. And Allah judges with truth, while those to whom they call upon besides Him do not judge with anything. Indeed, Allah, He is the All Hearer, the All Seer.*33

وَاللَّهُ يَقْضِي بِالْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ
يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَقْضُونَ
بِشَيْءٍ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ
الْبَصِيرُ ﴿٢٠﴾

*33 That is, He is not a blind and deaf god like your deities that He may be unaware of the misdeeds of a person about whom He is passing judgment.

21. Have they not traveled in the land, then see how was the end of those who were before them. They were mightier than them in strength and traces (they left behind) in the land. Then Allah seized them for their sins. And none had they to protect them from Allah.

﴿٢١﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ
كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ كَانُوا هُمْ أَشَدَّ
مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَءَاثَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَا كَانَ
لَهُمْ مِنْ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَاقٍ ﴿٢١﴾

22. That was because their messengers came to them with clear evidences,^{*34} but they disbelieved, so Allah seized them. Indeed, He is All Strong, severe in punishment.

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانَتْ تَأْتِيهِمْ
رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فكَفَرُوا
فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ
الْعِقَابِ

***34** *Bayyinat* means three things:

- (1) The clear signs which pointed to the Messengers' being appointed by Allah.
- (2) The convincing arguments which were a clear proof of their teachings being based on the truth.
- (3) The clear guidance and instructions about the problems and affairs of life which could enable every reasonable person to see that such pure teachings could not be given by an impostor.

23. And certainly, We sent Moses^{*35} with Our revelations and a manifest authority.^{*36}

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا
وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ

***35** For the other details of the story of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 49-61; Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 164; Surah Al-Maidah, Ayats 20-26; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 103-162; Surah Yunus, Ayats 7, 5-92; Surah Houd, Ayats 17, 96-97, 110; Introduction to Surah Yusuf; Surah Ibrahim, Ayats 5-8; Surah Bani-Israil, Ayats 101-104; Surah Al-Kahf, Ayats 60-82; Surah Maryam, Ayats 51-53; Surah TaHa, Ayats 9-98; Surah Al-

Muminun, Ayats 45-49; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 10-68; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 7-14; Introduction to Surah Al-Qasas and Surah Al-Qasas, Ayats 3-44; Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayats 69; Surah As-Saff, Ayats 114-122 and the E.Ns thereof.

***36** “A manifest authority”: With such clear signs as left no doubt that he had been sent by Allah, and he had Allah, Lord of the worlds’ power at his back. From a careful study of the details of the Prophet Moses’ story, as given in the Quran, it becomes obvious as to what were those signs which are being described here as a clear authority of his appointment as a Prophet by Allah. In the first place, even this was strange that a person who, a few years earlier, had fled the country after killing a man of Pharaoh’s nation and whose warrants of arrest had been issued, should make a sudden appearance directly in the packed court of Pharaoh, with a staff in hand, and should boldly and fearlessly address the king and his nobles and demand that they should acknowledge him as the representative of Allah, Lord of the worlds, and should act according to what he says, and none dares to lay his hands on him. Whereas the nation to which Moses belonged, had been so suppressed under slavery that if he had been apprehended immediately on the charge of murder, no one would have voiced even a protest, not to speak of rising in rebellion. This shows that Pharaoh and his courtiers had been awe-inspired just at the appearance of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), even before they witnessed the miracles of the staff and the shining hand, and they had realized in the

very beginning that he had some greater power behind him, Then each of the wonderful miracles that he performed, one after the other, was enough to bring about the conviction that it was not a manifestation of magic but of divine power. After all, what power of magic could cause a staff to change into a serpent, or cause a whole country to suffer from famine, or cause different sorts of disasters to strike vast areas of the land on a sudden notice by Moses and be removed on a notice by him? That is why, according to the Quran, Pharaoh and all the responsible people of his kingdom had been convinced in their hearts, whether they might be refusing to profess with the tongue, that Moses had indeed been appointed a Prophet by Allah. (For details, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 106-117; Surah TaHa, Ayats 56-78; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 30-51; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 10-13).

24. To Pharaoh and Haman^{*37} and Korah, but they said: “A lying sorcerer.”

إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَمَانَ وَقُرُونَ فَقَالُوا سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ

***37** For a reply to the critics’ objections about *Haman*, see E.N. 8 of Surah Al-Qasas.

25. Then, when he brought them the truth from Us,^{*38} they said: “Kill the sons of those who have believed with him, and keep their women

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُم بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوا اقْتُلُوا أَبْنَاءَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ وَاسْتَحْيُوا

alive.”*39 And the plot of the disbelievers is not except in error.*40

نِسَاءَهُمْ وَمَا كَيْدُ الْكَافِرِينَ
إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ

*38 “The truth”: the miracles and signs by which the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) proved that he was a Messenger sent by Allah and the strong arguments by which he showed that he was wholly in the right.

*39 As already mentioned in Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 127, Pharaoh’s courtiers had said to him: Will you leave Moses and his people free to spread disorder in the land? And he himself had said: I will have their sons slain and let their daughters live. This verse states that this order was at last issued from Pharaoh’s court. It was, in fact, meant to so terrify the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) himself and his supporters and followers that they should abandon him out of fear.

*40 Another meaning of this sentence can be: Whatever the disbelievers had plotted, was aimed at deviation, tyranny and antagonism to the truth. That is, even after being convinced of the truth in their hearts, they continued to show stubbornness and did not hesitate to adopt any mean device whatsoever in order to defeat and frustrate the truth.

26. And Pharaoh said:*41
“Leave me to kill Moses,*42
and let him call upon his
Lord. Indeed, I fear that
he may change your religion

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ذَرُونِي أَقْتُلْ
مُوسَىٰ وَلْيَدْعُ رَبَّهُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ
أَنْ يُبَدِّلَ دِينَكُمْ أَوْ أَنْ يُظْهِرَ

or that he will cause corruption in the land.”*43

في الأرضِ الفسادِ

*41 The event which is being related here is a very important event of the Israelite history, which the Israelites themselves have totally forgotten. Both the Bible and the Talmud are without it, and no mention of it is found in the other Israelite traditions either. Only through the Quran has the world come to know that during the conflict between Pharaoh and the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) this event had taken place at some time. Anybody who reads this story, provided that he has not been blinded by prejudice against Islam and the Quran, cannot but realize that from the viewpoint of the invitation to the truth this story is very valuable, and this thing by itself also is in no way against reason that a person from among the nobles of the kingdom of Pharaoh himself might have quietly believed in his heart, having been influenced by the personality of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), his preaching and the wonderful miracles shown by him, and might not have been able to restrain himself when he saw that Pharaoh was planning to kill him. But the way the Western orientalisks, in spite of their tall claims to knowledge and research, try to repudiate the self-evident truths of the Quran, on account of prejudice, can be judged from this that the author of the article "Musa" in the Encyclopaedia of Islam writes in respect of this story:

“The Kuranic story of a believer at the court of Pharaoh who wants to save Musa is not quite clear (xl, 28). Ought we to compare Jethro in the Haggada who advises clemency at

Pharaoh's court?

In other words, these so called researchers have one thing settled with them: They must find fault with everything that the Quran presents. Now, if they do not find any ground for criticizing a statement of it, they should at least say this much out of mischief that the story is not entirely clear, and also should incidentally create this doubt in the reader's mind that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) might have heard from somewhere the story of Jethro mentioned in the Haggada taking place even before the birth of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), and inserted it here in this form. This is the type of literary research which these people have adopted with regard to Islam and the Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

***42** In this sentence Pharaoh tries to give the impression as if some people were restraining him from killing the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). Had they not stood in his way, he would have killed him long ago, whereas in fact there was no external power to restrain him; it was the fear of his own heart which was preventing him from laying his hands on the Messenger of Allah.

***43** That is, I fear a revolution from him, and even if he is unable to bring it about, there is at least the danger that he will cause mischief to appear in the country by his activities. Therefore, even if he doesn't commit a crime punishable with death, he should be put to death only for the sake of the maintenance of public order. As for this whether there is a real danger to the public order from

him, the king's satisfaction in this regard is enough. If his majesty is convinced that he is dangerous, it should be declared that he is really dangerous and punishable with death.

Here, the meaning of "changing the religion" also should be understood well, on account of which Pharaoh wanted to put the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) to death. *Deen* here implies the system of government, and what Pharaoh meant to say was this: I fear that he will change your king. (Ruhul-Maani, vol. xxiv, p. 56). In other words, the *deen* of the land was the religious, political, cultural and economic system that was prevalent in Egypt on the basis of Pharaoh's and his family's sovereignty, and Pharaoh was afraid that Moses' message would change that very *deen*. But like the cunning and deceitful rulers of every age, he also did not say that he feared being deposed from his position of authority and, therefore, he wanted to kill Moses (peace be upon him), but he presented the case like this: O people, the danger is for you, not for me, for if Moses' movement succeeded your *deen* would change. I am not worried for myself: I am worried for your sake as to what would become of you when you have been deprived of the protection of my authority. Therefore, the wicked man who poses such a danger should be put to death, for he is an enemy of the state.

27. And Moses said: "Indeed, I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant who does not

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي
وَرَبِّكُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ لَا

believes in a Day of Reckoning.”*44

يُؤْمِنُ بِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ

*44 Here, there are two equal probabilities and there is no ground for preferring one to the other. The first probability is that the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) might himself be present in the court at the time and Pharaoh might have expressed his intention to kill him in his presence, and the Prophet might have given this direct answer there and then, addressing him and his courtiers. The other probability is that Pharaoh might have expressed this intention in the absence of Moses in a meeting with the responsible people of his government and a report of this conversation might have been conveyed to the Prophet by some of the believers, whereupon he might have said these words in some gathering of his followers. Whatever be the case, it is apparent from the words that the threat of Pharaoh could not cause any state of fear in Moses' heart and with trust in Allah he flung his threat back at Pharaoh. The context in which this event has been related in the Quran by itself shows that the same also was the reply from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to those wicked people who, being fearless of the Day of Reckoning, were devising plots to kill him.

28. And a believing man from the family of Pharaoh who hid his faith, said: “Would you kill a man because he says, My Lord is Allah, and he has come to

وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ آلِ
فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ
أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ

you with clear signs from your Lord.*45 And if he is lying, then his lie is upon him.*46 And if he is truthful, then some of that with which he threatens you will strike you. Indeed, Allah does not guide him who is a transgressor, a liar.”*47

اللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَإِنْ يَكُ كَذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ وَإِنْ يَكُ صَادِقًا يُصِيبْكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ

كذّابٌ

*45 That is, He has shown such manifest signs to you as have made it absolutely clear that he is a Messenger sent by your Lord. The Believer, from among the people of Pharaoh, was obviously referring to the signs the details of which have already been given in Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 107-117, 130-133; Surah Bani-Israil, Ayats 101-102; Surah TaHa, Ayats 56-73; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 30-51; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 10-13).

*46 That is, if in spite of such manifest signs as he has shown you, you regard him as a liar, you should leave him alone, for the alternative probability, and a very strong probability too, is that he is truthful, and therefore you may involve yourselves in God's torment by laying your hands on him. Therefore, even if you think that he is a liar, you should leave him to himself. For if he is lying, in the name of Allah, Allah Himself will take him to task. Similar words had the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) himself said to Pharaoh before this: If you do not believe in me, do not

harm me. (Surah Ad-Dukhan, Ayat 21).

Here one should keep in mind that the Believer of the people of Pharaoh had not openly disclosed in the beginning that he had affirmed faith in the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), but he spoke as if he also belonged to Pharaoh's side, and was only wishing his people well. But when Pharaoh and his courtiers did not seem to see reason and continued to behave stubbornly, he at last disclosed the secret of his faith, as becomes obvious from his speech in verses 38-44.

*47 This sentence can have two meanings and probably the Believer had intentionally employed it, because he did not yet want to express his belief openly. Its one meaning is: One and the same person cannot combine righteousness and lying and falsehood. You can clearly see that Moses is a man of very sublime and pure character. Therefore, how can you believe that, on the one hand, he should be such a liar as to lay a baseless claim to prophethood in the name of Allah. And on the other hand, Allah should bless him with such high morals? The other meaning is: If you are bent upon taking the life of Moses (peace be upon him) by transgressing all limits and will execute your evil designs by bringing false accusations against him, you should remember that Allah will never show you the way to success.

29. "O my people, yours is the kingdom today, you being dominant in the land. Then who would

يَقَوْمِ لَكُمْ الْمَلِكُ الْيَوْمَ
ظَاهِرِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَنْ

protect us from the punishment of Allah should it come to us.”*48 Pharaoh said: “I do not show you except what I see, nor do I guide you but to a wise path.”*49

يَنْصُرُنَا مِنْ بَأْسِ اللَّهِ إِنْ جَاءَنَا
قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ مَا أُرِيكُمْ إِلَّا مَا
أَرَىٰ وَمَا أَهْدِيكُمْ إِلَّا سَبِيلَ
الرَّشَادِ ﴿٢٦﴾

*48 That is, why are you being ungrateful to Allah for His blessing of granting you domination in the land and are inviting His scourge to visit you?

*49 From this answer of Pharaoh it appears that he had not yet found out that the noble of his court had become a Believer in his heart. That is why he did not show any displeasure at what he said, but made clear that he was not inclined to change his opinion even after hearing what he had to say.

30. And he who believed said: “O my people, indeed I fear upon you (a fate) like the day of the factions (of old).”

وَقَالَ الَّذِي ءَامَنَ يَوْمَئِذٍ
أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِثْلَ يَوْمِ
الْأَحْزَابِ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. “A plight like that of the people of Noah, and Aad, and Thamud, and those after them. And Allah does not intend injustice for (His) slaves.”*50

مِثْلَ دَابِّ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ
وَتَمُودَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ ۗ وَمَا
اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعِبَادِ ﴿٣١﴾

***50** That is, Allah has no enmity with His servants that He should destroy them without any reason. He sends calamities upon them only when they have transgressed all limits, and sending the torment then is the very demand of justice.

32. “And O my people, indeed I fear for you a day of summon.”

وَيَقَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ

التَّنَادِ ﴿٣٢﴾

33. “The day when you will turn your backs to flee. No protector shall you have from Allah. And he whom Allah sends astray, then for him there is no guide.”

يَوْمَ تَوَلَّوْنَ مُدْبِرِينَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ
اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ ^ط وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ
فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

34. “And certainly, Joseph did come to you before with clear proofs, but you ceased not to doubt in that with which he came to you. Until, when he died, you said: “Allah will never send any messenger after him.”^{*51} Thus^{*52} Allah leaves astray him who is a transgressor and skeptic.”

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ يُوسُفُ مِنْ
قَبْلُ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا زِلْتُمْ فِي شَكِّ
مِمَّا جَاءَكُمْ بِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا
هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَنْ يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ مِنْ
بَعْدِهِ رَسُولًا كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ
اللَّهُ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُّرْتَابٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

***51** That is, your deviation, and then your stubbornness, is such that before Moses (peace be upon him), there came in

your land the Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) about whom you yourselves admit that he was a man of the highest morals, and you also admit that by giving the right interpretation of the king's dream he saved you from the dreadful effects of the seven year long famine, which had struck Egypt in his time, and your entire nation also acknowledges that Egypt has never witnessed a period of greater justice and prosperity than the period of his rule. But in spite of knowing and recognizing all his merits and high qualities you did not believe in him during his life time, and when he died, you said: Never will the like of him come again! That is, you recognized his excellences only for an excuse to deny every prophet who came after him. This means that you would not accept guidance in any case.

*52 It so appears that the next few sentences are an addition by Allah and an explanation of the words of the Believer of the people of Pharaoh.

35. "Those who dispute concerning the revelations of Allah without an authority that has come to them.*53 It is greatly hateful to Allah and to those who believe. Thus does Allah seal up the heart of every arrogant tyrant."*54

الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ
بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَانٍ أَتَتْهُمْ كَبْرَ مَقْتًا
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ
قَلْبٍ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ



*53 That is, Allah allows only those people to go astray who possess the following three qualities:

(1) They transgress all limits in their evil doing, and then develop such a taste for it that they do not feel inclined to accept any invitation to reform their morals.

(2) Their permanent attitude in respect of the Prophets is characterized by doubt and suspicion. The Prophets of God may bring any clear signs before them, yet they doubt their Prophethood and view with suspicion those truths which they present with regard to Tauhid and the Hereafter.

(3) They try to resist the revelations of the Book of Allah with crooked arguments instead of considering them rationally, and these objections are neither based on any sound reason nor on the authority of a revealed Book, but from the beginning to the end their only basis is obstinacy and stubbornness.

When a group of the people develops these three evils, Allah hurls it into the deep pit of Hell fire where from no power can then rescue them.

*54 That is, the seal is not set on the heart of anybody without a reason. This seal of curse is set only on the heart of the one who is filled with arrogance and spirit of violence and tyranny.

36. And Pharaoh said: "O Haman, build for me a tower that I may reach at the ways."

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَتَّهَمُنُ ابْنَ لِي
صَرَخًا لَعَلِّي أَبْلُغُ الْأَسْبَابَ

37. "The ways of the heavens, and may look at the God of Moses, and indeed, I think him a

أَسْبَابَ السَّمَوَاتِ فَأَطَّلِعَ إِلَى
إِلَهِ مُوسَى وَإِنِّي لِأَظُنُّهُ

liar.”*55 And thus was made fair seeming to Pharaoh his evil deed, and he was hindered from the way. And Pharaoh’s plot was not except in ruin.

كَذِبًا ۖ وَكَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ
لِفِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ وَصُدَّ عَنِ
السَّبِيلِ ۚ وَمَا كَيْدُ فِرْعَوْنَ
إِلَّا فِي تَبَابٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

*55 Pharaoh addresses these words to Haman, his minister, interposing in the speech of the Believer in a way as though he has no regard for what he was saying. Therefore, he turns away from him arrogantly and says to Haman: Build me a high tower so that I may climb it to see where the God of whom this Moses speaks, lives. (For explanation, see Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 38 and E.Ns thereof).

38. And he who believed said: “O my people, follow me, I will guide you to right way.”

وَقَالَ الَّذِي ءَامَنَ يَنْقُومِ
اتَّبِعُونِ أَهْدِكُمْ سَبِيلَ
الرَّشَادِ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. “O my people, this life of the world is only an enjoyment,*56 and indeed, the Hereafter, that is the enduring home.”

يَنْقُومِ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ
الدُّنْيَا مَتَعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ
دَارُ الْقَرَارِ ﴿٣٩﴾

*56 That is, you are being forgetful of Allah on account of your pride in the transient wealth and prosperity of this

world, this is your folly.

40. “Whoever does an evil deed, will not be recompensed except the like thereof. And whoever does a righteous deed, whether male or female, and he is a believer, then those will enter the Garden, they will be provided therein without limit.”

مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا تَجْزِيْ اِلَّا
مِثْلَهَا وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ
ذَكَرٍ اَوْ اُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ
فَاُولٰٓئِكَ يَدْخُلُوْنَ الْجَنَّةَ
يُرْزَقُوْنَ فِيْهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٤٠﴾

41. “And O my people, how is it that I call you to salvation while you call me to the Fire.”

۞ وَيَقَوْمٍۭ مَا لِيْ اَدْعُوْكُمْ اِلَى
النَّجْوٰى وَتَدْعُوْنِيْۤ اِلَى النَّارِ
﴿٤١﴾

42. “You call me to disbelieve in Allah and ascribe as partners to Him that of which I have no knowledge,^{*57} and I call you to the All Mighty, the Oft Forgiving.”

تَدْعُوْنِيْ لِاَكْفُرَ بِاللّٰهِ وَاُشْرِكَ
بِهٖۤ مَا لَيْسَ لِيْۤ بِهٖۤ عِلْمٌ وَّاَنَا
اَدْعُوْكُمْ اِلَى الْعَزِيْزِ الْغَفْرِ
﴿٤٢﴾

*57 That is, about whom I have no scientific proof that they are God's associates. Why should I then accept such a stupendous thing blindly that they also have a share in Godhead and that I have to serve them along with Allah?

43. “Assuredly, that to which you call me grants no (response to) supplication in the world, nor in the Hereafter,^{*58} and that our return will be to Allah. And indeed the transgressors,^{*59} they shall be companions of the Fire.”

لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّمَا تَدْعُونِي إِلَيْهِ
لَيْسَ لَهُ دَعْوَةٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَا
فِي الآخِرَةِ وَأَنْ مَرَدَّنَا إِلَى اللَّهِ
وَأَنَّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ هُمْ أَصْحَابُ
النَّارِ



***58** This sentence can have several meanings:

- (1) That they neither possess here nor in the Hereafter any right that the people should be invited to acknowledge their godhead.
- (2) That they have been made gods by the people themselves without any reason, for they have neither claimed godhead for themselves in this world nor will they put forward any such claim in the Hereafter that they also were gods and should have been acknowledged as such.
- (3) That it is of no use invoking them here nor in the Hereafter, for they are absolutely powerless and invoking them is of no avail at all.

***59** A transgressor is every such person who recognizes the godhead of others than Allah, or assumes godhead for himself, or rebels against God and adopts an attitude of independence in the world, and then commits excesses against himself, against other creatures of God and against everything else with which he has to deal. Such a person, in fact, transgresses all limits of reason and justice.

44. “So you will remember what I say to you. And I entrust my affair to Allah. Indeed, Allah is All Seer of (His) slaves.”*60

فَسْتَذْكُرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ
وَأُفَوِّضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

*60 This sentence clearly shows that while saying all this the Believer was certain that he would have to bear the brunt of the wrath of the entire kingdom of Pharaoh in consequence of his speaking the truth, and that he would have to lose all his honors and privileges, even his life. But in spite of knowing all this he performed his duty only with his trust in Allah, according to the call of his conscience, on this critical occasion.

45. So Allah saved him from the evils which they plotted,*61 while a worst punishment encompassed the people of Pharaoh.*62

فَوَقَّهٖ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِ مَا مَكَرُوا
وَحَاقَ بِعَالِ فِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ
الْعَذَابِ

*61 This shows that the Believer was such an important man in the kingdom of Pharaoh that although he spoke out the truth in the face of Pharaoh, in the packed court, yet none could have the courage to punish him publicly. That is why, Pharaoh and his supporters had to make secret plans to kill him, but these plans also were frustrated by Allah.

*62 It so appears from the style that this event of the Believer’s speaking out the truth had taken place in the last stage of the conflict between the Prophet Moses (peace be

upon him) and Pharaoh. Probably being fed up and disgusted with the long drawn out conflict, Pharaoh might have at last made up his mind to kill the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). But he might have felt from the truthfulness of that influential person of his kingdom that the Prophet Moses' (peace be upon him) influence had even reached the higher circles of his government. Therefore, he might have decided that before taking the extreme step against Moses (peace be upon him) he should find out who among the chiefs and nobles and higher officials of the kingdom had been influenced by the movement, and should seize Moses (peace be upon him) after having punished them. But while he was still busy devising his plans, Allah commanded the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and his companions to migrate, and it was while pursuing them that Pharaoh was drowned in the sea along with his hosts.

46. The Fire, they are exposed to it morning and evening. And on the day when the Hour will be established (it will be said): "Make the people of Pharaoh enter the severest punishment."^{*63}

النَّارُ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا
وَعَشِيًّا وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ
أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ
الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٦﴾

*63 This verse is an express proof of the torment of *barzakh*, which has often been mentioned in the traditions as the torment of the grave. Allah here has in clear words mentioned two stages of the torment, a lesser torment, which is being given now to Pharaoh and his people before

the coming of Resurrection, and it is, this that they are presented before the fire of Hell morning and evening, which strikes terror in their hearts and they see the Hell which they will have to enter ultimately. After this when Resurrection comes, they will be given the real and greater punishment which is destined for them, i.e. they will be hurled into the same Hell, which they are being made to witness since the time they were drowned till today, and will continue to witness it till the Hour of Resurrection. And such a treatment is not especially meant for Pharaoh and his people. All the culprits continue to witness the evil end, from the hour of death till Resurrection, which is awaiting them. On the other hand, the righteous people are made to see continually the pleasant picture of the good end, which Allah has gotten ready for them. A tradition has been related in Bukhari, Muslim, and Musnad Ahmad on the authority of Abdullah bin Umar, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Whoever from among you dies is shown his final resting place morning and evening continually, whether he be a dweller of Paradise or of Hell. It is said to him: This is the place which you will enter when Allah will raise you back to life on the Day of Resurrection and will call you into His presence. (For further details, see Surah Al-Anfaal, Ayats 50-51; Surah An-Nahal, Ayats 28-32; Surah Al-Mominoon, Ayats 99-100 and the E.Ns thereof, and E.Ns 22, 23 of Surah YaSeen).

47. And when they will dispute in the Fire, then the weak will say to those who

وَإِذْ يَتَحَاوُونَ فِي النَّارِ
فَيَقُولُ الضُّعَفَاءُ لِلَّذِينَ

were arrogant: “Indeed, we were your followers, so will you relieve from us a portion of the Fire.”*64

أَسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا
فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُغْنُونَ عَنَّا
نَصِيبًا مِّنَ النَّارِ



*64 This they will not say in any hope that their previous guides or rulers or leaders would actually be able to save them from the torment, or would have it reduced. At that time they will have fully realized that those people could not avail them anything there. But they will say this in order to humiliate them, as if to say: In the world you ruled over us with great show of power and authority, now save us also from this disaster which has befallen us only because of you.

48. Those who were arrogant will say: “Indeed, we are all (together) in this. Indeed, Allah has judged between (His) slaves.”*65

قَالَ الَّذِينَ أَسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا
كُلٌّ فِيهَا إِنَّا لَمَّا قَدَّ حَكَمَ
بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ



*65 That is, both you and we have already been sentenced and Allah has passed His judgment regarding each of us. Now it does not lie in anyone’s power to change the sentence of Allah, or to make any increase or decrease in the punishment awarded by Him.

49. And those in the Fire will say to the guards of Hell: “Call upon your Lord that

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ فِي النَّارِ لِخَزَنَةِ
جَهَنَّمَ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا

He may lighten from us a day from the punishment.”

يَوْمًا مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٩﴾

50. They will say: “Did there not come to you your messengers with clear evidences.” They will say: “Yes.” They will reply: “Then call (as you like).” And the call of the disbelievers is not except in error. *66

قَالُوا أَوْلَمَ تَكُ تَأْتِيكُمْ
رُسُلُكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ
قَالُوا فَادْعُوا وَمَا دُعَاؤُ
الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ ﴿٥٠﴾

*66 That is, when the fact is this that the Messengers had come to you with the clear signs, and you have already been sentenced to suffer punishment here, because you had refused to believe in them, it is not possible for us to pray for you to Allah. For obviously there should be some plea for such a prayer, and you have exhausted every plea by your misconduct. So, you pray for yourselves if you so like, but we would tell you beforehand that the prayers of the people who had disbelieved in the world like you have been of no avail.

51. Indeed, We do help Our messengers, and those who believe, in the life of the world, *67 and on the day when the witnesses will stand forth. *68

إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ
يُقِيمُ الْأَشْهَادُ ﴿٥١﴾

*67 For explanation, see E.N. 93 of Surah As-Saaffat.

*68 That is, when Allah’s Court will be established and the witnesses will be produced before Him.

52. The day when their excuses will not benefit the wrongdoers, and theirs will be the curse, and theirs will be the evil abode.

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ الظَّالِمِينَ مَعذِرَتُهُمْ
وَلَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ



53. And certainly, We gave Moses the guidance,^{*69} and We caused the Children of Israel to inherit the Scripture.

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْهُدَى
وَأَوْرَثْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْكِتَابَ



***69** That is, We did not just leave Moses alone when We sent him against Pharaoh, but We gave him guidance at every step till success. This contains a subtle allusion to the effect: O Muhammad, We shall help you too in the same manner. We have neither left you alone after raising you as a Prophet in the city of Makkah and the tribe of Quraish so that these wicked people may treat you as they like, but We Ourselves are with you and are giving you guidance at every step.

54. A guidance and a reminder for those of understanding.^{*70}

هُدًى وَذِكْرَى لِأُولِي
الْأَلْبَابِ



***70** That is just as those who disbelieved in Moses (peace be upon him) were deprived of this blessing and the Israelites who believed in him were made heirs to the Book, so will also those who deny you be deprived and only those who

believe in you will have the good fortune to inherit the Quran and rise in the world as the standard bearers of guidance.

55. So have patience^{*71} (O Muhammad). Indeed, the promise of Allah is true.^{*72} And ask forgiveness for your sin,^{*73} and glorify the praise of your Lord in the night and the morning.^{*74}

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ
وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لِدُنُوبِكَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ
رَبِّكَ بِالْعِشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَرِ

***71** “Have patience”: Bear up with a cool mind against these hardships through which you are passing.

***72** The allusion is to the promise made above in the sentence: We do help Our Messengers and the believers in the life of this world.

***73** A study of the context shows that here “sin” implies the state of impatience that was being caused to the Prophet (peace be upon him) on account of the severe antagonism, especially the persecution of his followers. He earnestly desired that either some miracle should be shown, which should convince the disbelievers or something else should soon come down from Allah, which should quell the storm of opposition. Though this desire in itself was not a sin, which should have called for repentance, the high rank with which Allah had blessed the Prophet (peace be upon him) demanded great grit and will power; so the little impatience shown by him was regarded as inconsistent with his high rank. Therefore, he was required to ask Allah’s forgiveness for showing the weakness and was told to hold

his ground like a rock as a man of a high rank like him should.

***74** That is, Glorification of Allah with His praises is the only means by which those who work for the sake of Allah can get the strength to resist and overcome the hardships faced in the way of Allah. Glorifying the Lord morning and evening can have two meanings:

- (1) Remembering Allah constantly and perpetually.
- (2) Performing the Prayers at the specific times.

And in this second case, the allusion is to the five times of the Prayers, which were enjoined on all the believers as a duty some time after the revelation of this Surah. For the word *ashiyy* in Arabic is used for the time from the declining of the sun till the early part of night, which covers the times of the four Prayers from Zuhr to Isha, and *ibkar* is the time from dawn to the rising of the sun, which is the time of the Fajr Prayer. (For further details, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 3, 43, 45, 238; Surah Houd, Ayat 114; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 98-99; Introduction to Surah Bani Israil and Ayats 78-79; Surah TaHa, Ayat 130; Surah An-Noor, Ayats 56-58; Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayat 45; Surah Ar-Rum, Ayats 17-18, 31 and the E.Ns thereof).

56. Indeed, those who dispute about the revelations of Allah without an authority having come to them, there is nothing else in their breasts except pride^{*75} which they will not attain.^{*76} So seek

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي
آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَانٍ أَتَتْهُمْ
إِنْ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ إِلَّا كِبْرٌ مَّا
هُمْ بِبَلِيغِيهِ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ

refuge in Allah.^{*77} Indeed, it is He who is the All Hearer, the All Seer.

هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

***75** That is, the real cause for their opposition without any argument and their irrational crooked argumentation is not that they do not understand the truth and the themes of goodness and reform being presented before them in the form of the revelations of Allah; therefore, they dispute about them in good faith in order to understand them. But the actual reason for their wrong attitude is that their self-conceit does not permit any tolerance. They do not want that in Arabia the guidance and leadership of Muhammad (peace be upon him) should be accepted and acknowledged. And ultimately one day they themselves should have to accept the leadership of the person against whom they think they have a greater right to be the chiefs and leaders. That is why they are straining every nerve not to let Muhammad (peace be upon him) have his way, and they do not hesitate to use any mean device whatsoever for the purpose.

***76** In other words it means: He whom Allah has made great, will remain great, and the efforts of the small people who are trying to establish their superiority will ultimately end in failure.

***77** That is, just as Moses (peace be upon him) had become free from fear and anxiety after invoking Allah Almighty's help and refuge against Pharaoh's threats, so should you also seek His help and refuge against the threats and conspiracies of the chiefs of the Quraish, then should busy

yourself in raising His word being free from every anxiety.

57. Assuredly,^{*78} the creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of mankind, but most of mankind do not know.^{*79}

لَخَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
أَكْبَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِ النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

*78 After reviewing the conspiracies and plots of the chiefs of the Quraish in verses 21-56, the address is now being directed towards the common people, and they are being made to understand that the truths to which Muhammad (peace be upon him) is inviting them, are absolutely rational, as if to say: Your own good and well-being lies in accepting them, and rejecting them is ruinous for your own selves. In this connection, first of all arguments have been given for the doctrine of the Hereafter, for the disbelievers regarded this very doctrine as most bewildering and incomprehensible.

*79 This is an argument for the possibility of the Hereafter. The disbelievers thought it was impossible for man to be resurrected after death. In answer to this, it is being said: Those who talk like this are, in fact, ignorant. If they use their common sense, they will easily understand that for that God Who has created this wonderful Universe it cannot at all be difficult to create men once again.

58. And not equal are the blind and the seer, and those who believe and do good deeds are

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ
وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا

not (equal with) those who
do evil. Little do you
reflect.*80

الصَّالِحَاتِ وَلَا الْمُسِيءِ
قَلِيلًا مَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ

***80** This is an argument for the necessity of the Hereafter. In the preceding sentence it was said that the Hereafter can take place, and its occurrence is not impossible. In this it is being said that the Hereafter should take place. It is the demand of both reason and justice that it should occur, and its nonoccurrence is against reason and justice. After all, how can a reasonable man believe it to be right that those who live like the blind in the world and fill God's earth with mischief by their immoral and wicked deeds, should not see the evil end of their misdeeds and wrong conduct. Likewise, those people who pass their lives in the world with open eyes, and believe and do good works, should be deprived of seeing a good result of their righteousness? If this is expressly against reason and justice, then the belief of denying the Hereafter also should be against reason and justice, for the non-occurrence of the Hereafter means that the good and the bad should both become dust after death and meet with one and the same end. For in this case, not only are reason and justice destroyed but morality also is proved to be meaningless and absurd. For if good and evil have one and the same end and destiny, then the evildoer would be highly wise, because he gratified all his desires before his death, and the good man highly foolish because he kept himself subjected to every sort of moral restoration without any reason.

59. Indeed, the Hour is surely coming, there is no doubt therein, but most of mankind do not believe.*81

إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَأْتِيَةٌ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ

*81 This is the absolute assertion about the occurrence of the Hereafter, which can be made only on the basis of knowledge and not on the basis of reasoning, and in no other discourse than of revelation this assertion can be made with such absoluteness. That which can be said without revelation only on the basis of intellectual reasoning is that Resurrection can take place and it should take place. Beyond this, to assert that Resurrection will certainly take place, can be said only by that Being Who knows that Resurrection will occur, and that Being is none but Allah. It is here that it becomes explicit and evident that if religion can be based on pure knowledge, instead of speculation and reasoning, it can only be on the knowledge obtained through divine revelation.

60. And your^{*82} Lord said: "Call upon Me. I will respond to your (invocation)."*83 Indeed, those who disdain My worship, they will enter Hell, disgraced.*84

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ
لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ
عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ
دَاخِرِينَ

*82 After the Hereafter, the discourse now turns to Tauhid

which was the second point of dispute between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the disbelievers.

***83** That is, all the powers to answer our prayers rest in Me only; so you should not pray to others but pray to Me. To understand the spirit of this verse well, three points should be comprehended properly:

First, man prays only to that being whom he regards as All-Hearing and All-Seeing and Possessor of supernatural powers. And the real motive of prayer for man is the internal feeling that the natural means and resources of the material world are not enough to remove any of his troubles and to fulfill any of his needs, or are not proving to be enough. Therefore, it is inevitable that he should turn to a being who is possessor of supernatural powers and authority. Man invokes that Being even without having seen Him; he invokes Him at all times, at all places, and under all circumstances; he invokes Him in solitude, aloud as well as in a low voice, and even in the depths of his heart. He does so inevitably on the basis of the belief that that Being is watching him everywhere, is also hearing whatever he has in his heart, and possesses such absolute powers that, it can come to the help of the supplicant wherever he is, and can help him out of every trouble and difficulty. After having known this truth about the prayer, it remains no longer difficult for man to understand that the one who invokes another than Allah for help, commits shirk absolutely and purely and clearly, for he believes those attributes to be belonging to the other being, which only belong to Allah. Had he not believed the other being to be

an associate of Allah in the divine attributes, he would never have even thought of invoking it for help.

Second, one should fully understand that man's merely thinking about a being that it is the possessor of powers and authority, does not necessitate that it should actually become possessor of the powers and authority. Being possessor of powers and authority is a factual matter, which is not dependent on somebody's understanding or not understanding it. The one who is actually the Possessor of the powers will in any case remain the Possessor whether man regards Him so or not. And the one who is not in reality the possessor, will not be able to have any share whatever in the powers only because man has believed it to be possessing the powers. Now, the fact of the matter is that the Being Who is All-Powerful, All-Hearing, All-Seeing, and Who is actually controlling the whole Universe is only Allah, and He alone is Possessor of all powers and authority. There is none else in this Universe, who may have any power to hear the prayers and to answer them or reject them. As against this factual matter, if some people of themselves start entertaining the belief that some prophets, saints, angels, jinns, planets or imaginary gods also are share-holders in the powers, the reality will not change in any way whatsoever. The Owner will remain the Owner and the helpless servants will remain the servants.

Thirdly, the one who invokes others than Allah behaves like the supplicant who takes his petition to a government office, but leaving aside the real officer who has authority, presents it before one of the other supplicants who may be

present there with his petition, and then starts imploring him humbly, saying: you possess all the powers, and yours is the only authority here; so, you alone can fulfill my needs. Such a conduct, in the first place, is in itself highly foolish, but in a case like this it also amounts to high insolence, because the real officer who has the authority, is present and before his very eyes applications and petitions are being made before another, apart from him. Then this ignorance and folly reaches its height when the person before whom the petition is being presented makes the petitioner understand over and over again that he himself is a petitioner like him and possesses no power at all, and that the real officer who has the powers is present, and he should make his petition before him. But in spite of this counsel and warning, the foolish person goes on saying: You are my lord, you alone can fulfill my need.

Keeping these three things in view, one should try to understand what Allah has said here: Call upon Me, I shall answer your prayers, it is for Me to accept them.

***84** Two things deserve special attention in this verse:

(1) *Dua* (prayer) and *ibadat* (worship) have been used as synonyms here. The prayer of the first sentence has been called worship in the second. This makes it explicit that prayer itself is worship, rather the essence of worship.

(2) The words “Who disdain My worship” have been used for those who do not pray to Allah. This shows that praying to Allah is the very requirement of one’s servitude to Him, and turning away from Him amounts to being vain and arrogant.

According to Numan bin Bashir, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The prayer is the very essence of worship. Then he recited this verse. (Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Abu Daud, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Ibn Abu Hatim, Ibn Jarir). According to Anas, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Prayer is the marrow of worship. (Trimidhi). Abu Hurairah says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Allah becomes angry with him who does not ask Him for anything. (Tirmidhi).

In the light of the above, the enigma that often causes confusion in the minds is also resolved. In connection with prayer, people say that when the evil or the good destiny is in the control of Allah and whatever He has already decreed in accordance with His dominant wisdom and expedience has to take place inevitably. What is then the use of the prayer? This is a serious misunderstanding which destroys the importance of prayer from the heart of man, and with this false notion even if man prays, his prayer would be soulless. The above verse of the Quran removes this misunderstanding in two ways:

In the first place, Allah says in clear words: Call upon Me: I will answer your prayers. This proves that fate or destiny is not something which, God forbid, might have tied the hands of Allah Himself also, and the powers to answer the prayer might have been withdrawn from Him. The creatures have no power to avert or change the decrees of Allah: but Allah Himself certainly has the power to change His decrees and decisions on hearing a servant's prayer and petition. The other thing that has been stated in this verse is that whether a prayer is accepted or not, it is never

without an advantage. The servant by presenting his petition before his Lord and by praying to Him acknowledges His Lordship and Supremacy and admits his own servitude and helplessness before Him. This expression of servitude is in itself worship, rather the essence of worship of whose reward the servant will in no case be deprived, irrespective of whether he is granted the particular thing for which he had prayed or not.

We get a full explanation of these two themes in the sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The following traditions throw light on the first theme. Salman Farsi relates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Nothing can avert destiny but the prayer. (Tirmidhi). That is, no one has the power to change the decisions of Allah but Allah Himself can change His decisions, and this happens when the servant prays to Him.

Jabir bin Abdullah says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Whenever man prays to Allah, Allah either gives him the same which he prayed for, or prevents a calamity of the same degree from befalling him provided that he does not pray for a sin or for severing relations with the kindred. (Tirmidhi). Another Hadith on the same subject has been reported by Abu Saeed Khudri in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Whenever a Muslim prays, unless it be a prayer for a sin or for severing relations with a kindred, Allah grants it in one of the three ways: Either his prayer is granted in this very world, or it is preserved for rewarding him in the Hereafter, or a disaster of the same degree is prevented from befalling him.

(Musnad Ahmad).

Abu Hurairah says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Whenever one of you prays, he should not say: O God, forgive me if You so please, show me mercy if You so please, grant me provisions if You so please, but he should say definitely: O God, fulfill my such and such need.

(Bukhari). According to another tradition from Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Pray to Allah with the certainty that He will answer it. (Tirmidhi).

In still another tradition Abu Hurairah has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The servant's prayer is granted provided that he does not pray for a sin or for severing connections with the kindred, and is not hasty. It was asked: What is being hasty, O Messenger of Allah? He replied: Being hasty is that man should say: I have prayed much, too much, but I see that my prayer is nor being answered. Then he should be tired of it and give up praying. (Muslim). The other theme is explained by the following traditions:

Abu Hurairah relates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Nothing is as praiseworthy in the sight of Allah as the prayer. (Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah).

Ibn Masud says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Ask of Allah His bounty, because Allah likes that He should be asked. (Tirmidhi).

Ibn Umar and Muadh bin Jabal state that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The prayer is in any case beneficial, both with respect to those calamities which have descended and with respect to those which have not yet

descended. So, O servants of Allah, you must always pray. (Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad).

Anas says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Each one of you should ask his every need of Allah; so much so that even if his shoe-lace breaks, he should pray for it to Allah. (Tirmidhi). That is, even in matters which man feels are in his own power, he should invoke Allah's help for it before planning his own devices for it, for in no matter can man succeed only on the basis of his own devices without the help and succor of Allah, and praying before devising plans means that the servant is at all times acknowledging the supremacy of Allah and admitting his own helplessness.

61. Allah, it is He who has appointed for you the night that you may rest therein, and the day for seeing. Indeed, Allah is full of Bounty to mankind, but most of mankind are not grateful.*85

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ لَيْلًا
لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى
النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يَشْكُرُونَ



*85 This verse comprises two important themes: First, the night and the day have been presented in it as an argument for Tauhid, because their alternating regularly means that One God alone is ruling over the earth and the sun, and their alternation's being beneficial for man and other earthly creatures is an express proof of the fact that the

same One God is also the Creator of all these things and has devised this system with such great wisdom that it should be beneficial and useful for all His creatures. Secondly, in this verse the atheists and the polytheists have been to realize how great a blessing has Allah bestowed on them in the shape of the night and the day and what ungrateful wretches they are that while they are benefiting from this blessing of His they are being disloyal and rebellious to Him day and night (For father explanation see Surah Yunus, Ayat 87; Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 62, E.Ns thereof).

62. That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of all things. There is no god except Him.*86 So how are you turning away.*87

ذَٰلِكُمْ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ



*86 That is, the alternation of the night and day has proved that Allah alone is your Creator as well as of everything else, and the great advantage and benefits that accrue from this alternation for your life, prove that He is your highly Beneficent Lord. After this, it automatically follows that He is your real Deity too. For, it would be entirely against reason and justice that your Creator and Provider should be Allah and your deities others.

*87 That is, who is misleading you to think that those who are neither the creators nor providers should deserve to be worshiped by you.

63. Thus were turned away those who used to reject the revelations of Allah.*88

كَذَلِكَ يُؤْفِكُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا
بِعَايَةِ اللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ

*88 That is, in every age the common people have been deluded by the misguides only because the people did not believe in the revelations that Allah sent down through His Messengers to make them understand the truth. Consequently; they were trapped by the selfish, dishonest people, who had set up shrines of false gods as a business.

64. Allah it is He who has appointed for you the earth as a settlement place*89 and the sky as a canopy,*90 and He fashioned you and perfected your shapes, and He has provided you with good things.*91 That is Allah, your Lord. Then blessed be Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ
قَرَارًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَصَوَّرَكُمْ
فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ
الطَّيِّبَاتِ ذَٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ
فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ
الْعَالَمِينَ

*89 For explanation, see Surah An-Naml, Ayat 61 and E.N. 74 on it.

*90 That is, you have not been exposed to outer space so that heavenly calamities should rain on you and annihilate you completely, but We have built over the earth a fully fortified celestial system (which appears like a dome to the eye), which does not allow any destructive element to reach you; so much so that even the destructive cosmic rays

cannot reach you and that is how you are living peacefully on the earth.

***91** That is, We had provided for you such a safe and peaceful place of rest even before your creation. Then We created you and gave you a fine body with most appropriate limbs and physical and mental powers of a high caliber. You did not create this erect stature, these hands and feet, these eyes and nose and ears, this talking tongue and this brain, which is a treasure-house of great capabilities, nor were these created by your mother and father, nor a prophet, or a saint, or a god had the power to create them. Their Maker and Creator was the All-Wise, All-Merciful, All-Mighty Sovereign, Who created Man with this wonderful body to function in the world, when He decided to bring him into being. Then as soon as you were created, you found by His beneficence a vast table laid out with pure provisions containing items of pure food which is not poisonous but health-giving, which is not bitter and tasteless but tasty, which is not rotten and stale and stinking but good smelling, which is not lifeless dregs but rich in vitamins and useful organic substances, so essential for the proper development and nourishment of yew body. Who has provided in such abundance this water, and corn, vegetables, fruits, milk, honey, meat and condiments, which not only add relish to your food but also provide you vitality and pleasures of life? And who has made the arrangements that these measureless granaries of food should go on coming out from the earth endlessly and their supply should never fail? Just consider this: What would

have become of life if there had been no arrangement of food and man had been brought into existence suddenly? Is this not a clear proof that Your Creator is not merely a Creator but is an All-Wise Creator and All-Merciful Lord? (For further explanation, see Surah Houd, Ayat 6; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 60-66 and the E.Ns thereof):

65. He is the Ever Living,^{*92} there is no god except Him. So call upon Him, (being) sincere to Him in religion.^{*93} All the praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.^{*94}

هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

***92** That is, His is the real and true life. He only is living by virtue of His own power. No one else has the eternal and everlasting life but Him. All others have borrowed and temporary life, which is destined to death and perishable.

***93** For explanation, see E.Ns 3, 4 of Surah Az-Zumar.

***94** That is, there is none else the hymns of whose praise may be sung and who may be thanked.

66. Say (O Muhammad): “Indeed, I have been forbidden to worship those whom you call upon besides Allah,^{*95} when there have come to me clear proofs from my Lord, and I have been commanded to submit to the Lord of the worlds.”

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهَيْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ
الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
لَمَّا جَاءَنِي الْبَيِّنَاتُ مِنْ رَبِّي
وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أُسَلِّمَ لِرَبِّ
الْعَالَمِينَ

***95** Here again *ibadat* (worship) and *dua* (prayer) have been used as synonyms.

67. He it is who created you from dust, then from a sperm drop, then from a clot, then He brings you forth as a child, then (ordains) that you attain your full strength, then that you become old. And among you is he who is taken by death before (old age),^{*96} and that you reach an appointed term,^{*97} and that perhaps you may understand.^{*98}

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تَرَابٍ
ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ
يُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا
أَشُدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لِتَكُونُوا شُيُوخًا
وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُتَوَفَّى مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَلِتَبْلُغُوا أَجَلًا مُّسَمًّى
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ



***96** That is, someone dies before birth, and someone before attaining youth, and someone before reaching old age.

***97** “An appointed term” may either imply the time of death, or the time when all human beings will be resurrected and presented before their Lord. In the first case, the meaning would be: Allah passes every man through different stages of life and takes him to the specific time which He has appointed for everyone’s return. Before that time even if the whole world joins to kill him, it cannot kill him; and when that time has arrived, none can keep him alive even if all the powers of the world join together to do so. In the second case, it would mean: This gamut of life has not been brought about so that man may end up in the

dust and be completely annihilated, but Allah passes him through different stages of life so that all human beings may present themselves before Him at the time which He has appointed for the purpose.

***98** That is, you are not being passed through these different stages of life so that you may live as the animals live and die as they die, but for the purpose that you may use your common sense which Allah has granted you and then understand the system in which you are living. The creation of a wonderful thing like life from the lifeless substances of the earth, then the coming into being of a marvelous creation like man from the microscopic germ of the sperm, then its developing inside the mother's womb, from the time of conception till delivery, in such a manner that its sex, its form and appearance, its bodily structure, its mental qualifications and characteristics, and its faculties and capabilities should be determined therein, un-influenced by any external factor or agency. Then the one who is to be eliminated by abortion does fall a prey to abortion. The one who is to die in infancy, does die in infancy, whether he be the child of a king. And the one who is to reach maturity or old age, does reach that age, even through highly dangerous conditions, in which death should be certain. And the one who is to die in a particular stage of life, does die in that stage even if he is given the best medical attention and treatment in the best hospitals by the best doctors. Are not all these things pointing to the truth that the ultimate control of life and death is in the hand of an all-Mighty Sovereign? And when the reality is

this that an All-Powerful Being is controlling the life and death, then how did a prophet or a saint or an angel or a star or planet become worthy of worship and service? When did a creature attain the rank that we should pray to it, and accept it as the maker and un-maker of our destiny? And how did a human power have the status that we should obey its commands and prohibitions and its self-made law about the lawful and the unlawful, without question? (For further explanation, see Surah Al-Hajj, Ayats 5-7 and the E.Ns on it).

68. He it is who gives life and causes death. And when He decrees a matter, He only says to it: "Be." And it is.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٦٨﴾

69. Have you not seen those who dispute about the revelations of Allah, how are they turned away.*99

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ أَنِّي يُصْرَفُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

*99 That is, have you not understood even after the above discourse what is the real source of these people's misunderstanding and misconduct, and what has caused them to go astray? (One should note that the addressee here is not the Prophet (peace be upon him) but every such person who reads these verses or hears them read).

70. Those who deny the Book and that with

الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِالْكِتَابِ

which We sent Our
messengers. *100 Soon they
will come to know.

وَبِمَا أَرْسَلْنَا بِهِ رُسُلَنَا فَسَوْفَ
يَعْلَمُونَ

*100 This is the real cause of their going astray. Their denial of the Quran and the teachings brought by the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah and their resisting by disputation the revelations of Allah instead of pondering over them seriously, was the basic cause, which has led them astray and exhausted all possibilities of their adopting the right way.

71. When the shackles will
be around their necks, and
the chains, they shall be
dragged.

إِذِ الْأَغْلَالُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ
وَالسَّلْسِلُ يُسْحَبُونَ

72. In the boiling water,
then they will be thrust
into the Fire. *101

فِي الْحَمِيمِ ثُمَّ فِي النَّارِ
يُسْجَرُونَ

*101 That is, when compelled by the intensity of thirst they will ask for water, the keepers of Hell will drag them by the chains towards the springs of boiling water, and when they will have drunk from them, they will drag them back to be cast into the fire of Hell.

73. Then it will be said
to them: "Where is that
you used to associate (in
worship)." *102

ثُمَّ قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ
تُشْرِكُونَ

*102 That is, if they really were gods or associates in

Godhead, and you worshiped them in the hope that they would help you in the evil time, then why don't they come to rescue you now?

74. “Besides Allah.” They will say: “They have vanished from us. But, we did not call upon anything before.”*103 Thus, Allah sends astray the disbelievers.

مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا
بَل لَّمْ نَكُن نَدْعُوا مِن قَبْلُ
شَيْئًا كَذَلِكَ يَضِلُّ اللَّهُ
الْكَافِرِينَ

*103 They do not mean to say, we did not associate them with God in the world, but they mean: Now we have understood well that those whom we invoked in the world were nothing and mere nonentities.

75. (It will be said): “That was because you had been exulting in the earth without any right, and that you used to rejoice extremely.”*104

ذَالِكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ
فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَمْرَحُونَ

*104 That is, you not only followed that which was untrue and false, but you became so enamored of the untruth that when the truth was presented before you, you paid no heed to it, but continued to exult in your worship of the falsehood.

76. “Enter the gates of Hell to abide eternally therein.

أَدْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ

So evil is the habitation of the arrogant.”

فِيهَا فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى
الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

77. Then be patient^{*105} (O Muhammad). Indeed, the promise of Allah is true. Then whether we let you see some of what We promise them, or We take you in death, then to Us they will be returned.^{*106}

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَإِمَّا
نُرِينَكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ
نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَإِلَيْنَا يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

***105** That is, you should have patience at what those people say and do, who are opposing you by disputation and wrangling and want to defeat you by mean devices.

***106** That is, it is not necessary that We should punish every such person who has tried to harm you, in this world and during yow lifetime. Whether a person receives his punishment here or not, he cannot in any case escape our grasp: He has to return to Us after death. Then he will receive full punishment of his misdeeds.

78. And certainly, We sent messengers before you. Among them are those (whose stories) We have related to you, and among them are those We have not related to you.^{*107} And it was not for any messenger that

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّن قَبْلِكَ
مِنْهُمْ مَّن قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن لَّمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ
وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ

he should bring a sign^{*108} except by permission of Allah. Then, when the command of Allah comes, it will be judged with truth, and the followers of falsehood will then be lost.^{*109}

بِعَايَةِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ فَإِذَا جَاءَ
أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قُضِيَ بِالْحَقِّ وَخَيْرَ
هُنَالِكَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ



***107** A new theme starts from here. The disbelievers of Makkah said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): We would not believe you to be Allah's Messenger unless you showed us the miracle that we ask you to show us. In the following verses an answer is being given to this very demand without mentioning it. (For the type of the miracles they demanded, see Surah Houd, Ayat 12; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayat 7; Surah Bani Israil, Ayats 90-93; Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 21 and the E.Ns thereof).

***108** That is, no Prophet ever showed a miracle by his own will and desire, nor had any Prophet the power to show a miracle by himself. Whenever a miracle was shown through a Prophet, it was shown when Allah willed it to be shown through him to the disbelievers. This is the first answer to the disbelievers' demand.

***109** That is, a miracle has never been shown for the mere fun of it. It is a decisive thing. If a nation does not believe even after a miracle has been shown, it is destroyed. You are demanding a miracle only for the sake of fun, but you have no idea that by making such a demand you are, in fact, inviting your own doom. This is the second answer to their demand. (For details, please see Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats

8, 58-60; Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 59; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 5-9; Surah Al-Furqan, Ayats 22-23; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 66-67 and the E.Ns thereof).

79. Allah it is who has made for you cattle, that you may ride on them, and of them you eat.

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَنْعَامَ
لَتَرْكَبُوا مِنْهَا وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ



80. And for you in them are (other) benefits. And that you may reach by their means a desire that is in your breasts (carry your loads), and on them and on ships you are carried.

وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوا عَلَيْهَا
حَاجَةً فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَعَلَيْهَا
وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ



81. And He shows you His signs. So which of the signs of Allah do you deny.^{*110}

وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ فَآيَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ
تُنْكِرُونَ



***110** It means this: If you are not demanding a miracle only for the sake of fun and amusement but want to have the satisfaction whether that to which Muhammad (peace be upon him) is inviting you (i.e. Tauhid and the Hereafter) is true or not, then God's those signs which you are observing and experiencing at all times, are quite enough. For there remains no need for other signs when there are these signs to help you understand the truth. This is the third answer to their demand of the miracles. This answer also has been

given at several places in the Quran and we have given detailed commentary on it. (See Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 37-39; Surah Yunus, Ayat 101; Surah Ar-Raad, Ayats 7-13; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 4-9 and the E.Ns thereof).

The animals which serve man on the earth, especially the cow, ox, buffalo, sheep, goat, camel and horse, have been created with such nature by the Creator that they easily become man's domestic pet servants and he uses them to fulfill countless of his needs. He rides on them, employs them for carrying loads and in agriculture, get milk from them which he drinks and also uses it for making curd, butter, oil, condensed milk, cheese and different sorts of confectioneries; eats their flesh, uses their fat, and puts to good uses their wool and hair and skin and intestines and bones, even their blood and dung. Is it not a manifest proof that the Creator of man has created these animals even before creating him in view of his countless needs, on a special pattern so that he may use them to advantage?

The three-fourths of the earth's surface is under water and only one-fourth is dry land. In the dry parts also there are small and wide tracts of land which are separated by water. The spreading of human populations on the dry lands and the establishment of commercial and other relations between them could not be possible unless water and oceans and winds were made subject to such laws as would make navigation possible, and such materials were made available on the earth, which man could employ for building ships. Is it not an express sign that there is One God and only One All-Powerful, All-Merciful and All-Wise

Lord, Who has made man and earth and water and oceans and winds and everything on the earth according to His own special scheme? Rather, if man only considers from the viewpoint of navigation, how the positions of the stars and regular movements of the planets are helpful in it, he will have the testimony that not only of the earth but of the heavens also that the Creator is the same One Bountiful Lord.

Then, consider also this: Can you in your right senses imagine that the All-Wise God, Who has given His countless things in the control of man and has granted him all these provisions for his well-being, will be, God forbid, so blind of the eye and so thoughtless as would never call man to account after giving him all this?

82. Have they^{*111} not traveled in the earth and seen how was the end of those before them. They were more numerous than themselves, and mightier in strength, and (in the) traces (they left behind them) in the earth. So it did not avail them whatever they used to earn.

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ
قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْهُمْ
وَأَشَدَّ
قُوَّةً وَءِثَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَا
أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

*111 This is the conclusion to the discourse. While studying this please also keep in view verses 4-5 and verse 21 of this Surah.

83. Then when their messengers came to them with clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty), they exulted in what they had of the knowledge.*112 And surrounded them (punishment) that at which they used to ridicule.

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ
وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ
يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ



*112 That is, they took their philosophy and their science, their law, their secular sciences and their mythology and theology invented by their religious guides as the real knowledge, and regarded the Knowledge brought by the Prophets of Allah as worthless and therefore paid no heed to it.

84. Then, when they saw Our punishment, they said: "We believe in Allah alone, and we disbelieve in that which we used to associate (with Him)."

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا
بِاللَّهِ وَحَدَهُدُ وَكَفَرْنَا بِمَا كُنَّا
بِهِ مُشْرِكِينَ



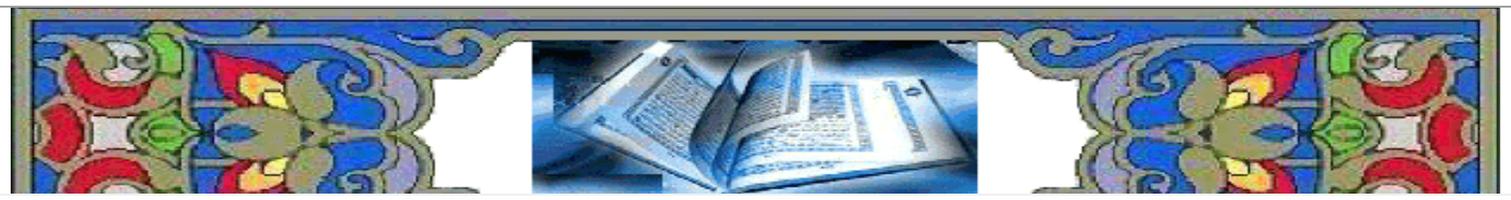
85. Then their faith did not avail them when they saw Our punishment. (That is) Allah's established way which has preceded among His slaves.*113 And the disbelievers will then be lost.

فَلَمْ يَكُ يَنْفَعُهُمْ إِيمَانُهُمْ لَمَّا
رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا سُنَّتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ
خَلَتْ فِي عِبَادِهِ وَخَسِرَ
هُنَالِكَ الْكَافِرُونَ



***113 “Allah’s established way”:** the Law that repentance and faith are beneficial only till the time man is not seized by the torment of Allah or death. Believing or repenting after the torment has arrived or the signs of death have appeared, is not acceptable to Allah.





فُصِّلَتْ Hamim-Sajdah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The name of this Surah is composed of two words, *Ha-Mim* and *As-Sajdah*, which implies that it is a Surah which begins with *Ha-Mim* and in which a verse requiring the performance of *sajdah* (prostration) has occurred.

Period of Revelation

According to authentic traditions, it was revealed after the affirmation of the faith by Hamzah and before the affirmation of the faith by Umar. Muhammad bin Ishaq, the earliest biographer of the Prophet (peace be upon him), has related on the authority of Muhammad bin Kaab al-Qurzi, the famous follower of the companions, that one day some of the Quraish chiefs were sitting in their assembly in the Masjid al-Haram, while in another corner of the Mosque there was the Prophet (peace be upon him) sitting by himself. This was the time when Hamzah had already embraced Islam and the people of the Quraish were feeling upset at the growing numbers of the Muslims. On this occasion, Utbah bin Rabiah (the father-in-law of Abu Sufyan) said to the Quraish chiefs: If you like I would go and speak to Muhammad (peace be upon him) and put

before him some proposals; maybe that he accepts one of them, to which we may also agree, and so he may stop opposing us. They all agreed to this, and Utbah went and sat by the Prophet (peace be upon him). When the Prophet (peace be upon him) turned to him, he said: Nephew, you know the high status that you enjoy in the community by virtue of your ancestry and family relations, but you have put your people to great trouble. You have created divisions among them and you consider them to be fools. You talk ill of their religion and gods, and say things as though all our forefathers were pagans. Now listen to me and I shall make some suggestions. Consider them well: maybe that you accept one of them. The Prophet said: Abul Walid, say what you want to say and I shall listen to you. He said: Nephew, if by what you are doing, you want wealth, we will give you enough of it so that you will be the richest man among us. If you want to become an important man, we will make you our chief and will never decide a matter without you. If you want to be a king, we will accept you as our king. And if you are visited by a jinn, whom you cannot get rid of by your own power, we will arrange the best physicians and have you treated at our own expense. Utbah went on speaking in this strain and the Prophet (peace be upon him) went on listening to him quietly. Then he said: Have you said, O Abul Walid, what you had to say? He replied that he had. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Well, now listen to me. Then pronouncing *Bismilah-ir Rehman-ir-Raihm* he began to recite this very Surah, and Utbah kept on listening to it, putting his hands

behind his back and leaning on them as he listened. Coming to the verse of prostration (verse 38) the Prophet (peace be upon him) prostrated himself; then raising his head, said: This was my reply, O Abul Walid, now you may act as you please. Then Utbah arose and walked back towards the chiefs, the people saw him from afar, and said: By God! Utbah's face is changed. He does not look the same man that he was when he went from here. Then, when he came back and sat down, the people asked: What have you heard? He replied: By God! I have heard something the like of which I had never heard before. By God, it's neither poetry, nor sorcery, nor magic. O chiefs of the Quraish, listen to what I say and leave this man to himself. I think what he recites is going to have its effect. If the other Arabs overcome him, you will be saved from raising your band against your brother, and the others will deal with him. But if he overcame Arabia, his sovereignty would be your sovereignty and his honor will be your honor. Hearing this, the chiefs spoke out: You too, O father of Walid, have been bewitched by his tongue. Utbah replied: I have given you my opinion, now you may act as you please. (Ibn Hisham, vol. 1, pp. 313-314).

This story has also been narrated by several other traditionists on the authority of Jabir bin Abdullah in different ways, with a little variation in wording. In some traditions it has also been related that when during the recitation the Prophet (peace be upon him) had come to verse 13, viz; If they turn away, say to them: I warn you of a thunderbolt the like of which had visited the Aad and the

Thamud. Utbah had spontaneously placed his hand on the Prophet's mouth, and said: For God's sake, have mercy on your people. Afterwards he justified his action before the Quraish chiefs, saying: You know that whatever Muhammad (peace be upon him) says is always fulfilled. Therefore, I feared lest a torment should descend on us. (For details, see Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. IV, pp. 90- 91; Al Bidayah wan-Nihayah, vol. III, p. 62).

Theme and Subject Matter

In the discourse that Allah sent down in response to what Utbah said, no attention whatever was paid to the absurd proposals that he had made to the Prophet (peace be upon him). For what he had said was, in fact, an attack on the Prophet's (peace be upon him) intention and his intellect. His assumption was that as there was no possibility of his being a Prophet and the Quran being Allah's revelation, inevitably the motive of his invitation must either be the desire to obtain wealth and political power, or, God forbid, he had lost his reason. In the first case, he wanted to make a bargain with the Prophet (peace be upon him); in the second, he was insulting him when he said that the Quraish chiefs would have been cured of his madness at their own expense. Obviously, when the opponents come down to such absurd things, no gentleman would like to answer them, but would ignore them and say what he himself had to say. Therefore, ignoring what Utbah said, this Surah makes antagonism its subject of discussion, which the unbelieving Quraish were showing stubbornly and wickedly in order to defeat the message of the Quran. They would say to the

Prophet (peace be upon him): You may try however hard you try, we would not listen to you. We have put coverings on our hearts and we have closed our ears. There is a wall between you and us, which would never let us meet together.

They had given a clear notice to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the effect: You may continue your mission of inviting the people to yourself, but we would go on opposing you as hard as we can to frustrate your mission.

For this object they had devised the following plan: Whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) or a follower of his would try to recite the Quran before the people, they would at once raise such a hue and cry that no one could hear anything.

They were desperately trying to misconstrue the verses of the Quran and spread every kind of misunderstanding among the people. They misconstrued everything and found fault even with the straightforward things. They would isolate words and sentences from their right context, from here and there, and would add their own words in order to put new meanings on them so as to mislead the people about the Quran and the Messenger who presented it.

They would raise strange objections a specimen of which has been presented in this Surah. They said: If an Arab presents a discourse in Arabic, what could be the miracle in it? Arabic is his mother tongue. Anyone could compose anything that he pleased in his mother tongue and then make the claim that he had received it from God. It would

be a miracle if the person would suddenly arise and make an eloquent speech in a foreign tongue which he did not know. Then only could one say that the discourse was not of his own composition but a revelation from God.

Here is a resume of what has been said in answer to this deaf and blind opposition:

1. The Quran is most certainly the Word of God, which He has sent down in Arabic. The ignorant people do not find any light of knowledge in the truths that have been presented in it plainly and clearly, but the people of understanding are seeing this light as well as benefiting by it. It is surely Allah's mercy that He has sent down this Word for the guidance of man. If a person regarded it as an affliction, it would be his own misfortune. Good news is for those who benefit by it and warning for those who turn away from it.

2. If you have put coverings on your hearts and have made yourselves deaf, it is none of the Prophet's job to make the one hear who does not want to hear, and the one who does not want to understand forcibly. He is a man like you; he can make only those to hear and understand who are inclined to hear and understand.

3. Whether you close down your eyes and ears and put coverings on your hearts, the fact, however, is that your God is only One God, and you are not the servant of any one else. Your stubbornness cannot change this reality in any way. If you accept this truth and correct your behavior accordingly you will do good only to yourselves, and if you reject it, you will only be preparing your own doom.

4. Do you have any understanding as to whom you disbelieve and with whom you associate others in divinity? It is with regard to that God Who has created this limitless universe, Who is the Creator of the earth and heavens, from Whose blessings you are benefiting on the earth, and on Whose provisions you are being fed and sustained. You set up His mean creatures as His associates and then you are made to understand the truth, you turn away in stubbornness.

5. If you still do not believe then be aware that a sudden torment is about to visit you, the like of which had visited the Aad and the Thamud, and this torment also will not be the final punishment of your crimes, but there is in addition the accountability and the fire of Hell in the Hereafter.

6. Wretched is the man who gets as company such satans from among men and jinn, who show him nothing but green and pleasant, who make his follies seem fair to him, who neither let him think aright himself nor let him hear right from others. But on the Day of Reckoning when their doom overtakes them, each one of them will say that if he happened to get hold of those who had misled and deceived him in the world, he would trample them under his foot.

7. This Quran is an unchangeable Book. You can not defeat it by your machinations and falsehoods. Whether falsehood comes from the front or makes a secret and indirect attack from behind, it cannot succeed in refuting it.

8. Today when this Quran is being presented in your own language so that you may understand it, you say that it should have been sent down in some foreign tongue. But

had We sent it in a foreign tongue for your guidance, you would yourselves have called it a joke, as if to say: What a strange thing! The Arabs are being given guidance in a non-Arabic language, which nobody understands. This means that you, in fact, have no desire to obtain guidance. You are only inventing ever new excuses for not affirming the faith.

9. Have you ever considered that if it became established that the Quran was really from Allah, then what fate you would meet by denying it and opposing it so vehemently as you do?

10. Today you do not believe but soon you will see with your own eyes that the message of this Quran had pervaded the whole world and you have yourselves been overwhelmed by it. Then you will come to know that what you were being told was the very truth.

Besides giving these answers to the opponents, attention has been paid to the problems which the believers and the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself were facing in that environment of active resistance. Not to speak of preaching the message to others, the believers were even finding it difficult to follow the way of the faith. Anyone about whom it became known that he had become a Muslim, life would become an agony. As against the dreadful combination of the enemy and its all pervading power, they were feeling utterly helpless and powerless. In this state, in the first place, they were consoled and encouraged, as if to say: You are not, in fact, helpless and powerless, for any person who believes in God as his Lord and adheres to this belief and

way of life resolutely, God's angels descend on him and help and support him at every stage, from the life of this world till the Hereafter. Then they were encouraged with the consolation: The best man is he who does good, invites others to God and proclaims firmly that he is a Muslim.

The question that was vexing the Prophet (peace be upon him) at that time was as to how he should carve out a way of preaching his message when he had to face such heavy odds on every side. The solution he was given to this question was: Although apparently the obstacles seem to be insurmountable, the weapon of good morals and character can smash and melt them away. Use this weapon patiently, and whenever Satan provokes you and incites you to use some other device, seek refuge in Allah.

<p>1. Ha. Meem.</p>	<p>حَمْدٌ</p>
<p>2. A revelation from the Beneficent, the Merciful.</p>	<p>تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ</p>
<p>3. A Book whose verses have been expounded, an Arabic Quran for a people who know.</p>	<p>كِتَابٌ فَصَّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ</p>
<p>4. As a giver of good tidings and a warner.*1 So most of them turn away, so they do not hear.</p>	<p>بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا فَأَعْرَضَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ</p>

*1 This is a brief introduction to the Surah. A study of the following discourse can show what relevance the things mentioned in it have with the theme that follows. The first

thing said is that this Word is being sent down by God, as if to say: You, O people, may go on saying again and again that this Word is being composed by Muhammad (peace be upon him) but the fact is that its revelation is from God, Lord of the worlds. Furthermore, the addressees have also been warned, so as to say: If you express your displeasure on hearing this discourse, this displeasure is not against Muhammad (peace be upon him) but is against God. If you reject it, you reject Allah's Word, not a man's word. And if you turn away from it, you do not turn away from a man but from Allah.

Secondly, that the one sending it down is that God, Who is extremely Merciful (*Rehman* and *Rahim*) to His creatures. The mention of the attribute of mercy of the sender of revelation, instead of any other attributes, points to the truth that He has sent down this Word under the requirement of His mercifulness. By this the addressees have been warned, so as to say: If someone spurns this Word, or rejects it, or expresses displeasure at it, he in fact is his own enemy. That is indeed a supreme blessing which God has sent down, out of this infinite mercy, for the guidance and well-being and happiness of man. If God were merciless to mankind, He would have left them to wander about in darkness and would have least cared what pit they fell into. But this is His bounty and beneficence that along with bringing men into existence and providing for them, He has also taken on Himself the responsibility to show them the light of knowledge in order to adorn their lives, and is sending down this Word to a servant of His for the

same purpose. Now, who could be more ungrateful and a greater enemy of himself than him who, instead of benefiting from this mercy, made up his mind to fight it? Thirdly, that the verses of this Book are well-expounded. That is, there is nothing confusing and ambiguous in it so that somebody might excuse himself from accepting it on the ground that he was unable to understand the contents of the Book. It has been plainly told in it what is the truth and what is the falsehood, what are the right beliefs and what are the wrong beliefs, what is good and what is evil, what is high morality and what is vice, in what way lies the good of man and in what he incurs loss for himself. If a person rejects such clear and manifest guidance, or pays no heed to it, he cannot offer any excuse for it. His attitude clearly implies that he wants to remain in the wrong willfully.

Fourthly, that this is an Arabic Quran, which implies this: If this Quran had been sent down in some other language, the Arabs would have presented the excuse that they were ignorant of the language in which God had sent His Book. But this is their own language. They cannot put forward the excuse that they cannot understand it. Here, one should also keep in view verse 44 in which the same theme has been expressed in a different way. And the suspicion that in that case there is a reasonable excuse for the non-Arabs not to accept the message of the Quran has already been removed in the commentary of Surah Yusuf, Ayat 2 and E.N. 2 on it. (For further details, please also see Rasail-o-Masail. Vol. I, pp. 19-23).

Fifthly, that this Book is for those who possess knowledge. That is, only the people of understanding can draw any benefit from this Book. For the ignorant it is as useless as a precious diamond for the one who cannot distinguish it from a mere stone.

Sixthly, that this Book gives good news and administers warning. That is, it does not consist of mere fantasy, or a philosophy, or a specimen of good literary composition, which one may accept or reject without entailing any consequence, but it is openly administering a warning to the whole world that the results of accepting and believing in it are marvelous and of rejecting it very dreadful. Thus only a fool could reject it with scant attention.

5. And they say: “Our hearts are under coverings from that to which you call us,^{*2} and in our ears there is a deafness, and between us and you there is a veil.^{*3} So work you (on your way). indeed, we are working.”^{*4}

وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا فِي أَكِنَّةٍ مِّمَّا
تَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ وَفِي آذَانِنَا وَقْرٌ
وَمِنْ بَيْنِنَا وَبَيْنِكَ حِجَابٌ
فَاعْمَلْ إِنَّا عَامِلُونَ

^{*2} That is, it has no way open to reach our hearts.

^{*3} That is, this invitation has divided us. It has cut us off from you. It has become a hindrance for us to join you.

^{*4} It has two meanings:

(1) That we have nothing to do with you.

(2) That if you do not desist from your preaching, you may go on doing your mission, we will also not stop our opposition to you, and we will do whatever we can to defeat

and frustrate your mission.

6. Say (O Muhammad): “I am only a mortal like you.^{*5} It has been revealed to me that your god is One God,^{*6} so take the straight path to Him^{*7} and seek forgiveness of Him.^{*8} And woe to those who associate (with Him).”

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ
إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ
فَأَسْتَقِيمُوا إِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ
وَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُشْرِكِينَ

***5** That is, it is not in my power to remove the covering that envelops your hearts, open your ears, and tear away the curtain which you have drawn between me and yourselves. I am only a man. I can make only him understand who is inclined to listen, and can only meet him who is ready to meet with me.

***6** That is, you may, if you so like, put coverings on your hearts and make your ears deaf, but the fact is that you don't have many gods: there is only One God, whose servants you are. And this is no philosophy, which I might have thought out myself, and which might have equal probability of being true or false, but this reality has been made known to me through revelation, which cannot admit of any likelihood of error.

***7** That is, do not make any other your God: do not serve and worship any other deity: do not invoke and bow to any other for help: and do not obey and follow the customs and laws and codes made and set by others.

***8** Seek for His forgiveness: Ask for His forgiveness for the unfaithfulness that you have been showing so far towards

Him, for the shirk and disbelief and disobedience that you have been committing till now, and for the sins that you happened to commit due to forgetfulness of God.

7. Those who do not give the poor due,^{*9} and they are disbelievers in the Hereafter.

الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ
بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ

*9 Here, the meaning of the word *zakat* has been disputed by the commentators. Ibn Abbas and his illustrious pupils, Ikrimah and Mujahid, say that *zakat* here implies the purity of the soul and self which accrues from belief in Tauhid and obedience to Allah. According to this explanation, the translation of the verse would be: Woe to the mushriks, who do not adopt purity. The other group which includes commentators like Qatadah, Suddi, Hasan Basri, Dahhak, Muqatil and Ibn as-Saib take this word here also in the meaning of the zakat on property and wealth. According to this explanation, the verse means: Woe to those who do not fulfill the right of Allah by committing shirk and the right of the men by withholding the zakat.

8. Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them is a reward that will never end.^{*10}

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ
مَمْنُونٍ

*10 The words *ajrun ghaira mamnun* in the original have two other meanings also:

(1) That it will be a reward which will never decrease and diminish.

(2) That this reward will not be given with reminders of good done, like the gift made by a miserly person, who keeps on reminding the beneficiary of his favor if at all he gives away anything.

9. Say: "Do you indeed, disbelieve in Him who created the earth in two days, and you attribute to Him rivals. That is the Lord of the worlds."

﴿ قُلْ أَفَإِنَّكُمْ لَتَكْفُرُونَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَجْعَلُونَ لَهُدْ أَنْدَادًا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾



10. And He placed in it (earth) firm mountains (rising) above it, and He put blessings in it,^{*11} and He measured in it its sustenance in four days,^{*12} in accordance for (the needs of) those who ask.^{*13}

﴿ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَرَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سَوَاءً لِّلسَّائِلِينَ ﴾



*11 Blessings of the earth imply those measureless and countless things which have been continuously coming out of it since millions and millions of years, and are fulfilling the ever increasing needs and requirements of all the creatures from the microscopic germs to the highly civilized man. Among these the principal blessings are the air and the water by which alone vegetable, animal and then

human life became possible on the earth.

***12** This sentence has been interpreted by the commentators in different ways:

Some of them interpret it to mean: The provisions of the earth were placed in it precisely according to the needs and requirements of those who ask, in exactly four days. That is, it took exactly four days, neither more nor less.

Ibn Abbas, Qatadah and Suddi interpret it to mean: The provisions of the earth were placed in it in four days. The answer to those who ask is completed. That is, whoever asks as to how long it took, his complete answer is that it took four days.

According to Ibn Zaid it means: The provisions of the earth were placed in it for those who ask within four days, precisely in accordance with the demand and need of everyone.

As far as the rules of the language are concerned, the words of the verse admit of all these three meanings, but in our opinion the first two meanings have no merit. In view of the context, it is immaterial whether the work was completed in exactly four days and not in more or less four days. There is no need whatever for such an addition to make up for any deficiency in supporting the description of Allah's perfect power, perfect providence and perfect wisdom. Likewise, the commentary: The answer to those who ask is completed, is a very weak commentary. There is no indication in the theme preceding the verse and following it, to show that at that time somebody had asked the question as to how long it had taken for those works to be

completed, and this verse was sent down as an answer to it. That is why we prefer to adopt the third meaning. In our opinion the correct meaning of the verse is this: Allah placed within the earth the full provisions of food precisely and exactly in accordance with the demands and needs of every kind of creature that Allah would create in the earth from the beginning of the creation till Resurrection. There are countless kinds of vegetation found on land and in water and the food requirements of each kind are different from those of other kinds. Allah has created countless species of living creatures in the air and on land and in water, and every species demands a different kind of food. Then unique among all these is the species of man, who requires different kinds of food not only for the development and nourishment of his body but also for the satisfaction of his taste. Who beside Allah could know how many members of the different kinds of creatures would be born on this globe, from the beginning of life till its end, and when and where they would be born and how much and what kind of food would be required for their nourishment? Just as He had made the plan of creating those creatures who stood in need of food in His scheme of creation, so He made full arrangements of food also to meet their requirements and demands.

In the modern age, the people who have brought out the Islamic edition of the Marxist conception of Socialism in the name of “the Quranic order of providence”, translate the words *sawa-al-lis-sa-ilin* as equal for all those who ask, and raise the edifice of reasoning on it, saying that Allah

has kept equal provisions for all the people in the earth. Therefore, in order to fulfill the intention of the verse a system of the state is needed, which may provide equal rations of food to everybody. For, in the system of individual ownership the equality which the Quranic law demands cannot be established. But these people, in their enthusiasm to press the Quran in the service of their theories, forget that those who ask, who have been mentioned in this verse, are not only human beings but all those different species of animals and plants who need food for survival. Has Allah really established equality among all of them, or even among all the members of each different species of the creatures, in the matter of the provision of food? Do you find anywhere in this entire system of nature the arrangement of the distribution of equal rations of food? If that is not the case, it means that in the vegetable and animal kingdom, where the distribution of the provisions is directly being arranged by the State of Allah, and not by the human state, Allah Himself is violating His own this “Quranic law”, rather, God forbid, is practicing injustice! Then, they also forgo that “those who ask” also include those animals which man domesticates and arranging provisions for which is also his responsibility, e.g. sheep, goats, cows, buffaloes, horses, donkeys, mules, camels, etc: If the Quranic law is that equal food be given to all those who ask, and to enforce the same law a state is needed, which may administer the order of providence, will that state establish economic equality between men and animals also?

***13** Here, the commentators generally have been confronted with this question: If it is admitted that the creation of the earth took two days and the setting up of the mountains and placing of the provisions and blessings in it took four days, and the creation of the heavens, as mentioned below, took another two days, the total number of the days would be eight, whereas at several places in the Quran Allah has said that the creation of the earth and heavens took six days in all. (For example, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 54; Surah Yunus, Ayat 3, Surah Houd, Ayat 7; Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 59). On this very basis, almost all the commentators agree that these four days include the two days of the creation of the earth. That is, two days were taken for the creation of the earth and two days for the creation of the rest of the things within the earth, as mentioned below. Thus, the earth along with its provisions became complete in four days in all. But this not only is against the apparent words of the Quran, but the difficulty also is, in fact, an imaginary difficulty, to avoid which a need for this interpretation has been felt. The two days of the creation of the earth are, in fact, not separate from the two days in which this universe as a whole was created. If we consider the following verses, we see that in them the creation of both the earth and the heavens has been mentioned together, and then it has been stated that Allah made the seven heavens in two days. These seven heavens imply the whole universe, one part of which is also our earth. Then, when like the other countless stars and planets of the universe this earth also took the shape of a unique

globe within two days, Allah began to prepare it for animate creatures, and in four days created in it all those provisions which have been mentioned in the above verse. What development works were carried out in the other stars and planets in these four days have not been mentioned by Allah, for not to speak of the man of the period of the revelation of the Quran, even the man of the present age does not have the capability to digest and assimilate this information.

11. Then He turned to the heaven while it was smoke,^{*14} then He said to it and to the earth: “Come both of you, willingly or by compulsion.” They said: “We have come willingly.”^{*15}

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ
دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا
طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا
طَائِعِينَ



***14** Three things need to be explained here:

First, by heaven is meant the whole universe, as becomes obvious from the following sentences. In other words, turning to the heaven means that Allah turned to the creation of the universe.

Second, by smoke is implied the initial and primary stage of matter, in which it lay diffused in space in a shapeless, dust like condition before the formation of the universe. Scientists of the modern age describe the same thing as nebulae, and the same also is their view about the beginning of the universe: that is, before creation the matter of which the universe was built lay diffused in smoke-like nebulous form.

Third, it would be wrong to interpret “then He turned to the heaven” to mean that first He created the earth, then set mountains in it, then arranged blessings and provisions of food in it, and then, at the end, He turned towards the creation of the universe. This misunderstanding is removed by the following sentence: “He said to it and the earth: Come both of you, willingly or by compulsion. They said: We have come willingly.” This makes it clear that in this verse and in the following verses, mention is being made of the time when there was neither the earth nor the heaven, but the creation of the universe was being started. Only the word *thumma* (then) cannot be made the argument to say that the earth had been created before the heavens. There are several instances of this in the Quran that the word *thumma* is not necessarily used to show the chronological order but it is also used for the order of Presentation. (Please see E.N. 12 of Surah Az-Zumar).

Among the earliest commentators the dispute has been going on for ages as to what was created first according to the Quran, the earth or the heavens. One group of them argues on the basis of this verse and verse 29 of Surah Al-Baqarah that the earth was created first. The other group argues from verses 27-33 of Surah An-Naziat that the heavens were created first, because there it has been clearly stated that the earth was created after the heavens. But the fact is that nowhere in the Quran has the mention of the creation of the universe been made to teach Physics or Astronomy, but while inviting towards belief in the doctrines to Tauhid and the Hereafter, like countless other

signs, the creation of the heavens and the earth has also been presented as food for thought. For this purpose it was not at all necessary that the chronological order of the creation of the heavens and the earth should have been presented, and it should have been told whether the heavens were created first or the earth. No matter whether this was created first or that, in any case both are an evidence of Allah Almighty's being the One and only Deity, and are a testimony that their Creator has not created this whole universe as a plaything for a care-free person. That is why the Quran sometimes mentions the creation of the earth first and sometimes the creation of the heavens first. Where the object is to make man realize the blessings of God, there generally it has mentioned the earth first, for it is closer to man; and where the object is to give man the concept of God's greatness and His omnipotence there it has generally mentioned the heavens first, for the scene of the revolving heavens has always been awe-inspiring for man.

***15** In these words Allah has described the nature of His method of creation in a manner as to differentiate between divine creation and human workmanship. When man wants to make something, he prepares a plan for it in his mind, then gathers together the necessary material, then works persistently hard to mold the material according to his plan, and in the process of his effort the material which he wants to mold according to his mental plan constantly resists him; so much so that sometimes the resistance of the material succeeds and the thing is not made precisely

according to the desired plan, and sometimes man's effort overcomes the resistance and he succeeds in giving it the desired form and shape. For example, when a tailor wants to make a shirt, he first conceives in his mind the shape of the shirt, then arranging the cloth he tries to cut and sew it according to his concept of the shirt, and during this effort, he has to face constantly the resistance of the cloth, for it does not easily yield to be molded according to the tailor's concept; so much so that sometimes the resistance of the cloth dominates and the shirt doesn't take the desired shape, and sometimes the tailor's effort dominates and he is able to shape it precisely according to his concept. Now, consider Allah's mode of creation. The matter of the universe lay scattered and diffused in the form of smoke. Allah willed to give it the shape of the universe as it is now. For this purpose, He did not have to sit down, like a human artisan, and chisel and mold the earth and the moon and the sun and the other stars and planets, but He only commanded the scheme of the universe that was in His Mind to come into being, i.e. the smoke like diffused matter to take the shape of the galaxies and stars and planets, which He wanted to create. This matter did not have the power to resist the command of Allah. Allah did not have to make any effort to give it the shape of the universe. No sooner was the command given than the matter started contracting and condensing and taking shape obediently according to the scheme of its Master, so that the whole universe including the earth became ready as planned.

This same scheme of Allah's method of creation has been

described at several other places in the Quran like this: When Allah decides to do something He only commands it to be and it is done. (See Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 117; Surah Aal-Imran, Ayats 47, 59; Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 40; Surah Maryam, Ayat 35; Surah YaSeen, Ayat 82, Surah Al-Mumin, Ayat 68).

12. Then He ordained them as seven heavens in two days and inspired in each heaven its command. And We adorned the nearest heaven with lamps, and (provided it) with guard.*¹⁶ That is the measuring of the All Mighty, the All Knower.

فَقَضَيْنَهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ فِي
يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَىٰ فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ
أَمْرَهَا ۗ وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا
بِمَصْبِيحٍ وَحِفْظًا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ
تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

***16** To understand these verses well, it would be useful to study the following portions of the Tafheem al-Quran: Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 29; Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 2; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 16-18; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 30-33; Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 65; Surah Al-Muminun, Ayat 17; Surah YaSeen: E.N. 37, and E.Ns 5-9 of Surah As-Saaffat."

13. So if they turn away,*¹⁷ then say: "I have warned you of a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt (that struck) Aad and Thamud."

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَقُلْ أَنْذَرْتُكُمْ
صَاعِقَةً مِّثْلَ صَاعِقَةِ عَادٍ
وَتَمُودَ

***17** That is, if they do not believe that God and Deity is One and only One, Who has created this earth and the whole

universe, and if they still persist in their ignorance that they would make others as their deities beside Him, others who are in fact His creatures and slaves, and regard them as His associates in His Being and rights and powers, then warning for them is like that of what stuck Aad and Thamud.

14. When the messengers had come to them before them and after them,^{*18} (saying): “Worship none except Allah.” They said: “if our Lord had willed, He surely would have sent down the angels, so indeed, we are disbelievers in that with which you have been sent.”^{*19}

إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الرُّسُلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ
أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا
تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ ۗ قَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ
رَبُّنَا لَأَنْزَلَ مَلَائِكَةً فَإِنَّا بِمَا
أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

***18** This sentence can have several meanings:

- (1) That the Messengers continued to come to them one after the other.
- (2) That the Messengers tried in every way to make them understand the truth and did not leave any stone unturned to bring them to the right path.
- (3) That the Messengers came to them in their own country as well as in the adjoining countries.

***19** That is, if Allah had disapproved of our religion, and had willed to send a messenger to us to keep us away from it, He would have sent the angels. As you are not an angel but a man like us, we do not believe that you have been sent by God, and sent for the purpose that we give up our

religion and adopt the way of life that you are presenting. The disbelievers' saying that they deny, what you have been sent with, was only sarcastic. It does not mean that they believed him to have been sent by God and then denied what he said. But this is a sarcastic expression of the type that Pharaoh had uttered before his courtiers about the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him): This messenger of yours, who has been sent to you, seems to be utterly mad. (Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayat 27). For further explanation, see E.N. 11 of Surah YaSeen.

15. As for Aad, so they were arrogant in the land without right, and they said: "Who is mightier than us in strength." Did they not see that Allah who created them, He was mightier than them in strength. And they denied Our signs.

فَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي
الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَقَالُوا مَنْ
أَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً^ط أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ
اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُمْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ
مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً^ط وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
يَجْحَدُونَ

16. So We sent upon them a furious wind in evil days,^{*20} that We might make them taste the punishment of disgrace in the life of the world.^{*21} And the punishment of the Hereafter will be more

فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي
أَيَّامٍ نَحْسَاتٍ لِنَدِيقَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
الْحَزِينِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا^ط
وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَخْزَىٰ وَهُمْ

disgracing, and they will not be helped.

لَا يُنصَرُونَ

*20 “Evil days” does not mean that the days in themselves were evil or ill-omened, and the torrent came because the people of Aad met with those evil or ill-omened days. If this were the meaning and there were some ill omen in the days themselves, the torment would have visited all the nations of the world. The correct meaning, therefore, is that since in those days God’s torment descended on this nation, the days were evil or ill-omened for the people of Aad. It is not correct to argue on the basis of the verse that some days are ill-omened and some auspicious.

The lexicographers have disputed the meaning of the words *rih-an sarsaran*, which have been used for the stormy wind. Some say that they imply an intensely hot wind, others say that they imply an extremely cold wind, and some others say that they imply a wind which produces a great noise when it blows. In any case, they all agree that the words are used for a severe storm.

The details of this torment given at other places in the Quran show that this wind continued to rage for seven nights and eight days consecutively. It swept the people off the ground and they fell down dead and lay scattered here and there like hollow trunks of the palm-tree. (Surah Al-Haaqqah, Ayat 7). It left rotting everything on which it blew. (Surah Adh-Dhariyat, Ayat 42). When the people of Aad saw it advancing, they rejoiced with the hope that the dense clouds would bring much rain, which would water their withering crops. But when it came, it laid waste the

entire land. (Surah Al-Ahqaf, Ayats 24-25).

***21** This ignominious torment was an answer to their arrogance and vanity because of that which they had assumed greatness in the land without any right, and would boast that there was none more powerful than them on the entire earth. Allah disgraced them and destroyed the major part of their population along with their civilization. The remnant of their population was humbled and debased before those very nations whom they used to overawe by their show of power and might (for the details of the story of Aad see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 65-72; Surah Houd, Ayats 50-60; Surah Al-Muminun, Ayats 32-41; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 123-140; Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayat 40 and the relevant E.Ns).

17. And as for Thamud, We guided them, but they preferred blindness over the guidance, so the thunderbolt of humiliating punishment seized them because of what they used to earn.

وَأَمَّا
ثَمُودُ فَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ
فَأَسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَمَىٰ عَلَىٰ الْهُدَىٰ
فَأَخَذْتَهُمْ صَاعِقَةً الْعَذَابِ
أَلُؤُنَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

18. And We saved those who believed and were righteous. ^{*22}

وَنَجَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا
يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

***22** For the details of the story of Thamud see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 73-79; Surah Houd, Ayats 61-68; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 80-84; Surah Bani-Israil, Ayat 59; Surah Ash-

Shuaara, Ayats 141-159; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 45-53 and the E.Ns.

19. And the day when the enemies of Allah will be gathered to the Fire,^{*23} so they will be driven in ranks.^{*24}

وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُ أَعْدَاءُ اللَّهِ إِلَى
النَّارِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ

***23** What is meant to be said here is: When they will be rounded up to be presented in the Court of Allah, though the words used are to the effect: When they will be gathered to be driven to Fire of Hell, for Hell in any case will be their final destination.

***24** That is, All the former and latter generations and races will be gathered together at a time and called to account together. For, whatever a person does in his lifetime, whether good or evil, its influence and impact does not end with his life but continues to operate even after his death for long periods of time, for which he is totally responsible. Likewise, whatever a generation does in its own time, its influence continues to affect the later generations for centuries, and it is responsible for its heritage. It is inevitable to examine all these influences and their results and to collect their evidences. For that very reason, generation after generation of the people will go on arriving and will be withheld. The court will start its work when all the former and latter generations will have assembled together in the Plain of Resurrection. (For further explanation, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 38-39 and E.N. 30 on it).

20. Until, when they reach it, their ears and their eyes and their skins will testify against them of what they used to do.^{*25}

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا مَا جَاءُوهَا شَهِدَ
عَلَيْهِمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَأَبْصَرُهُمْ
وَجُلُودُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



***25** The explanation of this given in the Hadith is that when a stubborn culprit will go on denying his crimes, and will even belie all the witnesses, then the limbs of his body will bear the witness, one after the other, by the command of Allah, and will tell what offenses he had committed through them. This thing has been reported by Anas, Abu Musa Ashari, Abu Said Khudri and Ibn Abbas from the Prophet (peace be upon him), and traditionists like Muslim, Nasai, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Bazzar and others have related these in their books. (For further explanation, see E.N. 55 of Surah YaSeen).

This verse is one of those many verses which prove that the Hereafter will not only be a spiritual world but human beings will be resurrected with the body and soul as they are now in this world. Not only this: they will be given the same body in which they live now. The same particles and atoms which composed their bodies in the world will be collected on the Day of Resurrection, and they will be resurrected with the same previous bodies in which they had lived and worked in the world. Evidently, the limbs of man can bear the witness in the Hereafter only in case they

are the same limbs with which he committed a crime in his previous life. This subject is borne out decisively and absolutely by the following verses of the Quran: Surah Bani-Israil, Ayats 49-51, 98; Surah Al-Muminun, Ayats 35-38, 82-83; Surah An-Noor, Ayat 24; Surah As-Sajdah, Ayat 10; Surah YaSeen, Ayats 65, 78, 79; Surah As-Saafat, Ayats 16-18; Surah Al-Waqiah, Ayats 47-50; Surah An-Naziat, Ayats 10-14.

21. And they will say to their skins: “Why did you testify against us.” They will say: “Allah has given us speech as He gave speech to all things,^{*26} and He created you the first time, and to Him you are returned.”

وَقَالُوا لِحُلُودِهِمْ لِمَ شَهِدْتُمْ عَلَيْنَا قَالُوا أَنْطَقَنَا اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْطَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ خَلَقَكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

***26** This shows that not only man’s own limbs will bear witness on the Day of Resurrection, but every such thing before which man would have committed any crime will also speak out. The same thing has been said in Surah Al-Zilzal, thus: The earth will cast out all the burdens, which lie within it, and man will say: what has befallen it? On that Day shall it relate whatever had happened (on it), because your Lord will have commanded it (to do so). (verses 2-5).

22. “And you have not been hiding against yourselves, lest testify against you, your hearing, nor your sight, nor

وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَرُونَ أَنْ يَشْهَدَ عَلَيْكُمْ سَمْعُكُمْ وَلَا أَبْصَارُكُمْ

your skins, but you thought that Allah does not know much of what you were doing.”

وَلَا جُلُودُكُمْ وَلَكِنْ ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنَّ
اللَّهَ لَا يَعْلَمُ كَثِيرًا مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ



23. “And that thought of yours which you thought about your Lord. It has brought you to destruction, and you have become of those utterly lost.”*27

وَذَالِكُمْ ظَنُّكُمُ الَّذِي ظَنَنْتُمْ
بِرَبِّكُمْ أَرَدْتُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ مِنَ
الْخَاسِرِينَ



***27** Hasan Basri has explained this verse thus: Every man’s attitude and conduct is determined by the thought and conjecture that he has about his God. The conduct of a righteous believer is right because his thought and conjecture about his Lord is right, and the conduct of a disbeliever and a hypocrite and a sinful person is wrong because his thought and conjecture about his Lord is wrong. This same theme has the Prophet (peace be upon him) expressed in a comprehensive and brief Hadith, thus: Your Lord says: I am with the thought and conjecture that My servant holds about Me. (Bukhari, Muslim).

24. So (even) if they have patience, the Fire will be a home for them, and if they ask for to be excused, yet they are not of those who will be excused.*28

فَإِنْ يَصْبِرُوا فَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَهُمْ^ط
وَإِنْ يَسْتَعْتَبُوا فَمَا هُمْ مِنَ
الْمُعْتَبِينَ



***28** It can also mean this: If they would want to return to the world, they would not be able to return, and this: If they would want to come out from Hell, they would not be able to come out of it, and this: If they would want to offer an excuse or repentance, it would not be accepted.

25. And We have appointed for them companions who have made attractive for them what was before them and what was behind them. ***29**

And the word has become true upon them among the nations who have passed away before them, of jinn and mankind. Indeed, they were the losers.

﴿ وَقَيَّضْنَا لَهُمْ قُرَنَاءَ فَزَيَّنُوا لَهُمْ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَحَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴾



***29** This is the permanent and eternal way of Allah that He does not let the men with evil intentions and desires have good companions, but lets them have bad companions according to their own inclinations. Then, as they go on descending into the depths of vice, more and more evil and wicked men and devils go on joining them as their associates and advisers and companions. Some people's saying that so-and-so is himself a very good man but happens to have bad companions is, in fact, contrary to fact. The law of nature is that every man gets the same sort of friends as he himself is. If bad people happen to be associated with a good man, they cannot remain associated with him for long. Likewise, if good and noble men happen

to be associated with evil intentioned and immoral men by chance, their association cannot last long. An evil man naturally attracts only evil men to himself and only evil men become attracted towards him just as filth attracts flits and flits are attracted by the filth.

The meaning of: “Who have made attractive for them what was before them and what was behind them” is this: They assured them that their past had been glorious and their future would also be bright. They made them see everything attractive and pleasant on every side. They told them that those who criticized them were foolish because they were not doing anything novel or strange. Those who had made any progress in the world before them had been doing the same that they were doing. Ahead of them there was no Hereafter at all in which they might have to be called to account for their deeds. But if at all, the Hereafter did take place, as some foolish people assert it would, the God who was blessing them in the world would bless them there too. Hell had not been made for them but for those whom God had deprived of His blessings here.

26. And those who disbelieve say: “Do not listen to this Quran, and make noise in the midst of its (recitation) that perhaps you will overcome.”*30

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَسْمَعُوا
هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَالْغَوْا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَغْلِبُونَ



*30 This was one of those plans of the disbelievers of Makkah with which they wanted to frustrate the Prophet's (peace be upon him) mission of preaching his message.

They knew well how impressive was the Quran, how high was the character of the man presenting it, and how effective and inspiring the style of his preaching. They knew that anyone who heard such matchless discourses in such an attractive style from such a noble person could not help being hued and charmed. Therefore, they planned that they should neither hear it themselves nor let anyone else hear it; whenever Muhammad (peace be upon him) should start reciting it, they should create noise, clap hands, pass taunting remarks and raise all sorts of objections and such a hue and cry as to subdue his voice. By this plan they hoped they would be able to defeat the Prophet of Allah.

27. Then surely We will cause those who disbelieve to taste a severe punishment, and surely We will recompense them the worst of what they used to do.

فَلَنُذِيقَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَذَابًا
شَدِيدًا وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي
كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

28. That is the recompense of the enemies of Allah, the Fire. For them therein will be the eternal home, recompense for what they used to deny Our revelations.

ذَٰلِكَ جَزَاءُ أَعْدَائِ اللَّهِ النَّارُ
هُمْ فِيهَا دَارٌ أَلْحَدٌ ۗ جَزَاءُ بِمَا
كَانُوا بِعَايَتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

29. And those who disbelieved will say: "Our Lord, Show us those who led us astray of the jinn and mankind. We will

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا رَبَّنَا أَرِنَا
الَّذِينَ أَضَلَّانَا مِنَ الْجِنِّ

place them underneath our feet that they may be among the lowest.”^{*31}

وَالْإِنْسِ نَجْعَلُهُمَا تَحْتَ أَقْدَامِنَا
لِيَكُونَا مِنَ الْأَسْفَلِينَ

***31** That is, in the world these people were at the beck and call of their leaders and religious guides and deceitful devils, but when on the Day of Resurrection they will come to know where their leaders had led them, they will curse them and would wish that they should somehow get hold of them so that they may trample them under their foot.

30. Indeed, those^{*32} who say: “Our Lord is Allah.” Then remain upright,^{*33} the angels will descend upon them^{*34} (saying): “Do not fear,^{*35} nor grieve, and receive the good tidings of Paradise which you have been promised.”

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا
تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا
وَأَبشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ

***32** After warning the disbelievers of the consequences of their opposition to the truth and their stubbornness, the address now turns to the believers and the Prophet (peace be upon him).

***33** That is, they did not call Allah their Lord merely incidentally, nor were they involved in the error to regard Allah as their Lord and at the same time others as well as their lords, but they embraced the faith sincerely and stood by it steadfastly: neither adopted a creed contrary to it

later nor mixed it up with a false creed, but they fulfilled the demands of the doctrine of Tauhid in their practical lives as well.

“Then remain upright” has been explained by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the eminent companions thus:

Anas has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Many people called Allah their Lord, but most of them became disbelievers. Firm and steadfast is he who remained firm on this creed till his death. (Ibn Jarir, Nasai, Ibn Abi Hatim).

Abu Bakr Siddiq has explained it thus: Then he did not associate another with Allah: did not attend to any other deity beside Him. (Ibn Jarir).

Umar once recited this verse on the pulpit and said: By God, the steadfast are those who remained firm on obedience to Allah: did not run about from place to place like foxes. (Ibn Jarir).

Uthman says: Performed his deeds sincerely for the sake of Allah only. (Kashshaf).

Ali says: Performed the duties enjoined by Allah faithfully and obediently. (Kashshaf).

***34** It is not necessary that the coming down of the angels may be perceptible, and the believers may see them with the eyes, or hear their voices with the ears. Although Allah also sends the angels openly for whomever He wills, generally their coming down for the believers, especially in hard times when they are being persecuted by the enemies of the truth, takes place in imperceptible ways and their voices penetrate into the depths of the heart as peace and

tranquility instead of just striking the ear-drums. Some commentators have regarded this coming down of the angels as restricted to the time of death or grave, or the Plain of Resurrection. But if the conditions in which these verses were sent down are kept in view, there remains no doubt that the real object of stating this thing here is to mention the coming down of the angels on those who struggle with their lives in this world in the cause of the truth, so that they are consoled and encouraged and they rest assured that they are not helpless but the angels of Allah are at their back. Although the angels also come to receive the believers at the time of death and they also welcome them in the grave (in the state of *burzakh*), and they will also accompany them constantly on the Day of Resurrection, from the time Resurrection takes place till their entry into Paradise, yet their company is not particularly restricted to the Hereafter but remains available in this world also. The context clearly shows that in the conflict between the truth and falsehood just as the worshipers of falsehood are accompanied by the devils and mischievous people, so are the believers accompanied by the angels. On the one hand, the companions of the worshipers of falsehood show their misdeeds seem fair to them and assure them that the tyrannical and dishonest acts that they are committing are the very means of their success and through them only will their leadership and dominance remain safe in the world. On the other hand, the angels come down to the worshipers of the truth and give them the message that is being mentioned in the following

sentences.

***35** These are very comprehensive words, which contain a new theme of consolation and peace for the believers, in every stage of life, from the world till the Hereafter. This counsel of the angels in this world means: No matter how strong and powerful be the forces of falsehood, you should not be afraid of them, and whatever hardships and deprivations you may have to experience on account of your love of the truth, you should not grieve on account of them, for ahead there lie in store for you such things against which every blessing of the world is insignificant. When the angels say the same words at the time of death, they mean this: There is no cause of fear for you in the destination you are heading for, for Paradise awaits you there, and you have no cause of grief for those whom you are leaving behind in the world, for we are your guardians and companions here. When the angels will say these very words in the intermediary state between death and Resurrection and in the Plain of Resurrection, they will mean: Here, there is nothing but peace for you. Do not grieve for the hardships you had to suffer in the world, and do not fear what you are going to face in the Hereafter, for we are giving you the good news of Paradise, which used to be promised to you in the world.

31. “We were your friends in the life of the world and in the Hereafter. You will have therein whatever your souls desire, and you will

نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا
تَشْتَهُي أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا

have therein whatever you ask for.”

تَدْعُونَ ﴿٦﴾

32. A gift of welcome from the Oft-Forgiving, Merciful.

نُزُلًا مِّنْ غَفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

33. And who is better in speech than him who calls (people) to Allah, and does righteousness, and says: “Indeed, I am of the Muslims.”*36

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنَّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

*36 After consoling and encouraging the believers, now they are being exhorted towards their real duty. In the preceding verse they were told: Being firm in the service to Allah and standing steadfast on this way after adopting it is by itself the basic good, which makes man a friend of the angels and worthy of Paradise. Now they are being told: The next thing which wins man the highest place of honor is that he should do good deeds himself and should invite others to the service of Allah, and even in the environment of severe antagonism where to proclaim Islam is tantamount to inviting hardships for oneself, one should firmly say that one is a Muslim. To understand the full significance of these words, one should keep in view the conditions in which they were said. The conditions were that anyone who proclaimed to be a Muslim would feel as if he had stepped into a jungle of beasts, where everyone was rushing at him to tear him into pieces. More than that, if anyone opened his mouth to preach Islam he would feel as if he had called on the beasts to come and devour him. Such

were the conditions when it was said: A person's believing in Allah as his Lord and adopting the right way and standing steadfast on it is indeed a great and fundamental good, but the greatest good is that man should boldly say that he is a Muslim and should invite others towards Allah's service, fearless of the consequences, and while performing this duty should remain so pure and pious in conduct and character that no one should have a cause to find fault with Islam and with those who uphold it.

34. And not equal are the good deed and the evil deed. Repel (the evil deed) by that which is better, then he between you and him there was enmity (will become) as though he was a devoted friend.*37

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ
 ۚ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا
 الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ
 كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ



*37 To understand the full significance of these words, one should keep in view the conditions in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) and, through him, his followers were given this instruction. The conditions were that the invitation to the truth was being resisted and opposed with extreme stubbornness and severe antagonism, in which all bounds of morality, humanity and decency were being transgressed. Every sort of lie was being uttered against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions. Every kind of evil device was being employed to defame him and to create suspicions against him in the minds of the people. Every kind of accusation was being leveled against him and

a host of the propagandists were busy creating doubts against him in the hearts. In short, he and his companions were being persecuted in every possible way because of which a substantial number of the Muslims had been compelled to emigrate from the country. Then the program that had been prepared to stop him from preaching was that a hand of the mischievous people was set behind him, who would raise such a hue and cry that no one should be able to hear anything as soon as he opened his mouth to preach his message. In such discouraging conditions when apparently every way of extending invitation to Islam seemed to be blocked, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was taught this recipe for breaking the opposition.

First, it was said that goodness and evil are not equal, as if to say: Although apparently your opponents might have raised a dreadful storm of mischief and evil, as against which goodness might seem absolutely helpless and powerless, yet evil in itself has a weakness which ultimately causes its own destruction. For as long as man is man, his nature cannot help hating evil. Not only the companions of evil, even its own upholders know in their hearts that they are liars and wicked people and are being stubborn for selfish motives. Not to speak of creating dignity and honor for them in the hearts of others. It lowers them in their own esteem, and causes their morale to be weakened and destroyed in the event of every conflict. As against this evil, the good which appears to be utterly helpless and powerless, goes on operating and working and it becomes dominant in the long run. For, in the first place, the good

has a power of its own which wins the hearts and no man, however perverted and corrupted, can help esteeming it in his own heart. Then, when the good and evil are engaged in a face to face conflict and their nature and merits become apparent and known, after a long drawn out struggle, not many people would be left, who would not start hating the evil and admiring the good.

Second, it was said that evil should be resisted not by the mere good but by a superior good, as if to say: If a person treats you unjustly and you forgive him, it is the mere good. The superior good is that you treat the one who ill-treats you with kindness and love.

The result would be that your worst enemy would become your closest friend, for that is human nature itself. If you remain quiet in response to an abuse, it will be mere goodness but it will not silence the abuser. But if you express good wishes for him in response to his abuses, even the most shameless opponent will feel ashamed, and then would hardly ever be able to employ invectives against you. If a person doesn't miss any opportunity to harm you, and you go on tolerating his excesses, it may well make him even bolder in his mischief. But if on an occasion he gets into trouble and you come to his rescue, he will fall down at your feet, for no mischief can hold out against goodness. However, it would be wrong to take this general principle in the meaning that every enemy will necessarily become a close friend when you have treated him with the superior good. There are such wicked people also in the world, whose inimical nature will never change for the better no

matter how tolerantly you may overlook their excesses and how benevolently you may react and respond to every evil committed by them. But such devil-incarnates are as few in the world as the embodiments of goodness are.

35. And none is granted it except those who are patient,^{*38} and none is granted it except the owner of great fortune.^{*39}

وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا
وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ



***38** Although a very efficacious recipe, it is not easy to use. It requires a great will power, resolution, courage, power of endurance and full control over one's own self. A man may act benevolently in response to an evil done, on an impulse, and there is nothing extraordinary in it. But when a person has to fight for years and years, for the sake of the truth, those mischievous worshipers of falsehood, who do not feel any hesitation in violating any bond of morality, and are also intoxicated with power, it requires extraordinary grit to go on resisting the evil with good, and that too with the superior good, without ever showing any lack of restraint and self-control. Such a work can be accomplished only by him who has resolved with a cool mind to work for the cause of upholding the truth, who has subdued his self to intellect and sense and in whom good and righteousness have taken such deep roots that no malice and mischief of the opponents can succeed in deposing him from his high position.

***39** This is a law of nature. Only a man of very high rank is

characterized by these qualities; and the one who possesses these qualities cannot be prevented by any power of the world from attaining to his goal of success. It is in no way possible that the depraved people may defeat him with their mean machinations and shameless devices.

36. And if an evil whisper from Satan tries to turn you away (O Muhammad), then seek refuge in Allah.^{*40} Indeed, He is the All Hearer, the All Knower.^{*41}

وَأِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ
فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ
الْعَلِيمُ



***40** Satan feels grieved when he sees that in the conflict between the truth and falsehood, meanness is being resisted with nobility and evil with goodness. He wants that he should somehow incite the fighters for the sake of the truth and their prominent men in particular, and especially their leaders, to commit such a mistake, even if once, on the basis of which he may tell the common people that evil is not being committed by one side only. If mean acts are being committed by one side, the people of the other side also are not morally any better, they too have committed such and such a shameless act. The common people do not have the capability that they may assess and counterbalance fairly the excesses being committed by one party by the reactions of the other. As long as they see that while the opponents are adopting every mean act yet these people do not swerve at all from the path of decency and nobility, goodness and righteousness, they continue to regard and esteem them highly. But if at some time they happen to commit an

unworthy act, even if it is in retaliation against a grave injustice, both the sides become equal in their esteem, and the opponents also get an excuse to counter one blamable act with a thousand abuses. That is why it has been said: Be on your guard against the deceptions of Satan. He will incite you as a well wisher to take note of every abuse and every insult and attack and urge you to pay the opponent in the same coin, otherwise you would be regarded as a coward and weaken your image of strength. On every such occasion whenever you feel any undue provocation, you should take care that this is an incitement of Satan who is arousing you to anger and wants you to commit a mistake. And after having been warned, do not be involved in the misunderstanding that you have full control over yourself, and Satan cannot make you commit any mistake. This high opinion of one's own power of judgment and will is another and more dangerous deception of Satan. Instead of it you should seek Allah's refuge, for man can save himself from mistakes only if Allah helps and grants him protection.

The best commentary of this subject is the event which Imam Ahmad has related in his Musnad on the authority of Abu Hurairah. He says that once a man started uttering invectives against Abu Bakr in the presence of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Abu Bakr kept on hearing the invectives quietly and the Prophet (peace be upon him) kept on smiling at it. At last, when Abu Bakr could restrain himself no longer, he also uttered a harsh word for the person in response. No sooner did he utter the word, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was seized by restraint, which

appeared on his face, and he rose and left the place immediately. Abu Bakr also rose and went behind him. On the way he asked: How is it that as long as the person went on abusing me, you kept quiet and smiling, but when I also said a word in retaliation, you were annoyed. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: As long as you were quiet, an angel remained with you who went on replying to him on your behalf, but when you spoke out, Satan came in place of the angel. I could not sit with Satan.

***41** After seeking Allah's refuge against the storm of opposition, the thing that brings patience and peace and tranquility to the heart of the believer is this conviction, Allah is not unaware. He knows whatever we are doing as well as that which is being done against us. He is hearing whatever we and our opponents utter and watches the conduct of both of us. On the basis of this very conviction, the believer entrusts his own and the opponents of the truth's affair to Allah and remains satisfied.

This is the fifth place where the Prophet and, through him, the believers have been taught this wisdom of preaching and reforming the people. For the other four places, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 199-204, Surah An-Nahl, Ayats 125-128, Surah Al-Muminun, Ayats 96-98, Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayats 46-47 and the E.Ns.

37. And from among^{*42} His signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon.^{*43} Do not prostrate to the sun, nor to the moon,

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ
وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ لَا تَسْجُدُوا
لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوا

and prostrate to Allah who created them, if it should be Him you worship.*44

لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُمْ إِنَّ
كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

*42 Now the discourse turns to the common people and they are made to understand the truth in a few sentences.

*43 That is, they are not the objects of divine power that you may start worshiping them, thinking that Allah is manifesting Himself in their form, but they are the signs of Allah by pondering over which you can understand the reality of the universe and its system, and can know that the doctrine of the Oneness of God which the Prophets are teaching is the actual reality. The mention of the night and day before the sun and moon has been made to give the warning that the hiding of the sun and appearing of the moon at night, and the hiding of the moon and appearing of the sun in the day clearly point to the fact that neither of them is God or object of divine power, but both are helpless and powerless objects, and are moving subject to the law of God.

*44 This is an answer to the philosophy that the intelligent among the polytheists generally used to propound to prove that polytheism was rational. They said that they did not bow to these objects but bowed to God through them. An answer to this has been given, so as to say: If you really are Allah's worshipers, there is no need of these intermediaries: why don't you bow down to Him directly?

38. So if they are
arrogant,*45 then those

فَإِنْ أَسْتَكْبَرُوا فَالَّذِينَ عِنْدَ

(angels) who are with your Lord, they glorify Him by night and day, and they do not become weary.*46

AsSajda

رَبِّكَ يُسَبِّحُونَ لَهُ بِاللَّيْلِ
وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْأَمُونَ



*45 If they are arrogant: If they think it is below their dignity for them to listen to you, and still persist in the ignorance in which they are involved.

*46 It means this: The system of this whole universe, whose agents are the angels, is running on the basis of Allah's Oneness and His servitude. The angels who are its agents are testifying every moment that their Lord is pure and exalted far above that another should be His associate in His Divinity and worship. Now, if a few foolish persons do not believe even after admonition, and turn away from the way that is being followed by the whole universe and persist in following the way of shirk only, let them remain involved in their folly.

The consensus is that it is obligatory to perform sajdah (prostration) here, but the jurists differ as to which of the two preceding verses requires the performance of sajdah. Ali and Abdullah bin Masud performed the sajdah at the end of verse 37, while Ibn Abbas, Ibn Umar, Said bin Musayyab, Masruq, Qatadah, Hasan Basri, Abu Abdur Rahman as-Sulami, Ibn Sirin, Ibrahim Nakhai and several other prominent jurists have expressed the opinion that it should be performed at the end of verse 38. The same also is the opinion of Imam Abu Hanifah, and the Shafeites also have held the same view as preferable.

39. And among His signs is that you see the earth barren, then when We send down upon it water, it is stirred to life and grows. Indeed, He who gives it life, can surely give life to those who are dead.*⁴⁷ Indeed, He has power over all things.

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ أَنْ تَرَى الْأَرْضَ خَاشِعَةً فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ إِنَّ الَّذِي أَحْيَاهَا لَمُحْيِ الْمَوْتَى إِنَّهُد عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

***47** For explanation, see Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 65; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 5-7; Surah Ar-Room, Ayat 19 and E.N. 19 of Surah Al-Fatir.

40. Indeed, those^{*48} who turn away from Our revelations^{*49} are not hidden from Us.*⁵⁰ So is he who is cast into the Fire better, or he who comes secure on the Day of Resurrection. Do whatever you will. Indeed, He is Seer of what you do.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي ءَايَاتِنَا لَا يَخْفَوْنَ عَلَيْنَا أَفَمَنْ يُلْقَىٰ فِي النَّارِ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ يَأْتِي ءَامِنًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَلُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ إِنَّهُد بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

***48** After telling the common people in a few sentences that the doctrine of Tauhid and the Hereafter to which Muhammad (peace be upon him) is inviting them, is rational and the signs of the universe testify to its being right and true, the discourse again turns to the opponents who were determined to oppose it stubbornly.

***49** The word *yulhidun* in the original is derived from *ilhad* which means to deviate, to turn away from the right to the wrong path, to adopt crookedness. Thus, *ilhad* in the revelations of Allah would mean that instead of understanding them in their clear and straightforward meaning one should misconstrue them and go astray and also lead others astray. One of the devices being adopted by the disbelievers of Makkah to defeat the message of the Quran was that they would hear the verses of the Quran and then would isolate one verse from its context, tamper with another, misconstrue a word or a sentence and thus raise every sort of objection and would mislead the people, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had said such and such a thing that day.

***50** These words imply a severe threat. The All-Powerful Ruler's saying that the acts of such and such a person are not hidden from Him by itself contains the meaning that he cannot escape their consequences.

41. Indeed, those who disbelieved in the reminder (Quran) when it has come to them (are guilty). And indeed it is a Book of exalted power. ^{*51}

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ

***51** A mighty Book: An unchanging Book, which cannot be defeated by tricks and cunning devices, which the worshipers of falsehood are employing against it. It has the force of the truth in it, the force of true knowledge, the force of argument and reason, the force of eloquence and

style, the force of divinity of God who sent it, and the force of the personality of the Messenger who presented it. No one, therefore, can defeat it by falsehood and hollow propaganda.

42. Falsehood cannot approach it from before it, nor from behind it.*52 A revelation from the Wise, the Owner of Praise.

لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ
وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنْ
حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ

*52 “Falsehood from before it” means that none can succeed in proving anything wrong or any teaching false in the Quran by making a frontal attack on it; “nor from behind it” means that nothing can be discovered till Resurrection which may be opposed to the truths and realities presented by the Quran; no new science, if it is really a science, can be propounded, which may contradict the knowledge contained in the Quran; no new experiment or observation can be made to prove that the guidance given to man by the Quran in respect of the beliefs, morality, law, civilization or culture, and economic, social and political life is wrong. That which this Book has declared as the truth can never be proven to be falsehood and that which it has declared as falsehood can never be proven to be the truth. Furthermore, it also means that whether falsehood makes a frontal attack, or makes a surprise attack by deception, it cannot defeat the message which the Quran has brought. In spite of all sorts of open and secret machinations of the opponents the message will

spread and none shall be able to defeat and frustrate it.

43. Nothing is said to you (O Muhammad), except what was certainly said to the messengers before you. Indeed, your Lord is the possessor of forgiveness,^{*53} and the possessor of painful penalty.

مَا يُقَالُ لَكَ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ قِيلَ
لِلرُّسُلِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو
مَغْفِرَةٍ وَذُو عِقَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٤٣﴾

*53 That is, it is all due to His clemency and forgiveness that although His Messengers were opposed, abused and persecuted yet He went on giving respite to their opponents for years and years on end.

44. And if We had made this Quran in a foreign language, they would assuredly have said: “Why are not its verses explained. What, a foreign tongue and an Arab.”^{*54} Say: “This (Quran), for those who believe, is a guidance and a healing.” And those who do not believe, there is a deafness in their ears, and it is blindness for them. They are those who are called from a place far away.^{*55}

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْءَانًا أَعْجَمِيًّا
لَقَالُوا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ
ءَاَعْجَمِيٌّ وَعَرَبِيٌّ قُلْ هُوَ
لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا هُدًى
وَشِفَاءٌ لِّلَّذِينَ
يُؤْمِنُونَ فِي ءَاذَانِهِمْ وَقُرْءَانٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ عَمًى أُولَٰئِكَ
يُنَادُونَ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

***54** This is the kind of the stubbornness that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was confronting. The disbelievers said: Muhammad (peace be upon him) is an Arab. Arabic is his mother tongue. How can one believe that the Arabic Quran that he presents has not been forged by himself but has been revealed to him by God? The Quran could be believed to be the revelation of God if he had started speaking fluently in a foreign language unknown to him, like Persian, Latin, or Greek. This argument of theirs has been refuted by Allah, saying: Now when the Quran has been sent down in their own tongue so that they may understand it, they raise the objection: Why has it been sent down to an Arab in Arabic? But if it had been sent down in a foreign tongue, these very people would have said: How strange! An Arab Messenger has been sent to the Arabs, but the revelations being sent to him are in a tongue which is neither understood by him nor by his people.

***55** When a person is summoned from afar, he hears a voice but does not understand what is being said to him. This is a wonderful simile which fully depicts the psychology of the stubborn opponents. Naturally when you talk to a person who is free from prejudice, he will listen to you, will try to understand what you say, will accept it if it is reasonable, with an open mind. On the contrary, the person who is not only prejudiced against you but is also malicious and spiteful, will not at all listen to you however hard you may try to make him understand your viewpoint. In spite of hearing you all the time he will not understand at all what you had been saying.

45. And certainly, We gave Moses the Scripture, but there has been dispute about it.^{*56} And if it had not been for a word (decree) that went forth before from your Lord, it would have been judged between them.^{*57} And indeed, they are in grave doubt concerning it.^{*58}

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ
فَاخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ ۗ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ
سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ
بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ
مُرِيبٍ



***56** That is, some people had believed in it and some others had made up their minds to oppose it.

***57** It has two meanings:

(1) If Allah had not already decreed that the people would be given enough respite for consideration the disputants would have long been destroyed.

(2) If Allah had not already decreed that the disputes would finally be decided on the Day of Judgment, the reality would have been made plain as to who is in the right and who is in the wrong.

***58** In this brief sentence the spiritual disease of the disbelievers of Makkah has been clearly diagnosed. It says that they are involved in doubt about the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and this doubt has caused them great anguish and confusion. That is, although apparently they deny the Quran as being Allah's Word and the Prophet (peace be upon him) as being His Messenger very vehemently, yet this denial is not based on any conviction, but their minds are afflicted with great

vacillation, and doubt. On the one hand, their selfish motives, their interests and their prejudices demand that they should belie the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and oppose them strongly. On the other hand, their hearts are convened from within, that the Quran is, in fact, a unique and un-paralleled Word the like of which has never been heard from any literary man or poet. Neither can the insane utter such things in their madness, nor can devils come to teach God-worship, piety and righteousness to the people. Likewise, when they say that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a liar, their heaps from within put them to shame, and ask: Can such a person ever be a liar? When they brand him a madman, their hearts cry out from within and ask: Do you really think that he is mad? When they accuse that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is not interested in the truth but is working for selfish motives, their hearts from within curse them and ask: Do you call this virtuous man selfish, whom you have never seen striving for the sake of wealth and power and fame, whose life has been free from every tract of self-interest, who has always been working to bring about goodness and piety, but has never acted from any selfish motives.

46. Whoever does righteous deeds, it is for his own self. And whoever does evil, it is against his (own self). And your Lord is not ever unjust to (His) slaves. *59

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ
وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا رَبُّكَ
بِظَلَمٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ

***59** That is, your Lord can never be so unjust as to let go to waste the good deeds of a good man and fail to punish the evil-doers for their evil.

47. To Him is referred ^{*60} knowledge of the Hour. ^{*61}

And no fruits come out of their sheaths, nor does a female conceive (within her womb), nor brings forth (young), ^{*62} except by His Knowledge. And on the Day when He will call to them: “Where are My partners.” They will say: “We announce to You, not among us is any witness.” ^{*63}

﴿إِلَيْهِ يُرَدُّ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ﴾ وَمَا
تَخْرُجُ مِنْ ثَمَرَاتٍ مِّنْ أَكْمَامِهَا
وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أُنْثَىٰ وَلَا تَضَعُ
إِلَّا بِعِلْمِهِ ۗ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ أَيْنَ
شُرَكَآئِي قَالُوا ءَاذَنَّاكَ مَا
مِنَّا مِنْ شَيْدٍ ﴿٤٧﴾

***60** That is, none but Allah knows when the Hour would occur. This is the answer to the disbelievers’ question as to when the threat being given to them of meeting with the consequences of their evil deeds will be carried out. Allah has answered their question without citing it.

***61** The Hour: the Hour of Resurrection, i.e. the Hour when the evildoers will be punished for their evil and the grievances of the oppressed good people will be redressed.

***62** By this the listeners have been made to realize two things:

(1) That not only of Resurrection but the knowledge of all unseen things is reserved for Allah alone; there is no other knower of the unseen.

(2) That God Who possesses the detailed knowledge of the most minor things cannot remain unaware of the acts and deeds of anybody.

Therefore, no one in His kingdom should act fearlessly, with impunity. Only according to this second meaning the sentence becomes relevant to what follows. If one studies the following sentences, the theme that immediately becomes obvious is: Don't concern yourselves about finding out the date of the coming of Resurrection; you should, however, be anxious about the consequences of your deviations you will have to bear when it comes. This same thing had the Prophet (peace be upon him) once said to a person, who asked him the date of the coming of Resurrection. All the major collections of Hadith contain a commonly reported tradition to the effect: Once when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was on a journey, a man on the way shouted his name from a distance. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked what he wanted to say. He said: When will Resurrection come? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: It must come, in any case! What preparations have you made for it?

*63 That is, now we have realized that what we had in our minds was absolutely wrong. Now none among us is of the view that there is another one who is also your associate in Godhead. The words "we announce" show that on the Day of Resurrection the disbelievers will be asked again and again, on every occasion: In the world you went on refusing to believe what the Messengers of God said: now say who was in the right: they or you? And the disbelievers will

every time confess that the truth indeed was that which the Messengers preached and they themselves were in the wrong because they forsook the knowledge and persisted in their own ignorance.

48. And lost from them will be those whom they used to invoke before.*⁶⁴ And they will perceive that for them (there is) not any place of refuge.

وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَدْعُونَ
مِنْ قَبْلُ وَظَنُوا مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ
مَحِيصٍ

*⁶⁴ That is, in their utter hopelessness they will look around to see if they could find any one of those whom they used to serve and worship in the world, who could come to their rescue and save them from God's torment, or at least have their punishment reduced, but they will find no helper on any side.

49. Man does not get weary of supplication for good,*⁶⁵ and if an evil touches him, then he is hopeless, despairing.

لَا يَسْأَلُ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ دُعَاءٍ
الْخَيْرِ وَإِنْ مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَيَعْوِسُ
قَنُوطٌ

*⁶⁵ "For good": For prosperity, abundance of provisions, good health, well-being of children, etc. And man here does not imply every human being for it also includes the prophet and the righteous people, who are free from this weakness as is being mentioned below. But here it implies the mean and shallow person who starts imploring God humbly when touched by harm and is beside himself with

joy when he receives the good things of life as most human beings are involved in this weakness, it has been called a weakness of man.

50. And if We make him taste a mercy from Us after an adversity has touched him, he will surely say: "This is my own."^{*66} And I do not think that the Hour will be established, and if I am brought back to my Lord, indeed, there will be for me with Him the best." Then, We will surely inform those who disbelieved about that they did, and We will surely make them taste a severe punishment.

وَلَيْنَ أَذَقْنَهُ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ
ضَرَاءٍ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ هَذَا لِي
وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِن
رُجِعْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّ لِي عِنْدَهُ
لَلْحُسْنَىٰ فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِّنْ
عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ ﴿٥٠﴾

***66** That is, I have gotten all this because of my being worthy of it. It is my right that I should receive all this.

51. And when We bestow favor upon man, he withdraws and turns aside,^{*67} and when evil touches him, then he has recourse to long supplications.^{*68}

وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَىٰ الْإِنْسَانِ
أَعْرَضَ وَنَجَّ بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ
الشَّرُّ فذُو دُعَاءٍ عَرِيضٍ ﴿٥١﴾

***67** That is, he turns away from Our obedience and worship, and thinks it is below his dignity to bow to Us.

***68** For other verses on this subject, see Surah Yunus,

Ayat 12; Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 83; Surah ArRoom, Ayat 33-36; Surah Az-Zumar, Ayats 8-9, 49 and the E.Ns.

52. Say: "Do you see if it (Quran) is from Allah and yet you disbelieved in it, who is further astray than one who is in far away dissension."^{*69}

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ
اللَّهِ ثُمَّ كَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ مَنْ أَضَلُّ
مِمَّنْ هُوَ فِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ

*69 It does not mean that they should believe in it only owing to the danger that if it were really from Allah they would be inviting their own doom by denying it. But it means this: It is not wisdom that you should be bent upon opposing it stubbornly without seriously trying to understand what it says. You cannot assert that you have come to know that this Quran is not from God, and you have known with certainty that God has not sent it. Obviously, your refusal to believe in it as divine Word is not based on knowledge, but on conjecture, which may possibly be right as well as wrong. Now consider both the possibilities. If your conjecture were right, then, according to your own thinking, both the believers and the unbelievers would be equal, because both will become dust after death, and there is no life of Hereafter where belief and unbelief might be distinguished. But, if this Quran were really from God, and that of which it is forewarning did really take place, then think what doom you would invite for yourselves by denying it and opposing it like that. Therefore, your own interest demands that you should give up stubbornness and consider this Quran seriously; if even

after due consideration, you decide not to believe in it, you may not, but you should not oppose it to the extent that you start employing falsehood and deception and persecution to bar the way of its message and prevent others from believing in it, not being content with your own unbelief.

53. We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifest to them that it is the truth.^{*70} Is it not sufficient about your Lord that He is a Witness over all things.^{*71}

سُرِّيهِمْ ءَايَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي
أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ
الْحَقُّ ۗ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ



***70** This verse has two meanings and both have been given by the major commentators:

First, that they will soon see with their own eyes that the message of the Quran has spread in all the adjoining lands, and they themselves have yielded to it. Then they will realize that what they are being told today, which they are denying, was absolutely true. Some people have objected to this meaning, saying that a message's being dominant and overwhelming vast areas is no argument to prove that it is the truth. False messages also become dominant and their adherents also go on subduing one country after the other. But this is a superficial objection which has been raised without a thorough study of the matter. The wonderful conquests that Islam achieved in the period of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the rightly guided Caliphs, were not the signs of Allah only in the sense that the believers

conquered one country after the other, but in the sense that this conquest of the countries was not like other conquests of the world, which make one man or one family or one nation master of the life and property of others and God's earth is filled with tyranny and injustice. Contrary to this, this conquest brought with it a great religious, moral, intellectual, cultural, political, economic and social revolution; whose influence, wherever it reached, elicited what was best in man and suppressed what was worst in him. This revolution developed and nurtured the moral excellences which the world could hope to see only in the hermits and the meditating recluses and could never imagine that they could also be found among the people responsible for running the worldly affairs in the politics of the rulers, in the chambers of justice, in the wars and conquests of the commanders of forces, in the work of the tax collectors and in the commerce of the big businessmen. This revolution so raised the common people in the society created by it in respect of the sense of morality, character, cleanliness and purity that even the select people of other societies seemed to be much inferior to them. It took man out of the labyrinths of superstition and whim and put him on the broad highway of scientific research and rational thought and action. It treated and cured these diseases of the collective life of whose treatment no idea existed in the other systems, or if at all they tried to treat them, they did not succeed in it. For example, separation between men on the basis of color, race, country and language, classification of men in the same society and discrimination among them,

non existence of legal rights and equality in practical life, degeneration of women and their deprivation of the basic rights, prevalence of crime, liquor drinking and use of all intoxicating drugs, the governments being above criticism and accountability, deprivation of the fundamental human rights the masses, disrespect of agreements in international relations, barbarism in wars, and such other diseases. In Arabia itself this revolution brought about order in place of chaos, peace in place of bloodshed and anarchy, piety in place of wickedness, justice in place of tyranny and injustice, purity and culture in place of filth and indecency, knowledge in place of ignorance, brotherhood and love in place of long-standing feuds, and it made a nation whose people could not dream of anything beyond leadership of their tribe, leaders of the world. These were the signs which the very generation before whom the Prophet (peace be upon him) had recited this verse for the first time, saw with their own eyes, and after that till today Allah has been constantly showing those signs. The Muslims, even during their downfall, displayed such high morals as could never be attained by those people who represent as the leaders of civilization and culture. No precedent can be found from any period of the history of the Muslims of the tyrannical treatment that has been meted out by the European nations to the subdued nations of Africa, America, Asia and of Europe itself. This is the blessing of the Quran which has so humanized Muslims that they could not become so tyrannical even when they had attained domination as the non-Muslims have been in all periods of history and are

even today. A person who has eyes can himself see how the Muslims treated the Christians in Spain when they ruled it for centuries, and how the Christians treated the Muslims when they gained power there; how the Muslims behaved towards Hindus during their eight hundred year long rule in India and how the Hindus are now treating them after they have attained power; how the Muslims treated the Jews during the past 1300 years and how the Jews are treating the Muslims in Palestine.

The other meaning of this verse is that Allah will show the people in the external world around them as well as in their own selves such signs as will make manifest that the teaching the Quran is giving is the very truth. Some people have raised the objection that the people even at that time were observing the world around them and also their own selves; therefore, it would be meaningless to show them any such signs in the future. But this objection also is as superficial as the objection against the first meaning. No doubt, the external world is the same as man has been seeing in the past and his own self also is of the same nature as has been seen in every age, yet in these the signs of God are so numerous that man has never comprehended them fully nor will ever be able to do so. In every age man has met with many new signs and this will go on happening till the Resurrection Day.

***71** That is, is it not enough to warn the people of their evil end that Allah is watching whatever they are doing to belie and defeat the Message of the truth?

54. Behold, they are indeed in doubt about the meeting with their Lord.^{*72}
Behold, He indeed is surrounding all things.^{*73}

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ فِي مَرِيَّةٍ مِّن لِّقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ
أَلَا إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطٌ

***72** That is, the basic cause of their attitude and conduct is that they are not sure that they will ever have to appear before their Lord and be held accountable for their deeds and actions.

***73** That is, they cannot escape His grasp nor can anything of their deeds be prevented from being recorded by Him.



Ash-Shura الشُّورَى

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

It is derived from the sentence, *wa amru-hum shura baina hum*, of verse 38, implying thereby that it is a Surah in which the word *shura* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Although it could not be known from any authentic traditions, yet one feels after a study of its subject matter that this Surah might have been revealed consecutively after HaMim AsSajdah, for it seems to be, in a way, a supplement to it. This will become clear to every person who first studies Surah HaMim AsSajdah carefully and then goes through this Surah. He will see that in that Surah the Quraish chiefs had been taken to task for their deaf and blind opposition so that anyone in Makkah and in its outskirts, who had any sense of morality and nobility left in him, should know how unreasonably the chiefs of the people were opposing Muhammad (peace be upon him), and as against them, how serious he was in everything he said, how rational was his standpoint and how noble his character and conduct. Immediately after that warning this

Surah was sent down, which did full justice to teaching and instruction, and made the truth of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) message plain in such an impressive way that anyone who had any element of the love of the truth in him and who had not been blinded by the errors of ignorance, could not help being influenced by it.

Theme and Subject Matter

The discourse begins in a way as if to say: Why are you expressing surprise and amazement at what Our Prophet is presenting before you? What he says is not new or strange, nor anything novel, which might have been presented for the first time in history: that revelation should come down to a man from God and he should be given instructions for the guidance of mankind. Allah has been sending similar revelations with similar instructions to the former Prophets before this. It is not surprising that the Owner of the universe should be acknowledged as Deity and Ruler, but what is strange is that one should accept another as divine and deity in spite of being His subject and slave. You are being angry with him who is presenting Tauhid before you, where as the shirk that you are practicing with regard to the Master of the universe is such a grave crime as may cause the heavens to break asunder. The angels are amazed at this boldness of yours and fear that the wrath of Allah might descend on you any moment.

After this the people have been told that a person's being appointed to Prophethood and his presenting himself as a Prophet does not mean that he has been made master of the people's destinies and he has come to the world with that

very claim. Allah has kept the destinies in His own hand. The Prophet has come only to arouse the heedless and guide the strayed ones to the right path. To call to account those who do not listen to him and to punish or not to punish them is Allah's own responsibility, and not part of the Prophet's work. Therefore, they should take it out of their head that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has come with a claim similar to those that are made by their so called religious guides and saints to the effect that he who would not listen to them, or would behave insolently towards them, would be burnt to death. In this very connection, the people have also been told that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has not come to condemn them but he is their well wisher; he is warning them that the way they are following will only lead to their own destruction.

Then, an answer has been given to the question: Why didn't Allah make all human beings righteous by birth, and why did He allow the difference of viewpoint owing to which the people start following each and every way of thought and action? The answer given is this: Owing to this very fact has it become possible for man to attain to the special mercy of Allah, which is not meant for other dumb creatures, but is only meant for those endowed with power and authority, who should take Allah as Patron and Guardian not instinctively but consciously by willing choice. Allah supports the man who adopts this way and guides and helps him to do good and right and admits him into His special mercy. On the contrary, the man who misuses his option and makes his patron those who are not,

in fact, the guardians, and cannot be, are deprived of divine mercy. In this connection, it has also been made clear that only Allah is the Patron of man and of all other creatures. Others are neither the patron nor have the power to do full justice to patronage. Man's success depends only on this that he should make no mistake in choosing a patron for himself by the use of his free choice, and should take only Him his Guide Who, in reality, is the real Patron.

After this, it has been explained what the *Deen* being presented by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) really is:

Its primary basis that as Allah Almighty is the Creator, Master and real Patron of the universe and man, He alone is man's Ruler, He alone has the right to give man faith (*Deen*) and Law (system of belief and practice) and judge the disputes of man and tell what is truth and what is falsehood. No other being has any right whatsoever to be man's law-giver. In other words, like the natural sovereignty, the sovereignty with regard to law-making also is vested only in Allah. No man or creature, apart from Allah, can be the bearer of this sovereignty. And if a person does not recognize and accept this divine rule of Allah, it is merely futile for him to recognize the natural sovereignty of Allah.

On this very basis has Allah ordained a *Deen* (true religion) for man from the very beginning. It was one and the same religion that was vouchsafed in every age to all the Prophets. No Prophet ever founded any separate religion of his own. The same one religion has been enjoined by Allah

for all mankind since the beginning of creation, and all the Prophets have been following it and inviting others to follow it.

This religion and creed was not sent so that man may rest content only with believing in it, but it was sent with the purpose and intention that it alone should be introduced, established and enforced in the world, and no man made religion be made to prevail in Allah's earth apart from His religion. The Prophets had not been appointed only to preach this religion but to establish it particularly in the world.

This same was the original religion of mankind, but after the death of the Prophets, selfish people created new creeds by creating schisms for vested interests due to self conceit, vanity and ostentation. All the different religions and creeds found in the world today have resulted from corruption of the original divine truth.

Now, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been sent so that he may present before the people the same and original religion in place of the various practices and artificial creeds and man made religions, and may try to establish the same. On this, if instead of being grateful, you feel angry and come out to fight him, it is your folly; the Prophet will not abandon his mission only because of your foolishness. He has been enjoined to adhere to his faith at all costs and to carry out the mission to which he has been appointed. Therefore, the people should not cherish any false hope that in order to please them he would cater to the same whims and superstitions of ignorance which has

corrupted Allah's Religion before.

You do not understand how great an impudence it is against Allah to adopt a man made religion and law instead of the religion and law enjoined by Allah. You think it is an ordinary thing and there is nothing wrong with it. But in the sight of Allah it is the worst kind of shirk and a grave crime whose punishment will be imposed on all those who enforced their own religion on Allah's earth and those who adopted and followed their religion.

Thus, after presenting a clear and visible concept of religion it is said: The best possible method that could be employed for your instruction and for bringing you to the right path has already been employed. On the one hand, Allah has sent down His Book, which is teaching you the truth in a most impressive way in your own language; and on the other hand, the lives of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions are present before you by which you can see for yourselves what kind of men are prepared by the guidance given in this Book. Even then if you do not accept this guidance, nothing else in the world can bring you to the right path. The only alternative, therefore, is that you should be allowed to persist in the same error in which you have remained involved for centuries, and made to meet with the same doom which has been destined by Allah for such wrongdoers.

While stating these truths, brief arguments have been given, here and there, for Tauhid and the Hereafter, the world worshipers have been warned of the evil consequences and their punishment in the life Hereafter,

and the disbelievers have been criticized for the moral weaknesses, which were the real cause of their deviation from the truth. The Surah has been concluded with two important themes.

First, that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was wholly unaware of this concept of the Book or the true faith during the first forty years of his life and then his sudden appearance before the people with those two things, is a manifest proof of his being a Prophet.

Secondly, his presenting his own teaching as the teaching of God does not mean that he claims to have spoken to God, face to face, but God has conveyed to him this guidance, as in the case of all other Prophets, in three ways: He speaks to His Prophets either through revelation, or from behind a veil, or He sends an angel with the message. This thing was clarified so that the opponents did not have an opportunity of accusing the Prophet (peace be upon him) of claiming to have spoken to God, face to face, and the lovers of the truth should know by what methods Allah gave instruction to the man whom He had appointed to the mission of Prophethood.

<p>1. Ha. Meem.</p>	 حمّ
<p>2. Ain. Seen. Qaf.</p>	 عسقّ
<p>3. Thus He has revealed to you (O Muhammad) and to those before you,^{*1} Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.</p>	<p>كَذَلِكَ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ</p> 

*1 The style of the opening verses by itself shows that in the background there are the misgivings, wonder and amazement which were being expressed at that time in every assembly, every meeting place, every street and every house and shop of Makkah at the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the themes of the Quran. The people said; Where is this man bringing from new revelations to us every day? The like of these we have never heard nor seen before. How strange that he rejects as false the religion that our forefathers have been following in the past, the religion that is still being followed by all of us, and the traditions and ways that have been prevalent in the country for so many centuries; and he says that the religion that he presents only is right and true. They said: Had he presented even this new religion in a way as to substitute some of the falsehood he found in the ancestral paganism and prevalent customs with certain others which might be the result of his own thought, there could be a dialogue with him. But he says that what he recites is divine Word. How can we accept this? Does God visit him, or does he visit God? Or does some dialogue take place between him and God? It is in the background of such expression of wonder and doubt that although the address is apparently directed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), the disbelievers have in fact been told: Yes, these very things are being revealed by the All-Mighty, the All-Wise Allah, and with the same themes has its revelation been coming down to all the former Prophets.

Lexically, *wahi* means swift and secret instruction, i.e. an

inspiration which is made with such haste and speed that none may know it except the inspirer and the one being inspired. As a term this word has been used for the guidance and instruction that is put in the mind of a man by Allah like a flash of lightning. What is meant to be said here is this: There is no question of Allah's visiting somebody or somebody's visiting Allah and speaking face to face with Him. He is All-Mighty and All-Wise. Whenever He pleases to have a contact with a servant for the guidance and instruction of mankind, nothing can obstruct His will and intention, for He adopts the method of revelation for the purpose by His wisdom. This very theme has been repeated in the last verses of the Surah with greater clarity and detail.

As to the people's objection that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was presenting strange and novel things, it has been said: There is nothing strange and novel in what Muhammad (peace be upon him) presents. Allah has been giving the same guidance and instruction to the Prophets who came before him in the world.

4. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, and He is the Most High, the Most Great.*2

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

*2 These introductory sentences are not meant to be said merely in praise of Allah Almighty, but their each word has a deep link with the background in which these verses were sent down. The foremost basis of the objections of the

people who were expressing wonder and doubts against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Quran was that he was inviting them to Tauhid and they were being alarmed at this and saying that if Allah alone is the Creator, Sustainer and Ruler, what would be the position of their saints and holy men? At this it has been said: This whole universe belongs to Allah. How can therefore the godhead of another work and operate in the kingdom of the real Sovereign, particularly when those others whose godhead is acknowledged, are themselves also His subjects? Then, it has been said: He is the High, the Great! That is, He is far above that somebody else should be equal to Him in rank and should become His associate in His Being, attributes, powers or rights.

5. The heavens are almost rent asunder from above them,^{*3} and the angels glorify the praises of their Lord, and ask for forgiveness for those on the earth.^{*4} Behold, indeed it is Allah who is the Oft Forgiving, the Most Merciful.^{*5}

تَكَادُ السَّمَوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْ
فَوْقِهِنَّ^ج وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يُسَبِّحُونَ
بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِمَنْ
فِي الْأَرْضِ^ط إِلَّا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ
الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

*3 That is, it is not a trivial matter that a creature should be joined in lineage with Allah and regarded as His son or daughter. Another regarded as fulfiller of the needs and the answerer of the petitions so that the people should start invoking him for help. Yet another taken as the maintainer

of the entire world, and his devotees should start proclaiming that their holy saint heard the prayer of everyone at all places at all times and came to his help and answers his petition. Another invested with the authority to enjoin and prohibit things and declare them as lawful and unlawful, and the people should start obeying his commands, instead of the commands of God, as if he alone was their God. This boldness against God is such that they may well cause the heavens to break asunder. (This same theme has also been presented in Surah Maryam, Ayats 88-91).

***4** It means: the angels shudder with disgust when they hear such nonsense being uttered by the people in respect of their Lord, and they regard it as a rebellion against Him. They say: Glorified be Allah! No one can have the position that he should become an associate with Allah, Lord of the worlds, in divinity and command; there is none beside Him who may be our and all other servants benefactor so that hymns be sung in his praise and he be thanked. So they feel that it is a grave crime being committed in the world, and it may provoke Allah Almighty's wrath any moment. Therefore, they implore Allah for mercy again and again for the dwellers of the earth who have forgotten themselves and their God, and pray that they may yet be spared from the torment and given more respite to mend their ways.

***5** That is, it is only Allah's clemency, mercifulness and forgiveness that the people who have touched the extreme limits in disbelief, polytheism, atheism, sinfulness and tyranny, have been receiving respite after respite for years

and years, even for centuries; yet they not only go on receiving their sustenance but are also acclaimed as the great people of the world and they are provided with such adornments of the worldly life as cause the ignorant people the misunderstanding that this world perhaps has no God.

6. And those who take as protectors others than Him, Allah is Guardian*⁶ over them, and you are not a disposer of affairs over them.*⁷

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ
اللَّهُ حَفِيفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا أَنْتَ
عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ

*6 The word *auliya* (sing. *wali*) as used in the text is very comprehensive in meaning. The different beliefs and all sorts of diverse practices with regard to the false deities held and worshiped by the polytheistic people, have been described as: taking others as *auliya* (guardians) instead of Allah in the Quran. According to the Quran, a person takes such a one his *wali*:

(1) Whom he obeys in all matters, whose instructions he carries out and whose ways and customs and rules he follows in all affairs of life (Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 118-120; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats: 3, 27-30);

(2) In whose guidance he has full faith, and who he thinks will lead him aright and save him from error and deviation (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 257; Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 97; Surah Al-Kahf, Ayats 17-50; Surah Al-Jathiah, Ayat 19).

(3) About whom he trusts that he will protect him from the torment of God in the Hereafter if it really existed (Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 123, 173; Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 51; Surah

Ar-Raad, Ayat 37; Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayat 22; Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 65; Surah Az-Zumar, Ayat 3).

(4) About whom he has the belief that he helps him in the world in supernatural ways, protects him from disaster and afflictions, gets him jobs, blesses him with children, and fulfills his desires and all other needs. (Surah Houd, Ayat 20; Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 16; Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayat 41).

At some places in the Quran the word *wali* has been used in one of these senses and at others in all its meanings. The verse being commented upon is one of such verses. In it, taking others as guardians instead of Allah implies regarding them as one's patron and supporter and helper in all the four above mentioned meanings.

*7 Allah is watching over them and seeing whatever they are doing and is recording their conduct. It is His responsibility to call them to account and punish them. As for the words "You are not disposer of affairs over them", these have been addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him). They mean: Their destiny has not been placed under your control so that you may burn to ashes anyone who does not listen to you, or depose him from power, or annihilate him. This, however, does not mean that, God forbid, the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarded himself as such, and this was said in order to remove his misunderstanding or self-conceit, but this was meant for the disbelievers. Although apparently the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself is the addressee, the real object is to tell the disbelievers that the Prophet of Allah has made no such claims as were usually made by their so-called saints who

posed to possess great spiritual powers. Among the ignorant people it is generally thought that the so-called holy men have the power to ruin the destiny of anyone who behaves insolently towards them in any way; so much so that even after their death if somebody happened to dishonor their grave, or if nothing else, only nursed an evil thought about them in his mind, they destroyed him completely. Such a thought is in most cases spread by the holy men themselves. As for the good men who do not themselves say any such thing, their names are exploited by some other clever people, who spread such thoughts about them in order to promote their business. In any case this is regarded as a necessary corollary of spirituality and piety among the common people that one should possess the powers of making and marring destinies. To destroy the spell of this same fraud, Allah is addressing His Messenger (peace be upon him), as if to tell the disbelievers: You are no doubt Our Messenger and We have blessed you with Our revelations, but your duty is only to guide the people to the right path. Their destinies have not been placed under your control; they are in Our hands; therefore, to watch over the deeds and acts of the servants and to punish or not to punish them is Our own responsibility."

7. And thus We have revealed to you a Quran in Arabic,^{*8} that you may warn the mother town (Makkah) and those around it,^{*9} and you may warn of the Day of

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ قُرْءَانًا
عَرَبِيًّا لِّتُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَى وَمَنْ
حَوْلَهَا وَتُنذِرَ يَوْمَ الْجَمْعِ لَا

Assembling^{*10} about which there is no doubt. A party will be in Paradise and a party in the blazing Fire.

رَيْبَ فِيهِ فَرِيقٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَفَرِيقٌ فِي السَّعِيرِ



*8 The same thing which had been said in the beginning of the discourse has been said again with greater emphasis, and by making mention of the Arabic Quran, the listeners have been warned to the effect: The Quran is not in any foreign language but in your own language, you can understand it yourself directly, study its themes and see for yourself that the pure and selfless guidance that is being given in it can be from none other than the Lord of the Universe.

*9 That is, arouse them from slumber and warn them that there is nothing but destruction in store for them in consequence of the errors of morality and conduct in which they are involved and of the perverse principle on which they have ordered their individual and collective lives.

*10 That is, tell them also that this destruction is not confined only to this world but the Day has to come when Allah will gather together all mankind and subject them to accountability. Even if a person escaped the evil consequences of his deviation and wickedness in the world, there will be no chance of his escape on that Day, and highly unfortunate is he, who is doomed to a tragic fate both in this world and in the Hereafter.

8. And if Allah had willed, He could have made them one nation, but He

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَهُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً

admits whom He wills into His mercy. And the wrongdoers, there is no protector for them, nor a helper.*11

وَلٰكِنْ يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ ۗ وَالظَّالِمُونَ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيرٍ



***11** This theme has three objects in this context:

First, it is meant to instruct and console the Prophet (peace be upon him), as if to say: Do not grieve so much at the ignorance and deviation of the disbelievers of Makkah and their stubbornness and obduracy. It is Allah's will that man should be granted the freedom of choice and action. Then whoever desires to have guidance should be given guidance, and whoever wants to remain astray should be allowed to go astray. Had this not been Allah's will, there was no need whatsoever of sending the Prophets and the Books. For this only a creative hint of Allah Almighty's was enough, all human beings would have become as obedient as the rivers, mountains, trees, stones, and all other creatures. (In this connection, see Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 35-36, 107).

Secondly, its addressees are all those people who were involved in the confusion, and even now are, that if Allah really had wanted to show guidance to human beings and He did not like the differences of creed and practice that were prevalent among the people, and wanted to have the people adopt the way of the faith and Islam, there was no need for the revelation and the Book and the Prophethood. He could have easily achieved this object by creating everyone a believer and Muslim by birth. Another result of

this confusion was also this reasoning: When Allah has not done so, the different ways that we are following, are approved by Him, and whatever we are doing, is according to His will. Therefore, nobody has any right to object to it. (To remove this misunderstanding also this theme has been mentioned at several places in the Quran. Please see Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 112, 137, 148-149; Surah Yunus, Ayat 99; Surah Houd, Ayats 118-119; Surah An-Nahl, Ayats 9, 35 and the relevant E.Ns).

Thirdly, its object is to make the believers realize the truth about the difficulties that one generally faces in the way of preaching religion and reforming the people. Those people who do not understand the reality of the God, given freedom of choice and will and of the resulting differences of temperament and methods, sometimes become despondent at the slow progress of the reformatory work and wish that some supernatural things should appear from Allah, which should change the hearts of the people, and are sometimes inclined to adopt unsound methods of bringing about reformation, owing to excessive enthusiasm. (For this object also this theme has occurred at some places in the Quran, for which see Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 31; Surah An-Nahl, Ayats 91-93).

To highlight these objects a very important theme has been expressed in these brief sentences. Allah's real vicegerency in the world and His Paradise in the Hereafter is not an ordinary blessing, which may be distributed over creatures of the rank of the earth and stones and donkeys and horses as a common blessing. This is indeed a special blessing and

a blessing of a very high order for which even the angels were not considered fit. That is why Allah created man as a creature endowed with power and authority and placed vast means of His earth under his control and blessed him with these special powers so that he may pass through the test, success in which alone can entitle a servant to His blessings. This blessing is Allah's own; no one has a monopoly over it, nor can anyone claim to have it on the basis of a personal right, nor has anyone the power to take it by force. He who presents service before Allah, who takes Him as his Guardian and comes under His protection, alone can have it. Then Allah blesses him with help, guidance and grace to pass this test, so that he may enter His Mercy. As for the unjust man who turns away from Allah Himself and instead takes others as his patrons, Allah has no need that he should become his guardian by force. And the others whom He takes as his guardians do not possess any knowledge and power and authority that they may enable him to achieve success by dint of their guardianship of him.

9. Or have they taken protectors besides Him. But Allah, He is the Protector. And He gives life to the dead, and He has power over all things.*12

أَمْ آتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ
فَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْوَلِيُّ وَهُوَ يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى
وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

*12 That is, protection or guardianship is not a thing of one's personal choice and satisfaction that he may take anyone, he may please, as his guardian, and the other may

also become his real and true guardian and may do full justice to the function of guardianship. This is a reality, which does not change with the whims of the people. The guardian is he who is really the guardian, whether someone regards and acknowledges him as his guardian or not, and the one who is not in reality the guardian is not the guardian, no matter whether someone continues to regard and acknowledge him as his guardian till the last moment. Now, as for the question: What is the proof of only Allah's being the real guardian and of no one else's being the guardian? The answer is: Man's real guardian can be the one who changes death into life, who has created a living man by breathing life into inorganic substances, and who also possesses the powers and authority to do full justice to the function of guardianship. If there is such a one, apart from Allah, he may be made the guardian, and if He is Allah alone, then taking another beside Him as one's guardian is nothing but ignorance and folly and self-destruction.

10. And^{*13} in any thing over which you disagree,^{*14} then its ruling is (to be referred) to Allah. Such is Allah,^{*15} my Lord, in whom did I put my trust, and to whom I turn.^{*16}

وَمَا اٰخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيْهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
فَحُكْمُهُۥٓ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ذٰلِكُمْ اَللّٰهُ
رَبِّيْ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَاِلَيْهِ اُنِيْبُ



*13 From here to the end of verse 12, though the whole discourse is a revelation from Allah, the speaker is not

Allah but the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah. In other words, Allah Almighty is telling His Prophet (peace be upon him) to make this proclamation to the people. Such themes in the Quran sometimes begin with *qul* (say, O Prophet) and sometimes without it. Only the style indicates that the speaker at a place is not Allah but Allah's Messenger. Even at some places though the words are Allah's, the speaker are the believers, as for example in Surah Surah Al-Fatiha. Or, the speaker are the angels as in Surah Maryam, Ayats 64-65.

***14** This is the natural and logical demand of Allah Almighty's being the Master of the Universe and His being the real Guardian. When Sovereignty and Guardianship belong to Him only inevitably He alone is also the Ruler. And it is for Him to judge human beings' mutual disputes and differences. Those who restrict it only to the Hereafter make a mistake. There is no argument to prove that Allah's position as a Ruler has no effect in this world but is meant only for the life Hereafter. Likewise, those who restrict it only to beliefs and a few questions of religious nature are also in the wrong. The words are general and they clearly proclaim Allah as having the sole right to judge all disputes and differences. According to them, just as Allah is the Master of the Day of Judgment in the Hereafter; so He is the best of Judges in this world too. And just as He is the Settler of the differences pertaining to beliefs as to what is the truth and what is falsehood, so also in legal matters He is the Settler of differences as to what is pure for man and what is impure, what is lawful and desirable for him and

what is forbidden and undesirable. What is evil and vicious in morals and what is good and virtuous, what are the rights of the people in their mutual dealings and what are the right practices in social political and economic life and what are wrong. On this very basis the Quran has declared this principle as the fundamental of law:

If there arises any dispute between you about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger. (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 59). And: It does not behoove a believing man and a believing woman that when Allah and His Messenger have given their verdict in a matter, they should exercise an option in that matter of theirs. (Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 36).

And: O people, follow what has been sent down to you from your Lord and do not follow other patrons beside Him. (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 3).

Then, in the context in which this verse has occurred, it gives another meaning also and that is: To decide differences is not only Allah's legal right on accepting or rejecting which depends on man's being a believer or an unbeliever, but Allah, in fact, practically also is deciding between the truth and falsehood due to which falsehood and its worshipers are ultimately being destroyed and the truth and the faithful are being honored and exalted, no matter how delayed the enforcement of this decision may seem to be. This theme occurs in verse 24 below, and has been expressed at several places in the Quran. For this please see Surah Ar-Raad, Ayats 17, 41; Surah Ibrahim, Ayats 24-27; Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 8; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 18, 44 and the E.Ns.

*15 The same Allah, Who is the real Settler of disputes.

*16 These are two verbs one of which is in the past tense and the other in the present which contains the sense of perpetuity. In the past verb it was said: In Whom did I put my trust, i.e. I decided once and for all that as long as I live I have to rely on His help, on His guidance, on His support and protection, and on His decision. Then in the present verb it was said: To Whom I turn, i.e. Whatever situation I face in life, I turn only to Allah in it. I do not look towards others in an affliction or trouble or difficulty but invoke only Him for help. I seek only His refuge when I face a danger and depend on His protection. I turn to Him for guidance whenever I am confronted by a problem and seek its solution in His teaching and guidance. And I look up only to Him when I have a dispute with somebody with the belief that He alone will give the final decision, and have the faith that whatever decision He gives will be the right one.

11. The Creator of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you mates from yourselves, and mates among the cattle. He multiplies you thereby. Nothing is like His Likeness.*17 And He is the All Hearer, the All Seer.*18

فَاطِرُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا
وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجًا يَذُرُّكُمْ
فِيهِ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ
السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

*17 Literally, "Nothing is like His likeness," which implies this: Even if there were a likeness of Allah, nothing would

be like it, not to speak of being like unto Allah Himself.

*18 That is, at one and the same time He is hearing everybody and seeing everything in the Universe.

12. His are the keys of the heavens and the earth. He extends provision for whom He wills, and straitens (it for whom He wills). Indeed, He is the All Knower of all things.*19

لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ
يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عَلِيمٌ

*19 These are the arguments to prove why Allah alone is the true Guardian and why putting trust in Him alone is right and correct and why He alone should be turned to in all matters. (For explanation, see Surah An-Naml, Ayats 60-66; Surah Ar-Room, Ayats 20-22 and the E.Ns).

13. He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah, and that which We revealed to you (Muhammad), and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus, (saying), that establish the religion, and do not be divided therein.*20 Dreadful for those who associate (with Allah) is that to which you call them. Allah chooses for

﴿ شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى
بِهِ نُوحًا وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ
وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى
وَعِيسَى أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا
تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ
مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي
إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ

Himself whom He wills, and
He guides to Himself
whoever turns (to Him).^{*21}



***20** Here the same thing as already mentioned in the first verse has been further elaborated. It clearly states that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is not the founder of any new religion, nor was any of the Prophets a founder of a separate religion, but it has been one and the same religion which all the Prophets have been presenting from Allah from the very beginning, and the same is being presented by Muhammad (peace be upon him). In this regard, the first name mentioned is of the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him), who was the first Prophet after the Flood. After him the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been mentioned, who is the last of the Prophets; then the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) has been mentioned, whom the Arabs acknowledged as their guide, and last of all, the Prophets Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them) have been mentioned to whom the Jews and the Christians attribute their religions. This does not mean that only these five Prophets had been enjoined this religion, but what is meant to be said is that all the Prophets who came to this world, brought one and the same religion and the names of the five illustrious Prophets have been mentioned only as examples through whom the world received the most well known codes of divine law.

As this verse throws important light on *Deen* (religion) and its aim, it is necessary that we should study it to understand it well.

Lexically, the word *sharaa* in *sharaa lakum* (ordained for you) means to make the way. As a term it implies appointing a way, a code and a rule. Accordingly, in Arabic the words *tashri* and *shariat* and *shari* are understood as the synonyms of legislation and law and law giver respectively. This divine legislation, in fact, is the natural and logical result of the fundamental truths which have been stated in verses 1, 9 and 10 above: that Allah alone is the Owner of everything in the Universe, and He alone is man's real Guardian and it is for Him to judge the disputes that arise between human beings. Now, when Allah alone is the Owner and Guardian and Ruler, inevitably He alone is entitled to make the code of law for man and it is His responsibility that He should give this code of law to man. So, He has carried out His responsibility like this.

Then the words *min-ad-din* (of the nature of *din*) denote that the way appointed by Allah is legislation pertaining to *deen*. If the explanation of the word *deen* that we have given in E.N. 3 of Surah Az-Zumar above, is kept in view, there can be no difficulty in understanding that *deen* means nothing but acknowledging the sovereignty and leadership of someone and obeying his commands. And when this word is used in the meaning of the way, it implies the way which man must regard as obligatory for himself to follow and the one appointing it as the one whom he ought to obey. On this basis, calling God-appointed Way as legislation pertaining to *deen* clearly means that it is not merely recommendatory in nature or a mere counsel, but it is a law enjoined by the Master, which must necessarily be

obeyed by the servants and disobedience of which is tantamount to rebellion, and the one who does not obey it, in fact, denies Allah's being the Sovereign and Ruler and his own position of a servant.

Then, it has been said that this legislation which pertains to *deen* is the same as was enjoined on Noah. Abraham and Moses and the same now has been enjoined on Muhammad (peace be upon them all). This contains several points:

(1) That Allah did not send this legislation of His directly to every man, but appointed whenever He deemed proper and necessary a person as His Messenger and consigned the legislation w him.

(2) That this legislation has been the same from the beginning. It did not so happen that in one age one particular *deen* was appointed for a nation, and in another age another and contradictory *deen* was sent for another nation. Allah did not send many *deens* but on every occasion He sent one and the same *deen*.

(3) That it is an essential part of this *deen* to acknowledge the apostleship of those men through whom the legislation has been sent and the revelation in which the legislation has been couched, besides acknowledging the Sovereignty of Allah; and it is the demand of reason and logic too, that it should be a necessary part of it, for a man cannot obey this legislation at all unless he is satisfied that it is authentically from Allah.

Then it has been said that the Prophets were given this legislation pertaining to *deen*, with the express instruction: *Aqim-ud-din*; "Establish this *deen*", or "Keep this *deen*

established,” as variously translated by Shah Waliullah, Shah Rafiuddin and Shah Abdul Qadir. Both these translations are correct, for iqamat means both to establish and to keep established, and the Prophets were appointed to perform both the functions. Their first duty was to establish this din wherever it was not established, and the second that they should keep it established after they had established it, or had found it already established in a place. Obviously, a thing can be kept established only when it has already been established, otherwise the primary requirement would be to establish it first, and then make continuous effort to keep it established.

Here, two questions arise: First, what is the meaning of establishing the *deen*? Second, what is *deen* itself, which we have been enjoined to establish and then keep it established? Let us try to understand these questions well.

The word *iqamat* (to establish) when used in respect of a material or physical object implies causing it to rise from the sitting or lying positions or assembling the scattered parts of a thing and raising it up high. But when *iqamat* is used in respect of a thing which is not material but spiritual in nature, it does not merely imply preaching it, but also acting according to it as best as one can, introducing it and enforcing it practically. For example, when we say that so and so established his rule, it does not mean that he invited others to his government but that he subdued the people of the land and organized the different departments of the government in a way that the administration of the country began to function according to his orders. Similarly, when

we say that courts have been established in the country, it means that judges have been appointed to do justice and they are hearing the cases and giving judgments, and not that hymns in praise of justice are being sung and the people being impressed. Likewise, when the Quran enjoins the establishment of the Prayer (Salat), it does not imply that one should merely preach and exhort others to the Prayer but that one should not only perform it himself, observing all its conditions, but should also strive to make arrangement so that it becomes a regular practice among the believers. There should be mosques, there should be arrangements for offering the Prayer collectively and for the Friday congregational Prayer, and for making calls to the Prayer punctually. There should be the Imams to lead the Prayers and the scholars to give sermons, and the people should visit the mosques regularly and punctually and make offering the Prayer an essential part of their daily routine. After this explanation, there should remain no difficulty in understanding that when the Prophets were enjoined to establish the deen and to keep it established, it did not simply mean that they should practice it themselves and not only that they should preach it to others so that the people may accept its truth, but also that when the people have accepted it, steps should be taken to introduce and enforce the entire *deen* practically among them so that they may start living according to it forever afterwards. No doubt preaching is the primary necessary stage of this work without which there can be no second stage, but every intelligent person can himself see that in this command

preaching has not been made the object, but the real object is to establish the *deen* and keep it established. Preaching is certainly a means to the end but not the end in itself, but nobody can say that it was the only and foremost object of the mission of the Prophets.

Now, let us take the second question. When some people saw that the *deen* which has been enjoined to be established is common among all the Prophets, and their shariahs have been different, as Allah Himself says: We appointed for each community among you a law and a way of life, they formed the view that inevitably this *deen* did not imply the *shariah* commandments, rules and regulations but only the acceptance of Tauhid, the Hereafter and the Book and the Prophethood and performance of certain acts of devotion to Allah, or at the most, it included some of the major moral principles which have been common to all the *shariahs*. But this is a superficial view, which has been formed after having a cursory glance over the unity of religion and the difference of the *shariahs*. This is, however, a dangerous view, which if not corrected in time, may well lead to the separation between *deen* (religion) and *shariahs* (law). It was this very view in, which St. Paul was involved, who presented the doctrine of the *deen* (religion) without *shariah* (law), and corrupted the community of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). For, if *shariah* (law) is something separate from *deen* (religion) and the command is only for establishing the *deen* and not the *shariah*, inevitably the Muslims also, like the Christians, would regard the *shariah* as unimportant and overlook its

establishment as not being the real object by itself, and would remain content with only beliefs and a few important moral principles. Instead of determining the meaning of *deen* from such speculations, let us turn to the Quran itself and see whether the *deen* which we have been enjoined here to establish implies the beliefs and a few important moral principles only, or the *shariah* values and commandments as well. When we explore the Quran we find that what it regards as *deen* includes the following things as well:

(1) And the only command they were given was to worship Allah, making their *deen* sincerely His, turning all their attention towards Him, and to establish the Salat and to pay the Zakat, this alone is the true and right *deen*. (Surah Al-Bayyinah, Ayat 5). This shows that the Salat and the Zakat are included in this *deen*, whereas the commandments pertaining to both have been different in the different *shariahs*. No one can say that in all the previous *shariahs* the Salat has had the same form, the same elements, the same number of the *rakahs*, the same direction of the *qiblah*, the same times and the same other commands concerning it. Likewise, no one can claim also about the Zakat that in all the *shariahs* the same has been the exemption limits, the same rates and the same injunctions concerning its collection and distribution. But in spite of the difference of the *shariahs*, Allah has regarded both these as part of *deen*.

(2) You are forbidden carrion and blood, the flesh of swine and of that animal which has been slaughtered in any name other than of Allah, and of the strangled animal, and of

that beaten to death or killed by a fall or gored to death or mangled by a beast of prey, save of that you duly slaughtered while it was still alive, and of that which is slaughtered at (ungodly) shrines. It is also unlawful for you to try to find your fortune by means of divining devices, for all these things are sinful acts. Today the disbelievers have despaired of (vanquishing) your religion; therefore do not fear them but fear Me. Today I have perfected your *deen* for you and completed My blessing on you and approved Islam as the *deen* (way of life) for you. (Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 3). This shows that all these *shariah* commandments are also *deen*.

(3) Fight with those from among the people of the Book, who do not believe in Allah nor in the Last Day; who do not make unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful, and do not adopt the right *deen* as their *deen*. (Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 29). This shows that besides belief in Allah and the Hereafter it is also *deen* to accept and follow the commands about the lawful and the unlawful, which have been given by Allah and His Messenger.

(4) The woman and the man guilty of fornication, flog each one of them with a hundred stripes, and let not any pity for them restrain you in regard to a matter prescribed in the *deen* of Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. (Surah An-Noor, Ayat 2). It did not behoove Joseph to seize his brother by the king's *deen*. (Surah Yousuf, Ayat 76). This shows that the criminal law is also *deen*. If a man follows the criminal law prescribed by God, he is a follower of God's *deen* and if he follows a king's law, he is a follower

of the king's *deen*.

These are the four specimens in which the *shariah* commandments have been described as *deen* in clear words. But, besides these, a careful study shows that the eradication of the sins for which Allah has held out the threat of Hell (e.g. adultery, taking of interest, killing of a believer, consuming the property of the orphan, taking possession of the other peoples properties in unlawful ways etc.), and the crimes which become the cause of God's torment, e.g. sodomy (the act of Prophet Lot's people) and dishonesty in business dealings (as practiced by the Prophet Shuaib's people) should necessarily be included in *deen*, for if *deen* cannot save one from Hell and Allah's torment, what use could it be? Likewise, those *shariah* commandments also should be part of the *deen*, violation of which has been regarded as cause of entry into the Fire, e.g. injunctions relating to inheritance, after stating which it has been said: And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses the limits prescribed by Him, Allah will cast him into the Fire wherein he will have a disgraceful torment. (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 14). Likewise, the prohibition of those things whose prohibition Allah has mentioned with great emphasis and absoluteness, e.g. prohibition of the mother, sister and daughter and prohibition of wine, theft, gambling, false evidence, etc. if not included in the establishment of the *deen*, it would mean that Allah has given some unnecessary commands also, which are not meant to be introduced and enforced. Similarly, establishing those things which Allah has made

obligatory, e.g. fasting and pilgrimage, cannot be excluded from the establishment of *deen* only on the pretext that the entire month of fasting of Ramadan had not been enjoined in the previous *shariahs*, and pilgrimage to the Kabah was enjoined only in the *Shariah* which was inherited by the Ishmaelite branch of the Prophet Abraham's progeny.

As a matter of fact, the misunderstanding was caused only because the verse: We appointed for each community among you a law and a way of life, has been misconstrued to mean that since the *shariah* appointed for every community was separate and the command given was only to establish the *deen* (way of life) which was common to all the Prophets, the establishment of the *shariah* was not included in the establishment of the *deen*, whereas the real meaning of this verse is just the opposite of it. If the context (verses 41-50) in which this verse has occurred in Surah Al-Maidah is studied carefully, it will be seen that the correct meaning of this verse is: Whatever *shariah* was given by Allah to the community of a Prophet, was the *deen* for that community, and the establishment of the same *deen* was the object during his Prophethood. And since now is the period of the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) Prophethood, the *shariah* which has been given to the *Ummah* of Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the *deen* of this time, and to establish the same is to establish the *deen*. As for the difference of the *shariah*, it does not mean that the *shariahs* sent by God were mutually contradictory, but it means that in their details there have been some differences owing to the different environments, take, for

instance, the Prayer and the Fast. The Prayer has been obligatory in all the *shariahs*, but the *qiblah* of all the *shariahs* was not the same, and there was a difference in its times and *rakahs* and elements as well. Likewise, the Fast was obligatory in every *shariah*, but the month long fasting of Ramadan was not there in the other *shariahs*. From this it is not correct to conclude that the Prayer and the Fast as such are included in the establishment of *deen* but performing the Prayer in a particular way and observing the Fast at a particular time is excluded from it. However, the correct conclusion that one can draw is: To perform the Prayer and observe the Fast according to the rules and procedures that had been appointed for the people in the *shariah* of every Prophet amounted to establishment of *deen* in his time. In the present age the establishment of the *deen* is that these acts of worship be performed according to the procedures enjoined in the *Shariah* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The same is true about all other *Shariah* commandments as well.

Whoever studies the Quran carefully will see that this Book does not envisage that its adherents will live as subjects of the disbelievers and will pass a religious life under them, but it openly proclaims that it will have its own rule established; it demands from its followers that they should struggle with their lives for the intellectual, cultural, legal and political supremacy of the true faith; and it gives them a program for the reformation of human life, the major part of which can be acted upon only when political power and authority is in the believers' hand. As stated by itself,

the object of this Book's being sent down is: We have sent down this Book to you with the truth so that you may judge between the people in accordance with the light that Allah has shown you. (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 105). The Commandments given in this Book about the collection and distribution of the Zakat expressly envisage a government who should be responsible for collecting the Zakat and distributing it among the deserving people according to a laid down procedure. (Surah At-Taubah, Ayats 60,103). The prohibition of interest that has been enjoined in this Book and the declaration of war that has been made against those who do not abstain from taking interest (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 275-279) can be enforced only when the political and economic system of the country is entirely in the believers' hand. The Law of Retribution for murder (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 178), cutting off of the hand for theft (Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 38) and carrying out of the prescribed punishment for adultery and calumny (Surah An-Noor, Ayat 2-4) have not been enjoined on the assumption that the believers will remain subject to the police and courts of the disbelievers. The command to fight the disbelievers (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 190, 216) has not been given with the idea that the followers of this *deen* will carry out this command by getting enlisted in the army of disbelief. The command to take Jizyah from the followers of the former Books (Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 29) has not been given on the assumption that the Muslims will take Jizyah from them while being their subjects and will be responsible for their protection. And this thing is not true

only about the Madinite Surahs; in the Makkan Surahs as well a discerning eye can clearly see that the scheme envisaged from the very beginning was of Islam's supremacy and dominance and not of Islam's and the Muslims' subjugation under an un-Islamic rule. See, for instance, Surah Bani Israil, Ayats 76-89; Surah Al-Qasas, Ayats 85-86; Surah Ar-Room, Ayats 1-6; Surah As-Saaffat, Ayats 171-179; Surah Suad, Introduction, Ayat 11 and E.N. 12 on it.

Above all, this misinterpretation clashes with the great work that the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself accomplished during the 23 years of his Prophethood. Who can deny the fact that he subdued entire Arabia by means of both preaching and the sword and established in it a full fledged system of government with a detailed law, covering all aspects of life, from beliefs and rites of worship to personal conduct, collective morality, culture and civilization, economic and social life, politics and judiciary, peace and war. If this entire work of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is not accepted as a commentary of the command of *iqamat deen* (establishment of *deen*) which, according to this verse, he had been enjoined to undertake like all other Prophets, then it could have one of the two meanings: That earlier, God forbid, the Prophet (peace be upon him) should be blamed that he had been appointed only to preach and teach beliefs and a few important moral rules but he exceeded his mandate and established a government of his own whim and laid down a code of law, which was different from the common law of the Prophets

as well as in excess of it; or that Allah should be blamed that after having made the above mentioned declaration in Surah Ash-Shura. He went back on His own word, and made His last Prophet do something which was not only much over and about and different from the objective of *iqamat deen* as stated in this Surah, but on the completion of this mission He also made this declaration, contrary to His first declaration: Today I have perfected your *deen* for you. (Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 3). May Allah keep us safe from this! Apart from these two, if there is any third alternative, which makes this interpretation of *iqamat deen* plausible and also does not lay any blame on Allah or His Messenger, we would like to know it.

After giving the command for *iqamat deen*, the last thing that Allah has stated in this verse is this: *La tatafarragu fihi*: Do not create schisms in the *deen*: Be not divided in it. Creating schisms in *deen* implies that one should introduce something new in religion for which there exists no sound basis, and then should insist that belief and unbelief depend on the acceptance of the innovation, and should separate along with those who have accepted it from those who have not accepted it. This new thing can be of several kinds:

- (1) To introduce something entirely new into *deen*.
- (2) To exclude from *deen* something which actually belonged to it.
- (3) To tamper with the fundamentals of *deen* by misinterpretations and introduce new beliefs and novel practices.
- (4) To distort the *deen* by making changes of fundamental

nature in it, for example, by reducing what was important in it to un-important, by raising what was at most permissible to the position of imperative and obligatory, even to the position of the most fundamental pillar of Islam. Owing to such innovations, divisions first appeared in the communities of the Prophets; then gradually the creeds of the sects developed into wholly separate and mutually exclusive religious systems whose followers now do not have any idea that once they all belonged to one and the same origin. These divisions have nothing to do with the permissible and reasonable difference of opinion which naturally takes place among the scholars when they are engaged in understanding and studying the injunctions and fundamentals of the *deen* for the purpose of deriving and extracting points of law, and for which there is room in the words of the Book of Allah itself owing to the considerations of lexicon, idiom and rules of grammar. (For a detailed discussion of this subject, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 213; Surah Aal-Imran, Ayats 19, 50; Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 171; Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 77; Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 159; Surah An-Nahl, Ayats 118-124; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 92-93; Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 67; Surah Al-Muminun, Ayats 53-54; Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 53; Surah ArRoom, Ayat 32 and the E.Ns).

*21 Here the same thing as stated in verses 8-9 above, has been reiterated, and we have explained it in E.N. 11 above. The object of repeating it here is as if to say: You are presenting the clear highway of religion before them but the foolish people, instead of appreciating the blessing, are

becoming annoyed over it. But even among them there are the people of their own tribe, who are turning to Allah and Allah also is drawing them closer to Himself. But one should understand that Allah's bestowal of His blessings is not blind. He draws only him towards Himself who is inclined to be drawn and not him who runs away from Him.

14. And they did not become divided until after what came to them of knowledge,^{*22} through rivalry among themselves.^{*23} And if it had not been for a word that had already gone forth from your Lord for an appointed term, it would have been judged between them.^{*24} And indeed those, who were made to inherit the Scripture after them, are in hopeless doubt concerning it.^{*25}

وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ وَلَوْلَا
كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ
مُّسَمًّى لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ
أُورِثُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لَفِي
شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مُرِيبٍ



*22 That is, the divisions were created not because Allah had failed to send the Prophets and the Books, and therefore, the people could not know the right way and so invented their own separate religions, sects, schools of thought and systems of life, but divisions appeared after knowledge had come to them from Allah. Therefore, Allah is not responsible for it, but the people who abandoned the

clear principles of religion and commands of the *Shariah* and created their own creeds and religions are themselves responsible for it.

***23** That is, the motive for creating the divisions was not good, but they resulted from the desire for ostentation, love of an independent entity, mutual rivalry and stubbornness, the urge to humiliate and defeat one another, and greed for worldly wealth and position. When the clever and ambitious saw that if the godly people followed the true religion honestly, there would only be One God before whom the people would bow, there would be one Messenger whom they would acknowledge as their guide and leader, there would be one Book which they would turn to and there would be a clearly defined creed and code of life which they would be following. In such a system there could be no place of distinction for themselves, on the strength of which they could have their own leadership flourish so that the people should rally round them, and bow to them and also make rich offerings to them. This was the real cause which became the motive of the invention of new creeds and philosophies, new ways and rites of worship and new systems of life, and diverted a large part of humanity from the highway of divine religion and misled them into blind alleys. Then the mutual disputes of the factions and their religious, economic and political conflicts gave rise to intense bitterness, which in turn led to bloodshed and violence among humanity.

***24** That is, all such people who were guilty of inventing false systems and followed them would have been

annihilated in the world itself by a torment, and only the righteous ones allowed to survive, which should have indicated as to who was a follower of the truth and who of falsehood in the sight of Allah. But Allah has deferred this decision till Resurrection, for after such a decision in the world, the trial of mankind becomes meaningless.

***25** It means: After the passage of the time of every Prophet and his closest followers when the divine Book reached the later generations, they did not receive it with faith and conviction but were involved in doubts and suspicions and confusions about it. There were many causes for this state of affairs, which can be easily understood by a study of the case of the Torah and the Gospel. The earlier generations have not conveyed both these Books to the later generations well preserved in their original state and in their original words and language. They mixed up the divine word in them with the human word in the form of their commentary, history, verbal traditions and juristic hair-splitting. They made their translations prevail until the original was lost and only the translations remained. Their historical authenticity also was ruined, so much so that nobody now can say with certainty that the Book in his hand is the same that the world had once received through the Prophet Moses or the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon them). Then their elders in the different periods of history initiated such discussions on religion, divinity, philosophy, law, physics, psychology and sociology and invented such systems of thought that the people were lost in them and it became impossible for them to decide as to which was the

straight highway of the truth among the countless crooked ways. And since the divine Book did not exist in its original, reliable state, they could neither turn to any authority that could help them to distinguish the truth from falsehood.

15. So to that (religion) then invite (O Muhammad). And be upright as you are commanded. And do not follow their desires.*²⁶ And say: “I believe in what Allah has sent down of the Book.*²⁷ And I have been commanded to be just among you.*²⁸ Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us are our deeds and for you your deeds.*²⁹ No argument between us and you.*³⁰ Allah will bring us together, and to Him is the journeying.”

فَلِذَلِكَ فَادْعُ^ط وَأَسْتَقِمْ كَمَا
أُمِرْتُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَقُلْ
ءَامَنْتُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ
كِتَابٍ وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَعْدِلَ
بَيْنَكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ لَنَا
أَعْمَلْنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَلُكُمْ لَا
حُجَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ اللَّهُ يَجْمَعُ
بَيْنَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ^ط



*²⁶ That is, do not make any change nor effect any increase or decrease in this religion only to please them. Do not resort to any compromises with the misguided people on the principle of give and take. Do not make any room in the religion for their whims, prejudices and practices of ignorance in the hope that they would embrace Islam. Let the one who wants to accept, accept the original, pure religion of God, as sent down by Him, straight forwardly; otherwise let him go and enter any hell that he chooses for

himself. The religion of God cannot be changed for the sake of the people; if the people are desirous of their own well being and true success, let them change their ways and mold themselves according to it.

***27** In other words, I am not like those schismatic people who believe in some Books sent down by God and disbelieve in others; I believe in every Book sent down by Him.

***28** This sentence has several meanings:

(1) I have been appointed to discard the schisms and adopt true impartiality. I do not like to harbor prejudice in favor of one and against the other schism. I have one and the same kind of relationship with all human beings, and it is the relationship of justice and equity. I am a companion and supporter of everyone who follows the truth, whether he is an utter stranger for me, and an opponent of everyone who follows falsehood, whether he is a neighbor or a close kinsman.

(2) There is no place of distinction for anybody in the system of truth, which I have, been appointed to present before you. It honors everyone equally. It does not contain separate sets of the rights for the kindred and the stranger, the big and the small, the poor and the rich, the noble and the humble. Whatever is good in it is good for everyone, and whatever is sinful and unlawful and criminal in it is sinful, unlawful and criminal for everybody. In its just system, there is no exception even for my own self.

(3) I have been appointed to establish justice in the world. I have been entrusted with the mission of doing justice

between the people and should put an end to their excesses and injustice, which are prevalent in your society.

Besides, there is also a fourth meaning of this sentence, which remained hidden in Makkan life but became clear after emigration to Madinah, and it was: I am a judge appointed by God, I am responsible to do justice between you.

***29** That is, each one of us is himself responsible and accountable for his deeds. If you do good, you will yourself profit by its good results, and not we. If we do evil, we ourselves shall bear all its evil consequences, and not you. The same thing has been stated in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 139; Surah Yunus, Ayat 41; Surah Houd, Ayat 35; and Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 55.

***30** That is, we have done our best in conveying to you the message in a rational way. Now there is no use wrangling and disputing; therefore, even if you try to have a dispute with us, we have no desire to join in.

16. And those who argue about Allah after He has been acknowledged,^{*31} their argument has no weight with their Lord, and upon them will be (His) wrath, and for them will be a severe punishment.

وَالَّذِينَ يُحَاجُّونَ فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ
بَعْدِ مَا اسْتُجِيبَ لَهُمْ حُجَّتُهُمْ
دَاحِضَةٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَلَيْهِمْ
غَضَبٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ

***31** This is an allusion to the state of affairs that was being

experienced in Makkah at that time almost daily. Whenever it became known about somebody that he had become a Muslim, the people would start treating him mercilessly. They would worry and vex him, would neither let him have peace in the house nor in the street nor in society. Wherever he went, they would start an endless discussion with the object to somehow make him abandon Muhammad (peace be upon him) and return to the same creed of ignorance which he had rejected.

17. Allah it is who has sent down the Book with truth and the Balance.*³² And what will make you know, perhaps the Hour is near.*³³

اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ
وَالْمِيزَانَ ۗ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّ
السَّاعَةَ قَرِيبٌ

*³² *Mizan* (Balance): the *Shariah* of Allah, which, like a balance, brings out clearly the distinction between the right and the wrong, the truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, and righteousness and wickedness. In verse 15 above, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been made to say: I have been commanded to do justice between you. Here, it has been told that with this Book the Balance has come by which justice will be established.

*³³ That is, the one who is inclined to mend his ways, must mend his ways forthwith, he should not lose time under the delusion that the Hour of Judgment is yet far off. Man cannot be sure whether he will be able to take another breath or not, his present breath may be his last.

18. Only those seek to hasten it who do not believe in it. And those who believe are fearful of it and they know that it is the truth. Behold, indeed those who dispute concerning the Hour are far astray.

يَسْتَعْجِلُ بِهَا الَّذِينَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا مُشْفِقُونَ مِنْهَا
وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهَا
الْحَقُّ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
يُمَارُونَ فِي السَّاعَةِ لَفِي
ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ



19. Allah is Subtle with His slaves.*³⁴ He provides for whom He wills.*³⁵ And He is the All Strong, the All Mighty.*³⁶

اللَّهُ لَطِيفٌ بِعِبَادِهِ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ
يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ



***34** The word “Subtle” cannot fully convey the meaning of the word *Latif* as used in the original. This word contains two meanings: First, that Allah is very Kind and Compassionate to His servants; second, that He is a subtle observer and keeps in view even their minutest and most ordinary needs, which none else can see, and He fulfills them in such ways that they themselves do not perceive as to which need of theirs has been fulfilled at what time and by whom. Then the slaves here does not imply only the believers but all slaves. That is, Allah is Kind and Compassionate to all His slaves.

***35** It means: The demand of His general kindness and compassion is not this that all the slaves should be given

everything equally. For, although He is providing for each and every one from His treasures, there is no equality and uniformity in the measure of His provisions. He has given one thing to one and another to another. He has provided someone with something in a greater measure and another with another thing more generously.

***36** That is, His system of providence is functioning under His own might. No one has the power to change it or take away something forcibly from Him, or prevent Him from providing for somebody.

20. Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter, We give him increase in its harvest. And whoever desires the harvest of the world, We give him thereof, and for him there is no portion in the Hereafter.^{*37}

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ
تَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ وَمَنْ كَانَ
يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا
وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَصِيبٍ



***37** Two of the truths have been mentioned in the previous verse, which we are observing everywhere at all times:

(1) That Allah is Kind and Compassionate to all His servants.

(2) That the measure of His provisions is not the same for everybody, but it varies from man to man. Now, in this verse it is being told that although the partial differences in kindness and measures of provisions are countless, there is also a difference of fundamental nature, which is: there is

one kind of the provision for the seeker of the Hereafter and of another kind for the seeker of the world.

This is a very important truth which has been stated here briefly. Let us understand it fully, for it helps every man to determine his attitude to life.

Both the seeker of the Hereafter and the seeker of the world have been likened to the farmer in this verse, who labors persistently hard right from the time he prepares the soil until the time his crop is ready for harvesting. He puts in all his labor so that he may reap and gather the crop of the seeds he sowed. But because of the difference of the intention and objective and also the difference of the attitude and conduct, to a large extent, a vast difference takes place between the farmer who sows for the Hereafter and the farmer who sows for this world. Therefore, Allah has ordained different results and consequences of the labors of each, although the place of activity of both is this very earth.

As to the farmer who is sowing for the Hereafter, Allah has not said that he will get no share from the world. The world, in a more or less measure, he will get in any case. For, he also has a share in the common provisions being bestowed by Allah, and every person, good or bad, is getting his sustenance here. But Allah has not given him the good news of the harvest of this world but that his harvest of the Hereafter will be increased, for he is a seeker of the same, and is concerned about his end there. There are several ways in which this harvest can be increased. For example, as he will go on doing righteous deeds with sincere

intentions, he will be blessed with the grace to do more and more righteous deeds and his breast will be opened out for more and more good works. When he will make up his mind to adopt pure means for achieving pure aims, he will be blessed with pure means only and Allah will not let it so happen that all doors to goodness be closed and only doors to evil to remain open for him. Above all, his each good work, however small and insignificant, will at least be increased ten times over in the Hereafter, and there is no limit to this increase. Allah will increase it hundreds of thousands of times for whomever He may please.

As for the one who is only sowing for this world, and is not at all concerned about the Hereafter, Allah has plainly told him of two of the results of his labors:

(1) That, however hard he may struggle and strive, he will not get the whole of what he is trying for, but only a fraction of it, which Allah has ordained for him.

(2) That whatever he has to get, he will get only in this world, there is no share for him in the good things of the Hereafter.

21. Or do they have partners (of Allah) who have ordained for them in religion that which Allah has not allowed.^{*38} And if it had not been for a decisive word (gone forth already), it would have been judged between them.^{*39} And indeed the

أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ شَرَعُوا لَهُمْ
مِّنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَنُ بِهِ اللَّهُ
وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةُ الْفَصْلِ لَفُضِيَ
بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ

wrongdoers, for them is a
painful punishment.

عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

***38** In this verse the word *shuraka* (associates) obviously does not mean those beings whom the people invoke, or those in whose names they make offerings, or those before whom they carry out rites of worship, but inevitably it refers to those men whom the people regard as associates in the authority and sovereignty of Allah, whose thoughts, creeds, ideologies and philosophies they believe in, whose values they adopt, whose moral precepts and norms of civilization and culture they accept, and whose laws and rules and regulations they adopt to their rituals and rites of worship, in their personal and collective lives, in their trade and business dealings, in their politics and governments, as if they constituted the *shariah* that they had to follow faithfully. This is a complete code of life which the inventors invented against the legislation of Allah, Lord of the worlds, without His sanction and followed by the followers. This is the same sort of shirk as prostrating oneself before another and invoking another than Allah. (For further explanation, see Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 60; Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 87; Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 121, 136. 137; Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 31; Surah Yunus, Ayat 59; Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 22; Surah An-Nahl, Ayats 115-116; Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 52; Surah Al-Qasas, Ayats 62-64; Surah Saba, Ayat 41; Surah YaSeen, Ayat 74 and the relevant E.N.s).

***39** That is, this is such a boldness against Allah that had not judgment been deferred till Resurrection, the torment

would have been sent down on every such person, who in spite of being Allah's servant, enforced his own religion and way of life on Allah's earth, and those people also would have been visited by it, who forsook Allah's religion and accepted the religion invented by others.

22. You will see the wrongdoers fearful of what they have earned, and it will (surely) befall them. And those who believe and do righteous deeds (will be) in flowering meadows of the gardens. They will have what they desire with their Lord. That is the supreme bounty.

تَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ
مِمَّا كَسَبُوا وَهُوَ وَاقِعٌ بِهِمْ
وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي رَوْضَاتِ
الْجَنَّاتِ هُمْ مَّا يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ
رَبِّهِمْ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ



23. That is of which Allah gives good tidings to His slaves who believe and do righteous deeds. Say (O Muhammad): “I do not ask you a payment for it,^{*40} except kindness through kinship.”^{*41} And whoever earns a good deed, We will increase for him good therein. Indeed, Allah is

ذَٰلِكَ الَّذِي يُبَشِّرُ اللَّهَ عِبَادَهُ
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ
عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَمَنْ يَقْتَرِفْ حَسَنَةً نَّزِدْ لَهُ
فِيهَا حُسْنًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ

Oft Forgiving, Most
appreciative.*42



***40** That is, every effort that the prophet (peace be upon him) was making to save the people from Allah's punishment and to enable them to become worthy of the promise of Paradise.

***41** The word *qurba* in the original has been interpreted differently by the different commentators. One section of them takes it in the meaning of kinship and has given this meaning to the verse: I do not ask of you any reward for this service, but I do desire that you (O people of Quraish) should show some regard for the kinship that is there between me and you. You should have accepted my invitation, but if you do not accept it, you should not be so hard-hearted as to become my bitterest enemies in the entire land of Arabia. This is the interpretation given by Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas, which has been cited by Imam Ahmad, Bukhari. Muslim. Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarir, Tabarani, Baihaqi. Ibn Said and others on the authority of many reporters and the same commentary has been given by Mujahid. Ikrimah, Qatadah, Suddi, Abu Malik, Abdur Rehman bin Zaid bin Aslam, Dahhak. Ata bin Dinar and the other major commentators.

The other section takes *qurba* in the meaning of nearness and interprets the verse to mean: I do not seek from you any other reward than this that you should develop in yourselves a desire for attaining nearness to Allah. That is, you should be reformed. That is my only reward. This commentary has been reported from Hasan Basri and a

saying of Qatadah also has been cited in support of this, so much so that in a tradition by Tabarani this saying has also been attributed to Ibn Abbas. In the Quran itself, at another place, this same subject has been treated, thus: Tell them: I do not seek of you any reward for this work. I only ask of the one, who will, to adopt the way of his Lord. (Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 57).

The third group takes *qurba* in the meaning of the kindred, and interprets the verse to mean this: I do not seek from you any other reward than this that you should love my near and dear ones. Then, some of the commentators of this group interpret the kindred to mean all the children of Abdul Muttalib, and some others restrict it to Ali and Fatimah and their children. This commentary has been reported from Saeed bin Jubair and Amr bin Shuaib, and in some traditions it has been attributed to Ibn Abbas and Ali bin Hussain (Zainal Abedin), but this interpretation cannot be accepted for several reasons. Firstly, when Surah Ash-Shura was revealed at Makkah, Ali and Fatimah had not yet been married and, therefore, there could be no question of their children. As for the children of Abdul Muttalib, they were not all following the Prophet (peace be upon him) but some of them had openly joined with his enemies, and the enmity of Abu Lahab is well known. Second, the kindred of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were not only the children of Abdul Muttalib but he had his kindred among all the families of the Quraish through his mother and his father and his wife Khadijah. In all these clans he had his best supporters as well as his staunch

enemies. Third, and this is the most important point, in view of the high position of a Prophet (peace be upon him) from which he starts his mission of inviting the people towards Allah, it does not seem fitting that he would ask the people to love his kindred in return for his services in connection with his great mission. No person of fine taste could imagine that Allah would have taught His Prophet (peace be upon him) such a little thing, and the Prophet would have uttered the same before the Quraish. In the stories that have been narrated of the Prophets in the Quran, we find that a Prophet after Prophet stands up before his people and says: I do not ask of you any reward: my reward is with Allah, Lord of the worlds. (Surah Yunus, Ayat 72; Surah Houd, Ayats 29, 51; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 109, 127, 145, 164, 180). In Surah YaSeen the criterion given of a Prophet's truthfulness is that he gives his invitation without any selfish motive. (verse 21). In the Quran the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself has been made to say again and again words to the effect: I demand no reward from you for this message. (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 90; Surah Yousuf, Ayat 104; Surah Al-Muminun, Ayat 72; Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 57; Surah Saba, Ayat 47; Surah Suad, Ayat 86; Surah At-Toor, Ayat 40; Surah Al-Qalam, Ayat 46). After this, what could be the occasion for the Prophet (peace be upon him) to tell the people that in return for his service of inviting them to Allah, they should love his relatives. Then it seems all the more irrelevant when we state that the addressees here are the disbelievers and not the believers. The whole discourse, from the

beginning to the end, is directed to them. Therefore, there could be no question in this regard of asking the opponents for any reward, for a reward is asked of those who show some appreciation for the services that a person has rendered for them. The disbelievers were not at all appreciative of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) services. On the contrary, they regarded them as a crime and had turned bitterly hostile to him.

*42 That is, contrary to the culprits who commit disobedience knowingly, Allah's affair with the servants who strive to do good, is like this:

(1) He makes them even more righteous than they could be solely by their own efforts.

(2) He overlooks the weaknesses that remain in their work, and the sins that are committed by them inadvertently, in spite of striving to become good.

(3) Allah appreciates whatever little provision of the good deeds they bring and rewards them richly and generously for it.

24. Or do they say: "He has invented a lie against Allah."*43 Then if Allah willed, He could have sealed your heart.*44 And Allah will eliminate falsehood and will establish the truth by His words.*45 Indeed, He is Aware of what is in the breasts.*46

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَىٰ اللَّهِ كَذِبًا
فَإِنْ يَشَاءِ اللَّهُ يَخْتِمْ عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ
وَيَمْحُ اللَّهُ الْبَاطِلَ وَيُحِقُّ الْحَقَّ
بِكَلِمَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ
الصُّدُورِ

***43** In this interrogative sentence the style is of severe reproach. It means: O Prophet (peace be upon him): Have these people become so bold and fearless that they do not feel any shame in accusing you of inventing a lie, and that too of a heinous sin against Allah? They calumniate you that you are forging the Quran yourself and then falsely attributing to Allah.

***44** That is, such big lies are only uttered by those whose hearts have been sealed up. If Allah wills, He may include you also among them, but it is His mercy that He has kept you away from them. This answer contains a severe satire against the people who were so accusing the Prophet (peace be upon him). It means this: O Prophet, they think that you are a man like them. Just as they are in the habit of uttering any big lie only for the sake of a selfish motive, so they thought you also must have forged a lie for selfish ends. But it is Allah's mercy that He has not sealed up your heart as He has sealed up theirs.

***45** That is, it is Allah's way that He does not grant stability to falsehood, and in the long run proves the truth to be true. Therefore, O Prophet (peace be upon him), you should go on doing your mission, without paying any attention to their false accusations. A time will come when this whole falsehood will vanish like dust, and the truth of that which you are presenting will become visible and manifest.

***46** That is, He knows why you are being thus falsely accused and what are the actual motives that are working behind all this struggle that is being made to frustrate and

defeat you.

25. And He it is who accepts repentance from His slaves, and He pardons the evil deeds, and He knows what you do.^{*47}

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ
عِبَادِهِ وَيَعْفُو عَنِ السَّيِّئَاتِ
وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

***47** Calling the people's attention to repentance immediately after the preceding verse by itself gives the meaning, as if to say: O wicked people, why are you making yourselves still more worthy of God's punishment by falsely accusing the true Prophet? If you desist from your misdeeds even now, and offer true repentance, Allah will forgive you. Repentance means that one should feel remorse for the evil he has done, and should refrain and desist from it in the future. Moreover, it is also an inevitable demand of true repentance that one should try his utmost to compensate for the evil he has done in the past, and wherever compensation is not possible, he should seek Allah's forgiveness and should do more and more good to wipe off the blot from himself. But no repentance can be true repentance unless it is offered with the intention of pleasing Allah. Giving up an evil for some other reason or intention is no repentance at all.

26. And He answers (the supplication of) those who believe and do righteous deeds, and increase for them from His bounty. And

وَيَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ
مِّنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَالْكَافِرُونَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ

the disbelievers, for them will be a severe punishment.

شَدِيدٌ
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27. And if Allah had extended the provision for His slaves, they would have committed tyranny in the earth, but He sends down by the measure what He wills. Indeed, He is Informed, Seer of His slaves. ^{*48}

﴿ وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللَّهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهِ لَبَغَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنْ نُنزِّلُ بِقَدَرٍ مَّا يَشَاءُ ۚ إِنَّهُ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴾
۳۷

***48** If the context in which this thing has been said is kept in view, it appears that Allah here is alluding to the basic factor that was working in the rebellion of the disbelievers of Makkah. Although they were insignificant as against the mighty Roman and Iranian Empires and their position among the nations of the neighboring countries was no more than of a commercial tribe of a backward people, the relative prosperity and glory that they enjoyed among the other Arabs had made them so proud and arrogant that they were not inclined even to listen to the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah, and their chiefs of the tribes regarded it below their dignity that Muhammad bin Abdullah (peace be upon him) should be their guide and they his followers. On this it is being said: If We had actually opened up the gates of provisions for these mean people, they would have burst with pride. But We are watching over them, and are providing for them only sparingly so as to keep them within limits. According to this meaning this verse, in other words, is touching on the same

subject which has already been treated in Surah At-Taubah, Ayats 68-70; Surah Al-Kahf, Ayats 32-42; Surah Al-Qasas, Ayats 75-82; Surah Ar-Room, Ayat 9; Surah Saba, Ayats 34-36 and Surah Al-Mumin, Ayats 82-85.

28. And He it is who sends down the rain after they had despaired, and He spreads out His mercy. And He is the Protector, the Praiseworthy.*49

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْ
بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا وَيَنْشُرُ رَحْمَتَهُ
وَهُوَ الْوَلِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

*49 Here, the word *wali* implies the Being who is the Governor of the affairs of all His creations, Who has taken the responsibility of fulfilling all the needs and requirements of His servants.

29. And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and whatever He has dispersed in them both of creatures.*50 And He is Able to gather them when He wills.*51

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَتَّ فِيهِمَا مِنْ
دَابَّةٍ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ جَمْعِهِمْ إِذَا يَشَاءُ
قَدِيرٌ

*50 “In them both”: In both the earth and the heavens.

*51 That is, just as He has the power to disperse them, so He has also the power to gather them all together. Therefore, it is wrong to think that Resurrection cannot take place, and all the former and the latter generations cannot be raised up and gathered all together.

30. And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He forgives much.^{*52}

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيبَةٍ
فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُوا
عَنْ كَثِيرٍ



***52** One should note that here the cause of all human afflictions is not being stated but the address is directed to the people who were at that time committing disbelief and disobedience at Makkah. They are being told: Had Allah seized you for all your sins and crimes, He would not have even allowed you to live. But the calamities (probably the allusion is to the famine of Makkah) that have descended on you, are only a warning so that you may take heed and examine your actions and deeds to see as to what attitude and conduct you have adopted as against your Lord. And you can try to understand how helpless you actually are against God against Whom you are rebelling, and know that those whom you have taken as your patrons and supporters, or the powers that you have relied upon, cannot avail you anything against the punishment of Allah.

For further explanation it is necessary to state that as regards to the sincere believer, Allah's law for him is different. All the calamities and hardships that befall him go on becoming an atonement for his sins, errors and deficiencies. There is an authentic Hadith to the effect: Whatever sorrow and suffering, distress and grief, and affliction and worry that a Muslim experiences, even if it be a thorn prick, it is made an atonement by Allah for one or

the other of his errors. (Bukhari, Muslim). As for the hardships that a believer faces in the way of raising Allah's Word, they do not merely become an atonement for his deficiencies but also a means of the exaltation of ranks with Allah. In this connection, it cannot even be imagined that they descend as a punishment for sins.

31. And you cannot escape (from Allah) in the earth. And for you other than Allah there is not any protector, nor a helper.

وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ
وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٣١﴾

32. And of His signs are the ships in the sea, like mountains.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ الْجَوَارِ فِي الْبَحْرِ
كَأَلْأَعْلَمِ ﴿٣٢﴾

33. If He wills, He causes the wind to cease, then they would become motionless on the back (of the sea). Indeed, in that are signs for everyone patient and grateful. *53

إِنْ يَشَأْ يُسْكِنِ الرِّيحَ فَيَظْلَنَ
رَوَاكِدَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ إِنَّ فِي
ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ
﴿٣٣﴾

***53** Signs for him who patiently endures, who keeps himself fully under control and remains steadfast on the path of servitude under all circumstances, good or bad; who does not forget himself so as to become rebellious against God and cruel to the people, when favored with

good times, and loses heart and stoops to anything when visited by evil times. A grateful person is every such person who regards it as a bounty of Allah and not the result of any merit or excellence in himself when he is exalted to any high place of honor in life by a divine decree, and keeps his mind concentrated on the blessings which remain available to man even under the worst circumstances instead of his deprivations when deposed to the lowest of the low position. Thus, he continues to thank his Lord in both prosperity and adversity with his tongue and heart.

34. Or He could destroy them (by drowning) because of that which they have earned. And He pardons much.

أَوْ يُوبِقَهُنَّ بِمَا كَسَبُوا وَيَعْفُ
عَنْ كَثِيرٍ

35. And those who argue concerning Our revelations may know that they have no refuge.^{*54}

وَيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي
آيَاتِنَا مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ مَّحِيصٍ

***54** The Quraish, in connection with their business and trade, had also to visit Habash and the coastal lands of Africa, and in these journeys they used sailing ships and boats for crossing the Red Sea, which is a very dangerous sea. It is generally stormy and abounds in submerged rocks which are a serious hazard for navigation especially during the storms. Therefore, the state that has been depicted here by Allah could be fully realized by the people of the Quraish in the light of their personal experiences.

36. So whatever of things you have been given is an enjoyment of the life of the world.*55 And that which is with Allah is better and more lasting*56 for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord.*57

فَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَّعْ
الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا عِندَ اللّٰهِ
خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَلَىٰ
رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

***55** That is, it is not a thing at which man should exult whatever worldly wealth a person has in his possession, he has it only for a short time. He uses it for a few years and then leaves the world empty-handed. Then, although the amount of the wealth may be very high in the ledgers, practically only a fraction of it is used by the man himself. To exult at such wealth does not behoove a man who understands the truth about himself, about his wealth and this world itself.

***56** That is, that wealth is far more superior as regards to its nature and quality and is also eternal and everlasting.

***57** Here, trust (*tawakkul*) in Allah has been regarded as an inevitable demand of the faith and a necessary characteristic for success in the Hereafter. *Tawakkul* means:

(1) That man should have full confidence in the guidance of Allah, and should understand that the knowledge of the truth, the principles of morality, the bounds of the lawful and the unlawful, and the rules and regulations of passing life in the world, that Allah had enjoined, are based on the truth and in following them alone lies man's good and well

being.

(2) That man should not place reliance on his own powers and abilities, means and resources, plans and schemes and the help of others than Allah, but he should keep deeply impressed in his mind the fact that his success in every thing, here and in the Hereafter, actually depends on the help and succor of Allah, and that he can become worthy of Allah's help and succor only if he works with the object of winning His approval, within the bounds prescribed by Him.

(3) That man should have complete faith in the promises that Allah has made with those who would adopt the way of faith and righteousness and work in the cause of the truth instead of falsehood, and having faith in the same promises would discard all those benefits, gains and pleasures that may seem to accrue from following the way of falsehood, and endure all those losses, hardships and deprivations that may become his lot on account of following the truth steadfastly. From this explanation of the meaning of *tawakkul* it becomes obvious how deeply it is related with the faith, and why those wonderful results that have been promised to the believers who practice *tawakkul* cannot be obtained from the mere empty affirmation of the faith.

37. And those who avoid the greater sins and indecencies,^{*58} and when they are angry, they forgive.^{*59}

وَالَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْإِثْمِ
وَالْفَوَاحِشَ وَإِذَا مَا غَضِبُوا هُمْ
يَغْفِرُونَ



*58 For explanation, see Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 31; Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 151; Surah An-Naml, Ayat 90; Surah An-Najm, Ayat 32 and the E.Ns.

*59 That is, they are not wrathful and crazy but are temperate and cool minded. They are not revengeful but forbearing and forgiving by nature. If ever they feel angry at something they control their rage. This characteristic is the best of man's qualities, which has been highly commended in the Quran (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 134) and regarded as a major factor of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) success (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 159). According to Aishah, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) never avenged himself on anybody, however, when a thing enjoined to be held sacred by Allah was desecrated, he would award the punishment. (Bukhari, Muslim).

38. And those who answer the call of their Lord^{*60} and establish prayer, and whose affairs are a matter of counsel among them,^{*61} and who spend of what We have provided them.^{*62}

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا
الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ
وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

*60 Literally: "Who answer the call of their Lord", that is they hasten to do whatever Allah enjoins them to do, and accept whatever Allah invites them to accept.

*61 This thing has been counted here as the best quality of the believers and has been enjoined in Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 159. On this basis, consultation is an important pillar of the Islamic way of life, and to conduct the affairs of

collective life without consultation is not only the way of ignorance but also an express violation of the law prescribed by Allah. When we consider why consultation has been given such importance in Islam, three things become obvious:

First, that it is injustice that a person should decide a matter by his personal opinion and ignore others when it involves the interests of two or more persons. No one has a right to do, as he likes in matters of common interest. Justice demands that all those whose interests are involved in a matter be consulted, and if it concerns a large number of the people, their reliable representatives should be made a party in consultation.

Second, that a man tries to do what he likes in matters of common interest either because he wants to usurp the rights of others for selfish ends, or because he looks down upon others and regards himself as a superior person. Morally both these qualities are equally detestable, and a believer cannot have even a tinge of either of these in himself. A believer is neither selfish so that he should get undue benefits by usurping the rights of others, nor he is arrogant and self-conceited that he should regard himself as all-wise and all-knowing.

Third, that it is a grave responsibility to give decisions in matters that involve the rights and interests of others. No one who fears God and knows what severe accountability for it he will be subjected to by his Lord, can dare take the heavy burden of it solely on himself. Such a boldness is shown only by those who are fearless of God and heedless

of the Hereafter. The one who fears God and has the feeling of the accountability of the Hereafter, will certainly try that in a matter of common interest he should consult all the concerned people or their authorized representatives so as to reach, as far as possible, an objective and right and equitable decision, and if there occurs a mistake one man alone should not be held responsible for it.

A deep consideration of these three things can enable one to fully understand that consultation is a necessary demand of the morality that Islam has taught to man, and departure from it is a grave immorality which Islam does not permit. The Islamic way of life requires that the principle of consultation should be used in every collective affair, big or small. If it is a domestic affair, the husband and the wife should act by mutual consultation, and when the children have grown up, they should also be consulted. If it is a matter concerning the whole family, the opinion of every adult member should be solicited. If it concerns a tribe or a fraternity or the population of a city, and it is not possible to consult all the people, the decision should be taken by a local council or committee, which should comprise the trustworthy representatives of the concerned people according to an agreed method. If the matter concerns a whole nation, the head of government should be appointed by the common consent of the people, and he should conduct the national affairs in consultation with the leaders of opinion whom the people regard as reliable, and he should remain at the helm of affair only as long as the people themselves want him to remain in that position. No

honest man can try to assume the headship of a nation by force, or desire to continue in that position indefinitely, nor can think of coming into power by deception and then seek the people's consent by coercion, nor can he devise schemes so that the people may elect representatives to act as his advisers not by their own free choice but according to his will. Such a thing can be desired only by the one who cherishes evil intentions, and such a fraud against the Islamic principle of consultation can be practiced only by him who does not feel any hesitation in deceiving both God and the people whereas the fact is that neither can God be deceived nor the people be so blind as to regard the robber, who is committing robbery in the bright day light openly, as their well wisher and servant.

The principle of consultation as enshrined in *amru-hum shura baina-hum* by itself demands five things:

(1) The people whose rights and interests relate to collective matters, should have full freedom to express their opinion and they should be kept duly informed of how their affairs are being conducted. They should also have the full right that if in the conduct of the affairs they see an error, a weakness or a deficiency, they can check it and voice a protest, and if they do not see any change for the better, they can change their rulers. To conduct the people's affairs by keeping them silent and un-informed is sheer dishonesty which no one can regard as adherence to the principle of consultation in Islam.

(2) The person who is to be entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the collective affairs, should be

appointed by the people's consent, and this consent should be their free consent, which is not obtained through coercion, temptation, deception, and fraud, because in that case it would be no consent at all. A nation's true head is not he who becomes its head by trying every possible method, but he whom the people make their head by their own free choice and approval.

(3) The people who are appointed as advisers to the head of the state should be such as enjoy the confidence of the nation, and obviously the people who win representative positions by suppression or by expending wealth, or by practicing falsehood and fraud, or by misleading the people cannot be regarded as enjoying the confidence in the real sense.

(4) The advisers should give opinion according to their knowledge and faith and conscience and they should have full freedom of such expression of opinion. Wherever this is not the case, wherever the advisers give advice against their own knowledge and conscience, under duress or temptation, or under party discipline, it will be treachery and dishonesty and not adherence to the Islamic principle of consultation.

(5) The advice that is given by a consensus of the advisers, or which has the support of the majority of the people, should be accepted, for if a person (or a group of persons) behaves independently and acts on his own whims, even after hearing the advice of others, consultation becomes meaningless. Allah does not say: They are consulted in their affairs, but says: They conduct their affairs by mutual

consultations. This instruction is not implemented by mere consultation, but for its sake it is necessary that the affairs be conducted according to what is settled by consensus or by majority opinion in consultation.

Along with this explanation of the Islamic principle of consultation, this basic thing also should be kept in view that this consultation is not independent and autocratic in conducting the affairs of the Muslims, but necessarily subject to the bounds that Allah Himself has set by His legislation, and is subject to the fundamental principle: It is for Allah to give a decision in whatever you may differ, and if there arises any dispute among you about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger. According to this general principle, the Muslims can hold consultations in *Shariah* matters with a view to determining the correct meaning of a text or verse and to find out the ways of implementing it so as to fulfill its requirements rightly but they cannot hold consultations in order to give an independent judgment in a matter which has already been decided and settled by Allah and His Messenger.

***62** It has three meanings:

(1) They spend only out of what lawful provisions We have given them, they do not touch unlawful things for supplementing their expenditure.

(2) They do not set aside the provisions granted by us, but spend them.

(3) They spend out of what they have been given in the cause of Allah also, they do not reserve everything for personal use only.

The first meaning is based on this that Allah calls the lawful and pure provisions only as the provisions granted by Him. He does not call the provisions earned in impure and unlawful ways His provisions. The second meaning is based on that whatever Allah provides for man is provided so that he may spend it and not that he may set it aside and hoard it up like a miser. The third meaning is based on that according to the Quran, spending does not mean spending merely on his own self and for his personal needs, but it also contains the meaning of spending for the sake of Allah in His way. On account of these three reasons Allah here is counting spending of wealth among the best qualities of the believers because of which the blessings of the Hereafter have been reserved only for them.

39. And those who, when tyranny strikes them, they defend themselves.*63

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ



*63 This also is one of the best characteristics of the believers, they do not fall a prey to the tyrants. Their tender heartedness and forgiving nature is not the result of any weakness. They have not been taught to live humbly and meekly like the hermits and ascetics. Their nobility demands that when they are victors they should forgive the errors of the vanquished. When they possess the power, they should avoid vengefulness and when a weak or subdued person happens to commit a mistake they should overlook it. But when a powerful person, drunk with authority, commits violence against them, they should resist

and fight him with all their might. A believer is never cowed by a wicked person nor bows to an arrogant man. For such people he proves to be a hard nut which breaks the teeth of those who try to break it.

40. And the recompense^{*64} for an evil is an evil one like it.^{*65} Then whoever forgives and makes reconciliation, so his reward is due from Allah.^{*66} Indeed, He does not like wrongdoers.^{*67}

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا ۖ فَمَنْ
عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ
إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ

***64** The passage from here to the end of verse 43 is an explanation of verse 39.

***65** This is the first fundamental principle which must be borne in mind in retaliation. The right limit of retaliation is that one should return the same sort of ill treatment that he has received; he has no right to return a greater ill treatment.

***66** This is the second principle. It means: Although it is permissible to retaliate against the one who has committed a violence, wherever pardoning can be conducive to reconciliation, pardoning is better for the sake of reconciliation than retaliation. And since man pardons the other by suppressing his own feelings, Allah says that the reward of such a one is with Him, for he has suppressed his own self for the sake of reforming the evil-doers.

***67** In this warning allusion has been made to a third principle about retaliation, and it is this: One should not become a wrongdoer himself in the process of avenging a

wrong done by the other. It is not permissible to do a greater wrong in retaliation for the wrong done. For example, if a person gives another a slap, the other can return only one slap; he cannot shower blows and kicks. Likewise, it is not right to commit a sin in retaliation for a sin. For example, if a wicked man has killed the son of someone, it is not right to go and kill the son of the former. Or, if a mean person has violated the chastity of a person's sister or daughter, it is not lawful for him to commit rape on the former's sister or daughter.

41. And whoever takes revenge after he has suffered wrong, then for such there is no way (of blame) against them.

وَلَمَنْ أَنْتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهِ
فَأُولَئِكَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ سَبِيلٍ



42. The way (of blame) is only against those who wrong mankind, and rebel in the earth without right. Those will have a painful punishment.

إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
يَظْلِمُونَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْغُونَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ۗ أُولَئِكَ
لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ



43. And whoever is patient and forgives. Indeed, that is of the affairs (requiring) courage.*68

وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ لَمِنْ
عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ



*68 One should note that the qualities of the believers that

have been mentioned in these verses, practically existed in the lives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions, and the disbelievers of Makkah were their eye-witnesses. Thus, Allah has, in fact, told the disbelievers: The real wealth is not the provisions that you have received for passing the transitory life of the world, and are bursting with pride of it, but the real wealth are the morals and characteristics which the believers from your own society have developed by accepting the guidance given by the Quran.

44. And he whom Allah sends astray, then for him there is no protector after Him.^{*69} And you (Muhammad) will see the wrong doers when they see the punishment, saying, is there any way of return.^{*70}

وَمَنْ يُضَلِّ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ وِلِّيٍّ
مِّنْ بَعْدِهِ ۗ وَتَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ
لَمَّا رَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ يَقُولُونَ
هَلْ إِلَىٰ مَرَدٍّ مِّنْ سَبِيلٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

^{*69} That is, Allah sent the best Book like the Quran for the guidance of the people, which is giving them the knowledge of the reality in a rational and effective way and guiding them to the right way of life. He sent a Prophet like Muhammad (peace be upon him) for their guidance, a man of better character than whom they had never seen before. And then Allah also showed them the results of the teaching and training of this Book and this Messenger in the lives of the believers. Now, if after witnessing all this, a person turns away from the guidance, Allah casts him into the same deviation from which he has no desire to come out.

And when Allah Himself has driven him away, who else can take the responsibility of bringing him to the right way.

*70 That is, today when there is a chance of coming back, they are refusing to come back. Tomorrow when the judgment will have been passed and the sentence enforced, then seeing their fate they will wish to come back.

45. And you will see them, (when) they are brought before it (Hell), they shall be downcast with disgrace, looking with veiled eyes.*71

And those who believe will say, indeed, the losers are those who lost themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection. Behold, indeed the wrongdoers in an enduring punishment.

وَتَرَاهُمْ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا
خَشِعِينَ مِنْ آذِنِ
الَّذِي يُنْظَرُونَ مِنْ طَرَفٍ خَفِيٍّ
وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّ
الْخَسِرِينَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَهْلِيهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
أَلَّا إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ فِي عَذَابٍ
مُتَّقِمٍ

*71 By nature man is such that when a dreadful scene comes before him and he knows that soon he is going to fall a prey to it, he closes his eyes forthwith in fear. Then, when he cannot hold himself any longer, he tries to see what kind of the calamity it is and how far away it is from him. But he does not find the courage to lift up his head and have a full view of it. Therefore, he opens his eyes a little again and again and sees it from the corner of the eye, and then again

closes his eyes from fear. The same state of those who will be driven to Hell has been depicted here.

46. And they will have no protectors to help them besides Allah. And he whom Allah sends astray, then for him there is no way.

وَمَا كَانَتْ لَهُمْ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ
يَنْصُرُونَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ
يُضِلِّ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ



47. Answer the call of your Lord before there comes from Allah a Day which cannot be averted.*72 You have no refuge on that Day, nor have you any (power of) denial.*73

أَسْتَجِيبُوا لِرَبِّكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ
يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ
مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ مَلْجَأٍ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَمَا
لَكُمْ مِنْ نَكِيرٍ



*72 That is, neither will Allah Himself avert it, nor has anyone else the power to avert it.

*73 This sentence has several other meanings also:

- (1) You will not be able to deny any of your misdeeds.
- (2) You will not be able to hide yourself even in disguise.
- (3) You will not be able to protest or show any displeasure against any treatment that is meted out to you.
- (4) It will not be in your power to change the condition in which you are placed.

48. So if they turn away, then We have not sent you as a

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ

guard over them.^{*74} Upon you is not except to convey (the message). And indeed, when We cause man to taste of mercy from Us he rejoices in it. And if some evil befalls them because of that which their own hands have sent before, then indeed, man (becomes) ingrate.^{*75}

عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيزًا ۚ اِنْ عَلَيْكَ اِلَّا
الْبَلٰغُ ۗ وَاِنَّا اِذَا اُذْقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ
مِنَّا رَحْمَةً فَرِحَ بِهَا ۗ وَاِنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ
سَيِّئَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيهِمْ فَاِنَّ
الْاِنْسَانَ كَفُوْرٌ



***74** That is, you have not been made responsible that you must bring them to the right path anyhow, nor will you be held accountable as to why these people did not come to the right path.

***75** Man here implies the mean and shallow people who are the subject of the discourse here, who have gotten a measure of the worldly provisions and are exulting in this, and who do not pay any attention when they are admonished to come to the right path. But when they are visited by a disaster in consequence of their own misdeeds, they start cursing their fate, and forget all those blessings which Allah has blessed them with, and do not try to understand how far they themselves are to be blamed for the condition in which they are placed. Thus, neither does prosperity become conducive to their reformation nor can adversity teach them a lesson and bring them to the right path. A study of the context shows that this is, in fact, a satire on the attitude of the people who were the addressees of the above discourse, but they have not been addressed to

tell them of their weakness directly, but the weakness of man has been mentioned in a general way and pointed out that what is the real cause of his sad plight. This gives an important point of the wisdom of preaching: the weaknesses of the addressee should not be made the target directly, but they should be mentioned in a general way so that he is not provoked, and if his conscience has still some life in it, he may try to understand his shortcoming with a cool mind.

49. To Allah belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth.*76 He creates what He wills. He bestows female (offspring) upon whom He wills, and bestows male (offspring) upon whom He wills.

لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ
إِنثًا وَيَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ الذُّكُورَ



*76 That is, if the people who are involved in disbelief and polytheism do not believe even after the admonition, they may not, for the truth is the truth. The kingdom of the earth and heavens has not been entrusted to the so-called kings and despots and chiefs of the world nor has any prophet, saint, god or goddess any share in it, but its Master is One Allah alone. His rebel can neither succeed by his own power, nor can any of the beings whom the people look upon as owners of divine powers by their own folly, come to their rescue and aid.

50. Or He bestows them both, males and females,

أَوْ يُزَوِّجُهُمْ ذُكْرَانًا وَإِنثًا

and He makes barren whom He wills. Indeed, He is the All Knower, Powerful.*77

وَيَجْعَلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ عَقِيمًا إِنَّهُ

عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ

*77 This is a manifest proof of Allah's Sovereignty being absolute. No man, whether he be posing as owner of the highest worldly authority, or regarded as owner of great spiritual powers, has ever been able to produce children for himself according to his own choice and desire, not to speak of providing children for others. The one whom Allah made barren could not have children through any medicine, any treatment, any amulet or charm. The one whom Allah gave only daughters could not get a single son by any device, and the one whom Allah gave only sons could not have a single daughter by any means. In this matter everyone is absolutely helpless. Even after seeing all this if some one posed to be all-powerful in God's kingdom, or regarded another as a possessor of the powers, it would be his own shortsightedness for which he himself will suffer, the truth will not change at all.

51. And it*78 is not for any mortal that Allah should speak to him except (it be) by revelation,*79 or from behind a veil,*80 or (that) He sends a messenger to reveal by His permission what He wills.*81 Indeed, He is Exalted, Wise.*82

وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ

إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَائِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ

يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بآذِنِهِ مَا

يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ حَكِيمٍ

*78 In conclusion, the same theme with which the discourse began has been reiterated. To understand it fully, please see the first verse of this Surah and the E.N. on it.

*79 Here, *wahi* means to inspire somebody with something, or to show something to somebody in a vision as were the Prophets Abraham and Joseph shown (peace be upon them). See Surah Yousuf, Ayats 4, 100; Surah As-Saaffat, Ayat 102.

*80 That is, one may hear a voice without seeing the speaker, just as it happened in the case of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) when he suddenly began to hear a voice from a tree on Mount Toor, while the speaker was hidden from him. See Surah TaHa, Ayats 11-48, Surah An-Naml, Ayats 8-12; Surah Al-Qasas, Ayats 30 35).

*81 This is the form of *wahi* by which all divine Scriptures have actually reached the Prophets of Allah. Some people have misinterpreted this sentence and given it this meaning Allah sends a messenger who by His command conveys His message to the common people. But the words of the Quran *fa-yuhiya bi-idni-hi ma yasha* (then He reveals by His command whatever He wills) show that this interpretation is absolutely wrong. The Prophets's preaching before the common people has neither been called *wahi* anywhere in the Quran nor is there any room in Arabic for describing a man's speaking to another man openly by the word *wahi*. Lexically, *wahi* means secret and swift instruction. Only an ignorant person will apply this word to the common preaching by the Prophets.

*82 That is, He is far above that He should speak to a man

face to face, and His wisdom is not helpless that He may adopt another method of conveying His instructions to a servant of His than of speaking to him face to face.

52. And thus We have revealed to you (Muhammad) a Spirit of Our command.*⁸³ You did not know what the Scripture was, nor what the Faith was.*⁸⁴ But We have made it a light by which We guide whom We will of Our slaves. And indeed, you are guided to a straight path.

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا
مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا
الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَكِن
جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ
نَّشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدَى
إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٢﴾

***83** “And thus” does not refer only to the last method of *wahi*, but to all the three methods as mentioned in the preceding verses, and a spirit implies *wahi* (revelation), or the teaching given to the Prophet (peace be upon him) by revelation. Both the Quran and the Hadith confirm that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was given instruction by all these three methods:

(1) In a Hadith Aishah has stated that revelation in the beginning came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the form of true visions. (Bukhari, Muslim) This continued in later life also. Traditions mention many visions in which he was given some teaching or informed of something and in the Quran also a vision of his has been clearly mentioned (Surah Al-Fath, Ayat 27). Besides, several traditions also

mention that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: I have been inspired with such and such a thing, or I have been informed of this and this, or I have been enjoined this, or I have been forbidden this. All such things relate to the first kind of the *wahi* and the divinely inspired traditions (*Ahadith Qudsi*) mostly belong to this category of the traditions.

(2) On the occasion of the *Miraj* (Ascension) the Prophet (peace be upon him) was honored with the second kind of the *wahi* also. In several authentic traditions the way mention has been made of the commandment of the Salat five times a day and the Prophet's (peace be upon him) making submissions in that regard again and again clearly shows that at that time a similar dialogue took place between Allah Almighty and His servant Muhammad (peace be upon him) as had taken place between Allah and the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) at the foot of Mount Toor. As for the third kind, the Quran itself testifies that it was conveyed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) through Angel Gabriel, the trustworthy. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 97; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 192-195).

*84 That is, before his appointment to Prophethood, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had never had any idea that he was going to receive a Book, or that he should receive one, but he was completely unaware of the heavenly Books and the subjects they treated. Likewise, although he believed in Allah, intellectually he was not aware of the requirements of the faith in Allah, nor did he know that along with that belief it was also necessary that he should

believe in other things, the angels, the Prophethood, the divine Books and the Hereafter. Both these things were such as were not hidden even from the disbelievers of Makkah. No one belonging to Makkah could bear witness that he had ever heard anything pertaining to a divine Book from the Prophet (peace be upon him) before his sudden proclamation of the Prophethood, or any such thing that the people should believe in such and such things. Obviously if a person had already been looking forward to becoming a prophet, it could not be that the people who remained socially associated with him day and night for 40 years should not have even so much as heard the word Book and the faith from him, and after 40 years he should suddenly have started making fiery speeches on the same themes.

53. The path of Allah, to whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Behold, all affairs reach towards Allah. *85

صِرَاطِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
إِلَى اللَّهِ تَصِيرُ الْأُمُورُ

*85 This is the final warning that has been given to the disbelievers. It means: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said something and you heard and rejected it. The matter would not end there. Whatever is happening in the world, will be presented before Allah, and ultimately He Himself will decide what should be the end of every person.



Az-Zukhruf

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

It is derived from the word *zukhruf-an* which occurs in verse 33 of this Surah.

Period of Revelation

It could not be known from any authentic tradition, but a study of its subject matter shows that this Surah also was revealed in the same period in which the Surahs Al-Mumin, As-Sajdah and Ash-Shura, were revealed. It appears that the revelation of this series of the Surahs began when the disbelievers of Makkah were planning to put an end to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life. Day and night they were holding consultations in their assemblies as how to eliminate him and even an attack on his life had also been made as has been clearly referred to in verses 79-80.

Theme and Topics

In this Surah a forceful and severe criticism has been made of the Quraish and the common Arabs creeds and superstitions of ignorance in which they persisted. Their stubbornness has been exposed in a firm and effective way, so that every member of the society, who was reasonable in

some degree, should be made to consider the evils in which the community was involved and its tyrannical treatment of the person who was trying to redeem it.

The discourse starts in a way as if to say: You, by means of your mischief, want that the revelation of this Book should be stopped, but Allah has never withheld the appointment of His Prophets and the revelation of His Books because of the mischief of the people, but has destroyed the wicked people, who obstructed the way of His guidance. The same He will do again. A little further in verses 41-43 and 79-80 the same thing has been reiterated. Though the people who were plotting against his life are meant, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been addressed to the effect: Whether you remain alive or not, We will certainly punish the wicked. And the people themselves have been plainly warned to the effect: If you have decided to take an action against Our Prophet, We too will take a decisive action.

Then, it has been told: What is the reality of the religion that the people are following so devotedly and what are the arguments on whose strength they are resisting Muhammad (peace be upon him).

They themselves admit that the Creator of the earth and heavens and of themselves and their deities is only Allah. They also know and admit that the blessings they are benefiting from have been bestowed by Allah; yet they insist on making others associates of Allah in His Godhead. They regard Allah's servants as His children, and even the daughters, whom they regard as disgraceful for themselves. They believe that the angels are goddesses. They have

carved their images as females. They adorn them with female dresses and ornaments and call them daughters of Allah. They worship them and invoke them for the fulfillment of their needs. How did they know that the angels were female?

When they are rebuked for these superstitions, they present the pretense of destiny and say: Had Allah disapproved of these our practices, we could not have worshiped these images, whereas the means of finding out whether Allah had approved of something or not, are His Books and not those things which are happening in the world according to His Will. For under His Will not only idol worship but crimes like theft and adultery, robbery, murder, etc. also are being committed. Can this argument be used to justify as right and proper for the commission of every crime and evil in the world?

When it is asked: Do you have any authority, apart from this wrong argument, for the polytheism of yours? They reply: The same has been the practice since the time of our forefathers. In other words, this in their opinion is a strong enough argument for a creed's being right and true, whereas the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), descent from whom is the only basis of their pride and distinction, had rejected the religion of his elders and left his home, and he had discarded every such blind imitation of his forefathers, which did not have the support of any rational argument. Then, if these people had to follow their elders only, for this also they selected their most ignorant elders and abandoned their most illustrious elders like the

Prophets Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them).

When they are asked: Has ever a Prophet or a Book, sent down by God, given this teaching that others beside Allah are worthy of worship? They present this practice of the Christians as an argument that they took Jesus (peace be upon him), son of Mary, as son of God and worshiped him; whereas the question was not this whether the community of a Prophet had committed shirk or not, but whether a Prophet had himself taught shirk. Jesus (peace be upon him), son of Mary, had never said that he was son of God and that the people should worship him. His was the same teaching which every other Prophet had given: My Lord as well as your Lord is Allah, so worship Him alone.

They were disinclined to believe in the Prophethood of the Prophet (peace be upon him) because he was neither a rich man nor a person of high worldly position and rank. They said: Had Allah willed to appoint a prophet among us, He would have appointed one of the great men of our two cities (Makkah and Taif). On that very basis, Pharaoh also had looked down upon the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and said: If Allah, the King of the heavens, had to send a messenger to me, the king of the earth, He would have sent him with bracelets of gold and a company of angels in attendance. Where from has this mendicant appeared. I am superior to him, for the kingdom of Egypt belongs to me, and the canals of the Nile are flowing under my control. What is the status of this man as against me? He has neither wealth nor authority.

Thus, after criticizing each practice of ignorance of the

disbelievers and rejecting it with rational arguments, it has been pointed out: Neither has God any offspring, nor are there separate gods of the earth and heavens, nor is there any intercessor who may be able to protect from His punishment those who adopt deviation knowingly. Allah is far above this that He should have children. He alone is the God of the whole Universe. All others are His servants and not associates in His attributes and powers, and only such men can intercede with Him, who are themselves followers of the truth and they also can intercede only for those who may have adopted obedience of the truth in the world.

1. Ha. Mim.

حَم

2. By the lucid Scripture.

وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

3. Indeed, We made it a Quran in Arabic that you might understand.*1

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

*1 The object of taking an oath by the Quran is to impress this fact: We are the Author of this Book and not Muhammad (peace be upon him), and the attribute of the Quran chosen for the oath is that it is a lucid Scripture. To swear by the Quran itself with this attribute in order to impress that the Quran is divine Word by itself implies this: O people, this is an open Book before you. Read it intelligently. Its clear and un-ambiguous themes, its language and literary style, its teaching which distinguishes the truth from falsehood, all are testifying to the fact that none but the Lord of the Universe could be its Author.

Then the sentence: “Indeed, We made it a Quran in Arabic that you might understand” has two meanings:

(1) It is not in any foreign tongue but in your own language; therefore, you can have no difficulty in assessing its value and worth. Had it been in a non-Arabic language, you could have offered the excuse that you could not determine its being divine, or otherwise, for you did not understand it. But you cannot offer this excuse about this Arabic Quran. Its each word is clear to you, its each passage and discourse, both in language and in theme, is plain for you. Now you may see it for yourself whether this could be the word of Muhammad (peace be upon him) or of some other Arab.

(2) We have sent this Book in Arabic because We are addressing the Arabs, who can only understand an Arabic Quran. The person who disregards this expressly rational ground for sending down the Quran in Arabic and regards it as the word of Muhammad (peace be upon him) instead of divine Word only because Muhammad’s mother tongue is also Arabic, commits a grave injustice. (To understand this second meaning, please see Surah HaMim As-Sajdah, Ayat 44 and its E.N).

4. And indeed it is in the Source of Decrees with Us,^{*2} exalted, full of wisdom.^{*3}

وَإِنَّهُ فِي أُمِّ الْكِتَابِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلِيٌّ
حَكِيمٌ

^{*2} *Umm al-Kitab*: the “Original Book”: the Book from which all the Books sent down to the Prophets have been derived. In Surah Al-Waqiah the same thing has been

described as *Kitab-um-Maknun* (the hidden and preserved Book) and in Surah Al-Burooj, Ayat 22 as *Lauh-i Mahfuz* (the preserved tablet), that is, the tablet whose writing cannot be effaced, which is secure from every kind of interference. By saying that the Quran is inscribed in *Umm al-Kitab*, attention has been drawn to an important truth. Different Books had been revealed by Allah in different ages to different Prophets for the guidance of different nations in different languages, but all these Books invited mankind to one and the same faith. They regarded one and the same thing as the truth. They presented one and the same criterion of good and evil. They propounded the same principles of morality and civilization. In short, they brought one and the same *Deen* (religion). The reason was that their source and origin was the same, only words were different; they had the same meaning and theme which is inscribed in a Source Book with Allah, and whenever there was a need, He raised a Prophet and sent down the same meaning and subject-matter clothed in a particular diction according to the environment and occasion. Had Allah willed to raise the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in another nation instead of the Arabs, He would have sent down the same Quran in the language of that nation. In it the meaning and content would have been expressed according to the environments and conditions of the people and land. The words would have been different and the language also different but the teaching and guidance the same basically, and it would be the same Quran though not the Arabic Quran. This same thing has been expressed in

Surah Ash-Shuara, thus: This (Book) has been revealed by the Lord of the worlds. The trustworthy Spirit has come down with it upon your heart so that you may become one of those who are (appointed by God) to warn (the people) in plain Arabic language, and this is also contained in the scriptures of the former peoples. (verses 192-196). (For explanation, see Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 192-196 and the E.Ns there of).

*3 This sentence is related both to *Kitab-i mubin* and to *Umm al-Kitab*. Thus, it is in praise of both the Quran and the Original Book from which the Quran has been derived. This praise is meant to impress the fact that if a person does not recognize the true worth of this Book and does not benefit from its wise teachings because of his own folly, it would be his own misfortune. If someone tried to degrade it and found fault with it, it would be his own meanness. It cannot become worthless on account of someone's lack of appreciation of it, and its wisdom cannot be eclipsed by anyone's throwing dust at it. This is by itself a glorious Book, which stands exalted by its matchless teaching, miraculous eloquence, faultless wisdom and the sublime personality of its great Author. Therefore, none can succeed in minimizing its value and worth. In verse 44 below the Quraish in particular and the Arabs in general have been told that the revelation of the Book for which they are showing such lack of appreciation had provided them a unique opportunity of honor, which if they lost, would subject them to a severe accountability before God. (See E.N. 39 below).

5. Then should We turn away the reminder from you, because you are a transgressing people.*4

أَفَنضِرْبُ عَنْكُمْ الذِّكْرَ
صَفْحًا أَنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا

مُسْرِفِينَ

*4 In this one sentence the entire history that had taken place since the time the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had proclaimed to be a Prophet till the revelation of these verses during the past few years has been compressed. This sentence depicts the following picture: A nation has been involved in ignorance, backwardness and depravity for centuries. Suddenly, Allah looks at it with favor. He raises in it an illustrious guide and sends down His own Word to take it out of the darkness of ignorance so that it is aroused from slumber, it gives up superstitions of ignorance and it becomes aware of the truth and adopts the right way of life. But the ignorant people of the nation and the tribal chiefs turn hostile to the guide, and try their utmost to defeat him and his mission. With the passage of time their hostility and mischief go on increasing; so much so that they make up their mind to kill him. At this, it is being said: Should We stop making any efforts to reform you because you are proving to be unworthy people? Should We withhold sending down this Admonition, and leave you lying in the same wretched state in which you have been lying since centuries? Do you really think that should be the demand of Our Mercy? Have you ever considered what doom you would meet when you have

turned down the bounty of Allah and persisted in falsehood after the truth has come before you?

6. And how many a prophet did We send among the men of old.

وَكَمْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ نَبِيِّ فِي الْأَوَّلِينَ



7. And never came to them a prophet except that they used to ridicule at him.*5

وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا كَانُوا

بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ

*5 That is, if such absurdity and senselessness had barred the sending of a Prophet or a Book, no Prophet would ever have come to any nation nor a Book sent to it.

8. Then We destroyed stronger than these in might. And has preceded (before them) the example of the ancient peoples.*6

فَأَهْلَكْنَا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا

وَمَضَىٰ مَثَلُ الْأَوَّلِينَ



*6 That is, the result of the senselessness of some particular people could not be that the entire mankind should be deprived of the guidance of the Prophethood and the Book. The result has always been that the worshippers of falsehood, with the pride of power, did not desist from mocking the Prophets and were ultimately destroyed. When Allah's wrath descended upon the people, those who possessed thousands of times greater power than that possessed by the chiefs of the Quraish, they were crushed to annihilation like mosquitoes and fleas.

9. And if you ask them: “Who created the heavens and the earth.” They will surely say: “The All Mighty, the All Knower created them.”

وَلَيْنَ سَأَلْتَهُم مِّنْ خَلْقِ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَيَقُولُنَّ
خَلَقَهُنَّ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٩﴾

10. (The one) Who has made for you the earth a resting place,^{*7} and has made for you therein roads^{*8} that you might be guided.^{*9}

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ
مَهْدًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا
لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

***7** At other places the earth has been described as a bed, but here as a cradle. That is, just as a child lies resting in its cradle, so is this great globe meant to be a place of rest for you, which is suspended in space, which is spinning on its axis at a speed of 1,000 miles an hour, which is revolving around the sun at a speed of 66,000 miles an hour. Its interior is so intensely hot that it can melt the stones and sometimes it manifests its power in the form of volcano eruptions. But, in spite of that, the Creator has made it so tranquil that one sleeps on it in full peace and there is no jerk whatsoever. One lives on it and does not at all feel that this globe is suspended and he is hanging from it with his head pointing downward. One moves about on it with satisfaction and never thinks that he is riding on a vehicle moving faster than a bullet. You dig it at will and turn it inside out and beat it as you like to obtain your sustenance. Whereas, a little shaking of it in an earthquake makes you

feel what a terrible giant it is, which Allah has subdued for you. (For further explanation, see Surah Al-Naml, Ayat 61 and E.N. 74 of it).

***8** The passes in the mountains and the rivers in the hill and plain regions are the natural paths, which Allah has provided on the surface of the earth. Man has spread on the earth by means of these. If the mountainous ranges had been created erect, without a crevice, and there had been no rivers and streams, man would have been confined to the same areas where he was born. Then, Allah through another grace has not made the entire surface of the earth uniform in nature, but has created different marks of distinction by means of which man recognizes different lands and feels the difference between one land and another. This is the second important means by which man became able to move about on the earth. This blessing can be appreciated by the one who has had a chance of going on a vast desert, where for thousands of miles the earth is without any landmarks and one does not know where one has reached and where one has to go.

***9** This sentence gives two meanings simultaneously:

(1) That by means of these natural paths and landmarks you may find your way and reach the place you want to reach.

(2) That you may obtain guidance from the observation of this craftsmanship of Allah Almighty. May reach the underlying reality and understand that this system of the earth is not functioning haphazardly, nor has been devised by many gods jointly, but there is one All-Wise Creator,

Who has made these paths in the hills and on the plains in view of the needs and requirements of His creatures, and has given each region of the earth a different form in countless different ways by means of which man can distinguish one region from the other.

11. And who sends down from the sky water in due measure.^{*10} And We revive therewith a dead land. Thus will you be brought forth.^{*11}

وَالَّذِي نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
بِقَدَرٍ فَأَنْشَرْنَا بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَيْتًا
كَذَلِكَ نُخْرِجُوكَ

***10** That is, for each region He has ordained an average measure of the rain which falls year after year for long ages regularly. It does not happen that an area may have two inches of the rainfall one year and 200 inches of it the next year. Then He spreads the rainfall over different places in different times in such a way that it becomes beneficial on the whole for the products of the earth. And this is also His wisdom that He has deprived some parts of the earth of the rainfall almost entirely and turned them into dry barren deserts, and in some other parts, He sometimes causes famines to occur and sometimes sends torrential rains so that man may know what a great blessing the rain and its general regularity is for the populated areas, and he may also remember that this system is under the control of another power, whose decrees cannot be changed by anyone. No one has the power that he may change the general average of the rainfall of a country, or effect a variation in its distribution over vast areas of the earth, or

avert an impending storm, or attract the clouds towards his own land and compel them to rain. (For further explanation, see Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 21-22; Surah Al-Muminun, Ayats 18-20).

*11 Here, the birth of vegetation in the earth by means of water has been presented as an argument for two things simultaneously:

(1) That these things are happening by the power and wisdom of One God; no one else is His associate in these works.

(2) That there can be life after death and it will be. (For further explanation, see Surah An-Nahl, Ayats 65-67; Surah Al-Hajj, Ayats 5-7; Surah An-Naml, Ayat 60; Surah Ar-Room, Ayats 19, 24; Surah Fatir E.N. 19 and Surah YaSeen E.N. 29).

12. And who has created all the pairs,^{*12} and has made for you ships and cattle those which you ride.

وَالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا
وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْفُلْكِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ
مَا تَرْكَبُونَ

*12 Pairs here does not imply only pairs of men and women among human beings and of males and females among animals and vegetation, but there are countless other things which the Creator has made as matching partners of each other and by whose coming together and combination new and ever new things come into being in the world. For example, among the elements, some can be combined with others and some cannot be combined. The combination of

those which can combine is resulting into various compositions, e.g. the negative and positive charges in electricity are the matching partners of each other and their mutual attraction is causing wonderful things to happen in the world. If man considers the structure and the mutual relationships and the different forms of cooperation and the results of the combination of this and other countless pairs which Allah has created among countless of His creations. He cannot help testifying to the truth that this great workshop of the world is the creation of one and only one Almighty, All-Wise Designer, and is functioning only under His care and control. Only a man of mean intelligence could suppose that all this happened, and is happening, without a Wise Being, or there is the possibility in it of the agency and interference of more than one God.

13. That you may mount upon their backs, then remember the favor of your Lord when you mount thereon, and say: “Glorified be He who has subjected this for us, and we could not have subdued it.”*13

لَتَسْتَوْرَأَ عَلَى ظُهُورِهِ ثُمَّ
تَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّكُمْ إِذَا اسْتَوَيْتُمْ
عَلَيْهِ وَتَقُولُوا سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي
سَخَّرَ لَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ
مُقْرِنِينَ



*13 That is, only man from among all the creatures of the earth has been given this power by Allah to use boats and ships and animals as conveyance. Should he never think and be grateful as to who it is who created possibilities for

him to run boats in the mighty oceans, and who created some animals, among the countless kinds of animals, with a nature that they become his servants in spite of being far stronger than him in power, so he ride on them and drive them wherever he likes. To benefit by these blessings and to forget the Benefactor is a sign of the heart's becoming dead and the conscience's being insensitive. For, when a man endowed with a living heart and a sensitive conscience will sit on these conveyances, he will be filled with the feelings of the blessings and with the gratitude for it, and will cry out: Glorified is the Being Who subjected these things to me. Glorified is He from that another should be His associate in His Being and attributes and powers. Glorified is He and free from the weakness that He should become helpless of performing the functions of His Godhead by Himself and should stand in need of other associate gods. Glorified is He that I should make another an associate with Him in rendering thanks for these blessings.

The best practical commentary of the intention and meaning of this verse are the words that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pronounce at the time he sat on the conveyance. Abdullah bin Umar says that whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) sat on a conveyance for a journey, he would pronounce Allahu-Akbar three times, then would recite this verse, and then pray: O God, I implore You to grant me in this journey the grace of goodness and piety and such acts as may please You. O God, make the journey easy and roll up the long distance for us. O God, You alone are the Companion during the

journey and Guardian of the family in our absence. O God, take care of us during the journey and our household in our absence. (Musnad Ahmed, Muslim, Abu Daud, Nasai, Darimi, Tirmidhi).

Ali says: Once the Prophet (peace be upon him) put his foot in the stirrup with *Bismillah*, and then, after riding, said: *Alhamdu-lillah subhan-alladhi sakhkhara lana hadha*, then pronounced *Alhamdu-lillah* three times, and *Allahu-Akbar* three times; then said: *Subhana-ka la-ilaha illa anta, qad zalamtu nafsi faghfir-li*. Then he laughed. I asked: What made you laugh. O Messenger of Allah? He replied: When a servant says: *Rabb-ighfir-li*, Allah Almighty is very pleased with this. He says: My servant knows that there is none beside Me who can forgive sins. (Ahmed, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Nasai, and others)

Abu Mijlaz says: Once I rode on my animal and recited this verse: *Subhan-alladhi sakhkhara lane hadha*, Hasan said: Have you been commanded to say so? I said: What should I say then? He replied: Say, thank God, Who guided us to Islam: Thanks to Him, Who did us a favor by sending Muhammad (peace be upon him): Thanks to Him Who admitted us into the best community that has been raised for the people; then recite this verse. (Ibn Jarir, Ahkam al-Quran by Jassas).

14. “And indeed, to Our Lord we are surely returning.”*14

وَإِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ

*14 That is, while embarking on every journey one should remember that there is ahead a longer and final journey also. Besides there is the possibility in the use of every

conveyance that an accident may turn that very journey into one's last journey; therefore, every time one should remember his return to his Lord so that if something unexpected happens, he does not die unaware.

Let us pause here for a while and consider the moral results of this teaching. Can one imagine that a person who while sitting on a conveyance starts his journey consciously with full remembrance of Allah and his return and accountability before Him, would commit sins and injustices and tyrannies on the way? Can a person think or utter these words from his mouth when he intends to go to meet a prostitute, or to visit a club for the purpose of drinking and gambling? Can a ruler, or a government official, or a merchant who has stepped out of his house with such thoughts and such words at his lips, usurp the rights of others when he reaches his destination? Can a soldier utter these words while boarding his aircraft or tank when he goes out to shed blood of the innocent and deprive the weak of their freedom? If not, then this one thing alone is enough to bar every movement undertaken for the commission of a sin.

15. And they assign to some of His slaves a share with Him.*¹⁵ Indeed, man is clearly ingrate.

وَجَعَلُوا لَهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ جُزْءًا
إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ مُّبِينٌ

*¹⁵ “Assign to some of His slaves a share with Him” implies declaring a servant of Allah His offspring, for an offspring inevitably is homogeneous with and a part of the father's body, and regarding somebody as Allah's son or

daughter means that he or she is being made a partner in Allah's Being. Besides, another form of making a creature a part of Allah is that it should be regarded as possessor of the attributes and powers as are specifically Allah's own, and it should be invoked under the same concept, or rites of worship performed before it, or its sanctities observed and regarded as imperative and binding. For, in that case man divides divinity and provider between Allah and His servants and hands over a part of it to the servants.

16. Or has He taken, out of what He has created, daughters and He has selected for you sons.

أَمْ اتَّخَذَ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ بَنَاتٍ
وَأَصْفَكَم بِالْبَنِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

17. And when one of them is given tidings of (the birth of a girl) that which he set forth as a parable to the Beneficent, his face becomes dark, and he is filled with grief.*16

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِمَا ضَرَبَ
لِلرَّحْمَنِ مَثَلًا ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ
مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾

*16 Here, the folly of the polytheists of Arabia has been fully exposed. They said that the angels were the daughters of Allah. They had carved out their images as females, and these were their goddesses whom they worshiped. About this Allah says: In the first place, in spite of knowing and recognizing that the Creator of the earth and heavens is Allah and it is He Who has made this earth a cradle for you and it is He Who sends down the rain from the sky, and it is He Who has created these animals for your service, yet you

have taken others as gods beside Him, whereas those whom you serve as deities are not God but creatures of God. Then, further more, you have made some of the servants associates of Allah not only in His attributes but in His Being as well, and invented the creed that they were Allah's offspring. Then, not resting content with this, you assigned to Allah that kind of the offspring which you regard as disgraceful for your own selves. When a daughter is born in your house, your face grows dark, you feel distressed, and sometimes you bury her alive. This offspring you assign to Allah and reserve for yourselves the sons, whom you regard as a source of joy and pride. Even then you claim that you believe in Allah.

18. Or (they like for Allah) one who is raised up in adornments (women), and who in dispute cannot make (itself) clear.*¹⁷

أَوْ مَن يُنْشَأُ فِي الْهَلِيَّةِ وَهُوَ
فِي الْخِصَامِ غَيْرُ مُبِينٍ

*¹⁷ In other words, You have assigned to Allah the offspring that is by nature delicate, weak and frail, and adopted for yourselves the offspring that is bold, courageous and fearless.

This verse shows permissibility of the ornaments for the women, for Allah has mentioned the ornaments as a natural thing for them. The same is also confirmed by the Hadith. Imam Ahmad, Abu Daud and Nasai have related on the authority of Ali that the Prophet (peace be upon him) took silk in one hand and gold in the other and said that both were forbidden to be used in dress by the men of

his Ummah. Tirmidhi and Nasai have related from Abu Musa Ashari a tradition, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Silk and gold have been forbidden for the men but made lawful for the women of my Ummah. Allama Abu Bakr al-Jassas has discussed this question in his Ahkam ai-Quran and related the following traditions:

Aishah says: Once Usamah, son of Zaid bin Harithah, was hurt and started bleeding. The Prophet (peace be upon him) loved him like his own children. He sucked his blood and spat it out, and cheered him saying: Had Usamah been a daughter we would have adorned him with ornaments! Had Usamah been a daughter, we would have dressed him in fine clothes!

Abu Musa Ashari has related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Wearing of silken clothes and ornaments of gold is unlawful for the men of my Ummah but lawful for the women.

Amr bin Aaas has related: Once two women came before the Prophet (peace be upon him), and they were wearing bracelets of gold. He said: Would you like that Allah should make you wear bracelets of the fire instead of these? They replied that they would not. Thereupon he said: Pay their dues, i.e. the zakat due on them.

Aisha has stated that there is no harm in wearing the ornaments if the zakat due on them is paid.

Umar wrote to Abu Musa Ashari: Order the Muslim women who live in the areas under your administrative control that they should pay the zakat dues on their ornaments.

Imam Abu Hanifah has related the following traditions on the authority of Amr bin Dinar: Aishah had arranged ornaments of gold for her sisters and Abdullah bin Umar for his daughters.

After citing all these traditions, Allama Jassas writes: The traditions that have been related from the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the companions about the permissibility and lawfulness of gold and silk for the women are better known and more common than those that are there about their unlawfulness, and the above verse also points to their lawfulness. Then the practice of the Muslims also from the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions till our time (i.e. till the latter part of the 4th century of hijrah) has been the same, and no one ever objected to it. In such matters, no objection can be admitted on the basis of the isolated reports (Akhbar ahab).

19. And they have made the angels, those who are the slaves of the Beneficent, females.^{*18} Did they witness their creation.^{*19} Their testimony will be recorded and they will be questioned.

وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ
عِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنثًا أَشْهَدُوا
خَلْقَهُمْ سَتُكْتَبُ شَهَادَتُهُمْ
وَيُسْأَلُونَ



***18** That is, who are free from this that they should be males or females.

***19** Another translation can be: Were they present at the time of their creation?

20. And they say: “If the Beneficent One had (so) willed, we would not have worshipped them.”*20 They have no knowledge whatsoever of that. They do not but falsify.

وَقَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ الرَّحْمَنُ مَا
عَبَدْنَاهُمْ مَا لَهُم بِذَلِكَ مِنْ
عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

***20** This was their reasoning from destiny to cover up their deviation and error, and this has been the argument of the wrongdoers in every age. They argued that their worshiping the angels became possible only because Allah allowed them to do so. Had He not willed so they could not have done it; and then it had been a practice with them for centuries and no torment from Allah had descended on them, which meant that Allah did not disapprove of their this practice.

21. Or have We given them a scripture before this (Quran), so to which they are holding fast.*21

أَمْ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمْ كِتَابًا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ
فَهُمْ بِهِ مُسْتَمْسِكُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

***21** It means this: These ignorant people think that whatever is happening in the world has the approval of Allah for it, because it is happening according to His will. This argument, however, is wrong. For it is not only shirk which is being committed in the world, but countless other crimes like stealing, robbery, murder, bribery, etc. are also taking place, which nobody likes. Then, can it be said by the same reasoning that all such acts are lawful and good only because Allah is letting them happen in His world, and

when He allows them to happen, He must have approved of them also? The means of knowing what Allah likes and what He hates are not the events that are happening in the world, but the Book of Allah, which comes through His Messenger and in which Allah Himself states as to what beliefs, what deeds and what morals He likes and what He dislikes. If these people have a Book, which came before the Quran, and which tells that Allah has appointed the angels also as deities beside himself and that they should worship them also, they should cite it. (For further explanation, see Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 107-112, 137, 148-149; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 28; Surah Younus, Ayat 99; Surah Hud, Ayats 118-119; Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 31; Surah An-Nahl, Ayats 9, 35-36, 93; and E.N. 20 of Surah Az-Zumar and E.N. 11 of Surah Ash-Shura).

22. But they say: “Indeed, we found our forefathers upon a certain way, and indeed we are guided on their footsteps.”*22

بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا
عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ
مُهْتَدُونَ

*22 That is, they have no authority of any divine book. The only authority they have is that it has been the practice since the time of their forefathers. Therefore, they have taken the angels as goddesses in imitation of them.

23. And similarly, We did not send before you (Muhammad) into a township any warner, but

وَكَذَٰلِكَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي
قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا

its affluent said: “Indeed we found our forefathers on a certain way, and indeed we are following on their footsteps.”*23

إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا ءَابَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا
عَلَىٰ ءَاثَرِهِم مُّقْتَدُونَ



*23 Here, the point worth consideration is why only the well to do people of every community have resisted the Prophets and upheld the imitation of their forefathers in every age. Why have they alone been in the forefront to oppose the truth and to endeavor to maintain the established falsehood and to beguile and incite the common people against them? Its basic causes were two:

(1) The well to do and affluent people are so absorbed in making and enjoying the world of their own that they are not inclined to bother themselves about the useless debate (as they assume it to be) between the truth and falsehood. Their love of ease and mental lethargy renders them so heedless of religion and conservative that they want the established order, no matter whether it is based on truth or falsehood, to retrain in force so that they do not have to take the trouble of thinking about the new order at all for themselves.

(2) Their interests become so dependent on the established order that when they get the first glimpse of the order presented by the Prophets, they start feeling that if it came, it would not only put an end to their leadership but also would deprive them of the freedom to consume the lawful and commit the unlawful. (For further details, see Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 103; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 66-70. 75, 88

109, 127; Surah Houd, Ayats 27-28; Surah Bani-Israil, Ayat 16; Surah Al-Muaminun, Ayats 24-33, 46; Surah Saba, Ayat 34 and the corresponding E.Ns).

24. He (the warner) said: “Even if I brought you better guidance than that upon which you found your forefathers.” They said: “Indeed, we disbelieve in that with which you have been sent.”

﴿ قُلْ أَوْلَوْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِأَهْدَىٰ مِمَّا وَجَدْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ ءَابَاءَكُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ﴾

25. So We took vengeance on them, then see how was the end of those who denied.

﴿ فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ ﴾

26. And when Abraham said to his father and his people: *24 “Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship.”

﴿ وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّنِي بَرَاءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴾

*24 For details, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 124-133; Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 74-84; Surah Ibrahim, Ayats 35-41; Surah Maryam, Ayats 41-50; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 51-73; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 69-89, Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayats 16-27; Surah As-Saaffat, Ayats 83-100 and the corresponding E.Ns.

27. “Except He who created me, and indeed He will

﴿ إِلَّا الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي فَإِنَّهُ سَيَهْدِينِ ﴾

guide me.”*25



*25 In these words not only did the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) state his creed but also gave the argument for it. The reason for not having any connection with the other deities is that they neither have created nor they give right guidance in any matter, nor they can; and the reason for having a connection only with Allah Almighty is that He alone is the Creator and He alone gives, and can give the right guidance to mankind.

28. And he made it a word lasting*26 among his offspring that they might return.*27

وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً بَاقِيَةً فِي عَقْبِهِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ



*26 A word: the word that none but the Creator is worthy of worship in the world.

*27 That is, whenever they swerve from the right path, this word should be there to guide them so that they return to it again. This event has been mentioned here in order to expose the foolishness of the disbelieving Quraish and to put them to shame, as if to say: When you have adopted obedience of your ancestors, you have selected the most depraved of them for the purpose instead of the most righteous and illustrious, who were the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them). The basis of the leadership of the Quraish in Arabia was that they were the descendants of the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them) and were the attendants of the Kabah built by them. Therefore, they should have followed them and

not their ignorant forefathers who had given up the way of the Prophets and adopted polytheism from the neighboring idol-worshippers. Furthermore, by mentioning this event another error of those people has been pointed out. That is, if the blind imitation of the forefathers, without the distinction of good and evil had been the right thing, the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) should have done so in the first instance. But he had plainly told his father and his people that he could not follow their creed of ignorance in which they had abandoned the Creator and made those imaginary beings their deities, who were not the creator. This shows that the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) did not believe in following the forefathers, but his creed was that before one followed the forefathers one should see whether they were following the right way or not, and if it became known by reason that they were following the wrong way, one should give up their way and adopt the way that was proved right.

29. But I gave enjoyment (of life) to these and their fathers, until there came to them the truth and a clear messenger. ^{*28}

بَلْ مَتَّعْتُ هَؤُلَاءِ وَاٰبَاءَهُمْ
حَتَّىٰ جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ وَرَسُولٌ مُّبِينٌ



***28** Another meaning of the word *rasulum-mubin* can be: A Messenger whose being a Messenger was obvious and apparent: Whose life before and after the Prophethood clearly testified that he was certainly Allah's Messenger.

30. And when the truth (the Quran) came to them, they said: “This is magic^{*29} and indeed we are disbelievers therein.”

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ قَالُوا هَذَا
سِحْرٌ وَإِنَّا بِهِ كَافِرُونَ

***29** For explanation, see Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 3 and E.N. 5 on it, and E.N. 5 of Surah Suad.

31. And they said: “Why was this Quran not sent down upon a great man of the two towns.”^{*30}

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ
عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ

***30** The two towns: Makkah and Taif. What the disbelievers meant was: Had Allah really willed to send a messenger and intended to send down a book to him, He would have selected a great man from our these central cities for the purpose. For Allah could not have selected for this great mission a person who was born an orphan, who did not inherit much property, who passed his youth by tending goats, who even at present earned his living through business with his wife’s money, and who was neither the chief of a tribe nor the head of a family. Were not there well known chiefs like Walid bin Mughirah and Utbah bin Rabiah in Makkah, and nobles like Urwah bin Masud, Habib bin Amr, Kinanah bin Abdi Amr and Ibn Abd Yalil in Taif? This was their reasoning in the first instance, they were also not inclined to believe that a man could be a Messenger. But when the Quran refuted this

misconception by argument and reason and they were told that in the past only men had come as Messengers and a man only could be a Messenger for the guidance of the people, and not another kind of being and the Messenger who came did not descend suddenly from heavens but were born in the same ordinary dwellings, walked about in the streets, had children and families and stood in need of food and drink (see Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 43; Surah Bani Israil, Ayats 94-95; Surah Yousuf, Ayat 109; Surah Al-Furqan, Ayats 7, 20; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 7-8; Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 38), they took this stand, saying: Well, even if a human being, he should be a big man, who should be wealthy, influential and awe-inspiring and having a large following. How could Muhammad bin Abdullah (peace be upon him) be fit for this appointment?

32. Is it they who distribute the mercy of your Lord. It is We who have distributed between them their livelihood in the life of the world, and We have raised some of them above others in ranks, that some of them may make use of others for service.^{*31} And the mercy of your Lord is better than the (wealth) which they accumulate.^{*32}

أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ
 نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي
 الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ
 فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَتَّخِذَ
 بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا سُخْرِيًّا وَرَحْمَتُ
 رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ



***31** This is the answer to their objection, which briefly mentions many important things:

First, it asks: Since when do these people become responsible for distributing the mercy of your Lord? Is it for them to decide whom Allah should favor with His mercy and whom He should not? (Here, by Allah's mercy is implied His general mercy from which everyone has a share).

Second, Allah says: Prophethood is a great blessing. We have even kept the distribution of the common means of life in the world in Our own hand, and have not entrusted it to anyone else. We create someone beautiful and another ugly, someone with a sweet voice and another with a harsh voice, someone robust and strong and another weak and frail, someone intelligent and another dull, someone with a strong memory and another forgetful, some with healthy limbs and another a cripple, or blind or deaf and dumb, someone in a rich family and another among the poor, someone in an advanced country and another in a backward community. No one can do anything about this destiny concerning birth. One is compelled to be what We have made him. And it is in no one's power to avert the impact his circumstances of birth have on his destiny. Then it is We our self Who are distributing provisions, power, honor, fame, wealth, government, etc. among men. No one can degrade the one whom We have blessed with good fortune, and no one can save from ruin the one whom We have afflicted with misfortune. All plans and schemes of man become ineffective against Our decrees. In this universal divine system, therefore, how can these people decide as to whom should the Master of the universe make

His Prophet and whom He should not?

Thirdly, an abiding principle that We have kept in view in this divine system is that everything should not be given to one and the same person, or everything should not be given to everybody. If you look around carefully, you will see that great differences exist between the people in every respect. We have given one thing to one person but deprived him of another, and given the same to another one. This is based on the wisdom that no human being should become independent of others, but everyone should remain dependent on the other in one way or the other. Now if would be foolish on your part to think that We should have given the Prophethood also to the same person whom We had blessed with wealth and nobility. Likewise, will you also say that wisdom, knowledge, wealth, beauty, power, authority and all other excellences should be assembled in one and the same person, and the one who has not been given one thing, should not be given anything else?

***32** Your Lord's mercy: the Prophethood. It means: Your leaders and chiefs whom you regard as big people because of their wealth and dignity and chiefship, are not worthy of this wealth, which has been given to Muhammad bin Abdullah (peace be upon him). This wealth is far superior to that and for this the criterion is different. If you think that every noble and rich man is worthy of becoming a prophet, it would only show your own thinking. Why do you expect Allah to be so ignorant and simple?

33. And if it were not that the mankind would become

وَلَوْلَا أَن يَكُونَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً

one community, We would have made, for those who disbelieve in the Beneficent, for their houses roofs of silver and stairs (of silver) upon which to mount.

وَاحِدَةً لَّجَعَلْنَا لِمَن يَكْفُرُ
بِالرَّحْمَنِ لِبُيُوتِهِمْ سُقْفًا مِّن
فِضَّةٍ وَمَعَارِجَ عَلَيْهَا يَظْهَرُونَ



34. And for their houses, doors and couches (of silver) upon which to recline. *33

وَلِبُيُوتِهِمْ أَبْوَابًا وَسُرُرًا عَلَيْهَا
يَتَّكِفُونَ



*33 That is, this silver and gold whose possession by somebody is the highest blessing and the very climax of good fortune in your sight, is so base and contemptible a thing in the sight of Allah that had there been no danger of all human beings being inclined towards unbelief, He would have made every disbeliever's house of gold and silver. Since when has the abundance of this worthless commodity become proof of man's nobility and his piety and his spiritual purity? This kind of wealth is even found in the possession of those foul and wicked people whose filthy characters make the whole society stink. And this you have made the criterion of man's greatness of character.

35. And adornments of gold. And all that is not but an enjoyment of the life of the world. And the Hereafter with your Lord is for the righteous.

وَزُخْرَفًا وَإِن كُلُّ ذَلِكَ لَمَّا
مَتَعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةُ
عِندَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ



36. And whoever is blinded from the remembrance of the Beneficent,^{*34} We appoint for him a devil, then he is to him a companion.

وَمَنْ يَعَشُ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ
نُقِضَ لَهُ شَيْطَانًا فَهُوَ لَهُ
قَرِينٌ

***34 Dhikrir Rahman:** His remembrance as well as His admonition and the Quran.

37. And indeed, they hinder them (people) from the way (of Allah), and they think that they are (rightly) guided.

وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَصُدُّونَهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ
وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ

38. Until, when he comes to Us, he says (to devil companion): “Ah, would that between me and you were the distance of the two easts, an evil companion.”

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَنَا قَالَ يَلَيْتَ بَيْنِي
وَبَيْنَكَ بُعْدَ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ فَبِئْسَ
الْقَرِينُ

39. And never will it benefit you this Day, when you have wronged. That you will be partners in the punishment.^{*35}

وَلَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ إِذْ ظَلَمْتُمْ
أَنْتُمْ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُونَ

***35** That is, in this there is no aspect of consolation for you that the one who misguided you is being punished, for you are also receiving the same punishment for accepting and following the deviation.

40. Then will you (O Muhammad) make the deaf

أَفَأَنْتَ تَسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ أَوْ تَهْدِي

hear, or guide the blind, and him who is in error manifest.*36

الْعُمَى وَمَنْ كَانَتْ فِي ضَلَالٍ
مُبِينٍ

*36 It means to say: Pay attention to those who are inclined to listen and have not closed their eyes to the realities, and do not consume yourself in showing the way to the blind and making the deaf to hear, nor consume yourself with the grief as to why your near and dear ones are not coming to the right path, and why they are making themselves worthy of Allah's torment.

41. So whether We take you away (in death), indeed, We shall take vengeance on them.

فَأِمَّا نَذْهَبَنَّ بِكَ فَإِنَّا مِنْهُمْ
مُنْتَقِمُونَ

42. Or (whether) We show you that which We have promised them, then indeed, We have complete command over them.*37

أَوْ نُرِيَنَّكَ الَّذِي وَعَدْنَاهُمْ فَإِنَّا
عَلَيْهِمْ مُّقْتَدِرُونَ

*37 This thing can be understood fully only by keeping in view the background in which it was said. The disbelievers of Makkah thought that the person of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had become a source of trouble for them. If they could somehow get rid of him, matters would become normal. On the basis of this evil thought they were holding consultations day and night and planning to kill him. At this, Allah addresses His Prophet (peace be upon him) so as to tell them indirectly: It doesn't

make any difference whether you remain among them or not. If you live, you will see them meet their doom with your own eyes. If you are recalled from the world, they will be sent to their doom in your absence, because they cannot in any case escape the consequences of their misdeeds.

43. So hold fast to that which is inspired to you. Indeed, you are on a straight path. ^{*38}

فَأَسْتَمْسِكْ بِالَّذِي أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ
إِنَّكَ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

***38** That is, you should not worry as to what punishment do those who are resisting and opposing the truth with injustice and dishonesty receive and when. Nor should you worry whether Islam flourishes during your lifetime or not. For you this satisfaction is quite enough that you are on the right path. Therefore, you should go on fulfilling your mission unconcerned about the results, and leave it to Allah whether He defeats falsehood in front of you or after you.

44. And indeed, this (Quran) is a reminder for you and your people. And soon you will be questioned. ^{*39}

وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ
وَسَوْفَ تُسْأَلُونَ

***39** That is, there can be no greater good fortune for a person than that Allah should choose him from among all men to become the recipient of His Book, and there can be no greater good fortune also for a nation than that Allah should raise His Prophet in it, apart from all other nations of the world, and should send down His Book in its tongue, and give it the opportunity to rise as the standard-bearer of

divine message in the world. If the Quraish and the people of Arabia have no sense of this great honor, and spurn it, a time will come when they will be called upon to account for it.

45. And ask those whom We sent before you of Our messengers. Did We ever appoint, beside the Beneficent, gods to be worshipped.*40

وَسَأَلْ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا أَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ ءَالِهَةً يُعْبَدُونَ

*40 Ask the Messengers: Find out from the Books brought by them. Just as the meaning of: “If there arises any dispute among you about anything, refer it to Allah and His Prophet,” is not that the dispute should be taken before Allah and His Messenger, but that one should turn to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger for a decision, so “asking the Messengers” also does not mean that one should approach all the Messengers who have left the world and ask them, but the right meaning is: Discover what teachings the Messengers of Allah have left in the world as to which of them taught that another than Allah also is worthy of worship and service.

46. And indeed We^{*41} sent Moses with Our signs^{*42} to Pharaoh and his chiefs. And he said: “Indeed, I am a messenger of the Lord of the Worlds.”

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَقَالَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

*41 This story has been narrated here for three objects:

(1) That when Allah sends His Prophet to a country and nation and affords it the opportunity which He has now given to the Arabs by appointing the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to Prophethood, and it, instead of taking advantage of this, commits the folly of Pharaoh and his people, it meets the same fate which has become an object lesson in history.

(2) That just as Pharaoh also on account of his arrogance and pride of kingdom and grandeur and wealth and possessions had belittled the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) as mean and contemptible, so the unbelieving Quraish are now regarding Muhammad (peace be upon him) as insignificant as against their chiefs. But God's judgment was different which ultimately proved who was really great.

(3) That to mock Allah's revelations and show stubbornness against His warnings is not a mere joke, but a very serious sin. If you do not learn a lesson from the fate of those who have been doomed on account of this, you also would go to your doom on account of the same.

*42 This implies the signs with which the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had gone to the court of Pharaoh, i.e. the signs of the staff and the shining hand. (For explanation, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 107-108; Surah TaHa, Ayats 20-22; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 32-33; Surah An-Naml; Ayats 10-12, Surah Al-Qasas; Ayats 31-32).

47. Then when he came to them with Our signs, behold, they laughed at them.

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا إِذَا هُمْ مِنْهَا
يَضْحَكُونَ

48. And We showed them not of a sign except it was greater than its sister (sign), and We seized them with the punishment that perhaps they might return.*43

وَمَا نُزِيهِمْ مِّنْ آيَةٍ إِلَّا هِيَ
أَكْبَرُ مِنْ أُخْتِهَا وَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ
بِالْعَذَابِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

***43** This implies the signs which Allah showed them through the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) afterwards, and these were the following:

(1) A public encounter of Allah's Prophet with the magicians, who believed after their defeat. For details, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 112-126; Surah TaHa, Ayats 68-73; Surah Ash Shuara, Ayats 37-51.

(2) A severe famine which hit the land of Egypt according to Prophet Moses' (peace be upon him) announcement and which left the country only by his prayer.

(3) Dreadful rain and hail-storms accompanied by lightning and thunder struck the country even as Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had announced, which destroyed the crops and dwellings and which also was removed only by his prayer.

(4) The sudden appearance of locusts in the land. This calamity was also not removed when Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) prayed to Allah.

(5) Lice and weevils spread throughout the country according to the announcement made by Moses (peace be upon him), which afflicted men and animals on the one hand, and destroyed granaries on the other. This torment was also averted when Prophet Moses (peace be upon him)

was requested to pray for its removal.

(6) Frogs appeared everywhere in the country according to the warning given by Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), which put the whole population to great distress. This calamity did not also retreat until Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) prayed for it.

(7) The torment of blood appeared precisely as foretold by Moses (peace be upon him), which turned the water of all canals, wells, springs, pools and cisterns into blood. The fish died and the water smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink from it for a full week. This evil was also averted when the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was asked to pray for its removal. For details, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 130-136. Surah An-Naml, Ayat 12 and E.N. 37 of Surah Al-Mumin.

Chapters 7 to 10 of Exodus also contain the details of these calamities, but it is a combination of gossip and truth. It says that when the calamity of blood appeared, the magicians also worked a similar miracle, but when the calamity of the lice came, the magicians could not produce lice in response, and they said that it was God's work. Even more strange than this is that when the storm of the frogs came, the magicians also brought about frogs, but in spite of that Pharaoh requested only the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) to pray to God to take away the frogs. The question is when the magicians could produce frogs, why didn't Pharaoh get the frogs taken away through them? And how did it become known which of the frogs were Allah's work and which of the magicians' work? The same

question arises about the blood. When according to the warning of Moses (peace be upon him) water became blood everywhere, which water did the magicians turn into blood? And how was it known that the water of a particular place had turned blood by the power of the magicians? Such are the things which show that the Bible does not consist of purely divine revelation, but the people who wrote it mixed up many things in it from their own imagination. The pity, however, is that the authors also were people of ordinary intelligence, who did not even know how to invent a story.

49. And they said: “O you sorcerer, invoke your Lord for us with what He promised to you. Indeed, we will be guided.”

وَقَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا السَّاحِرُ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ إِنَّنَا لَمُهْتَدُونَ



50. Then when We removed the punishment from them. Behold, they broke their word.*44

فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابَ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُتُونَ



*44 The stubbornness of Pharaoh and the chiefs of his people can be judged from the fact that when distressed by the torment they wanted the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) to pray for its removal, even then they did not recognize him as a Prophet but addressed him as a magician, whereas they were not unaware of the truth about magic, and they also knew that those miraculous things could not be brought about by the power of magic.

The most that a magician can do is that in a limited area he can so influence the people present in front of him as to make them feel that water has become blood, or frogs are coming out in large numbers or swarms of locusts are advancing. And within this limited place also no water will actually become blood, but water will remain water as soon as it comes outside it; no frog will be produced in actual fact, but will prove to be an imaginary thing as soon as brought outside the circle; locusts also would be imaginary: they would not be able to destroy any crop. As for this that a famine appears throughout a country, or that the canals and springs and wells of the country are filled with blood, or that swarms of locusts spread over thousands of square miles and eat up crops growing over thousands of acres, this has neither been accomplished by a magician so far, nor can it ever happen by the power of magic. Should such magicians be there in the service of a king, he need not keep forces and fight wars; he could conquer the whole world by the power of magic. Even if the magicians possessed such power, they would not seek service under the kings, but would assume kingship themselves.

The commentators in general have been perplexed as to why Pharaoh and his courtiers addressed the Prophet Moses as “O sorcerer”, when they requested him to pray for the removal of the calamity, for the one who seeks another’s help in a hard time flatters him and does not condemn him. They have given the interpretation that sorcery in the Egypt of those days was held as a very respectable art, and when they addressed Moses as “O

sorcerer” they did not condemn him, but honored him because it amounted to calling him as “O Learned man” But this interpretation is absolutely wrong on the ground that wherever at other places in the Quran Pharaoh’s sayings have been cited in which he had called the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) a sorcerer and the miracles presented by him sorcery, the sense of condemnation and contempt becomes apparent, and it becomes manifestly clear that sorcery was false in his sight, which he imputed to the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) so as to prove his claim to the Prophethood to be false! Therefore, it cannot be acceptable that suddenly at this time “sorcerer” became the title of an honorable and learned man in his sight. As for the question: Why did the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) accede to his request at all when even while requesting him for the prayer, Pharaoh insulted him publicly, the answer is that the object before the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was to strengthen the case against those people by Allah’s command. Their request to him to pray for the removal of the torment by itself proved that in their hearts they had come to know why the torments were occurring, who was sending them and who could avert them. In spite of that, when they called him a “sorcerer” stubbornly, and went back on their word of following the right way as soon as the torment was averted, they in fact, did not do any harm to Allah’s Prophet, but only caused the case and argument to be strengthened against themselves, which Allah at last decided against them with their total destruction. When they called him a

sorcerer, this did not mean that they believed in their hearts as well that the torments against them were coming by the power of sorcery, but they realized it fully that those were Allah's signs and yet they denied them deliberately. The same thing has been said in Surah An-Naml, Ayat 14: They rejected those signs out of sheer injustice and vanity, whereas in their hearts they were convinced.

51. And Pharaoh called out among his people,^{*45} he said: "O my people, Is not mine the dominion of Egypt, and these rivers flowing underneath me. See you not then."^{*46}

وَنَادَى فِرْعَوْنُ فِي قَوْمِهِ قَالَ
يَقَوْمِ أَلَيْسَ لِي مُلْكُ مِصْرَ
وَهَذِهِ الْأَنْهَارُ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِي
أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ

***45** Pharaoh probably sent heralds to the cities and towns throughout the country to proclaim what he said in his address to his ministers and courtiers in the capital. Pharaoh could not have availed of the services of a sycophantic press, controlled news agencies and official radio.

***46** The words of the proclamation clearly show that ground was slipping from under the Pharaoh's feet. The miracles performed one after the other by the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had caused the common people's beliefs in their gods to waver and the Pharaoh's spell under which their dynasty was ruling over Egypt as representatives of the gods, was shattered. Thereupon, Pharaoh cried out: O wretched people, can't you see who is

ruling over this land and under whose control are the canals which have been dug out from the Nile, upon which depends your whole economy? All these developments in this country have been brought about by me and my predecessors, but you are being devoted, charmed and fascinated by this pauper!

52. “Or am I not better than this one, who is despicable,^{*47} and can hardly express himself clearly.”^{*48}

أَمْ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ
مَهِينٌ وَلَا يَكَادُ يُبِينُ



***47** Who is despicable: the person who has neither wealth, nor power, nor authority. This same objection had been raised by the disbelieving Quraish against the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

***48** Some commentators have expressed the opinion that Pharaoh referred to the impediment of speech from which the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) suffered since childhood. But this is not a correct opinion. As has been mentioned in Surah TaHa above, when the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was being appointed to Prophethood, he had implored Allah Almighty to remove the defect from his tongue so that the people might understand his speech and at that very time his request had also been granted along with his other requests (verse 27-36). Moreover, orations of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) that have been cited at different places in the Quran, point to his perfect eloquence and fluency. Therefore, the basis of Pharaoh’s objection was not any impediment of speech from which Moses (peace be upon him) might be suffering

but what he meant was: This person talks confusedly, at least I have never been able to understand what he says.

53. “Then why have not been bestowed upon him bracelets of gold, or come with him the angels in conjunction.”*49

فَلَوْلَا أُلْقِيَ عَلَيْهِ أَسْوِرَةٌ مِّنْ
ذَهَبٍ أَوْ جَاءَ مَعَهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
مُقْتَرِنِينَ

*49 In the ancient times when a person was appointed to be governor of a land or sent as an ambassador to a foreign country, a robe of honor was conferred on him by the king, which also included bracelets of gold, and he was also accompanied by a contingent of soldiers and servants for over-awing the people and for showing the glory and grandeur of the king who had appointed him. What Pharaoh meant to say was: If the King of the heavens had really sent Moses (peace be upon him) as His ambassador to His counterpart on the earth, he should have been dressed in a robe of honor and come with several contingents of angels in attendance. How strange that a poor man should appear with a staff in his hand and say that he was the messenger of the Lord of the worlds!

54. Then he persuaded his people to make light (of Moses), so they obeyed him. Indeed, they were a people disobedient.*50

فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهُ فَاَطَاعُوهُ
إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَسِيقِينَ

*50 A tremendous reality has been expressed in this brief sentence. When a person wishes to become autocratic in a

country and contrives every plan openly to achieve his object, he practices every deception and trick. He buys and sells consciences and persecutes and crushes ruthlessly those who cannot be purchased. He, in fact, shows by his actions, whatever he may say to the contrary, that he takes the people of the country to be light as regards to their intellect, morals and manliness, and has formed the impression that he can drive the foolish, unscrupulous and cowardly people wherever he likes. Then, when he has succeeded in his designs and the people have become his obedient servants, they prove by their conduct and behavior that they are actually what the wicked man had taken them to be, and the main cause of their depravity is that they are basically a sinful people. They are not in the least concerned as to what is the truth and what is falsehood, what is justice and what is injustice, whether the noble traits of character are truthfulness and honesty or falsehood and dishonesty and meanness. Instead of this, only their personal interests are of real importance to them, for the sake of which they remain ever ready to cooperate with every wicked person, to yield to every tyrant, to accept every falsehood and to suppress every protest that is voiced in favor of the truth.

55. So when they angered Us, We took vengeance on them and drowned them all.

فَلَمَّا ءَاسَفُونَا اَنْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ
فَاَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ اَجْمَعِينَ

56. Then We made them a precedent and an example

فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ سَلَفًا وَمَثَلًا

for those after (them).^{*51}

لِلَّذِينَ خَرِيتَ
٥٦

***51** That is, they are a precedent for those who do not learn any lesson from their example, and an object lesson for those who are keen to learn a lesson.

57. And when the son of Mary is quoted as an example. Behold, your people laugh out thereat.

وَلَمَّا ضُرِبَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ مَثَلًا
إِذَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْهُ يَصِدُّونَ
٥٧

58. And they say: “Are our gods better, or is he (Jesus).^{*52} They quoted not it to you except for argument. But they are a quarrelsome people.

وَقَالُوا ءَأَلِهَتُنَا خَيْرٌ أَمْ هُوَ مَا
ضَرَبُوهُ لَكَ إِلَّا جَدَلًا بَلْ هُمْ
قَوْمٌ خَصِمُونَ
٥٨

***52** In verse 45 above, it was said: You may ask all other Messengers whom We sent before you whether We had appointed any other gods to be worshiped beside the Merciful God. When this discourse was being presented before the people of Makkah, a person called Abdullah ibn az-Zibara in the traditions, put forward the objection: Well, is it not a fact that the Christians regard the son of Mary as the son of God and worship him? What is then wrong with our gods? This caused much laughter among the crowd of the disbelievers and they started clamoring for an answer to this objection. But at this foolish behavior, the continuity of the revelation was not broken, but was first completed and then the objection of the questioner was taken up. (It should be borne in mind that this incident has

been reported in the books of commentaries in different ways which contain great variations, but after a study of the context and the traditions the real incident in our view is the same as we have mentioned above).

59. He was not but a slave. We bestowed Our favor upon him, and We made him an example for the Children of Israel.^{*53}

إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا عَبْدٌ أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَيْهِ
وَجَعَلْنَاهُ مَثَلًا لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ



***53** “We made him an example” implies causing the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) to be born without a father, and then granting him such miracles as had not been granted to anyone before him nor to anyone after him. He would make a bird of clay and then breathe into it and it would become a living bird; he would give sight to those born blind; he would cure the lepers; so much so that he would raise the dead back to life. What Allah means to say is: It is wrong to worship him as son of God and regard him as above servitude only because of his extraordinary birth and the great miracles granted to him. He was no more than a mere servant, whom We had blessed and made an example of Our power. (For details, see Surah Aal-Imran, Ayats 42-49, 59; Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 156; Surah Al-Maidah, Ayats 17, 110; Surah Maryam, Ayats 17-35; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 91; Surah Al-Muminun, Ayat 50).

60. And if We willed, We could have made among you angels^{*54} to be viceroys on the earth.

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ مَلَائِكَةً
فِي الْأَرْضِ يَخْلُفُونَ



***54 Another translation can be: make some of you angels.**

61. And indeed, he will be a known (sign) of the Hour.^{*55} So have no doubt about it, and follow Me. This is the straight way.

وَإِنَّهُ لَعِلْمٌ لِّلسَّاعَةِ فَلَا تَمْتَرُنَّ بِهَا وَاتَّبِعُونِ ۚ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ



***55 Another translation of this sentence can be: He is a means of the knowledge of Resurrection. Here the question arises: What is implied by “he”?** According to Hasan Basri and Saeed bin Jubair it implies the Quran. That is, one can learn from the Quran that Resurrection will come. But this commentary is irrelevant to the context. There is nothing in the context on the basis of which it may be said that it refers to the Quran. Other commentators almost unanimously have expressed the opinion that it implies the prophet Jesus Christ (peace be upon him), and this is suitable to the context. Now the question is: In what sense has Jesus Christ been called a sign or a means of the knowledge of Resurrection? Ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Ikrimah, Qatadah, Suddi, Dahhak, Abul Aliyah and Abu Malik say that this refers to the second coming of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) as has been foretold in a large number of the traditions, and the verse means that when he comes the second time to the world, it will become known that Resurrection is not far behind. But in spite of the great authority that these scholars hold it is difficult to believe that in this verse the second advent of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) has been called a sign of Resurrection,

or a means of its knowledge. For it is contradicted by the next verse. His second advent, indeed, can be a means of the knowledge of Resurrection only for those people who will be living in that future period or will be born after that. How could he be regarded as a means of the knowledge for the pagans of Makkah, who are being asked not to have any doubt about it? Therefore, the correct interpretation in our opinion is the one that has been given by some other commentators, according to which the Prophet Jesus' (peace be upon him) birth without a father and his making a bird out of clay and his raising the dead back to life has been presented as a proof of the possibility of Resurrection. So, the divine words would mean: Why do you think it is impossible for God to raise you and all mankind from death when He can create a child without a father and a servant of His can breathe life into an image of clay and raise the dead back to life by His permission?

62. And let not Satan hinder you. ^{*56} Indeed, he is a clear enemy for you.

وَلَا يَصُدَّنْكُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

***56 Hinder you:** hinder you from believing in Resurrection.

63. And when Jesus came with clear proofs, he said: "I have come to you with wisdom, and to make clear for you some of that in which you differ. So fear Allah, and obey me."

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ عِيسَى بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالَ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَلِأُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي تَخْتَلِفُونَ فِيهِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا

64. “Indeed Allah, He is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him. This is the straight path.”*57

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَأَعْبُدُوهُ
هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ

*57 That is, the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) himself had never claimed that he was God or son of God, and that the people should worship him, but, on the contrary, his message was the same as of all other Prophets, the same as was now being conveyed to you through Muhammad (peace be upon him). (For explanation, see Surah Aal-Imran, Ayats 50-51; Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 171-172; Surah Al-Maidah, Ayats 72, 116-117; Surah Maryam, Ayats 30-36).

65. But the factions from among them differed.*58 So woe to those who have wronged from the punishment of a painful day.

فَاخْتَلَفَ الْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ
فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ
عَذَابِ يَوْمِ أَلِيمٍ

*58 That is, one group of the people denied him and in their antagonism went to the extent of accusing him of illegitimate birth and got him crucified as they thought. The other group believed in him but owing to exaggerated reverence made him son of God, and then the question of man’s being God became such a riddle for it that every effort to resolve it caused it to be divided into countless sects. (For explanation, see Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 171, Surah Al-Maidah, Ayats 17, 77, 116-117 and the corresponding E.Ns).

66. Are they waiting except for the Hour that it shall come upon them suddenly while they do not perceive.

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ
تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ



67. Friends, that day, will be enemies one to another, except for the righteous.*59

الْأَخِلَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ
لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ



*59 In other words, only those friendships will remain unaffected which are based on righteousness and piety in the world. All other friendships will turn into enmities, and those who are cooperating with one another in deviation, tyranny and wickedness today, will on the Day of Resurrection, put the blame on others and try to escape. This subject has been treated repeatedly at many places in the Quran so that every person in this very world may fully realize with whom it would be beneficial for him to cooperate and with whom it is harmful.

68. (Allah will say): “O My slaves, no fear shall be on you this Day, nor shall you grieve.”

يَعْبَادِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ الْيَوْمَ
وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ



69. “(You) who believed in Our verses and surrendered.”

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا
مُسْلِمِينَ



70. “Enter the Garden, you and your wives,^{*60} you will be delighted.”

أَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ أَنْتُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ
تُحِبُّونَ

*60 The word *azwaj* as used in the original can be used both for the wives and for those people who are a person's close associates, friends and peers. This comprehensive word has been used so as to cover both the meanings. The believers will be accompanied both by their believing wives and by their believing friends in Paradise.

71. (Therein) are brought round for them trays of gold and goblets, and therein is whatever the souls desire and eyes find delight. And you will abide forever therein.

يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِصِحَافٍ مِنْ
ذَهَبٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ وَفِيهَا مَا
تَشْتَهِيهِ الْأَنْفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ
الْأَعْيُنُ وَأَنْتُمْ فِيهَا
خَالِدُونَ

72. And that is the Garden which you are made to inherit because of what you used to do.

وَتِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا
كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

73. For you therein is fruit in plenty from which you will eat.

لَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ مِنْهَا
تَأْكُلُونَ

74. Indeed, the criminals will be in the punishment of Hell to abide (therein) forever.

إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي عَذَابٍ جَهَنَّمَ
خَالِدُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾

75. It will not be relaxed for them, and they will despair therein.

لَا يُفْتَرُ عَنْهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ
﴿٧٥﴾

76. We wronged them not, but they themselves were the wrongdoers.

وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا هُمُ
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

77. And they will call: “O Malik (Keeper of Hell),^{*61} let your Lord make an end of us.” He will say: “Indeed, you will remain.”

وَنَادَوْا يَمَلِكُ لِيَقْضِ عَلَيْنَا
رَبُّكَ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ مَّا كُنْتُمْ
﴿٧٧﴾

***61 Malik: a keeper of Hell as is evident from the context.**

78. Indeed, We brought to you the truth, but most of you were averse to the truth.^{*62}

لَقَدْ جِئْنَاكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَكُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كَرِهُونَ
﴿٧٨﴾

***62 That is, We made the reality plain to you, but you were fond of the imaginary, and you had an aversion to the truth. Now, why do you lament at the fate of your foolish choice? It may be a part of the Hell-keeper’s answer, and it may also be that his answer ended with: Here you must remain, and this second sentence as an addition by Allah. In the first case, the keeper’s saying: We had brought the**

Truth to you, is just like an official's using the word "we" on behalf of his government, when he wants to say: Our government did this or gave such and such an order.

79. Or have they devised a plan.*63 Then indeed, We are devising.

أَمْ أَبْرَمُوا أَمْرًا فَإِنَّا مُبْرِمُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

*63 The allusion is to the plans that the chiefs of the Quraish were devising in their secret assemblies in order to take a decisive action against the Prophet (peace be upon him).

80. Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private conversations. Yes, and Our messengers (angels) are with them recording.

أَمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّا لَا نَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ ۚ بَلَىٰ وَرُسُلْنَا لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

81. Say (O Muhammad): "If the Beneficent had a son, then I would be the first of the worshippers."*64

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدٌ فَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْعَابِدِينَ ﴿٨١﴾

*64 It means: My rejection of somebody's being God's offspring and my refusal to worship those whom you regard as His offspring is not due to any stubbornness and obduracy. My reason for the refusal is only this that God has no son or daughter, and your such beliefs are against the reality; otherwise I am such a faithful servant of my Lord that if at all the reality had been the same as you state I would have submitted myself in worship before you.

82. Glorified be the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the Throne, above that which they ascribe (unto Him).

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا
يَصِفُونَ

83. So leave them flounder (in their talk) and play until they meet their Day which they are promised.

فَذَرَهُمْ خَوْضًا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّى
يُلْقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ

84. And He it is who in the heaven is God, and in the earth God. And He is the All Wise, the All Knower. ^{*65}

وَهُوَ الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاءِ إِلَهٌُ وَفِي
الْأَرْضِ إِلَهٌُ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ
الْعَلِيمُ

***65** That is, the gods of the heavens and the earth are not separate, but there is only One God of the entire universe. It is His wisdom that is working in the whole system of the universe and only He has the knowledge of all realities.

85. And blessed be He to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. ^{*66} And with whom is knowledge of the Hour. And unto whom you will be returned. ^{*67}

وَتَبَارَكَ الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا
وَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَإِلَيْهِ
تُرْجَعُونَ

*66 That is, He is far above it that another should be His associate in Godhead and may have any share whatsoever in ruling this great universe. Whatever is there in the earth and the heavens, whether the Prophets, the saints, the angels, jinn, spirits, stars or planets, they are His servants and slaves and subjects. It is impossible for them to be characterized with a divine attribute or be possessed with a divine power.

*67 That is, you may have taken anyone as your helper and patron in the world, but after death you will have to face only One God and render an account of your deeds before Him alone.

86. And those whom they call besides Him, do not possess (power of) intercession, except those who bear witness to the truth and they know.*68

وَلَا يَمْلِكُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ
مِنْ دُونِهِ الشَّفَعَةَ إِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ
بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ



*68 This sentence has several meanings:

- (1) Those whom the people have made their deities in the world, will not at all be their intercessors before Allah. Those of them who were wicked, will themselves be presented as culprits there. However, those who had borne witness to the truth by virtue of knowledge (and not unconsciously) will certainly be able to intercede for others.
- (2) Those who will be permitted to intercede, will be able to do so only for those who had testified to the truth consciously (and not heedlessly). They will neither intercede of their own will, nor will have the permission to intercede

for anyone who had gone and been led astray from the truth in the world, or had been affirming the faith in Allah as the only Deity unconsciously as well as serving other deities at the same time

(3) If a person says that those whom he has made gods necessarily possess the powers of intercession, and they wield such an influence with Allah that they can have anyone they like forgiven, irrespective of his beliefs and deeds, is totally wrong. No one enjoys such a position with Allah. If the one who claims that another has such powers of intercession can testify to the truth of this matter by virtue of knowledge, one should have the courage to say so. But if one is not in a position to bear such a testimony, and he is certainly not, it would be sheer folly to invent such a creed on the basis of mere hearsay or conjecture and risk his life Hereafter relying only on an imaginary support.

Incidentally, this verse also gives two important principles: First, it shows that bearing a testimony to the truth without knowledge may be reliable in the world, but it is not so before Allah. In the world, whoever affirms the faith verbally will be regarded as a Muslim and treated as such unless he openly commits an act expressly contradictory to belief. But as before Allah only such a one will be counted as a Muslim, who has uttered *Lailaha illAllah* consciously, with full understanding of what he is denying and what he is affirming according to his best knowledge.

Secondly, it gives this principle of the law of evidence that knowledge is a pre-requisite of bearing the evidence. If the bearer of an evidence has no knowledge of the event to

which he is bearing evidence, his evidence is meaningless. The same is borne out by a decision given by the Prophet (peace be upon him). He said to a witness: If you saw what happened with your own eyes as you are seeing the sun, then you may bear the witness, otherwise not. (Ahkam al-Quran by al Jassas).

87. And if you ask them who created them, they will surely say: “Allah.”*69 How then are they turned away.

وَلَيْنِ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ
لَيَقُولَنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

*69 This verse has two meanings:

- (1) If you ask them who has created them, they will say: Allah.
- (2) If you ask them who is the Creator of their gods, they will say: Allah.

88. And (Allah acknowledges) his saying: “O my Lord, indeed these are a people who do not believe.”*70

وَقِيلِهِ يَرْبِّ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمٌ لَّا
يُؤْمِنُونَ

*70 This is one of the most difficult verses of the Quran as it involves the complicated syntactic question of the kind of *waw* that has been used in *wa qili-hi*. From the translation of Shah Abdul Qadir it appears that the *waw* here is not conjunctive but for taking oath, and is related to *fa-anna yu-fakun*, and the pronoun in *qili-hi* turns to the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah. Therefore, the verse means this: By this saying of the Messenger: O my Lord, these are a people who would not believe. They are so utterly deluded that although they themselves admit that Allah alone is

their Creator and Creator of their gods, yet they abandon the Creator and persist in worshiping His creatures.

The object of swearing by this saying of the Messenger is that the conduct of the people clearly shows that they are, in fact, stubborn, for the foolishness of their attitude is apparent from their own admission, and such an irrational attitude can be adopted only by such a person, who is resolved not to believe. In other words, the oath implies: The Messenger has rightly said so: indeed these people would not believe.

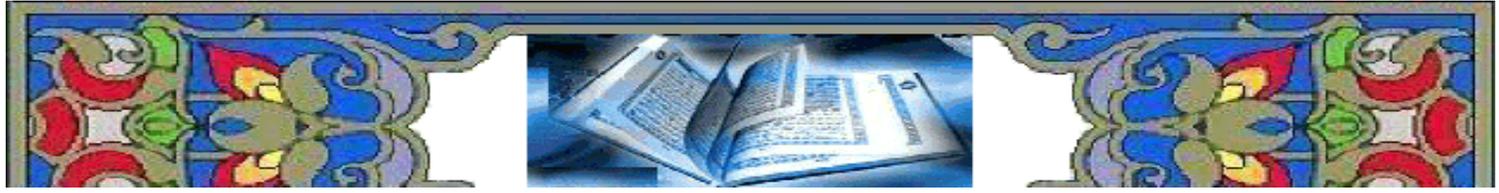
89. Then bear with them (O Muhammad) and say: “Peace.”^{*71} They will come to know.

فَأَصْفَحْ عَنْهُمْ وَقُلْ سَلَامٌ
فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ



***71** That is, you should neither curse them for their scornful words and attitude of mockery and derision, nor respond with harsh words, just wish them well and take your leave.





الدُّخَان Ad-Dukhan

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word *dukhan* which occurs in verse 10.

Period of Revelation

Its period of revelation could not be determined from any authentic tradition, but the internal evidence of the subject matter shows that this Surah was revealed in the same period in which Surah Zukhruf and a few other earlier Surahs had been revealed. However, this Surah was sent down somewhat later. Its historical background is this: When the disbelievers of Makkah became more and more antagonistic in their attitude and conduct, the Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed: O God, help me with a famine like the famine of Joseph. He thought that when the people would be afflicted with a calamity, they would remember God, their hearts would soften and they would accept the admonition. Allah granted his prayer, and the whole land was overtaken by such a terrible famine that the people were sorely distressed. At last, some of the Quraish chiefs among whom Abdullah bin Masud has particularly

mentioned the name of Abu Sufyan came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and requested him to pray to Allah to deliver his people from the calamity. On this occasion Allah sent down this Surah.

Subject Matter and Topics

The introduction to the address revealed on this occasion for the admonition and warning of the people of Makkah contained some important points, which are as follows:

1. You, O People of Makkah, are wrong in thinking that the Quran is being composed by Muhammad (peace be upon him). This Book by itself bears the clear testimony that it is not the composition of a man but of Allah, Lord of the worlds.
2. You are making a wrong estimate of the worth of this Book. You think it is a calamity that has descended on you, whereas the Hour when Allah, out of sheer mercy, decided to send His Messenger and His Book to you was highly blessed.
3. You are foolishly involved in the misunderstanding that you will fight this Messenger and this Book and will win, whereas the fact is that the Messenger has been raised and the Book sent down in that particular Hour when Allah decides the destinies, and Allah's decisions are not so weak that they may be changed to a person's liking, nor are they based on ignorance and folly that there may be the likelihood of a mistake or error or weakness in them. They are rather the firm and unalterable decisions of the Ruler of the Universe, Who is All Hearing, All Knowing and All Wise. Therefore, they cannot be treated lightly.

4. You yourselves acknowledge that Allah alone is the Master and Lord of the earth and heavens and of everything in the Universe and also admit that life and death are only in His power, yet you insist on making others your deities, for which the only argument you offer is that that had been the practice since the time of your forefathers, whereas if a person has the conviction that Allah alone is the Master, Sustainer and Giver of life and death, he can never entertain the doubt that there can also be other gods beside Him, who can be worthy of worship. If your forefathers had committed this folly, there is no reason why you also should continue committing it blindly. As a matter of fact, their Lord too was only One God, Who is your Lord, and they also should have worshiped only Him, Whom you should worship.

5. The only demand of Allah's Providence and Mercifulness is not this that He should feed you, but also this that He should arrange guidance for you. For this very guidance He has sent His Messenger and His Book.

After this introduction, the question of the famine that was raging in Makkah has been discussed. As already mentioned, this famine had occurred on the Prophet's (peace be upon him) prayer, and he had prayed for it so that when the calamity befell it would break the stubbornness of the disbelievers and then they would listen to the rebuke. It looked as if this expectation was being fulfilled to some extent, for some of the most stubborn enemies of the truth, on account of the severities of the famine, had cried out: O Lord, avert this torment from us

and we will believe. At this, on the one hand, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been foretold: These people will not learn any lesson from such calamities. When they have turned away from the Messenger, whose life, character, works and speech clearly show that he is Allah's true Messenger, how will a mere famine help remove their disbelief? On the other hand, the unbelievers have been addressed, so as to say: You lie when you say that you will believe as soon as the torment is removed from you. We shall just remove it to see how sincere you are in your promise. There is a graver disaster about to fall upon you. You need a much more crushing blow. Minor misfortunes cannot set you right.

In this very connection, a reference has been made a little below to Pharaoh and his people, implying that those people also had met with precisely the same trial as the chiefs of the disbelieving Quraish are now afflicted. To them also a similar noble and honorable Messenger had come. They also had seen those express pointers and signs which clearly showed that he had been appointed by Allah. They also had gone on witnessing one sign after the other but they did not give up their stubbornness, till at last they made up their mind to put an end to the Messenger's life, and they met their doom, which has since become an object lesson for the people forever.

After this the theme of the Hereafter has been taken up, which the disbelievers of Makkah vehemently denied. They said: We have never seen anyone rising back to life after death. Raise our forefathers back to life if you are true in

your claim about the life Hereafter. In response to this, two arguments for the Hereafter have been presented briefly:

(1) That the denial of this creed has always proved destructive for the morals.

(2) That the universe is not a plaything of a thoughtless deity, but it is a wise system and no work of wisdom is ever vain or useless. Then the disbelievers demand to bring their forefathers back to life has been answered, thus: This cannot be done every day to meet the demand of the individuals, but Allah has appointed a time when He will resurrect all mankind simultaneously and will subject them to accountability in His court. If one has to protect himself there, one should think about it here. For, no one will be able to save himself there by his own power, nor by the power of any one else.

In connection with this court of Allah, mention has been made of the fate of those who will be declared as culprits and of the rewards of those who will be declared as successful. The discourse has been concluded with this warning: This Quran has been revealed in simple language in your own tongue so that you may understand it. Yet if you do not understand it and insist on seeing your evil end, you may wait. Our Prophet is waiting too. Whatever is to happen, will happen at its own appointed time.

1. Ha. Mim.

حَمِّم

2. By the lucid Scripture.

وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

3. Indeed, We sent it down in a blessed night. Indeed,

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ إِنَّا

We are ever warning.*1

كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ

*1 The meaning of taking an oath by the lucid Scripture has been explained in E.N.1 of Surah Az-Zukhruf. Here also what has been sworn by is that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is not the author of this Book but We are the author, and this Book by itself is enough to provide a proof of that. Furthermore, it has been said that the night in which it was revealed was full of blessings. That is, the foolish and ignorant people, who have no idea of their own well being or otherwise, regard the revelation of this Book as a disaster for themselves and are deeply anxious as how to get rid of it. But, as a matter of fact, the Hour when We decided to send down this Book to arouse the heedless, was highly blessed for them and for all mankind.

Some commentators have expressed the opinion that the meaning of sending down the Quran in that night is that its revelation began during that night, and some others think that the whole of the Quran was transferred from Umm-ul-Kitab and entrusted to the bearers of revelation (angels), and then revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) as and when required and demanded by the occasion and circumstances during 23 years. As to what actually happened Allah alone has the best knowledge.

The night implies the same night which has been called *lailat-ul-qadr* in Surah Al-Qadr, Ayat 1, There it has been said: We sent it down in a night of glory, and here: We sent it down in a blessed night. It was the night of the month of Ramadhan, as it is said in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 185:

Ramadhan is the month in which the Quran was revealed.

4. Wherein is made distinct every wise command.*2

فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ

*2 The word *amr-in-hakim* as used in the text has two meanings:

(1) That the command is entirely based on wisdom: there is no likelihood of any error or weakness in it.

(2) That it is a firm and stable decision: it lies in no one's power to change it.

5. A command from Us.*3
Indeed, We are ever sending.

أَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ



*3 In Surah Al-Qadr, this same thing has been expressed thus: The angels and the Spirit (Angel Gabriel) descend in it with every decree, by the leave of their Lord. This shows that it is such a night in the divine administration of Allah in which He decides the destinies of the individuals and nations and countries and entrusts His decisions to His angels, who then implement them accordingly. Some commentators among whom Ikrimah is most prominent, have been involved in the misunderstanding that this is the 15th night of Shaban, for in some traditions it has been said that the destinies of people are decided during that night. But Ibn Abbas, Ibn Umar, Mujahid, Qatadah, Hasan Basri, Saeed bin Jubair, Ibn Zaid, Abu Malik, Dahhak and many other commentators agree that this is the same night of Ramadan, which has been called *lailat-ul-qadr*, for the Quran itself has stated this, and where any Quranic

statement exists, no other view can be formed on the basis of random reports. Ibn Kathir says: The traditions that Imam Zuhri has related from Uthman bin Muhammad that destinies are decided from one Shaban to the next Shaban is an indirect tradition and such traditions cannot be cited as against the clear texts of the Quran. Qadi Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi says: No Hadith in respect of the 15th of Shaban is reliable, either in respect of its merit, or about this that decisions with regard to the destinies are taken in it; therefore, they do not merit attention, (Ahkam ul-Quran).

6. A mercy from your Lord.^{*4}
Indeed, He is the All Hearer,
the All Knower.^{*5}

رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ
السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

^{*4} That is, it was not only a demand of wisdom to send a Messenger with this Book but also of Allah's mercy, for He is the Provider, and Provider requires that not only should arrangements be made for nourishing the servants' bodies but they should also be afforded right guidance by knowledge, that they should be made aware of the distinction between right and wrong and that they should not be left wandering in darkness.

^{*5} The object of mentioning these two attributes of Allah in this context is to warn the people of the truth that He alone can give correct knowledge for He alone knows all the realities. Not to speak of one man, even if all men join to determine a way of life for themselves, there can be no guaranty of its being the right way, for even the entire mankind together cannot become all-hearing and all-

knowing. It does not lie in its power to comprehend all those realities whose knowledge is essential for determining a correct way of life. This knowledge is only with Allah. He alone is All-Hearing and All-Knowing. Therefore, He alone can tell what is guidance for man and what is falsehood, what is the truth and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil.

7. Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. If you believe with certainty.*⁶

رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا
بَيْنَهُمَا إِنَّكُمْ مُوقِنِينَ

*⁶ The Arabs themselves admitted that Allah alone is the Lord (Master and Provider) of the Universe and of everything in it. Therefore, it has been said to them: If you are not admitting only verbally but are really conscious of His being the Provider and are convinced of His being the Master, you should admit that:

(1) It is the very demand of His Mercifulness and Providence that He should send a Book and a Messenger for the guidance of man.

(2) It is His right as the Master and your duty as His servants that you should obey every guidance and submit to every command that comes from Him.

8. There is no god but Him.*⁷ He gives life and causes death.*⁸ Your Lord and Lord of your forefathers before.*⁹

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ
رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ



***7** The real God Who alone has the right that He should be worshiped and served.

***8** That is, there is no god other than Allah, nor can there be. Therefore, it is against reason that you should disdain the worship of Him Who breathed life into dead matter and made you a living man. And Who possesses full powers to keep you alive as long as He likes and bring your life to an end whenever He likes. So, it is against reason that you serve any other than Him, or start worshiping others besides Him.

***9** There is a subtle allusion in it to this: He is also Lord of those of your ancestors who took other gods besides Allah; they had not done the right thing by giving up their real Lord and serving others that you should be justified in imitating them and regard their conduct as an argument for the soundness of your creed. They ought to have served only Him, because He alone is their Lord.

9. But they are in doubt, playing. ^{*10}

بَلْ هُمْ فِي شَكٍّ يَلْعَبُونَ

***10** In this brief sentence an allusion has been made to an important truth. Even atheists or polytheists do come across occasions when their being from within says: There is somewhere some weakness in the creed that we have adopted. The atheist may apparently be very firm in his denial of God, his heart at one or the other time does bear the testimony that this wonderful and wise system which extends from the particle of dust to the galaxies and from a blade of grass to the creation of man, could not come into existence without an All-Wise Designer. Likewise, a

polytheist may be deeply submerged in his polytheism, his heart also sometimes cries out: Those whom you have adopted as deities cannot be God. But this testimony of the heart neither leads the atheist nor the polytheist to the conviction about the existence and Oneness of God, nor to conviction and satisfaction about their creed of atheism and polytheism itself. Instead, their religion, in fact, is based on doubt, no matter how convinced they might appear to be of its truth. As for the question: Why doesn't this doubt make them restless and why don't they seek the truth seriously so as to obtain a satisfactory ground for their convictions? The answer is: they lack seriousness in religious matters. What they really regard as important are the worldly earnings and acquisitions and their enjoyment, in search of which they expend all their powers and abilities of the heart and mind and body. As for the religious matters, they are in fact no more than fun, a mere pastime, amusement, or a mental diversion for them, for which they cannot spare even a few moments of serious study. Religious rites are being performed as an entertainment; discussions about denial and atheism are being engaged in as an amusement. No one can spare a few moments from his worldly pursuits to consider whether he has turned away from the truth, and if so, what would be its consequences.

10. Then wait for the Day (when) the sky will bring forth a visible smoke.

فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَاءُ
بِدُخَانٍ مُّبِينٍ



11. That will cover the people. This is a painful punishment.

يَغْشَى النَّاسَ هَذَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

12. “Our Lord, relieve us of the punishment, indeed we are believers.”

رَبَّنَا اكْشِفْ عَنَّا الْعَذَابَ إِنَّا مُؤْمِنُونَ

13. How can there be for them an admonition, and indeed there has come to them a clear Messenger.*11

أَنَّى لَهُمُ الذِّكْرَى وَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مُّبِينٌ

*11 *Rasul-i-mubin* has two meanings:

- (1) His being a Messenger is quite evident from his character, his morals and his works.
- (2) He has made every effort to make the truth plain and clear.

14. Then they turned away from him and said: “One taught (by others), a madman.”*12

ثُمَّ تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوا مُعَلَّمٌ مَجْنُونٌ

*12 What they meant was: this was a simple man, some others have incited and deceived him. They secretly forge and teach him verses of the Quran, and he comes and recites them before the people. They sit back in peace and leave him alone to receive the abuses and be pelted with stones. They would make a mockery of all the arguments, the admonitions and the serious teachings which the

Prophet (peace be upon him) had been presenting since several years and was growing weary. Neither they paid any attention to the rational things being expressed in the Quran nor recognized the extraordinary character of the man who was presenting them, nor took any trouble to think what nonsense they were uttering when they imputed such things to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Obviously, if there had been another person who gave secret instruction to the Prophet (peace be upon him), he could not have remained hidden from Khadijah and Abu Bakr, Ali and Zaid bin Harithah and other early Muslims, who were the closest and constant companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Then, how it is that these very people only became his most devoted and dedicated followers, whereas if the business of prophethood had depended on the secret instruction of some other person, these very people would have been in the forefront to oppose him (For further explanation, see Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 103; Surah Al-Furqan, Ayats 4-6 and the corresponding E.Ns).

15. Indeed, We shall remove the punishment for a while. Indeed, you will revert.

إِنَّا كَاشِفُوا الْعَذَابَ قَلِيلًا إِنَّكُمْ عَائِدُونَ

16. The Day We shall seize with the greatest seizure. Indeed, We shall take vengeance.*13

يَوْمَ نَبْطِشُ الْبَطْشَةَ الْكُبْرَىٰ إِنَّا مُنْتَقِمُونَ

*13 The commentators have seriously disputed the meaning of these verses, and the difference of opinion existed even in

the time of the companions. Masruq, the well-known student of Abdullah bin Masud, states: One day when we entered the mosque of Kufah, we saw a preacher addressing the people. He recited the verse: *Yauma tatis-sama-u bidukhan-im-mubin*, then asked: Do you know what kind of smoke it is? This smoke will appear on the Day of Resurrection and will make the disbelievers and the hypocrites blind and deaf, but the believers will be affected only to the extent as if they had caught cold. Hearing this commentary we went to Abdullah bin Masud and reported to him what the preacher had said. Abdullah at that time was lying down. On hearing this commentary he sat up startled and said: When a person does not have the knowledge, he should ask those who have it. The fact is that when the people of the Quraish went on refusing to accept Islam and continued to oppose the Prophet (peace be upon him), the Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed: O God, help me with a famine like the famine of Joseph (peace be upon him); consequently, a very severe famine overtook Makkah and the people were forced to eat bones, skins and carrion. The conditions became so bad that whoever looked up to the sky would see nothing but smoke due to intensity of hunger. At last, Abu Sufyan came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: You tell the people to treat their kindred kindly, your own people are starving, kindly pray to God to remove this calamity. This was the time when the people of the Quraish had started saying: O God, if You remove this torment from us, we will believe. This same event has been referred to in these verses; and the severest

blow implies the calamity that was inflicted on the Quraish in the Battle of Badr. This tradition has been related by Imam Ahmad, Bukhari Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatim from Masruq with several chains of authorities. Besides Masruq, Ibrahim Nakhai Qatadah, Asim and Amir have also related that Abdullah bin Masud had given the same commentary of this verse. Therefore there cannot be any doubt that Ibn Masud actually held this same opinion. Among the immediate followers of the companions, Mujahid, Qatadah. Abul Aliyah, Muqatil, Ibrahim Nakhai, Dahhak and Atiyyah al-Aufi and others have also concurred with Ibn Masud in this commentary.

On the contrary, scholars like Ali, Ibn Umar, Ibn Abbas, Abu Saeed Khudri, Zaid bin Ali, and Hasan Basri say that in these verses mention has been made of the time just before Resurrection, and the smoke that has been foretold will envelop the earth at that time. This commentary is further strengthened by the traditions that have been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Hudhaifah bin Asid al-Ghifari says: One day when we were talking about Resurrection, the Prophet (peace be upon him) came out to us and said: Resurrection will not be established till ten signs have appeared one after the other: Rising of the sun in the west, smoke, the beast, emergence of Gog and Magog, descent of Jesus son of Mary, sinking of the earth in the East, in the West and in the Arabian Peninsula, and the appearance of a fire from Yemen, which will drive the people away. (Muslim) This is confirmed by Abu Malik Ashari's tradition which has been related by Ibn Jarir and

Tabarani, and Abu Said Khudri's tradition which has been related by Ibn Abi Hatim. Both these traditions show that the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarded the smoke as one of the signs of Resurrection and also said that when that smoke will spread, it will affect the believer only like a cold, but will infuse every nerve of the disbeliever and come out from every part of his body.

A study of the verses under consideration can remove the disparity between the two commentaries. As for the commentary of Abdullah bin Masud, it is a fact that a severe famine had hit Makkah resulting from the Prophet's (peace be upon him) prayer and it had unnerved the disbelievers considerably and they had requested the Prophet (peace be upon him) to pray for its removal, as referred to at several places in the Quran. (See Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 43; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 94-95; Surah Yunus, Ayat 21; Surah Al-Muminun, Ayats 75-77 and the corresponding E.Ns). In these verses also there is a clear pointer to the same conditions. The disbeliever are saying: Our Lord, remove this torment from us, we will believe. Allah is saying: How can they rid themselves of their heedlessness? Even when a manifest Messenger came to them, they paid no heed to him, and said: He is a madman taught by others. Then Allah is saying: Were We to remove the torment a little, you would revert to the same that you were doing before. All this can be relevant only if it refers to the conditions of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) time. To apply them to what will happen near the time of Resurrection, is not correct. Therefore, in view of this,

Abdullah bin Masud's commentary seems to be correct, but its this part that "the smoke" also had appeared in that very time, in that when the people in their extreme state of hunger looked up to the sky, they could see nothing but smoke, does not seem to be correct. It also does not conform to the apparent words of the Quran and is against the traditions as well. The Quran does not say: The sky brought forth the smoke and it spread over the people; but it says: Wait for the day when the sky will appear with a visible smoke, and it will envelop mankind. A study of the subsequent verses clearly points to this meaning: When you do not believe even after the Messenger's admonition, nor take heed from the warning given in the shape of the famine, then you should wait for Resurrection. At that time when you see your doom confronting you, you will fully realize what was the truth and what was falsehood. Therefore, as for the smoke, the correct view is that it has nothing to do with the time of the famine, but it is a sign of Resurrection and the same is also confirmed by the Hadith.

17. And indeed, We tried before them Pharaoh's people, and there came to them a noble messenger.*14

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمَ
فِرْعَوْنَ وَجَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ
كَرِيمٌ

*14 The words *rasul-un karim* in the original imply a man who is characterized with most noble traits of character and highly praiseworthy qualities.

18. “That^{*15} render to me the slaves of Allah.^{*16} Indeed, I am to you a messenger, trustworthy.”^{*17}

أَنْ أَدُّوْا إِلَيَّ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ^ص إِيَّيْكُمْ
رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ



***15** One should note that the sayings of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) being cited here, are not parts of a continuous address delivered by him at any one time, but they are a summary in a few sentences of what he said to Pharaoh and his courtiers on different occasions during many years. (For the details, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 103-136; Surah Yunus, Ayats 75-92; Surah TaHa, Ayats 45-76; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 10-68; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 7-14; Surah AlQasas, Ayats 32-42; Surah Al-Mumin, Ayats 23-46; Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayats 46-56; and the corresponding E.Ns.)

***16** That is, leave the children of Israel to go with me. This demand is synonymous with the demand made in Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 105; Surah TaHa, Ayat 47 and Surah Ash-Shurra, Ayat 17. Another translation that has been reported from Abdullah ibn Abbas is: Servants of Allah, fulfill my right, i.e. accept what I say, believe in me, follow my guidance. This is my right on you from Allah. The following sentence: I am a trustworthy Messenger to you is more in keeping with the second meaning.

***17** That is, I am a reliable Messenger: I do not forge anything from myself, nor am I the one who would present something based on personal interest or desire, or forge a command or law, in the name of Allah. Rest assured that I shall convey to you intact only that which my Sender has

commanded. It should be noted that these two sentences belong to the time when the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) first started preaching Allah's message.

19. "And that exalt not against Allah. Indeed, I bring to you a manifest authority."*18

وَأَنْ لَا تَعْلُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ ^ص إِنِّي
ءَاتِيكُمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٩﴾

*18 In other words, it means: Your rebellion against me is in fact rebellion against Allah, for what annoys you is not what I say but what Allah says, and I only present those things as His Messenger. If you doubt whether I have really been sent by Hun or not, I present before you a clear authority of my appointment from Allah. This authority does not imply any one miracle but a long series of the miracles which the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) continued to show to Pharaoh and his people for years since the time he came in the court of Pharaoh till his last days in Egypt. Whatever sign they denied, was followed up by a greater sign of authority by him. (For explanation, see E.Ns 42, 43 of Surah Az-Zukhruf).

20. "And indeed, I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord lest you stone me."

وَإِنِّي عُدْتُ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ أَنْ
تَرْجُمُونِ ﴿٢٠﴾

21. "And if you do not believe in me, then leave me alone."*19

وَإِنْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا لِي فَأَعْرِضُونِ ﴿٢١﴾

*19 This was said at the time when, as against all the signs

presented by the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), Pharaoh was still showing stubbornness, but was feeling upset and confounded at the realization that all classes of the Egyptian society were rapidly being influenced by those signs. In that period, first of all he made the speech before his packed court as mentioned in verses 51-53 of Surah Az-Zukhruf (see E.Ns 45 to 49), then, when he felt the ground slipping from under his feet, he made up his mind to kill Allah's Messenger. At that time the Prophet (peace be upon him) said the words as mentioned in Surah Al-Mumin, Ayat 27 to the effect: I have taken refuge in my Lord and your Lord against every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning. Here, the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) is referring to that same thing and telling Pharaoh and his chiefs: Look, I have sought Allah's refuge against all sorts of violence from you, now you cannot harm me. But if you wish yourselves well, do not harm me. If you do not want to believe what I say, you may not, but you should never lay your hands on me, otherwise you will meet with catastrophic consequences.

22. So he called upon his Lord, (saying): "Indeed, these are the people who are criminals."^{*20}

فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمٌ
مُجْرِمُونَ

*20 This is the final report that the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) presented before his Lord, saying: These are the people who are criminals. That is, their being the criminals has been confirmed finally and absolutely. They have exhausted every chance of concession and respite for

reformation. It is time that the final fatal decision be passed against them.

23. (Allah said): “Then set out with My servants by night.*²¹ Indeed, you will be followed.”*²²

فَأَسْرِ بِعِبَادِي لَيْلًا إِنَّكُمْ
مُتَّبَعُونَ



***21** With my servants: With all those people who have believed, including both the Israelites and the Egyptian Copts who had become Muslims since the time of the Prophet Joseph till that of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon them), and those also who had been influenced by the signs shown by Moses (peace be upon him) and His preaching and accepted Islam from among the Egyptians. (For explanation, see Surah Yousuf: E.N. 68).

***22** This was the initial command given to the prophet Moses (peace be upon him) for the migration. (For explanation, see Surah TaHa, Ayat 77; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 52-68 and the corresponding E.Ns).

24. “And leave the sea at rest. Indeed, they are a host to be drowned.”*²³

وَأَتْرِكِ الْبَحْرَ رَهَوًّا إِنَّهُمْ
مُغْرَقُونَ



***23** This command was given when the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had crossed the sea along with his caravan and wanted that he should restore the sea to its former state by smiting it with the staff so that Pharaoh and his hosts should not pursue them on the dry path created by the miracle. At that times it was said: Leave the sea divided as it is, so that Pharaoh and his armies should

descend into it. Then the sea will be restored and they will be drowned all together.

25. How many they left behind, of gardens, and water springs.

كَمْ تَرَكُوا مِنْ جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ



26. And crops and noble sites.

وَزُرُوعٍ وَمَقَامٍ كَرِيمٍ



27. And pleasant things wherein they took delight.

وَنَعْمَةٍ كَانُوا فِيهَا فَيَكْهِنُونَ



28. Thus, and We made it an inheritance for other people.*24

كَذَلِكَ وَأَوْرَثْنَاهَا قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ



*24 Hasan Basri says that “other people” here implies the children of Israel, whom Allah made heirs of the land of Egypt after Pharaoh’s people, and Qatadah says it implies the other people who inherited Egypt after the people of Pharaoh, for the history does not make any mention that the Israelites ever returned to Egypt after the exodus and inherited it. This same point has been disputed by the later commentators also. (For a detailed discussion, see Surah Ash Shuara, Ayats 57-59 and the E.Ns on it).

29. So the heaven and the earth wept not for them, and they were not given any respite.*25

فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَاءُ

وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنظَرِينَ



*25 That is, when they were the rulers, they were known

for their glory and grandeur, hymns were sung of their praise, flatterers flattered them to such an extent as if the whole world was devoted to them for their excellences and indebted to them for their favors and there was none more popular in the world than they. But when they fell, there was none to shed a tear on their fall, rather the world felt relieved that a cause of distress had been removed. Obviously, they had neither done any good to the people that the dwellers of the earth might weep on them, nor anything for the sake of Allah's pleasure that the dwellers of the heavens might grieve over their ruin. As long as Allah continued to give them respite by His will, they enjoyed life as they pleased; but when they transgressed all limits in their crimes, they were cast aside like rubbish.

30. And indeed, We saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating punishment.

وَلَقَدْ نَجَّيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنَ
الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. From Pharaoh.^{*26} Indeed, he was an arrogant among the transgressors.^{*27}

مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيًّا
مِّنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

***26** That is, Pharaoh by himself was an abasing torment for them and all other torments were indeed offshoots of the same great torment.

***27** There is a subtle satire in it on the chiefs of the disbelieving Quraish. It means to say this: You do not enjoy any place of distinction among the transgressors against Allah. Pharaoh indeed was a rebel of the highest order who

was ruling on the throne of the largest kingdom of the time as a god. When he was swept away like straw, how can you prevent the divine wrath?

32. And indeed, We chose them by knowledge above the nations.*28

وَلَقَدْ آخَرْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عَلَىٰ
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

*28 That is, Allah was well aware both of the qualities and of the weaknesses of the children of Israel. He had not chosen them blindly. For when he chose them from among the contemporary nations to become the standard bearers of His message and His Tauhid, they were the most suitable people in His knowledge for the purpose.

33. And We gave them of signs that in which there was a manifest trial.*29

وَأَتَيْنَاهُم مِّنَ الْأَيَّاتِ مَا فِيهِ
بَلَاءٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

*29 For explanation, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 49-74; Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 153-160; Surah Al-Maidah, Ayats 20-26; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 138-171; Surah TaHa, Ayats 80-97 and the corresponding E.Ns.

34. Indeed, these are saying:

إِنَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ لَيَقُولُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. “There is nothing except our first death, and we shall not be raised again.”*30

إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا مَوْتَتُنَا الْأُولَىٰ وَمَا
نَحْنُ بِمُنشَرِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

*30 That is, when we die the first time, we shall be

annihilated: there will be no other life after that.

36. “So bring (back) our forefathers, if you are truthful.”^{*31}

فَاتُوا بِآبَائِنَا إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ



***31** This was their reasoning: We have never seen a dead person resurrected to life. Therefore, we believe that there will be no other life after death. If you claim that there will be another life, then resurrect our forefathers from their graves, so that we are convinced of the life after death. If you do not do this, we would think that your claim is false. This was, as they thought, a very strong argument for the refutation of life after death, whereas it was absurd. Nobody had told them that the dead would return to this very world after being raised back to life, nor the Prophet (peace be upon him), nor any Muslim had ever claimed that he could raise the dead back to life.

37. Are they better, or the people of Tubba^{*32} and those before them. We destroyed them. Indeed, they were criminals.^{*33}

أَهُمْ خَيْرٌ أَمْ قَوْمٌ تُبَعِّعُ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا



***32** Tubba was the title of the kings of the Himyarites, like the titles of Khosroes, Caesar, Pharaoh etc. which have been associated with the kings of different countries. They were a branch of the Sabaeans, who attained domination over Saba in 115 B.C. and ruled it until 300 A.D. They have

been a well known people of Arabia for centuries. (For details, see E.N. 37 of Surah Saba).

***33** This is the first answer to the disbelievers' objection; it means: Any individual group or nation which denies the Hereafter becomes criminal. Perversion of the morals is its inevitable result, and human history bears evidence that whichever nation adopted this view of life ultimately perished. As for the question: Are they better or the people of Tubba or the people before them? It means this: The disbelievers of Makkah have not been able to attain to the prosperity and splendor that became the lot of the people of Tubba and of the people of Saba and of the people of Pharaoh and others before them. But this material prosperity and worldly splendor could not save them from the consequences of their moral degeneration. How will then the chiefs of the Quraish be saved from destruction on the strength of their puny resources and wealth? (For details, see E.Ns 25 to 36 of Surah Saba).

38. And We created not the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, for play.

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَعِبِينَ

39. We did not create them except with truth, but most of them do not know. ^{*34}

مَا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

***34** This is the second answer to their objection; it means: Whoever denies life after death and the rewards and punishments of the hereafter, in fact, regards this world as

a plaything. This is why he has formed the view that man, after raising all sorts of the storms in the world, will end up in the dust one day and none of his good or bad acts will bear any fruit. The fact, however, is that this universe is the creation of an All-Wise Creator and not of a frivolous being, and it cannot be expected from an All-Wise Creator that he would perform a useless and vain act. (For a detailed explanation, see Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 73; Surah Yunus, Ayats 5-6; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 16-18; Surah Al-Muminun, Ayat 115; Surah Ar-Room, Ayats 8-9 and the corresponding E.Ns).

40. Indeed, the Day of Decision^{*35} is the time appointed for them all.

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ مِيقَاتُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ



***35** This is the answer to their demand: Bring back our forefathers if you are truthful. It means: Life-after-death is not a trivial matter, it cannot be that whenever somebody denies it, a dead person may be raised immediately from the graveyard and presented before him. For it a time has been fixed by the Lord of the worlds, when He will resurrect to life all the former and the latter generations, gather them together in His court and will decide their cases. You may believe in it or may not, but this will in any case happen on its own pre-ordained time. If you believe in it, it will be to your own advantage, for, being forewarned, you will make preparations to fare well in that court. If you do not believe in it, you will incur loss for yourselves, for you will spend your whole life in the misunderstanding that

good and evil are confined only to this worldly life; after death there is going to be no court where our good or bad deeds might have to be judged for any permanent results.

41. The day when a friend cannot avail a friend anything,^{*36} nor will they be helped.

يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي مَوْلَى عَنْ مَوْلَى
شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

*36 The Arabic word *maula* is used for a person who supports another person either because of kinship, or friendship, or some other relationship.

42. Except him on whom Allah has mercy. Indeed, He is the All Mighty, the Most Merciful.^{*37}

إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الرَّحِيمُ

*37 These sentences portray the nature of the court that will be established on the Day of Decision. It will be a court where nobody's help or support will help rescue any culprit nor have his sentence reduced. All powers will rest with the real Sovereign Whose decisions cannot be withheld from being enforced nor influenced by any power. It will entirely depend on His own discretion whether He forgives somebody mercifully, or awards him a lesser punishment. It indeed behooves Him to exercise justice mercifully and not mercilessly, but whatever decision He gives in any case, will be enforced entirely and completely. After this portrayal of the nature of the divine court, in the following few sentences it has been stated what will be the fate of those who will be found guilty in that court, and what will be conferred on those about whom it will be established

that they had been refraining from Allah's disobedience in the world out of fear of Him.

43. Indeed, the tree of zaqqum.^{*38}

إِنَّ شَجَرَتَ الزَّقُّومِ ﴿٤٣﴾

*38 For details of *zaqqum*, see E.N. 34 of Surah As-Saaffat.

44. The food for the sinner.

طَعَامُ الْأَثِيمِ ﴿٤٤﴾

45. Like boiling oil,^{*39} it will boil in the bellies.

كَالْمُهْلِ يَغْلِي فِي الْبُطُونِ ﴿٤٥﴾

*39 The word *al-muhl* in the original has several meanings: molten metal, pus-blood, molten tar, lava, dregs of oil. These are the different meanings given by the lexicographers and commentators, but if this word is understood with reference to *zaqqum* (cactus), it may mean its juice which will probably be like the dregs of oil.

46. Like the boiling of scalding water.

كَغَلِي الْحَمِيمِ ﴿٤٦﴾

47. "Seize him and drag him into the midst of hell."

خُذُوهُ فَاعْتَلُوهُ إِلَىٰ سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٤٧﴾

48. "Then pour upon his head the punishment of scalding water."

ثُمَّ صُبُّوا فَوْقَ رَأْسِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْحَمِيمِ ﴿٤٨﴾

49. "Taste. Indeed, you were the mighty, the noble."

ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ ﴿٤٩﴾

50. “Indeed, this is what you used to doubt.”

إِنَّ هَذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَمْتَرُونَ



51. Indeed, the righteous will be in a place secured.*40

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي مَقَامٍ أَمِينٍ



*40 A secure place: A place safe from every kind of fear, grief, worry and danger, hardship and trouble. According to a Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: It will be proclaimed to the dwellers of Paradise: You will remain in good health, will never fall ill, will live forever, will never die, will ever remain happy and prosperous and will never meet with a misfortune, will ever remain youthful, will never become old. (Muslim, on the authority of Abu Hurairah and Abu Saeed Khudri).

52. Amid gardens and springs.

فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ



53. Dressed in silk and silk embroidery,*41 facing each other.

يَلْبَسُونَ مِنْ سُندُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ



مُتَقَابِلِينَ

*41 *Sundus* and *istabraq* in the original are fine silk cloth and thick silk cloth respectively.

54. Thus. And We shall marry them to fair ones with lovely eyes.*42

كَذَلِكَ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ



*42 In the original, *hur-un ein* means fair complexioned, large-eyed women. (For further explanation, see E.Ns 26,29)

of Surah As-Saaffat).

55. They will call therein for every (kind of) fruit in safety.*43

يَدْعُونَ فِيهَا بِكُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ
ءَامِنِينَ

*43 That is, they will order the attendants in Paradise to bring anything they would like in any measure they would demand, and it will be presented before them. In this world, a man cannot ask for a thing in an inn, or even his own things in his own house, with the freedom and satisfaction as he will ask for these in Paradise. For, in the world nothing is found anywhere in unlimited measure, whatever man uses here, he has to pay for it. In Paradise, things will belong to Allah, and the servants will enjoy full freedom to use them. Neither will there be the danger of the failure of the supply, nor the necessity of a bill to pay.

56. They will not taste death therein except the first death (of this world). And He will save them from the punishment of the blazing Fire.*44

لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا الْمَوْتَ
إِلَّا الْمَوْتَ الْأُولَىٰ
وَوَقَّاهُمْ
عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ

*44 Two things are worthy of notice in this verse. First, after mentioning the blessings of Paradise, special mention has been made of being secure from Hell separately whereas a person's entry into Paradise by itself amounts to his being safe from Hell. This is because man can feel the worth of the reward of obedience fully only when he is informed what end the disobedient people have

met and from what evil end he himself has been saved. Secondly, Allah is mentioning those people's safety from Hell and their entry into Paradise as a result of His own grace. This is meant to warn man of the truth that this success cannot be achieved by any person unless he is blessed by Allah's grace. Although man will be rewarded for his own good deeds, in the first place he cannot do good unless favored by Allah's succor; then even the best deed that man is able to perform, cannot be absolutely perfect and none can claim that it is flawless and faultless. It is only Allah's bounty that He should overlook the servant's weaknesses and defects in his actions and accept his services and bless him with rewards; otherwise if He resorts to minute accountability, no one can dare claim to win Paradise only on the strength of his own deeds. The same thing has been said by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a Hadith to the effect: Act and try to act as righteously as you possibly can, but know that the action of a person alone will not make him enter Paradise. It was asked: What about your own action, O Messenger of Allah? He replied: Yes, even I won't enter Paradise on the strength of my actions, unless of course, my Lord covers me up in His mercy.

57. A bounty from your Lord. That is the supreme triumph.

فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكَ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيمُ

58. Then indeed, We have made this (Quran) easy in

فَإِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنَاهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ

your tongue, that they may remember.

يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. Wait then (O Muhammad). Indeed, they (too) are waiting.^{*45}

فَأَرْتَقِبْ إِنَّهُمْ مُّرْتَقِبُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

***45** That is, if they do not accept the admonition even now, you should wait to see how they are visited by their doom; and they are also waiting to see what becomes of the message that you are giving them.



Al-Jasiah أَلْجَاثِيَّة

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The name *Al-Jasiah* is derived from the sentence *wa tartt kullu ummat-in jathiyat-un* of verse 28, implying thereby that it is the Surah in which the word *jasiah* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

The period of the revelation of this Surah has not been mentioned in any authentic tradition, but its subject matter clearly shows that it was revealed consecutively after Surah Ad-Dukhan. The close resemblance between the contents of the two Surahs makes them look like the twin Surahs.

Subject Matter and Topics

It answers the doubts and objections of the disbelievers of Makkah about Tauhid and the Hereafter and warns them of their attitude that they had adopted against the message of the Quran.

The discourse begins with the arguments for Tauhid. In this connection, reference has been made to the countless signs that are found in the world, from man's own body to the earth and heavens, and it is pointed out that everywhere around him man finds things which testify to

Tauhid which he refuses to acknowledge. If man sees carefully the variety of animals, the day and night, the rainfall and the vegetation thereby, the winds and his own creation, and ponders over them intelligently, without prejudice, he will find these signs sufficiently convincing of the truth that this universe is not Godless, nor under the control of many gods, but it has been created by One God, and He alone is its Controller and Ruler. However, the case of the person who is determined not to acknowledge and wants to remain involved in doubts and suspicions is different. He cannot be blessed with the faith and conviction from anywhere in the world.

A little below, in the beginning of the second section, it has been reiterated that the things man is exploiting in the world, and the countless forces and agencies that are serving his interests in the universe, did not come into being just accidentally, nor have they been provided by the gods and goddesses, but it is One God alone, Who has supplied and subjected these to him from Himself. If only a person uses his mind properly and rightly, his own intellect will proclaim that God alone is man's real Benefactor and He alone deserves that man should pay obeisance to Him.

After this, the disbelievers of Makkah have been taken to task and reproved for their stubbornness, arrogance, mockery and insistence on disbelief with which they were resisting the invitation of the Quran they have been warned that this Quran has brought the same blessing which had been granted to the children of Israel before, by virtue of which they became distinguished above all the people of the

world. Then, when they failed to recognize the true worth of this blessing and disputed their religion and lost it, this blessing now has been sent to the Arabs. This is such a code of guidance which shows the clear pathway of religion to man. The people who would turn it down by their own folly, would only prepare for their own doom, and only such people would become worthy of God's succor and mercy who would adopt obedience to it and lead a life of piety and righteousness.

In this connection, the followers of the Prophet (peace be upon him) have been instructed that they should forbear and pardon the absurd and foolish behavior towards them of the people fearless of God, for if they showed patience, God Himself would deal with their opponents and would reward them for their fortitude.

Then, there is a criticism of the erroneous ideas that the disbelievers hold about the Hereafter. They said that life was only this worldly life and there was no Hereafter. Man dies in the course of time just as a watch stops functioning suddenly. The body is not survived by any soul, which might be seized and then breathed again into the human body some time in the future. In this regard, they challenged the Prophet (peace be upon him), saying: If you lay a claim to this, then raise our dead forefathers back to life. In answer to this, Allah has given the following arguments:

1. You do not say this on the basis of any knowledge but are uttering this grave thing on the basis of conjecture. Do you really have the knowledge that there is no other life

after death, and the souls are not seized but are annihilated?

2. Your claim rests mainly on this that you have not seen any dead person rising back to life and returning to the world. Is this basis strong enough for a person to make a claim that the dead people will never rise to life? When you do not experience and observe a thing, does it mean that you have the knowledge that it does not exist at all?

3. It is utterly against reason and justice that the good and the bad, the obedient and the disobedient, the oppressor and the oppressed, should be made equal ultimately. Neither a good act should bear a good result nor an evil act an evil result. Neither the grievances of the oppressed be redressed nor the oppressor be punished, but everyone should meet with the same fate ultimately. Whoever has formed this view about the universe of God, has formed a patently wrong view. The unjust and wicked people adopt this view because they do not want to face the evil results of their deeds, but this world of God is not a lawless kingdom; it is rather a system based on the truth, in which there can be no question of the injustice of regarding the good and the bad as equal.

4. That the creed of the denial of the Hereafter is highly destructive of morals. This is adopted only by such people as are the slaves of their lusts, and for the reason that they should have full freedom to serve their lusts. Then, when they have adopted this creed, it goes on making them more and more perverse till at last their moral sense becomes dead and all avenues of guidance are closed against them.

After giving these arguments Allah says most emphatically: Just as you did not become living of your own accord, but became living by Our power, so you do not die of your own accord, but die when We send death on you. And a time is certainly coming when you will all be gathered together. If you do not believe in this because of your ignorance and folly today, you may not; when the time arrives, you will see for yourself that you are present before your God and your whole book of conduct is ready accurately, which bears evidence against each of your misdeeds. Then you will come to know how dearly has your denial of the Hereafter and your mockery of it cost you.

1. Ha. Mim.

حَم

2. The revelation of the Book is from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.*¹

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ
الْحَكِيمِ

*1 In this brief introduction to the Surah, the listeners have been warned of two things:

(1) That this Book is not the composition of Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself, but it is being sent down to him by Allah.

(2) That it is being sent down by that Allah Who is All-Mighty as well as All-Wise. His being the Almighty demands that man should not dare disobey His commands, for if he disobeys Him, he cannot escape His punishment. And His being the All-Wise demands that man should obey and follow His Guidance and His commands with full

satisfaction and willingness of the heart, for there can be no possibility of His teachings being wrong or inadequate or harmful in any way.

3. Indeed, in the heavens and the earth are signs for the believers.*2

إِنَّ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ

لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*2 To begin the discourse like this after the introduction, indicates that in the background there are the objections of the people of Makkah, which they were raising against the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They said: After all, how can we believe this one man when he says that all those great beings to whose shrines we have been dedicated and devoted so far, are nothing and that Godhead belongs to only One God? About this it is being said that the world is replete with the signs of the reality to which they are being invited. If only they saw with open eyes, they would find those signs in themselves and outside them everywhere, which testify that this whole universe is the creation of One and only One God, and He alone is its Master and Ruler and Controller. It didn't need to be pointed out what was the nature of the signs in the earth and heavens, for the dispute at that time centered around the point that the polytheists were insisting on believing in other gods and deities besides Allah, and the Quran gave the message that there was neither a god nor a deity beside One God. Therefore, it was apparent by itself from the content that the signs were of the truth of Tauhid and of the refutation of shirk.

As for the sentence: The signs are for those who believe, it means that although the signs are meant for all human beings, only those people can reach the right conclusion from their observation, who are inclined to believe. As for the heedless people, who live like animals and the stubborn people who are resolved not to believe, the existence and the non-existence of the signs is equal. The splendor and beauty of the garden is for those who can see. A blind man cannot perceive any splendor and beauty, for him even the existence of the garden is meaningless.

4. And in your creation, and what He scattered of moving creatures are signs for people who have (faith with) certainty.*³

وَفِي خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا يَبُتُّ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ
آيَاتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ

*³ That is, the case of those who have made up their minds not to believe, or of those who have chosen for themselves to remain lost in the blind alleys of doubt, is different, but when those who have not locked up their hearts against belief and conviction, will consider seriously their own creation, the structure of their own body, and the variety of animals found on the earth, they will see countless signs as will leave no doubt in their minds that all this did not come into being without a God, or that it stood in need of more than one God for its creation. (For explanation, see Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 37-38; Surah An-Nahl, Ayats 5,8; Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 57; Surah Al-Muminun, Ayats 12-14; Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 54; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 78-81; Surah An-Naml, Ayat 64; Surah Ar-Room, Ayats 20-21, 54;

E.Ns 14 to 18 of Surah As-Sajdah; Surah YaSeen, Ayats 71-73; Surah Az-Zumar, Ayat 6; and E.Ns 97, 98,110 of Surah Al-Mumin).

5. And the alternation of night and day,^{*4} and what Allah sends down from the sky of the provision,^{*5} then revives therewith the earth after its death,^{*6} and turning about of the winds,^{*7} are signs for a people who have sense.

وَآخْتَلَفِ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ
اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ رِزْقٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ
الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَتَصْرِيفِ
الرِّيْحِ ءَايَاتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

*4 The difference of the night and day is a sign because one follows the other with full regularity, because one is bright and the other dark, because over a certain period the day goes on shortening and the night lengthening gradually till the two become equal in duration, then again the day goes on lengthening and the night shortening till the two again become equal in duration. These different kinds of variations found in the night and the day and the great aspects of wisdom that accrue from these, are a clear pointer to the fact that the Creator of the sun and the earth and of every thing on the earth is one and that one All-Powerful Being is keeping both these spheres under His control. Such a Being is not deaf and blind and unwise but All-Wise, Who has established this unalterable system and made His earth a suitable place for the countless species of life, which He has created here in the form of vegetables, animals and men. (For explanation, see Surah Younus,

Ayat 67, Surah An Naml, Ayat 86; Surah Al-Qasas, Ayats 71-73; Surah Luqman, Ayat 29 and E.N. 50; Surah YaSeen, Ayat 37 and E.N. 32).

*5 Provision: Rainfall as becomes evident from the following sentence.

*6 For explanation, see Surah Al-Muminun, Ayats 18-20; Surah Al-Furqan, Ayats 48-49; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayat 7; Surah An-Naml, Ayat 61; Surah Ar-Room, Ayats 24, 48, Surah YaSeen: E.Ns 26 to 31.

*7 The circulation of the winds implies the circulation of the different kinds of winds at different times, on different parts of the earth and at different heights, which cause change of the seasons. What deserves attention is not only that above the surface of the earth there is a thick atmosphere, which contains all those elements needed by living beings for breathing, and this thick covering has kept the earth's population safe from many of the heavenly calamities. Besides, another noteworthy thing is that the air is not just filled inertly in the atmosphere, but it blows occasionally in different ways. Sometimes a cool wind blows and sometimes a hot wind. Sometimes it stops blowing and sometimes it starts blowing. Sometimes it blows soft and sometimes strong, and sometimes it assumes the proportions of a storm. Sometimes a dry wind blows and sometimes a moist wind. Sometimes it brings the rain and sometimes it drives away the clouds. These different kinds of the winds do not blow without a purpose, but under a law and a system, which testifies that this arrangement is based on perfect wisdom, and it is serving great objectives.

Then it is deeply related with coolness and heat, which go on increasing and decreasing according to the changing conditions and relationships between the earth and the sun. Furthermore, it has a deep relation with the seasonal changes and the distribution of the rain. All these facts proclaim that these arrangements have not been made haphazardly by some blind nature. Nor the sun and the earth and the air and water and vegetation and animals have separate controllers, but inevitably One God alone is the Creator of them all, and it is His Wisdom that has established this system for a great objective, and it is His power that it is functioning regularly according to a pre-ordained law.

6. These are the verses of Allah which We recite to you (Muhammad) with truth. Then in which statement, after Allah and His verses, will they believe.*8

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ
بِالْحَقِّ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَ اللَّهِ
وَأَيِّتِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦﴾

*8 That is, when these people have not believed even after Allah's own arguments have been presented for His Existence and His Unity, what else can be there by which they will gain the faith? For Allah's Word is the final thing by which a person can attain to this blessing, and the maximum of the rational arguments that could possibly be given to convince someone of an unseen reality have been presented in this divine Word. In spite of this if a person is bent upon denial, he may persist in his denial, for his denial cannot change the reality.

7. Woe unto each sinful liar.

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿٧﴾

8. Who hears the verses of Allah recited to him, then persists arrogantly as though he heard them not.*⁹ So give him tidings of a painful punishment.

يَسْمَعُ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ
يَصِرُّ مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَأَن لَّمْ يَسْمَعْهَا
فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٨﴾

*⁹ In other words, there is a marked difference between the person who listens to Allah's revelations sincerely with an open mind and ponders over them seriously and the person who listens to them resolved that he would deny them, and then persists in the resolve already made without any serious thought. If the first person does not believe in the revelations immediately, it does not mean that he wants to remain an unbeliever, but because he wants to have greater satisfaction. Therefore, even if he is taking time to believe, it is just possible that another revelation might enter his heart and he might believe sincerely with full satisfaction. As for the other person, he would never believe in any revelation whatsoever, for he has already locked his heart up to every revelation of Allah. In this state such people generally are involved as are characterized by the following three qualities:

(1) They are liars; therefore, the truth does not appeal to them.

(2) They are wrongdoers; therefore, it is very hard for them to believe in a teaching or guidance that may impose moral restrictions on them.

(3) They are involved in the conceit that they know everything, and that none can teach them anything; therefore, they do not regard as worthy of attention and consideration Allah's revelations that are recited to them, and it is all the same for them whether they listen to them or not.

9. And when he knows something of Our verses, he takes them in ridicule.^{*10} Those, for them is a humiliating punishment.

وَإِذَا عَلِمَ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا شَيْئًا اتَّخَذَهَا
هُزُوعًا أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ



*10 That is, he does not rest content with mocking any one particular revelation, but mocks all the revelations. For example, when he hears that a particular thing has been mentioned in the Quran, he does not take it in its straightforward meaning, but first puts a crooked meaning on it in order to make it a subject of ridicule and mockery, then after making fun of it, says: These are strange things: one daily hears one or the other funny thing from them.

10. Beyond them is Hell.^{*11} And will not avail them what they have earned at all, nor what they have taken besides Allah as protecting friends.^{*12} And they will have a great punishment.

مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ
مَا كَسَبُوا شَيْئًا وَلَا مَا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيمٌ



*11 The word *wara* is used for every such thing as is hidden

from man, whether it is before him or behind him. Therefore, another translation can be: They have Hell behind them. In the first case, the meaning would be: They are unconsciously running on this way and have no idea that there is Hell in front of them in which they would fall; in the second case, it would mean: They are engaged in this mischief of theirs, thoughtless of the Hereafter, and they have no idea that Hell is in pursuit of them.

*12 Here, the word *wali* (guardian) has been used in two meanings:

(1) For those gods and goddesses and living and dead guides about whom the polytheists thought that anybody who was devoted to them, would escape Allah's punishment, whatever he might have done in the world, for their intercession will save them from Allah's wrath.

(2) For those chiefs and leaders and rulers whom the people took as their guides and patrons independent of God and followed them blindly and tried to please them even if they had to displease God.

This verse warns all such people that when they will face Hell in consequence of this way of life, neither of the two kinds of the guardians will come forward to save them from it. (For explanation, see E.N.6 of Surah Ash- Shura).

11. This is a guidance. And those who disbelieve in the verses of their Lord, for them there is a painful punishment of wrath.

هَذَا هُدًى وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
بِعَايَةِ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِّن رَّجْزٍ
أَلِيمٌ



12. It is Allah who has subjected to you the sea, that the ships may sail upon it by His command,^{*13} and that you may seek of His bounty,^{*14} and that you may be thankful.

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الْبَحْرَ لَتَجْرِيَ أَلْفُكُ فِيهِ بِأَمْرِهِ﴾
﴿وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ﴾
﴿وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ﴾

***13** For explanation, see Surah Bani-Israil, Ayats 66-67; Surah Ar-Room, Ayat 46 and the corresponding E.Ns, and E.N. 55 of Surah Luqman; E.N. 110 of Surah Al-Mumin and E.N. 54 of Surah Ash-Shura.

***14** Seek His bounty: Seek lawful provisions by trade, fishing, diving, navigation and other means in the sea.

13. And He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth,^{*15} all from Him.^{*16} Indeed, in that are signs for a people who reflect.^{*17}

﴿وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِنْهُ﴾
﴿إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾

***15** For explanation, see Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 32 and E.N. 44 on it, and E.N. 35 of Surah Luqman.

***16** This sentence has two meanings:

(1) This gift and favor of Allah is not like the gift of the worldly kings, who favor their favorites with the wealth that they have collected from the people themselves, but, on the contrary, all the good things in the universe have been created by Allah Himself, and He has granted these to man

from Himself.

(2) Neither is anyone a partner of Allah in the creation of these good things, nor has anyone anything to do in making them subservient to man. Allah alone is their Creator and He alone has granted these to man from Himself.

*17 That is, in their subjection and in making them beneficial for man, there are many signs for those who think and reflect. These signs clearly point to the truth that the Creator and Master and Administrator of everything and of every power in the universe, from the earth to the heavens, is One God alone Who has subjected them to a law. And that God alone is Lord of man Who has made all these things and powers favorable and helpful for man's life his sustenance, his convenience, his development and his civilization and social life by His power and wisdom and mercy, and that God alone is worthy of man's service and gratitude and devotion and not some other beings, who have neither any share in creating the things and powers nor anything to do with subjecting them to man and making them beneficial for him.

14. Say to those who believe to forgive those who hope not for the days of Allah,^{*18} that He may recompense people for what they have earned.^{*19}

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يَغْفِرُوا
لِلَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ أَيَّامَ اللَّهِ
لِيَجْزِيَ قَوْمًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ



*18 Literally: Who do not except the days of Allah. But in

Arabic usage on such occasions, *ayyam* does not merely mean days but those memorable days in which important historical events may have taken place. For example, the word *ayyam-ul-Arab* is used for the important events of the history of the Arabs and the major battles of the Arab tribes, which the later generations remember for centuries. Here, *ayyam-Allah* implies the evil days of a nation when the wrath of Allah may descend on it and ruin it in consequence of its misdeeds. That is: Those who do not fear the coming of evil days from Allah, i.e. those who do not fear that a day will come when they will be called to account for their actions and deeds, and this same fearlessness has made them bold and stubborn in acts of wickedness.

***19** The commentators have given two meanings of this verse and the words of the verse admit of both:

(1) That the believers should pardon the excesses of this wicked group so that Allah may reward them for their patience and forbearance and nobility from Himself and recompense them for the persecutions they have suffered for His sake.

(2) That the believers should pardon these people so that Allah may Himself punish them for their persecutions of them.

Some other commentators have regarded this verse as repealed. They say that this command was applicable only till the Muslims had not been permitted to fight. Then, when they were permitted to fight, this command became abrogated. But a careful study of the words of the verse

shows that the claim about abrogation is not correct. The word “pardon” is never used in the sense that when a person is not able to retaliate upon another for the latter’s excesses, he should pardon him, but on such an occasion the usual words are patience and forbearance. Instead of them, when the word “pardon” has been used here, it by itself gives the meaning that the believers, in spite of their ability for retaliation, should refrain from retaliating upon the people for their excesses, whom fearlessness of God has made to transgress all limits of morality and humanity. This command does not contradict those verses in which the Muslims have been permitted to fight. Permission to fight pertains to the condition when the Muslim government has a reasonable ground for taking military action against an unbelieving people, and the command concerning forgiveness and pardon pertains to the common conditions in which the believers have to live in contact with a people who are fearless of God and have to suffer persecutions by them in different ways. The object of this command is that the Muslims should keep their moral superiority and should not stoop to the level of the morally inferior people by indulging in disputes and wrangling with them and resort to retaliation for every frivolity. As long as it is possible to respond to an accusation or objection gently and rationally, or to defend oneself against an excess, one should not refrain from this, but when things seem to be crossing these limits, one should hold his peace and entrust the matter to Allah. If the Muslims themselves become involved in a fight or quarrel with them, Allah will leave

them alone to deal with them; but if they pardon and forbear, Allah will Himself deal with the wicked people and reward the oppressed ones for their patience.

15. Whoever does a righteous deed, it is for his own self. And whoever does wrong, so it is against it (his own self). Then to your Lord you will be returned.

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ

١٥

16. And certainly We gave the Children of Israel the Book and judgment*²⁰ and prophethood, and provided them with good things*²¹ and favored them above (all) peoples.

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ الْعَالَمِينَ

١٦

***20** *Hukm* (judgment) implies three things:

- (1) Knowledge and understanding of the Book and Religion.
- (2) Wisdom to act according to the intention of the Book.
- (3) Capability to give right decisions in disputes.

***21** It does not mean that they were given preference over all the people of the world forever, rather it means: Allah had chosen the children of Israel from among all the contemporary nations of the world for the service that they should hold fast to the divine Book and should rise as the standard bearers of God worship in the world.

17. And We gave them clear commandments. And they differed not until after the knowledge had come to them, through rivalry among themselves.*22 Indeed, your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they used to differ.

وَأَتَيْنَهُمْ بَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ^ط فَمَا
أَخْتَلَفُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمْ
الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ^ج إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا
كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ



***22** For explanation, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 213; Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 19 and E.Ns 22, 23 of Ash-Shura.

18. Then We have set you (O Muhammad) on a clear way of (Our) commandment,*23 so follow it, and follow not the desires of those who know not.

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَىٰ شَرِيعَةٍ مِّنَ
الْأَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ
الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ



***23** It means: The mission that had been entrusted to the children of Israel before you has now been entrusted to you. They, in spite of receiving knowledge, created such differences in religion out of selfish motives and stirred up such divisions among themselves that they became disqualified to call the people to God's way. Now you have been set upon the clear pathway of religion so that you may perform the service which the children of Israel have failed to perform and became disqualified to perform it. (For further explanation, see Ash-Shura, Ayats 13-15 and E.Ns 20 to 26).

19. Indeed, they will never avail you against Allah at all.*24 And indeed the wrong doers, some of them are friends of others. And Allah is the protector of the righteous.

إِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يُغْنُوا عَنْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا ۚ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

*24 That is, if you make any changes in Allah's religion only to please them, they will not be able to save you from Allah's accountability and punishment.

20. This is an enlightenment for mankind, and a guidance, and a mercy for a people who have (faith with) certainty.*25

هَذَا بَصِيرَةٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ

*25 That is, this Book and this Shariah present such a light for all the people of the world, which distinguishes the truth from falsehood, but only such people receive any guidance from it who believe in its truth; for them only it is a mercy.

21. Or do*26 those who commit evil deeds suppose that We shall make them as those who believe and do righteous deeds. So that their life and their death should be alike. Evil is that what they judge.*27

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءً مَحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتِهِمْ ۚ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ

***26** After the invitation to Tauhid, the discourse now turns to the theme of the Hereafter.

***27** This is the moral reasoning for the truth of the Hereafter. The difference of good and evil in morals and of goodness and wickedness in deeds necessarily demands that the good and the evil people should not meet with one and the same end, but the good should be rewarded for their good and the wicked punished for their evil deeds. Otherwise, if the good and the evil end up similarly, the distinction of virtue and vice in morals becomes meaningless and God becomes unjust. The people who follow evil ways in the world do want that there should be no accountability and no rewards and punishments, for this concept goes against their enjoyment of life, but it is against the justice and wisdom of the Lord of the worlds that He should treat the good and the evil alike, and should not care to see how the righteous believer has lived his life in the world and how the sinful unbeliever has been enjoying it. One of them kept himself subjected to moral restrictions all his life, rendered the rights of those to whom they were due, restrained himself from the unlawful benefits and pleasures, and continued to incur losses for the sake of the truth. The other fulfilled his desires in every possible way, neither recognized the rights of God nor hesitated from violating the rights of the people, but went on collecting benefits and good things of life in every possible way. Can it be expected of God that He would overlook the difference between the lives of the two kinds of men? If the end of both be the same, no greater injustice could be conceived.

(For further explanation, see Surah Yunus, Ayat 4; Surah Houd, Ayat 106; Surah An-Nahl, Ayats 38 39; Surah Al-Hajj, E.N. 9, Surah An-Naml, E.N. 86, Surah Ar-Rum, Ayat 7-8; Surah Suad, Ayat 28; and E.N. 30 on it).

22. And Allah created the heavens and the earth in truth,^{*28} and that every soul may be recompensed what it has earned. And they will not be wronged.^{*29}

وَخَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
بِالْحَقِّ وَلِتُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا
كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

***28** That is, Allah has not created the earth and the heavens for mere sport, but it is a wise system with a purpose. In this system it is absolutely unimaginable that the people who may have accomplished good deeds by the right use of the powers and means and resources granted by Allah, and the people who may have spread mischief and wickedness by their wrong use, should end up ultimately in the dust after death, and there should be no life Hereafter in which their good and bad deeds should lead to good or bad results according to justice. If this were so, this universe would be the plaything of a thoughtless being, and not a purposeful system devised by a Wise Being. (For further explanation, see, Surah Al-Anaam: 73; Surah Yunus, Ayats 5-6, Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 19, Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 3, Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayat 44 and E.Ns 75, 76; Surah Ar-Room, Ayat 8 and E.N. 6 on it).

***29** In this context the sentence clearly means: If the good people are not rewarded for their goodness, and the wicked are not punished for their wickedness, and the grievances

of the oppressed are not redressed, it would be injustice. There cannot be such an injustice in the kingdom of God. Likewise, there cannot also be the other kind of injustice that a good man be given a lesser reward than what is due to him, or a bad man be given a greater punishment than what he deserves.

23. Have you seen him who takes his desire as his god,^{*30} and Allah sent him astray purposely,^{*31} and has sealed up his hearing and his heart, and put on his sight a covering.^{*32} Then who will guide him after Allah. Will you not then heed.^{*33}

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ آخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ
وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ
سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ عَلَىٰ
بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ
بَعْدِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ



***30** “Desire his god” implies that one should become a slave of his lusts and desires. He should do whatever he likes whether God has forbidden it, and should not do what he dislikes, whether God has made it obligatory. When a man starts obeying somebody like this, it means that his deity is not God but the one whom he is obeying without question, no matter whether he calls him his lord (with the tongue) or not, and carves out an image of him and worship him or not. For when he has worshiped him directly without question, it is enough to make him a deity and after this practical shirk one cannot be absolved from the guilt of shirk only because he did not call the object of his worship as his deity with the tongue, nor prostrated himself before

it. The major commentators also have given the same commentary of this verse. Ibn Jarir says: The forbidden things by Allah are forbidden. He does not regard the things made lawful by Him as lawful. Abu Bakr al-Jassas gives this meaning: He obeys his desires as one should obey his God. Zamakhshari explains it, thus: He is obedient to the desires of his self. He follows his self wherever it beckons him, as if he serves him as one should serve his God. (For further explanation, see E.N. 56 of Surah Al-Furqan; E.N. 63 of Surah Saba; E.N. 53 of Surah YaSeen, and E.N. 38 of Surah Ash-Shura).

***31** The words *adalla hulla-huala ilm-in* may either mean: The person in spite of being knowledgeable was driven astray by Allah, for he had become a slave of his desires; or Allah, by virtue of His knowledge that he had made his desires as his god, drove him astray.

***32** For the commentary of letting a person go astray and setting a seal upon his heart and ears and a covering on his eyes, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 7, 18; Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 25 and E.N. 28; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 100; Surah At-Taubah, Ayats 87, 93; Surah Yunus, Ayat 74 and E.N. 73; Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 27; Surah Ibrahim, Ayats 4, 27; Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 108; Surah Bani-Israil, Ayat 46; Surah Ar-Room, Ayat 59; Surah Fatir, Ayat 8 and E.Ns 16, 17, and E.N. 54 of Surah Al-Muminun).

***33** From the context in which this verse occurs, it becomes obvious that only those people deny the Hereafter, who want to serve their desires and who regard belief in the Hereafter as an obstacle to their freedom. Then, once they

have denied the Hereafter, their servitude of the self goes on increasing and they go on wandering further into deviation. They commit every kind of evil without feeling any qualms. They do not hesitate to usurp the rights of others. They cannot be expected to restrain themselves when there is an opportunity for them to commit an excess or injustice only because of a regard for justice and truth in their hearts. The events and incidents that can serve as a warning for a man are witnessed by them too, but they draw the wrong conclusion that whatever they are doing is right and they should do the same. No word of advice moves them. No argument, which can stop a man from evil, appeals to them; but they go on devising and furnishing more and more arguments to justify their unbridled freedom, and their minds remain day and night engaged only in devising ways and means of fulfilling their own interests and desires in every possible way instead of engaging in a good thought. This is an express proof of the fact that the denial of the Hereafter is destructive for human morals. The only thing that can restrain man within the bounds of humanity is the feeling that man is not irresponsible but has to render an account of his deeds before God. Being devoid of this feeling, even if a person is highly learned, he cannot help adopting an attitude and behavior worse than that of the animals.

24. And they say: “There is nothing but our life of the world, we die and we live, and nothing destroys us

وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا
نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ

except time.” And they have no knowledge of it. They do not but guess.*34

وَمَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ



*34 This is, there is no means of knowledge by which they might have known with certainty that after this life there is no other life for man, and that man's soul is not seized by the command of God, but he dies and perishes merely in the course of time. The deniers of the Hereafter say these things not on the basis of any knowledge but on mere conjecture. The maximum that they could say scientifically is: We do not know whether there is any life after death or not; but they cannot say: We know that there is no other life after this life. Likewise, they cannot make the claim of knowing scientifically that man's soul is not seized by God's command but he perishes after death just like a watch which suddenly stops functioning. The most they can say is just this: We do not know what exactly happens in either case. Now the question is: When to the extent of the means of human knowledge there is an equal possibility of there being life after death or there being no life after death, and the soul's being seized by Allah's command, or man's dying of himself in the course of time, what is the reason that these people abandon the probability of the possibility of the Hereafter and give their judgment in favor of its denial? Do they have any other reason than this that they, in fact, decide this question on the basis of their desire and not by any argument? As they do not like that there should be any life after death and death should mean

total annihilation and not seizure of the soul by Allah's command, they make their heart's desire their creed and deny the other probability.

25. And when Our clear verses are recited to them,^{*35} their argument is no other than that they say: "Bring (back) our forefathers, if you are truthful."^{*36}

وَإِذَا تُلِيٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ مَّا
كَانَ حُجَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا أَن قَالُوا أَأَتُّوْا
بِعَابَابِنَا إِن كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ

***35** "Our clear verses": the Revelations in which strong arguments have been given for the possibility of the Hereafter and in which it has been stated that its occurrence is the demand of both wisdom and justice, and its non-occurrence renders the whole system of the universe meaningless and absurd.

***36** In other words, what they meant to say was: When somebody tells them that there is life after death, he must raise a dead person from the grave and present him before them. And if this is not done, they cannot believe that the dead would ever be raised to life once again at some time in the future, whereas nobody ever told them that the dead would be raised to life in this world as and when required separately, but what was said was: On the Day of Resurrection Allah will raise all human beings to life simultaneously and will subject them to accountability and punish and reward them accordingly.

26. Say, Allah gives you life, then causes you to die,^{*37}

قُلِ اللّٰهُ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيْتُكُمْ ثُمَّ

then He will gather you on the Day of Resurrection about which there is no doubt.*38 But most of mankind know not.*39

تَجْمَعُكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

*37 This is the answer to their saying that death comes to man automatically in the course of time. It means: Neither you get life accidentally nor your death occurs automatically. It is God Who gives you life and it is He Who takes it away.

*38 This is the answer to their demand: Bring back our forefathers if you are truthful. To this it has been said: This will not happen now separately for individuals, but a Day has been fixed for gathering all mankind together.

*39 That is, it is lack of knowledge and right understanding which is the real cause of the people's denying the Hereafter; otherwise it is not its coming but its not coming which is against reason. If a person reflects rightly on the system of the universe and on his own self, he will himself realize that there can be no doubt about the coming of the Hereafter.

27. And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth.*40 And the day the Hour is established, that day those who follow falsehood shall lose.

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُومِذِ تَخْسِرُ الْمُبْطِلُونَ

*40 In view of the context, this sentence by itself gives the

meaning that it is not at all beyond the power of God Who is ruling over this great and marvelous universe that He should bring the human beings whom He has created in the first instance back into existence once again.

28. And you will see every nation humbled on their knees,^{*41} every nation will be called to its record. This Day you will be recompensed what you used to do.

وَتَرَىٰ كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ جَاثِيَةً ۚ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ
تُدْعَىٰ إِلَىٰ كِتَابِهَا الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ مَا
كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

***41** That is, the dread and terror of the Plain of Resurrection and the awe of the divine court will be such that it will break the stubbornness of the most arrogant and boastful people, and everyone will be found fallen on his knees humbly.

29. This, Our Book, speaks against you with truth. Indeed, We were recording whatever you used to do.^{*42}

هَذَا كِتَابُنَا يَنْطِقُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ ۗ
إِنَّا كُنَّا نَسْتَنْسِخُ مَا كُنْتُمْ
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

***42** The only possible way of getting a thing recorded is not by means of the pen and paper only. Man himself has discovered in this world several other forms of recording human words and actions and reproducing them exactly and accurately; and we cannot even imagine what other possibilities of it lie yet undiscovered, which man himself will discover and exploit in the future. Now, who can know how and by what means is Allah getting recorded man's

every word, his every movement and action, even his hidden intentions and motives and desires and ideas, and how He will place before every man and every group and every nation his or its whole lifework accurately and exactly?

30. Then, as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, so their Lord will admit them into His mercy. That is the evident triumph.

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُدْخِلُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ فِي
رَحْمَتِهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْمُبِينُ



31. And as for those who disbelieved, (it will be said): “Were not My verses recited to you. But you were arrogant^{*43} and you were a criminal people.”

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَفَلَمْ تَكُنْ
ءَايَاتِي تَتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ فَاَسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ
وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ



***43** That is, you thought it was below your dignity to believe in Allah’s revelations and submit to them, and considered yourselves to be above subjection and servitude.

32. And when it was said: “Indeed, Allah’s promise is the truth, and the Hour (is coming), no doubt about it. You said: “We know not what the Hour is. We deem it nothing but a conjecture,

وَإِذَا قِيلَ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ
وَالسَّاعَةُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا قُلْتُمْ مَا
نَدْرِي مَا السَّاعَةُ إِنْ نَسْطُنُّ إِلَّا

and we have no firm convincing belief.”^{*44}

ظَنًّا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُتَّقِينَ

***44** The people mentioned in verse 24 above were those who denied the Hereafter openly and absolutely, here those who are not sure of it although they do not deny its possibility because of conjecture. Apparently there is a vast difference between the two groups in that one of them denies the Hereafter absolutely and the other regards it as possible on the basis of conjecture. But as for the result and final end, there is no difference between them, for the moral consequences of the denial of the Hereafter and of lack of the faith in it are the same. A person, whether he disbelieves in the Hereafter or lacks faith in it, will in either case be inevitably devoid of the feeling of accountability before God, and this lack of feeling will necessarily involve him in the error and deviation of thought and action. Only faith and belief in the Hereafter can keep a man on the right track in the world. In the absence of it, both doubt and denial give him a similar attitude of irresponsibility, and since this same attitude of irresponsibility is the real cause of man's being doomed in the Hereafter, therefore neither the denier of it can escape Hell nor the one who lacks faith in it.

33. And the evils of what they did will appear to them,^{*45} and will befall them that which they used to ridicule at.

وَبَدَا لَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا عَمِلُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِم مَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ

***45** That is, there they will come to know that their ways of behavior, their practices and manners, and their actions and pastimes, which they regarded as very good in the world were, in fact, very bad: they had committed a basic mistake in thinking that they were not answerable to anyone, and this had rendered their entire lifework fruitless and vain.

34. And it will be said: “This day We will forget you, as you forgot the meeting of this day of yours, and your abode is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers.”

وَقِيلَ الْيَوْمَ نَنْسِيكُمْ كَمَا نَسِيتُمْ
لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا وَمَأْوَأَكُمْ النَّارُ
وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ نَّاصِرِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. That is because you took the verses of Allah in ridicule, and the life of the world deceived you. So that Day, they shall not be taken out from it (Fire), nor can they make amends.^{*46}

ذَالِكُمْ بِأَنَّكُمْ اتَّخَذْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ
هُزُؤًا وَغَرَّتْكُمْ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا
فَالْيَوْمَ لَا تَخْرُجُونَ مِنْهَا وَلَا هُمْ
يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

***46** This last sentence depicts the manner of a master who after rebuking some of his servants turns to others and says: Well, these wretched people now deserve such and such punishment!

36. Then, all the praise is to Allah, Lord of the heavens, and Lord of the earth, the Lord of the Worlds.

فَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَرَبِّ
الْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

37. And to Him belongs
Majesty in the heavens and
the earth, and He is the All
Mighty, the All Wise.

وَلَهُ الْكِبْرِيَاءُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ



الأَحْقَافِ Al-Ahqaf

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The name *Al-Ahqaf* is derived from the sentence *idh andhara qauma-hu bil Ahqaf-i* of verse 21.

Period of Revelation

It is determined by an historical event that has been mentioned in verses 29-32. This incident of the visit of the jinn and their going back after listening to the Quran had occurred, according to agreed traditions of the Hadith and biographical literature, at the time when the Prophet (peace be upon him) had halted at Makkah during his return journey from Taif to Makkah. And according to all authentic historical traditions he had gone to Taif three years before the Hijrah; therefore it is determined that this Surah was revealed towards the end of the 10th year or in the early part of the 11th year of the Prophethood.

Historical Background

The 10th year of the Prophethood was a year of extreme persecution and distress in the prophet's (peace be upon him) life. The Quraish and the other tribes had continued their boycott of the Bani Hashim and the Muslims for three

years and the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the people of his family and companions lay besieged in Shieb Abi Talib. The Quraish had blocked up this locality from every side so that no supplies of any kind could reach the besieged people. Only during the Hajj season they were allowed to come out and buy some articles of necessity. But even at that time whenever Abu Lahab noticed any of them approaching the market place or a trading caravan, he would call out to the merchants exhorting them to announce forbidding rates of their articles for them, and would pledge that he himself would buy those articles so that they did not suffer any loss. This boycott which continued uninterrupted for three years had broken the back of the Muslims and the Bani Hashim; so much so that at times they were even forced to eat grass and the leaves of trees.

At last, when the siege was lifted this year, Abu Talib, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) uncle, who had been shielding him for ten long years, died, and hardly a month later his wife, Khadijah, who had been a source of peace and consolation for him ever since the beginning of the call, also passed away. Because of these tragic incidents, which closely followed each other, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to refer to this year as the year of sorrow and grief.

After the death of Khadijah and Abu Talib the disbelievers of Makkah became even bolder against the Prophet (peace be upon him). They started treating him even more harshly. So much so that it became difficult for him to step

out of his house. Of these days Ibn Hisham has related the incident that a Quraish scoundrel one day threw dust at him openly in the street.

At last, the Prophet (peace be upon him) left for Taif with the intention that he should invite the Bani Thaqif to Islam, for even if they did not accept Islam, they might at least be persuaded to allow him to work for his mission peacefully. He did not have the facility of any conveyance at that time, and traveled all the way to Taif on foot. According to some traditions, he had gone there alone, but according to others, he was accompanied by Zaid bin Harithah. He stayed at Taif for a few days, and approached each of the chiefs and nobles of the Bani Thaqif and talked to him about his mission. But not only they refused to listen to him, but plainly gave him the notice that he should leave their city, for they feared that his preaching might spoil their younger generation. Thus, he was compelled to leave Taif. When he was leaving the city, the chiefs of Thaqif set their slaves and scoundrels behind him, who went on crying at him, abusing him and petting him with stones for a long way from either side of the road till he became broken down with wounds and his shoes were filled with blood. Wearied and exhausted he took shelter in the shade of the wall of a garden outside Taif, and prayed:

O God, to Thee I complain of my weakness, little resource, and lowliness before men. O Most Merciful, Thou art the Lord of the weak, and Thou art my Lord. To whom wilt Thou confide me? To one afar who will misuse me? Or to an enemy to whom Thou hast given power over me? If

Thou art not angry with me I care not. Thy favor is more wide for me. I take refuge in the light of Thy countenance by which the darkness is illumined, and the things of this world and the next are rightly ordered, lest Thy anger descend upon me or Thy wrath light upon me. It is for Thee to be satisfied until Thou art well pleased. There is no power and no might save in Thee. (Ibn Hisham: A. Guillaume's Translation, p. 193).

Grieved and heart broken when he returned and reached near Qarn al-Manazil, he felt as though the sky was overcast by clouds. He looked up and saw Gabriel in front of him, who called out: Allah has heard the way your people have responded. He has, therefore, sent this angel in charge of the mountains. You may command him as you please. Then the angel of the mountains greeted him and submitted: If you like I would overturn the mountains from either side upon these people. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: No, but I expect that Allah will create from their seed those who will worship none but Allah, the One. (Bukhari, Dhikr al Malaikah; Muslim: Kitab al-Maghazi; Nasai: Al-Bauth).

After this he went to stay for a few days at Makkah, perplexed as to how he would face the people of Makkah, who, he thought, would be still further emboldened against him after hearing what had happened at Taif. It was here that one night when he was reciting the Quran in the Prayer, a group of the jinn happened to pass by and listened to the Quran, believed in it, and returned to their people to preach Islam. Thus, Allah gave His Prophet the

good news that if the men were running away from his invitation, there were many of the jinn, who had become its believers, and they were spreading his message among their own kind.

Subject Matter and Topics

Such were the conditions when this Surah was revealed. Anyone who keeps this background in view and studies this Surah will have no doubt left in his mind that this is not at all the composition of Muhammad (peace be upon him), but a revelation from the All-Mighty, All-Wise Allah. For, nowhere in this Surah, from the beginning to the end, does one find even a tinge of the human feelings and reactions, which are naturally produced in a man who is passing through such hard conditions. Had it been the word of Muhammad (peace be upon him) whom the occurrence of personal grieves one after the other and the countless and the recent bitter experience at Taif had caused extreme anguish and distress, it would have reflected in some degree the state of the mind of the man who was the subject of these afflictions and grieves. Consider the prayer that we have cited above: It contains his own language its every word is saturated with the feelings that he had at the time. But this Surah which was revealed precisely in the same period and was recited even by him under the same conditions is absolutely free from every sign or trace of the time.

The subject matter of the Surah is to warn the disbelievers of the errors in which they were involved, and also resisted arrogantly, and were condemning the man who was trying

to redeem them. They regarded the world as a useless and purposeless place where they were not answerable to anyone. They thought that invitation to Tauhid was false and stuck to the belief that their own deities were actually the associates of Allah. They were not inclined to believe that the Quran was the Word of the Lord of the worlds. They had a strange erroneous concept of apostleship on the basis of which they were proposing strange criteria of judging the Prophet's (peace be upon him) claim to it. In their estimation one great proof of Islam's not being based on the truth was that their elders and important chiefs of the tribes and so called leaders of their nation were not accepting it and only a few young men and some poor folks and some slaves had affirmed faith in it. They thought that Resurrection and life after death and the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter were fabrications whose occurrence was absolutely out of the question.

In this Surah each of these misconceptions has been refuted in a brief but rational way, and the disbelievers have been warned that if they would reject the invitation of the Quran and the Prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) by prejudice and stubbornness instead of trying to understand its truth rationally, they would only be preparing for their own doom.

1. Ha-Mim.*¹



*¹ For explanation, see E.N. 1 of Surah Az-Zumar; E.N. 1 of Surah Al-Jathiyah and also E.N. 1 of Surah As-Sajdah for understanding the true spirit of this introduction.

2. The revelation of the Book is from Allah, the All Mighty, the All Wise.

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ
الْحَكِيمِ

3. We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them except in truth, and for an appointed term.*² And those who disbelieve turn away from that whereof they are warned.*³

مَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ
مُّسَمًّى وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَمَّا أُنذِرُوا
مُعْرِضُونَ

*² For explanation, see Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 73; Surah Yunus, Ayats 5-6; Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 19; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayat 85; Surah An-Nahl, Ayat: 3; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 16-18; Surah Al-Muminun, Ayat 115; Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayats 44; Surah Ar-Room, Ayat 8 and the corresponding E.Ns.

*³ That is, the fact is that this universe is not a purposeless plaything but a purposeful, wise system in which the decisions regarding the good and the bad, the oppressor and the oppressed, will necessarily be based on justice. The present system of the universe is not permanent and eternal, but it has a fixed term appointed for it on the expiry of which it will inevitably come to an end. For the court of Allah also there is a settled time and it will certainly be established when the time for it reaches its term. But the people who have refused to believe in Allah's Prophet (peace be upon him) and His Book, have an

aversion to these truths. They are least mindful of this that a time has to come when they will have to render an account of their deeds. They think that the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah has done them a great wrong by warning them of these truths, whereas he has done them a great good by fore-warning them not only of the time when they will be subjected to accountability but also of what they will be questioned at that time so that they may prepare themselves accordingly.

To understand the following discourse it should be borne in mind that man's basic error is the one that he commits with regard to determining his belief about God. In this regard, the adoption of a creed carelessly on the basis of mere hearsay, without any serious and deep thought and investigation is a stupendous folly, which vitiates man's entire attitude towards life in the world and ruins his destiny for ever afterwards. But the reason why man becomes involved in this dangerous kind of heedlessness is that he regards himself as irresponsible and un-answerable and develops the misunderstanding that whatever creed he may adopt about God, it would make no difference, because either there is no life after death in which he might have to face accountability, or if there is any such life and he is also called to account, the beings of whom he is a devotee, will save him from any evil fate. This same lack of the sense of responsibility renders him frivolous in the selection of a religious creed, and on the basis of the same he fabricates all sorts of absurd creeds, from atheism to every form of polytheism, or adopts the creeds fabricated

by others.

4. Say (O Muhammad):
“Have you considered that which you invoke besides Allah. Show me what have they created of the earth, or have they any partnership in the heavens. Bring me a book (revealed) before this, or some remnant of knowledge if you are truthful.”*4

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ أُرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ
الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ أَتُنُونِي بِكِتَابٍ مِنْ
قَبْلِ هَذَا أَوْ أَثَرَةٍ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤﴾

*4 As the addresses are a polytheistic people, they are being told the reality of the irrational creed in which they persisted carelessly due to lack of the sense of responsibility. Along with acknowledging Allah as the Creator of the universe they had made many other beings their deities. They invoked them, regarded them as fulfillers of their needs and removers of hardships, prostrated themselves and made offerings before them, and thought they had the powers of making and unmaking of their destinies. About the same beings, they are being asked: On what basis have you made them your deities? Obviously, there can be only two bases for regarding someone as an associate in worship along with Allah: Either man himself should know through some means of knowledge that his deity too has a share in making the earth and heavens, or Allah Himself may have stated that

so and so also is His associate in the functions of Godhead. Now, if a polytheist can neither make the claim that he possesses direct knowledge of his deity's being an associate of God, nor he can show in a Book sent by God that God Himself has appointed somebody as His associate, his creed would inevitably be baseless.

In this verse, "a Book revealed before this" implies a Book sent by Allah before the Quran, and some remnant of knowledge, implies some part of the teachings of the Prophets and righteous men of the ancient times, which may have reached the later generations reliably. There is no tinge of shirk in whatever man has received through these two means. All the heavenly Books unanimously present the same Tauhid to which the Quran invites the people, and no existing remnant of the ancient lore bears evidence to this that some Prophet or saint or righteous man might have taught the people to serve and worship any other than God. Even if we do not take a Book to mean a divine Book and remnant of knowledge the knowledge bequeathed by the Prophets and righteous men, no authentic book or the research made by a scholar of religious or secular lore has pointed out that such and such a thing in the earth or the heavens has been created by such and such a saint or god, or a certain blessing of the blessings of life which man is benefiting from in the universe has been created by such and such a deity instead of God.

5. And who could be more astray than he who invokes

وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّن يَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ

besides Allah, those who cannot respond to him until the Day of Resurrection.*5 And they are unaware of their calls.*6

اللَّهُ مَنْ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُدَّ إِلَى يَوْمِ
الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُمْ عَنْ دُعَائِهِمْ
غَافِلُونَ

*5 “Cannot respond to him”: Cannot answer the supplications of any one. That is, these gods do not possess the powers by virtue of which they could give decisions on the prayers and petitions of their devotees. (For further explanation, see E.N. 33 of Surah Az-Zumar).

“Until the Day of Resurrection” means that as long as the world lasts they will get no answer to their supplications and prayers from their deities, but when Resurrection will have taken place, the deities will turn hostile to their worshipers themselves, as becomes explicit from the next verse.

*6 That is, they do not even hear the supplications of the supplicants, neither through their own ears nor through any other means. This thing can be elaborated like this: The being whom the polytheists the world over have been invoking are divided into three categories:

- (1) Lifeless and inanimate creation.
- (2) The pious men who have passed away.
- (3) The wicked men who had themselves gone astray, and who misled others and passed away.

As for the first category of the deities they will naturally remain unaware of the supplications of their worshipers. As for the deities of the second kind, who were favorites

with their God, there are two reasons of their remaining unaware: (a) They are in the presence of Allah in a state where human voices cannot reach them directly; and (b) even Allah and His angels do not inform them that the people whom they had been teaching to invoke Allah alone in the world, were invoking them instead, for no information could cause them a greater shock than this, and Allah does not at all like to vex the souls of His righteous servants.

Now if we consider the case of the third kind of the deities, we shall see that there are two reasons also of their remaining unaware: (a) That they have been placed in confinement as the accused, and no voice from the world can reach them; and (b) that even Allah and His angels do not convey to them the news that their mission is flourishing in the world, and the people have set them up as deities, for this news would be a happy news for them, and Allah does not like to make the wicked people happy.

In this connection, one should also understand that Allah conveys to His righteous servants the greetings of peace and prayers of mercy from the people of the world, for these things are a source of joy and pleasure for them. Likewise, He informs the culprits of the curses, censures and condemnations of the people of the world, as the disbelievers killed in the Battle of Badr were made to hear the curse of the Prophet (peace be upon him) according to a Hadith, for it is a cause of anguish for them. But anything which might cause distress to the righteous people and joy to the culprits is not conveyed to them. This explanation

makes the truth about the question of hearing by the dead plain and easy to understand.

6. And when mankind shall be gathered, they (who were called) will become enemies to them, and they will deny of their worship.*7

وَإِذَا حُشِرَ النَّاسُ كَانُوا لَهُمْ
أَعْدَاءً وَكَانُوا بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ كَافِرِينَ



*7 That is, they will say: We had neither told the people to invoke us for help, nor are we aware that they used to invoke us. They themselves had presumed that we could fulfill their needs and so had started invoking us.

7. And when Our clear verses are recited to them, those who disbelieve say of the truth when it has reached to them: "This is mere magic."*8

وَإِذَا تُلِيٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ
قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا
جَاءَهُمْ هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ



*8 It means: When the revelations of the Quran were recited before the disbelievers of Makkah, they realized that the Quran was far superior to human speech. The compositions of their greatest poets, orators and literary men were no match with the un-paralleled eloquence, enchanting oratory, sublime themes and heart-moving style of the Quran. Above all, even the Prophet's (peace be upon him) own words and speech were not comparable with the discourses that were being sent down to him by God. Those who had known him since childhood knew well the vast difference that was there between his language and words

and the words of the Quran, and it was not possible for them to believe that a man who had been living day and night among them for forty years would suddenly one day forge a speech whose diction and style would bear no resemblance with his familiar and known manner of speech and style. This thing made the truth plain before them, but since they were bent upon denial, they would say: This is plain magic, instead of acknowledging it as divine word after witnessing this manifest sign. (They regarded the Quran as magic from another aspect also, which we have explained in our commentary of Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 3 and E.N. 5 of Surah Suad).

8. Or do they say: “He has fabricated it.” Say: “If I have fabricated it,^{*9} then you will have no power for (protecting) me against Allah at all. He knows best of what you say among yourselves about it. Sufficient is He as a witness between me and you.^{*10} And He is the All Forgiving, the Most Merciful.”^{*11}

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ إِنْ افْتَرَيْتُهُ
فَلَا تَمْلِكُونَ لِي مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا
هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ كَفَى
بِهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَهُوَ
الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ



*9 This interrogative tone expresses great surprise and amazement. It means to say: Are these people so shameless that they accuse Muhammad (peace be upon him) of fabricating the Quran himself? Whereas they know that it cannot be his word and their calling it magic is by itself an

express proof that they regard it as an extraordinary word, which cannot be of human composition even according to themselves.

***10** As it was quite evident that their accusation was baseless and motivated by stubbornness, there was no need to present arguments to refute it. Therefore, only this much was regarded as a sufficient response: If I have really fabricated something and committed a grave crime by imputing it to Allah, as you accuse me of, you will not be able to rescue me from Allah's punishment. But if it is really Allah's Word, and you are rejecting it by bringing false accusations, Allah Himself will deal with you. For the reality is not hidden from Allah, and He is sufficient to decide between the truth and falsehood. If the whole world calls some one a liar, although he is truthful in Allah's knowledge, the final decision will be in his favor. On the country, if the whole world regards some one as truthful though he is a liar in the knowledge of Allah, he will be regarded as a liar in the final judgment. Therefore, do not confuse things but pay heed to your final end.

***11** Here, this sentence gives two meanings:

(1) It is in fact Allah's mercy and His forbearance that these people are surviving in the world, although they have no hesitation in declaring Allah's Word as falsehood; otherwise if a merciless and cruel god had been the master of this universe, he would not have allowed such insolent people to live even for a moment in the world.

(2) O unjust people, if you give up your stubbornness even now, the door of God's mercy is still open for you, and

whatever misdeeds you may have committed heretofore can be forgiven.

9. Say: “I am not something new among the messengers, and I do not know what will be done to me, nor to you. I do not follow except what is revealed to me, and I am no but a warner.”*12

قُلْ مَا كُنْتُ بِدَعَاٍ مِّنَ الرُّسُلِ وَمَا
أَدْرِي مَا يُفَعَلُ بِي وَلَا بِكُمْ إِنِّ
أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا إِلَّا
نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

*12 Its background is this: When the Prophet (peace be upon him) presented himself as Allah’s Messenger, the people of Makkah raised different kinds of objections against it. They said: What kind of a Messenger he is who has a family, who moves about in the streets, eats and drinks and lives a common man’s life. There is nothing special about him, which might distinguish him above the other people and therefore we may know that Allah has specially made this man His Messenger. Then they said: Had he been appointed a Messenger by God, He would have sent an angel as an attendant with him who would have announced that he was God’s Messenger, and would have punished with a scourge every such person who had behaved insolently towards him. How strange that God should appoint a person as His Messenger and then should leave him alone to roam the streets of Makkah and suffer every kind of humiliation. If nothing else Allah should at least have created a magnificent palace and a blooming garden for His Messenger. He should not have been left to

depend on his wife's resources. Besides, these people demanded different kinds of miracles from him and asked news of the unseen. They thought that a person's being God's Messenger meant that he should possess supernatural powers so that mountains should move at his bidding and deserts at once turn into green fields. He should have the knowledge of the past and the future events and of everything hidden from others.

An answer to the same has been given in these sentences, and each sentence contains a world of meaning.

First, it is said: Tell them, I am not a novel Messenger. That is, my being appointed as a Messenger is not a novel event of its kind in the world so that you may have some confusion about the characteristics of a Messenger. Many Messengers have come to the world before me, and I am not any different from them. Never has a Messenger come, who did not have a family, who did not eat and drink, or who did not live a common man's life. Never has an angel descended as an attendant with a Messenger, heralding his prophethood and carrying a whip before him. Never have gardens and palaces been created for a Messenger and never has a Messenger been spared of the hardships which I am suffering. Never has a Messenger shown a miracle by his own power, or known everything by his own knowledge. Then, how is it that you are bringing forth these strange criteria only to judge my Prophethood?

Then it is said: Tell them also, I do not know what shall befall you tomorrow nor what shall befall me. I only follow that which is revealed to me. That is, I am not a knower of

the unseen so that everything of the past and present and future should be known to me, and I should have the knowledge of everything in the world. Not to speak of your future, I do not even know my own future. I only know that of which I am given knowledge by revelation. More than that I have never claimed to know, nor has there ever been a Messenger in the world, who made that claim. It is not a Messenger's job to tell the whereabouts of the lost articles, or tell whether a pregnant woman will deliver a boy or a girl, or whether a sick patient will live or die.

In conclusion, it is said: Say to them, I am no more than a plain warner. That is, I do not possess divine powers so that I may show you the wonderful miracles that you demand from me every next day. My only mission is that I should present the right way before the people, and should warn of an evil end those who do not accept it.

10. Say: "Have you considered if it (the Quran) is from Allah and you disbelieve in it,^{*13} and a witness of the Children of Israel has testified to the like thereof and has believed while you are arrogant."^{*14} Indeed, Allah does not guide wrongdoing people.

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
وَكَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ، وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ بَنِي
إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَىٰ مِثْلِهِ، فَعَامَنَ
وَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي
الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

***13** This same theme has been expressed in another way in Surah HaMim As-Sajdah, Ayat 62 above. For explanation,

see E.N. 69 of that Surah.

***14** A large number of the commentators have taken this witness to imply Abdullah bin Salam, who was a famous Jewish scholar of Madinah, and who believed in the Prophet (peace be upon him) after the migration. As this thing happened in Madinah, these commentators say that this verse was revealed at Madinah. This commentary is based on a statement of Saad bin Abi Waqqas according to which this verse was sent down in respect of Abdullah bin Salam (Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai Ibn Jarir); and on the same basis have several major commentators like Ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah, Dahhak, Ibn Sirin, Hasan Basri, Ibn Zaid and Auf bin Malik al-Ashjai accepted this commentary. But, on the other hand, Ikrimah and Shabi and Masruq say that this verse cannot be about Abdullah bin Salam for this entire Surah was revealed at Makkah. Ibn Jarir Tabari also has preferred this view. He says: The whole previous discourse is an address directed to the pagans of Makkah and the following discourse also is directed to them. In this context it is not conceivable that a verse revealed at Madinah was inserted here. The later commentators who have accepted this second version, do not reject the tradition of Saad bin Abi Waqqas, but have opined that as this verse also applies to Abdullah bin Salam's affirmation of the faith, Saad expressed the opinion, in the tradition of the ancients, that it was sent down with regard to him. This does not, however, mean that when he believed, it was revealed then about him only, but that this verse precisely applied to him and his

acceptance of Islam.

Apparently, this second view seems to be more correct and reasonable. Now, the question that remains to be answered is: Who is implied by this witness? Some of the commentators who have accepted the second view say that it implies the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), but the following sentence: He believed while you showed arrogance, bears no relevance to this explanation. What seems to be nearer the truth is that which the commentator Nisaburi and Ibn Kathir have stated. They say: Here, by a witness is not meant any particular person but a common Israelite. The meaning is this: The teachings that the Quran is presenting before you are not new so that you could deny them by offering the excuse that they were novel teachings which had never been presented before man in the past. Before this these very teachings have been similarly revealed and exist with the Israelites in the form of the Torah and other scriptures, and a common Israelite has already believed in them, and also admitted that Allah's revelation is a means of the coming down of these teachings. Therefore, you cannot make the claim that revelation and these teachings are incomprehensible. The only thing that hinders you from believing is your arrogance and baseless conceit.

11. And those who disbelieve say of those who believe: "If it had been any good, they would not have preceded us to it."¹⁵ And when they are

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا لَوْ كَانَ خَيْرًا مَّا سَبَقُونَا
إِلَيْهِ ۚ وَإِذْ لَمْ يَهْتَدُوا بِهِ

not guided by it, they will say: “This is an ancient lie.”*16

فَسَيَقُولُونَ هَذَا آيَاتُ قَدِيمٍ

*15 This is one of those arguments that the chiefs of the Quraish employed to beguile and mislead the common people against the Prophet (peace be upon him). They said: If the Quran were really based on the truth and Muhammad (peace be upon him) were inviting towards a right thing, the chiefs and the elders and the noblemen of the community would have been in the forefront to accept it. How could it be that a few young boys and mean slaves only should accept a reasonable thing but the distinguished men of the nation, who are wise and experienced, and who have been held as reliable by others, would reject it? This was the deceptive reasoning by which they tried to make the common people believe that there was something wrong with the new message; that is why the elders of the people were not believing it. Therefore, they also should avoid it.

*16 That is, they regard themselves as a criterion of the truth and falsehood. They think that whatever (guidance) they reject must be falsehood. But accepting them since thousands of years also were devoid of wisdom and knowledge, and the whole wisdom has now become these people's monopoly.

12. And before this was the book of Moses as a guide and a mercy. And this is a confirming Book in the Arabic tongue, that it may

وَمِنْ قَبْلِهِ كِتَابُ مُوسَى إِمَامًا
وَرَحْمَةً وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ مُصَدِّقٌ
لِّسَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لِيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا

warn those who have wronged^{*17} and as good tidings for the doers of good.

وَنُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

***17 To warn the wrongdoers:** To warn of the evil end those who are being unjust to themselves and to the truth itself by disbelieving in Allah and serving others than Allah, and are involved because of this deviation of theirs in the evils of morals and deeds, which have filled human society with every kind of wickedness and injustice.

13. Indeed, those who say: “Our Lord is Allah,” then remain steadfast, there shall be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve.^{*18}

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَمُوا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

***18 For explanation, see E.Ns 33 to 35 of Surah HaMim As-Sajdah.**

14. Those are the companions of the Garden, abiding therein forever, as a reward for what they used to do.

أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

15. And We have enjoined upon man to be kind to his parents. His mother carried him with hardship and she gave him birth with hardship, and his bearing and his weaning is thirty

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا ۖ وَحَمَلُهُ وَفِصَالُهُ

months.*¹⁹ Until when he reaches to his full strength, and reaches forty years, he says: “My Lord, enable me that I may be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I may do righteous deeds as may please You,*²⁰ and make righteous for me my offspring. Indeed, I have turned in repentance to You, and indeed, I am of those who surrender.”

ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ
وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ
أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي
أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ
أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي
فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي إِنِّي تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ



*¹⁹ This verse tells that although the children should serve both the mother and the father, the mother’s right is greater in importance on the ground that she undergoes greater hardships for the sake of the children. The same is borne out by a Hadith, which has been related with a little variation in wording in Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Musnad Ahmad, and in Adab al-Mufrad of Imam Bukhari, to the effect that a person asked the Prophet (peace be upon him): Who has got a greater right to my service? The Prophet replied (peace be upon him): Your mother. He asked: Who after her? He replied: Your mother. He asked: Who after her? He replied: Your mother. He asked: Who after her? He replied: Your father. This Hadith precisely explains this verse, for in it also

allusion has been made to the triple right of the mother:

(1) His mother bore him with hardship.

(2) She gave him birth with hardship.

(3) His bearing and his weaning took thirty months.

Another legal point also is derived from this verse and verse 14 of Surah Luqman and verse 233 of Surah Al-Baqarah, which was pointed out by Ali and Ibn Abbas in a law case and made Uthman change his decision. The story goes that during the caliphate of Uthman, a person married a woman from the Juhainah tribe, and just six months after the marriage she gave birth to a healthy and sound child. The man took the case before Uthman, who declared the woman to be an adulteress and ordered that she be stoned to death. On hearing this Ali immediately came to Uthman and asked: What sort of a decision have you given? He replied: She has given birth to a sound child six months after marriage. Is it not a clear proof of her being an adulteress? Ali did not agree, and recited the three above mentioned verses in their sequence. In Surah Al-Baqarah Allah says: The mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years, if the fathers desire the suckling to be completed. In Surah Luqman it is said: And his weaning took two years, and in Surah Al-Ahqaf: And his bearing and his weaning took thirty months. Now, if two years of suckling are taken away from 30 months, six months of bearing remain. This shows that the minimum period of pregnancy in which a sound child can be born is six months. Therefore, the woman who has given birth to a child six months after the marriage cannot be declared an

adulteress. On hearing this reasoning of Ali, Uthman admitted that he had not considered that thing at all. Then he recalled the woman and changed his decision. According to another tradition, Ibn Abbas also supported the reasoning of Ali and then Uthman changed his decision. (Ibn Jarir, Ahkam al-Qur'an by al-Jassas Ibn Kathir).

The following legal injunctions are derived from the three verses when they are read together: The woman who gives birth to a sound and complete child in less than six months after marriage (i.e. in a proper delivery and not abortion) will be declared an adulteress and her child's lineage from her husband will not be established.

(2) The woman who delivers a sound and complete child six months or more after marriage, cannot be accused of adultery only on the basis of the child birth, nor can her husband have the right to slander her, nor can he refuse to acknowledge fatherhood of the child. The child will certainly be recognized as his, and the woman will not be punished.

(3) The maximum period for fosterage is two years. If a woman has suckled a child after this age, she will not be regarded as his foster mother, nor will the injunctions pertaining to fosterage (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 23) be applicable to her. In this regard, Imam Abu Hanifah has out of caution proposed the period of two and a half years instead of two years so that there remains no chance of error in a delicate matter like the prohibition of the foster relations. (For explanation, see E. N. 23 of Surah Luqman). Here, it would be useful to know that according to the latest

medical research a child needs at least 28 weeks to remain in the mother's womb to be developed and delivered as a living baby. This period amounts to a little more than 6 months. The Islamic law has allowed a concession of about half a month, because a woman's being declared an adulteress and a child's being deprived of lineage is a grave matter, and its gravity demands that maximum period be allowed to save both the mother and the child from its legal consequences. Furthermore, no physician and no judge, not even the pregnant woman herself and the man impregnating her, can know as to when exactly did the conception take place. This thing also demands that a few more days be allowed in determining the minimum legal period of pregnancy.

*20 That is, O Lord, grant me the grace of such righteous deeds as may conform to Your law in the apparent form as well as be acceptable to You in their actual worth. If an action, however good in the sight of the people, does not conform to obedience to Allah's law, it cannot have any value in the sight of Allah, no matter how highly it is praised by the people. On the contrary, another action which conforms to the Shariah exactly and has no flaw or deficiency in its apparent form, becomes hollow from within, on account of an evil intention, conceit, arrogance and greed of the world, is worthless in the sight of Allah.

16. Those are the ones We will accept from whom the best of what they did, and overlook their misdeeds.*21

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ
أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ

(They are) among the companions of Paradise. A true promise which they were promised.

سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ فِي أَصْحَابِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَدَّ
الصِّدْقِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ



***21** That is, their ranks in the Hereafter will be determined by the best deeds they would have done in the world, and their lapses and weaknesses and errors will be overlooked. It is just like a generous and appreciative master who determines the worth of his loyal and obedient servant not by the petty services that he renders but by some work of merit that he might accomplish or a feat of devotion and dedication that he might perform. He will not call his servant to account for his minor shortcomings and overlook his major services.

17. And the one who says to his parents: “Fie upon you both. Do you promise me that I shall be brought forth when generations before me have passed away.” And they both call to Allah for help (and say): “Woe unto you, believe. Indeed, the promise of Allah is true.” So he says: “This is nothing but tales of the ancient.”

وَالَّذِي قَالَ لِوَالِدَيْهِ أُفٍّ لَّكُمَا
أَتَعِدَانِي أَنْ أُخْرَجَ وَقَدْ خَلَتِ
الْقُرُونُ مِنْ قَبْلِي وَهُمَا يَسْتَكْبِرَانِ
اللَّهُ وَيَلِكْ ءَامِنٌ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ
فَيَقُولُ مَا هَذَا إِلَّا أَسْطِيرُ



18. They are those against whom the word (decree) is justified, among the nations that have passed away before them of jinn and mankind. Indeed, they were the losers.*22

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ
الْقَوْلُ فِي أُمْرٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا
خَسِرِينَ

*22 Here, two types of the character have been placed side by side and the listeners are asked the silent question as to which of them is better. At that time both these types of character practically existed in the society, and it was not at all difficult for the people to know where they could find the first type of the character and where the second. This is the answer to this saying of the chiefs of the Quraish: If it had been any good to believe in this Book, these few youngsters and slaves would not have believed in it before they did. In the light of this answer everyone could see for himself as to what was the character of the believers and what of the unbelievers.

19. And for all there will be ranks for what they did. And that He may recompense them for their deeds, and they will not be wronged.*23

وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَةٌ مِمَّا عَمِلُوا
وَلِيُؤْفِقَهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَا
يُظْلَمُونَ

*23 That is, neither will the good deeds and sacrifices of the good people be lost, nor the evildoers will be awarded a greater punishment than what they will actually deserve. If

a good man is deprived of his reward and receives a lesser reward than what is actually his due, it is injustice. Likewise, if an evildoer is not punished appropriately for his evil deeds, or receives a greater punishment than deserved, it is also injustice.

20. And the day those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire. “You received your good things in the life of the world and sought comfort therein. So this day you will be recompensed with the punishment of humiliation because you were arrogant in the land without a right, and because you used to transgress.”*24

وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَى
النَّارِ أَذْهَبْتُمْ طَيِّبَاتِكُمْ فِي
حَيَاتِكُمْ الدُّنْيَا وَأَسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهَا
فَالْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا
كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ
الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

*24 “Punishment of humiliation”, because of the arrogance that they showed. They thought they were big people and it was below their dignity to believe in the Messenger and join the poor and indigent believers. They were involved in the false pride that if the big people like them would believe in a thing which a few slaves and poor men had believed in, they would incur infamy. That is why Allah will disgrace them in the Hereafter and will destroy their pride.

21. And mention of the brother of Aad, when he warned his people among the wind-curved sand hills,*25

﴿٢١﴾ وَادُّكَّرْ أَخَا عَادٍ إِذْ أَنْذَرَ قَوْمَهُ
بِالْأَحْقَافِ وَقَدْ خَلَّتِ النُّذُرُ مِنْ

and indeed warners have passed away before him and after him, (saying): “Worship none except Allah. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a mighty day.”

بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا
إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ
يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ



*25 As the chiefs of the Quraish had a false pride of their superiority and exulted in their wealth and prosperity, the story of Aad is being related to them about whom it was well known that they had been the mightiest people in Arabia.

Literally, *Ahqaf* (pl. of *hiqf*) are long dunes of sand less in height than mountains, but technically it is a name given to the southern-western part of the Arabian desert (Ar-Rubul-khali) which is wholly un-inhabited. Ibn Ishaq says that the territory of Aad extended from Oman to Yaman, and the Quran tells us that they actually belonged to Al-Ahqaf from where they spread to the adjoining lands and subdued weak nations. 125 miles to the north of the present-day city of Makkah there is a place in Hadramaut, where the people have built a tomb to the Prophet Houd, and the place is well known as the grave of Houd. A religious festival is held there on the 15th of Shaban and thousands of people from different parts of Arabia gather there annually. Although it is not historically established, the grave's being built there and the southern Arabs' visiting it in large numbers is at least a proof that local tradition regards this very territory as the land of Aad.

Besides, there are several ruins in Hadramaut which the natives still call by the name of Dar-Aad (Abode of Aad). From the present condition of Al-Ahqaf, no one can even imagine that this land might have been the home of a mighty people boasting of magnificent civilization. Probably it was a green and fertile land thousands of years ago, and then the change of climate might have turned it into a sandy desert. Today it is a vast, wind-swept desert, and no one can dare go into its interior. In 1843 A.D. a Bavarian soldier was able to reach its southern edge. He says that if one looks down from the northern plateau of Hadramaut one can see this desert about a thousand feet in the depression. Here and there in it there are white areas where if a thing falls it goes on sinking into the sand and decays. The Arab Beduins fear this land and are never willing to step into it at any cost. Once when the Bedouins were not ready to take him there, he went by himself. He says that the sand there is very fine powder, and when he threw a plummet into it from a distance, it sank into it within five minutes and the end of the line to which it was attached, also decayed.

For detailed information, see:

Arabia and The Isles, Harold Ingrams, London, 1946.

The Unveiling of Arabia, R H. Kirnan, London, 1937.

The Empty Quarter. Philby. London, 1933.

22. They said: “Have you come to turn us away from our gods. Then bring us that with which you promise us,

قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا لِنَأْفِكَنَا عَنِ ءِٰهِنَا
فَاتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ

if you are of the truthful.”

الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾

23. He said: “The knowledge is with Allah only.*²⁶ And I convey to you that with which I have been sent. But I see you a people ignorant.”*²⁷

قَالَ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأُبَلِّغُكُمْ
مَا أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ وَلَٰكِنِّي أَرٰنَكُمْ
قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

***26** That is, Allah alone knows as to when the torment will descend on you and for how long you will be granted respite.

***27** That is, you are taking my warning as a joke in your ignorance and are demanding the torment for fun. You have no idea of how dreadful is God’s torment and how near at hand it might have approached because of your misdeeds.

24. Then, when they saw it as a cloud coming towards their valleys. They said: “This is a cloud bringing us rain.” Nay,*²⁸ but this is that which you asked to be hastened. A wind wherein is a painful punishment.

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ عَارِضًا مُّسْتَقْبِلَ
أَوْدِيَّتِهِمْ قَالُوا هٰذَا عَارِضٌ
مُّمَطِّرُنَا ۚ بَلْ هُوَ مَا اسْتَعْجَلْتُمْ بِهِ ۗ
رِيحٌ فِيهَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

***28** Here, there is no indication as to who gave them this answer. However, the style shows explicitly that this was the answer they were given by the existing conditions. They thought it was a cloud which was coming to give rain to their valleys, but in reality it was a windstorm that was

coming on to completely exterminate them.

25. Destroying everything by the command of its Lord, so they became such that nothing could be seen except their dwellings. Thus do We recompense the criminal people.*29

تَدْمِرُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ بِأَمْرِ رَبِّهَا
فَأَصْبَحُوا لَا يُرَى إِلَّا مَسْكِنُهُمْ
كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ



***29** For the details of the story of Aad, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 65-72; Surah Houd, Ayats 50-60; Surah Al-Muminun, Ayats 31-41; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 123-140; Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayat 40; Surah HaMim-AsSajdah, Ayats 15-16 and the corresponding E.Ns.

26. And indeed, We had established them with that wherewith We have not established you.*30 And We made for them hearing and vision and hearts. So did not avail them their hearing, nor their vision, nor their hearts from anything when they denied the signs of Allah,*31 and befell upon them what they used to ridicule at.

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّهُمْ فِيمَا إِنْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ
فِيهِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ سَمْعًا وَأَبْصَرًا
وَأَفْئِدَةً فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ سَمْعُهُمْ
وَلَا أَبْصَرُهُمْ وَلَا أَفْئِدَتُهُمْ مِنْ
شَيْءٍ إِذْ كَانُوا تَجْحَدُونَ
بِعَايَةِ اللَّهِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا
بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ



***30** That is, you are no match for them as far as wealth, power, authority and other things are concerned: your

sphere of authority is restricted to the bounds of the city of Makkah, but they had dominated a large part of the earth.

***31** An important truth has been stated in this brief sentence. It is only the revelations of Allah which give the right knowledge and understanding of the truth and reality to man. If man has this understanding and knowledge he sees the right thing with his eyes, hears the right thing with his ears, thinks the right thing with his mind and intellect and takes the right decisions. But when he refuses to believe in the revelations of Allah, he fails to see the truth in spite of the eyes, becomes deaf to every word of admonition in spite of the ears, and misuses the blessings of the mind and intellect that God has granted him, and goes on drawing wrong conclusions one after the other, so much so that he starts using all his capabilities for his own destruction.

27. And indeed, We have destroyed what surrounds you of the habitations, and We have shown in various ways the signs that perhaps they might return.

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا مَا حَوْلَكُمْ مِّنَ
الْقُرَىٰ وَصَرَّفْنَا الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

28. Then why did not help them those whom they had taken for gods as a means of nearness (unto Him),^{*32} besides Allah. Nay. But they vanished completely from them. And this was their lies and what they used to invent.

فَلَوْلَا نَصْرُهُمُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِن
دُونِ اللَّهِ قُرْبَانًا ءِالِهَةً بَلْ ضَلُّوا
عَنَّهُمْ ؕ وَذَٰلِكَ إِفْكُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا
يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

***32** That is, they had put faith in those things in the beginning with the idea that they were favorite servants of God and through them they would attain nearness to Him, but then gradually they made them their gods. They started invoking them for help; they formed the belief that they had the powers to change their destinies and could answer their prayers and remove their hardships. To deliver them from this error Allah sent His revelations through His Messengers over and over again in different ways to bring them to the right path, but they persisted in the worship of their gods, and continued to insist that they would still invoke them instead of Allah. Now consider this: When the torment of Allah visited these polytheists because of their deviation, where had their redressers of grievances and removers of hardships disappeared? Why didn't they come to their rescue at the time of affliction?

29. And when We brought to you a group of jinn listening to the Quran.^{*33} Then when they attended it, they said: "Give ear." then when it was finished, they turned back to their people as warners.

وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَا إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ
يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقُرْآنَ فَلَمَّا
حَضَرُوهُ قَالُوا أَنْصِتُوا فَلَمَّا قُضِيَ
وَلَّوْا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ مُنْذِرِينَ

***33** The traditions that have been related from Abdullah bin Masud, Zubair, Abdullah bin Abbas, Hasan Basri, Saeed bin Jubair, Zarr bin Hubaish, Mujahid, Ikrimah and others in connection with the commentary of this verse concur that this incident of the first visit of the jinns, which

has been mentioned in this verse, had occurred in the valley of Nakhlah. And according to Ibn Ishaq, Abu Nuaim Isfahaini and Waqidi, this incident occurred during the Prophet's (peace be upon him) return journey from Taif to Makkah. On the way, when he halted at Nakhlah, and was reciting the Quran in the Isha or the Fajr or the Tahajjud Prayer, a group of the jinns happened to pass by and stopped to listen to him. In this connection, all the traditions agree that on this occasion the jinns did not appear before the Prophet (peace be upon him), nor did he feel their presence, but Allah informed him afterwards by revelation that they had come and listened to the Quranic recitation.

The place where this incident took place was either Az-Zaimah or AsSayl-ul-Kabir, for both these places are situated in the valley of Nakhlah and at both water is available and are green; if the travelers from Taif have to halt in this valley, they can halt at either of the places.

30. They said: "O our people, We have indeed heard to a Book that has been sent down after Moses. confirming that which was before it, guiding unto the truth and to a straight way."*34

قَالُوا يٰقَوْمَنَا اِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتٰبًا
 اُنزِلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مُوسٰى مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا
 بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ يَهْدِىۡ اِلَىۡ اَلْحَقِّ وَاِلَى
 طَرِيْقٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

*34 This shows that these jinns had already had faith in the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and in the divine Books. After hearing the Quran they felt that it gave the

same teachings as the former Prophets had been preaching. Therefore, they believed in this Book forthwith and also in the Prophet (peace be upon him) who had brought it.

31. “O our people, respond to Allah's caller and believe in him. He will forgive you your sins and will protect you from a painful punishment.”*35

يَقَوْمَنَا أَجِيبُوا دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ
وَأَمِنُوا بِهِ يَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ
ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُجِرْكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ



*35 Authentic traditions show that after this several deputations of the jinns visited the Prophet (peace be upon him), one after the other, and met him face to face. When all the traditions related in the collections of Hadith on this subject are read together, it appears that at least six deputations had visited him in Makkah before the Hijrah.

About one of these deputations, Abdullah bin Masud relates: One day the Prophet (peace be upon him) remained missing from Makkah for the whole night. We could not know his whereabouts and feared he might have been attacked by somebody. Early in the morning we saw him coming from the direction of Hira. On inquiring he said that a jinn had come to invite him and he had accompanied him and recited the Quran to a gathering of them there. (Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Abu Daud).

Abdullah bin Masud has related another tradition, saying: Once the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked his companions in Makkah as to which of them would

accompany him that night to meet the jinns. I became ready to go with him. At a place in the upper quarters of Makkah the Prophet (peace be upon him) drew a line and told me not to cross it. Then he went forward and stood and began to recite the Quran. I saw that a number of the people had gathered around him and they stood between me and him. (Ibn Jarir, Baihaqi: Dalail an-Nubuwwat, Abu Nuaim Isfahani: Dalail an-Nubuwwat).

On another occasion also during the night Abdullah bin Masud was with the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he decided a case of the jinns at Hajun in Makkah. Many years later Ibn Masud saw a group of the villagers at Kufa and said that the group of the jinns he had seen at Hajun closely resembled those people. (Ibn Jarir).

32. And ^{*36} whoever does not respond to Allah's caller, he cannot escape in the earth, and there will be no protecting friends for him besides Him. Such are in manifest error.

وَمَنْ لَا يُجِبْ دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ فَلَيْسَ
بِمُعْجِزٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَيْسَ لَهُ مِنْ
دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءُ أُولَئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ
مُبِينٍ

***36** This sentence might also be a part of the saying of the jinns, or it might be an addition by Allah to their saying. In view of the context the second view seems to be more reasonable.

33. Do they not see that Allah, who created the heavens and the earth, and

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَمْ يَعْ

was not wearied by their creation, is able to give life to the dead. Yes, indeed He has power over all things.

بِخَلْقِهِنَّ بِقَدْرِ عَلَى أَنْ يُحْيِيَ
الْمَوْتَىٰ بَلَىٰ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

قَدِيرٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

34. And the Day those who disbelieved will be exposed to the Fire. “Is not this the truth.” They will say: “Yes, By our Lord.” He will say: “Then taste the punishment because you used to disbelieve.”

وَيَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَى
النَّارِ أَلَيْسَ هَذَا بِالْحَقِّ قَالُوا
بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّنَا قَالَ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. So be patient, as were patient those of determination among the messengers.^{*37} And do not be in haste for them. The day when they will see that which they are promised as though they had not stayed but an hour of day. A clear message. So shall (any) be destroyed except the disobedient people.

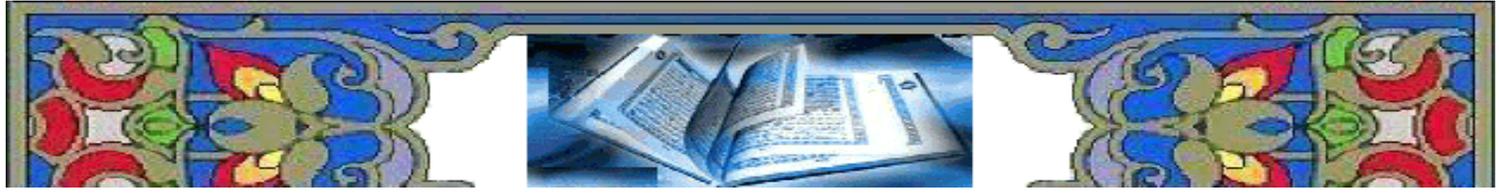
فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُو الْعَزْمِ مِنَ
الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ
يَوْمَ يَرُونَ مَا يُوعَدُونَ لَمْ
يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّنْ نَّهَارٍ بَلَّغٌ
فَهَلْ يُهْلِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقُونَ

﴿٣٥﴾

***37** That is, just as the Prophets before you went on enduring with patience and ceaseless struggle the indifference, opposition, resistance and persecutions of

their people for years, so should you also do the same, and do not entertain the idea that either the people should believe in you immediately or if they do not believe, Allah should visit them with His torment.





مُحَمَّد Muhammad

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah derives its name from the sentence *wa amanu bi-ma nuzzila ala Muhammad-in* of verse 2, thereby implying that it is the Surah in which the name of Muhammad (peace be upon him) has occurred. Besides, it also has another well known name *al-Qital* which is derived from the sentence *wa dhukira fi-hal-qital* of verse 20.

Period of Revelation

The contents of this Surah testify that it was revealed after the *hijrah* at Al-Madinah at the time when the fighting had been enjoined, though active fighting had not yet been undertaken. Detailed arguments in support of this view have been given in E.N. 8 below.

Historical Background

The conditions at the time when this Surah was revealed were such that the Muslims were being made the target of persecution and tyranny in Makkah in particular and in Arabia in general, and life had become miserable for them. Although the Muslims had emigrated to the haven of Al-Madinah from every side, the disbelieving Quraish were

not prepared to leave them alone and let them live in peace even there. Thus, the small settlement of Al-Madinah was hemmed in by the enemy, who was bent upon exterminating it completely. The only alternative left with the Muslims was that either they should surrender to the forces of ignorance, giving up their mission of preaching the true faith, or even following it in their private lives, or should rise to wage a war at the cost of their lives to settle finally and forever whether Islam would stay in Arabia or the creed of ignorance. On this occasion Allah showed the Muslims the same way of resolution and will, which is the only way for the true believers. He first permitted them to fight in Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 39 and then enjoined fighting in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 190. But at that time everyone knew well what it meant to wage a war in those conditions. There were only a handful of Muslims in Madinah, who could not muster even a thousand soldiers; yet they were being urged to take up the sword and clash against the pagan forces of the entire Arabia. Then the kind of the weapons needed to equip its soldiers for war could hardly be afforded by the town in which hundreds of emigrants were still homeless and unsettled even by resort to starving its members at a time when it had been boycotted economically by the Arabs on all sides.

Theme and Subject Matter

Such were the conditions when this Surah was revealed. Its theme is to prepare the believers for war and to give them preliminary instructions in this regard. That is why it has also been entitled *al-Qital*. It deals with the following topics.

At the outset it is said that of the two groups confronting each other at this time, one has refused to accept the truth and has become an obstruction for others on the way of Allah, while the other group has accepted the truth which had been sent down by Allah to His servant, Muhammad (peace be upon him). Now, Allah's final decision is that He has rendered fruitless and vain all the works of the former group and set right the condition and affairs of the latter group.

After this, the Muslims have been given the initial war instructions. They have been reassured of Allah's help and guidance. They have been given hope for the best rewards on offering sacrifices in the cause of Allah and they have been assured that their struggle in the cause of the truth will not go to waste, but they will be abundantly rewarded both in this world and in the Hereafter.

Furthermore, about the disbelievers it has been said that they are deprived of Allah's support and guidance. None of their designs will succeed in their conflict with the believers, and they will meet a most evil fate both in this world and in the Hereafter. They thought they had achieved a great success by driving the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah out of Makkah, but in fact by this they had hastened their own doom.

After this, the discourse turns to the hypocrites who were posing to be sincere Muslims before the command was sent down for fighting, but were confounded when this command actually came down, and began to conspire with the disbelievers in order to save themselves from the

hazards of war. They have been plainly warned to the effect that no act and deed is acceptable to Allah of those who adopt hypocrisy with regard to Him and His Prophet (peace be upon him). There, the basic issue against which all those who profess the faith are being tried is whether one is on the side of the truth or falsehood, whether one's sympathies are with Islam and the Muslims or with disbelief and the disbelievers, whether one keeps his own self and interests dearer or the truth which he professes to believe in and follow. One who fails in this test is not at all a believer; his Prayer and his Fasting and his discharging of the Zakat deserve no reward from Allah.

Then the Muslims have been exhorted not to lose heart for being small in numbers and ill equipped as against the great strength of the disbelievers. They should not show weakness by offering peace to them, which might still further embolden them against Islam and the Muslims, but they should come out with trust in Allah and clash with the mighty forces of disbelief. Allah is with the Muslims, they alone shall triumph and the might of disbelief will be humbled and vanquished.

In conclusion, the Muslims have been invited to spend their wealth in the cause of Allah. Although at that time they were economically very weak, the problem that they confronted was the very survival of Islam and the Muslims. The importance and delicacy of the problem demanded that the Muslims should not only risk their lives for safeguarding themselves and their faith from the dominance of disbelief and for exalting Allah's religion but

should also expend their economic resources as far as possible in the preparations for war. Therefore, they were clearly warned to the effect: Anyone who adopted a niggardly attitude at the time, would not, in fact, harm Allah at all, but would result in his own destruction, for Allah does not stand in need of help from men. If one group of men shirked offering sacrifices in the cause of His religion, Allah would remove it and bring another group in its place.

1. Those who disbelieve^{*1} and hinder (others) from the way of Allah,^{*2} He will waste their deeds.^{*3}

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنِ سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ أَضَلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ

***1 Those who disbelieved:** Those who refused to accept the teachings and guidance presented by Muhammad (peace be upon him).

2 The verb *sadd (from which *saddu* of the original is derived) is used both as a transitive and as an intransitive verb in Arabic. Therefore, the sentence would mean “they themselves refrained from adopting Allah’s Way” as well as “they prevented others from adopting this way.”

There are several ways of preventing others from adopting Allah’s Way:

(1) That one should forcibly prevent another from believing.

(2) That one should so persecute the believers that it should become difficult for them to remain steadfast on the faith and for others to embrace the faith in view of the dreadful conditions.

(3) That one should mislead the people against the religion and its followers in different ways and create doubts in the hearts so that the people may become suspicious of the religion itself. Besides, every disbeliever prevents others from the way of Allah in the sense that he brings up his children on the way of disbelief, and then it becomes difficult for his future generation to give up the ancestral faith and accept Islam. Likewise, every unbelieving society is an obstruction to the Way of Allah, for it creates obstacles in the way of the progress of the faith by its system of education and training, its government and its customs and prejudices.

*3 The words *adalla aamala-hum* (led their deeds astray, let them go to waste) are very comprehensive in meaning. Their one meaning is: Allah deprived them of the grace that their efforts and their labors should be spent in the right way. Now, whatever they do, they will do that for wrong aims and objects in wrong ways. All their endeavors will be directed to the way of error and deviation instead of guidance. Their second meaning is: The works that they have been performing as pious deeds, e.g. guardianship of the Kabah, entertaining the guests, treating the kindred well and such other works, which are counted among religious services and noble actions morally, were rendered fruitless by Allah. They will get no reward for them, for when they refuse to accept Tauhid and to adopt the way of Allah's service and worship and also stop others from adopting Islam, none of their works can be acceptable to Allah. The third meaning is Allah rendered fruitless and

vain the efforts they were making to obstruct the way of the truth and to keep their creed of disbelief alive in Arabia as against the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). All their designs and endeavors now are aimless, they will never attain their goals by these designs.

2. And those who believe, and do righteous deeds, and believe in what has been sent down upon Muhammad,^{*4} and it is the truth from their Lord. He will remove from them their misdeeds,^{*5} and will set their condition right.^{*6}

وَالَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ وَءَامَنُوا بِمَا نُزِّلَ
عَلَىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ
كَفَّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَأَصْلَحَ بَالَهُمْ



*4 Although after saying *alladhina amanu* (those who believed) there was no need to say *wa amanu bima nuzzila ala Muhammad-in* (and accepted that which has been sent down to Muhammad), for belief by itself implies believing in the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and in the teachings sent down to him, yet making a separate mention of it is particularly meant to assert this. After the appointment of Muhammad (peace be upon him) to Prophethood, a person's belief in Allah and the Hereafter and the former Messengers and the Books cannot be beneficial until he also believes in him and the teachings brought by him. This explanation was necessary because after the emigration, the Muslims had also to deal with those people, who recognized and accepted all the

requirements of the faith but refused to acknowledge and accept the Prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

***5** This has two meanings:

(1) That Allah wiped off from their record all those sins which they had happened to commit in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance. Now, they will not at all be held accountable for them.

(2) That Allah removed from them the evils of creed, thought, morals and action in which they were involved. Now their minds were changed, their creed and ideas were changed. Now there was faith in their hearts instead of ignorance, and righteous acts instead of the immoral evil.

***6** This also has two meanings:

(1) That Allah changed their previous condition and put them on the right path and improved and bettered their lives for them.

(2) That Allah has taken them out of the condition of weakness and helplessness and oppression in which they were placed till then. Now He has created for them such conditions in which instead of being persecuted they will defend themselves against the oppressors. Instead of living as subjects, they will now live and order their lives as free people, and will have the upper hand instead of being subdued and suppressed.

3. That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood, and those who believe follow the truth from

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا اتَّبَعُوا
الْبَطِيلَ وَأَنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّبَعُوا

their Lord. Thus does Allah set forth their parables for mankind.*7

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ
لِلنَّاسِ أَمْثَلَهُمْ

*7 That is, He makes both the parties aware of their positions. One party insists on following falsehood; therefore, Allah has brought all its endeavors to naught. And the other party has adopted obedience of the Truth; therefore, Allah has purified it of its evils and corrected its condition.

4. So when you meet (in battle) those who disbelieve, strike (their) necks until, when you have crushed them, then secure their bonds. Then whether you show favor afterwards or accept ransom until the war lays down its arms.*8 That (is the command). And if Allah had willed, He could have taken vengeance upon them. But that He may test some of you by (means of) others.*9 And those who are killed in the cause of Allah, He will never let their deeds be lost.*10

فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمْ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ
الرِّقَابِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخْنْتُمُوهُمْ
فَشُدُّوا أَلْوَتَاقَ فَإِمَّا مَنًّا بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا
فِدَاءً حَتَّىٰ تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا
ذَلِكَ وَلَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَانتَصَرْنَا مِنْهُمْ
وَلَكِن لِّيَبْلُوَ بَعْضَكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ
وَالَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَن
يُضِلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ

*8 The words of this verse as well as the context in which it

occurs clearly show that it was sent down after the revelation of the command for fighting and before the actual fighting began. The words, “So when you meet (in battle) those who disbelieve”, indicate that the fighting has not yet taken place and the Muslims are being instructed that when it does take place, what they should do.

The words of verse 20 below testify that this Surah was sent down at a time when the command for fighting had already been given in Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 39 and Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 190, and the hypocrites of Madinah and the people of the weak faith had been so upset that it seemed as if they were actually facing death.

Besides, verses 67-69 of the Surah Al-Anfal also testify that this verse had been sent down before the Battle of Badr. There it has been said: It does not behoove a Prophet to have captives until he has crushed down the enemies in the land. You desire the gains of this world, but Allah desires the Hereafter, and Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise. Had not a decree already been issued by Allah, you would have incurred a severe chastisement in consequence of what you have done. So eat of what you have taken as spoils because it is lawful and pure.

A careful study of this passage shows that what had displeased Allah on this occasion was that before crushing down the enemy completely in the Battle of Badr, the Muslims had started taking the enemy soldiers as captives, whereas the instruction given to them in Surah Muhammad before the actual fighting was this: When you have crushed them completely, then bind the captives tight. However, as

the Muslims had been permitted, among other things in Surah Muhammad, to accept ransom from the prisoners, Allah declared the money taken from the captives of Badr as lawful and did not punish them for that. The words: Had not the decree already been issued by Allah, are clearly pointing to the fact that the command for permission to accept ransom had already been given in the Quran before this event, and obviously, there is no other verse in the Quran beside this verse of Surah Muhammad, which contains this command. Therefore, it will have to be admitted that this verse had been sent down before the above cited verse of the Surah Al-Anfal (For explanation, see E.N. 49 on Surah Al-Anfal).

This is the first verse of the Quran in which preliminary instructions have been given about the laws of war. Below is given a resume of the injunctions that are derived from this verse and the Prophet's (peace be upon him) and his companions' practice according to it and the juristic inferences as based on this verse and the Sunnah:

(1) The real aim of the Muslim army in war is to break the fighting power of the enemy until it is crushed and the war lays down its arms. Under no circumstances, should the Muslim's lose sight of this aim and start taking the enemy soldiers as captives. Captives should be taken after the enemy has been completely crushed and its numbers thinned down. The Arabs have been so instructed at the outset lest in the greed for ransom and taking slaves they should forget and overlook the real aim of the war.

(2) About the prisoners taken in war it has been said: You

have the option whether you show them favor or accept ransom from them. This gives the general law that the prisoners of war should not be put to death. Abdullah bin Umar, Hasan Basri, Ata and Hammad bin Abi Sulaiman favor this view, which is quite valid. They say that a man can be killed only during the war. When the war is over and one has been made a prisoner, it is not lawful to kill him, Ibn Jarir and Abu Bakr alJassas have related that Hajjaj bin Yousuf handed over one of the prisoners of war to Abdullah bin Umar and commanded him to put him to death. He refused to obey and cited this verse and said: We are not allowed to kill a man when he is a prisoner. Imam Muhammad in *As-Siyat al-Kabir* also has related that Abdullah bin Amir had commanded Abdullah bin Umar to kill a prisoner of war, and he had refused to obey the command for this reason.

(3) But since in this verse it has neither been clearly forbidden to kill the prisoner, the Prophet (peace be upon him) understood this intention of Allah's command, and also acted accordingly, that if there was a special reason for which the ruler of an Islamic government regarded it as necessary to kill a particular prisoner (or prisoners), he could do so. This is not the general law, but an exception to it, which would be applied only when necessary. Thus, the Prophet (peace be upon him) put to death only Uqbah bin Abi Muait and Nadr bin al-Harith from among the 70 prisoners taken at Badr, and only the poet Abu Azzah from the prisoners taken at Uhud. Since the Bani Quraizah had surrendered on the condition that they would accept

whatever decision Hadrat Saad bin Muadh would give in their regard, and he had decreed that all the males of the Quraizah should be killed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had them executed. From among the prisoners taken at Khaiber only Kinanah bin Abi al-Huqaiq was put to death because of his violating the agreement. At the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded in respect of only a few particular persons from among all the inhabitants of Makkah that any one of them who was captured should be put to death. Apart from these exceptions, the Prophet (peace be upon him) never killed prisoners of war, and the same also continued to be the practice of the righteous Caliphs. During their times also killing of prisoners of war was rare, which was resorted to only for a special reason. Umar bin Abdul Aziz also during his caliphate put to death only one prisoner of war for the reason that he had persecuted the Muslims very cruelly. On this very basis the majority of the jurists have held the view that the Islamic government can put a prisoner to death if necessary. But it is for the government to take such a decision; a soldier is not permitted to kill any prisoner he likes. However, if there is the danger of a prisoner's running away or of his committing a dangerous mischief, the guard can kill him. In this connection, the jurists of Islam have also made three other points: (a) That if a prisoner accepts Islam, he cannot be killed; (b) that the prisoner can be killed only as long as he is in the government's custody; if he has been allotted to, or given in somebody else's possession by sale, he cannot be killed; and

(c) that if the prisoner has to be killed, he should be killed in a straightforward way; he should not be tortured to death.

(4) The general command that has been given about the prisoners of war is: Show them favor, or accept ransom from them. Favor includes four things: (a) That they should be treated well as prisoners; (b) that instead of killing them or keeping them in captivity for lifetime, they should be handed over to the individual Muslims as slaves; (c) that they should be put under *jizyah* and made *dhimmis*; and (d) that they should be set free without ransom.

There are three ways of ransoming them: (a) That they should be set free on payment of a ransom; (b) that they should be set free after taking some special service from them; and (c) that they should be exchanged for the Muslim prisoners of war who are in the possession of the enemy. The Prophet (peace be upon him) and the companions at different times acted in one or the other way as the occasion demanded. The divine law has not bound the Islamic government to act in only one particular way. The government can take any action it deems appropriate on a particular occasion.

(5) The practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the companions confirms that as long as a prisoner of war is in the government's custody, the government will be responsible for his food and clothing, and his treatment if he is ill or wounded. Islamic law does not permit prisoners to be kept without food or clothing, or be subjected to torture. On the contrary, instructions also have been given

to treat them well and generously, and precedents of this very practice are found in the Sunnah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) distributed the prisoners of Badr in the houses of different companions and gave the instruction: Treat these prisoners well. One of those prisoners, Abu Aziz, has reported: The Ansar Muslims, in whose house I was kept, gave me bread in the morning and the evening, but as for themselves they had only dates to eat. About another prisoner; Suhail bin Amr, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was told: He is a fiery speaker, and has been making speeches against you: please have his teeth broken. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: If I have his teeth broken, Allah will break my teeth, although I am a Prophet. (Ibn Hisham). When Thumamah bin Uthal, the chief of Yamamah, was brought as a prisoner, he was provided with good food and milk on the Prophet's (peace be upon him) orders as long as he remained a captive. (Ibn Hisham). The same was the practice in the time of the companions. No precedent is found when a prisoner might have been mistreated in their time.

(6) Islam has not permitted that the prisoners be kept in captivity forever so that the government may subject them to forced labor as long as it likes. If they are not exchanged for other prisoners of war, or ransomed, the method enjoined of doing them favor is that they should be made slaves and given in possession of individuals, and their masters instructed to treat them well. This method was acted upon during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as well as of the companions, and the jurists of Islam

have unanimously upheld it as permissible. In this regard, it should be borne in mind that a person who might have accepted Islam before being taken as prisoner, and then is somehow made a prisoner, will be set free, but the acceptance of Islam by a person who accepts it after being taken prisoner, or after being given in possession of somebody, will not gain him freedom automatically. A tradition has been related in Musnad Ahmad, Muslim and Tirmidhi on the authority of Imran bin Husain that a person from among the Bani Uqail was brought as a prisoner and he said: I have accepted Islam. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: If you had said this when you were free, you would certainly have attained to success. The same thing was said by Umar: When a prisoner becomes a Muslim after falling into the hands of the Muslims as a captive, he will not be killed, but will remain a slave. Oh this very point, the jurists of Islam have unanimously ruled that the prisoner who becomes a Muslim after being taken captive cannot escape slavery. (Imam Muhammad, As-Siyar al-Kabir). And this also is quite reasonable. If our law had been that anyone, who embraced Islam after being taken a captive, would be set free, no prisoner would be so foolish as not to win his freedom by pronouncing the *Kalimah*.

(7) The third manner of doing favor with the prisoners according to the law of Islam is that they may be put under *jizyah* and made *dhimmi* subjects of the Islamic state and allowed to live as free citizens of dar-al-Islam (abode of Islam) just like the Muslims. Imam Muhammad writes in

his *As-Siyar alKabir*: Any person who can be made a slave, can also be made a *dhimmi* and put under *jizyah*. At another place he says: "The ruler of the Muslims has the right to levy *jizyah* on them and a tax on their lands and set them absolutely free. This method has been practiced generally in the condition when the territory of the people who have been made prisoners, is conquered and annexed to the Islamic state. The Prophet (peace be upon him), for instance, practiced this method in the case of the people of Khaiber, and then Umar followed and practiced it extensively on the conquest of Iraq and other territories. Abu Ubaid writes in his *Kitab-al-Amwal*: After the conquest of Iraq a deputation of the leading men of that country came before Umar and submitted: O Commander of the Faithful, before this the people of Iran had subdued us: they subjected us to harsh treatment and committed all sorts of excesses against us. Then, when God sent you, we became very pleased, and we neither put up any resistance against you nor participated in the war. Now, we hear that you want to make us slaves. Umar replied: You have the option either to become Muslims, or accept to pay *jizyah* and remain free. They agreed to pay the *jizyah* and they were granted full freedom. At another place in the same book. Abu Ubaid says: Umar wrote to Abu Musa al-Ashari: Set free every farmer and peasant from among the people who have been captured in the war.

(8) The fourth favor is that the prisoner be set free without ransom. This is a special concession that the Islamic government can give only in case the special conditions of a

prisoner demand it, or when it is expected that the concession will win the prisoner's gratitude forever, and help turn him a friend from an enemy, or a believer from a disbeliever; otherwise, obviously it would in no way be a wise thing to set free a person of the enemy camp, who could again return to fight the Muslims. This is why the Muslim jurists generally have opposed it, and imposed the condition: If the ruler of the Muslims finds it expedient to set the prisoners, or some of them, free as a favor, there is no harm in doing so. (As-Siyat al-Kabir). Many precedents of this are found in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and in almost every case expediency seems to be the reason.

About the prisoners taken at Badr, he said: If Mutim bin Adi were alive, and had spoken to me in respect of these treacherous people, I would have let them go for his sake. (Bukhari, Abu Daud, Musnad Ahmad). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said this because when he had returned from Taif to Makkah, Mutim at that time had given him refuge, and his armed sons had escorted him to the Kabah. Therefore, he wanted to repay his debt of gratitude in this way.

According to Bukhari, Muslim and Musnad Ahmad, when Thumamah bin Uthal, the chief of Yamamah, was brought as a prisoner, the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him: Thumamah, what do you say? He replied: If I am killed, then such a one would be killed, whose blood has some value: if I am shown favor, then favor would be shown to a person, who appreciates favor; and if you want wealth, ask

for it, you will be given it. For three days the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him the same thing and he gave the same reply. At last, the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered that Thumamah be set free. On attaining freedom, he went to a nearby oasis, washed himself and came back, pronounced the *kalimah* and became a Muslim, saying: Before this day nobody was more detestable than you and no religion more odious than your religion in my sight, but now for me no man is more lovable than you and no religion more lovable than your religion. Then he went to Makkah for Umrah and gave the people of Quraish a notice to the effect: After this no grain will reach you from Yamamah unless Muhammad (peace be upon him) permits it. So, he stopped the grain supply and the people of Makkah had to request the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he should not stop the supply of grain for them from Yamamah.

From among the prisoners of the Bani Quraizah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) forgave Zabir bin Bata and Amr bin Saad (or Ibn Suda), the former because he had given refuge to Thabit bin Qais Ansari in the battle of Buath, in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance; therefore, he handed him over to Thabit that he may repay him for his favor. And he forgave Amr bin Sad because it was he who was exhorting his tribe not to be treacherous when the Bani Quraizah were committing breach of the trust with the Prophet (peace be upon him).

After the Battle of Bani-al-Mustaliq, when the prisoners were brought and distributed among the people, the

Prophet (peace be upon him) paid Juwairiyah's ransom to the person to whom she was allotted to secure her freedom and then married her to himself. At this all the Muslims set their own prisoners free, saying: Now they have become the Prophet's relatives. Thus, the prisoners of a hundred families became free. (Musnad Ahmad, Tabaqat Ibn Saad, Ibn Hisham).

On the occasion of the treaty of Hudaibiyah, at about dawn, 80 men came from the direction of Tanim with the intention of launching a sudden attack on the Muslim camp, but were all captured, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) set all of them free lest it became a cause of war on that critical occasion. (Muslim, Abu Daud, Nasai, Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad).

At the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) forgave all the people of Makkah except only a few men, and did not kill more than three or four of even those who had been made an exception. The whole of Arabia was well aware of what atrocities the people of Makkah had committed against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Muslims; yet he forgave them after attaining complete victory over them, gave the Arabs the satisfaction that they had not been overpowered by a tyrant but by a merciful, affectionate and generous leader. That is why after the conquest of Makkah the Arabian peninsula did not take longer than two years to be completely subdued.

After the Battle of Hunain, when the Hawazin deputation came to secure the freedom of their prisoners, the prisoners had already been distributed. The Prophet (peace be upon

him) called the Muslims together and said: These people have come with repentance, and I am of the opinion that their men should be returned to them. He who would like to set the prisoner allotted to him free willingly without ransom, should set him free, and the one who would like to take ransom, shall be paid it out of the first income that is received in the Public Treasury. Thus, six thousand prisoners were set free, and those who wanted to take ransom, were given it by the government. (Bukhari, Abu Daud, Musnad Ahmad, Tabaqat Ibn Saad). This also shows that the government is not authorized to set the prisoners free after they have been distributed; this can be done by the willing approval of those in whose possession the prisoners have been given, or by paying them the ransom.

After the Prophet (peace be upon him), precedents of setting the prisoners free as a favor continue to be found throughout the period of the companions also. Abu Bakr set free Ashath bin Qais al-Kindi and Umar granted freedom to Hurmuzan and the prisoners of Manadhir and Maisan. (Abu Ubaid, Kitab alAmwal).

(9) The precedent of setting the prisoners free on payment of the ransom in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is found only on the occasion of Badr, when the prisoners were set free on payment of one thousand to four thousand *dirhams* each. (Tabaqat Ibn Saad, Kitab al-Amwal). No precedent of this is found in the time of the companions; and the jurists of Islam have generally disapproved it, for it means that we should take money and set a man free so that he may again rise against us with the

sword. But since taking of ransom has been permitted in the Quran, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) also acted according to it once, it is not absolutely forbidden. Imam Muhammad writes in his *As-Siyar al-Kabir* that if the need arises the Muslims can free their prisoners on payment of the ransom.

(10) The criterion of freeing a prisoner for a service rendered is also found in connection with the battle of Badr. For those of the Quraish prisoners who had no ransom the Prophet (peace be upon him) imposed the condition that they should teach reading and writing to ten Ansar children each to win their freedom. (Musnad Ahmad, *Tabaqat Ibn Saad, Kitab al-Amwal*).

(11) Several instances of the exchange of prisoners are found in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Once he dispatched Abu Bakr on an expedition and he brought some captives, including a beautiful woman, who fell to the lot of Salamah bin Akwa. The Prophet urged him to give her back, then sent her to Makkah and had several Muslim prisoners released, in exchange for her. (Muslim, Abu Daud, *Tahawi Kitab al-Amwal of Abi Ubaid, Tabaqat Ibn Saad*). Imran bin Husain relates that once the tribe of Thaqif arrested two men of the Muslims. Some time later, a man of the Bani Uqail, who were allies of the Thaqif, was arrested by the Muslims. The Prophet (peace be upon him) sent him to Taif and got both the Muslims released in exchange for him. (Muslim, Tirmidhi, *Musnad Ahmad*). From among the jurists Imam Abu Yusuf, Imam Muhammad, Imam Shafai, Imam Malik and Imam Ahmad

hold the exchange of the prisoners as permissible. A ruling of Imam Abu Hanifah is that exchange should not be practiced, but according to another ruling of his exchange can be practiced. However, there is a consensus that the prisoner who becomes a Muslim should not be handed over to the disbelievers for the purpose of exchange.

This explanation makes it abundantly clear that Islam has formulated a comprehensive code in respect of the prisoners of war, which contains provision for this problem in every age under all sorts of conditions. Those people who take this Quranic verse in its simple meaning that the prisoners of war should either be shown favor and set free or freed for ransom, do not know what different aspects the question of the prisoners of war has, and what problems it has been creating in different ages and can create in the future.

***9** That is, if Allah had only wanted to crush the worshipers of falsehood, He did not stand in need of your help for this. He could have done this through an earthquake or a tempest in no time, But what He wills is that the followers of the truth among the people should enter into a conflict with the worshipers of falsehood and fight against them so that the qualities and characteristics of each are brought out clearly by means of the test and each is given the place and rank that he deserves according to his conduct.

***10** It means this: A person's being slain in the way of Allah does not mean that he lost his life and as far as his person was concerned, all his lifework was wasted. It is wrong to think that the sacrifices of the martyrs are not

beneficial for themselves but only for those who live after them in the world, and take advantage of their sacrifices. The fact is that even for the martyrs themselves it is a bargain of profit, not of loss at all.

5. He will guide them, and set their condition right.

سَيِّدِيهِمْ وَيُصَلِّحُ بَالَهُمْ

6. And He will admit them into the Paradise with which He has acquainted them.^{*11}

وَيُدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ عَرَفَهَا هُمْ

***11** This is the profit that the martyrs falling in the way of Allah will gain. Its three grades have been stated:

(1) That Allah will guide them.

(2) That He will set their condition right.

(3) That He will admit them into the Paradise with which He has acquainted them beforehand.

Guidance here obviously implies guiding to Paradise; setting the condition right implies that before their entry into Paradise, Allah will adorn them with robes of honor and remove every filth which had polluted them in the life of the world; and the third stage means that even in this world they have been told through the Quran and the Prophet (peace be upon him) what kind of Paradise it is that has been prepared for them. When they enter that Paradise they will enter a place with which they will already be familiar and they will come to know that they have been blessed precisely with the same that had been promised to them in the world.

7. O you who believe, if you help Allah, He will help

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَنْصُرُوا

you^{*12} and will make your foothold firm.

اللَّهُ يَنْصُرُكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتُ أَقْدَامَكُمْ ﴿٧﴾

***12** If you help Allah: If you participate in the work of raising Allah's Word with your life and wealth. But this has a deeper meaning too, which we have explained in E.N. 50 of Surah Aal-Imran.

8. And those who disbelieve, so for them is destruction^{*13} and He will waste their deeds.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَتَعَسَا لَهُمْ وَأَصْلٌ
أَعْمَلَهُمْ ﴿٨﴾

***13** Literally, to stumble and fall down on the face.

9. That is because they disliked what Allah has sent down,^{*14} so He rendered their deeds worthless.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَرِهُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
فَأَحْبَطَ أَعْمَلَهُمْ ﴿٩﴾

***14** That is, they preferred the whims, superstitions, customs and moral perversion of their former ignorance and did not like the teaching that Allah had revealed to guide them to the right way.

10. Have they not then traveled in the land and seen how was the end of those before them. Allah destroyed them, and for the disbelievers is a similar end.^{*15}

﴿١٠﴾ أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
دَمَّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ
أَمْثَلُهَا ﴿١٠﴾

***15** This sentence has two meanings:

(1) The same destruction that was met by those disbelievers now awaits these disbelievers, who are not accepting the invitation of Muhammad (peace be upon him).

(2) The ruin of those people does not end with the torment of the world; the same doom also awaits them in the Hereafter.

11. That is because Allah is the protector of those who believe and that the disbelievers have no protector for them.^{*16}

ذَالِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَأَنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ لَا مَوْلَى لَهُمْ

***16** After being wounded at Uhud when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was resting in a hill pass with a few companions, Abu Sufyan shouted: We have Uzza and there is no Uzza for you. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) told his companions to respond, saying: Our Protector and helper is Allah, and you have no protector and helper at all. This reply of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was derived from this very verse.

12. Indeed, Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds into Gardens underneath which rivers flow. And those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as the cattle eat,^{*17} and the Fire is their final abode.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
يَتَمَتَّعُونَ وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ
الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوَى لَهُمْ

*17 That is, just as an animal eats and does not think where from the food it eats has come, who has created it, and what rights of the creator are imposed on it for providing it with food, so are these people also eating and have no higher values or ideals beyond eating.

13. And how many a city was stronger in power than this city of yours that has expelled you, We destroyed them so there was no helper for them.*18

وَكَأَيِّن مِّن قَرْيَةٍ هِيَ أَشَدُّ قُوَّةً مِّن قَرْيَتِكَ الَّتِي أَخْرَجْتِكَ أَهْلُكُنَّهُمْ فَلَا نَاصِرَ لَهُمْ

*18 The Prophet (peace be upon him) was sorely distressed on leaving Makkah. When he was compelled to emigrate, he had stood facing the city outside it and said: O Makkah, you are the most beloved city in the sight of Allah, and I have the greatest love for you out of all the cities of Allah. If the polytheists had not driven me out, I would never have left you. About this it has been said: After driving you out of the city the people of Makkah think that they have achieved a great success, whereas, in fact, they have hastened only their own ruin by this evil act. The style of the verse clearly indicates that it must have been revealed soon after the Hijrah.

14. So is he who is on a clear proof from his Lord, like him to whom his evil deeds have been made pleasing, and they follow their desires.*19

أَفَمَن كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ كَمَن زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ

***19** That is, how is it possible that when the Prophet and his followers have been guided by God to a clear and straight path and they have started following it in the light of full knowledge and vision, they should walk along, with those who are still persisting in their ways of ignorance, who regard their deviation as guidance and their evildoing as a praiseworthy thing, and who judge on the basis of their personal desires, and not by argument as to what is the truth and what is falsehood. Now, neither can the lives of these two groups be alike in this world nor can their end be alike in the Hereafter.

15. The similitude of the Garden that has been promised to the righteous, therein are rivers of water unpolluted,^{*20} and rivers of milk whereof the flavor changes not,^{*21} and rivers of wine delicious to the drinkers,^{*22} and rivers of purified honey.^{*23} And for them therein is every kind of fruit, and forgiveness from their Lord.^{*24} (Are they) like those who shall dwell forever in the Fire and are given to drink boiling water so that it would sever their intestines.

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ
 فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِنْ مَّاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ
 مِنْ لَبَنٍ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ وَأَنْهَارٌ
 مِنْ خَمْرٍ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ
 عَسَلٍ مُصَفًّى وَهُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ
 الثَّمَرَاتِ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ كَمَنْ
 هُوَ خَالِدٌ فِي النَّارِ وَسُقُوا مَاءً
 حَمِيمًا فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَاءَهُمْ

***20** Literally, *aasin* is the taste and color of water which has

changed, or which gives a bad smell. In the world the water of rivers and canals is generally muddy; its taste and color change due to the mixture of sand and dust and of different kinds of vegetation in it, and it also gives off a kind of bad smell. Therefore, the quality of the water of the rivers and canals of Paradise will be such that it will be pure and clear, without any adulteration.

***21** In a Hadith directly reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him), it has been explained thus: It will not be the milk squeezed from the milk glands of animals. That is, it will be the milk which Allah will bring out in the form of springs from the earth and cause it to flow into canals of Paradise. About this natural milk it has been said: Its flavor will not change at all; that is, it will not give even the slightest offensive smell that is found in every kind of milk squeezed from the animal milk glands.

***22** In another Hadith reported directly from the Prophet (peace be upon him), it has been explained, thus: This wine will not have been distilled from rotten fruit by beating and fermenting, like the wine in the world, but Allah will produce it also in the form of springs and cause it to flow into canals; then its quality will be such that it will be delightful for the drinkers. That is, it will not be bitter and foul-smelling like the wines of the world, which cannot be drunk even by the most habitual drinker without showing some distaste. In Surah As-Saffat, another quality of it has been described: Neither will the drinker be harmed physically thereby nor become drunk. (verse 47). In Surah Al-Waqiah it has been said: Which will neither cause them

giddiness nor affect their sense. (verse 19). This shows that wine will not intoxicate, but will only give pleasure and delight.

***23** In the Hadith it has been explained, thus: The honey will not have been drawn from the bees' bellies, but it will also come out from springs and flow into canals; therefore, it will not have wax, and pieces of the honey-comb and legs of dead bees mixed in it, but it will be absolutely pure.

***24** The mention of forgiveness from Allah after the blessings of Paradise can have two meanings:

(1) That the greatest blessing by far will be that Allah will forgive them.

(2) That the errors and faults that they happened to commit in the world, will not even so much as be mentioned before them, but Allah will cover them up forever so that they are not put to shame in Paradise.

16. And among them are some who give ear to you, until when they go out from you, they say to those who have been given knowledge: "What did he say just now."^{*25} These are the ones upon whose hearts Allah has set a seal, and they follow their desires.^{*26}

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ حَتَّى إِذَا
خَرَجُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ
أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مَاذَا قَالَ آنِفًا
أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى
قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ

***25** This is concerning those disbelievers and hypocrites and unbelieving followers of the former Books, who sat in the assemblies of the Prophet (peace be upon him), listened

to his discourses, or the verses of the Quran, but since in their hearts they were averse to the themes presented by him, they would understand nothing in spite of listening to him. Therefore, when they came out, they would ask the Muslims: What was he saying just now?

***26** This was the real reason because of which their ears had become deaf to the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They were the slaves of their lusts, and the teachings that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was presenting fell against their lusts. Therefore, if ever they sat in the assemblies of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and listened to him, they would understand nothing.

17. And those who are guided, He increases them in guidance^{*27} and grants them their righteousness.^{*28}

وَالَّذِينَ أَهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى
وَأَتَتْهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ

***27** That is, the same revelations about which the disbelievers and hypocrites ask: What was the Prophet (peace be upon him) saying just now? become a cause of further guidance for the rightly guided people, and from the same assembly from which these unfortunate people rise without gaining anything, the fortunate ones return with a new treasure of knowledge and insight.

***28** That is, Allah grants them the grace to develop in themselves the kind of piety *taqwa* that they have the capability to develop.

18. Do they then await other than the Hour that it should come upon them suddenly.^{*29}

فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ

Its indications indeed have come.^{*30} Then how (good) for them, when it does come to them, will be their reminder.

تَأْتِيهِمْ بَغْتَةً فَكَدْ جَاءَ أَشْرَاطُهَا
فَأَنَّى لَهُمْ إِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ ذِكْرُهُمْ

***29** That is, as far as the explanation and clarification of the truth is concerned; it has been explained well by argument and reasoning, the miraculous discourses of the Quran, the pure character of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the revolution in the lives of his companions. Now, are these people awaiting that Resurrection itself should take place and then only they will believe?

***30** The portents of Resurrection imply those signs which indicate that its approach is near. One such important sign is the advent of God's last Prophet after whom no other prophet will come till Resurrection. Traditions have been related in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Musnad Ahmad on the authority of Anas, Sahl bin Saad As-Saidi and Buraidah, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) raised his index finger and the middle finger and said: My advent and Resurrection are like these two fingers. That is, Just as there is no other finger between these two fingers, so no other prophet will be raised between me and Resurrection; after me only Resurrection now will occur.

19. So know that there is no god except Allah, and ask forgiveness for your sin, and for believing men and believing women.^{*31} And

فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
وَأَسْتَغْفِرْ لِدُنْيِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

Allah knows your place of movements and your place of resting.

وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ

وَمَثُونَكُمْ

***31** One of the morals taught to man by Islam is also this: However hard and sincerely may man be trying to serve and worship his Lord and fighting and struggling in the cause of His Religion, he should never be involved in the misunderstanding that he has done and accomplished whatever he was required to do. Rather, on the contrary, he should have the feeling that he has not been able to do full justice to what was expected of him by his Lord and Master. Therefore, he should confess his errors constantly and pray to Allah saying Lord, forgive me for whatever fault and error I may have committed in Your service. This is indeed the essence of Allah's command: O Prophet, ask forgiveness for your fault. This does not mean that God forbid, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had actually committed an error willfully, but its correct meaning is that it did not even behoove the servant who was the greatest worshiper of his Lord that he should harbor even a tinge of the pride of accomplishment in his heart, but his true position also was that in spite of all his great and glorious services he should continue confessing his shortcomings before his Lord. It was under this state of the mind that the Prophet (peace be upon him) often implored his Lord for forgiveness. According to Abu Daud and Nasai, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: I implore Allah for forgiveness one hundred times every day.

20. And those who believe say: “Why has a surah not been sent down.” Then when a decisive surah is sent down and fighting is mentioned therein, you see those in whose hearts is a disease, looking towards you with the look of one fainting unto death.*³² so woe unto them.

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَوْلَا
 نَزَّلَتْ سُورَةٌ فَإِذَا أُنزِلَتْ سُورَةٌ
 مُحْكَمَةٌ وَذُكِرَ فِيهَا الْقِتَالُ رَأَيْتَ
 الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يَنْظُرُونَ
 إِلَيْكَ نَظَرَ الْمَغْشِيِّ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ
 الْمَوْتِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ



***32** That is, in view of the conditions through which the Muslims were passing and the attitude that the disbelievers had adopted towards Islam and the Muslims at that time, the believers were generally of the opinion that they should be permitted to fight even before fighting was actually enjoined by Allah. Rather they were asking Allah’s command in this regard impatiently and were asking again and again: Why are we not permitted to fight these wicked people? But the condition of the people who had joined the ranks of the Muslims hypocritically was quite different from that of the believers. They held their lives and their properties as dearer to themselves than Allah and His religion, and were not prepared to risk them at any cost. Therefore, as soon as fighting was enjoined, they were clearly sorted out from the true believers. Until the time when fighting had not been enjoined, the hypocrites and the common believers could not be distinguished one from the

other. The hypocrites offered the Prayer just as the true believers did, they observed the Fast just like them, and practiced every article of the faith as made no demand of a sacrifice on them. But when the time came for making the supreme sacrifice of life for the sake of Islam, their hypocrisy was exposed and their veil of false display of the faith was rent asunder. In Surah An-Nisa, their this state has been described thus: Have you marked those to whom it was said: Withhold your hands a while and establish the salat and pay the zakat? Now that the fighting has been enjoined for them, some of them fear the people as they should fear Allah, or even more than that. They say: Our Lord, why have You enjoined fighting for us? Why have You not given us a brief respite? (verse 77)

21. Obedience and good word. And when the matter is determined, then if they had been true to Allah, it would have been better for them.

طَاعَةٌ وَقَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ فَإِذَا عَزَمَ
الْأَمْرَ فَلَوْ صَدَقُوا اللَّهَ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا
هُمَّ

22. So would you perhaps, if you turned away,^{*33} that you would spread corruption on earth and sever your ties of relationship.^{*34}

فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ
تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتُقَطِّعُوا
أَرْحَامَكُمْ

***33** Another translation of the words in the original can be: If you became rulers over the people,

***34** Its one meaning is: If at this time you shirk supporting

and defending Islam and refrain from fighting with your life and wealth for the cause of the great reformist revolution which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions are struggling to bring about. There will be no other consequence of this than that you would return to the same system of ignorance in which you have been cutting each other's throat since centuries, burying your children alive and filling God's earth with injustice and wickedness. Its other meaning is: You are a people of depraved character. You are not at all sincere in your claim of having affirmed the faith, because you are not prepared to make any sacrifice in its cause. Now, if Allah gives you power in the land and entrusts the affairs of the world to you when morally you are unsound and unreliable, what else can be expected of you than that you would commit tyranny and mischief and resort to killing of your own near and dear ones.

This verse clearly points out that Islam forbids severing of relations with the kindred. On the other hand, in positive terms also, at several places in the Quran, treating the relatives kindly and well has been enjoined and counted among the major virtues. (For instance, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 83, 177; Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 8, 36; Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 90; Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 26; Surah An-Noor, Ayat 22). The word *rahm* in Arabic is used for kinship and relationship by blood metaphorically. All the relations of a person, whether near or distant, are his kinsmen, *dhwil-arham*. The nearer the relationship the greater the right one has upon the other and greater the sin

of severing the ties of blood. To treat the kindred well implies that one should do his utmost in doing whatever good he possibly can to his relative. As well as, he should avoid doing any ill or harm to him. Reasoning from this very verse Umar had forbidden as unlawful selling of the slave girl who had given birth to a child from her master, and the companions had concurred with him in this. Hakim in his Musradrik has related on the authority of Buraidah that one day when he was sitting among the audience of Umar, suddenly a clamor arose in the street. On inquiring it was known that a slave girl was being sold and her daughter was crying. Umar immediately got the Ansar and the Muhajirin together and put before them the question: Do you find in the religion that Muhammad (peace be upon him) has brought any room for severing of relations between the blood relationships? Everybody replied in the negative. Thereupon, Umar said: Then, how is it that in your houses a mother is being separated from her daughter? Could there be a greater and more serious instance of the cutting of these relationships? Then he recited this verse. The people said: You may adopt whatever measure you deem fit to stop this practice. At this Umar issued this decree for enforcement in all the Islamic territories: No slave-girl who has given birth to a child from her master is to be sold because this is breaking of kinship ties which is not lawful.

23. Such are they whom Allah has cursed, so that He has made them deaf and

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ

blinded their sight.

فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَأَعَمَّى أَبْصَرَهُمْ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. Do they not then reflect over the Quran, or are there locks upon their hearts.^{*35}

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْءَانَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَآءَ ﴿٢٤﴾

***35** That is, either these people do not ponder over the Quran at all, or if they try to ponder over it, its teachings and meaning do not enter into their hearts, because they have put locks on them. As for this; “are there locks upon their hearts” means: There are such locks for them as are specially meant for the hearts which are not susceptible to the truth.

25. Indeed, those who turn on their backs after guidance had become clear to them, Satan enticed them and prolonged hope for them.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَرْتَدُّوا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهِمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ ۗ الشَّيْطَانُ سَوَّلَ لَهُمْ وَأَمَلَىٰ لَهُمْ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. That is because they said to those who showed aversion to what Allah sent down: “We shall obey you in some matters.”^{*36} And Allah knows their secret affairs.

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ كَرِهُوا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ سَنُطِيعُكُمْ فِي بَعْضِ الْأُمْرِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِسْرَارَهُمْ ﴿٢٦﴾

***36** That is, in spite of professing the faith and being counted among the Muslims, they went on conspiring secretly with the enemies of Islam and even pledged to support them in certain matters.

27. Then how (will it be) when the angels take them in death, striking their faces and their backs.^{*37}

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا تَوَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهُهُمْ وَأَدْبَارَهُمْ



***37** That is, in the world they adopted this attitude so that they may safeguard their interests and may protect themselves from the dangers of the conflict between Islam and infidelity, but how will they escape Allah's wrath after death? At that time, no device of theirs will prove helpful for them to remain safe from the punishment by the angels. This verse also is one of those verses that point to the torment of *barzakh* (i.e. torment of the grave). It clearly shows that the unbelievers and hypocrites start being afflicted with the torment right from the time of death, and this torment is different from the punishment which they will get on Resurrection after their cases will have been decided by Allah. (For further explanation, see Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 97; Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 93-94; Surah Al-Anfal, Ayat 50; Surah An-Nahl, Ayats 28, 32; Surah Al-Muminun, Ayats 99-100; Surah YaSeen, Ayats 26-27 and E.Ns 22, 23; Surah Al-Mumin, Ayat 46 and E.N. 63).

28. That is because they followed that which angered

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ اتَّبَعُوا مَا أَصْحَبَتْ

Allah, and hated that which pleased Him. So He rendered their deeds worthless. *38

اللَّهُ وَكَرَهُوا رِضْوَانَهُ فَأَحْبَطَ
أَعْمَالَهُمْ

*38 This refers to all those works that they performed as Muslims. Their Prayers, their Fasting, their payments of the Zakat, and all other acts of worship and virtue, which in appearance and form are counted among good works, were rendered void, for they failed to adopt the attitude of sincerity and loyalty towards Allah and Islam and the Muslim community, even though they professed to be Muslims. But, on the contrary, they went on conspiring with the enemies of Islam for the sake of small worldly gains, and started devising schemes to save themselves from any possible risks as soon as time came for Jihad in the cause of Allah. These verses are absolutely decisive and conclusive in this regard that in the conflict between Islam and un-Islam the faith of the person whose sympathies are not with Islam and the Muslims, or are with disbelief and the disbelievers, cannot at all be reliable, not to speak of any of his works being acceptable before Allah.

29. Or do those in whose hearts is a disease think that Allah will not expose the impurity of their hearts.

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
مَرَضٌ أَنْ لَنْ يُخْرِجَ اللَّهُ أَضْغَنَهُمْ

30. And if We willed, We could show them to you, then

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَأَرَيْنَاكَهُمْ فَלَعَرَفْتَهُمْ

you would recognize them by their mark. And you will surely know them by the tone of the speech. And Allah knows your deeds.

بِسِيمَتِهِمْ^{٣٠} وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِي لَحْنِ
الْقَوْلِ^{٣١} وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ أَعْمَالَكُمْ

31. And We will certainly test you until We make evident those who strive hard among you and the steadfast, and We will test your record.

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّىٰ نَعْلَمَ
الْمُجَاهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ
وَنَبْلُوا أَخْبَارَكُمْ

32. Indeed, those who disbelieve and hinder (others) from the way of Allah, and oppose the messenger after the guidance has been manifested unto them, never will they harm Allah in the least. And He will render their deeds

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَن
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَشَاقُّوا الرَّسُولَ مِن
بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ لَن
يُضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيُحِطُّ
أَعْمَالَهُمْ

***39** This sentence has two meanings:

(1) That Allah will render vain and fruitless all those works which they had performed as good works, and they will get no reward whatever for them in the Hereafter.

(2) That all the devices that they are adopting to obstruct the way of Allah and His Messenger's (peace be upon him) religion will prove ineffective and fruitless.

33. O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and render not vain your deeds. ^{*40}

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ
وَاطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَلَا تُبْطِلُوا
أَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴾

***40** In other words, the deeds being beneficial and yielding of good results depends wholly on one's obedience to Allah and His Messenger. After one has turned away from obedience, no deed remains a good deed so that one may deserve any reward for it.

34. Indeed, those who disbelieve, and hinder (others) from the way of Allah then die while they were disbelievers, never will Allah forgive them.

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَن
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ مَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ
فَلَن يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ ﴾

35. So be not weak and call for peace ^{*41} while you have the upper hand. And Allah is with you, and will never deprive you (the reward) of your deeds.

﴿ فَلَا تَهِنُوا وَتَدْعُوا إِلَى السَّلْمِ
وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ وَاللَّهُ مَعَكُمْ وَلَنْ
يَتْرُكُمُ أَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴾

***41** Here, one should bear in mind the fact that when this discourse was revealed only a handful of the Muslims consisting of a couple of hundreds of the Muhajirin and Ansar living in the small town of Madinah were upholding the standard of Islam and they were not only faced by the powerful Quraish but also by the whole of pagan Arabia.

Such were the conditions when they were exhorted not to show weakness and not to beg (the enemy) for peace, but to make preparations for the decisive conflict. This does not mean that the Muslims should never negotiate for peace, but it means that in a state like this it is not right to initiate peace negotiations when it shows the Muslims' weakness, for it will still further embolden the enemy. The Muslims should first establish their superiority in power and strength; then if they negotiate peace there will be no harm.

36. The life of this world is only a play and diversion.*42

And if you believe and fear, He will give you your rewards, and will not ask of you your possessions.*43

إِنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ
وَإِنْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا يُؤْتِكُمْ
أَجْرَكُمْ وَلَا يَسْأَلْكُمْ أَمْوَالَكُمْ



*42 That is, as against the Hereafter, this world is no more than a means of temporary entertainment. The success or failure here is not anything real and enduring, which might in any way be important. The real life is the life Hereafter, and its success should be man's main concern. (For further explanation, see E.N. 102 of Surah Al-Ankabut).

*43 That is, Allah is Self-Sufficient: He does not need taking anything from you for His own self. If He tells you to expend something in His way, He does so not for Himself but only for your own good.

37. If He were to ask you of it, and press you, you

إِنْ يَسْأَلْكُمْوهَا فَيُحْفِكُمْ

would withhold, and He would bring your malice out.*44

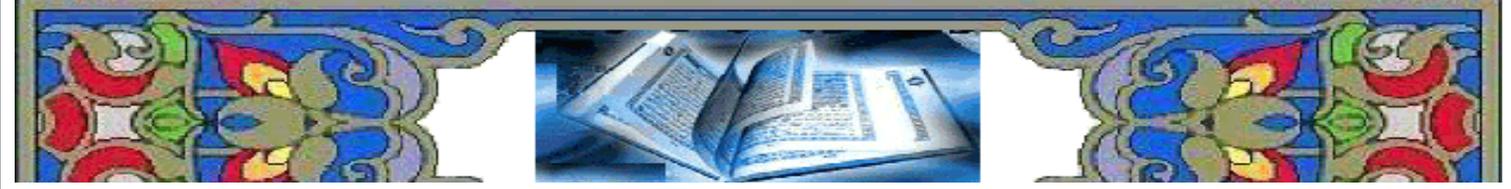
تَبَخَّلُوا وَخُجِّرْ أَضْغَنْكُمْ ﴿٣٧﴾

*44 That is, He does not put you to any severe trial that may bring out your weaknesses.

38. Here you are, those who are called to spend in the cause of Allah. Then among you are some who withhold. And whoever withholds, he then only withholds against his own self. And Allah is Self Sufficient and you are the needy. And if you turn away, He will replace you with another people, and they will not be like you.

هَاتِئْتُمْ هَاتُوا تَدْعُونَ
لِتُنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَمِنْكُمْ
مَنْ يَبْخَلُ وَمَنْ يَبْخَلْ فَإِنَّمَا
يَبْخَلُ عَنِ نَفْسِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ
وَأَنْتُمْ الْفُقَرَاءُ ۗ وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا
يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا
يَكُونُوا أَمْثَلَكُمْ ﴿٣٨﴾





Al-Fatah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

It is derived from the words *Inna fatah-na laka fat-han mubina* of the very first verse. This is not only a name of the Surah but also its title in view of the subject matter, for it deals with the great victory that Allah granted to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Muslims in the form of the Truce of Hudaibiyah.

Period of Revelation

Traditions concur that it was revealed in Dhil-Qadah, A.H. 6, at a time when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was on his return journey to Al-Madinah after concluding the Truce of Hudaibiyah with the disbelievers of Makkah.

Historical Background

The events in connection with which this Surah was revealed began like this: One day the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw in a dream that he had gone to Makkah with his companions and had performed the umrah there. Obviously, the Prophet's dream could not be a mere dream and fiction for it is a kind of divine inspiration as Allah confirmed in verse 27 below and said that He had shown

that dream to His Messenger. Therefore, it was not merely a dream but a divine inspiration which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had to obey and follow.

Apparently, there was no possible way of acting on this inspiration. The disbelieving Quraish had debarred the Muslims from proceeding to the Kabah for the past six years and no Muslim had been allowed during that period to approach the Kabah for the purpose of performing hajj and umrah. Therefore, it could not be expected that they would allow the Prophet (peace be upon him) to enter Makkah along with a party of his companions. If they had proceeded to Makkah in the pilgrim garments with the intention of performing umrah, along with their arms, this would have provoked the enemy to war, and if they had proceeded unarmed, this would have meant endangering his own as well as his companions' lives. Under conditions such as these nobody could see and suggest how the divine inspiration could be acted upon.

But the Prophet's position was different. It demanded that he should carry out whatever command his Lord gave fearlessly and without any apprehension and doubt. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) informed his companions of his dream and began to make preparations for the journey. Among the tribes living in the suburbs, he also had the public announcement made that he was proceeding for umrah and the people could join him. Those who could only see the apparent conditions thought that he and his companions were going into the very jaws of death, none of them therefore was inclined to accompany him in

the expedition. But those who had true faith in Allah and His Messenger were least bothered about the consequences. For them this information was enough that it was a divine inspiration and Allah's Prophet (peace be upon him) had made up his mind to carry it into effect. After this nothing could hinder them from accompanying the Messenger of Allah. Thus, 1,400 of the companions became ready to follow him on this highly dangerous journey.

This blessed caravan set off from Al-Madinah in the beginning of Dhil Qadah, A. H. 6. At Dhul Hulaifah they entered the pilgrims robe with the intention of umrah, took 70 camels with collars round their necks indicating that they were sacrificial animals; kept only a sword each in sheaths, which the pilgrims to the Kabah were allowed to carry according to the recognized custom of Arabia, but no other weapon. Thus, the caravan set out for the Kabah, the House of Allah, at Makkah, chanting the prescribed slogan of *Labbaik, Allahuma Labbaik*.

The nature of the relations between Makkah and Al-Madinah in those days was well known to every Arab. Just the previous year, in Shawwal A.H. 5, the Quraish mustering the united strength of the Arab tribes had invaded Al-Madinah and the Battle of the Trench had taken place. Therefore, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) along with such a large caravan set off for the home of his blood-thirsty enemy, the whole of Arabia looked up with amazement, and the people also noticed that the caravan was not going with the intention to fight but was proceeding to the House of Allah in a forbidden month in

the pilgrims garb carrying sacrificial animals and was absolutely unarmed.

The Quraish were confounded at this bold step taken by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Dhil-Qadah was one of those forbidden months which had been held as sacred for pilgrimage in Arabia for centuries. Nobody had a right to interfere with a caravan which might be coming for hajj or umrah in the pilgrims garb in this month; so much so that even an enemy tribe could not hinder it from passing through its territory according to the recognized law of the land. The Quraish therefore were caught in a dilemma, for if they attacked this caravan from Al-Madinah and stopped it from entering Makkah, this would arouse a clamor of protest in the whole country, and all the Arab tribes would have the misgiving that the Quraish had monopolized the Kabah as exclusively their own, and every tribe would be involved in the mistrust that now it depended on the will of the Quraish to allow or not to allow anyone to perform hajj or umrah in the future and that they would stop any tribe with which they were angry from visiting the Kabah just as they had stopped the Al-Madinese pilgrims. This, they thought would be a grave mistake, which would cause the entire Arabia to revolt against them. But, on the other hand, if they allowed Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his large caravan to enter their city safely, they would lose their image of power in Arabia and the people would say that they were afraid of Muhammad (peace be upon him). At last, after a great deal of confusion, perplexity and hesitation they were overcome by their false sense of honor

and for the sake of their prestige they took the decision that they would at no cost allow the caravan to enter the city of Makkah.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) had dispatched a man of the Bani Kab as a secret agent so that he may keep him fully informed of the intentions and movements of the Quraish. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) reached Usfan, he brought the news that the Quraish had reached Dhi Tuwa with full preparations and they had sent Khalid bin Walid with two hundred cavalry men in advance towards Kuraal-Ghamim to intercept him. The Quraish wanted somehow to provoke the Prophet's (peace be upon him) companions into fighting so that they may tell the Arabs that those people had actually come to fight and had put on the pilgrims garments for umrah only to deceive others.

Immediately on receipt of this information the Prophet (peace be upon him) changed his route and following a very rugged, rocky track reached Hudaibiyah, which was situated right on the boundary of the sacred Makkan territory. Here, he was visited by Budail bin Warqa the chief of the Bani Khuzaah, along with some men of his tribe. They asked what he had come for. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied that he and his companions had come only for pilgrimage to the House of Allah and for going round it in worship and not for war. The men of Khuzaah went and told this to the Quraish chiefs and counseled them not to interfere with the pilgrims. But the Quraish were obstinate. They sent Hulays bin Alqamah,

the chief of the Ahabish, to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to persuade him to go back. Their object was that when Muhammad (peace be upon him) would not listen to Hulays, he would come back disappointed and then the entire power of the Ahabish would be on their side. But when Hulays went and saw that the whole caravan had put on the pilgrims garments, had brought sacrificial camels with festive collars round their necks, and had come for doing reverence to the House of Allah and not to fight, he returned to Makkah without having any dialogue with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and told the Quraish chiefs plainly that those people had no other object but to pay a visit to the Kabah. If they debarred them from it, the Ahabish would not join them in that, because they had not become their allies to support them if they violated the sacred customs and traditions.

Then the Quraish sent Urwah bin Masud Thaqafi. He had lengthy negotiations with the Prophet (peace be upon him) in an effort to persuade him to give up his intention to enter Makkah. But the Prophet (peace be upon him) also gave him the same reply that he had given to the chief of the Khuzaah, that they had not come to fight but to do honor to the House of Allah and carry out a religious duty. Urwah went back and said to the Quraish: I have been to the courts of the Caesar and Khosroes, and the Negus also, but by God, never have I seen any people so devoted to a king as are the companions of Muhammad (peace be upon him) to him. If Muhammad (peace be upon him) makes his ablutions they would not let the water thereof fall on the

ground but would rub it on their bodies and clothes. Now you may decide as to what you should do.

In the meantime when the messages were coming and the negotiations were going on, the Quraish tried again and again to quietly launch sudden attacks on the Muslim camp in order to provoke the companions and somehow incite them to war, but every time they did so the companions' forbearance and patience and the Prophet's (peace be upon him) wisdom and sagacity frustrated their designs. On one occasion forty or fifty of their men came at night and attacked the Muslim camp with stones and arrows. The companions arrested all of them and took them before the Prophet (peace be upon him), but he let them go. On another occasion 80 men came from the direction of Tanim right at the time of the Fajr prayer and made a sudden attack. They were also caught, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) forgave them, too. Thus, the Quraish went on meeting failure after failure in every one of their designs.

At last, the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent Uthman as his own messenger to Makkah with the message that they had not come to fight but only for pilgrimage and had brought their sacrificial camels along, and they would go back after performing the rite of pilgrimage and offering the sacrifice. But the Quraish did not agree and withheld Uthman in the city. In the meantime a rumor spread that Uthman had been killed, and when he did not return in time, the Muslims took the rumor to be true. Now they could show no more forbearance. Entry into Makkah was different for there was no intention to use force. But when

the ambassador was put to death, the Muslims had no alternative but to prepare for war. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) summoned all his companions together and took a solemn pledge from them that they would fight to death. In view of the critical occasion, it was not an ordinary undertaking. The Muslims numbered only 1400 and had come without any weapons, were encamping at the boundary of Makkah, 250 miles away from their own city, and the enemy could attack them in full strength, and could surround them with its allies from the adjoining tribes as well. In spite of this, none from the caravan except one man failed to give his pledge to fight to death, and there could be no greater proof of their dedication and sincerity than that in the cause of Allah. This pledge is well known in the history of Islam as the pledge of Ridwan.

Later it was known that the news about Uthman was false. Not only did he return, but Suhail bin Amr from the Quraish also arrived with a deputation to negotiate peace with the Prophet (peace be upon him). Now, the Quraish no more insisted that they would disallow the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions to enter Makkah. However, in order to save their face they only insisted that he should go back that year but could come the following year to perform the umrah. After lengthy negotiations peace was concluded on the following terms:

1. War would remain suspended for ten years, and no party would indulge in any hostility, open or secret, against the other.
2. If any one during that period from among the Quraish

went over to Muhammad (peace be upon him), without his guardian's permission, he would return him to them, but if a companion of Muhammad (peace be upon him) came over to the Quraish, they would not return him.

3. Every Arab tribe would have the option to join either side as its ally and enter the treaty.

4. Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his men would go back that year and could come the following year for umrah and stay in Makkah for three days, provided that they brought only one sheathed sword each, and no other weapon of war. In those three days the Makkans would vacate the city for them (so that there was no chance of a clash), but they would not be allowed to take along any Makkans on return.

When the conditions of the treaty were being settled, the whole of the Muslim army was feeling greatly upset. No one understood the expedience because of which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was accepting the conditions. No one was far sighted enough to foresee the great benefit that was to result from this treaty. The disbelieving Quraish looked at it as their victory, and the Muslims were upset as to why they should be humiliated to accepting those mean conditions. Even a statesman of the caliber of Umar says that he had never given way to doubt since the time he had embraced Islam but on this occasion he also could not avoid it. Impatient he went to Abu Bakr and said: Is he, the Prophet (peace be upon him), not Allah's Messenger, and are we not Muslims, and are they not polytheists? Then, why should we agree to what is humiliating to our faith?

He replied: O Umar, he is surely Allah's Messenger, and Allah will never make him the loser. Unsatisfied he went to the Prophet himself and put the same questions to him, and he also gave him the same replies as Abu Bakr had given. Afterwards, Umar continued to offer voluntary prayers and give alms so that Allah may pardon his insolence that he had shown towards the Prophet (peace be upon him) on that occasion.

Two things in the treaty were highly disturbing for the Muslims, first, the second condition, about which they said that it was an expressly unfair condition, for if they had to return a fugitive from Makkah, why should not the Quraish return a fugitive from Al-Madinah? To this the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: What use would be he to us, who fled from us to them? May Allah keep him away from us! And if we return the one who flees to us from them, Allah will create some other way out for him. The other thing that was rankling in their minds was the fourth condition. The Muslims thought that agreeing to it meant that they were going back unsuccessful and this was humiliating. Furthermore, the question that was causing them feel upset was that they had accepted the condition of going back without performing the pilgrimage to the Kabah, whereas the Prophet (peace be upon him) had seen in the vision that they were performing tawaf at Makkah. To this the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied that in his vision the year had not been specified. According to the treaty conditions, therefore, they would perform the tawaf the following year if it pleased Allah.

Right at the time when the document was being written, Suhail bin Amr's own son, Abu Jandal, who had become a Muslim and been imprisoned by the pagans of Makkah somehow escaped to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) camp. He had fetters on his feet and signs of violence on his body. He implored the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he help secure his release from imprisonment. The scene only increased the companions' dejection, and they were moved beyond control. But Suhail bin Amr said the conditions of the agreement had been concluded between them although the writing was not yet complete; therefore, the boy should be returned to them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) admitted his argument and Abu Jandal was returned to his oppressors.

When the document was finished, the Prophet (peace be upon him) spoke to the companions and told them to slaughter their sacrificial animals at that very place, shave their heads and put off the pilgrim garments, but no one moved from his place. The Prophet (peace be upon him) repeated the order thrice but the companions were so overcome by depression and dejection that they did not comply. During his entire period of apostleship, on no occasion had it ever happened that he should command his companions to do a thing and they should not hasten to comply with it. This caused him a great shock, and he returned to his tent and expressed his grief before his wife, Umm Salamah. She said: You may quietly go and slaughter your own camel and call the barber and have your head shaved. After that the people would automatically do what

you did and would understand that whatever decision had been taken would not be changed. Precisely the same thing happened. The people slaughtered their animals, shaved their heads or cut their hair short and put off the pilgrim garb, but their hearts were still afflicted with grief.

Later, when this caravan was returning to Al-Madinah, feeling depressed and dejected at the truce of Hudaibiyah, this Surah was revealed at Dajnan (or according to some others, at Kura al-Ghamim), which told the Muslims that the treaty that they were regarding as their defeat, was indeed a great victory. After it had come down, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) summoned the Muslims together and said: Today such a thing has been revealed to me, which is more valuable to me than the world and what it contains. Then he recited this Surah, especially to Umar, for he was the one who was feeling most dejected.

Although the believers were satisfied when they heard this divine revelation, not much longer afterwards, the advantages of this treaty began to appear one after the other until every one became fully convinced that this peace treaty indeed was a great victory:

1. In it for the first time the existence of the Islamic State in Arabia was duly recognized. Before this in the eyes of the Arabs the position of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions was no more than of mere rebels against the Quraish and other Arab tribes, and they regarded them as the outlaws. Now the Quraish themselves by concluding this agreement with the Prophet (peace be upon him) recognized his sovereignty over the

territories of the Islamic State and opened the way for the Arab tribes to enter treaties of alliance with either of the political powers they liked.

2. By admitting the right of pilgrimage to the House of Allah for the Muslims, the Quraish also admitted that Islam was not an anti-religious creed, as they had so far been thinking, but it was one of the admitted religions of Arabia, and like the other Arabs, its followers also had the right to perform the rites of hajj and umrah. This diminished the hatred in the Arabs' hearts that had been caused by the propaganda made by the Quraish against Islam.

3. The signing of a no-war pact for ten years provided full peace to the Muslims, and spreading to every nook and corner of Arabia they preached Islam with such spirit and speed that within two years after Hudaibiyah the number of the people who embraced Islam far exceeded those who had embraced it during the past 19 year or so. It was all due to this treaty that two years later when in consequence of the Quraish's violating the treaty the Prophet (peace be upon him) invaded Makkah, he was accompanied by an army of 10,000 strong, whereas on the occasion of Hudaibiyah only 1,400 men had joined him in the march.

4. After the suspension of hostilities by the Quraish the Prophet (peace be upon him) had the opportunity to establish and strengthen Islamic rule in the territories under him and to turn the Islamic society into a full fledged civilization and way of life by the enforcement of Islamic law. This is that great blessing about which Allah says in

verse 3 of Surah Al-Maidah: Today I have perfected your religion for you and completed My blessing on you and approved Islam as the way of life for you. (For explanation, see Introduction to Surah Al-Maidah and its E.N.15).

5. Another gain that accrued from the truce with the Quraish was that being assured of peace from the south the Muslims overpowered all the opponent forces in the north and central Arabia easily. Just three months after Hudaibiyah, Khaiber, the major stronghold of the Jews, was conquered and after it the Jewish settlements of Fadak, Wad-il Qura, Taima and Tabuk also fell to Islam one after the other. Then all other tribes of central Arabia, which were bound in alliance with the Jews and Quraish, came under the sway of Islam. Thus, within two years after Hudaibiyah, the balance of power in Arabia was changed so much that the strength of the Quraish and pagan gave way and the domination of Islam became certain.

These were the blessings that the Muslims gained from the peace treaty which they were looking upon as their defeat and the Quraish as their victory. However, what had troubled the Muslims most in this treaty was the condition about the fugitives from Makkah and Al-Madinah, that the former would be returned and the latter would not be returned. But not much long afterwards this condition also proved to be disadvantageous for the Quraish, and experience revealed what far reaching consequences of it had the Prophet (peace be upon him) foreseen and then accepted it. A few days after the treaty a Muslim of Makkah, Abu Basir, escaped from the Quraish and

reached Al-Madinah. The Quraish demanded him back and the Prophet (peace be upon him) returned him to their men who had been sent from Makkah to arrest him. But while on the way to Makkah he again fled and went and sat on the road by the Red Sea shore, which the trade caravans of the Quraish took to Syria. After that every Muslim who succeeded in escaping from the Quraish would go and join Abu Basir instead of going to Al-Madinah, until 70 men gathered there. They would attack any Quraish caravan that passed the way and cut it into pieces. At last, the Quraish themselves begged the Prophet (peace be upon him) to call those men to Al-Madinah, and the condition relating to the return of the fugitives of itself became null and void.

The Surah should be read with this historical background in view in order to fully understand it.

1. Indeed, We have granted you a manifest victory.*¹

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا



*¹ When after the treaty of Hudaibiyah, this good news of the victory was announced, the people wondered as to how the treaty could be called a victory. The Muslims did believe in this divine revelation as true on the basis of their faith, but no one could understand what aspect of the victory it had. On hearing this verse, Umar asked: Is it a victory, O Messenger of Allah? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Yes. (Ibn Jarir) Another companion came before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and he also

put the same question; whereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: By Him in Whose hand is the life of Muhammad, this indeed is a victory. (Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud). On arriving at Al-Madinah still another person said to his companions: What sort of a victory is it? We were debarred from the House of Allah; our sacrificial camels also could not go to their right places; the Messenger of Allah had to halt at Hudaibiyah, and in consequence of this truce two of our oppressed brothers (Abu Jandal and Abu Basir) were handed over to their oppressors. When this thing reached the Prophet, he said: A very wrong thing has been uttered, it indeed is a great victory. You reached the very home of the polytheists, and they had to persuade you to go back by soliciting you to perform Umrah the following year. They themselves expressed the desire to suspend hostilities and have peace with you, whereas their malice and enmity against you is too well known. Allah has granted you the upper hand over them. Have you forgotten the day when you were fleeing from Uhud and I was calling you back from behind? Have you forgotten the day when the enemy had descended on us from every side in the battle of the Trench and the hearts were coming up to the throats? (Baihaqi on the authority of Urwah bin Zubair). But not long after this, the truce's being a victory began to become manifest, and everyone realized that the triumph of Islam had begun with the treaty of Hudaibiyah. Almost one and the same thing has been related from Abdullah bin Masud, Jabir bin Abdullah and Bara bin Azib. They are reported to have said: The people look upon the conquest

of Makkah as the victory, but we regard the truce of Hudaibiyah as the real victory. (Bukhari, Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarir).

2. That Allah may forgive you what preceded of your sins and what will follow,^{*2} and may perfect His favor upon you^{*3} and guide you to a straight path.^{*4}

لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ
ذُنُوبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ
عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا



***2** If the context in which this sentence occurs is kept in view, one will certainly feel that the faults referred to here imply those shortcomings and weaknesses that had remained in the struggle that the Muslims had been making for the success and victory of Islam, under the leadership of the Prophet (peace be upon him), for the past nineteen years or so. These shortcomings are not known to any one because the intellect is absolutely helpless to find out any weakness in that struggle. But according to the highest standards of perfection in the sight of Allah there had remained some such weakness in it because of which the Muslims could not attain a decisive victory so soon over the pagans of Arabia. What Allah means to say is this: If you had carried on your struggle along with those weaknesses, it would have taken you much longer to subdue Arabia, but We have overlooked all those weaknesses and shortcomings and compensated for them only through Our grace, and opened for you at Hudaibiyah

the door to victory and conquest which you could not have achieved only by your ordinary endeavors.

Here, this thing also should be understood well that for the weaknesses that might occur and remain in the struggle and endeavor that a group might be making for an object, the leader and guide of the group only is addressed. This does not mean that the weaknesses are the leader's personal weaknesses. Those are, in fact, the weaknesses of the struggle that the group is making as a whole; but the address is made to the leader to tell him that his work suffers from such and such a weakness.

However, as the address is directed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and declared that Allah has forgiven him all his former and latter faults, the general words also give this meaning that Allah pardoned all the shortcomings (which were the shortcomings in view of his high position) of His Messenger (peace be upon him). That is why when the companions saw that he took extraordinary pains over his worship, they would say: Why do you subject yourself to such hardships when all your former and latter errors and shortcomings have been pardoned? the Prophet (peace be upon him) would reply: Should I not behave as a grateful servant? (Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud).

***3** "Perfection His favor" implies that the Muslims should become free to live their lives in accordance with Islamic civilization, Islamic law and commandments, secure from every fear, every resistance and every external interference, and they should also be blessed with the power that they may uphold Allah's Word throughout the

world. Dominance of disbelief and wickedness which may be a hindrance in the way of Allah's worship and an obstacle in the struggle in propagating Allah's Word, is the greatest calamity for the believers. The Quran calls it *fitnah* (mischief). Delivered and freed from this calamity when they are able to achieve an abode of Islam (darul-Islam) in which the divine religion is enforced in its entirety, and along with that they are also provided with the means and resources by which they may establish faith and righteousness on Allah's earth in place of disbelief and wickedness, this would be the perfection of Allah's blessing on them. As this blessing was achieved by the Muslims only through the Prophet (peace be upon him), Allah addressed only him and said: We willed to complete Our blessing on you; therefore we have granted this victory to you.

*4 "The straight path", the way to conquest and success. In other words, it implies that by causing the treaty to be concluded at Hudaibiyah, Allah paved the way for and inspired the Prophet (peace be upon him) with the plan by which he could subdue all the forces that were resisting Islam.

3. And that Allah may help you with strong help.*5

وَيَنْصُرَكَ اللَّهُ نَصْرًا عَزِيزًا

*5 Another translation can be: "Bestow on you an unprecedented victory," for the word *aziz* in the original may mean mighty as well as unprecedented and unparalleled. According to the first meaning, the sentence means: By means of this treaty Allah has helped you in a way as to make your enemies helpless; and according to the

second, it means: Seldom has this novel method ever been adopted to help somebody, that a thing which apparently is a mere peace treaty, and that too a treaty concluded from a weak position, would turn into a decisive victory.

4. He it is who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers*⁶ so that they might add faith unto their faith.*⁷ And to Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is All Knowing, All Wise.*⁸

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزِدُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ
إِيمَانِهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ جُنُودُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا
حَكِيمًا



*⁶ *Sakinat* in Arabic is calmness and tranquility and peace of mind. Here Allah calls its being sent into the hearts of the believers an important factor in the victory that Islam and the Muslims achieved at Hudaibiyah. From a study of the conditions of the time, one comes to know what kind of a *Sakinat* it was that was sent down into the hearts of the Muslims during that period and how it became a source of victory. If at the time when the Prophet (peace be upon him) expressed his intention to go for Umrah to Makkah, the Muslims had become terror-stricken and started behaving like the hypocrites as if they were going into the very jaws of death, or if at the time when they heard the news on the way that the disbelieving Quraish were coming out in great strength to fight them, they had been alarmed as to how they would face the enemy un-armed, and thus

become panic-stricken, obviously no benefits would have resulted from Hudaibiyah at all. Then, if at the time when at Hudaibiyah the disbelievers had stopped the Muslims from going any further, and when they had tried to provoke them by launching against them repeated sudden attacks, and when the rumor of Uthman's martyrdom had spread, and when Abu Jandal had appeared on the scene as the very image of oppression and persecution, the Muslims had actually become provoked and broken the discipline that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had instilled in them, the result would have been disastrous. Above all, if at the time when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was going to conclude the treaty on the conditions which were unacceptable to the entire party of the Muslims, the Muslims had happened to disobey him, the great victory of Hudaibiyah would have turned into a humiliating defeat. Thus, it was all because of Allah's bounty that on all these critical moments the Muslims were blessed with full peace of mind with regard to the leadership and guidance of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the truth of Islam and the truthfulness of their mission. This is why they decided with a cool mind that they would face and accept whatever hardships they would encounter in the way of Allah. That is why they remained safe from fear, confusion, provocation and despair; that is why perfect discipline continues to prevail in the camp; and that is why, in spite of being deeply grieved at the conditions of peace, they submitted to the decision taken by the Prophet (peace be upon him). This was the *sakinat* that Allah had sent down

into the hearts of the Muslims, and it was all because of this that the dangerous step of undertaking a journey for performing Umrah became the prelude to a unique victory.

***7** That is, one faith they already had before they set out on this expedition; they attained the additional faith when they remained steadfast on the way of sincerity, piety and obedience in every trial that they faced in connection with the expedition. This verse is one of those verses which show that faith is not a static state which is incapable of growth, but it develops as well as decays and deteriorates. After embracing Islam till death the believer at every step in his life continues to be confronted with such tests and trials in which he has to take a decision whether in following the divine religion he is prepared to sacrifice his life, his wealth, his sentiments, desires, time, comforts and interests or not. If at the time of every such trial, he adopts the way of sacrifice, his faith progresses and develops, and if he turns away, his faith decays and deteriorates till a time may also come when the initial state of the faith with which he had entered Islam is even endangered to be lost and destroyed. (For further explanation. see E.N.2 of Surah Al-Anfal and E.N. 38 of Surah Al-Ahzab).

***8** It means this: Allah has such hosts by which He can destroy and exterminate the disbelievers completely whenever He wills, but He has deliberately and by wisdom only placed this responsibility on the believers that they should enter a conflict with the disbelievers and struggle to make the religion of Allah prevail and prosper in the world. In this way alone does a door to the enhancement of

their ranks and successes in the Hereafter open as is being indicated in the following verse.

5. That He may admit the believing men and the believing women^{*9} into the Gardens underneath which rivers flow, to abide therein forever, and may remove from them their misdeeds.^{*10}

And this is the great success with Allah.

لِيَدْخُلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَيُكَفَّرُ عَنْهُمْ
سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ^ج وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا

^{*9} In the Quran generally mention of the rewards for the believers is made collectively and separate mention is not made of the rewards for the men and the women. But here, since the general mention of giving the rewards could cause the doubt that this reward may perhaps be only meant for the men. Allah has made a separate mention of the believing women, saying that they too would be equal partners in this reward with the believing men. The reason is obvious. Those God-fearing women who encouraged their husbands, sons, brothers and fathers to proceed on the dangerous journey instead of stopping them from it and discouraging them by crying and wailing, who looked after their houses, their properties, their honor and children in their absence faithfully, who did not even feel the alarm lest at the sudden departure of 1,400 of the companions the disbelievers and hypocrites of the surrounding areas would attack the city, should certainly have become equal

partners with their men in the reward of jihad although they stayed behind in their homes.

*10 That is, that He may pardon whatever errors they might have committed because of human weaknesses, remove every trace and mark of the errors from them before admitting them into Paradise so that they may enter Paradise absolutely free from every evil that may cause them embarrassment.

6. And that He may punish the hypocrite men and the hypocrite women and the polytheist men and the polytheist women, those who think about Allah an evil thought.*11 Upon them is the evil turn of fortune.*12 And Allah is angry with them, and He cursed them and has prepared for them Hell. And evil is the destination.

وَيُعَذِّبُ
وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ
وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ
وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ الظَّالِمِينَ بِاللَّهِ
ظَنَّ السَّوْءَ عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةً
السَّوْءِ وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَعَنَهُمْ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ
وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا

*11 The hypocrites living in the suburbs of Al-Madinah were thinking, as has been stated in verse 12 below, that the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions would not return alive from that journey. As for the polytheists of Makkah and their pagan companions, they were thinking that they had successfully put to rout the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions by preventing them from

performing Umrah. In fact, whatever these two groups had thought, they had this misunderstanding about Allah that He would not help His Messenger (peace be upon him). And in the conflict between the truth and falsehood, He would allow falsehood to defeat and frustrate the truth.

*12 That is, they were encompassed by the same evil fate which they wanted to avoid and against which they had devised all those plans, and their same plans caused the evil fate to be hastened.

7. And to Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.*13

وَلِلَّهِ جُنُودُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا

*13 Here the theme of verse 4 has been reiterated for another object. There, the object was to state that Allah, instead of employing His supernatural hosts to fight the disbelievers, had employed the believers for it only because He willed to favor them. Here, the theme has been repeated to say that in order to punish the one whom Allah wills to punish He can employ whichever of His countless hosts He likes for the purpose; no one has the power to avert His punishment by his own plans.

8. Indeed, We have sent you as a witness,*14 and a bearer of good tidings, and a warner.*15

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَهِيدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا
وَنَذِيرًا

*14 Shah Waliyullah has translated *shahid* as a bearer of witness to the truth, and other translators translate it as a bearer of the witness. The word *shahadat* comprehends

both these meanings. For explanation, see E.N. 82 of Surah Al-Ahzab.

*15 For explanation, see E.N. 33 of Surah Al-Ahzab.

9. So that you (O mankind) may believe in Allah and His Messenger, and may help him (the Messenger) and honor him. And glorify Him (Allah) morning and evening. *16

لَتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُعَزِّرُوهُ
وَتُوَقِّرُوهُ وَتُسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً
وَأَصِيلًا

*16 According to some commentators the verse means: “And help the Messenger, and honor him, and glorify Allah morning and evening”, and according to others: “And help Allah, and honor Him and glorify Him morning and evening.”

Glorifying Allah morning and evening does not mean glorifying Him only in the morning and the evening but at all times. It is just like saying about something that it is well-known in the east and the west when one actually means to say that it is well-known everywhere in the world.

10. Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you (O Prophet), *17 indeed pledge allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is over their hands. *18 Then whoever breaks his pledge, breaks only against his own self. And whoever fulfills what he

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا
يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ
أَيْدِيهِمْ فَمَنْ نَكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ
عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِمَا عَاهَدَ

has covenanted with Allah,^{*19}
so He will bestow on him a
great reward.

عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَسَيُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا



***17** The reference is to the pledge that the Prophet (peace be upon him) took from his companions at Hudaibiyah at the rumor that Uthman had been killed at Makkah. According to some traditions it was a pledge unto death, and according to others it was an undertaking that they would not turn away from the battlefield. The first thing has been reported from Salamah bin Akwa and the second from Ibn Umar, Jabir bin Abdullah and Maqil bin Yasar. The purport of both is the same. The companions had pledged allegiance on the Prophet's (peace be upon him) hand with the express object that if the news of Uthman's martyrdom proved to be true, they would settle the matter with the Quraish there and then even if they were cut to pieces in the clash. As on this occasion it was not yet certain whether Uthman actually had been killed or was still living, the Prophet (peace be upon him) placed one of his own hands on the other and pledged allegiance on his behalf, and thus bestowed a unique honor on Uthman in that he made Uthman a partner in the pledge by making his own sacred hand represent the hand of Uthman. The Prophet's (peace be upon him) taking the pledge of allegiance on his behalf necessarily meant that he had full confidence that if Uthman had been present he would certainly have pledged the allegiance.

***18** That is, the hand on which the Muslims were swearing

allegiance was not the hand of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) person but of Allah's representative, and this allegiance was in fact being sworn to Allah through His Messenger.

*19 Here, instead of *alaih-illah* the words used in the original are *alaih-ullah*, which is a departure from the general rule of Arabic. Allama Alusi has given two reasons for the unusual use of the vowel points here. First, the object on this special occasion is to express the great glory, eminence and majesty of the Being to Whom the pledge was being sworn for which *alaih-u* is more appropriate than *alaih-i*; second, the *ha* in *alaih-i* actually represents vowel, therefore, adhering here to the vowel points of the original goes well with the theme of the allegiance.

11. Those who remained behind of the Bedouins*²⁰ will say to you: “(O Prophet), our possessions and our families kept us occupied, so ask forgiveness for us.” They say with their tongues that which is not in their hearts.*²¹ Say: “Who then can avail you at all against Allah if He intends for you harm, or He intends for you benefit. But Allah is All Aware of what you do.”*²²

سَيَقُولُ لَكَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ مِنَ
الْأَعْرَابِ شَغَلَتْنَا أَمْوَالُنَا وَأَهْلُونَا
فَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا يَقُولُونَ بِالسِّنْتِهِمْ
مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ ۗ قُلْ فَمَنْ
يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَلَلهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ
أَرَادَ بِكُمْ ضَرًّا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ نَفْعًا
بَلْ كَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

***20** This refers to the people living in the suburbs of Al-Madinah whom the Prophet (peace be upon him) had invited to accompany him in his march out for Umrah, but they had not left their homes in spite of their claim to faith just because they were afraid of death. Traditions show that these were the people of the tribes of Aslam, Muzainah, Juhainah, Ghifar, Ashja, Dil and others.

***21** This has two meanings:

(1) That after your returning to Madinah the excuse that these people will present for not going out with you, would only be a lame excuse, because they know in their hearts why they had stayed behind.

(2) That their imploring the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah for a prayer of forgiveness would only be an empty word of mouth, for in fact, they are neither feeling remorse for their failure to accompany you, nor have they any feeling that they committed a sin by not going out with the Messenger (peace be upon him), nor are they seeking forgiveness sincerely.

As for themselves they think that they did a wise thing by not going on the dangerous journey; had they any desire for Allah and His forgiveness, they would not have stayed behind at home.

***22** That is, Allah's decision will be on the basis of the knowledge that He has about the reality of your actions. If your actions deserve the punishment and I pray for your forgiveness, my prayer will not save you from Allah's punishment. And if your actions do not deserve the punishment, and I do not pray for your forgiveness, my

failure to pray will not do any harm to you. Everything is in Allah's control, not mine, and no one's empty words can deceive Him. Therefore, even if I accept as true what you say and then also pray for your forgiveness on its basis, it will be vain and without result.

12. But you thought that the Messenger and the believers would never return to their families, ever, and that was made pleasing to your hearts,^{*23} and you did think an evil thought and you are a people most wicked.^{*24}

بَلْ ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ لَنْ يَنْقَلِبَ الرَّسُولُ
وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِيهِمْ أَبَدًا
وَزُيِّنَ ذَٰلِكَ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ
وَظَنَنْتُمْ ظَنًّا سَوْءًا وَكُنْتُمْ
قَوْمًا بُورًا



***23** That is, you were delighted to think that you had saved yourselves from the danger into which the Messenger (peace be upon him) and his believing supporters were going. You thought you had done so by dint of your great wisdom; and you also did not feel any compunction in rejoicing at the thought that the Messenger (peace be upon him) and the believers would not return alive from their expedition. You did not feel uneasy in spite of your claim to the faith but were pleased to think that you did not put yourselves in the danger by accompanying the Messenger (peace be upon him).

***24** The word *ba-ir* (pl. *bur* in the original) has two meanings:

(1) A sinful, perverted and evil-minded person who is

incapable of doing anything good.

(2) One who is doomed to an evil end and is following the path of destruction.

13. And whoever does not believe in Allah and His Messenger, then indeed, We have prepared for the disbelievers a blazing Fire. *25

وَمَنْ لَّمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِنَّا
أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَعِيرًا

*25 Here, Allah in clear words is declaring all such people disbelievers and devoid of the faith, who are not sincere with regard to Allah and His religion, who shirk endangering their interests, their lives and wealth for the sake of Allah's religion when the time comes of their trial and test. But one should remember that this is not the sort of disbelief on the basis of which somebody in the world may be regarded as excommunicated from Islam, but this is the disbelief because of which he will be declared a disbeliever in the Hereafter. The reason is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) even after the revelation of this verse did not regard as outside Islam those people in respect of whom it was sent down, nor treated them like the disbelievers.

14. And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He may pardon whomever He wills and punish whomever He wills. And Allah is All Forgiving, All Merciful. *26

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

***26** The mention of Allah's being All-Forgiving and All-Merciful, after the foregoing warning, contains in it a subtle aspect of admonition. It means this: Even now if you give up your insincere attitude and way of life and adopt sincerity, you will find Allah All-Forgiving and All-Merciful. He will forgive you your previous shortcomings and will treat you according to the quality of your sincerity in the future.

15. Those who remained behind will say, when you set out to capture booty: "Allow us to follow you."^{*27} They want to change the words of Allah.^{*28} Say: "Never shall you follow us. Thus did Allah say before."^{*29} Then they will say: "But you are jealous of us." Nay, but little do they understand.

سَيَقُولُ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ إِذَا
 أَنْطَلَقْتُمْ إِلَىٰ مَغَائِمَ
 لَتَأْخُذُوهَا ذُرُونًا نَّتَّبِعُكُمْ
 يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُبَدِّلُوا كَلِمَ اللَّهِ
 قُلْ لَنْ تَتَّبِعُونَا كَذَلِكُمْ قَالَ
 اللَّهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَسَيَقُولُونَ بَلْ
 تَحْسُدُونَنَا بَلْ كَانُوا لَا يَفْقَهُونَ
 إِلَّا قَلِيلًا



***27** That is, the time is approaching when these very people who were shirking accompanying you on the dangerous journey, would see you going on an expedition in which there would be the possibility of attaining easy victory and much booty. Then they would come running and request

you to take them also along. Such a time came just three months after the truce of Hudaibiyah, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) marched to Khaiber and took it easily. At that time everyone could see that after the truce with the Quraish not only Khaiber but the Jewish settlements of Taima, Fadak, Wadi-al-Qura and also others from northern Arabia would not be able to withstand the might of the Muslims and would easily fall to the Islamic State. Therefore, Allah in these verses forewarned the Prophet (peace be upon him) that the opportunists of the suburbs of Al-Madinah would come up to take part in and receive their share when they would see easy victories being attained, and that he should tell them plainly: You will never be allowed to take part in these, because only those who had gone forth to offer their lives in the conflict at Hudaibiyah regardless of every danger would be entitled to them.

***28** Allah's Word implies the decree that only those people would be allowed to accompany the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the expedition to Khaiber, who had taken part in the expedition to Hudaibiyah and sworn the pledge there, for Allah has reserved the spoils of Khaiber exclusively for them, as has been stated clearly in verse 18 below.

***29** The words "Thus did Allah say before" caused the people the misunderstanding that this refers to some other command bearing upon the same subject that might have been sent down before this verse, and since no such command is found in this Surah before this verse, they

started looking for it at other places in the Quran till they found verse 84 of Surah At-Taubah, in which this very subject has been dealt with for another occasion. But that verse, in fact, does not apply to this, for it was sent down in connection with the Battle of Tabuk, and its period of revelation is three years after the period of revelation of Surah Al-Fatah. The fact of the matter is that this verse refers to verses 18-19 of this Surah itself, and Allah's already having said this does not mean its having been said before this verse but its having been said to the laggards before this conversation. This conversation with the laggards about which advance instructions are being given to the Prophet (peace be upon him) was to take place at the time of the expedition to Khaiber, and this whole Surah, including verses 18-19, had been sent down three months earlier on return from Hudaibiyah on the way. A careful study of the context shows that Allah here is giving this instruction to His Messenger: When after your return at Al-Madinah the laggards come to you with their excuses, you should give them this reply, and when they express their desire to accompany you in the expedition to Khaiber, you should tell them this.

16. Say to those who remained behind of the bedouins: "You will be called to (fight against) a people of great military might. You will fight them, or they will submit."³⁰ Then

قُلْ لِلْمُخَلَّفِينَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ
 سَتُدْعُونَ إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ أُولِي بَأْسٍ
 شَدِيدٍ تُقَاتِلُونَهُمْ أَوْ يُسَلِّمُونَ
 فَإِنْ تَطِيعُوا يُؤْتِكُمُ اللَّهُ أَجْرًا

if you obey, Allah will give you a fair reward, and if you turn away as you did turn away before, He will punish you with a painful punishment.”

حَسَنًا وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا كَمَا تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِنْ
قَبْلُ يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٦﴾

***30** The words *au-yuslimuna* in the original can have two meanings and both are implied:

(1) That they should accept Islam.

(2) That they should submit to the Islamic rule.

17. No blame is upon the blind, nor is blame upon the lame, nor is blame upon the sick.^{*31} And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will admit him into Gardens underneath which rivers flow. And whoever turns away, He will punish him with a painful punishment.

لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرْجٌ وَلَا
عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرْجٌ وَلَا عَلَى
الْمَرِيضِ حَرْجٌ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ
يُعَذِّبْهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٧﴾

***31** That is, the one who has a genuine excuse for not joining jihad is not accountable, but if the able-bodied, strong people make excuses for not joining it, they cannot be regarded as sincere with regard to Allah and His religion, and they cannot be given the opportunity to take advantage of the gains as members of the Muslim community, but when time comes for making sacrifices for

Islam, they should lag behind and seek the safety of their lives and properties.

Here, one should know that two kinds of the people have been exempted from jihad duty by the Shariah:

(1) Those who are not physically fit for jihad, e.g. young boys, women, the insane, the blind and such patients as cannot perform military duties, and such disabled people as cannot take part in war.

(2) Those for whom it may be difficult to join jihad for other sound reasons, e.g. the slaves, or those persons who may be ready for jihad but may not afford weapons of war and other necessary equipment, or such debtors who may have to pay their debts at the earliest opportunity and the creditors may not be willing to allow them more time, or such people whose parents (or a parent) might be alive, who stand in need of the children's help.

In this regard, it should also be known that the children should not join jihad without the permission of their parents if they are Muslims, but if they (the parents) are non-Muslims, it is not permissible for a person to stay away from jihad in case they refuse permission.

18. Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you under the tree.^{*32} So He knew what was in their hearts, then He sent down tranquility upon them^{*33} and rewarded them with a victory

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ
تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَبَهُمْ

near at hand.

*32 Here again the pledge taken from the companions at Hudaibiyah has been mentioned. This is called Baiat Ridwan. For, Allah in this verse has given the good news that he became well pleased with those who on this dangerous occasion did not show the least hesitation in offering their lives for the cause of Islam and gave an express proof of their being true in their faith by taking the pledge on the hand of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Muslims at this time were equipped only with a sword each, numbered only 1,400, were unprepared for warfare, but were donning the pilgrim garments, were away from their military headquarters (Al-Madinah), while the enemy's stronghold (Makkah) where from it could get any kind of help was just 13 miles off. Had these people been lacking in their sincerity of Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and His religion in any degree, they would have abandoned the Messenger (peace be upon him) on this extremely dangerous occasion, and Islam would have been vanquished forever. Apart from their own sincerity there was no external pressure under which they might have been compelled to take the pledge. Their becoming ready at that time to fight in the cause of Allah's religion regardless of the dangers, is a clear proof that they were true and sincere in their faith and loyal to the cause of Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) in the highest degree. That is why Allah honored them with this certificate of His good pleasure. Now if someone becomes angry with them after

they have been honored with this certificate of Allah's good pleasure, or slanders and vilifies them, his enmity is with Allah, not with them. Those who say that at that time when Allah honored them with this certificate of His good pleasure, they were sincere, but afterwards they became disloyal to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him), perhaps harbor a mistrust about Allah that while sending down this verse He was unaware of their future; therefore, He awarded them this warrant only in view of their state at that time, and probably due to the same unawareness inscribed this verse in His Holy Book as well so that afterwards also, when those people have turned disloyal, the world should continue reading this verse about them and praising the knowledge of the unseen of that Allah Who, God forbid, had granted these faithless and disloyal people the warrant of His good pleasure.

About the tree under which this pledge was taken, a tradition by Ibn Umar's slave Nafi has generally been related, saying that the people had started visiting it and offering prayers by it, so that when Umar came to know of it, he rebuked and warned the people and ordered it to be cut down. (Tabaqat Ibn Saad, vol. II, p. 100). But there are several other traditions which contradict it. A tradition from Nafi himself has been reported in Tabaqat of Ibn Saad to the effect that many years after the Baiat Ridwan the companions looked for the tree but they could not recognize it and differed as to which tree it was. (p. 106). The second tradition has been reported in Bukhari, Muslim, and Tabaqat on the authority of Saeed bin al-

Musayyab. He says that his father was one of those who had participated in the Baiat Ridwan. He told him that when they had gone for Umrah al-Qada the following year, they had forgotten the tree, and they could not locate it even after looking for it. The third tradition is from Ibn Jarir. He says that when Umar, during his caliphate, passed by Hudaibiyah, he inquired about the tree under which the pledge had been sworn. Someone pointed to one tree and another one to another tree. At this Umar told the people to forget it as there was no real need to bother about it.

*33 Here, *sakinat* means that state of the heart on whose strength a man throws himself into dangers with complete calm and peace of mind for the sake of a great objective and resolves without fear and consternation to undertake it regardless of the consequences.

19. And much war booty which they will take.*34 And Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.

وَمَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً يَأْخُذُونَهَا وَقَانَ
 اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا

*34 The reference is to the conquest of Khaiber and its rich spoils and this verse expressly points out that Allah had reserved this reward only for those people who had taken part in the Baiat Ridwan; apart from them no one else was entitled to take part in the victory and have a share in the spoils. That is why when the Prophet (peace be upon him) marched out to attack Khaiber in Safar, A.H. 7, he took only those people with him. No doubt afterwards, he gave some of the spoils of Khaiber to those emigrants also who

returned from Habash and to some companions from the Dus and Ashar tribes as well, but this was given either from Khums (one fifth of the spoils of war given into the public treasury), or with the approval of the companions who had taken the pledge of Ridwan; no one else was given any share of it.

20. Allah promises you much booty, which you will acquire,^{*35} then He has hastened for you this (victory),^{*36} and has restrained the hands of the people from you,^{*37} and that it may be a sign for the believers,^{*38} and He may guide you to a straight path.^{*39}

وَعَدَكُمْ اللَّهُ مَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً
تَأْخُذُونَهَا فَعَجَّلَ لَكُمْ هَذِهِ
وَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَ النَّاسِ عَنْكُمْ
وَلِتَكُونَ آيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ صِرَاطًا مُّسْتَقِيمًا



***35** This refers to the other victories that the Muslim achieved successively after Khaiber.

***36** This implies the treaty of Hudaibiyah which has been described as a manifest victory in the beginning of the Surah.

***37** That is, He restrained the disbelieving Quraish from attacking you at Hudaibiyah although from all appearances they were in a much better position and yours was a much weaker side militarily. Furthermore, it also implies that no enemy power could muster courage to attack Al-Madinah in those days, whereas after the departure of 1,400 soldiers the Al-Madinah front had

become very weak, and the Jews, the polytheists and hypocrites could take advantage of the situation.

***38** Sign of this as to how Allah helps the one who remains steadfast on obedience to Allah and His Messenger and comes out to support and defend the truth and righteousness with his trust and faith in Allah.

***39** To a straight path: To the path of greater insight and faith so that you may remain steadfast on obedience to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) in the future and may go on marching on the way of truth with trust in Allah, and may learn this lesson from these experiences that the believer should take practical steps to do whatever is demanded by Allah's religion with his trust in Him, and should not overestimate either his own strength or the strength of the unbelievers.

21. And other (victories) which are not within your power, Allah has already encompassed them.^{*40} And Allah has power over all things.

وَأُخْرَى لَمْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهَا قَدْ
أَحَاطَ اللَّهُ بِهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرًا

***40** Most probably this is a reference to the conquest of Makkah. The same is the opinion of Qatadah and Ibn Jarir. It seems to mean this: Though Makkah has not yet fallen to you, Allah has encircled it, and as a result of this victory at Hudaibiyah, it will also fall to you.

22. And if those who disbelieve had fought you, they would have turned their

وَلَوْ قَتَلْتُمْ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوَلَّوْا

backs, then they would not have found a protector, nor a helper.*41

الْأَدْبَرَ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُونَ وَلِيًّا وَلَا
نَصِيرًا

*41 That is, Allah did not prevent fighting at Hudaibiyah because there was a possibility of your being defeated there, but there were other reasons for it, which are being stated in the following verses. Had that factor not been there and Allah had allowed the war to take place, the disbelievers would surely have been routed and Makkah would have fallen to you at that very time.

23. (That is) the way of Allah which has taken course before.*42 And you will never find any change in the way of Allah.

سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا

*42 Here, “the way of Allah” means: Allah disgraces the disbelievers who fight His Messenger (peace be upon him) and helps him.

24. And it is He who restrained their hands from you and your hands from them in the valley of Makkah, after He had made you victors over them. And Allah is the All Seer of what you do.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي كَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ
وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ بِبَطْنِ مَكَّةَ مِنْ
بَعْدِ أَنْ أَظْفَرَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا

25. They are the ones who disbelieved and hindered you

هُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوكُمْ

from al Masjid al Haram, and the sacrificial animals were prevented from reaching to the place of sacrifice.*43 And had there not been believing men and believing women, whom you did not know that you may kill them, and on whose account a crime would have accrued by you without (your) knowledge. That Allah may admit into His mercy whom He wills. if they (the believers and the disbelievers) had been apart, We would have punished those who disbelieved among them with painful

punishment.*44

عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَأَهْدَىٰ
مَعْكُوفًا أَنْ يَبْلُغَ مَحَلَّهُمْ ۚ وَلَوْلَا
رِجَالٌ مُّؤْمِنُونَ وَنِسَاءٌ مُّؤْمِنَاتٌ
لَّمَّ تَعَلَّمُوهُمْ أَنْ تَطَّوَّهُمْ
فَتُصِيبَكُمْ مِنْهُمْ مَعْرَةٌ بِيغْيَرِ عِلْمٍ
لَّيَدْخُلَ اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
لَوْ تَزَيَّلُوا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا



*43 That is, Allah was seeing the sincerity and the selfless devotion with which you had become ready to lay down your lives in the cause of the true faith and were obeying the Prophet (peace be upon him) without asking any question. Allah was also seeing that the disbelievers were being unfair. The demand of this situation was that they should have been punished there and then through you, but in spite of that, Allah restrained your hands from them and their hands from you.

***44** This was the reason why Allah did not allow fighting to take place at Hudaibiyah. This has two aspects:

That at that time there were quite a number of the Muslim men and women living in Makkah, who were either hiding their faith, or were being persecuted because of their faith as they had no means to emigrate. Had there been fighting and the Muslims had pushed back the disbelievers and entered Makkah, these Muslims would also have been killed in ignorance along with the disbelievers. This would not only have grieved the Muslims but the Arab polytheists also would have gotten an opportunity to say that the Muslims did not even spare their own brethren in faith during wartime. Therefore, Allah took pity on the helpless Muslims and averted the war in order to save the companions from grief and infamy. The other aspect of the expedience was that Allah did not will that Makkah should fall to the Muslims as a result of the defeat of the Quraish after a bloody clash but He willed that they should be encircled from all sides so that within two years or so they should become absolutely helpless and subdued without offering any resistance, and then the whole tribe should accept Islam and enter Allah's mercy as it actually happened on the conquest of Makkah.

Here the juristic dispute has arisen that if during a war between the Muslims and the disbelievers, the disbelievers should bring out some Muslim men and women, children and old men, in their possession and put them in the forefront as a shield for themselves, or if there is some Muslim population also in the non-Muslim city under

attack by the Muslim forces, or if on a warship of the disbelievers, which is within gunfire, the disbelievers have also taken some Muslims on board, can the Muslim army open fire on it? In answer to it the rulings given by different jurists are as follows:

Imam Malik says that in such a case fire should not be opened, and for this he cites this very verse as an argument. He contends that Allah prevented the war at Hudaibiyah only in order to save the Muslims. (Ibn al-Arabi, Ahkam al Quran). But this in fact is a weak argument. There is no word in the verse which may support the view that launching an attack on the enemy in this case is unlawful and forbidden. At the most what one can say on the basis of this verse is that the launching of an attack in such a case should be avoided in order to save the Muslims, provided that it does not put the disbelievers in an advantageous position against the Muslims militarily, or does not diminish the Muslims' chances of gaining an upper hand in the conflict.

Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Abu Yusuf, Imam Zufar and Imam Muhammad say that it is lawful to open fire in such a case; so much so that even if the disbelievers use the children of the Muslims as a shield by putting them in the forefront, there is no harm in shooting at them, and it is not obligatory for the Muslims to expiate and pay any blood-money for the Muslims thus killed, (Al-Jassas, Ahkam al-Quran; Imam Muhammad, Kitab as-Siyar).

Imam Sufyan Thauri also in this case regards opening of the fire as lawful, but he says that although the Muslims

will not pay the blood-money of the Muslims thus killed, it is obligatory for them to expiate the sin. (Al-Jassas, Ahkam al-Quran).

Imam Auzai and Laith bin Saad say that if the disbelievers use the Muslims as a shield, fire should not be opened on them. Likewise, if it is known that in their warship our own prisoners also are on board, it should not be sunk. But if we attack a city of theirs and we know that there are also Muslims in the city, it is lawful to open fire on the city, for it is not certain that our shells will only hit the Muslims, and if a Muslim becomes a victim of this shelling, it will not be willful murder of a Muslim but an inadvertent accident. (Al-Jassas, Ahkam alQur an).

Imam Shafei holds the view that in such a case if it is not inevitable to open fire. It is better to try to save the Muslims from destruction; although it is not unlawful to open fire in this case, it is undesirable. But if it is really necessary and it is feared that in case fire is not opened it will put the disbelievers in a better position militarily against the Muslims, it is lawful to resort to shelling, but even then every effort should be made to save the Muslims as far as possible. Furthermore, Imam Shafei also says that if during a conflict the disbelievers put a Muslim in front as a shield and a Muslim kills him, there can be two possible alternatives: either the killer knew that the murdered person was a Muslim, or he did not know that he was a Muslim. In the first case, he will be under obligation to pay compensation for manslaughter as well as do expiation; in the second case he will only do expiation. (Mughni al-

Muhtaj).

26. When those who disbelieved had put into their hearts zealotry, the zealotry of the time of ignorance.^{*45}

Then Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers,^{*46} and imposed on them the word of righteousness, for they were most worthy of it and deserving for it. And Allah is Aware of all things.

إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي
قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةَ
فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى
رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَأَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَى وَكَانُوا
أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا



^{*45} The words *hamiyyat al-jahiliyyah* mean that a man should willfully do something unworthy and improper only for the sake of his honor and prestige. The disbelievers of Makkah themselves acknowledged and admitted that everybody had a right to visit the Kabah for performing Hajj and Umrah, and that they had no right to stop anyone from this duty. This was an ancient admitted law of Arabia. But in spite of knowing that they were absolutely in the wrong and the Muslims in the right. They prevented the Muslims from performing Umrah only for the sake of their prestige. The righteous, even among the polytheists, were also saying that preventing the people, who had come in the pilgrim garbs along with sacrificial camels, from performing pilgrimage was an improper act. Yet the

Quraish leaders persisted in their resistance only with the idea that if Muhammad (peace be upon him) entered Makkah along with a large number of his followers, it would mean loss of prestige for them among the Arabs. This was their arrogance.

*46 Here, *sakinat* means the patience and dignity with which the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Muslims resisted the disbelievers rancor and spirit of paganism. They did not get provoked at their stubborn and insolent behavior and did not do anything which might have violated the spirit of truth and righteousness, or which might have further complicated the situation instead of settling it amicably.

27. Indeed, Allah has fulfilled the vision for His messenger in truth.*47 That you will surely enter the al Masjid al Haram, if Allah so wills,*48 in security,*49 having your heads shaved, and your hair shortened,*50 having no fear. He knew what you did not know. Therefore, He granted besides that a near victory.

لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّسُلَ
بِالْحَقِّ لَتَدْخُلَنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ
الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ ءَامِنِينَ
مُحْلِقِينَ رُءُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ لَا
تَخَافُونَ فَعَلِمَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا
فَجَعَلَ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ فَتْحًا
قَرِيبًا



*47 This is the answer to the question that was constantly agitating the minds of the Muslim. They said: The Prophet

(peace be upon him) had seen in his vision that he had entered the Masjid al-Haram and went around the Kabah in worship. Then how is it that they were returning without performing Umrah? In answer to this, although the Prophet (peace be upon him) had told them that in his vision he had not seen that they would perform the Umrah that very year, still there remained some suspicion in the hearts. Therefore, Allah Himself explained that it was He Who had shown the vision and it was a true vision and it would certainly be fulfilled.

***48** Here, about the words *Insha-Allah* (if Allah so wills), which Allah Himself has used with His promise, one can raise the objection that when Allah Himself is making this promise, what is the meaning of making it conditional upon His own willing it? The answer is: Here the words *Insha-Allah* have not been used in the sense that if Allah does not will, He will not fulfill His promise, but in fact these relate to the background in which this promise was made. The presumption on the basis of which the disbelievers of Makkah had played the drama of preventing the Muslims from umrah was that only he whom they would allow would perform umrah, and would perform it only when they would allow it. At this Allah has said: This depends on Our, not on their, will. The reason why umrah has not been performed this year is not because the disbelievers of Makkah did not allow it to be performed, but because We did not will it to be performed. In the future umrah will be performed if We will, no matter whether the disbelievers allow it or disallow it. Besides, these words also contain the

meaning that the Muslims too, will perform umrah not by their own power but because We would will that they should perform it. Otherwise, if We do not will, they do not possess any power to perform it by themselves.

*49 This promise was fulfilled in the following year in Dhil-Qadah A.H.7. This Umrah is well known in history as Umrah al-Qada.

*50 The words clearly point out that it is not obligatory to get the head shaved in umrah and Hajj, but it is also right to get the hair cut short. However, it is better to have the head shaved, for Allah has mentioned it first and then mentioned having the hair cut short.

28. It is He who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth that He may make it prevail over all religions. And All Sufficient is Allah as a Witness.*51

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ
بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ
عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ
شَهِيدًا



*51 The reason why this thing has been mentioned here is that when at Hudaibiyah the peace treaty was going to be written down, the disbelievers had objected to the use of the words Rasul-Allah (Messenger of Allah) with the name of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and on their insistence the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself had removed these words from the document. At this Allah says: Our Messenger's being a Messenger is a reality which remains unaffected whether someone believes in it or not. If some

people do not believe in it, they may not, for Allah is enough for a witness over it. Their denial will not change the reality, but the guidance and the true faith which this Messenger (peace be upon him) has brought from Us, shall prevail over all religion, no matter how hard the deniers try to obstruct its progress.

“All religions” implies all those ways of life which include the nature of deen (religion). We have explained it in details in E.N. 3 of Surah Az-Zumar and E.N. 20 of Surah Ash-Shura. Here what Allah has stated in clear words is: The purpose of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) appointment as a Prophet was not merely to preach this religion but to make it prevail over all others. In other words, he did not bring this religion so that it might survive in a limited compartment of life, while the rest of the spheres of life, by and large, should remain under the relentless control of some false religion (way of life). But he had brought it so that it should be the dominant way of life and any other religion should survive, if at all it survives, only within the limits in which it allows it to survive. (For further explanation, see E.N. 48 of Surah Az-Zumar).

29. Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those with him are hard^{*52} against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves.^{*53} You see them bowing, prostrating, seeking bounty from Allah

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ
أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ
تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ
فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا

and (His) pleasure. Their mark is on their faces from the trace of prostration.^{*54} Such is their likeness in the Torah,^{*55} and their likeness in the Gospel.^{*56} Like as the crop which put out its shoot, then strengthened it, then swelled and then stood on its own stem, delighting the sowers that He may enrage the disbelievers with them. Allah has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds among them, forgiveness and a great reward.^{*57}

سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِّنْ أَثَرِ
السُّجُودِ ذَٰلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ
وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَرۜرۜعٍ أَخۜرَجَ
شَطۜئَهُۥ فَآزَرَهُۥ فَاسۜتَغۜلَظَ
فَاسۜتَوَىٰ عَلَىٰ سُوۜقِهِۦ يُعۜجِبُ
الزُّرَّاعَ لِيغۜيِظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَ
اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّٰلِحٰتِ مِنْهُم مَّغۜفِرَةً وَّأَجۜرًا
عَظِيمًا



***52** The companions (of the Prophet) are hard against the disbelievers: They are not such that the disbelievers may mold them as they like. They can neither be cowed nor purchased by any inducement. The disbelievers have no power to turn them away from the great objective for the sake of which they have joined and followed the Prophet (peace be upon him) even at the cost of their lives.

***53** That is, whatever their hardness and severity, it is only for the disbelievers, not for the believers. As regards the believers they are soft, merciful, affectionate, sympathetic and compassionate. Their unity of aim and object has produced in them love and harmony and complete accord

among themselves.

***54** This does not imply the mark that appears on the forehead of some people on account of prostrations, but it implies the marks and traces of the fear of God, munificence, nobility and goodness of manner that naturally appears on the face of a person on account of bowing down before God. Man's face is an open book on the pages of which different states of a man's self can be seen easily. A vain and arrogant person's face is different from the face of a humble, modest and unassuming person; an immoral person's face is clearly distinguished from the face of a righteous and well mannered person; and there is a marked difference between the facial appearance of a wicked man and of a noble and virtuous man. What Allah means to say is: The companions of Muhammad (peace be upon him) are such that one can recognize them on first sight to be the best of mankind, because their faces shine forth with the light of God worship and God consciousness. This is the same thing about which Imam Malik has said that when the armies of the companions entered Syria, the Syrian Christians remarked: These people possess the very same qualities and characteristics of the disciples of the Prophet Jesus Christ (peace be upon him).

***55** The allusion probably is to Deuteronomy, 33: 2-3, in which the Holy Prophet's (peace be upon him) advent has been foretold and the word saints has been used for his companions. Apart from this, if some other quality of the companions has been mentioned in the Torah, it is not found in the existing, corrupted Torah.

***56** This parable is found in a sermon of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) that has been reported in the New Testament, thus: And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground: And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. And he said, Where unto shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth. But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shuted out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

The last portion of this sermon is also found in Matthew, 13: 31-32.

***57** A section of the Muslims translates this verse, thus: Allah has promised forgiveness and a great reward to those from among these people who have believed and done good works. Thus, they invent a way to vilify and slander the companions, and claim that according to this verse many people among the companions were not believers and righteous. But this commentary goes against verses 4, 5, 18 and 26 of this very Sarah, and does not even accord with the initial sentences of this verse itself. In verses 4-5, Allah has made mention of sending down *sakinat* (tranquility) and of effecting increase in the faith of all those

companions who were present with the Prophet (peace be upon him) at Hudaibiyah, and given them without any exception the good news of admission into Paradise. In verse 18, Allah has expressed His good pleasure for all those who took the pledge to the Prophet (peace be upon him), and in this also there is no exception. In verse 26, Allah has also used the word *muminin* (believers) for all the companions, has mentioned of sending down His *sakinat* to them, and obliged them to be righteous and pious, for they were most worthy and deserving of all mankind. Here also, it was not said that the news was being given only about those who were believers among them. Then also in the initial sentences of this verse itself the characteristics mentioned are of all those people who were with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The words are to the effect that all the people who are with him have this quality and characteristic. After this, suddenly in the last sentence there could be no excuse to say that some of them were the believers and others were not.





Al-Hujurat الْحُجْرَات

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from verse 4 in which the word *hujurat* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Traditions show and the subject matter of the Surah also supports the same that this Surah is a collection of the commandments and instructions revealed at different occasions, which have been put together because of the relevancy of the theme. Moreover, the traditions also show that most of these commandments were sent down during the final stage of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life at Al-Madinah. For instance, about verse 4 the commentators state that it was sent down concerning the Bani Tamim whose deputation had arrived in Al-Madinah and started calling out to the Prophet (peace be upon him) from outside the apartments (*hujurat*) of his wives, and according to all biographical books on the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life this deputation had visited Al-Madinah in A.H.9. Likewise, about verse 6, a large number of the traditions of Hadith confirm that it was revealed concerning Walid bin

Uqbah whom the Prophet (peace be upon him) had sent to collect the Zakat from the Bani al-Mustaliq, and it is well known that Walid bin Uqabah had become a Muslim on the conquest of Makkah.

Subject Matter and Topics

The subject matter of this Surah is to teach the Muslims the manners worthy of true believers.

In the first five verses they have been taught the manners they should observe with regard to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him).

Then, they have been given the instruction that it is not right to believe in every news blindly and to act according to it, without due thought. If information is received about a person, a group or a community, it should be seen carefully whether the means of the information is reliable or not. If the means is not reliable, it should be tested and examined to see whether the news is authentic or not before taking any action on it.

Then, it has been told what attitude the other Muslims should adopt in case two groups of the Muslims fall to mutual fighting.

Then the Muslims have been exhorted to safeguard against the evils that corrupt collective life and spoil mutual relationships. Mocking and taunting each other, calling others by nicknames, creating suspicions, prying into other people's affairs and back biting are the evils which are not only sins in themselves but they also corrupt society. Allah has mentioned all these evils separately and forbidden them as unlawful.

After this, the national and racial distinctions that cause universal corruption in the world have been condemned. National, tribal or ancestral supremacy and arrogance, looking down upon others as inferior, pulling down others only for the sake of establishing one's own superiority is a major source of global injustice and tyranny. Allah in a brief verse has exposed the root of this evil by stating that all men are descendants of the same one pair and their division into tribes and communities is only for the sake of recognition, not for boasting and pride, and there is no lawful basis of one man's superiority over the other except on the basis of moral excellence.

In conclusion, the people have been told that the real thing is not the verbal profession of the faith but to believe in Allah and His messenger (peace be upon him) truly, to obey them in practical life and to exert sincerely with one's self and wealth in the cause of Allah. True believers are only those who adopt this attitude. As for those who profess Islam merely orally without affirmation by the heart and then adopt an attitude as if they had done someone a favor by accepting Islam, may be counted among the Muslims in the world, may even be treated as Muslims in society, but they cannot be counted as believers in the sight of Allah.

1. O you who believe, do not put (yourselves) before Allah and His Messenger,^{*1} and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is All Hearing, All knowing.^{*2}

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقَدِّمُوا
بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١﴾

***1** This is the foremost and basic demand of the faith. If the person who regards Allah as his Lord and accepts Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) as his guide and leader, is true in his belief, he can never have the attitude that he should give his own opinion and view precedence over the decision of Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him), or should adopt an independent opinion in the matters, and pass his own judgments without caring to find out whether Allah and His Messenger have given any guidance in those matters or not, and if they have given it, what it is. That is why it has been said: O you who believe, do not put (yourselves) before Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him). That is, do not go ahead of them, but follow behind. Do not precede them, but be subordinate to them. This command is, in its application and effect, a step further to verse 36 of Surah Al-Ahzab. There it was said: It does not behoove a believing man and a believing woman that when Allah and His Messenger have given their decision in a matter, they should exercise an option in that matter of theirs, and here it is said that the believers should not decide their matters on their own whims, but should look for guidance in Allah's Book and His Prophet's (peace be upon him) sunnah concerning those matters.

This command is not confined only to individual matters of the Muslims but it also applies to their collective affairs. This is in fact the fundamental article of the Islamic law, which can neither be set aside nor ignored by a Muslim government, or by a Muslim court, or by a parliament. A tradition has been reported in Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud,

Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, with authentic chains of transmitters, saying that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was sending Muadh bin Jabal to Yaman as a judge, he asked him: By what will you decide the matters? He submitted: By the Book of Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: If you do not find the command concerning a matter in the Book of Allah, what will you turn to? He replied: To the sunnah of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked: If this also fails you? He replied: Then I shall exert and find out a solution by myself. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) placed his hand on Muadh's chest and said: Thank God Who has helped His Messenger's deputy to adopt the way that is approved by His Messenger. This giving of precedence to the Book of Allah and the sunnah of His Messenger over one's own exercise to find out a solution and to turn to them first to obtain guidance is the thing that marks the distinction between a Muslim judge and a non-Muslim judge. Likewise, in the matter of legislation also there is absolute consensus that the first and foremost source of the law is the divine Book and after it the sunnah of the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah. Even the consensus of the entire ummah cannot go against or remain independent of them, not to speak of the individual Muslim's reasoning and endeavor to interpret the law.

***2** That is, if ever you adopted an attitude of independence as against Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him), or gave priority to your own opinion and view over their

command, you should know that you have to deal with that God Who is hearing whatever you utter and is even aware of your secret intentions.

2. O you who believe, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak aloud to him in talk as you speak aloud to one another,^{*3} lest your deeds may be rendered vain while you do not perceive.^{*4}

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا لَا تَرْفَعُوْا
اَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا
تَجْهَرُوْا لَهُۥ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ
بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ اَنْ تَحْبَطَ
اَعْمَالُكُمْ وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٢﴾

*3 This is the etiquette that was taught to the people who sat among the audience of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or came to visit him. Its intention was that the believers should treat the Prophet (peace be upon him) with the highest respect and reverence when visiting him and talking to him. Nobody should raise his voice louder than his. The people should not be unmindful of the fact that they are addressing the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, and not a common man, or a person of equal rank. Therefore, there should be a marked difference between one's tone of conversation with the common people and one's tone of conversation with the Prophet (peace be upon him), and no one should talk to him in a voice louder than his.

Although this etiquette was taught for sitting in the Prophet's (peace be upon him) assembly and its addressees

were the people who were living in his time, the people of the later ages should also observe the same respect and reverence on the occasion when the Prophet's name is mentioned, or a command of his is stated, or his sayings are explained. Besides, this verse also points out what attitude the people should adopt when talking to persons of a higher rank and status than themselves. A person's talking before the men of a higher rank in a way as he talks before his friends or the common men, is in fact a sign that he has no respect for them in his heart, and he does not recognize any difference between them and the common people.

*4 This shows what high position the person of the Prophet (peace be upon him) occupies in Islam. No one, whatever his rank and status, has a position so that his unmannerly behavior towards the Prophet (peace be upon him), would not deserve in the sight of Allah the same punishment as the punishment for disbelief. In respect of ordinary people it is at the most a sort of rudeness, an uncivilized conduct, but in respect of the Prophet (peace be upon him) a little lack of reverence is such a grave sin as can destroy all the services of one's lifetime. For the reverence of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is indeed reverence of that God Who has sent him as His Messenger and lack of reverence for him amounts to lack of reverence of God Himself.

3. Indeed, those who lower their voices in the presence of Allah's Messenger, they are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested for

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَغُضُّونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ
عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ
أَمْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ لَهُمْ

righteousness.*⁵ For them is forgiveness and a great reward.

مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

*⁵ That is, only those people give due reverence to the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, who have passed successfully through the tests and trials set by Allah and proved by their steadfastness that their hearts indeed possess *taqwa* (piety). From this, it follows automatically that the heart which is devoid of reverence for the Prophet (peace be upon him) is, in fact, devoid of *taqwa*, and a person's raising his voice louder than the Prophet's (peace be upon him) is not only an uncivilized act outwardly but also a sign of the absence of *taqwa* in his heart.

4. Indeed, those who call you from behind the apartments, most of them have no sense.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُنَادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ
الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا
يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾

5. And if they had patience until you could come out to them, it would have been better for them.*⁶ And Allah is All Forgiving, All Merciful.*⁷

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ
لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ
رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥﴾

*⁶ The people who in the blessed time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) had received training in Islamic etiquette and manners under the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself had a full regard for his person. They fully realized how

busy he remained in performing the mission entrusted to him by Allah. They also understood well that during those tiresome activities he must necessarily have some time for rest, time for his important occupations and also time for attending to his domestic affairs. Therefore, they would come to visit him only at the time when he was available outside his house, and if ever they did not find him outside his living quarters among his companions, they would sit and await his emergence and would avoid giving him the trouble of coming out of his house unless there was a special need for it. But many a time it so happened that the people from far flung areas, who had had no opportunity to receive training in good manners, would come to visit the Prophet (peace be upon him) with the idea that the one who invited others to Allah and was working for the reformation of the people had no right to have rest at any time, and they had the right to visit and see him any time they pleased in the day or night and it was his duty that whenever they happened to arrive, he should be ready to receive them. Some of these people who came to see the Prophet (peace be upon him) from different parts of Arabia were so uncouth and impolite that they would not take the trouble to inform him of their arrival through some attendant, but would start shouting from outside the apartments of his wives to call him out. Several such incidents have been reported by the companions in the Hadith. This sort of behavior troubled him much, but he was tolerant on account of his natural clemency. At last, Allah had to intervene, Who reproved the people for their

uncivilized behavior and gave this instruction: Whenever they came to see the Prophet (peace be upon him) and did not find him, they should wait for him patiently until he came out to them himself, instead of shouting to call him out, from the house.

*7 This is, whatever had happened until then will be overlooked and forgiven by Allah and He will not hold those people accountable for the trouble they had been causing to His Messenger (peace be upon him) on account of His mercy and kindness, but they should not repeat such behavior in the future.

6. O you who believe, if a disobedient (person) comes to you with a news, so investigate, lest you harm a people in ignorance, then you become regretful over what you have done.*8

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ
فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا
قَوْمًا بِجَهْلَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا
فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

*8 Most of the commentators have expressed the view that this verse was sent down concerning Walid bin Uqbah bin Abi Muait. Its background is this: When the tribe of the Bani al-Mustaliq embraced Islam, the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent Walid bin Uqbah to collect the Zakat from them. When he arrived in their territory, he became fearful due to some reason and without visiting the people of the tribe returned to Al-Madinah and complained to the Prophet (peace be upon him) that they had refused to pay the Zakat and had even wanted to kill him. On hearing

this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) became very angry and he made up his mind to dispatch a contingent to punish those people. According to some traditions he had dispatched the contingent, and according to others, he was about to dispatch it. In any case, all agree that in the meantime the chief of the Bani al-Mustaliq, Harith bin Dirar, father of Juwairiyah, wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him), arrived at the head of a deputation, and submitted: By God, we did not at all see Walid; therefore, there could be no question of refusing to pay the Zakat and wanting to kill him. We are steadfast to the faith and have no intention to withhold the Zakat. At this, this verse was sent down. With a little variation in wording this incident has been related by Imam Ahmad, Abi Hatim, Tabarani, and Ibn Jarir, on the authority of Abdullah bin Abbas, Harith bin Dirar, Mujahid, Qatadah, Abdur Rehman bin Abi Laila, Yazid bin Ruman, Dahhak and Muqatil bin Hayyan. In the tradition reported by Umm Salamah this whole story has been related likewise but there is no reference to the name of Walid.

On this critical occasion when on account of believing in a baseless report a grave blunder was about to be committed, Allah gave the Muslims this guiding principle to be followed on receipt of news: Whenever you receive important news bearing upon a vital matter, you should not accept it immediately but should first examine the man who has brought it. If he is an evil man whose report is not authentic normally, you should inquire into it carefully to ascertain the truth instead of accepting it and acting on it

immediately. From this divine command an important legal principle is deduced, the sphere of application of which is very vast. According to it, it is not permissible for a Muslim government to take any action against a person or a group or a nation on the basis of the reports provided by the secret agents whose character might be doubtful. On the basis of this very principle the traditionalists introduced the art of critical appraisal in the science of Hadith in order to determine the value and worth of the people through whom traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) reached the later generations. And the jurists established this principle in the law of evidence that in a matter from which a Shariah value can be deduced, or a duty imposed on a person; the evidence of an evil man would be unacceptable. However, all scholars agree that as far as the common worldly matters are concerned it is not necessary to ascertain the truth of every news and the reliability of every informer. For the word used in the verse is *naba*, which does not apply to every news but only to the news of consequence. That is why the jurists say that this principle does not apply in the case of ordinary matters. For example, if a person goes to visit somebody and seeks permission to enter the house, and a person comes out and conveys the permission, he can enter the house accordingly no matter whether the one conveying the permission from the master of the house was good or bad. Likewise, the scholars also agree that the evidence, as well as the report, of the people whose evil does not relate to lying and immorality, but they are regarded as unrighteous only on

account of false beliefs, will also be acceptable. Only the falsehood of their creed cannot be a hindrance to accepting their evidence or reports.

7. And know that the Messenger of Allah is among you.*⁹ If he were to obey you in most of the matter, you would be in difficulty.*¹⁰ But Allah has endeared the faith to you, and made it pleasing in your hearts, and has made hateful to you disbelief, and wrongdoing, and disobedience. It is those who are rightly guided.

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ



*⁹ This is evident from the context as well as understood by several commentators from this verse that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was hesitant to take any military action against the Bani al-Mustaliq on the report given by Walid bin Uqbah, but some of the people insisted that they should be attacked at once. At this those people were warned that they should not forget that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was present among them, who understood them (Bani al-Mustaliq) better than they did. Therefore, their thinking that the Prophet (peace be upon him) should act according to their counsel in important matters was misplaced boldness. For if he started acting according to what they counseled it would generally lead to blunders for which they themselves would have to suffer.

*10 It means this: The whole community of the believers has not committed the error that was committed by those few people who wanted the Prophet (peace be upon him) to act as they counseled, and the believing community is remaining steadfast on the right path was due to the reason that Allah by His bounty and grace had endeared to them the path of the faith and made unbelief, wrongdoing and disobedience abhorrent to them. The addressees in the two parts of this verse are two separate groups. The sentence beginning with *lau yutiukum* is not addressed to the entire class of the companions but only to those particular companions who were insisting that the Bani al-Mustaliq should be attacked at once, and the sentence beginning with *wa lakin-nallaha*, is addressed to the general class of the companions who would never dare insist on their own opinion and view before the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, but had full faith in his leadership and remained steadfast on the path of obedience, which is, and should be, the demand of true faith. From this it cannot be concluded that those who had insisted on their own opinion were devoid of the love of the faith, but what becomes obvious from this is that they had become forgetful of this demand of the faith because of which they made the error of insisting on their own opinion in the presence of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Therefore, Allah first warned them of their error, then of its evil consequences, and finally stated that the right attitude for a believer was the one that had been adopted by the generality of the companions.

8. A bounty from Allah and a favor. And Allah is All Knowing, All Wise.*11

فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
حَكِيمٌ

*11 That is, Allah does not bestow His bounty and favor blindly, but He grants this great blessing to whomever He grants on the basis of wisdom and His knowledge that he is worthy of it.

9. And if two factions among the believers should fight,*12 then make peace between them both.*13 Then if one of them rebels against the other,*14 then fight against the one that rebels until it complies to the command of Allah.*15 Then if it complies, then make peace between them with justice,*16 and be equitable. Indeed, Allah loves those who are equitable.*17

وَإِن طَآئِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
أَقْتَتَلُوا فَأْصَلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فِإِن
بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى
فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى
أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِن فَاءَتْ فَأْصَلِحُوا
بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ
يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

*12 Instead of saying: When two factions of the believers fight mutually, it has been said: If two factions of the believers should fight. From these words, it follows that mutual fighting is not the character of the Muslims, nor should it be. It is not expected that being the believers they would fight mutually. However, if such a thing ever happens, the procedure that follows should be adopted.

Moreover, the word *taifah* has been used for a group instead of *firqah*: the words *taifah* and *firqah* in Arabic are used for a small group and a large group respectively. This also shows that it is indeed a highly offensive state in the sight of Allah in which large groups of the Muslims cannot be expected to be involved.

***13** The recipients of this command are all those Muslims who may not be a party to either of the groups and for whom it may be possible to try to make peace between them. In other words, Allah does not approve that the other Muslims should just sit and watch the clash when two groups of their own community have fallen to mutual fighting. But whenever such a sad situation arises all the believers should become concerned and should do whatever they can to bring about peace and reconciliation between the parties. They should urge the parties to desist from fighting; they should exhort them to fear God. Their influential people should go and talk to the responsible men of the two sides, should find out the causes of the dispute and do whatever they can to effect reconciliation between them.

***14** That is, The Muslims also should not allow the aggressor to continue his aggression and leave the victim alone, or, still worse, join hands with the aggressor. But their duty is that if all their efforts at reconciliation between the parties fail, they should find out as to who is in the right and who is the aggressor. Then they should join hands with the one who is in the right and fight the aggressor. As this fighting has been enjoined by Allah, it is

obligatory and comes under jihad, it is not the *fitnah* (mischief) about which the Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: It is a situation in which the one standing is better than the one moving, and the one sitting is better than the one standing. For, that *fitnah* implies the mutual fighting of the Muslims in which the parties might be fighting out of bigotry, or for a false sense of honor and worldly possessions and neither may be having the truth on its side. As for the fight that is undertaken in support of the group who is in the right against the aggressor, it is not taking part in the *fitnah* but carrying out Allah's command. All the jurists agree on its being an obligation. And there was no difference of opinion among the Prophet's (peace be upon him) companions about its being obligatory. (Al-Jassas, Ahkamal-Quran). Some jurists even regard it as superior to jihad itself and their reasoning is that Ali spent the entire period of his caliphate in fighting against the rebels instead of performing jihad against the disbelievers. (Ruhul-Maani). If a person argues that it was not obligatory because Abdullah bin Umar and some other companions had not participated in the wars fought by Ali, he would be in the wrong. Ibn Umar himself says: I have never been so much grieved at heart on anything as on account of this verse as to why I did not fight the rebels as enjoined by Allah. (Hakim, al-Mustadrik).

The command to fight the aggressor does not necessarily mean that he should be fought with the weapons and killed, but it implies the use of force against him, the real object being the removal of his aggression. For this object

whatever force is necessary should be used, and no more and no less force should be used than what is absolutely necessary.

The addressees of this command are the people who have the power to repel the aggression by the use of force.

***15** This shows that the fighting is not meant to punish the rebel (the aggressing party) for his rebellion (aggression), but to force him to return to the command of Allah. Allah's command implies that the rebel group should submit to what is right according to the Book of Allah and the sunnah of the Messenger of Allah, and should give up the attitude and conduct that amounts to aggression according to this criterion of the truth. As soon as a rebel group becomes ready and willing to follow this command, use of force against it should be stopped, for this is the actual object of the fighting and its target. The one who commits an excess after this would himself become the aggressor. As for this as to what is the truth and what is the aggression in a dispute according to the Book of Allah and the sunnah of His Messenger, its determination is inevitably the job of those people of the ummah, who have the ability to carry out research by virtue of their knowledge and insight.

***16** The command is not only to make peace but to make peace with justice and equity. This shows that in the sight of Allah the peace (and reconciliation) which is brought about only to stop fighting, overlooking the distinction between the truth and falsehood, and in which pressure is used against the party that is in the right to come to terms with the aggressor, is not commendable. True peace is that

which is based on justice. This alone can avert disaster and mischief; otherwise the inevitable result of pressing those in the right and encouraging the aggressors would be that the real causes of the evil would remain as they were, rather would go on adding up, and cause the mischief to appear and re-appear over and over again.

***17** This verse forms the actual basis of the Islamic law about the mutual fighting between the Muslims. No explanation of this law is found in the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) except one Hadith which we shall discuss below. For, in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), no war took place between the Muslims; hence nothing is found in his practice and sayings that could throw light on the commandments concerning it. Afterwards, when during the caliphate of Ali wars took place between the Muslims themselves, authentic explanation of this law became possible. At that time since a large number of the companions were still living, a detailed code of this aspect of the Islamic law was compiled in the light of their practice and statements. Ali's personal example in particular has been the real source in this matter for all the jurists. Below we give a brief resume of this code:

(1) There are several forms of mutual fighting between Muslims and each has its own separate injunctions:

(a) When both the fighting groups may be the subjects of a Muslim government: In this case it is the duty of the government to make peace between them, or to decide as to who is the aggressor between them, and to compel him by

use of force to revert to the truth.

(b) When the parties may be two powerful groups, or two Muslim governments, and both may be fighting for the sake of the worldly gain: In this case, the believers should absolutely refrain from taking part in the *fitnah* and should exhort the parties concerned to fear God and desist from fighting.

(c) When one of the belligerent parties as mentioned above may be right and the other the aggressor, who may not be listening to counsel nor be inclined to make peace: In this case believers should side with and support the party that is in the right against the aggressor.

(d) When one of the parties may be the subjects, who may have revolted against the government, i.e. the Muslim government: The jurists use the term *baghi* (rebel) for this very party which is guilty of rebelling.

(2) The rebels against the government may also be of several kinds:

(a) Those who may have risen only to create chaos and confusion, and may have no legal ground for their revolt. There is consensus that against such people it is lawful for the government to wage war, and it is obligatory for the believers to side with it, no matter whether it is a just government or not.

(b) Those who may revolt against a government in order to depose it from power, and may have no legal ground for this, and may also appear to be unjust and evil. In this case, if the government is just, it is obligatory to side with it without any question, but even if it is unjust, it is obligatory

to fight in order to sustain it, for there is peace and order in the country because of it.

(c) Those who may revolt against a government on the basis of a legal ground, but their ground may be false and their belief vicious and perverse, e.g. the Khwarij. In this case also a Muslim government whether it is just or unjust, has a lawful right to fight them and it is obligatory to side with it.

(d) Those who may revolt against a just government when its head might have assumed power lawfully. In this case whether they have a legal ground or do not have any, the government in any case is justified to wage war against them and it is obligatory to side with it.

(e) Those who may revolt against an unjust government, which might have come to power by coercion and whose leaders might be wicked and the rebels might have risen to establish justice and enforce articles of the divine law, and they might appear to be righteous. In this case, acute difference of opinion has appeared among the jurists as to whether they should be declared the rebels (i.e. transgressors) and whether it is obligatory to fight against them or not. This we state below briefly:

The generality of the jurists and the Ahl-al-Hadith hold the view that it is unlawful to rise in revolt against a ruler whose government has once been established and there is complete peace and order in the land under him, no matter whether he is just or unjust, and he has come to power in any way whatever, except in case he commits disbelief openly. Imam Sarakhsi writes: In a case when the Muslims

agree on a ruler and they enjoy peace under him and the roads are safe, if a group of the Muslims rises in revolt against him, everyone who has power is under obligation to side with the ruler of the Muslims and wage war against the rebels. (Al-Mabsut, Bab-al-Khwarij) Imam Nawawi writes in his commentary of Sahih Muslim: It is forbidden to rise in revolt and fight against the Imams (i.e. the Muslim rulers) even if they are wicked and unjust. Imam Nawawi claims that there is consensus on this.

But this claim of the consensus is not correct. A large group of the jurists of Islam which includes some major scholars, declares those rising in revolt as rebels only in case they rise in revolt against a just ruler. They do not regard as rebellion in the Quranic terminology the rising in revolt of the righteous against the unjust and wicked rulers, nor declare the waging of war against them as obligatory. The view of Imam Abu Hanifah about fighting against unjust rulers is well known among the scholars. Abu Bakr al Jassas clearly writes in his Ahkam-al-Quran that the Imam regarded this fighting not only as permissible but as obligatory in favorable conditions. (Vol. I, p. 81; Vol. II, p. 39). In Zaid bin Ali's revolt against the Umayyads, he not only provided financial help but urged others also to do the same. (Al-Jassas, Vol I, p. 81). In Nafs-al-Zakiyahs revolt against Mansur he went on earnestly supporting Nafs-al-Zakiyah, and he declared this war as superior to a war against the disbelievers. (Al-jassas, Vol. I, p. 81; Al-Kardari, Manaqib Abi Hanifah, Vol. II, pp. 71-72). Then the consolidated opinion of the Hanafi thinkers is not the

same as Imam Sarakhsi has stated. Ibne Humam writes in Fath al-Qadir (commentary of Hedaya) that a rebel is one who is disobedient to a rightful ruler. From amongst the Hanbalis Ibn Aqil and Ibn al-Jawzi declare struggle against a non-just ruler proper and on this point show solidarity with the revolt of Hussain (Al-Infaf, Vol. X, Bab Qital Ahl-al-Baghyi). Imam Shafei in his Kitab al-Um regards as rebel the one who fights against a just ruler (Vol. IV, p. 135). Imam Malik's view as cited in Al-Mudawwanah is: If the rebels come out to fight against a just ruler, they should be forcibly opposed. (Vol. I, p. 407). Qadi Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi has cited his this view in Ahkam al-Quran: When a person rises in revolt against a just ruler like Umar bin Abdul Aziz, it is obligatory to resist and repel him; as for some other kind of ruler, he should be left alone. Allah will punish him through some other unjust person and then both of them through some third unjust person. Another saying of Imam Malik that has been cited is: When the pledge has been sworn to a ruler, and then his brothers rise in revolt against him, they will be fought against, if he is a just ruler. As for the rulers of our time, there is no pledge for them, for pledge to them has been taken by coercion. Then the view of the Maliki scholars that Qadi has cited with reference to Sahnun is: Fighting will be undertaken only for under the just ruler, whether the just ruler is the former (being rebelled against) one or the one who has risen in revolt against him, but if neither is just, one should keep away from both. However, if one's own self is attacked, or the Muslims are being

subjected to tyranny, one should put up resistance. After citing these different views, Qadi Abu Bakr says: We will not fight except on the side of the just ruler, whom the truth loving people have made their head of their own free will.

(3) If those rising in revolt are small in number, and may have no large party on their back, nor be possessing any substantial war equipment, the law of rebellion will not be applied against them, but they will be proceeded against under the common penal law, i.e. if they kill, they will be subjected to the law of retaliation, and if they damage property, they will be required to pay the penalties. The law of sedition is applied only against those rebels who might be powerful, and rise in revolt in large numbers and with substantial military equipment.

(4) As long as those rising in revolt only express their false and perverse beliefs or hostile and seditious ideas against the government or its head, they cannot be killed or imprisoned. War will be waged against them only when they actually rise in armed revolt and start shedding blood. (Al-Mabsut, Bab al-Khwarij; Fath al-Qadir, Bab al-Bighat, al-Jassas, Ahkam al-Qur an).

(5) Before starting war against the rebels they will first be invited, according to the Quranic instructions, to give up the way of rebellion and adopt the way of justice. If they have some doubts and objections, effort will be made to remove them; even then if they do not listen, and fighting begins from their side, force will be used to deal with them. (Fath al-Qadir, al Jassas, Ahkam al-Quran).

(6) The code of regulations that has to be observed in the war against the rebels is based on the Prophet's (peace be upon him) following command that has been related by Hakim, Bazzar and al-Jassas on the authority of Abdullah bin Umar.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked Abdullah bin Masud: O Ibn Umm Abd: Do you know what is Allah's command concerning the rebels of this Ummah? He replied: Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Their wounded ones will not be laid hands on and their captives will not be killed, and the one who flees, will not be pursued, and their properties will not be distributed as spoils.

The second source of this code which has been held as trust-worthy by all the jurists is the word and deed of Ali. After attaining victory in the battle of the Jamul, he announced: Do not pursue him who flees; do not attack the wounded; do not kill the captives; give shelter to him who surrenders; do not make forcible entry into the people's houses; and do not raise your hands at the women even if they are abusing and cursing you. Some of his soldiers made the demand that the opponents and their family members be taken prisoners and distributed. At this he became furious and said: Who among you will take Aisha, mother of the faithful, as his share.

(7) The injunction concerning the properties of the rebels as derived from the good example of Ali is that no part of it, whether it is found on the battlefield or left behind in their houses, and whether they are living or have been

killed, will be declared as the spoils nor distributed among the army. However, no compensation will be necessary for the properties that have been damaged or destroyed. As soon as the war comes to an end and rebellion has been put down, their properties and belongings will be returned to them. Their weapons and conveyances, if seized during the war, will be used against them, but will not be made the possession of the victors and distributed as the spoils; and if there is no more fear of a rebellion from them, then these things also will be returned to them. Only Imam Abu Yusuf has expressed the opinion that the government will declare them to be the spoils, (Al-Mabsut; Fath al-Qadir, Al-Jassas).

(8) Their prisoners of war, after they have pledged not to rise in rebellion again, will be set free (Al-Mabsut).

(9) To cut off the heads of the slain rebels and to take them on the streets is a highly undesirable thing, for this is mutilation which the Prophet has strictly forbidden. When the head of a Roman patriarch was brought before Abu Bakr, he expressed great displeasure at it, and said: We are not here to imitate the Romans and Persians. When it is not allowed to mete out such a treatment to the unbelievers, how much more so should it be with regard to the Muslims. (Al-Mabsut).

(10) Whatever damage might have been caused to life and property by the rebels during the war, no retaliation and recompense for it will be imposed on them after the war has come to an end and peace has been restored. Neither will there be any retaliation for a slain person nor any

recompense for the lost property, so as to avoid any chance of the recurrence of the sedition. This same law was observed in the mutual fighting between the companions. (Al-Mabsut: al-Jassas; Ibn al-Arabi, Ahkam al-Quran).

(11) After the government has recaptured the territories which had gone under the rebels and where they had established their rule and order and collected the zakat and other taxes, it will not demand the zakat and the taxes from the people once again. If the rebels have spent the money thus collected lawfully, the payers will be deemed to have paid them off lawfully in the sight of Allah as well. But if the rebels have spent the money unlawfully, it will be a matter between the payers and their God; if they so like they may pay their zakat dues once again. (Fath al-Qadir, al-Jassas; Ibn al-Arabi).

(12) The decisions of the judges, who may be just and may have given the decisions according to the Shariah in the courts established by the rebels in the territories under them, will be upheld although the ones who appointed them might be guilty of sedition. However, if their decisions are against the Shariah and they are brought before the courts of the government after the rebellion has been put down, they will not be enforced. Moreover, no warrant or summons issued by the courts established by the rebels will be acceptable in the courts of the government. (Al-Mabsut; al-Jassas).

(13) The evidence of the rebels will not be acceptable in the Islamic courts, for it is iniquitous to fight against the just. Imam Muhammad says: As long as they do not fight and

actually rise in revolt against the people of justice, their evidence will be acceptable, but when they have already fought, I will not accept their evidence (Al-Jassas).

From these rulings it becomes plain as to what is the difference between the law of fighting against the disbelievers and of fighting against the Muslim rebels

10. Indeed, the believers are brothers, so make peace between your brethren,^{*18} and fear Allah that you may receive mercy.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا
بَيْنَ أَخْوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ

تُرْحَمُونَ

***18** This verse establishes a universal brotherhood of all the Muslims of the world, and it is by virtue of this that the sort of fraternity that exists among the Muslims exists among the followers of no other religion and creed. The importance of this command, and its demands, has been explained by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in many of his traditions from which one can understand its full significance and spirit.

Jarir bin Abdullah says: The Prophet (peace be upon him) took a pledge from me on three things: That I will establish the Prayer, that I will continue to pay the zakat, and that I will remain a well-wisher of every Muslim. (Bukhari: Kitab-al-Iman). According to Abdullah bin Masud, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: To abuse a Muslim is sinful and to fight him a disbelief. In Musnad Ahmad a tradition bearing on the same subject has also been related by Saeed bin Malik on the authority of his father.

Abu Hurairah relates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The life, property and honor of every Muslim is forbidden to every other Muslim. (Muslim: Kitab-al-Birr was Silah; Tirmidhi: Abwab-al-Birr was-Silah).

Abu Saeed Khudri and Abu Hurairah say that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: A Muslim is a brother to the other Muslim: he does not treat him unjustly, he does not leave him alone and he does not dishonor him. There is no greater evil than that one should hold a Muslim in contempt. (Musnad Ahmad).

Sahl bin Saad as-Saidi has related this saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): A believer's relation with the community of the believers is just like the head's relation with the body. He feels their afflictions as the head feels the pain of every part of the body. (Musnad Ahmad). In another Hadith bearing on the same subject the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The believers' example in the matter of their mutual love, relationship and compassion with one another is of the state of the body that when a part of it is afflicted, the whole of it is afflicted with fever and restlessness. (Bukhari, Muslim).

In another Hadith he is reported to have said: The believers are with one another like the bricks of a wall so that each is strengthened by the other. (Bukhari: Kitab al-Adab; Tirmidhi; Abwab al-Birr was-Silah).

11. O you^{*19} who believe, neither should men mock other men, it may be that these are better than

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ
مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا

they,^{*20} nor (should) women (mock) other women, it may be that these are better than they. And do not insult one another among yourselves,^{*21} nor call one another by nicknames.^{*22} Bad is the name of disobedience after faith.^{*23} And whoever repents not, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.

مِنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءً مِّنْ نِّسَاءِ عَسَىٰ أَنْ
يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا
أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِاللُّغَابِ
بِئْسَ الْأَسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ
الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

***19** In the preceding two verses after giving necessary instructions about the Muslim people's mutual fighting, the believers were made to realize that by virtue of the most sacred relationship of the faith they were brothers to one another, and they should fear God and try to keep their mutual relations right. Now, in the following two verses, they are being enjoined to avoid and shun those major evils which generally spoil the mutual relationships of the people in a society. Slandering and taunting the people and harboring suspicions and spying on others are, in fact, the evils that cause mutual enmities and then lead to grave mischief. In this connection, from the commandments that are being given in the following verses and the explanations of these found in the Hadith a detailed law of libel can be compiled. The western law pertaining to libel in this regard is so defective that a person who sues another under this law may well cause some loss to his own honor. The Islamic

law, on the contrary recognizes a basic honor for every person and gives nobody the right to attack it, no matter whether the attack is based on reality or not, and whether the person who has been attacked has a reputation of his own or not. Only the fact that a person has debased and humiliated the other person is enough to declare him a criminal unless, of course, it is proved that the humiliation caused had a legal ground for it.

***20** Mocking does not only imply mocking with the tongue but it also includes mimicking somebody, making pointed references to him, laughing at his words, or his works, or his appearance, or his dress, or calling the people's attention to some defect or blemish in him so that others also may laugh at him. All this is included in mocking. What is actually forbidden is that one should make fun of and ridicule another, for under such ridiculing there always lie feelings of one's own superiority and the other's abasement and contempt, which are morally unworthy of a gentleman. Moreover, it hurts the other person, which causes mischief to spread in society. That is why it has been forbidden.

To make mention of the men and the women separately does not mean that it is lawful for the men to mock the women or the women to mock the men. The actual reason for making a separate mention of the two sexes is that Islam does not at all believe in mixed society. Ridiculing each other generally takes place in mixed gatherings and Islam does not permit that non-mahram males and females should meet in such gatherings and make fun of each other.

Therefore, in a Muslim society it is inconceivable that the men would mock a woman, or the women would mock a man in an assembly.

***21** The word *lamz* as used in the original is very comprehensive and applies to ridiculing, reviling, deriding, jeering, charging somebody or finding fault with him, and making him the target of reproach and blame by open or tacit references. As all such things also spoil mutual relationships and create bad blood in society, they have been forbidden. Instead of saying: Do not taunt one another, it has been said: Do not taunt yourselves, which by itself shows that the one who uses taunting words for others, in fact, taunts his own self. Obviously, a person does not use invectives against others unless he himself is filled with evil feelings and is almost in a state of bursting like a volcano. Thus, the one who nourishes such feelings has made his own self a nest of evils before he makes others a target, Then, when he taunts others, it means that he is inviting others to taunt him. It is a different matter that the other person may evade his attacks because of a gentle nature, but he himself has opened the door to mischief so that the other may treat him likewise.

***22** This command requires that a person should not be called by a name or a title which may cause him humiliation, e.g. calling somebody a sinner or a hypocrite, or calling someone a lame or blind one, or one-eyed, or giving him a nickname containing a reference to some defect or blemish in him, or in his parents, or in his family, or calling a person a Jew or a Christian even after his

conversion to Islam, or giving such a nickname to a person, or a family, or a community, or a group, which may bring condemnation or disgrace on it. Only those nicknames have been made an exception from this command, which though apparently offensive, are not intended to condemn the persons concerned, but they rather serve as a mark of recognition for them. That is why the traditionists have allowed as permissible names like Suleman al-Amash (the weak-eyed Suleman) and Wasil al-Ahdab (the hunch-backed Wasil) among the reporters of the Hadith. If there are several men of the same name and a particular man among them may be recognized only by a particular title or nickname of his, the title or nickname can be used, even though the title by itself may be offensive. For instance, if there are several men called Abdullah, and one of them is blind, he may be called Abdullah the blind, for his recognition. Likewise, those titles also are excluded from this command, which though apparently offensive, are in fact, given out of love and the people who are called by those titles themselves approve them, like Abu Hurairah (father of the kitten) and Abu Turab (father of the dust).

***23** That is, it is very shameful for a believer that in spite of being a believer he should earn a name for using abusive language and for immodest behavior. If a disbeliever earns reputation for himself for mocking the people, or taunting them, or for proposing evil and offensive titles for others, it may not be a good reputation from the point of view of humanity, but it at least goes well with his disbelief. But if a person after affirming the faith in Allah and His Messenger

and the Hereafter earns reputation on account of these base qualities, it is simply regrettable.

12. O you who believe, avoid much suspicion, indeed some suspicions are sins.*²⁴ And do not spy,*²⁵ nor should any one backbite the other.*²⁶ Would any among you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother,*²⁷ you would hate it. And fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Acceptor of repentance, All Merciful.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا
مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ
وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم
بَعْضًا ؕ أَيُّحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن
يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا
فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ ؕ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ



***24** What is forbidden is not conjecture as such but excessive conjecture and following every kind of conjecture, and the reason given is that some conjectures are sins. In order to understand this command, we should analyze and see what are the kinds of conjecture and what is the moral position of each.

One kind of conjecture is that which is morally approved and laudable, and desirable and praiseworthy from religious point of view, e.g. a good conjecture in respect of Allah and His Messenger and the believers and those people with whom one comes in common contact daily and concerning whom there may be no rational ground for having an evil conjecture.

The second kind of conjecture is that which one cannot do without in practical life, e.g. in a law court a judge has to consider the evidence placed before him and give his decision on the basis of the most probable conjecture, for he cannot have direct knowledge of the facts of the matter, and the opinion that is based on evidence is mostly based on the most probable conjecture and not on certainty. Likewise, in most cases when one or the other decision has to be taken, and the knowledge of the reality cannot possibly be attained, there is no way out for men but to form an opinion on the basis of a conjecture.

The third kind of conjecture, which is although a suspicion, is permissible in nature, and it cannot be regarded as a sin. For instance, if there are clear signs and pointers in the character of a person (or persons), or in his dealings and conduct, on the basis of which he may not deserve to enjoy one's good conjecture, and there are rational grounds for having suspicions against him, the Shariah does not demand that one should behave like a simpleton and continue to have a good conjecture about him. The last limit of this lawful conjecture, however, is that one should conduct himself cautiously in order to ward off any possible mischief from him; it is not right to take an action against him only on the basis of a conjecture.

The fourth kind of conjecture which is, in fact, a sin is that one should entertain a suspicion in respect of a person without any ground, or should start with suspicion in forming an opinion about others, or should entertain a suspicion about the people whose apparent conditions show

that they are good and noble. Likewise, this also is a sin that when there is an equal chance of the evil and goodness in the word or deed of a person, one should regard it as only evil out of suspicion. For instance, if a gentleman while leaving a place of assembly picks up another one's shoes, instead of his own, and we form the opinion that he has done so with the intention of stealing the shoes, whereas this could be possible because of oversight as well, there is no reason for adopting the evil opinion instead of the good opinion except the suspicion.

This analysis makes it plain that conjecture by itself is not anything forbidden; rather in some cases and situations it is commendable, in some situations inevitable, in some permissible up to a certain extent and un-permissible beyond it, and in some cases absolutely unlawful. That is why it has not been enjoined that one should refrain from conjecture or suspicion altogether but what is enjoined is that one should refrain from much suspicion. Then, to make the intention of the command explicit, it has been said that some conjectures are sinful. From this warning it follows automatically that whenever a person is forming an opinion on the basis of conjecture, or is about to take an action, he should examine the case and see whether the conjecture he is entertaining is not a sin, whether the conjecture is really necessary, whether there are sound reasons for the conjecture, and whether the conduct one is adopting on the basis of the conjecture is permissible. Everyone who fears God will certainly take these precautions. To make his conjecture free and independent

of every such care and consideration is the pastime of only those people who are fearless of God and thoughtless of the accountability of the Hereafter.

***25 “Do not spy”:** Do not grope after the secrets of the people: do not search for their defects and weaknesses: do not pry into their conditions and affairs. Whether this is done because of suspicion, or for causing harm to somebody with an evil intention, or for satisfying one’s own curiosity, it is forbidden by the Shariah in every case. It does not behoove a believer that he should spy on the hidden affairs of other people, and should try to peep at them from behind curtains to find out their defects and their weaknesses. This also includes reading other people’s private letters, listening secretly to private conversation, peeping into the neighbor’s house, and trying to get information in different ways about the domestic life or private affairs of others. This is grave immorality which causes serious mischief in society. That is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) once said in an address about those who pry into other people’s affairs:

O people, who have professed belief verbally, but faith has not yet entered your hearts: Do not pry into the affairs of the Muslims, for he who will pry into the affairs of the Muslims, Allah will pry into his affairs, and he whom Allah follows inquisitively, is disgraced by Him in his own house. (Abu Daud).

Muawiyah says that he himself heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say: If you start prying into the secret affairs of the people, you will pervert them, or at least drive them

very near perversion. (Abu Daud).

In another he said: When you happen to form an evil opinion about somebody, do not pry about it. (Al-Jassas, Ahkam al-Quran).

According to still another Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The one who saw a secret affair of somebody and then concealed it is as though he saved a girl who had been buried alive. (Al-Jassas).

This prohibition of spying is not only applicable to the individuals but also to the Islamic government. The duty of forbidding the people to do evil that the Shariah has entrusted to the government does not require that it should establish a system of spying to inquire too curiously into the people's secret evils and then punish them, but it should use force only against those evils which are manifested openly. As for the hidden evils spying is not the way to reform them but it is education, preaching and counseling, collective training of the people and trying to create a pure social environment. In this connection, an incident concerning Umar is very instructive. Once at night he heard the voice of a person who was singing in his house. He became curious and climbed the wall. There he saw wine as well as a woman present. He shouted at the man, saying: O enemy of God, do you think you will disobey Allah, and Allah will not expose your secret? The man replied: Do not make haste, O commander of the faithful: if I have committed one sin, you have committed three sins: Allah has forbidden spying, and you have spied; Allah has commanded that one should enter the houses by the doors,

and you have entered it by climbing over the wall; Allah has commanded that one should avoid entering the other people's houses without permission, and you have entered my house without my permission. Hearing this reply Umar confessed his error, and did not take any action against the man, but made him to promise that he would follow the right way in future. (Abi Bakr Muhammad bin Jafar al-Kharaiti, Makarim al-Akhlaq). This shows that it is not only forbidden for the individuals but also for the Islamic government itself to pry into the secrets of the people and discover their sins and errors and then seize them for punishment. The same thing has been said in a Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: When the ruler starts searching for the causes of suspicions among the people he perverts them. (Abu Daud).

The only exception from this command are the special cases and situations in which spying is actually needed. For instance, if in the conduct of a person (or persons) some signs of corruption are visible and there is the apprehension that he is about to commit a crime, the government can inquire into his affairs; or, for instance, if somebody sends a proposal of marriage in the house of a person, or wants to enter into business with him, the other person can, inquire and investigate into his affairs for his own satisfaction.

***26** *Ghibat* (back-biting) has been defined thus: It is saying on the back of a person something which would hurt him if he came to know of it. This definition has been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. According

to a tradition which Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Nasai and others have related on the authority of Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) defined *ghibat* as follows: It is talking of your brother in a way irksome to him. It was asked: What, if the defect being talked of is present in my brother? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: If it is present in him, it would be *ghibat*; if it is not there, it would be slandering him.

In another tradition which Imam Malik has related in Muwatta, on the authority of Muttalib bin Abdullah. A person asked the Prophet (peace be upon him): What is *ghibat*? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: It is talking of your brother in a way irksome to him. He asked: Even if it is true, O Messenger of Allah? He replied: If what you said was false, it would then be a calumny.

These traditions make it plain that uttering a false accusation against a person in his absence is calumny and describing a real defect in him *ghibat*; whether this is done in express words or by reference and allusion, in every case it is forbidden. Likewise, whether this is done in the lifetime of a person, or after his death, it is forbidden in both cases. According to Abu Daud, when Maiz bin Malik Aslami had been stoned to death for committing adultery, the Prophet (peace be upon him) on his way back heard a man saying to his companion: Look at this man: Allah had concealed his secret, but he did not leave himself alone till he was killed like a dog! A little further on the way there was the dead body of a donkey lying rotting. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stopped, called the two men and said:

Come down and eat this dead donkey. They submitted: Who will eat it, O Messenger of Allah? The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: A little while ago you were attacking the honor of your brother: that was much worse than eating this dead donkey.

The only exceptions to this prohibition are the cases in which there may be a genuine need of speaking in of a person on his back, or after his death, and this may not be fulfilled without resort to backbiting, and if it was not resorted to, a greater evil might result than backbiting itself. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has described this exception as a principle, thus: The worst excess is to attack the honor of a Muslim unjustly. (Abu Daud).

In this saying the condition of unjustly points out that doing so with justice is permissible. Then, in the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself we find some precedents which show what is implied by justice and in what conditions and cases backbiting may be lawful to the extent as necessary.

Once a desert Arab came and offered his Prayer under the leadership of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and as soon as the Prayer was concluded, walked away saying: O God, have mercy on me and on Muhammad, and make no one else a partner in this mercy beside the two of us. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to the companions: What do you say: who is more ignorant, this person or his camel? Didn't you hear what he said? (Abu Daud). The Prophet (peace be upon him) had to say this in his absence, for he had left soon after the Prayer was over. Since he had

uttered a wrong thing in the presence of the Prophet (peace be upon him), his remaining quiet at it could cause the misunderstanding that saying such a thing might in some degree be lawful; therefore, it was necessary that he should contradict it.

Two of the companions, Muawiyah and Abu Jahm, sent the proposal of marriage to a lady, Fatimah bint Qais. She came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and asked for his advice. He said: Muawiyah is a poor man and Abu Jahm beats his wives much. (Bukhari, Muslim). In this case, as there was the question of the lady's future and she had consulted the Prophet (peace be upon him) for his advice, he deemed it necessary to inform her of the two men's weaknesses.

One day when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was present in the apartment of Aishah, a man came and sought permission to see him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) remarked that he was a very bad man of his tribe. Then he went out and talked to him politely. When he came back into the house, Aishah asked: You have talked to him politely, whereas when you went out you said something different about him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, On the day of Resurrection the worst abode in the sight of Allah will be of the person whom the people start avoiding because of his abusive language. (Bukhari, Muslim). A study of this incident will show that the Prophet (peace be upon him) in spite of having a bad opinion about the person talked to him politely because that was the demand of his morals; but he had the apprehension lest the people

of his house should consider the person to be his friend when they would see him treating him kindly, and then the person might use this impression to his own advantage later. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) warned Aishah telling her that he was a bad man of his tribe. Once Hind bint Utbah, wife of Abu Sufyan, came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: Abu Sufyan is a miserly person: he does not provide enough for me and my children's needs. (Bukhari, Muslim). Although this complaint from the wife in the absence of the husband was backbiting, the Prophet (peace be upon him) permitted it, for the oppressed one has a right that he or she may take the complaint of injustice to a person who has the power to get it removed.

From these precedents of the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the jurists and traditionalists have deduced this principle: *Ghibat* (backbiting) is permissible only in case it is needed for a real and genuine (genuine from the Shariah point of view) necessity, and the necessity may not be satisfied without having resort to it. Then on the basis of the same principle the scholars have declared that *ghibat* is permissible in the following cases:

- (1) Complaining by an oppressed person against the oppressor before every such person who he thinks can do something to save him from the injustice.
- (2) To make mention of the evils of a person (or persons) with the intention of reform before those who can be expected to help remove the evils.
- (3) To state the facts of a case before a legal expert for the

purpose of seeking a religious or legal ruling regarding an unlawful act committed by a person.

(4) To warn the people of the mischief of a person (or persons) so that they may ward off the evil, e.g. it is not only permissible but obligatory to mention the weaknesses of the reporters, witnesses and writers, for without it, it is not possible to safeguard the Shariah against the propagation of false reports, the courts against injustices and the common people or the students against errors and misunderstandings. Or, for instance, if a person wants to have the relationship of marriage with somebody, or wishes to rent a house in the neighborhood of somebody, or wants to give something into the custody of somebody, and consults another person, it is obligatory for him to apprise him of all aspects so that he is not deceived because of ignorance.

(5) To raise voice against and criticize the evils of the people who may be spreading sin and immorality and error or corrupting the people's faith and persecuting them.

(6) To use nicknames for the people who may have become well known by those names, but this should be done for the purpose of their recognition and not with a view to condemn them. (For details, see Fathal-Bari, vol. X, p. 362; Sharh Muslim by An-Nawawi; Riyad us-Salihin; al-Jassas, Ahkam al-Quran; Ruh al-Maani commentary on verse *wa la yaghtab ba-dukum badan*).

Apart from these exceptions it is absolutely forbidden to speak ill of a person behind his back. If what is spoken is true, it is *ghibat*; if it is false, it is calumny. And if it is

meant to make two persons quarrel, it is malicious. The Shariah has declared all these as forbidden. In the Islamic society it is incumbent on every Muslim to refute a false charge made against a person in his presence and not to listen to it quietly, and to tell those who are speaking ill of somebody, without a genuine religious need, to fear God and desist from the sin. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: If a person does not support and help a Muslim when he is being disgraced and his honor being attacked, Allah also does not support and help him when he stands in need of His help; and if a person helps and supports a Muslim when his honor is being attacked and he is being disgraced, Allah Almighty also helps him when he wants that Allah should help him. (Abu Daud).

As for the backbiter, as soon as he realizes that he is committing this sin, or has committed it, his first duty is to offer repentance before Allah and restrain himself from this forbidden act. His second duty is that he should compensate for it as far as possible. If he has backbitten a dead person, he should ask Allah's forgiveness for the person as often as he can. If he has backbitten a living person, and what he said was also false, he should refute it before the people before whom he had made the calumny. And if what he said was true, he should never speak ill of him in future, and should ask pardon of the person whom he had backbitten. A section of the scholars has expressed the opinion that pardon should be asked only in case the other person has come to know of it; otherwise one should only offer repentance, for if the person concerned is

unaware and the backbiter in order to ask pardon goes and tells him that he had backbitten him, he would certainly feel hurt.

***27** In this sentence Allah by likening backbiting to eating the dead brother's flesh has given the idea of its being an abomination. Eating the dead flesh is by itself abhorrent; and when the flesh is not of an animal, but of a man, and that too of one's own dead brother, abomination would be added to abomination. Then, by presenting the simile in the interrogative tone it has been made all the more impressive, so that every person may ask his own conscience and decide whether he would like to eat the flesh of his dead brother. If he would not, and he abhors it by nature, how would he like that he should attack the honor of his brother-in-faith in his absence, when he cannot defend himself and when he is fully unaware that he is being disgraced. This shows that the basic reason of forbidding backbiting is not that the person being backbitten is being hurt but speaking ill of a person in his absence is by itself unlawful and forbidden whether he is aware of it, or not, and whether he feels hurt by it or not. Obviously, eating the flesh of a dead man is not forbidden because it hurts the dead man; the dead person is wholly unaware that somebody is eating of his body, but because this act by itself is an abomination. Likewise, if the person who is backbitten also does not come to know of it through any means, he will remain unaware throughout his life that somebody had attacked his honor at a particular time before some particular people and on that account he had

stood disgraced in the eyes of those people. Because of this unawareness he will not feel at all hurt by this backbiting, but his honor would in any case be sullied. Therefore, this act in its nature is not any different from eating the flesh of a dead brother.

13. O mankind, indeed We created you from male and female, and We made you into nations and tribes so that you may recognize one another. Indeed, the most noble among you with Allah is the most righteous of you.*²⁸ Indeed, Allah is All knowing, All Aware.*²⁹

يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ
ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا
وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَاهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ

خَبِيرٌ

*²⁸ In the preceding verses the Muslims were addressed and given necessary instructions to safeguard the Muslim community against social evils. In this verse the whole of mankind has been addressed to reform it of the great evil that has always been causing universal disruption in the world, that is, the prejudices due to race, color, language, country, and nationality. On account of these prejudices man in every age has generally been discarding humanity and drawing around himself some small circles and regarding those born within those circles as his own people and those outside them as others. These circles have been drawn on the basis of accidental birth and not on rational and moral grounds. In some cases their basis is the accident of being born in a particular family, tribe, or race, and in

some particular geographical region, or in a nation having a particular color or speaking a particular language. Then the discrimination between one's own people and others is not only confined to this that those who are looked upon as one's own people are shown greater love and cooperation than others, but this discrimination has assumed the worst forms of hatred, enmity, contempt and tyranny. New philosophies have been propounded for it, new religions invented, new codes of law made and new moral principles framed; so much so that nations and empires have made this distinction a permanent way of life with them and practiced it for centuries. The Jews on this very basis regarded the children of Israel as the chosen people of God and even in the practice of their religious rites looked upon the non-Jews as inferior to the Jews in rights and rank. This very discrimination gave birth to class distinctions (varnashrama) among the Hindus according to which superiority of the Brahmins was established, all other human beings came to be regarded as inferior and unclean and the shudras cast into the depths of disgrace and degradation. Every person can see for himself even in this 20th century what atrocities have been committed against the colored people in Africa and America on account of the distinction between the white and the black. The treatment that the Europeans meted out to the Red Indian race in America and to the weak nations of Asia and Africa had the same concept underlying it. They thought that the rights and property and honor of all those who had been born outside the frontiers of their own land and nation

were lawful for them and they had the right to plunder and take them as their slaves and exterminate them if need be. The worst examples of how the nationalism of the western nations has turned one nation against the others and made it their bloodthirsty enemy have been seen in the wars of the recent past and are being seen even in the present time. In particular, if what was manifested by the racism of the Nazi Germany and the concept of the superiority of the Nordic race in the last World War is kept in view. One can easily judge how stupendous and devastating is the error for whose reform this verse of the Quran was revealed.

In this brief verse, Allah has drawn the attention of all mankind to three cardinal truths:

(1) The origin of all of you is one and the same. Your whole species has sprung up from one man and one woman. All your races that are found in the world today are, in fact, the branches of one initial race that started with one mother and one father. In this process of creation there is no basis whatsoever for the divisions and distinctions in which you have involved yourselves because of your false notions. One God alone is your Creator. Different men have not been created by different gods. You have been made from one and the same substance. It is not so that some men have been made from some pure and superior substance and some other men from some impure and inferior substance. You have been created in one and the same way; it is not also so that different men have been created in different ways. And you are the offspring of the same parents; it is not so that in the beginning there were

many human couples which gave birth to different populations in the different regions of the world.

(2) In spite of being one in origin, it was natural that you should be divided into nations and tribes. Obviously, all the men on the earth could not belong to one and the same family. With the spread of the race it was inevitable that countless families should arise, and then tribes and nations should emerge from the families. Similarly, it was inevitable that after settling in different regions of the earth, there should be differences of colors, features, languages and ways of living among the people, and it was also natural that those living in the same region should be closer in affinity and those living in remote regions not so close. But this natural difference never demanded that distinctions of inequality, of high and low, of noble and mean, should be established on its basis, that one race should claim superiority over the other, the people of one color should look down upon the people of other colors, and that one nation should take preference over the other without any reason. The Creator had divided the human communities into nations and tribes for that was a natural way of cooperation and distinction between them. In this way alone could a fraternity, a brotherhood, a tribe and a nation combine to give birth to a common way of life and to cooperate with each other in the affairs of the world. But it was all due to satanic ignorance that the differences among mankind created by Allah to be a means of recognition, were turned into a means of mutual boasting and hatred, which led mankind to every kind of injustice and tyranny.

(3) The only basis of superiority and excellence that there is, or can be, between man and man is that of moral excellence. As regards birth, all men are equal, for their Creator is One, their substance of creation is one, and their way of creation is one, and they are descended from the same parents. Moreover, a person's being born in a particular country, nation, or clan is just accidental. Therefore, there is no rational ground on account of which one person may be regarded as superior to the other. The real thing that makes one person superior to others is that one should be more God-conscious, a greater avoider of evils, and a follower of the way of piety and righteousness. Such a man, whether he belongs to any race, any nation and any country, is valuable and worthy on account of his personal merit. And the one who is reverse of him in character is in any case an inferior person whether he is black or white, born in the east or the west.

These same truths that have been stated in this brief verse of the Quran have been explained in greater detail by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his addresses and traditions. In the speech that he made on the conquest of Makkah, after going round the Kabah, he said:

Thank God Who has removed from you the blemish of ignorance and its arrogance. O people, men are divided into classes: the pious and righteous, who are honorable in the sight of Allah, and the sinful and vicious, who are contemptible in the sight of Allah, whereas all men are the children of Adam and Adam had been created by Allah from clay. (Baihaqi, Tirmidhi).

On the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, in the midst of the Tashriq days, he addressed the people, and said:

O people, be aware: your God is One. No Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab, and no non-Arab any superiority over an Arab, and no white one has any superiority over a black one, and no black one any superiority over a white one, except on the basis of *taqwa* (piety). The most honorable among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most pious and righteous of you. Say if I have conveyed the Message to you? And the great congregation of the people responded, saying: Yes, you have, O Messenger of Allah. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Then let the one who is present convey it to those who are absent. (Baihaqi).

In a Hadith he has said: You are all the children of Adam, and Adam was created from the dust. Let the people give up boasting of their ancestors, otherwise they will stand more degraded than a mean insect in the sight of Allah. (Bazzar).

In another Hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Allah will not inquire about your lineage on the Day of Resurrection. The most honorable in the sight of Allah is he who is most pious. (Ibn Jarir).

In still another Hadith he said: Allah does not see your outward appearances and your possessions but He sees your hearts and your deeds. (Muslim, Ibn Majah).

These teachings have not remained confined to words only but Islam has practically established a universal brotherhood of the believers on the basis, which does not

allow any distinction on account of color, race, language, country and nationality which is free from every concept of high and low, clean and unclean, mean and respectable, which admits all human beings with equal rights, whether they belong to any race and nation, any land or region. Even the opponents of Islam have to admit that no precedent is found in any religion and any system of the success with which the principle of human equality and unity has been given practical shape in the Muslim society, nor has it ever been found. Islam is the only religion which has welded and combined innumerable races and communities scattered in all corners of the earth into one universal ummah.

In this connection, a misunderstanding also needs to be removed. In the case of marriage, the importance that Islamic law gives to *kufv* (likeness of status) has been taken by some people in the sense that some brotherhoods are noble and some mean, and matrimonial relations between them are objectionable. But this, in fact, is a wrong idea. According to the Islamic law, every Muslim man can marry every Muslim woman, but the success of the matrimonial life depends on maximum harmony and conformity between the spouses as regards habits, characteristics and ways of life, family traditions and economic and social status, so that they may get on well with each other. This is the real object of being equal and alike. Where there is unusual difference and disparity between the man and the woman in this regard, lifelong companionship will be difficult. That is why the Islamic law disapproves of such

intermarriages, and not for the reason that one of the spouses is noble and the other mean, but for the reason that in case there is a clear and apparent difference and distinction in status, there would be a greater possibility of the failure of the matrimonial life if the marriage relationship was established.

*29 That is, this is only known to Allah as to who is really a man of high rank and who is inferior in respect of qualities and characteristics. The standards of high and low that the people have set up of their own accord, are not acceptable to and approved by Allah. May be that the one who has been regarded as a man of high rank in the world is declared as the lowest of the low in the final judgment of Allah, and maybe that the one who has been looked upon as a very low person here, attains to a very high rank there. The real importance is not of the honor and dishonor of the world but of the honor and dishonor that one will receive from Allah. Therefore, what man should be most concerned about is that he should create in himself those real qualities and characteristics which make him worthy of honor in the sight of Allah.

14. The bedouins say: "We believe." Say: "You have not believed,^{*30} rather say, we have submitted.^{*31} And faith has not yet entered your hearts. And if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not deprive you

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ ءَامَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ
تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا
يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِنْ
تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ

anything from your deeds.
Indeed, Allah is All
Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

مِنَ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ

رَحِيمٌ

***30** This does not imply all the desert Arabs but only a few particular groups of the Bedouins who had become Muslims, seeing the increasing power of Islam, thinking that they would not only remain safe from any attack by the Muslims but would also gain materially from the Islamic conquests. These people had not embraced Islam sincerely but had professed faith only verbally in order to be counted among the Muslims, and their inner state became exposed whenever they would come before the Prophet (peace be upon him) with different sorts of demands and would enumerate and mention their rights as if they had done him a great favor by accepting Islam. Traditions mention several of such tribal groups, e.g. Muzainah, Juhainah, Aslam, Ashja, Ghifar, etc. About the Bani Asad bin Khuzaimah in particular. Ibn Abbas and Saeed bin Jubair have stated that once during a drought they came to Madinah and making a demand for financial help, they said to the Prophet (peace be upon him) again and again: We became Muslims without any conflict, we did not fight against you as have such and such other tribes fought. By this they clearly meant to point out that their refraining from fighting against the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah and their accepting Islam was a favor for which they must be rewarded by the Messenger (peace be upon him) and the Muslims. It was this same attitude

and conduct of the Bedouin group living around Al-Madinah, which has been commented upon in these verses. One can understand this appraisal better if one reads it together with verses 90-110 of Surah At-Taubah and verses 11-17 of Surah Al-Fatha.

***31** Another translation of the words *qulu aslamna* can be; Say: We have become Muslims. From these words some people have concluded that in the language of the Quran, Mumin and Muslim are two opposite terms. A Mumin is he who has believed sincerely and a Muslim he who might have accepted Islam only verbally without true faith. But, in fact, this is an absolutely wrong idea. No doubt the word *iman* here has been used for sincere affirmation by the heart and the word Islam for only outward and external submission but to understand them as two independent and mutually contradictory terms of the Quran is not correct. A study of the Quranic verses in which the words Islam and Muslim have been used, shows that in the Quranic terminology of Islam is the name of the Faith, which Allah has sent down for mankind. It comprehends the faith and obedience both, and a Muslim is he who believes with a sincere heart and obeys the commands practically. This is borne out by the following verses:

Indeed, Islam is the only right way of life in the sight of Allah. (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 19).

And whoever adopts any other than this way of submission (Islam), that way shall not be accepted from him. (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 85).

And I have approved Islam as the way of life for you.

(Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 3).

Whomever Allah wills to guide aright, He makes his breast wide open to Islam. (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 125).

Obviously, in these verses Islam does not imply obedience without the faith. Here are some other verses:

Say (O Prophet): I have been enjoined to be the first one to affirm (faith in) Islam. (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 14).

If they have surrendered (to Islam), they are rightly guided. (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 20).

All the Prophets, who were Muslims, judged the cases according to the Torah. (Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 44).

Here, and at scores of other places, acceptance of Islam cannot mean adopting obedience without the faith. Likewise, here are a few verses in which the word Muslim has occurred signifying the meaning in which it has been used repeatedly in the Quran:

O you who have believed, fear Allah as He should truly be feared and see that you do not die save as true Muslim. (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 102).

Allah had called you Muslims before this and has called you (by the same name) in this Quran, too. (Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 78).

Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a Muslim, sound in the faith. (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 67).

And remember that when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the walls of this House, they prayed: Lord, make us Thy Muslims and also raise from our offspring a community which should be Muslim. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 128).

(The Prophet Jacob's will for his children): O my children, Allah has chosen the same way of life for you, hence remain Muslims up to your last breath. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 132).

After a study of these verses who can say that in these the word Muslim implies a person who does not believe sincerely but has accepted Islam only outwardly? Therefore, to make the claim that in the Quranic terminology Islam implies obedience without the faith and the Muslim in the language of the Quran is he who accepts Islam only outwardly is absolutely wrong. Likewise, this claim also is wrong that the words *iman* and *mumin* have been used in the Quran necessarily in the sense of believing sincerely. No doubt, at most places these words have occurred to express the same meaning, but there are many places where these words have also been used for outward affirmation of the faith, and all those who might have entered the Muslim community with verbal profession have been addressed with, "O you who have believed", no matter whether they are the true believers, or people with a weak faith, or mere hypocrites. For a few instances of this, see Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 156; Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 135; Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 54; Surah Al-Anfaal, Ayats 20-27; Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 38, Surah Al-Hadid, Ayat 28; Surah As-Saff, Ayat 2.

15. The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and then doubt not, and strive

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا

with their wealth and their lives for the cause of Allah. It is those who are the truthful.

وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الصَّٰدِقُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

16. Say: “Are you informing Allah of your faith. While Allah knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And Allah is Aware of all things.”

قُلْ أَتُعَلِّمُونَ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي
الْاَرْضِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾

17. They consider it a favor to you that they have accepted Islam. Say: “Do not consider your Islam as a favor to me. But Allah has done favor upon you that He has guided you to the faith, if you are truthful.”

يَمُنُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا ۗ قُلْ لَا
تَمُنُوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُم بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُ
عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

18. Indeed, Allah knows the unseen of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is the All Seer of what you do.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾



قـ Qaaf

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah derives its name from the initial letter *Qaf*, thereby implying that it is the Surah which opens with the alphabetic letter Qaf.

Period of Revelation

There is no authentic tradition to show as to when exactly this Surah was revealed. A study of the subject matter, however, reveals that its period of revelation is the second stage of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life at Makkah, which lasted from the third year of the Prophethood till the fifth year. We have given the characteristics of this period in the Introduction to the Sarah Al-Anaam. In view of those characteristics it can be said that this Surah might have been sent down in about the 5th year, when the antagonism of the disbelievers had become quite intense but had not yet assumed tyrannical proportions.

Theme and Topics

Authentic traditions show that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite this Surah generally in the Prayer on the Eid days. A woman named Umm Hisham bin Harithah,

who was a neighbor of the Prophet (peace be upon him), says that she was able to commit Surah Qaf to memory only because she often heard it from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Friday sermons. According to some other traditions, he often recited it in the Fajr Prayer. This makes it abundantly clear that this was an important Surah in the sight of the Prophet (peace be upon him). That is why he made sure that its contents reached as many people as possible over and over again.

This reason for this importance can be easily understood by a careful study of the Surah. The theme of the entire Surah is the Hereafter. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) started preaching his message in Makkah, what surprised the people most was the news that people would be resurrected after death, and they would have to render an account of their deeds. They said that that was impossible; human mind could not believe that it would happen. After all, how could it be possible that when the body had disintegrated into dust, the scattered particles would be reassembled after hundreds of thousands of years to make up the same body once again and raised up as a living body, Allah in response sent down this discourse. In it, on the one hand, arguments have been given for the possibility and occurrence of the Hereafter in a brief way, in short sentences, and, on the other hand, the people have been warned, as if to say: Whether you express wonder and surprise, or you regard it as something remote from reason, or deny it altogether, in any case it cannot change the truth. The absolute un-alterable truth is that Allah knows the

whereabouts of each and every particle of your body that has scattered away in the earth, and knows where and in what state it is. Allah's one signal is enough to make all the scattered particles gather together again and to make you rise up once again as you had been made in the first instance. Likewise, your this idea that you have been created and left free to yourselves in the world and that you have not been made answerable to anyone, is no more than a misunderstanding. The fact is that not only is Allah Himself directly aware of each act and word of yours, even of the ideas that pass in your mind, but His angels also are attached to each one of you, who are preserving the record of whatever you do and utter. When the time comes, you will come out of your graves at one call just as young shoots of vegetable sprout up from the earth on the first shower of the rain. Then this heedlessness which obstructs your vision will be removed and you will see with your own eyes all that you are denying today. At that time, you will realize that you had not been created to be irresponsible in this world but accountable to all your deeds. The rewards and punishments, the Hell and Heaven, which you regard as impossible and imaginary things, will at that time become visible realities for you. In consequence of your enmity and opposition to the truth you will be cast into the same Hell which you regard as remote from reason today. And those who fear the Merciful God, and return to the path of righteousness, will be admitted to the same Paradise at whose mention you now express wonder and surprise.

1. Qaaf. By the glorious
Quran.*1

ق وَالْقُرْآنِ الْمَجِيدِ ﴿١﴾

*1 The word *majeed* is used for expressing two meanings in Arabic: for expressing the high rank, status, honor and dignity of a person, and for saying that somebody is highly generous, charitable and beneficent. This word has been used for the Quran in both these meanings. The Quran is great and glorious in the sense that no book of the world can be brought up against it. It is a miracle both in its language and literary excellence and in its teaching and wisdom. Humans were helpless to produce the like of it at the time when it was sent down and are likewise helpless even today. Nothing of it could ever be proved wrong in any age, nor can anything of it be proved wrong in the present age. Falsehood can neither attack it from the front nor from the rear nor can defeat it. And it is generous and beneficent in the sense that the more a man goes on trying to gain guidance from it, the more of guidance it goes on giving him. And the more he follows and obeys its commands and instructions, the more he continues to be blessed with good things of the world and the Hereafter. There is no limit to its benefits and advantages where a man may become independent of it, and where it may cease to be beneficial and useful for him.

2. But they wonder that a
warner has come to them*2
from among themselves, so
the disbelievers say: “This is
a strange thing.”

بَلْ عَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ
فَقَالَ الْكٰفِرُونَ هٰذَا شَيْءٌ
عَجِيبٌ ﴿٢﴾

*2 This sentence is a unique example of eloquence. In it a vast subject has been compressed into a few brief words. The object for which an oath has been sworn by the Quran has not been mentioned. Instead, a subtle gap has been left and the sentence is resumed with “but”. If one thinks a little and also keeps in view the background in which this has been said, one comes to know what is the subject of the gap that has been left between the oath and “but”. In fact, what has been sworn of is this: The people of Makkah have not refused to acknowledge the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) for any sound reason but for the highly unsound reason that a member of their own kind and an individual of their own nation has come to them as a Warner from God and this is something highly surprising for them. Whereas what would actually be surprising was if God had remained unconcerned about the well being and adversity of His servants and made no arrangement whatsoever to warn them; or had sent a non-human to warn the human beings; or a non Arab to warn the Arabs. Therefore, this basis of the denial is absolutely unsound, and a reasonable person cannot but admit that there must exist some arrangement from God to warn the servants, and in the form that the Warner himself should be a person from among the people to whom he is sent. As for the question whether Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the person whom God has sent on this mission, no other evidence is needed to settle it but this glorious and beneficent Quran, which he is presenting; this is by itself enough to provide a proof of it. This explanation shows that

in this verse an oath has been sworn by the Quran to impress the point that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is really the Messenger of Allah and the disbelievers' surprise and wonder about his apostleship is misplaced, and the fact of the Quran's being *majeed* is a proof of this claim

3. "When we are dead and have become dust. That is a far return."^{*3}

أَإِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا^ط ذَٰلِكَ رَجْعٌ

بَعِيدٌ


*3 This was the second cause of their surprise, the first being that a member of their own kind and clan had arisen with the claim that he had come as a warner to them from God. They were further surprised that the person was warning them to the effect that all men will be raised back to life after death and they will be produced all together in the court of Allah where their deeds will be subjected to accountability and they will be rewarded and punished accordingly.

4. Surely, We know what the earth diminishes from them, and with Us is a Book preserved.^{*4}

قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنْقُصُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ^ط

وَعِنْدَنَا كِتَابٌ حَفِيظٌ


*4 That is, if it cannot be comprehended by intellect, it is their own narrow mind to blame. It does not mean that Allah's knowledge and power also should be narrow. They think that it is in no way possible to collect the scattered particles of the bodies of the countless human beings who have died since the beginning of creation and will die till

Resurrection. But the fact is that Allah directly knows each of those particles in whatever form and in whichever place they are. Furthermore, a full record of this is being maintained in the Register of Allah, which has not left out any particle un-recorded.

This verse also is one of those verses which point out that the life Hereafter will not only be a physical lift as it is in this world, but the body of every person also will be the same which he had in this world. If it were not so, it would be meaningless to tell the disbelievers: We know very well whatever the earth consumes of their bodies and We have a Book which preserves everything. (For further explanation, see E.N. 25 of Surah Ha Mim As-Sajdah).

5. But they have denied the truth when it came to them, so they are in a confused state.*5

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ
فَهُمْ فِي أَمْرٍ مَّرِيجٍ

*5 In this brief sentence a vast subject has been compressed. It means: These people did not rest content only with expressing wonder and declaring the thing to be far removed from reason, but when the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) presented his message of the truth, they denied it as falsehood without any hesitation. Its inevitable result was, and the same only could follow from it, that they do not agree on any one position with regard to the invitation and the Messenger who has presented it. Sometimes they brand him a poet, sometimes a sorcerer, and sometimes a madman. Sometimes they say that he is a magician and sometimes

that he is bewitched. Sometimes they say that he has fabricated this thing by himself in order to establish his superiority. Therefore, leaving it aside, detailed reasoning is now being presented about the authenticity of the second thing which those people regarded as strange and far removed from reason and intellect.

6. Have they not looked at the heaven above them,^{*6} how we made it,^{*7} and adorned it, and there are no rifts in it.^{*8}

أَفَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَوْقَهُمْ
كَيْفَ بَنَيْنَاهَا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا وَمَا لَهَا مِنْ

فُرُوجٍ

*6 Here, by the sky is implied the whole firmament that man finds spread over him, day and night, in which the sun shines in the day and the moon and countless stars glitter at night, which amazes him even when he sees it with the bare eye, but which appears as a vast, limitless universe when he looks at it through the telescope.

*7 This universe seems to be starting from nowhere and ending nowhere. Millions of times larger planets than our earth are moving in it like tiny balls; thousands of times brighter stars than our sun are shining in it our this entire solar system is located in a corner of its only one galaxy; only in this one galaxy there exist at least three thousand million other stars like our own sun, and man's observation has so far discovered one million such galaxies. Out of the millions of galaxies our nearest, neighboring galaxy is so distant from us that its light reaches the earth in ten million years traveling at the speed of 186,000 miles per second.

This shows the vastness of that part of the universe which has so far been observed and explored by man. As to how vast is the entire universe of God we have no means to estimate and judge. May be that the known universe of man does not bear with the entire universe even that ratio which a drop of water bears with the ocean. If about the God Who has brought this huge and wonderful universe into being, this tiny talking animal, called man, who creeps on the earth, asserts that He cannot recreate him once again after death, it would be due to narrowness of his own mind. The power of the Creator of the universe would not at all be affected by it.

*8 That is, in spite of its amazing vastness the wonderful order of the universe is so coherent and firm and its composition so perfect that there is no crack or cleft in it, and its continuity breaks nowhere. This can be understood by an example. Radio astronomers of the present age have observed a galactic system which they have named Source 3C 295. They think that its rays which are now reaching us might have left it more than four thousand million years ago. The question is: How could it be possible for the rays to reach the earth from such a distant source had the continuity and coherence of the universe between the earth and the galaxy been broken somewhere and its composition been split at some point. Allah, in fact, alludes to this reality and puts this question before man: When you cannot point out even a small breach in this system of My universe, how did the concept of any weakness in My power enter your mind, that after the respite of your test is over, if I like to

bring you back to life to subject you to accountability before Me, would I not be able to do so?

This is not only a proof of the possibility of the Hereafter but also a proof of Tauhid. These rays' reaching the earth from a distance of four thousand million light years and being detected by the man made instruments expressly point to the fact that from the galaxy to the earth the entire world has been made up of one and the same substance continuously, one and the same kind of the forces are working in it, and they are functioning according to the same laws without any difference and disparity. Were it not so, the rays could neither have reached here, nor detected by the instruments which man had made after understanding the laws working on the earth and its surroundings. This proves that One God alone is the Creator of this whole universe and its Master and Ruler and Controller.

7. And the earth We spread out, and We set in it firm mountains, and We caused to grow in it (things) of every beautiful kind.*9

وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ

بِهَيْجِ

*9 For explanation, see E.Ns 12-14 of Surah An-Nahl; E.Ns 73-74 of Surah An-Naml; and E.N. 7 of Surah Az-Zukhruf.

8. An insight and a reminder for every penitent slave.

تَبْصِرَةً وَذِكْرَى لِكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُنِيبٍ

٨

9. And We sent down from the sky blessed water, then We produced thereby gardens and harvest grain.

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُّبْرَكًا
فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ وَحَبَّ
الْحَصِيدِ ﴿٩﴾

10. And lofty palm trees with ranged clusters.

وَالنَّخْلَ بَاسِقَاتٍ لَهَا طَلْعٌ
نَضِيدٌ ﴿١٠﴾

11. A provision for the slaves. And We give life thereby to a dead land. *10 Thus will be the resurrection. *11

رِزْقًا لِلْعِبَادِ ط وَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ بَلَدَةً
مَيِّتًا كَذَلِكَ الْخُرُوجُ ﴿١١﴾

*10 For explanation, set E.Ns 73, 74, 81 of Surah An-Naml, E.Ns 25, 33, 35 of Surah Ar-Room and E.N. 29 of Surah YaSeen.

*11 The reasoning is this: Your conjecture about God Who made this sphere of the earth a suitable home for living creatures and Who by combining the lifeless clay of the earth with the lifeless water from the sky produced such a fine vegetable life that you witness flourishing in the form of your gardens and crops, and Who made the vegetation a means of sustenance for both man and beast, that He has no power to resurrect you after death, is a foolish and absurd conjecture. You witness almost daily the phenomenon that a land is lying barren and lifeless; then as soon as it receives a shower of rain, it gives birth to an endless chain of life all of a sudden, the roots lying dead for

ages sprout up and a variety of insects emerge playfully from the layers of the earth. This is a manifest proof that life after death is not impossible. When you cannot deny this express observation of yours, how can you deny that when Allah wills, you too will sprout up from the earth as the vegetation sprouts up. In this connection, one may note that in many parts of Arabia it does not sometimes rain for as long as five years at a stretch and sometimes even for longer periods the land does not receive even a drop of rain. For such long intervals in the burning deserts it is not conceivable that the roots of grass and the insects of the earth would survive. In spite of this when a little of the rain falls at some place, grass sprouts up and the insects of the earth return to life. Therefore, the inhabitants of Arabia can understand this reasoning much better than those people who do not have to experience such long periods of drought.

12. The people of Noah denied before them, and the dwellers of Rass^{*12} and Thamud.

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَأَصْحَابُ
الرَّسِّ وَثَمُودُ

***12** Before this the people of Rass (Ashab ar-Rass) have been mentioned in Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 38, and now here, but at both places they have been only referred to as of those nations who rejected the Prophets. No other detail about them has been given. In the traditions of Arabia two places are well known by the name of ar-Rass, one in the Najd and the other in northern Hejaz. Of these ar-Rass of the Najd is better known and has been referred to more

often in the pre-Islamic poetry of Arabia. Now it is difficult to determine which of these was the home of the Ashab ar-Rass. No reliable detail of their story is found in any tradition either. The most that one can say with certainty is that it was a nation which had thrown its Prophet into a well. But from the mere allusion that has been made to them in the Quran, one is led to think that in the time of the revelation of the Quran the Arabs were generally aware of this nation and its history, but the traditions about them could not be preserved in historic records.

13. And Aad and Pharaoh^{*13} and the brethren of Lot.

وَعَادٌ وَفِرْعَوْنُ وَإِخْوَانُ لُوطٍ

***13** Only the Pharaoh has been mentioned instead of the people of Pharaoh, for he had so dominated his people that they had been left with no independent opinion and will of their own, apart from him. They followed him wherever he led them. That is why he alone was held responsible for the deviation and degeneration of his people. Wherever there exists the freedom of will and action for a nation, it by itself bears the burden of its deeds, and wherever one man's dictatorship may have rendered a nation powerless the one man alone takes on his shoulders the burden of the sins of entire nation. This doesn't mean that the nation becomes absolved from its duty and responsibility when the one man alone has burdened himself with the responsibility. This is not so. The nation in such a case becomes responsible for the moral weakness shown by it in that why it allowed a man to overpower and dominate it so completely. The same thing has been alluded to in Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayat 54,

thus: Pharaoh took his people to be light, and they obeyed him, for they were indeed a sinful people. (For explanation, see E.N. 50 of Surah Az-Zukhruf).

14. And the dwellers of Aiykah and the people of Tubba.*¹⁴ Every*¹⁵ one denied the messengers,*¹⁶ so My threat proved true.*¹⁷

وَأَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ وَقَوْمُ تُبَعِّعٍ كُلٌّ
كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ وَعِيدِ ﴿١٤﴾

*14 For explanation, see E.N. 37 of Surah Saba; E.N. 32 of Surah Dukhan.

*15 That is, they all denied the apostleship of their Messengers as well as the news given by them that they will be raised back to life after death.

*16 Although every nation denied only the Messenger who was sent to it, as it denied the news which all the Messengers have been presenting unanimously, denying one Messenger, therefore, amounted to denying all of them. Moreover, these nations did not merely deny the apostleship of the Messenger who had come to them, but they were not at all inclined to believe that a mere human could be appointed by Allah for the guidance of other men. Therefore, they denied apostleship itself, and the crime of no one was confined to belying and rejecting any one Messenger only.

*17 This is a reasoning from history for the Hereafter. In the preceding six verses, arguments were given for the possibility of the Hereafter; in these the historical end of the nations of Arabia and the adjoining lands has been presented as an argument to prove that the doctrine of the

Hereafter which all the Prophets have been presenting, is the very truth, for whichever nation denied it became involved in the moral degeneration of the worst kind with the result that the torment of God descended on it and eliminated it from the world. This necessary result of the denial of the Hereafter and moral perversion which one can witness throughout history, is an express proof of the fact that man has not been created to be irresponsible in this world, but definitely he has to render an account of his deeds as soon as the time limit for action at his disposal comes to an end. That is why whenever he works in the world irresponsibly, his whole life pattern is set on the path of ruin. If evil and wrong results go on following a course of action successively, it is a clear proof that that course of action is in conflict with the truth.

15. Were We then worn out by the first creation. But they are in doubt about a new creation. *18

أَفَعِينَا بِالْخَلْقِ الْأَوَّلِ بَلْ هُمْ فِي لَبْسٍ مِّنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ

*18 This is a rational argument for the Hereafter. The person who is not a denier of God and is also not so foolish as to regard this excellently ordered universe and the creation of man in it as a mere accident, cannot help but admit that God alone has created man and this whole universe. Now this fact that we exist alive in this world and this great workhouse of the earth and heavens is functioning before us, by itself is an obvious proof that God is in no way powerless in creating us and this universe. Yet if a man says that after bringing about Resurrection the

same God will not be able to bring about a new world order and will not be able to create us once again, he says an irrational thing. Had God been powerless, He would not have been able to create all this in the first instance. When He has created the universe in the first instance and we ourselves came into existence by virtue of that act of creation, what can then be the rational ground for assuming that He will become powerless to re-make the dismantled thing originally made by Himself?

16. And indeed We ^{*19} created man and We know what his soul whispers to him, and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. ^{*20}

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا
تُوَسَّوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ
إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

***19** After presenting the arguments for the Hereafter, it is being stated: Whether you believe in the Hereafter, or deny it, it has to come in any case, and it is such a reality which will certainly come about in spite of your denial. If you heed the warning given by the Prophets in advance and prepare for it, you will be doing good to yourselves. If you do not believe in it, you will be inviting your own doom. Your denial will not prevent the Hereafter from taking place and God's law of justice will not become suspended.

***20** That is, Our power and Our knowledge has so encompassed man from within and without that Our power and knowledge is closer to him than his own jugular-vein. We do not have to travel from a distance to hear what he says, but We directly know every thought that arises in his

heart. Likewise, when We shall want to seize him, We will not have to seize him after covering a distance, for wherever he is, he is in Our grasp; and whenever We will, We will seize him.

17. When the two Receivers receive (him), seated on the right hand and on the left.

إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيَانِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ
وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ

18. He utters not any word but there is with him an observer, ever ready.*21

مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ
عَتِيدٌ

*21 That is, on the one hand, We directly know man's actions and movements, even his hidden thoughts; on the other hand, every man has two angels appointed over him, who are recording whatever he does and says; none of his actions or words is left unrecorded. This means that when man is produced in the court of Allah, Allah at that time Himself will also be knowing what each person has done in the world. Besides, there will also be two witnesses who will produce documentary evidence of the person's actions and deeds. As to what will be the nature of this documentary evidence, it is difficult for us to have a precise concept of it. But from the facts that we are witnessing today, it seems certain that the voices and pictures and marks of man's actions and movements are being preserved and imprinted on every particle of the environment in which he lives and works, and each one of these can be reproduced in exactly the same form and voice so as to leave no difference

whatsoever between the original and its copy. Man is doing this on a very limited scale with the help of his inventions, but the angels of God neither stand in need of these machines nor are bound by any limitation. Man's own body and everything around it is their tape and their film upon which they can record every voice and every image along with its minutest and most delicate detail precisely and exactly, and can make man hear, on the Day of Resurrection, with his own ears, in his own voice, those very things which he talked in the world, and can make him see, with his own eyes, the pictures of all his misdeeds, whose genuineness he would not possibly be able to deny. Here, one should also understand that in the court of the Hereafter, Allah will not punish anybody only on the basis of His own knowledge, but will punish him after fulfilling all the requirements of justice. That is why an exhaustive record is being prepared of every person's words and deeds in the world so that a complete proof with undeniable evidence becomes available of everyone's life work and activity.

19. The agony of death has come with the truth.*²² That is what you were trying to escape.*²³

وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ
ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ

*²² "Come with the truth" implies that the agony of death is the starting point when the reality which had remained concealed in the world, begins to be uncovered. At this point man starts seeing clearly the other world of which the Prophet had forewarned him. Here, man also comes to

know that the Hereafter is the very truth, and also this whether he is entering this second stage of life as favored or damned.

*23 That is, this is the same reality which you refused to believe. You desired that you should live and go about as an unbridled rogue in the world, and there should be no other life after death, in which you may have to suffer for the consequences of your deeds. That is why you shunned the concept of the Hereafter and were not at all inclined to believe that this next world would ever be established. Now, you may see that the same next world is unveiling itself before you.

20. And the trumpet is blown.*24 This is the threatened Day.

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمُ
الْوَعْدِ

*24 This implies that blowing of the Trumpet at which all dead men will rise back to life in their own physical bodies. For explanation, see E.N. 47 of Suarh Al-Anaam; E.N. 57 of Suarh Ibrahim; E.N. 78 of Suarh TaHa; E.N.1 of Suarh Al-Hajj; E.Ns 46,47 of Suarh YaSeen, and E.N. 79 of Suarh Az-Zumar.

21. And every soul will come, with it a driver and a witness.*25

وَجَاءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّعَهَا سَاقٍ
وَشَهِيدٌ

*25 Most probably this implies the same two angels who had been appointed for compiling the record of the words and deeds of the person in the world. On the Day of

Resurrection, when every man will rise from his grave on the sounding of the Trumpet, the two angels will come forth immediately and take him into their custody. One of them will drive him to the divine court and the other will be carrying his record.

22. Indeed, you were heedless of this. So We have removed from you your covering, so your sight is very sharp today.*26

لَقَدْ كُنْتَ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا
فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ
الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ

*26 That is, you can clearly see that everything of which the Prophets foretold is present here.

23. And his companion (angel) will say, this is what I have ready (as testimony).*27

وَقَالَ قَرِينُهُ هَذَا مَا لَدَىٰ عَتِيدٍ

*27 Some commentators say that the companion implies the angel who has been referred to as a witness in verse 21. He will say: I have this person's record ready with me here. Some other commentators say that the companion implies the satan who was attached to the person in the world. He will say: This person whom I was controlling and preparing for Hell, is now presented before You. But the commentary that is more relevant to the context is the one that has been reported from Qatadah and Ibn Zaid. They say that the companion implies the angel who drove and brought the person to Allah's court. He will say: Here is the person who had been given in my charge

24. Cast into Hell^{*28} every stubborn disbeliever.^{*29}

أَلْقِيَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ



***28** As the context shows this command will be given to the two angels who had taken the culprit into their custody as soon as he had risen from the grave, and then brought him before the court.

***29** The word *kaffar* as used in the text means an ungrateful person as well as a denier of the truth.

25. Hinderer of good,^{*30} transgressor,^{*31} doubter.^{*32}

مَنَاعٍ لِلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ مُّرِيبٍ

***30** *Khair* in Arabic is used both for wealth and for goodness. According to the first meaning, the sentence means that he paid no one his dues from his wealth, neither the dues of Allah nor of the people. According to the second meaning, it would mean that he did not only withhold himself from the path of goodness but forbade others also to follow it. He had become a hindrance for the people in the way of goodness and exerted his utmost to see that goodness did not spread.

***31** That is, he transgressed the bounds of morality in everything he did. He was ever ready to do anything and everything for the sake of his interests, his desires and his lusts. He amassed wealth by unlawful means and spent it in unlawful ways. He usurped the people's rights, had neither control over his tongue nor over his hands, and committed every injustice and excess. He did not rest content with creating hindrances in the way of goodness but harassed

those who adopted goodness and persecuted those who worked for it.

***32** The word *murib* as used in the original has two meanings: a doubter and the one who puts others in doubt, and both are implied here. It means that he was not only himself involved in doubt but also created doubts in the hearts of others. He held as doubtful the Being of Allah and the Hereafter and the angels and the Prophethood and revelation and every other truth of religion. Anything that was presented by the Prophets as a truth was held as unbelievable by him, and the same disease he spread to other people. Whomsoever he came in contact with, he would create one or the other doubt, one or the other evil thought in his mind.

26. He who had made up another god with Allah, so cast him into the severe punishment.^{*33}

الَّذِي جَعَلَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ
فَأَلْقِيَاهُ فِي الْعَذَابِ الشَّدِيدِ

***33** Allah, in these verses, has enumerated the qualities that make a man worthy of Hell:

- (1) Denial of the truth.
- (2) Ingratitude to Allah.
- (3) Enmity for the Truth and the followers of the truth.
- (4) To become a hindrance in the way of goodness.
- (5) Failure to fulfill the rights of Allah and the people from his wealth.
- (6) To transgress the bounds in his affairs.
- (7) To commit injustices and excesses against others.
- (8) To doubt the truths of religion.

(9) To create doubts in the hearts of the people.

(10) To hold another as an associate in the Godhead of Allah.

27. His (devil) companion will say: “Our Lord, I did not cause him to rebel, but he himself had gone far astray.”*34

قَالَ قَرِينُهُ رَبَّنَا مَا أَطْغَيْتُهُ
وَلَكِنْ كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ

*34 Here by companion is meant the satan who was attached to the disobedient person in the world. And this also becomes evident from the style that both the person and his satan are disputing between themselves in the court of Allah. He says: My Lord, this wretched one pursued me in the world and did not leave me until he succeeded in misleading me, therefore he alone should be punished. And the satan replies: Lord, I had no power over him. Had he not himself willed to become rebellious, I could not have seduced him forcibly. This wretched person himself fled from goodness and was fascinated by evil. That is why he did not like anything that the Prophets presented and went on yielding to every temptation and inducement presented by me.

28. He (Allah) will say: “Do not dispute in My presence. While I had already sent to you the threat.”*35

قَالَ لَا تَخْتَصِمُوا لَدَيَّ وَقَدْ
قَدَّمْتُ إِلَيْكُم بِالْوَعِيدِ

*35 That is, I had warned both of you as to what punishment will be given to the one who beguiles and what punishment will be suffered by him who is beguiled. In

spite of this warning when you did not desist from committing your respective crimes, there is no use quarreling now. Both, the one who beguiled and the one who was beguiled have to be punished for the crimes committed by them.

29. “The word (decree) cannot be changed with me,^{*36} nor am I unjust to My servants.”^{*37}

مَا يُبَدَّلُ الْقَوْلُ لَدَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا
بِظَلَمٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ



***36** That is, it is not My way to change the decisions once taken. The decision that I have taken to cast you into Hell cannot be withdrawn, nor can the law that I had announced in the world be changed that the punishment for misleading and for being misled will be awarded in the Hereafter.

***37** The word *zallam* as used in the original means the one who is highly unjust. It does not mean: I am unjust to My servants but not highly unjust. But it means: If I were unjust to My own servants being their Creator and Sustainer, I would be highly unjust. Therefore, I am not at all unjust to My servants. This punishment that I am giving you is precisely the same punishment which you have made yourselves worthy of. You are not being punished an iota more than what you actually deserve, for My court is a court of impartial justice. Here, no one can receive a punishment which he does not actually deserve, and for which his being worthy has not been proved by certain and undeniable evidence.

30. The Day We shall say to Hell: "Have you been filled." And it will say: "Is there any more."*³⁸

يَوْمَ نَقُولُ لِجَهَنَّمَ هَلِ امْتَلَأَتْ
وَتَقُولُ هَلْ مِنْ مَزِيدٍ

***38 This can have two meanings:**

- (1) There is no room in me for more men.
- (2) Bring all other culprits who may be there.

According to the first meaning the scene depicted would be that Hell has been so stuffed up with culprits that it cannot hold any more; so much so that when it was asked: Are you full? It cried out, alarmed: Are there still more culprits to come? According to the second meaning, the scene depicted before the mind is that the wrath of Hell is so flared up against the culprits that it is constantly demanding more and more of them to be cast into it so that no culprit escapes un-punished.

Here, the question arises: What is the nature of Allah Almighty's addressing Hell and its reply? Is it only something metaphoric, or is Hell actually a living and intelligent being which may be spoken to and it may respond and give replies? In this regard nothing can, in fact, be said with certainty. Maybe the meaning is metaphoric and only for the purpose of depicting the actual scene of the state of Hell it may have been described in the form of the question and answer, just as one may ask a motor car: Why don't you move forward? And it may say: There is no fuel in me. But this also is quite possible that this conversation is based on reality. Therefore, it is not correct to assume about the things which are lifeless and

mute for us in the world that they would be lifeless and mute for Allah as well. The Creator can have communication with any of His creatures and each of His creatures can respond to Him, no matter how incomprehensible its language may be to us.

31. And Paradise shall be brought near to the righteous, not far off.*³⁹

وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ



*³⁹ That is, as soon as the judgment will be passed about a person from the court of Allah that he is righteous and worthy of Paradise, he will immediately find Paradise in front of him. He will not have to travel a distance on foot or by a conveyance to reach to it. There will be no interval between the pronouncement of the judgment and his entry into the Paradise. From this it can be judged how different the concept of space and time is between this world and the Hereafter. The concept of space and time that we are familiar in this world will become meaningless there.

32. This is what you were promised, to every such returning*⁴⁰ (to Allah), heedful.*⁴¹

هَذَا مَا تُوْعَدُونَ لِكُلِّ أَوَّابٍ

حَفِيفٍ

*⁴⁰ The word *awwab* is very extensive in meaning. It implies the person who might have adopted the way of obedience and Allah's goodwill instead of the way of disobedience, who gives up everything that is disapproved by Allah and adopts everything that is approved by him, who gets alarmed as soon as he swerves a little from the

path of worship and obedience, and repents and returns to the path of worship and obedience, who remembers Allah much and turns to Him in all matters of life.

*41 The word *hafeez* means the one who guards. This implies the person who takes care of the bounds and duties enjoined by Allah, who guards the trusts imposed by Allah and avoids the things forbidden by him, who keeps watch over his time, energies and activities to see that none of these is being misemployed or misused, who offers repentance, remains steadfast and keeps it strong and intact, who examines himself over and over again to see that he is not disobeying his Lord anywhere in word or deed.

33. Who feared the Beneficent, unseen,^{*42} and came with a heart returning (in repentance).^{*43}

مَنْ خَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَجَاءَ

بِقَلْبٍ مُّنِيبٍ

*42 That is, although he could not see the Merciful God and could not perceive Him by his senses in any way, yet he feared His disobedience. His heart was more dominated by the fear of the unseen Merciful God than the fear of other perceptible powers and visible and mighty beings, and in spite of knowing that He is All-Merciful, he did not become a sinner, trusting His Mercy, but feared His displeasure in whatever he said and did. Thus, this verse points to two of the believer's important and basic characteristics: First, that he fears God although he cannot see and perceive Him; second, that he does not persist in sin in spite of his full awareness of God's quality of mercy. These very two

characteristics make him worthy of honor in the sight of Allah. Besides, there is another subtle point also in it, which Imam Razi has pointed out. In Arabic, there are two words for fear, *khauf* and *khashiyyat*, which have a difference in their shade of meaning. The word *khauf* is generally used for the fear that a man feels in his heart on account of his sense of weakness as against someone's superior power and strength, and the word *khashiyyat* is used for the dread and awe with which a man is filled and inspired because of somebody's glory and grandeur and greatness. Here, the word *khashiyyat* has been used instead of *khauf*, which is meant to point out that a believer does not fear Allah only on account of the fear of His punishment, but it is the sense of Allah's glory and greatness that keeps him awe inspired at all times.

***43** The word *munib* in the original is derived from *inabat*, which means to turn to one direction and to turn to the same again and again, just like the needle of the compass that points to the magnetic north persistently, however one may try to turn it away from that direction. Therefore, *qalb-i-munib* would mean such a heart as has turned away from every other direction and turned towards One Allah alone and then kept on turning towards Him again and again throughout life. The same sense has been conveyed by the devoted heart. This shows that in the sight of Allah the man of real worth is he who remains attached and devoted to Allah alone not merely verbally but also truly and sincerely.

34. Enter it in peace.^{*44} This is the Day of eternal life.

أَدْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمُ
الْخُلُودِ



***44** If the word *salam* in *udkhuluha bi-salamin* is taken in the meaning of peace and security, it would mean: Enter this Paradise safe and secure from every kind of grief, sorrow, anxiety and affliction; and if it is taken in the meaning of *salam* itself, it would mean: Enter this Paradise you are welcomed here with the greeting of peace by Allah and his angels.

In these verses Allah has mentioned the qualities because of which a person makes himself worthy of Paradise, and they are:

- (1) Taqwa (piety),
- (2) Turning towards Allah.
- (3) Watching over and guarding his relationship with Allah.
- (4) Fearing Allah although he has not seen Him, and has full faith in His quality of mercy.
- (5) Coming into His presence with a devoted and captivated heart, i.e. remaining constant on the way of devotion and dedication till death.

35. They shall have whatever they desire therein, and with Us is more.^{*45}

هُم مَّا يَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ



***45** That is, they will certainly get whatever they desire, but in addition We will also give them that which they have never conceived and, therefore, could not desire.

36. And how many a generation We destroyed before them, who were stronger than these in power, and they ransacked the lands.^{*46} Is there any place of refuge.^{*47}

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا فَنَقَّبُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ هَلْ مِنْ مَّخِصٍ

***46** That is, they were not only powerful and strong in their own land but had also made incursions into other lands and brought under their sway far off lands as well.

***47** That is, could their power and might save them when the time appointed by Allah came for their seizure? And could they find shelter and refuge anywhere? Now, on what trust do you hope that you will get refuge somewhere in the world when you have rebelled against Allah?

37. Indeed, in that there is a reminder for every such who has a heart, or who gives ear (listens), and he is present (heedful).^{*48}

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرٍ لِّمَن كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ

***48** In other words, either one should have so much of native intelligence that one may think right of his own accord, or if not so, he should be so free from prejudice and neglect that he may listen with attention when another person tries to make one understand the truth.

38. And certainly We created the heavens and the earth and what is

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ

between them in six days,^{*49}
and nothing of fatigue
touched Us^{*50}.

أَيَّامٍ وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِنْ لُغُوبٍ

***49** For explanation, see E.Ns 11 to 15 of the commentary of Surah HaMim As-Sajdah.

***50** That is, the fact of the matter is that We have made this entire universe in six days and We did not become weary at the end so that We might be powerless to reconstruct it Now, if these ignorant people mock you when they hear the news of the life-after-death from you and call you a madman, have patience at it, listen to whatever nonsense they utter with a cool mind, and continue to preach the truth that you have been appointed to spread.

In this verse, there is a subtle taunt on the Jews and the Christians as well, whereas in the Bible the story has been fabricated that God made the earth and the heavens in six days and rested on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2). Although the Christian priests are now feeling shy of it and have changed rested into “ceased from working” in their translation of the Bible, yet in King James authorized version of the Bible, the words “and He rested on the seventh day” are still there, and the same words are also found in the translation that the Jews have published from Philadelphia in 1954. In the Arabic translation also the words are: *fastraha ft! yaum as-sebi*.

39. So bear with patience
over what they say, and
glorify your Lord with His
praise before the rising of sun

فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ
بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ

and before its setting.

وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ ﴿٣﴾

40. And in the night glorify Him and after the prostrations.*51

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَأَدْبَرَ السُّجُودِ ﴿٤٠﴾

*51 This is the means by which man gets the power and energy to continue his struggle to raise the word of the truth and to call the people towards righteousness throughout life with full determination even though he may have to pass through heart-breaking and soul-destroying conditions and his efforts may seem to be bearing no fruit. Praising and glorifying the Lord implies the Prayer here, and wherever in the Quran the praise and glorification has been associated with specific times, it implies the Prayer. The Prayer before sunrise is the Fajr Prayer, and the Prayers before sunset are the Asr and the Zuhr Prayers. The Prayers in the night are the Maghrib and the Isha Prayers, and the third, the Tahajjud Prayer, is also included in the glorification of the night. (For explanation, see E.N. 111 of TaHa; E.Ns 23, 24 of Surah Ar-Room). As for the glorification that has been commanded after being free from prostrations, it may imply the after-Prayer devotions as well as the offering of the voluntary prayers at the end of the prescribed obligatory Prayers. Umar, Ali, Hasan bin Ali, Abu Hurairah, Ibn Abbas, Shabi, Mujahid, Ikrimah, Hasan Basri, Qatadah, Ibrahim Nakhai and Auzai say that it implies the two rakats after the Maghrib Prayer. Abdullah bin Amr bin Aas, and according to a

tradition, Abdullah bin Abbas also, held the opinion that it implies the after-Prayer devotions, and Ibn Zaid says that the object of this command is that voluntary Prayers should also be offered after the prescribed obligatory Prayers.

According to a tradition reported in Bukhari and Muslim, on the authority of Abu Hurairah, once the poor emigrants from Makkah came before the Prophet (peace be upon him), and said: O Messenger of Allah, the rich people have attained high ranks for themselves. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked: What has happened? They said: They offer the Prayers as we offer, and they observe the fasts as we observe; but they practice charity, which we cannot, and they set the slaves free which we cannot. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Should I tell you a thing which if you practiced, you would surpass all others, except those who practiced the same that you practiced? It is this that you should pronounce *Subhan-Allah, Al-Hamdu-lillah* and *Allahu-Akbar*, 33 times each after every Prayer. After some time, the same people came and said: Our rich brothers also have heard this and they too have started practicing, it. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: This is Allah's bounty and He bestows it on whomever He wills. According to a tradition these devotional words have to be repeated ten times each instead of 33 times each.

Zaid bin Thabit has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed his companions that they should pronounce *Subhan-Allah* and *AlHamdu-lillah* 33 times each and *Allahu-Akbar* 34 times after every Prayer. Afterwards,

an Ansar companion submitted: I have seen in a vision that somebody was telling me that it would be better if I pronounced these three devotional words 25 times each and then *Lailaha illAllah* 25 times. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Well, you may do likewise. (Ahmad, Nasai, Darimi).

Abu Saeed Khudri says: I have heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) pronounce the following words when he would return after the Prayers were over: *Subhana Rabbika Rabbil-izzati anima yasifun wasalam-un alal-mursalin, wal-hamdu lillahi Rabb-il alamin.* (Jassas Ahkam al-Quran).

Besides these, several other forms of the after-Prayer devotional pronouncements also have been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Those who wish to act on this instruction of the Quran may select the one they find suitable from Mishkat. Bab adh-dhik-as-Salat, commit it to memory and practice it. Nothing can be better than what the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself has taught in this regard. But what one should bear in mind is that the real object of the devotional pronouncements is not to utter these words only as a matter of course but to refresh and fix their meaning in the mind. Therefore, the meaning of whatever devotions one pronounces should be understood well and then practiced with full consciousness of the meaning.

41. And listen to the Day when the caller shall call out from a nearby place.^{*52}

وَأَسْتَمِعْ يَوْمَ يُنَادِ الْمُنَادِ مِنْ
مَكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ



*52 That is, wherever a dead person would be lying, or wherever his death had occurred is the world, the cry of the caller shall reach him there, which will urge him to rise and go before his Lord to render his account. This cry will be such that everybody who rises from death anywhere on the surface of the earth will feel as though the caller had called him from a nearby place. Simultaneously will this cry be heard everywhere on the globe equally clearly. From this also one can judge how different will be the concepts of space and time in the next world from what they are in this world, and what forces will be working there in accordance with the new laws.

42. The Day they will hear the blast in truth.*53 That is the Day of the coming out (of the dead).

يَوْمَ يَسْمَعُونَ الصَّيْحَةَ بِالْحَقِّ
ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُرُوجِ

*53 The words *yasmaun-as-saihata bil haqqi* can have two meanings:

- (1) That all the people will be hearing the cry of the right command.
- (2) That they will be hearing the cry rightly.

In the first case the sentence will mean that the people will be hearing the same right command with their ears, which they were not inclined to accept in the world, which they had persistently refused to believe, and mocked the Prophets who had brought it. In the second case it will mean that they will certainly hear this cry, and they will realize that it is no fancy but indeed the cry of Resurrection; they will be left with no doubt that the Day of

Resurrection of which they had been forewarned had arrived and the cry that was being raised was of the same.

43. Indeed, It is We who bestow life and give death and to Us is the journeying.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِيهِمْ وَنُؤْتِيهِمُ
وَالْمَصِيرُ
٤٣

44. On the Day the earth shall split asunder from them, rushing out of it in haste. That is a gathering easy for Us.^{*54}

يَوْمَ تَشَقُّقُ الْأَرْضُ عَنْهُمْ
سِرَاعًا ذَٰلِكَ حَشْرٌ عَلَيْنَا يَسِيرٌ
٤٤

***54** This is the answer to the saying of the disbelievers that has been reproduced in verse 3 above. They said: How can it be that when we are dead and become dust, we shall be raised back to life once again. This resurrection is far removed from reason. In reply it has been said: This gathering together, i.e. raising back to life and gathering all the people of the former and latter times together, is very easy for Us. It is not at all difficult for Us to know as to where the dust of one particular person lies and where of the other. We shall also face no difficulty in knowing as to which are the particles of one and which of the other among the scattered particles of the dust. Gathering together all these particles separately and remaking each and every man's body once again and then creating in that body the same very personality which had lived in it before, is not a task that may require any hard labor from Us, but all this can be accomplished immediately at one signal from

Us. All those human beings who have been born in the world since the time of Adam till Resurrection can be brought together by one command of Ours. If your petty mind thinks it is far off, it may think so, but it is not beyond the power of the Creator of the Universe.

45. We know best of what they say, ^{*55} and you are not a tyrant over them. So remind by the Quran him who fears My warning. ^{*56}

سَخْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِجَبَّارٍ فَذِكْرٌ بِالْقُرْءَانِ مَنْ يَتَخَفُ وَعِيدِ



^{*55} In this sentence there is consolation for the Prophet (peace be upon him) as well as a threat for the disbelievers. Addressing the Prophet (peace be upon him) it has been said: Do not care at all about what these foolish people utter about you. We are hearing everything and it is for Us to deal with it. The disbelievers are being warned to the effect: The taunting remarks that you are passing against Our Prophet will cost you dearly. We are hearing everything that you utter and you will have to suffer for its consequences.

^{*56} This does not mean that the Prophet (peace be upon him) wanted to compel the people into believing and Allah stopped him from this. But, in fact, although the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been addressed, the disbelievers are being warned, as if to say: Our Prophet has not been sent as a dictator over you. He is not there to compel you to become believers even if you did not wish to believe. His only responsibility is that he should recite the Quran and

make the truth plain to the one who would take the warning. Now, if you do not accept his invitation, We will deal with you, not he.





Az-Zariat الذَّارِيَّت

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

It is derived from the very first word *wadh-dhariyat*, which implies that it is a Surah which begins with the word *adh-dhariyat*.

Period of Revelation

The subject matter and the style clearly show that it was revealed in the period when although the Prophet's (peace be upon him) invitation was being resisted and opposed with denial and ridicule and false accusations stubbornly, persecution had not yet started. Therefore, this Surah also seems to have been revealed in the same period in which the Surah Qaf was revealed.

Subject Matter and Topics

The Surah mostly deals with the Hereafter, and in the end it presents the invitation to Tauhid. In addition, the people have also been warned that refusal to accept the message of the Prophets and persistence in the concepts and creeds of ignorance have proved to be disastrous for those nations themselves which have adopted this attitude and way of life in the past.

About the Hereafter what this Surah presents in short but pithy sentences is this: The people's different and conflicting beliefs about the end of human life are themselves an express proof that none of these beliefs and creeds is based on knowledge. Everyone by himself has formed an ideology on the basis of conjecture and made the same his creed. Someone thought that there would be no life-after-death; someone believed in the life-after-death, but in the form of the transmigration of souls, someone believed in the life hereafter and the meting out of the rewards and punishments but invented different sorts of props and supports to escape retribution. About a question of such vital and fundamental importance a wrong view of which renders man's whole life-work wrong and waste and ruins his future forever, it would be a disastrous folly to build an ideology only on the basis of speculation and conjecture without knowledge. It would mean that man should remain involved in a grave misunderstanding, pass his whole life in the heedlessness of error, and after death should suddenly meet with a situation for which he had made no preparation at all. There is only one way of forming the right opinion about such a question, and it is this: Man should seriously ponder over the knowledge about the Hereafter that the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah is conveying to him from Him, and should study carefully the system of the earth and heavens and his own existence, and should see whether the evidence of that knowledge's being sound and correct is afforded by everything around him or not. In this regard, the

arrangement of the wind and rain, the structure of the earth and the creatures found on it, man's own self, the creation of the heavens and of everything in the world in the form of pairs have been presented as evidence of the Hereafter. Instances have been cited from human history to show that the temper of the empire of the universe requires that the law of retribution must operate here.

After this, giving the invitation to Tauhid briefly, it has been said: Your Creator has not created you for the service of others but for His own service. He is not like your false gods, which receive sustenance from you and godhead of which cannot function without your help, but He is a God Who is the Sustainer of all, Who does not stand in need of sustenance from anyone and Whose Godhead is functioning by His own power and might.

In this very connection, it has also been stated that whenever the Prophets of Allah have been opposed and resisted, they have not been opposed and resisted on the basis of any rational ground but on the basis of the same obduracy and stubbornness and false pride that is being shown against the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and there is no other motive for it than rebellion and arrogance. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been instructed not to bother about the rebels but to go on performing his mission of invitation and admonition, for it is useful and beneficial for the believers although it may not be so for the other people. As for the wicked people who still persist in their rebellion, they should know that their predecessors who followed the same way of life, have

already received their shares of the punishment, and these people's share of the punishment has been made ready for them.

1. By those (winds) that scatter (dust), dispersing (it).

وَالذَّارِيَّتِ ذَرَوًا ﴿١﴾

2. Then those (clouds) that carry the burden (of water).^{*1}

فَالْحَامِلَتِ وَقْرًا ﴿٢﴾

^{*1} All the commentators agree that *adh-dhariyat* implies the winds that disperse and raise up the dust, and *al-hamirati wiqran* implies the winds that lift up millions of tons of water vapors from the oceans in the form of clouds. This same commentary has been reported from Umar, Ali, Abdullah bin Abbas, Abdullah bin Umar, and also from Mujahid, Saeed bin Jubair, Hasan Basri, Qatadah, Suddi and other scholars.

3. Then those (ships) sailing with ease (upon the sea).

فَالْجَارِيَّتِ يُسْرًا ﴿٣﴾

4. Then those (angels) distributing (by) command.^{*2}

فَالْمُقَسِّمَتِ أَمْرًا ﴿٤﴾

^{*2} The commentators have disputed the commentary of *al-jariyati yusran* and *al-muqassimati amran*. One group has preferred the view, or held this meaning as admissible, that by these two also are meant the winds; that is, the same very winds then transport the clouds, and spreading over different parts of the earth, distribute the water as and where required according to Allah's command, The other group holds that *al-jariyati yusran* implies fast moving boats, and *al-muqassimati amran* implies the angels who

distribute among the creatures their shares of the provisions according to Allah's command. According to a tradition, Umar explained this very meaning of these two sentences and said: Had I not heard this from the Prophet (peace be upon him), I would not have mentioned it. On this very basis, Allama Alusi has expressed the opinion that it is not permissible to take any other meaning of these sentences than this, and those who have taken any other meaning, have taken undue liberties. But Hafiz Ibn Kathir says that this tradition has weak links of the transmitters and on its basis it cannot be said with absolute certainty that the Prophet (peace be upon him) might himself have given this commentary of these sentences. There is no doubt that from a good number of the companions and their immediate followers only this second commentary has been reported, but a good number of the commentators have given the first commentary also, and it fits in better with the context. Shah Rafiuddin, Shah Abdul Qadir and Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hasan also have preferred the first meaning in their translations of the Quran.

5. Indeed, that which you are threatened with is surely true.^{*3}

إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَصَادِقٌ

^{*3} The word used in the original is *toadoona*. If it is derived from *waad*, the meaning would be: That which you are promised; and if it is from *waid*, it would mean: That which you are threatened with. As regards the context, the second meaning is preferable, for the addressees are the people who were lost in disbelief, polytheism and sin, and were not

prepared to believe that they would be held accountable some time in the future and would be rewarded or punished accordingly. That is why we have taken *toadoona* in the meaning of *waid* (threaten) and not of *waad* (promise).

6. And indeed, the rewards and punishments is sure to occur.*4

وَإِنَّ الدِّينَ لَوَاقِعٌ

*4 This is the thing for which the oath has been sworn. The oath implies this: The unique order and regularity with which the wonderful system of the rain is functioning before your eyes, and the wisdom and good reasons which clearly underlie it, testify to the reality that this world is not a meaningless and useless toy-house where the great drama of life is being presented at random since millions and millions of years. But, it is, in fact, a wise system of the highest order in which everything that happens has a purpose and reason behind it. In this system it is not possible that a creature like man should have been given intellect, senses and the powers to exploit things to advantage, should have been granted moral sense to distinguish the good and evil, right and wrong deeds and then might have been left alone foolishly and meaninglessly in the world to behave as he pleased. And that he should never be questioned as to how he had used and employed the powers of the heart and mind and body, the vast means placed at his disposal to work in the world, and the power and authority granted to him to employ the countless creatures of God to his advantage. In this system of the

universe where everything is purposeful, how can the creation of a unique being like man only be purposeless? In a system where everything is based on wisdom, how can the creation of man only be useless and futile? The purpose of the creation of those things which do not possess consciousness and intellect is fulfilled in this very physical world. Therefore, it would be right and reasonable if they were destroyed after they had reached the end of their life term, for they have not been granted any powers and authority for which they might have to be called to account. But a creature which possesses intellect and consciousness and authority, whose activities are not confined only to the physical world, but are also moral in nature, and whose actions entailing moral consequences do not take place only till the end of life, but continue to register their moral effects on it even after death, cannot be destroyed like plants and animals just after it has fulfilled the function of its physical existence. Whatever good or evil act he has committed by his own will and choice, he must get the reward or suffer the punishment for it justly and equitably. For, this is the basic requirement of the factor under which, contrary to other creatures, he has been endowed with the freedom of choice and will. If he is not held accountable, if he is not rewarded or punished according to his moral acts, and if he is also destroyed at the conclusion of his physical life like the creatures which have been given no freedom of will and choice, his creation would inevitably be altogether futile, and a Wise Being cannot be expected to indulge in a futile exercise.

Besides, there is also another reason for swearing an oath by these four phenomena of the Universe regarding the occurrence of the Hereafter and the meting out of rewards and punishments. The ground on which the deniers of the Hereafter regard the life after death as impossible is this: When we are mixed up with dust after death and our particles have scattered away in the earth, how can it be possible that all these scattered particles of the body are reassembled and we are made to rise up again? The error of this apprehension is by itself removed when we consider deeply the four phenomena of the Universe, which have been presented as an argument for the Hereafter. The rays of the sun have their effect on all the collections of water on the surface of the earth, where their heat reaches. In this process countless drops of water evaporate from the collection, but they do not become extinct, and every drop remains preserved in the air as vapors. When Allah commands, the same wind gathers the same vapors of the drops together, combines them into thick clouds, spreads those clouds on different parts of the earth and precisely at the time appointed by Allah causes each single drop to fall back to the earth in the form as it was in the beginning. This phenomenon that is occurring before the eyes of man daily testifies that the particles of the bodies of the dead men can also gather together at one command by Allah and the men can be raised up in the shape in which they lived before. Whether these particles are in the dust, or in the water, or in the air, in any case they remain preserved in this very earth and its atmosphere. Why should it be

difficult for the God Who gathers together the vapors of water after they had dispersed in the air, by means of the same air, and then causes them to rain as water, to gather together the scattered particles of the human bodies from the air, water and earth and then combine them in their original form and shape?

7. By the heaven of pathways.*5

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْحُبُكِ

*5 The word *hubuk* in the original is also used for the paths and for the waves which are produced on the sand of the desert and the surface of stagnant water by the wind; it is also spoken for the curls in wavy hair. Here, the sky has been characterized by *hubuk* either because the sky is often overcast with clouds of different shapes, which go on changing because of the wind, and no shape lasts nor resembles any other, or because at night one sees the stars scattered in the sky in many different combinations and no combination resembles any other combination.

8. Indeed, you are in differing opinion.*6

إِنْ كُمْ لَفِي قَوْلٍ مُّخْتَلِفٍ

*6 The oath has been sworn by the sky of various appearances on this difference of views because of the similarity. That is, just as the clouds and the clusters of stars in the sky have different appearances and there is uniformity among them, so are also your views about the Hereafter, each different from the other. Someone says that this world is eternal and no Resurrection can take place. Another says that this system is not eternal and can come to an end in the course of time, but whatever becomes extinct,

including man, cannot possibly be resurrected. Another one regards resurrection as possible but holds the belief that man, in order to be requited for his good and evil deeds, is born and reborn again and again in this very world. Someone believes in Hell and Heaven but combines the transmigration of the souls also with it. He thinks that the sinner goes to Hell to suffer the punishment as well as is born and reborn in this world for the sake of the punishment. Someone says that the life in the world is in itself an agony; as long as man's self remains attached to physical life, he goes on dying and taking birth again and again in this very world, and his real salvation is that he should attain annihilation. Someone believes in the Hereafter and Hell and Heaven, but says that God by giving death to His only son on the cross had atoned for the original sin of man, and man will escape the evil consequences of his evil acts by believing in the son. Some other people generally believe in the Hereafter and the meting out of the rewards and punishments but at the same time regard certain holy men as the intercessors, who are such favorites of Allah, or wield such influence with Him, that anyone who attaches himself to them as a disciple can escape the punishment whatever he may do in the world. About these holy men there is also no agreement among their devotees; every group of them has its own separate intercessor. This difference of the views itself is a proof that whenever man has formed an opinion about his own and the world's end, independent of revelation and Prophethood, he has formed it without knowledge;

otherwise if man in this regard really had some direct means of knowledge there would not have arisen so many different and contradictory beliefs.

9. Turned away from it (the Quran) is he who is averse.*7

يُؤْفِكُ عَنْهُ مَنْ أَفِكَ

*7 The pronoun of *anhu* in this sentence either turns to the meting out of the rewards and punishments, or to various views. In the first case, it means: The meting out of the rewards has to take place, in spite of your holding different beliefs about it; but only such a person is perverted from it who has turned away from the truth. In the second case, the meaning is: Only such a one is misled by these different views, who has turned away from the truth.

10. Destroyed are those who judge by conjecture.*8

قُتِلَ الْخَرَّصُونَ

*8 Here the Quran is warning man of an important truth. To judge or make an estimate on the basis of conjecture and speculation in the ordinary matters of worldly life may be useful to some extent, although it would be no substitute for knowledge, but it would be disastrous to make estimates and give judgments merely according to one's own conjectures and speculations in a question of such fundamental nature and importance as whether we are, or are not, responsible and accountable to anyone for the deeds and actions of our lifetime, and if we are, to whom are we accountable, when and what shall be the accountability, and what will be the consequences of our success and failure in that accountability. This is not a question on which man may form an estimate merely

according to his conjecture and speculation and then stake his entire life capital on the gamble. For if the conjecture proves to be wrong, it would mean that the man has doomed himself to utter ruin. Furthermore, this question is not at all included among those questions about which one may form a right opinion by the exercise of analogy and conjecture, For conjecture and analogy can work only in those matters which are perceptible for man, whereas this is a question which does not come under perception in any way. Therefore, it is not at all possible that a conjectural and analogical judgment about it may be right and correct. As for the question: What is the right way for man to form an opinion about the matters which are no perceptible and incomprehensible in nature? this has been answered at many places in the Quran, and from this Surah also the same answer becomes obvious, and it is this:

- (1) Man himself cannot reach the reality directly.
- (2) Allah gives the knowledge of the reality through His Prophets.
- (3) Man can ascertain the truth of that knowledge in this way: he should study deeply the countless signs that are found in the earth and heavens and in his own self, then consider seriously and impartially whether those signs testify to the reality that the Prophet has presented, or to the different ideologies that the other people have presented in this regard.

This is the only method of scientific investigation about God and the Hereafter that has been taught in the Quran. Doomed would be the one who discarded this method and

followed his own analogies and conjectures.

11. Those who are engrossed in heedlessness.*9

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي غَمْرَةٍ سَاهُونَ

*9 That is, they do not know what fate they are heading for on account of their wrong conjectures, whereas every way that is adopted with a wrong view of the Hereafter only leads to ruin. He who is a denier of the Hereafter is not at all preparing himself for any accountability and is engrossed in the thought that there would be no life after death, whereas the time would suddenly come when against all this expectations he would open his eyes in the new life and he would realize that there he has to render an account of each of his acts and deeds. The person who is spending his life under the idea that he would come back to this very world after death, will come to know as soon as he dies that all doors of return are closed, that there is no chance of compensating for the misdeeds of the previous life by any new actions, and that there is another life ahead in which he has to meet with and suffer the consequences of his worldly life for ever after. The person who commits suicide in the hope that after he has destroyed his self and its desires he would escape the agony of life in the form of total annihilation, will find as soon as he passes through the gate of death that there is an everlasting life ahead and not mortality, where he has to explain as to why he had been straining every nerve to destroy the self that he had been blessed with instead of developing and adorning it in every possible way. Likewise, the one who continued committing disobedience of Allah throughout life, placing, reliance

upon some son of Allah's becoming an atonement or some holy one's becoming an intercessor, will come to know as soon as he appears before Allah that there is neither any atoner there nor anyone wielding such influence and power that he may save him from Allah's grasp and punishment by means of his own power and influence. Thus, all these conjectural creeds are, in fact, an opiate under the intoxication of which these people are lying senseless, and do not know where they are being misled by the ignorance which they have adopted by rejecting the true knowledge given by God and His Prophets.

12. They ask: "When will be the Day of Recompense."

يَسْأَلُونَ أَيَّانَ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿١٢﴾

13. The Day they will be tormented over the Fire. ^{*10}

يَوْمَ هُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ يُفْتَنُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

***10** The disbelievers did not ask the question: "When will be the Resurrection" for the sake of seeking knowledge but for the purpose of taunt and ridicule. That is why they have been given such an answer. It is just like the taunting reaction of the wicked person who is admonished to desist from his immoral deeds, otherwise he would meet with the evil consequences of those deeds one day, and he asks in jest: When will that day be? Obviously, such a question is not asked to know the date of the occurrence of the evil end but to make fun of the admonition. Therefore, its right answer is that it will occur when the evildoers will meet with their doom. Besides, one should also understand well that if a denier of the Hereafter is discussing the question of the Hereafter sensibly, he can dispute the arguments in

favor and against it, but he can never ask the question: On what date will the Hereafter occur, unless he has lost all reason. Whenever he puts such a question, it will only be as a taunt and ridicule. For it does not at all affect the real discussion whether the date of the occurrence of the Hereafter is stated or not. No one can deny the Hereafter only because the year and the month and the day of its occurrence have not been given, nor can one believe in it on hearing that it will occur on such and such a day of such and such a month and year. The date is no argument that may cause a denier to be convinced of its coming, for after that the question will arise: How can one believe whether on that particular day the Hereafter will actually occur?

14. (It will be said): “Taste your torment.^{*11} This is what you used to seek to be hastened.”^{*12}

ذُوقُوا فِتْنَتَكُمْ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ
بِهِ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ



***11** The word *fitnah* gives two meanings here:

- (1) Taste this torment of yours.
- (2) Taste the mischief that you had created and spread in the world.

***12** The disbelievers asking: When will the Day of Retribution be, implied: Why is it being delayed. That is, when we have denied it and have deserved the punishment for belying it, why doesn't it overtake us immediately. That is why when they will be burning in the Hell-fire, at that time it will be said to them: This is that which you sought to be hastened. This sentence by itself gives the meaning: It was Allah's kindness that He did not seize you immediately

on the occurrence of disobedience from you and went on giving you respite after respite to think and understand and mend your ways. But the foolish people that you were, you did not take advantage of the respite but demanded that your doom should be hastened for you instead. Now you may see for yourself what it was that you were seeking to be hastened?

15. Indeed, the righteous^{*13} will be among gardens and springs.

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ



***13** In this context the word *muttaqi* (the righteous) clearly implies those people who believed in the Hereafter when they were given the news of it by the Book of Allah and His Messenger, and adopted the attitude and way of life that they were taught for success in the life hereafter, and refrained from the way about which they had been told that it would involve man in the torment of God.

16. Receiving what their Lord has given them.^{*14} Indeed, they were doers of good before.

ءَاخِذِينَ مَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ
كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُحْسِنِينَ



***14** Literally: “Receiving what their Lord has given them”, but in this context receiving does not merely mean to receive but to receive joyfully. Obviously, when a person is given something of his own choice and liking, his receiving it will naturally have the meaning of accepting and receiving it joyfully.

17. They used to sleep but little of the night.*¹⁵

كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ



*¹⁵ Some commentators have given this meaning of this verse: Seldom did it so happen that they spent the whole night sleeping and did not spend a part of it, in the beginning of the night or in the middle or in the end of it, awake in the worship of Allah. This commentary with a little variation in wording has been related from Ibn Abbas, Anas bin Malik, Muhammad al-Baqir, Mutrif bin Abdullah, Abul Aliyah, Mujahid, Qatadah, Rabi bin Anas and others. According to some other commentators, it means this: They spent the major part of their nights in the worship of Allah Almighty and slept little. This meaning has been reported from Hasan Basri, Ahnaf bin Qais, and Ibn Shihab Zuhri, and the later commentators and translators have preferred this, for this appears to be in better agreement with the words of the verse and the context.

18. And in the hours of dawn,*¹⁶ they would ask for forgiveness.

وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ

*¹⁶ That is they did not belong to those who spent their nights in immoral and indecent acts and even then never thought of seeking Allah's forgiveness. On the contrary, they spent a major part of the nights in the worship of Allah and then in the early hours of dawn sought His forgiveness, saying that they did not do full justice to the

worship that was due from them. The words *hum-yastaghfirun* also contain an allusion to this that it befitted and suited them alone that they should exert their utmost in the service of their Lord and then, at the same time, should implore Him humbly for the forgiveness of their errors and shortcomings instead of exulting at and waging proud of their good acts. This could not be the way of those shameless, wicked people who committed sin and behaved arrogantly as well.

19. And in their wealth was a right for the beggar and the deprived.*¹⁷

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ
وَالْمَحْرُومِ

*¹⁷ In other words, on the one hand, they recognized the right of their Lord and duly discharged it; on the other hand, they did not think that whatever Allah had given them, whether little or much, was wholly their own and their children's right, but they had the sense that in their possessions there was the right and share of every such person who was indigent and needy. They did not render help to the people as a charity so as to earn their gratitude for the favor done, but they regarded it as the people's right and discharged it as their own duty. Then their this service to mankind was not only confined to those who came to them for seeking help as beggars but anyone about whom they came to know that he had been left destitute, they would become anxious to render him necessary help of their own accord. There was no orphan who might have been left helpless, no widow who might have had no bread-

winner, no disabled person who might be unable to earn a living, no one who might have lost his job, or whose taming might not be sufficing his needs, nobody who might have been hit by a calamity and might be unable to compensate for the loss by himself. In short, there was no needy one whose condition they might have known and yet might have withheld their help when they could have rendered him necessary help and support.

The following are the three qualities on the basis of which Allah regards them as the righteous doers of good, and says that these very qualities have made them worthy of Paradise:

(1) That they believed in the Hereafter and refrained from every act and conduct which Allah and His Messenger had stated to be disastrous for the life-after-death.

(2) That they executed their utmost to do full justice to the service of Allah and still sought Allah's forgiveness instead of exulting at their acts of piety.

(3) That they served Allah's servants not as a favor to them but as their own duty and their right due from them.

Here, one should also know and understand another thing; The right of the needy ones that has been mentioned here in the wealth of the believers does not imply the zakat, which has been imposed as religious duty on them. But this is the right that a well-to-do believer himself feels there is in his possessions of the needy even after he has paid off the zakat, and he discharges it willingly even if it has not been made obligatory by the Shariah. Ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Zaid bin Aslam and other scholars have understood this very

meaning of this verse. In fact, the real spirit of this divine command is that a pious and virtuous person is never involved in the misunderstanding that he has become relieved of his duty of discharging the right of Allah and His servants that there was in his possessions after he has paid the zakat, and now he is not bound to help every needy and destitute person whom he comes across. Contrary to this, every servant of Allah, who is really pious and righteous, remains ever ready to do whatever good he can do willingly, does not let slip any opportunity when he could do some good to the people in the world. He is not of the way of thinking that he has done whatever good he had been enjoined to do and now no more good is required to be done by him. The one who has recognized the true value of goodness, does not perform it as a burden but tries to earn more and more of it, greedily as a bargain to his own advantage, in his own interest.

20. And in the earth are signs for those certain in faith.*18

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُوقِنِينَ

*18 The signs imply those proofs which testify to the possibility and necessity of the Hereafter. The earth's own body and its structure, its having been placed at a suitable distance from the sun at a particular angle, the arrangement of heat and light and of different seasons on it, the provision of air and water on it, and of countless different kinds of treasures in its belly, covering its surface with a fertile crest and causing to grow in it an endless variety of vegetables, generating countless races of the

animals of the land and water and air, providing suitable food and proper conditions for the life of every species, creating and making available all those means and resources on it even before the creation of man, so as to meet and suit his ever increasing needs in every stage of history as well as accord with the development of his civilization and way of living, these and countless other signs can be seen in the earth and its surroundings by every discerning eye. The case of the one who has closed the doors of his heart to belief and faith is different. He will see in these every thing else but not any sign that may point to the reality. But an un-prejudiced person who has an open mind, will never form the idea after observing these signs that all this has come about as the result of an accidental explosion, that had occurred suddenly in the universe millions of years ago; he will rather be convinced that this wise and perfect work of art is the creation of an Omnipotent and Omniscient God. And that God Who has made this earth cannot be helpless to resurrect man after death, nor can He be so unwise as to leave a sensible and intelligent being like man after granting him powers and authority to roam at will in His earth. The fact that man has been granted powers and authority by itself demands that he should be accountable; otherwise it would be against wisdom and justice; and the Creator's being all-powerful (Omnipotent) is by itself a proof that after the human species has fulfilled its function in the world, He can raise all its members back to life and gather them together from wherever they are lying dead in the earth for the

purpose of accountability.

21. And in your own selves. *19 Do you then not see.

وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ

*19 That is, you may not look outside yourself; look within your own self, and you will find countless signs testifying to the same truth. You will see how your creation was begun by combining a microscopic sperm with a microscopic egg in a corner of the mother's body; how you were blessed with a body of unique structure and a self endowed with wonderful powers and abilities; how you were brought out from the dark world of your mother's womb, as soon as your structure became complete, into this vast world, equipped with an automate machine within yourself, which goes on functioning by itself from the day you take birth till your maturity and old age, to assimilate food, produce blood and circulate it in the veins, discharge waste matter, prepare new parts in place of the wasted and worn out parts of the body, resisting the internal and the external hazards to the body and compensating for the losses, even for sending you to peaceful sleep after exhaustion, without any effort required to be made by you towards these basic needs of life. A wonderful brain has been placed under your skull in whose complicated layers lies filled an invaluable wealth of intellect, thought, imagination, consciousness, discrimination, will, memory, desire, feeling and emotions. Inclinations and trends, and other mental abilities. You have been provided with numerous means of knowledge which supply you with every kind of informational through the eye, nose, ears and skin. You

have been given the tongue and the power of speech by which you can express your thoughts and feelings. And then your ego has been placed as a ruler over the entire kingdom of your body so that it may employ all the powers and abilities and form opinions and decide as in what ways you have to spend and employ your time and labor and efforts, what you have to reject and what you have to accept, what should be your objective in life and what you should shun and avoid.

Thus equipped when you were brought into the world, you saw what provisions had been made ready here for your nourishment, development and the progress and perfection of your self by virtue of which you reached a particular stage of life when you became able to use the powers and authority you had been endowed with.

For using these powers you were given means in the earth, provided with opportunities, and given ability to control and employ many of the things as you pleased. You had all the ways of disbelief and faith, sin and obedience, justice and injustice, good and evil, truth and falsehood, open before you; there were those who invited to each of these ways and there were the means to lead to each one of them. Whoever among you selected one particular way did so on his own responsibility, for he had the power to decide and choose endowed in himself. Depending on the choice made by each one and taking advantage of the opportunities thus afforded of employing his powers of will and intention someone became a good man and another a bad man; someone adopted the way of belief and faith and another

the way of disbelief, polytheism or atheism; someone withheld himself from unlawful desires, and another did whatever he wanted in obedience to his self; someone became an oppressor and another the oppressed; someone carved out his duties and another usurped the rights of others; someone continued to do good till his last breath, another went on committing evil till his last moment of life; someone exerted himself to raise the word of the truth, another went on oppressing the followers of the truth in order to cause falsehood to flourish.

Now can a person, unless he is absolutely blind and senseless, say that a being such as this has appeared on the earth just by an accident? That there is no wisdom and no plan working behind his creation? That the storms that he is raising on the earth are without a purpose and will end up without entailing any consequence? That there will be no reward for a good act and no punishment for an evil act? And that injustice will not be redressed and the unjust will not be brought to book? Such things may be said by a person who has lost his reason, or by the one who is resolved not to acknowledge at all the wisdom of a Wise Being working behind the creation of man. But an unprejudiced, sensible person cannot help but admit that the creation of man, the powers and abilities he has been given, and the position he has been granted here, is certainly a grand, wise plan, and the wisdom of the God Whose plan it is, inevitably demands that man should be questioned about his actions and deeds; and it cannot be right to entertain the doubt about the powers of God that He will not be able

to recreate man whom He has brought up to this noble position of honor from a mere microscopic cell.

22. And in the heaven is your provision and that which you are promised. *20

وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ



*20 By the heaven here is meant the heavens, by provision, all that man is given for his survival and functioning in the world, and by that which you are promised, Resurrection, gathering together, accountability, meting out of rewards and punishments, and Hell and Heaven, which have been foretold and promised in all divine Books and now in the Quran. The verse means to say: The decisions, as to who should be given what and how much in the world, are taken in heavens, and also the decision as to when should any of you be recalled for the purpose of accountability and dispensation of the rewards and punishments.

23. Then by the Lord of the heaven and the earth, indeed it is truth, just as (the truth) that you are speaking.

فَوَرَبِّ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْكُمْ تَنْطِقُونَ



24. Has there reached you *21 the story of the honored guests of Abraham. *22

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ



*21 Now, from here to the end of verse 46, brief allusions have been made, one after the other, about Allah's Prophets and some of the nations of the past, which are meant to impress two things:

First, that in human history God's law of retribution has been working constantly, in which precedents are found of the rewards for the righteous and of punishments for the wicked people continuously. This is a clear evidence of the fact that even in the life of this world the Creator's relationship with man is not merely based on the physical law but the moral law also is working side by side with it. And when the temper of the kingdom of the universe is such that the creation which has been given an opportunity to act morally while living in a physical body, should not only be dealt with on the basis of physical laws, like animals and plants, but the moral law also should be applied to its moral acts. This by itself points to the truth that a time must come in this kingdom when on the completion of man's role in the physical world, full results of his moral acts should also appear strictly in accordance with the moral law because in the physical world they do not appear fully.

The second thing that has been impressed by these historical allusions is that the nations which did not believe in the Prophets of Allah and based the conduct and attitude in life on the denial of the Oneness of Allah, the Prophethood and the Hereafter, were ultimately doomed to destruction. This continuous experience of history testifies that God's law of morality that was conveyed through the Prophets, and on the basis of which man will be subjected to accountability in the Hereafter, is entirely based on the truth. For whichever nation determined its conduct and attitude in the world independent of this law, considering

itself irresponsible and unaccountable, has gone straight to its doom.

*22 This story has been narrated at three places in the Quran, in Surah Hood, Ayats 69-73; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 51-56 and Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayat 31.

25. When they came in to him, and they said: "Peace." He answered: "Peace, (you are) unfamiliar people."*23

إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ
سَلَامٌ قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ

*23 In view of the context in which this sentence has occurred, it can have two meanings:

(1) That the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) himself said to the guests: I have never had the chance to see you before, you are perhaps new-comers in this land.

(2) That after responding to their salutation, the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) said these words to himself, or to his servants, while going inside the house for arranging the feast: They appear to be strangers, people of their noble nature and appearance have not been seen before in this land.

26. Then he turned to his household,*24 then brought out a roasted calf.*25

فَرَاغَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ فَجَاءَ بِعِجَلٍ
سَمِينٍ

*24 That is, he did not tell his guests that he was going to arrange food for them, but after they were seated he went quietly into the house to arrange a feast for them, so that the guests should not refuse it out of formality.

*25 In Surah Hood, the words are *ijlin hanidh*, a roasted calf; here *bi-ijlin samin*: a fatted calf that he got roasted.

27. Then he put it before them, he said: “Will you not eat.”

فَقَرَّبَهُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ



28. Then he became afraid of them.*26 They said: “Fear not.” And they gave him good tidings of a son, possessing knowledge.*27

فَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً ط قَالَوْا لَا تَخَفْ ط وَدَشَّرُوهُ بِغُلْمٍ عَلِيمٍ ط



*26 That is, when they did not stretch out their hands for food, the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) became afraid in his heart. The reason for this fear could be that in tribal life the strangers' going to a house and avoiding food used to be an indication that they had come with an evil design. But most probably when they refrained from food the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) realized that they were angels, who had come in human guise; and since the angels came in human guise only on extraordinary occasions, he became afraid that they must have come in that guise on some dreadful mission.

*27 According to Surah Hood, Ayat 71, this was the good news of the birth of the Prophet Isaac and this also contained the good news that through the Prophet Isaac he would have a grandson like the Prophet Jacob (peace be upon them all).

29. Then his wife came forward, crying, and she

فَأَقْبَلَتِ امْرَأَتُهُ فِي صَرَخٍ فَصَكَتْ

smote her face, and she said:
“An old woman, barren.”*28

وَجَهَّهَا وَقَالَتْ عَجُوزٌ عَقِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

*28 That is, I am not only old but barren too. How shall a child be born to me? According to the Bible, the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) at that time was a hundred years old and Sarah was ninety (Gen. 17: 17).

30. They said: “Thus has said your Lord. Indeed, He is the All Wise, the All Knowing.”*29

قَالُوا كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ
الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٠﴾

*29 The object of this story is to tell that Allah will certainly reward His servant, who did full justice to the rights of His worship in the world, handsomely in the Hereafter. But even in this world he rewarded him well by giving him children at an age when according to the common physical laws he could not beget children and his aged wife having remained childless throughout life had completely despaired of ever bearing children; and then He granted him such extraordinary children as have not been granted to any one else in the world. There has been no other man in history in whose line four Prophets might have been born in succession. It was the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) alone whose line continued to be blessed with Prophethood for three generations, and the illustrious Prophets like Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (peace be upon them) emerged from his house.

31. He (Abraham) said:
“Then what is your

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا

errand,^{*30} O you who have
been sent.”

الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

***30** As the angels come in human guise only on highly important occasions, the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) used the word *khatb* to find out the purpose of their visit; the word *khatb* in Arabic is used for an errand of same extraordinary nature.

32. They said: “Indeed, we
have been sent to a criminal
people.”^{*31}

قَالُوا إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِينَ

﴿٣١﴾

***31** That is, to the people of the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him). The epithet of a criminal people was enough to tell which people were meant in view of the gravity of their crimes. They have already been mentioned in the Quran in Surah Al-Araf, Ayats 80-84; Surah Hood, Ayats 74-83; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 58-79; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 74-75; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 160-175; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 54-58; Surah As-Saaffat, Ayats 133-137.

33. “That we may send upon
them stones of baked clay.”

لِنُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّن طِينٍ

﴿٣٢﴾

34. “Marked with your Lord
for the transgressors.”^{*32}

مُسَوَّمَةٌ عِندَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

***32** That is, each stone has been marked by your Lord’s command to show for which culprit it is meant. According to the details given in the Quran, in Surahs Hood and Al-

Hijr, their towns were turned upside down, and then showered with stones of baked clay. From this one can understand that the entire land was overturned by a severe earthquake and the people who tried to escape were showered with brimstone and destroyed.

35. Then ^{*33} We evacuated whoever was therein of the believers.

فَأَخْرَجْنَا مَنْ كَانَ فِيهَا مِنَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*33 As to what happened between them and the people of the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) when the angels reached his house after their meeting with the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon them), has been left out. The details have been given in the Surahs Hood, Al-Hijr and Al-Ankabut. Here mention is being made only of the time when they were going to be visited by the scourge.

36. So We did not find within them other than one (single) house of Muslims. ^{*34}

فَمَا وَجَدْنَا فِيهَا غَيْرَ بَيْتٍ مِنَ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ

*34 That is, among the entire nation and in the entire land there was only one house that shone with the light of the faith and Islam, and it was no other but the house of the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) himself. The rest of the nation was sunk deep in sin and wickedness and its whole country was brimming over with filth and immorality. Therefore Allah rescued the people of that one house and then sent down the torment on the land, which did not spare any one of the wicked people. In this verse three

important themes have been discussed:

(1) That Allah's law of retribution does not decree the total destruction of a nation as long as there remains a considerable element of good in it. As against the majority of the bad people if it still contains a small element of those who continue trying to invite others to the right way, Allah gives it an opportunity to work, and goes on increasing the respite of the nation which is not yet wholly devoid of goodness. But in case there remains no element of goodness at all in the nation, Allah's law is that He somehow rescues by His power and grace some of the good people, who might have become weary and helpless fighting evil in its settlements, and deals with the rest as every sensible master would deal with his rotten fruit.

(2) That Muslim is not the name only of the people who are the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) but of all the Prophets before him and their followers who were also Muslims. Their religions were not mutually exclusive that one might be the religion of the Prophet Abraham, another of the Prophet Moses and still another of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon them all), but they all were Muslims and their religion was this same Islam. This truth has been explained at several places in the Quran and there is no room for ambiguity in this regard. For instance, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 128, 131-132; Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 67; Surah Al-Maidah, Ayats 44, 111; Surah Yunus, Ayats 72, 84; Surah Yousuf, Ayat 101; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 126; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 31, 42, 44.

(3) That the words Mumin and Muslim have been used as

synonyms in this verse. If this verse is read with verse 14 of Surah Al-Hujurat, the error of the thinking of those people becomes obvious, who regard Mumin and Muslim as two independent terms of the Quran, which have been used in one and the same meaning every where, and Muslim is necessarily used for the person who might have entered the fold of Islam by professing the faith only verbally, without true faith. (For further explanation, see E.N. 31 of Surah Al-Hujurat).

37. And We left behind therein a sign for those who fear the painful punishment.*35

وَتَرَكْنَا فِيهَا آيَةً لِلَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ
الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ

*35 A sign: the Dead Sea, southern part of which still presents the signs of a great disaster. The archaeologists have expressed the opinion that the principal cities of the people of Lot were probably sunk underground and the waters of the Dead Sea spread over them. For that part of this sea which is situated to the south of the small peninsula called Al-Lisan clearly seems to be a later development, and the signs of the ruins of the Dead Sea found to the north of this peninsula are very different from those found in the south. From this it is concluded that the southern part was once higher than the sea level. At some later time it sank and went under water. The period of its sinking also seems to be about 2000 B.C. and the same precisely is the time of the Prophets Abraham and Lot (peace be upon them) historically. In 1965 an American archaeological research party discovered a large graveyard at Al-Lisan which

contains more than twenty thousand graves. From this one is led to think that nearby it there must have existed a large city. But no ruins of any such city are found in the adjoining area, which might have given rise to such a big graveyard. This fact also strengthens the doubt that the city whose graveyard it was has sunk under the sea. The area to the south of the sea still abounds in the ruins and the underground stocks of sulfur, resin, tar and natural gas found in this area lead one to believe that hell must have been let loose at this place at some time by the eruption of lava and the play of lightning. (For further explanation, see E.N. 114 of Surah Ash-Shuara).

38. And in Moses (there is a sign), when We sent him to Pharaoh with a clear authority.*36

وَفِي مُوسَىٰ إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ
بِسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ

*36 A clear authority: such miracles and clear evidences which made it absolutely manifest that he had been appointed as a Messenger by the Creator of the earth and heavens.

39. Then he turned away in his might, and he said: “A wizard or a madman.”*37

فَتَوَلَّىٰ بَرْكَنِيهِ وَقَالَ سَاحِرٌ أَوْ
مَجْنُونٌ

*37 That is, they called him sometimes a sorcerer and sometimes a madman.

40. So We seized him and his hosts and cast them into

فَأَخَذْنَاهُ وَجُنُودَهُ فَنَبَذْنَاهُمْ فِي

the sea, and he became
blameworthy.*38

الَّيْمُ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ

*38 A whole history has been compressed into this brief sentence. To understand it well one should know that Pharaoh was the absolute ruler of the greatest center of civilization and culture of the world in those days and the people of the adjoining lands were overawed by his power and might. Obviously, when he might have sunk suddenly one day in the sea along with his armies, the event must have become well known not only in Egypt but among all the neighboring nations as well. At this, except for those whose kith and kin had sunk, there was no one else among their own people, or in the other nations of the world who would mourn them or write an elegy on them, or would at least express sorrow and say that good and noble people had become a victim of the disaster. Instead of this, as the world had become fed up with their wickedness and injustices, every person heaved a sigh of relief at their exemplary fate, everyone cursed them, and anyone who heard this news exclaimed that the wicked people had deserved the fate justly. In Surah Ad-Dukhan, the same thing has been expressed, thus: Then neither did the heavens weep on them nor the earth. (For explanation, see E.N. 26 of Surah Ad-Dukhan).

41. And in Aad (there is a sign), when We sent upon them a barren wind.

وَفِي عَادٍ إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيحَ
الْعَقِيمَ

42. It spared not of anything it reached upon, but made it like disintegrated ruins.*39

مَا تَذَرُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَتَتْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا
جَعَلَتْهُ كَالرَّمِيمِ

*39 The word used for this wind is *aqim*, which is used for a barren woman, though literally it means dry. If the literal meaning is taken it would mean that it was such an intensely hot and dry wind that whatever it blew on, it caused it to become absolutely dry; and if it is taken in the idiomatic sense it would mean that like a barren woman it was a wind without any benefit: neither it was pleasant, nor it brought rain, nor fertilized the trees, nor contained any other benefit for which the wind blows. At other places it has been stated that this wind was not only useless and dry but it blew so violently that it swept the people off the ground and it continued to rage for eight days and seven nights continuously, till it laid the entire land of the Aad to a waste. (For explanation, see E.Ns 20, 21 of Surah HaMim As-Sajdah, and E.Ns 25 to 28 of Surah Al-Ahqaf).

43. And in Thamud (there is a sign), when it was said to them: “Enjoy yourselves for a while.”*40

وَفِي ثَمُودَ إِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَمَتَّعُوا
حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ

*40 The commentators have disputed as to which respite it implies. Qatadah says that it alludes to that verse of Surah Houd in which it has been stated that when the Thamud killed the she camel of the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him), they were warned by Allah that they had three more days to enjoy life after which they would be overtaken by

the torment. Contrary to this, Hasan Basri has expressed the opinion that this thing had been said by the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) to his people in the beginning of his mission and by this he meant that if they would not adopt the way of repentance and faith, they would be granted a respite to enjoy life in the world only till an appointed time, and then they would be overtaken by the torment. The second of these two commentaries seems to be more correct, for the following verse (But they defied the command of their Lord) indicates that the respite being mentioned here had been given before the defiance and they committed it after the warning. On the contrary, the three days respite mentioned in Surah Houd had been given after the wicked people had committed the final defiance which became decisive in their case and sealed their doom forever afterwards.

44. But they defied the command of their Lord. So they were seized by a thunderbolt^{*41} while they looked on.

فَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ
الصَّاعِقَةُ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ

*41 Different words have been used for this torment at different places in the Quran. Somewhere it has been called *rajafah* (a frightful and shocking calamity), somewhere *saihah* (a crashing and thundering disaster), somewhere *taghiyah* (a most severe affliction) and here it has been described as *saiqah* (a calamity that strikes like a thunderbolt). Probably this torment was like an earthquake which was also accompanied by a terrible noise.

45. Then they were unable to rise up, nor could they help themselves.*42

فَمَا اسْتَطَعُوا مِنْ قِيَامٍ وَمَا كَانُوا
مُنْتَصِرِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

*42 *Intisar* from which the word *muntasirun* in the original is derived means to save oneself from an attack by somebody as well as to avenge oneself on the attacker.

46. And the people of Noah before. Indeed, they were a people disobedient.

وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ مِّنْ قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا
قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

47. And the heaven We*43 built with strength. And indeed, We (have the power to) make the vast extent (thereof).*44

وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا
لَمُوسِعُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

*43 After presenting historical arguments for the Hereafter, now arguments from the universe are being presented in proof of the same.

*44 The word *musi* (pl. *musiun*) may mean the one who possesses power and means, and also the one who can extend and expand something. According to the first meaning, the verse would mean: We have built this heaven by Our own might and not with somebody else's help, and its erection was in no way beyond Us. Then how can you ever conceive that We shall not be able to recreate it? According to the second meaning, it would mean: This huge universe that We have created, is not a finished work, but

We are expanding it continuously, and new and ever new manifestations of Our creation are appearing in it every moment. How do you then think that such a marvelous Creator would not be able to repeat His creation.

48. And the earth We have spread out, so how excellent Spreader We are.^{*45}

وَالْأَرْضَ
فَرَشْنَاهَا
فَنِعَمَ
الْمَهْدُونَ

*45 For explanation, see E.N. 18 above. For further explanation, see E.N. 74 of Surah An-Naml, E.N. 29 of Surah YaSeen and E.Ns 7 to 10 of Surah Az-Zukhruf.

49. And of all things We have created in pairs,^{*46} that you may remember.^{*47}

وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

*46 That is, everything in the world has been created on the principle of the pairs. The whole system of the universe is functioning on the principle that certain things are complementary and matching to certain others, and their combination brings into being countless new forms and combinations. Nothing here is so unique as may have no match, for the fact is that a thing becomes productive only after it has combined with its matching partner. (For further explanation, see E.N. 31 of Surah YaSeen, and E.N. 12 of Surah Az-Zukhruf).

*47 That is, the erection of the whole universe on the principle of the pairs and the existence of all things in the world in couples is a reality that testifies expressly to the necessity of the Hereafter. If you consider it deeply you will

yourself come to the conclusion that when everything in the world has a partner and nothing becomes productive without combining with its partner, how can the life of the world be without a match and partner? Its match and partner necessarily is the Hereafter. Without that partner it would be absolutely fruitless.

To understand what follows one should also understand that the discussion heretofore centers around the Hereafter, but this very discussion and argument afford a proof of the Oneness of God. Just as the argument of the rain, the structure of the earth, the creation of the heavens, man's own existence, the wonderful working of the law of pairs in the universe, testify to the possibility and necessity of the Hereafter, so they are also testifying that neither is this Godless nor it has many gods, but One All-Wise and All-Powerful God alone is its Creator and Master and Controller. That is why in the following verses the invitation to the Oneness of God is being presented on the basis of these very arguments. Furthermore, the inevitable result of believing in the Hereafter is that man should give up his attitude of rebellion against God and should adopt the way of obedience and servitude. He remains turned away from God as long as he remains involved in the false belief that he is not accountable before anyone and that he will not have to render an account of his deeds of the worldly life to anyone. Whenever this misunderstanding is removed, man immediately comes to the realization that he was committing a grave error by regarding himself as irresponsible, and this realization compels him to return to

God. That is why immediately after concluding the arguments for the Hereafter, it has been said: So flee unto Allah.

50. So flee unto Allah. Indeed, I am to you from Him a clear warner.*48

فَفِرُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ ^{صَلِّ} إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

*48 Though these sentences are the Word of Allah, the speaker here is not Allah but the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). In fact, Allah has made his Messenger say: Flee unto Allah, I am to you from Him a clear warner. An instance of this style is found in the very first Surah of the Quran, Surah Al-Fatihah, where the Word is of Allah, but the speakers are the servants, who say: *Iyyaka na budu wa lyyaka nastain; ihdi-nas siratal-mustaqim*. Thee alone we worship and to Thee alone we ask for help, show us the straight path. Just as there it has not been said: O believers, pray to your Lord thus, but the context itself shows that it is a supplication which Allah is teaching His servants, so here also it has not been said: O Prophet, say to these people, but the context itself indicates that it is an invitation to the Oneness of God, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is presenting according to Allah's command. Besides Surah Al-Fatihah, there are also several other instances of this style in the Quran, where though the word is of Allah, the speakers somewhere are the angels and somewhere the Prophet, and the context shows as through whom Allah is speaking at that particular place. For instance, see Surah Maryam, Ayats 64-65; Surah As-Saaffat, Ayats 159-167;

Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayat 10.

51. And do not make with Allah another god. Indeed, I am to you from Him a clear warner.

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ إِنِّي
لَكُمْ مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥١﴾

52. Likewise, there came not to those before them any messenger except they said: "A sorcerer or a madman."*49

كَذَلِكَ مَا آتَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
مِّن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا قَالُوا سَاحِرٌ أَوْ
مَجْنُونٌ ﴿٥٢﴾

*49 That is, this has not happened for the first time that the people are calling the Messenger sent by Allah a sorcerer and a madman when they heard the news of the Hereafter and the invitation to the Oneness of Allah from him. The whole history of Prophethood bears evidence that ever since the Messengers started coming for the guidance of mankind, ignorant people have been repeating the same folly in the same manner. Whichever Messenger came and gave them the warning that they were not the servants of many gods but One God alone is their Creator and Deity and Master of their destinies, ignorant people said that he was a sorcerer, who wanted to beguile and misguide them by his sorcery. Whichever Messenger came and warned them that they had not been created and left irresponsible in the world, but that at the conclusion of their life-work they would have to present themselves before their Creator and Master and render an account of their deeds and in consequence thereof they will be rewarded or punished

accordingly, the foolish people cried out that he was a madman and had lost his reason because no one could be resurrected after death.

53. Did they suggest it to them. But they are a rebellious people.*50

أَتَوَاصَوْا بِهِۦٓ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ



*50 That is, the fact that the people of different countries and nations adopted the same attitude as against the invitation of the Prophets and opposed them in the same manner in different ages for thousands of years could not be due to the reason that all the former and the latter generations had settled in a conference that whenever a prophet came with his message, he should be given such and such an answer. Then, what could be the reason for the uniformity of their attitude and behavior? There could be no other reason for this than that rebellion and transgression was their common characteristic. As all the ignorant people of every age have been desirous of living a life free of Allah's service and fearless of His accountability, whoever called them to the service of Allah and to lead a God-conscious life, they gave him one and the same fixed answer.

This also throws light on an important truth and it is that: The motives that man has been naturally endowed with for adopting error and guidance, goodness and evil, justice and injustice, and similar other conducts, have been appearing in every age and in every corner of the world in the like manner no matter how different might have been their

forms due to advancement of means and resources. Whether the man of today fights by means of the tanks and aircraft and hydrogen bombs and the man of the ancient time fought with stones and sticks, the basic motives for fighting between men have always been the same. Likewise, the atheist of today might heap up his arguments for atheism as he likes, his motives for following that creed are precisely the same as had been of an atheist six thousand years ago and in his reasoning also he is not basically any different from his predecessor.

54. So turn away from them, for you are not to be blamed.^{*51}

فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِمَلُومٍ

*51 In this verse a method of the preaching of religion has been taught which should be well understood. When a preacher of the truth has presented his message clearly before a person with rational arguments, and has also removed his doubts and objections and answered his arguments, he becomes relieved of his duty of making the truth plain. Even after this if the other person persists in his belief and creed, the responsibility for it does not lie on the preacher of the truth. It is no more necessary that he should pursue the same person, should go on spending his time in discussing things with him, and should make it a point that he has somehow to convince the same one man of the truth. The preacher, in fact, has done his duty; if the other man is not convinced, leave him alone. If the preacher does not any more attend to him, he cannot be blamed for letting a person remain involved in error, because the other

person himself is responsible for his deviation and error.

55. And remind, for indeed, the reminding benefits the believers. ^{*52}

وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَ تَنْفَعُ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*52 The Prophet (peace be upon him) has not been addressed here to be taught this method because, God forbid, in his preaching he unnecessarily pursued the people and Allah wanted to stop him from this fact, the real reason for stating this method is that when a preacher of the truth has done his best to make the people understand his message in a rational way and then seeing the signs of stubbornness in them withdraws from them, the people inveigh against him and start accusing him of indifference and inattention whereas, they, as they say, want to discuss things in order to understand his message. The fact, however, is that they do not intend to understand anything but only to involve the preacher in disputation and waste his time. Therefore, Allah Himself said in clear words: Turn away from them, you are not at all to blame for showing any indifference towards them. After this nobody could blame the Prophet (peace be upon him) that, according to the Book that he had brought, he had been appointed to make them understand his religion, then why he did not answer their objections.

56. And I have not created the jinn and the mankind except that they should worship Me. ^{*53}

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا
لِيَعْبُدُونِ

***53** That is, I have not created them for the service of others but for My own service. They should serve Me, for I am their Creator. When no one else has created them, no one else has the right that they should serve him; and how can it be admissible for them that they should serve others instead of Me, their Creator? Here, the question arises that Allah Almighty is not the Creator only of the jinn and men but of the entire universe and of everything in it. Then, why has it been said only about the jinn and men that He has not created them for the service of others but of Himself? Whereas every single creature is there to serve Allah. The answer is: Only the jinn and men have been granted the freedom that they may serve Allah within their sphere of choice if they so like; otherwise they can turn away from Allah's service as well as serve others beside Him. The rest of the creatures in the world do not have this kind of freedom. They do not have any choice whatsoever that they may not worship and serve Allah, or may serve any other. Therefore, only about the jinn and men it has been said here that by turning away from the obedience and servitude of their Creator within the bounds of their option and choice and by serving others than the Creator, they are fighting their own nature. They should know that they have not been created for the service of any other but the Creator, and for them the right way is that they should not abuse the freedom granted to them, but also within the bounds of this freedom they should serve God voluntarily just as every particle of their body is serving Him involuntarily in the sphere where they have not been

granted any freedom.

The word *ibadat* (service, worship) in this verse has not been used in the sense of only Prayer, Fasting and other kinds of such worship so that one may understand that the jinn and men have been created only for performing the Prayer, observing the Fast and for praising and glorifying Allah. Although this sense also is included in it, this is not its complete sense. Its complete sense is that the jinn and men have not been created for the worship, obedience and carrying out of the orders of any other but Allah. They are not there to bow to any other, to carry out the orders of any other, to live in fear of any other, to follow the religion enjoined by any other, to look upon any other as the maker and destroyer of ones destiny, and to supplicate to any other than Allah for help. (For further explanation, see E.N. 63 of Surah Saba; E.N. 2 of Surah Az-Zumar; E.N. 30 of Surah Al-Jathiyah).

Another thing that incidentally becomes quite obvious from this verse is that the jinn are a separate and independent creation from men. This brings out the error of the thinking of those people, who assert that some people from among mankind have been called the jinn in the Quran. This same thing is also confirmed and testified by the following verses of the Quran: Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 100, 128; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 38, 179; Surah Houd, Ayat 119; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 27 to 33; Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 88; Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 50; Surah As-Sajdah, Ayat 13; Surah Saba, Ayat 41; Surah Suad, Ayats 75, 76; Surah HaMim As-Sajdah, Ayat 25; Surah Al-Ahqaf, Ayat 18; Surah Ar-

Rahman, Ayats 15, 39, 56. (For a complete discussion of this question, see E. N. 21 of Surah Al-Anbiya, E.Ns 23, 45 of Surah An-Naml, E.N. 24 of Surah Saba).

57. I do not want from them any provision, nor do I want that they feed Me.^{*54}

مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعَمُونِ



*54 That is, I do not stand in need of any kind of help from the jinn and men: that My Godhead would not function if they did not worship Me: that I would be no more God if they turned away from My service. I indeed do not stand in need of their service, but it is the demand of their own nature that they should serve Me. They have been created for this very object, and fighting nature would be to their own detriment.

And in saying: I do not ask any sustenance of them nor do I ask them to feed Me, there is a subtle hint to this. Those whom the people, who have turned away from God worship in the world, worship, they indeed stand in need of these their worshipers. If they do not help sustain their godhead, it would not function even for a day. The gods do not provide for the worshipers but the worshipers provide for the gods instead. The gods do not feed them but they feed the gods instead. The gods do not protect them but the worshipers protect the gods instead. The worshipers, in fact, are their army through whom their godhead functions. Wherever the worshipers of the false gods have ceased to exist, or the worshipers have given up their worship, the gods have lost all their pomp and glory and the world has

seen how helpless they have become. Of all the deities Allah Almighty is the only real Deity Whose Godhead is functioning by His own power and might, Who does not take anything from His servants, but He alone gives His servants everything.

58. Indeed, it is Allah who is the Provider, the Possessor of power, the Strong.^{*55}

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ
الْمَتِينِ



***55** The word *mateen* as used in the original means strong and stable whom nobody can shake and move.

59. Then indeed, for those who have wronged^{*56} is a portion (of punishment) like the portion of their companions (of old), so let them not ask Me to hasten.^{*57}

فَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُنُوبًا مِّثْلَ
ذُنُوبِ أَصْحَابِهِمْ فَلَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ



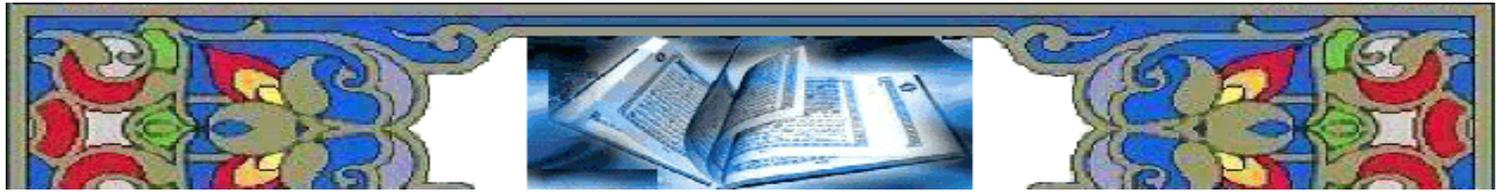
***56** Those who have wronged: Those who have violated the reality and the truth and their own nature. The context itself shows that those who have done wrong, here implies the people who are serving others than the Lord of the universe, who disbelieve in the Hereafter, who regard themselves as irresponsible in the world, and have denied those Prophets who have tried to make them understand the reality.

***57** This is the answer to the disbelievers' demand: Why doesn't the Day of Retribution Overtake us? Why is it being delayed?

60. Then, woe to those who disbelieve from (that) their Day which they have been promised.

فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ يَوْمِهِمُ
الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ





الطُّور At-Toor

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

It is derived from the very first word *Wat-Toori*.

Period of Revelation

From the internal evidence of the subject matter it appears that this Surah was revealed in the same stage of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life at Makkah in which the Surah Adh-Dhariyat was revealed. While going through it one can clearly feel that during the period of its revelation the Prophet (peace be upon him) was being showered with objections and accusations but there is no evidence yet to show that severe persecution of the Muslims had started.

Subject Matter and Topics

The subject matter of its first section (verses 1-28) is the Hereafter. As arguments for its possibility, necessity and occurrence had already been given in Surah Adh-Dhariyat, these have not been repeated here. However, swearing an oath by some realities and signs which testify to the Hereafter, it has been stated most emphatically that it will surely come to pass, and none has the power to prevent its occurrence. Then, it has been stated as to what will be the

fate of those who deny it when it actually occurs, and how will those who believe in it and adopt the way of piety and righteousness accordingly be blessed by Allah.

Then, in the second section (verses 29-49) the Quraish chiefs' attitude towards the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been criticized. They called him a sorcerer, a madman or a poet, and would thus mislead the common people against him so that they should not pay any serious attention to the message he preached. They looked upon him as a calamity that had suddenly descended on them and would openly wish that he met with a disaster so that they were rid of him. They accused him of fabricating the Quran by himself and of presenting it in the name of Allah, and this was, God forbid, a fraud that he was practicing. They would often taunt him, saying that God could not have appointed an ordinary man like him to the office of Prophethood. They expressed great disgust at his invitation and message and would avoid him as if he was asking them for a reward for it. They would sit and take counsels together to devise schemes in order to put an end to his mission. And while they did all this they never realized what creeds of ignorance they were involved in and how selflessly and sincerely was Muhammad (peace be upon him) exerting himself to deliver them from their error. While criticizing them for this attitude and conduct, Allah has put certain questions to them, one after the other, each of which is either an answer to some objection of theirs, or a criticism of some error. Then, it has been said that it would absolutely be of no avail to show them a

miracle in order to convince them of his Prophethood, for they were such stubborn people as would misinterpret anything they were shown only to avoid affirming the faith. In the beginning of this section, as well as in its end, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been given the instruction that he should persistently continue giving his invitation and preaching his message in spite of the accusations and objections of his opponents and enemies, and should endure their resistance patiently till Allah's judgment comes to pass. Besides, he has been consoled, as if to say: Your Lord has not left you alone to face your enemies, after raising you as a Prophet, but He is constantly watching over you. Therefore, endure every hardship patiently till the hour of His judgment comes, and seek through praising and glorifying your Lord the power that is required for exerting in the cause of Allah under such conditions.

1. By the Mount.*¹

وَالطُّورِ

*¹ Toor means a mountain, and *at-Toor* the particular mountain on which Allah had blessed the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) with the Prophethood.

2. And a Scripture inscribed.

وَكِتَابٍ مَّسْطُورٍ

3. In parchment unrolled.*²

فِي رَقٍّ مَّنشُورٍ

*² In ancient times the books and writings which were meant to be preserved for long were written on the skin of deer instead of the paper. This skin was especially prepared

for writing as a thin and fine parchment and was called *raqq* terminologically. The Jews and Christians in general wrote the Torah, Psalms, the Gospels and the Prophets' Books on this same *raqq* so that they would endure. Here, by Scripture inscribed is implied the same collection of the holy scriptures which the followers of the Book possessed. It has been described as unrolled because it was not extinct; it was read and one could easily find out what was written in it.

4. And the frequented (inhabited) House.*³



*³ According to Hasan Basri, the inhabited House implies the House of Allah, the Kabah, which is never without its visitors and pilgrims at any time of the day and night. However, Ali, Ibn Abbas, Ikrimah, Mujahid, Qatadah, Dahhak, Ibn Zaid and other commentators have stated that it implies the Bait-al-mamur (the inhabited House) which the Prophet (peace be upon him) referred to in connection with his Miraj (Ascension), against the wall of which he had seen the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) reclining. Mujahid, Qatadah and Ibn Zaid say that just as the Kabah is the center and place of refuge for all God-worshippers, so is there in every heaven a similar Kabah for its dwellers which occupies a similar central position for the worshipers of Allah there. One of these Kabahs was the one against the wall of which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had seen the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) reclining on the occasion of the Miraj; and with it the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had a natural affinity, for he himself

was the founder of the Kabah of the earth. In view of this explanation, this second commentary does not go against the commentary given by Hasan Basri, but if both are read together, we can understand that here the oath has not been sworn only by the Kabah of the earth, but it also includes an oath by all the Kabahs that are there in the entire universe.

5. And the roof exalted.*4

وَالسَّقْفِ الْمَرْفُوعِ

*4 The roof exalted: the sky which seems to be spread over the earth like a vault; here this word has been used for the entire universe. (For explanation, see E.N. 7 of Surah Qaf).

6. And the surging ocean.*5

وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ

*5 Several meanings have been given of the word *al-bahril-masjur* as used in the original. Some commentators have taken it in the meaning of full of fire; some take it in the sense of empty and unoccupied, the water of which might have sunk into the earth; some take it in the meaning of restricted and confined by which they imply that the ocean has been restrained so that its water neither sinks into the earth nor spreads over the land to drown all its dwellers. Some have taken it in the meaning of mixed and blended because in it sweet and saline, warm and cold, water is mixed together; and some take it in the meaning of brimful and surging. The first two of these meanings bear no relevance to the context. These two states of the ocean-splitting of the bottom of the ocean and sinking of its water

into the earth and then its being filled with fire will appear on the Day of Resurrection, as mentioned in Surah At-Takweer, Ayat 6 and Surah Al-Infitar, Ayat 3. These states of the future do not exist at present and therefore cannot be sworn by to convince the people of today of the occurrence of the Hereafter. Therefore, here *al-bahril-masjur* can be taken only in the meaning of confined, mixed, brimful and surging.

7. Indeed, the punishment of your Lord will occur.

إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ

8. There is none to avert it.*⁶

مَا لَهُ مِنْ دَافِعٍ

*⁶ This is that truth for which an oath has been sworn by the five things. “The punishment of your Lord” implies the Hereafter, for it will be a torment for those who deny that it will come. That is why it has been called “the punishment of your Lord” instead of the Resurrection, or the Hereafter, or the Day of Retribution. Now let us consider how the five things by which an oath has been sworn point to its occurrence.

Mount Toor is the place where a decision was taken to exalt an oppressed nation and to abase an oppressive nation, and this decision was taken not on the basis of a physical law but on the basis of a moral law and the law of retribution. Therefore, Mount Toor has been presented as a symbol for the Hereafter. It implies that the decision of exalting a helpless nation like the children of Israel and the drowning of a powerful and mighty ruler like the Pharaoh along with

his hosts, which was taken in a quiet and lifeless night on the Mount Toor, is proof of the fact how the nature of the kingdom of the universe demands that man who has been endowed with powers and authority, should be subjected to moral accountability and rewarded and punished accordingly, and for meeting this demand adequately a Day of Reckoning is necessary when the entire mankind should be gathered together and called to account for its deeds. (For further explanation, see E.N. 21 of Surah Adh-Dharyat).

The holy scriptures have been sworn by because all the Prophets who came to the world from the Lord of the universe and the Books they brought gave the same one news in every age which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is giving, i.e. that all humans of the former and latter generations will one day be resurrected and presented before their God and rewarded and punished according to their deeds. Every heavenly Book proclaimed that this life is not the only life. And that, after death, man will not end up in the dust forever, and that there will be both accountability and reckoning.

“The inhabited House” has been sworn by for the reason that in those days the building of the Kabah was a great sign, particularly for the Arabs, which pointed to the truthfulness of Allah’s Prophets and to the fact that they were supported by Allah Almighty’s far-reaching wisdom and great power. 2,500 years before the revelation of these verses a person happens to visit these barren and uninhabited mountains, without any army or worldly

provision, leaving behind a wife and a suckling child devoid of material support. Then, some time later the same man returns and builds at this desolate place a house for the worship of Allah and gives a call to the people to come and visit that house as pilgrims. This same structure and the call are so fervently received that the House becomes the center of the entire population of Arabia. People respond to the call enthusiastically and are drawn from every corner of the country to the House in a spirit of devotion and dedication. For 2,500 years this House continues to remain such a sanctuary of peace that while blood is shed in the country around it, none can dare raise his hand against another as soon as people enter its sacred boundaries; and then because of this very House, Arabia is blessed with four months of such total peace every year when caravans travel in full safety, trade flourishes and markets are held. Then the House inspired such awe that during this whole period no tyrant could ever look towards it with an evil intention, and whoever dared do so was so seized by Allah's wrath that he became an object of warning for others. Such a miracle had been witnessed by the people themselves only 45 years before the revelation of these verses, and many of those who had witnessed it were still present and living in the city at the time when these verses were being recited to the people of Makkah. What greater proof could be there of the fact that the Prophets of God never uttered empty words? They see with their eyes that which others do not see; they talk freely of such realities as cannot be comprehended by others by intellect; they engage at times

in works which might be viewed as madness by the contemporary world but which might strike with amazement the people coming centuries afterwards. When men of such caliber have unanimously been giving in every age the news that Resurrection shall occur and accountability shall take place, it would be sheer madness to dub it as the bragging of the insane.

The exalted roof (the sky) and the surging ocean have been sworn by, for both of these are a pointer to Allah's wisdom and His power, and the same wisdom and power prove both the possibility of the Hereafter and its occurrence and necessity. As for the sky's being a pointer we have already explained it in E. N. 7 of Surah Qaf. As for the ocean, anyone who considers it deeply with an unbiased mind will testify that the provision of water in such abundance on the earth is by itself such an amazing work which cannot be the result of an accident or chance. This also proves that it is not possible that such a perfect system could come into being by chance and the bodies of each species could be made precisely according to the depth in which it has to live. Its water has been made saline so that the bodies of the millions of the animals which die in it daily do not rot. Its water has been restrained at a particular level in such a way that it neither sinks into the earth's belly passing through its cracks and holes, nor it spreads over the land to submerge it, but has been checked at the same level for millions of years. Because of the existence of this great store of water the rainfall is arranged on the dry parts of the earth, in which the heat of the sun and the circulation of the

winds cooperate with full regularity. Then the ocean's being inhabited with life and the creation in it of the various kinds of creatures has given man the advantage that he obtains from it his food and other necessities in large quantities. Then its being checked and restrained to a limit has given birth to the continents and islands which are the home of man, and became of its adhering to and following some fixed laws has it become possible that man may navigate his ships in it. Such an arrangement could not have possibly existed without the wisdom of an All-Wise Being and the power of an Absolute Ruler, nor could this deep relationship that binds the interests of man and other creatures of the earth to the arrangement of the ocean be established at random. Now, if this is undeniable evidence that an All-Wise and All-Powerful God has also created a vast and surging, brackish ocean besides making countless other arrangements for the purpose of settling man on the earth, then that person would be foolhardy, who expects that the All-Wise God would make arrangements for man that he should water his crops from the ocean and provide him sustenance thereby but would never question him as to how he returned thanks after eating His provisions. And that He would grant man the power that he should run his ships on the surface of the ocean but would never question him as to whether he had run the ships for the sake of the truth, righteousness and justice, or had committed robberies. Likewise, it would also be sheer folly to imagine that the Absolute Sovereign, Who has checked and restrained this vast store of water on this suspended globe

which is moving in space, Who has dissolved a huge quantity of salt in it, Who has created countless varieties of creatures in it, and has arranged their sustenance therein, Who carries billions of tons of water from it every year by means of the wind and causes it to fall regularly as rain on millions of square miles of dry land, becomes so helpless and powerless after creating man that He could not resurrect him again.

9. On the Day the heaven will shake with a dreadful shaking.*7

يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَاءُ مَوْرًا ﴿٩﴾

*7 The word *maur* in the original is used for turning round, boiling, fluttering, rotating, swinging and moving forward and backward. The object of depicting the condition of the heavens on the Day of Resurrection in these words is to give the idea that the system of the heavens on that Day will be wholly upset, and when an observer will look up to the sky, he will feel that the constant pattern and order that it always used to present, has been broken and there is disorder, confusion and chaos on every side.

10. And the mountains will move away, an (awful) moving.*8

وَتَسِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سَيْرًا ﴿١٠﴾

*8 In other words, the pull of the earth which is keeping the mountains in place, will become loose, they will be uprooted and start floating about in space like clouds.

11. Then woe on that Day to the deniers.

فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَوْمَ الْمَكَذِبِينَ ﴿١١﴾

12. Those who play (amuse) in (useless) arguments.*9

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي خَوْضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

*9 It means that they are mocking and ridiculing the news of Resurrection, Hereafter, Heaven and Hell when they hear it from the Prophet (peace be upon him), and instead of considering it seriously they are disputing it only for fun and amusement. Their discussions of the Hereafter are not meant to understand the reality, but only to amuse themselves, and they do not at all realize the fate for which they are destined.

13. The day they are thrust towards the fire of Hell with a (disdainful) thrust.

يَوْمَ يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَىٰ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ دَعَاً ﴿١٣﴾

14. (It will be said): “This is the Fire that you used to deny.”

هَذِهِ النَّارُ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

15. “Then is this magic, or do you not see.”*10

أَفَسِحْرٌ هَذَا أَمْ أَنْتُمْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

*10 That is, when the Messengers in the world warned you of this Hell. you said that it was only by magic that they were fooling you. Now say: Is this Hell which you are facing mere magic, or you still do not see that you have actually met with the same Hell which was being foretold to you?

16. “(Enter to) burn therein, then whether you are patient, or impatient. It is all the same for you. You are only being paid (for) what you used to do.”

أَصْلَوْهَا فَاصْبِرُوا أَوْ لَا تَصْبِرُوا
سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّمَا تُجْزَوْنَ مَا
كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

17. Indeed, the righteous^{*11} shall be in gardens and delight.

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَعِيمٍ ﴿١٧﴾

***11** “The righteous”: the people who believed in the news given by the Prophets and who safeguarded themselves in the world itself and refrained from thoughts and deeds that doom man to Hell.

18. Rejoicing in what their Lord has given them. And their Lord saved them from the punishment of Hell.^{*12}

فِيكِهِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ وَوَقَّاهُمْ
رَبُّهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٨﴾

***12** There seems to be no need to mention a person’s being saved from Hell after it has been said that he will be admitted to Heaven, but at several places in the Quran these two things have been mentioned separately because a person’s being saved from Hell is by itself a great blessing. And the words, “and their Lord saved them from the punishment of Hell”, is an allusion to the truth that man’s being saved from Hell is possible only through Allah’s grace and bounty; otherwise human weaknesses cause such flaws to occur in everyone’s work that if Allah does not overlook them by His grace and instead decides to subject

him to accountability, none can save himself from His punishment. That is why although entry into Paradise is a great bounty from Allah, his being saved from Hell is no less a mercy.

19. Eat and drink with relish (happiness)^{*13} because of what you used to do.

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ



***13** Here, the word “with relish” contains vast meaning in itself. In Paradise whatever a man receives, he will have it without any labor and toil. There will be no question of its sustenance in short supply. Man will not have to spend anything for it. It will be precisely according to his desire and choice and taste. In whatever quantity and whenever he will desire it, it will be made available. He will not be staying there as a guest that he may feel shy of asking for something, but everything will be the reward of his lifelong deeds and the fruit of his own labors. His eating and drinking anything will not cause any illness nor will he eat for satisfying hunger or for survival but only for the sake of enjoyment. Man will be able to obtain as much pleasure from it as he pleases without the fear of indigestion, and the food eaten will not produce any filth. Therefore, the meaning of eating and drinking with relish in Paradise is much more vast and sublime than what is understood by it in the world.

20. Reclining on couches, facing each other, and We shall marry them to fair ones

مُتَّكِنِينَ عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَّصْفُوفَةٍ

with beautiful eyes.*14

وَزَوْجَتَهُمْ نَحُورٍ عَيْنٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

*14 For explanation, see E. Ns. 20, 29 of Surah As-Saaffat, and E. N. 42 of Surah Ad-Dukhan.

21. And those who believed and whose offspring followed them in faith, We shall join with them their offspring, and We shall not deprive them of anything of their deeds.*15 Every person is a pledge for what he has earned.*16

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ
بِإِيمَانٍ ءَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا
أَلْتَنَّهُمْ مِّنْ عَمَلِهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ ؕ كُلُّ
أَمْرٍ ءِىَّ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ ﴿٢١﴾

*15 This theme has already been mentioned in Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 23 and Surah Al-Momin, Ayat 8, but here a greater good news has been given. In the verse of Surah Ar-Raad only this much was said: They will enter into them (Gardens) along with the righteous from among their forefathers, wives and descendants, and in Surah Al-Mmin: The angels ask forgiveness for the believers; they say Our Lord... (admit therein also) of their parents and wives and children who are righteous. Here, what has been said in addition is: If the children had been following in the footsteps of their forefathers in faith, they will be joined with them in Paradise even though they might not deserve, on the basis of their deeds, the same high rank which the elders would attain on the basis of their superior faith and deeds, and this joining will not be of the nature of occasional visits and meetings but they will be lodged

permanently with them in Paradise as is borne out by the words: *alhaqna bi-him*. For the sake of further satisfaction it has been stated: In order to be joined with their offspring the parents will not be lowered and reduced in rank, but in order to be joined with their elders the rank of the children will be enhanced and exalted.

Here, it should be borne in mind that this news has been given in respect of the children who on reaching maturity voluntarily decided to affirm faith and of their own free will followed in the footsteps of their righteous forefathers. As for those of the children of a believer, who might have died even before reaching maturity, there cannot be any question of belief or disbelief, obedience or disobedience, for they will be admitted to Paradise automatically and will be lodged along with their parents to be a comfort of the eyes for them.

***16** Here, the metaphor of *rahn* (pledge) is very meaningful. If a person takes a loan from somebody, and the creditor keeps some article belonging to the debtor as a pledge with himself as a guarantee for the payment of his right, the debtor cannot redeem his pledge unless he pays off the debts; and if he does not redeem his pledge within the fixed time limit, the pledged article stands forfeited. The nature of the affair between man and God has been compared here to this very situation. The provisions, powers, capabilities and authority that God has granted man in the world are a debt that the Master has given to His servant, and as a guarantee for this debt the self of man is a pledge with Allah. If man by employing the provisions

and the powers and authority in the right way earns the good by which the debt can be paid off, he will redeem the pledged thing, i.e. his own self, otherwise it will be forfeited. This thing has been said immediately after the preceding verse because even though the righteous believers may themselves be the people of a very high rank, their children cannot redeem their pledge unless they redeem their self by their own labor and effort. The earning of the forefathers cannot redeem the children. However, if the children are able to redeem themselves by virtue of their faith in some degree by following their righteous forefathers in their footsteps, it would then be Allah's grace and bounty that in Paradise He may exalt them from lower ranks to be joined with their parents in the higher ranks. The good done by the forefathers can benefit the children only so far, but if by their own deeds they deserve Hell, it is not possible that they may be admitted to Paradise for the sake of the forefathers. Another thing that can be deduced from this verse is that the less righteous children's being joined with their more righteous forefathers is not in reality the result of the lifework of the children but of their forefathers'. They by virtue of their deeds will deserve the grace that their children be joined with them in order to be a comfort of the eyes for them. That is why Allah will not lower their ranks to join them with their children but will exalt the children's ranks to be joined with them, so that the perfection of Allah's blessings on them is not marred by the distress that they may suffer on account of the remoteness of their children far away.

22. And We shall provide them with fruits and meat,^{*17} such as they may desire.

وَأَمَدَدْنَاهُمْ بِفِكَهَةٍ وَلَحْمٍ مِّمَّا

يَشْتَهُونَ

***17** In this verse, there is the mention of providing the dwellers of Paradise with every kind of meat generally, and in Surah Al-Waqiah it has been said: They will be served with the flesh of fowls. We do not know what exactly will be the nature of this flesh. But just as in some expressions of the Quran and in some Ahadith it has been said about the milk of Paradise that it will not have been drawn from the udders of animals, and about the honey of Paradise it has been said that it will not have been produced by the bees, and about the wine of Paradise it has been said that it will not have been distilled from rotten fruit, but these things will flow out of the springs into the canals by the power of Allah, so it can be argued by analogy that this flesh too will not be obtained from slaughtered animals but this too will be a natural product. The God Who can produce milk and honey and wine directly from earthly substances can also produce tasty flesh of every kind from the same substances, which should even surpass the flesh of animals in taste and delight. (For further explanation, see E.N. 25 of Surah As-Saaffat, E.Ns 21 to 23 of Surah Muhammad).

23. They shall pass hand to hand therein a cup (of wine), wherein is no vanity, nor a cause of sin.^{*18}

يَتَنَزَّعُونَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا لَّا لَغْوٌ فِيهَا

وَلَا تَأْتِيمُ

***18** That is, the wine of Paradise will not intoxicate that

they should get drunk and talk nonsense, or use abusive language, or conduct and behave indecently as drunkards. (For further explanation, see E.N. 27 of Surah As-Saaffat).

24. And there will go round to them boys (servants) for them,*¹⁹ as if they were guarded pearls.

وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ غِلْمَانٌ لَهُمْ
كَأَنَّهُمْ لَوْلُؤٌ مَّكْنُونٌ

*¹⁹ Here, the word used is *ghilman-ul lahum* and not *ghilman-u-hum*. If *ghilman-u-hum* had been used, it would have meant that their servants in the world would be made their servants in Paradise too; whereas whoever from the world goes to Paradise, will go there on the basis of his own work and entitlement, and there is no reason that after his entry in Paradise he may be made a servant of the same master whom he had been serving in the world. But it can also be that a servant on account of his deeds may attain a higher rank than his master in Paradise. Therefore, by using *ghilman-ul-lahum* no room has been left for this suspicion. This word provides the explanation that these will be the boys who will be exclusively appointed for their service in Paradise. (For further explanation, see E.N. 26 of Surah As-Saffat).

25. And some of them will approach others, questioning.

وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ
يَتَسَاءَلُونَ

26. They will say: "Indeed, before this we were among

قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا

our people, in fear and
dread.”*20

مُشْفِقِينَ

*20 That is, we were not heedless and living a care-free life of ease and comfort, but we were always on our guard lest we should commit an evil for which we may be held accountable before God. Here, the mention of “we were among our people, in fear and dread,” in particular, has been made for the reason that man commits evil mostly when he is deeply engrossed in arranging ease and comfort for his children and trying to make their future secure and happy. For the same purpose, he earns forbidden things by forbidden means, usurps the rights of others and makes evil plans. That is why the dwellers of Paradise will say to one another: That which particularly saved us from the evil of the Hereafter was that while living among our families we did not think so much of arranging the pleasures of life and a splendid future for them as for avoiding for their sake those methods and means that might ruin our life in the Hereafter and that we should not lead our children also on to the way that might make them worthy of the torment of Allah.

27. “So Allah has conferred favor upon us and has saved us from the punishment of the scorching wind.”*21

فَمَنْ أَلَّهِ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَدْنَا عَذَابَ

السَّمُومِ

*21 The word *samum* in the original means hot, scorching wind; here it implies the waves of hot wind that will be arising from Hell.

28. “Indeed, we used to pray to Him before. Indeed, it is He who is the Beneficent, the Merciful.”

إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ

29. So remind, for you are not, by the favor of your Lord, a soothsayer, nor a madman.*22

فَذَكِّرْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَتِ رَبِّكَ بِكَاهِنٍ وَلَا مَجْنُونٍ

*22 After depicting a scene of the Hereafter the address now turns to the obduracy of the disbelieves of Makkah with which they were resisting the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This verse though apparently addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) is actually meant for the disbelievers through him. Whenever he spoke of Resurrection and the gathering together of mankind, and accountability, and meting out of rewards and punishments, and Heaven and Hell and recited the verses of the Quran in support thereof, with the claim that he received that information from Allah and that it was Allah’s Word that had been revealed to him, their leaders and religious guides and depraved people neither listened to him seriously themselves nor wanted that the other people should pay any attention to him. Therefore, they would sometimes taunt him saying that he was a sorcerer, or that he was a poet, or that he was a madman, or that he fabricated those strange things himself and presented them as Revelations from Allah only in order to impress the people. They thought that by passing such remarks against him, they would be able to create suspicions among the

people about him and would thus render his preaching ineffective and vain. About this it is being said: O Prophet (peace be upon him), the truth in fact is the same that has been presented from the beginning of the Surah to this point. If these people call you a sorcerer and a madman on account of these things, you should not take it to heart but should go on arousing the people from their heedlessness and warning them of the reality, for by the grace of God you are neither.

The word *kahin* (sorcerer) in Arabic is used for an astrologer, fortune teller and a wise man. In the pre-Islamic days of ignorance it was a full-fledged profession. The sorcerers claimed, and the credulous people thought and believed, that they knew the destinies of the people, or they had a special link with the spirits, devils and jinn through whom they come to know of the unseen realities. If a thing was lost, they could tell where it lay; if a theft occurred somewhere, they could tell who the thief was; and they could foretell destinies. People came to them, and they would tell them unseen things in exchange for gifts and offerings. They would sometimes visit the towns and villages and would cry about their profession so that the people might approach them. They had a way and manner and appearance of their own by which they became easily recognizable. The language they used also differed from the common speech of the people. They would utter rhymed and rhythmical sentences with a peculiar accent and modulation and generally used vague and ambiguous sentences from which every person could draw his own

meaning. The Quraish chiefs in order to deceive the common people accused the Prophet (peace be upon him) of sorcery only for the reason that he was giving the news of the realities that are hidden and his claim was that an angel from God came to reveal that news to him, and the Word of God that he was presenting was also rhymed. But no one in Arabia could be deceived by this accusation because no one was unaware of the sorcerers' profession and their general way and appearance and their language and business. Everyone knew what they did, why the people visited them, what they told them, what sort of modulated sentences they uttered and what subject-matter they contained. Then, above all, it could not be that a sorcerer would rise with a creed that went against the prevalent beliefs of the nation and would exert himself preaching it continuously at his own risk. Therefore, this accusation of sorcery did not apply to the Prophet (peace be upon him) at all and no one in Arabia who had any common sense could be deceived by it.

Likewise, the disbelievers of Makkah also accused him of madness only for their own satisfaction, just as some shameless Western scholars of the present day in order to satisfy their malice and enmity against Islam, claim that, God forbid, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had epileptic fits and whatever he uttered during those fits was taken as divine revelation by the people. No sensible person in those days regarded such absurd accusations as worthy of any attention, nor can anyone today, who reads the Quran and studies the wonderful facts of the Prophet's (peace be upon

him) leadership and guidance, believe that these were the product of epileptic fits.

30. Or do they say: “A poet, we await for whom the adverse turn of fortune.”*23

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ نَّتَرَبَّصُ بِهِ
رَبِّبَ الْمَنُونِ

*23 That is, we are waiting for him to be afflicted with calamity so that we get rid of him. Probably they thought that since Muhammad (peace be upon him) was opposing their deities and denying their supernatural powers, he would fall under the curse of some deity, or some bold devotee of a god would put an end to him.

31. Say: “Wait, for indeed, I am with you among those waiting.”*24

قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِّنَ
الْمُتَرَبِّصِينَ

*24 This can have two meanings:

(1) I would also see whether this desire of yours is fulfilled or not.

(2) I am also waiting to see who goes to his doom, you or me.

32. Or do their minds command them to this, or are they a people who have transgressed all limits.*25

أَمْ تَأْمُرُهُمْ أَحْلَامُهُمْ بِهَذَا أَمْ هُمْ
قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ

*25 In these two sentences, the opponents' entire propaganda has been nailed, and they have been completely exposed. The reasoning briefly is this: These

Qaraish chiefs and elders pose as very wise people, but does their intellect tell them that they should call a person a poet when he is not a poet, and call him a madman when he is well-known for his wisdom among the people, and dub him a sorcerer when he does not have the remotest association with sorcery? Then, if you are passing these judgments only on the basis of intellect and reason, you should have passed one judgment, and not so many contradictory judgments simultaneously. After all, how can one and the same man be a poet and a madman and a sorcerer at one and the same time? If he is mad, he can then neither be a sorcerer nor a poet. If he is a sorcerer, he cannot be a poet, and if he is a poet, he cannot be a sorcerer, for the language and diction and themes of poetry are quite different from the language and themes of sorcery. The one who knows the distinctions between poetry and sorcery cannot possibly call and regard the same discourse both as poetry and as sorcery at one and the same time. Therefore, it is evident that these contradictory things are being said against the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) not on the basis of intellect and reason but only due to obduracy and stubbornness, and the big chiefs of the nation blinded by their prejudice and enmity are leveling absurd charges which no serious person can regard as worthy of any attention. (For further explanation, see E.N. 104 of Surah Al-Aaraf; E.N. 3 of Surah Yunus; E.Ns 53, 54, of Surah Bani-Israil; E.Ns 130, 131, 140, 142-144 of Surah Ash-Shuara.

33. Or do they say: “He has made it up.” Nay, but they do not believe. ^{*26}

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقَوَّلَهُ بَلْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ



***26** In other words, it means this: The Quraish who think that Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself is the author of the Quran know deep down in their hearts that it cannot be his word, and those others also whose mother tongue is Arabic not only clearly feel that it is far more sublime and superior to human speech but any one of them who knows Muhammad (peace be upon him) personally cannot ever suspect that this is actually his own word and speech. Therefore, the thing plainly is that those who ascribe the authorship of the Quran to the Prophet (peace be upon him) do not, in fact, wish to affirm faith. That is why they are inventing false excuses one of which is this excuse. (For further explanation, see E.N. 21 of Surah Yunus; E N. 12 of Surah Al-Furqan; E N. 64 of Surah Al-Qasas; E.Ns 88, 89 of Surah Al-Ankabut; E.Ns 1 to 4 of Surah As-Sajdah; E.N. 54 of Surah HaMim As-Sajdah; E.Ns 8 to 10 of Surah Al-Ahqaf).

34. Then let them produce a statement like it, if they are truthful. ^{*27}

فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِّثْلِهِ إِنْ كَانُوا

صَادِقِينَ

***27** That is, not only is the Quran not the word of Muhammad (peace be upon him) but the truth is that it is not human at all; it is beyond the power of man to compose and produce it. If you think it is human, you are challenged

to produce the like of it, which should also be human. This challenge had been given not only to the Quraish but to all the disbelievers of the world first of all in this verse. Then it was repeated thrice in Makkah and then finally in Madinah. (Please see Surah Yunus, Ayat 38; Surah Houd, Ayat 13; Surah Bani-Israil, Ayat 88; Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 23). But no one could dare meet this challenge of the Quran at that time, nor has anyone else had so far the ability to compose and produce a man-made work like the Quran.

Some people, because of lack of understanding the real nature of this challenge, say that not to speak of the Quran, no one has the power to write prose or compose poetry in the style of another person. Homer, Rumi, Shakespeare, Goethe, Ghalib, Tagore, Iqbal, all are unique in their styles. It lies in no one's power to produce poetry like theirs by imitation. Those who give this answer to the challenge of the Quran are, in fact, involved in the misunderstanding that the meaning of "let them produce a statement like it", is a challenge to man to compose and write a book like the Quran, in the style of the Quran; whereas it does not imply any resemblance in literary style but it implies this: Bring a book of the same sublimity and quality and rank, not only in Arabic but in any language of the world, that may be regarded as a match for the Quran in respect of the characteristics for which the Quran is a miracle. The following are in brief some of the main characteristics because of which the Quran has been a miracle before as it is a miracle today:

(1) The Quran is the highest and most perfect model of the literature of the language in which it was revealed. No word and no sentence in the entire Book is sub-standard. Whatever theme has been presented in it, has been presented in the most appropriate words and in the most suitable style. One and the same theme has been presented over and over again but every time in a new style avoiding the defect of repetition everywhere. The entire Book, from the beginning to the end, is set in the choicest words, like chiseled and polished gems, that cannot be replaced. The discourses are so impressive that no one who knows the language, even if he is a disbeliever, can help being moved to ecstasies on hearing them. Even after 1,400 years this Book is still the model of Arabic literature and no other Arabic book can approach it in literary excellence not to speak of equaling it. Not only this, this Book has so controlled the Arabic language that even after the passage of 14 centuries the standard of this language's beauty and eloquence is the same that had been set by it; whereas in such long periods languages change out of recognition. No other language of the world has remained in the same state in so far as its spelling and diction, idiom, rules of language and usages are concerned. But it is only the power of the Quran that has held the Arabic language in place each idiom of it is still in use in Arabic literature; its literature is still the standard literature of Arabic; and in writing and speech still the same language is regarded as good Arabic that had been used in the Quran 1,400 years ago. Is there any man-made book in any language of the world that

bears the same characteristics?

(2) This is the one single Book in the world, which has so extensively and so universally influenced mankind's thoughts, morals, civilization and way of life as has no precedent in history. In the first instance, its impact changed one nation; then that nation rose and changed a major part of the world. No other Book has proved to be so revolutionary. This Book has not remained confined to writing on paper but in the practical world its each word has formed and molded ideas and thoughts and built up a lasting civilization. Its influence has continued being operative for 1,400 years and its circle of influence and impact is still expanding every day.

(3) The theme that this Book discusses is the most extensive theme which comprehends the whole universe, from eternity to eternity. It deals with the reality of the universe, its beginning and end, its system and law. It tells as to who is the Creator and Controller and Disposer of this universe, what are His attributes, what are His powers, and what is that essence and basis on which He has established this entire system of the world. It specifies man's position and his place which he cannot change. It tells what is the right and correct way of thought and action for man in view of this place and position, which corresponds to the reality, and what are the wrong ways which clash with the reality. Then to prove why the right way is right and the wrong way is wrong, it presents countless arguments from various phenomena of the earth and heavens, from different aspects of the system of the universe, from man's own self

and existence and from man's own history. Besides, it also tells how and for what reasons man adopts the wrong ways, by what means he can find out the right way, which has always been one and shall remain one, and how he has been guided to it in every age. It does not merely point to the right way but presents a plan of the complete system of life for following that way, which contains a detailed and systematic code concerning beliefs, morals, purification of self, worship, social life, civilization, economy, politics, justice, law and every other aspect of human life. Furthermore, it also tells in full detail what are the results of following this right way and of adopting the wrong ways in this world and what consequences of this will appear in the next world after the present system of the world has come to an end. It depicts fully the coming to an end of the present world and of the establishment of the new world; it gives every detail of the process of change; it portrays the next world and describes fully how man will find a totally new life there, how his deeds from worldly life will be subjected to accountability, what things he will be questioned about, how his complete record, which lie will not be able to deny or dispute, will be placed before him, what strong evidence will be produced in proof thereof, why the culprits will be punished and the righteous rewarded, what rewards will be bestowed on the righteous and in what forms will the culprits suffer the evil consequences of their misdeeds. The way this vast theme has been dealt with in this Book is not of the nature of some conclusions that its author might have reached from some

syllogistic premises but its nature is that its author has the direct knowledge of the reality.

He sees everything happening from eternity to eternity. All the realities are manifest for Him and the entire universe is like an open book before Him. He sees the entire life of mankind, from its origin to its end, even beyond the present life into the second life simultaneously, and He is guiding man not on the basis of conjecture and speculation but on the basis of knowledge. Not a single truth that He presents as knowledge has been proved to be wrong so far. The concept of the universe and man that He presents fully explains all the phenomena and events and can become the basis of research in every branch of knowledge. His Word contains the answers to all the ultimate problems of philosophy and natural and social sciences, and they are so coherent and consistent logically that a perfect, consistent and comprehensive system of thought can be built on their basis. Then from the practical aspect the guidance that He has given to man about various spheres of life is not only highly rational and pure but countless men have been living according to it in a real fact in different parts of the earth for 1,400 years and have found it by experience to be the only valid way. Is there any man made book of this unique quality present in the world, or has ever been, which may be produced to match this Book?

(4) This Book was not composed and written all at once and presented before the world, but a reformatory movement was started with some basic and initial instructions and then for 23 years as the movement passed through different

stages of its development its parts were presented by the tongue of the leader, sometimes as lengthy discourses and sometimes as brief sentences, as the conditions and requirements of the occasion demanded. Then, when the mission was brought to completion, these parts that had been issued at different times were compiled in the form of a complete Book which has been known by the name of the Quran. The leader of the movement states that these discourses and sentences are not his original work but were sent down to him by the Lord of all Creation. If a person asserts that they are the original work of the leader himself, he should produce a precedent from history to prove his contention. He should show whether it is possible that the speeches made and the instructions given by a man at different times while leading a powerful collective movement for years continuously by himself in different capacities, sometimes as a preacher and teacher of morals, sometimes as a leader of an oppressed class, sometimes as the ruler of a state, sometimes as the commander of a fighting army, sometimes as a victor, sometime as a law-giver and legislator, could form a complete and consistent and comprehensive system of thought and action, which should be free from every contradiction and inconsistency, which should appear to be dominated by the same central idea and pattern of thought, which should show that the leader has been building up a universal system of belief and action on the basis of the same foundation of his message with which he had started his work, and which should be a system each clement and part of which is in perfect

harmony and consistency with the other parts, Then the one who reads this collection of the discourses with a discerning eye cannot help realizing that the founder of the movement at the outset had a full plan of the movement in view till the last stage, and it never happened that a new idea might have struck him at some later stage, which was unknown to him before, or which he had to change later. If ever there has been a man of this caliber, his name should be made known to the world.

(5) The leader who had been made to give these discourses and speak these sentences did not suddenly emerge from a hidden place to present these before the people nor would disappear after he had done so. He had lived his life in full view of society before he started his movement as well as continued to live in the same society after that till his last breath. The people were well aware of the language and style of his conversation and speech. Hadith still presents a major part of it and by going through it the people who know Arabic can easily find out even today what was the leader's own style of speech and conversation. His contemporaries who spoke his language felt then and those who know Arabic feel today that the language and the style of this Book is very different from the language and style of that leader. So much so that whenever in the midst of a sermon delivered by the leader there occurs a sentence or two of this Book, the distinction between the two becomes all too obvious. The question is: Has a man in the world ever had the power, or can he have the capability, that he should go on conversing in two absolutely different styles

consistently for years at a stretch and it should never become known that the two separate styles are, in fact, of one and the same person? It is possible that one may succeed in such affectation temporarily but it is not at all possible that for twenty-three years continuously a person should have a different diction and style when he recites the revelations from Allah and a wholly different diction and style when he speaks in his personal capacity.

(6) The leader while leading and guiding the movement met with different sorts of conditions. Sometimes he became the target of ridicule, humiliation and severe persecution of his fellow-countrymen and the people of his own tribe and clan; sometimes his companions were so harshly treated that they were compelled to emigrate from the country; sometimes the enemies plotted against his life; sometimes he himself had to leave his home and city; sometimes he had to pass through extreme poverty and starvation; sometimes he had to fight wars successively in which he suffered defeats as well as won victories; sometimes he overcame the enemies and the same enemies who had persecuted him, came before him humbled; sometimes he achieved such power which few people in the world have been able to achieve. Under all such conditions a person's feelings obviously cannot remain the same. When on these different occasions the leader spoke in his personal capacity, his words, and speeches carried the clear impression of his personal feelings, which naturally arise in the heart of a man on such occasions. But the discourses that were heard from him as Allah's revelations in these

different conditions, are wholly devoid of human feelings. At no place can even an acute observer and critic point out the play of human feelings in them. The vast and comprehensive knowledge that is contained in this Book, is not possessed even by any of the distinguished learned people of this 20th century, not to speak of the people of Arabia and Rome and Greece and Iran of those days. The condition today is that after a man has spent his whole life-time studying a branch of philosophy or a natural or social science, he comes to know what ultimate problems of his field of study are, but when he studies the Quran seriously he comes to know that this Book contains a clear answer to those problems. This thing is not confined to any one branch of knowledge but holds good in respect of all those sciences which have anything to do with the universe and man. How can one believe that 1,400. years ago an un-lettered man in the Arabian desert possessed such deep insight into every branch of knowledge, and he had thought over every basic problem and thought out an absolute and final answer to it?

Although there are several other aspects also of the Quran's being a miracle, if a man ponders over these few aspects only, he will realize that the Quran's being a miracle is far more evident today than it was at the time when it was revealed and, if Allah so wills, it will go on becoming more and more evident and manifest as time passes till the Day of Resurrection.

35. Or were they created by nothing, or were they

أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمْ

(themselves) the creators.

الْخَالِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

36. Or did they create the heavens and the earth. Nay, but they have no firm belief.*28

أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

***28** The questions asked before this were meant to make the disbelievers of Makkah realize that whatever they were saying to belie the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) claim to prophethood was highly irrational. Now in this verse the question put before them is: What is that in the message of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) which you find so embarrassing for yourselves? He just says that Allah is your Creator and you should only serve Him. Why are you annoyed at it? Are you your own creators? Or, has this vast universe been created by you? If neither of these is true, and you admit that your Creator as well as the Creator of the universe is Allah alone, why do you then feel angry with the person who tells you that Allah alone is worthy of your service and worship? What you should actually feel angry about is that you worship him who is not your Creator instead of Him Who is your real Creator. You admit with the tongue that Allah alone is your Creator as well as of the whole universe, but if you really had faith in this, you would not have so maligned the person who was calling you to Allah's service.

This was such a pungent and stinging question that it shook the polytheistic faith to the root. Bukhari and Muslim have related that after the Battle of Badr, Jubair bin Mutim

came to Al-Madinah to negotiate release of the Quraish prisoners of war on behalf of the people of Makkah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) at that time was leading the Maghrib Prayer, and he recited this Surah at-Toour in it. Mutim himself has stated that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) reached this place, his heart seemed to be leaving his breast. One main reason of his embracing Islam afterwards was that Islam had taken root in his heart on hearing these very verses on that day.

37. Or do they possess the treasures of your Lord. Or is it they who control them. ^{*29}

أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَبِّكَ أَمْ هُمْ
الْمُصَيِّرُونَ

***29** This is an answer to the objection of the disbelievers of Makkah who said: Why had Muhammad (peace be upon him), son of Abdullah, only been appointed a Messenger? The answer implies this: Somebody in any case had to be appointed a Messenger in order to deliver the people from their error of serving others than Allah. Now the question is: Who should decide whom Allah should appoint His Messenger and whom He should not? If these people refuse to accept the Messenger appointed by Allah, it means that either they regard themselves as the masters of the world or they presume that the world may belong to Allah, but it should be ruled by them.

38. Or have they a stairway (unto heaven) by means of which they listen (decrees). Then let their listener

أَمْ لَهُمْ سُلَّمٌ يَسْتَمِعُونَ فِيهِ فَلْيَأْتِ
مُسْتَمِعُهُمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ

produce a manifest
authority (proof).

39. Or for Him are daughters
and for you sons. ^{*30}

أَمْ لَهُ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَكُمْ الْبُنُونَ

***30** A detailed reasoning has been compressed into these brief sentences. It means to say: If you deny what the Prophet (peace be upon him) says, then what other means do you have to know the reality? Has any of you had access to the heavens where he found out directly from Allah or His angels that the beliefs on which you have based your religion are absolutely in accord with the reality? If someone makes this claim, he should come forward and tell as to when and how he had access to the heavens and what knowledge he has brought from there. If you do not make any such claim, then consider how ridiculous is your creed that you assign children to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and that too daughters, whom you regard as disgraceful for yourselves. Without knowledge you are wandering in the darkness of such errors and turning hostile to the person who brings to you the light of knowledge from God.

40. Or do you ask them a
payment so they are
burdened with a load of
debt. ^{*31}

أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِنْ مَّغْرَمٍ
مُّثْقَلُونَ

***31** The question is actually directed to the disbelievers. It means: If the Messenger had a selfish motive and had been exerting only for a personal gain from you, there would be a rational ground for you to avoid him. But you yourselves know that he is absolutely selfless in his invitation and is

exerting himself only for your own benefit and well-being. Then, how is it that you are not even inclined to listen to him with a cool mind? There is also a subtle hint in this question. Like the self-styled guides and guardians of religious shrines of the world, the religious guides, priests and scholars of the polytheists of Arabia also were engaged in a religious business. In view of the same, this question was put before them: On the one hand, these dealers in religion are openly receiving gifts and offerings and fees for every religious service from you; on the other hand, a person who has ruined his trading business, is trying to show you the right way with highly rational arguments, absolutely selflessly. Is it not sheer senselessness that you shun him but run after them?

41. Or do they possess the Unseen so they write (it) down.*³²

أَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ



*³² That is, what particular knowledge do you have to refute the truths that the Messenger (peace be upon him) is presenting before you, which you may present with the claim that you directly know the realities hidden behind the phenomenal world? Do you really have the knowledge that God is not One, but all those whom you have set up as deities also possess godly attributes and powers? Have you really seen the angels and found that they are girls, and, God forbid, are begotten of God? Do you really know that the revelation has neither come to Muhammad (peace be upon him), nor it can come to any man, from God? Do you

really have the knowledge that no Resurrection will take place, that there is going to be no life after death, that there will be no Hereafter when man will be subjected to accountability and rewarded or punished according to his deeds? If you claim to possess any such knowledge, can you give in writing that you are belying what the Prophet (peace be upon him) says about the unseen realities on the ground that you have peeped into the hidden realities and seen that the truth is not that which the Prophet (peace be upon him) presents. Here, one may express the misgiving that if in response to this, those people had given this in writing, in their stubbornness, will not this reasoning have become meaningless? But this misgiving is misplaced because even if they had given this in writing on account of their stubbornness, the common people of society in which this challenge had been given openly were not blind: everyone of them would have understood that the writing had been given out of sheer stubbornness, and no one, in fact, was refuting what the Prophet (peace be upon him) said on the basis that he had the knowledge that it was false.

42. Do they intend a plot.^{*33} But those who disbelieve are themselves in a plot.^{*34}

أَمْ يُرِيدُونَ كَيْدًا فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ
الْمَكِيدُونَ

*33 The allusion is to the secret plots that the disbelievers of Makkah used to devise in their meetings in order to defeat the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and to kill him.

***34** This is one of the clear prophecies of the Quran. In the initial stage at Makkah when the Prophet (peace be upon him) had no apparent power and support with him except a handful of the ill-equipped Muslims and the whole nation was opposing and resisting him relentlessly, the confrontation between Islam and disbelief appeared to be utterly unequal. No one at that time could imagine that after a few years the tables would be turned on disbelief. Rather, the superficial observer could safely predict that the strong opposition of the Quraish and entire Arabia would at last put an end to the message of Islam. But even under those conditions, a challenge was thrown to the disbelievers and they were told in clear terms: You may devise whatever plots you wish in order to frustrate this message, they will all recoil upon you, and you will never succeed in defeating and putting an end to it.

43. Or have they a god other than Allah. Glorified be Allah above what they associate as partners. ^{*35}

أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَهُ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ ^ج سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ
عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

***35** That is, the fact of the matter is that those whom they have set up as deities, are not in fact the deities, and shirk is wholly an unreal thing. Therefore, the person who has risen with the message of Tauhid has the power of the truth with him; and those who are supporting shirk are indeed fighting for the imaginary. How will then shirk win in this conflict?

44. And if they see a fragment from the heaven

وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كِسْفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ

falling down, they would say:
“A heap of clouds.”*36

سَاقِطًا يَقُولُوا سَحَابٌ مَّرْكُومٌ



*36 This is meant to expose the stubbornness of the Quraish chiefs on the one hand; and to console the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions, on the other. The Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions wished that those people should be shown such a miracle by Allah as should convince them of the truth of his Prophethood. At this, it has been said: Whatever miracle they might see with their eyes, they will in any case misinterpret it and invent an excuse for persisting in disbelief, for their hearts are not at all inclined to believe. At several other places also in the Quran their this stubbornness has been mentioned, e.g. in Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 111, it has been said: Even if we had sent down the angels to them and made the dead speak to them and ranged all the things of the world before them (as a proof thereof), they would still have disbelieved, and in Surah Al-Hijr, Ayat 15: Even if We had opened a gate for them in heaven, and they had begun to ascend through it during day time, they would have said: Our eyes have been dazzled; nay, we have been bewitched.

45. So leave them until they meet their Day in which they will be struck down.

فَذَرَّهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي

فِيهِ يُصْعَقُونَ

46. The Day their plot will not avail them anything, nor

يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا

will they be helped.

وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

47. And indeed, for those who have wronged, there is a punishment beyond that, but most of them do not know.^{*37}

وَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عَذَابًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

﴿٤٧﴾

***37** This is a repetition of the same theme that has already occurred in Surah As-Sajdah, Ayat 21: Even in this world We shall make them taste (one or the other) lesser torment before that greater torment; maybe they desist (from their rebellious attitude). That is, We shall send down personal and national disasters from time to time in the world to remind that there is above them a superior power which is deciding their destinies and none has the power to change its decisions. But the people who are involved in ignorance have neither learned any lesson from these events before not will learn any lesson in the future. They do not understand the meaning of the disasters and calamities occurring in the world. Therefore, they explain them away in every such way as takes them further and further away from the reality, and their mind never turns to any explanation, which might make the error of their atheism or polytheism manifest to them. This same thing has been explained by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a Hadith, thus: The example of a hypocrite who falls ill and then gets well, is of the camel whom the masters tied, but it did not understand why they had tied him, and when they untied him, it did not understand why they had untied him. (Abu

Daud: Kitab al-Janaiz). For further explanation, see E.N. 45 of Surah Al-Anbiya; E.N. 66 of Surah An-Naml; E.Ns 72. 73 of Surah Al-Ankabut).

48. And be patient for the decision of your Lord,^{*38} for indeed, you are in Our sight.^{*39} And glorify your Lord with His praise when you rise up.^{*40}

وَأَصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا
وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ

*38 Another meaning can be: Remain firm and steadfast in carrying out the command of your Lord.

*39 That is, We are watching over you and have not left you alone.

*40 There can be several meanings of this and possibly all may be implied: First, whenever you rise from a meeting, you should rise glorifying and praising Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself acted upon this as well as instructed the Muslims that they should glorify and praise Allah when they rose from a meeting. Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Nasai and Hakim have related, on the authority of Hadrat Abu Hurairah, that the Prophet said: If a person sat in a meeting in which much controversy took place, and he pronounced the following words before rising, Allah would forgive whatever passed in the meeting: *subhanaka Allahumma wa bi-hamdika, ashhadu-al la-ilaha illa Anta, astaghfiruka wa utubu ilaika*: O Allah, I glorify You with Your praises: I bear witness that there is no deity but You: I seek Your forgiveness and offer repentance before You. The second meaning is: When you get up from bed, glorify

your Lord with His praise. The Prophet (peace be upon him) acted upon this himself and had also taught his companions that they should pronounce the following words when they got up after sleep: *la ilaha ill-Allah wahda-hu la sharika lahu, la hul mulku wa la hul-hamdu wa haws ala kulli shai In Qadir. Subhan-Allah-i wal-hamdu-lillahi wa la ilaha ill-Allah, wallahu Akbar, wa la hauls wa la quwwata-illa-billah.* (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhari, on the authority of Ubadah bin as-Samit).

Its third meaning is: When you stand up for the Prayer, begin it with the praise and glorification of Allah. Accordingly, the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught that the Prayer should be begun, after the first takbir, with the following words: *Subhanak-Allahumma wa bi-hamdi-ka wa tabarak asmuka wa taala jadduka wa la ilaha ghairuka:* Glory be to You, O Allah, and I praise You. Blessed is Your name, and You are exalted. There is no god other than You. Its fourth meaning is: When you rise to invite others to Allah, begin your invitation with the praise and glorification of Allah. That also was the Prophet's (peace be upon him) constant practice, and he always began his addresses with the praise and glorification of Allah Almighty.

Commentator Ibn Jarir has given still another meaning of it, and it is this: When you get up after the midday nap, offer the Prayer and this implies the Zuhr Prayer.

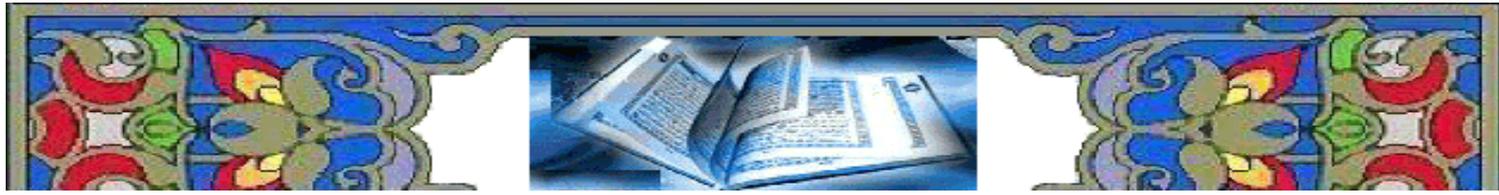
49. And in the night glorify Him^{*41} and at the setting of the stars.^{*42}

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَإِدْبَرَ
النُّجُومِ

***41** This implies the Maghrib, the Isha and the Tahajjud Prayers as well as the recital of the Quran and the remembrance of Allah.

***42** Setting of the stars implies the early hours of the morning when the stars set and they lose their luster on the appearance of dawn. This is the time of the Fajr Prayer.





النَّجْم An-Najm

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah derives its name from the very first word *wan Najm*. This title also does not relate to the subject matter, but is a name given to the Surah as a symbol.

Period of Revelation

According to a tradition related by Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud and Nasai, on the authority of Abdullah bin Masud, the first Surah in which a verse requiring the performance of a *sajdah* (prostration) was sent down, is Surah An-Najm. The parts of this *Hadith* which have been reported by Aswad bin Yazid, Abu Ishaq and Zubair bin Muawiyah from Ibn Masud, indicate that this is the first Surah of the Quran, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had publicly recited before an assembly of the Quraish (and according to Ibn Marduyah, in the Kabah) in which both the believers and the disbelievers were present. At the end, when he recited the verse requiring the performance of a *sajdah* and fell down in prostration, the whole assembly also fall down in prostration with him, and even those chiefs of the polytheists who were in the forefront of the

opposition to the Prophet (peace be upon him) could not resist falling down in prostration. Ibn Masud says that he saw only one man, Umayyah bin Khalaf, from among the disbelievers, who did not fall down in prostration but took a little dust and rubbing it on his forehead said that that was enough for him. Later, as Ibn Masud relates, he saw this man die in the state of disbelief.

Another eye witness of this incident is Muttalib bin Abi Wadaah, who had not yet become a Muslim. Nasai and Musnad Ahmad contain his own words to the effect: When the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited the Surah An-Najm and performed the *sajdah* and the whole assembly fell down in prostration along with him, I did not perform the *sajdah*. Now to compensate for the same whenever I recite this Surah, I make sure never to abandon its performance.

Ibn Saad says that before this, in the Rajab of the 5th year of Prophethood, a small group of the companions had emigrated to Abyssinia. Then, when in the Ramadan of the same year this incident took place the news spread that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had recited Surah An-Najam publicly in the assembly of the Quraish and the whole assembly, including the believers as well as the disbelievers, had fallen down in prostration with him. When the emigrants to Abyssinia heard this news they formed the impression that the disbelievers of Makkah had become Muslims. Thereupon, some of them returned to Makkah in the Shawwal of the 5th year of Prophethood, only to learn that the news was wrong and the conflict between Islam

and disbelief was raging as furiously as before. Consequently, the second emigration to Abyssinia took place, in which many more people left Makkah. Thus, it becomes almost certain that this Surah was revealed in the Ramadan of 5th year of Prophethood.

Historical Background

The details of the period of revelation as given above point to the conditions in which this Surah was revealed. During the first five years of his appointment as a Prophet, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been extending invitation to Allah's religion by presenting the divine revelations before the people only in private and restricted meetings and assemblies. During this whole period he could never have a chance to recite the Quran before a common gathering openly, mainly because of the strong opposition and resistance from the disbelievers. They were well aware of how magnetic and captivating was the Prophet's (peace be upon him) personality and his way of preaching and how impressive were the revelations of the Quran. Therefore, they tried their best to avoid hearing it themselves and also to stop others from hearing it and to suppress his invitation by false propaganda by spreading every kind of suspicion against him. For this object, on the one hand, they were telling the people that Muhammad (peace be upon him) had gone astray and was now bent upon misleading others as well. On the other hand, they would raise an uproar whenever he tried to present the Quran before the people so that no one could know what it was for which he was being branded as a misled and

misguided person.

Such were the conditions when the Prophet (peace be upon him) suddenly stood up one day to make a speech in the sacred precincts of the Kabah, where a large number of the Quraish had gathered together. Allah at that time made him deliver this discourse, which we have now in the form of the Surah An-Najm with us. Such was the intensity of the impression that when the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) started reciting it the opponents were so completely overwhelmed that they could not think of raising any disorder, and when at the conclusion he fell down in prostration, they too fell down in prostration along with him. Later they felt great remorse at the weakness they had involuntarily shown. The people also started taunting them to the effect that whereas they had been forbidding others to listen to the Quran, that day not only had they themselves listened to it, with complete absorption but had even fallen down in prostration along with Muhammad (peace be upon him). At last, they had to invent a story in order to get rid of the people's taunt and ridicule. They said After he had recited *afaraait-ul Lata wal Uzza wa Manat ath-thalitha-al ukhra*, we heard from Muhammad the words: *tilk al-gharaniqa-tal-ula, waanna shafaat-u-hunna latarja*: They are exalted goddesses: indeed, their intercession may be expected. From this we understood that Muhammad had returned to our faith. As a matter of fact, only a mad person could think that in the context of this Surah the sentences they claimed to have heard could have any place and relevance. (For details, please see E.Ns

96 to 301 of Surah Al-Hajj).

Subject Matter and Topics

The theme of the discourse is to warn the disbelievers of Makkah about the error of the attitude that they had adopted towards the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

The discourse starts in a way as if to say: Muhammad (peace be upon him) is neither deluded nor gone astray, as you are telling others in your propaganda against him, nor has he fabricated this teaching of Islam and its message, as you seem to think he has. In fact, whatever he is presenting is nothing but revelation which is sent down to him. The verities that he presents before you are not the product of his own surmise and speculation but realities of which he himself is an eye witness. He has himself seen the Angel through whom this knowledge is conveyed to him. He has been directly made to observe the great signs of his Lord. Whatever he says is not what he himself has thought out but what he has seen with his own eyes. Therefore, your disputing and wrangling with him is just like the disputing and wrangling of a blind man with a man of sight over a thing which the blind man cannot see but the seer can see.

After this, three things have been presented in their successive order:

First, the listeners have been made to understand that: The religion that you are following is based on mere conjecture and invented ideas. You have set up a few goddesses like Lat and Manat and Uzza as your deities, whereas they have no share whatsoever in divinity. You regard the angels as

the daughters of Allah, whereas you regard a daughter as disgraceful for your own selves. You think that these deities of yours can influence Allah in your favor, whereas the fact is that all the angels together, who are stationed closest to Allah, cannot influence Him even in their own favor. None of such beliefs that you have adopted, is based on knowledge and reason, but are wishes and desires for the sake of which you have taken some whims as realities. This is a grave error. The right and true religion is that which is in conformity to the reality, and the reality is never subject to the people's wishes and desires so that whatever they may regard as a reality and truth should become the reality and truth. Speculation and conjecture cannot help to determine as to what is according to the truth and what is not; it is the knowledge. When that knowledge is presented before you, you turn away from it, and brand the one who tells you the truth as misguided. The real cause of your being involved in this error is that you are heedless of the Hereafter. Only this world is your goal. Therefore, you have neither any desire for the knowledge of reality, nor you bother to see whether the beliefs you hold are according to the truth or not.

Secondly, the people have been told that: Allah is the Master and Sovereign of the entire Universe. The righteous is he who follows His way, and the misguided is he who has turned away from His way. The error of the misguided and the righteousness of the righteous are not hidden from Him. He knows whatever everyone is doing. He will requite the evil with evil and the good with good. The final judgment

will not depend on what you consider yourself to be, and on tall claims you make of your purity and chastity but on whether you are pious or impious, righteous or unrighteous, in the sight of God. If you refrain from major sins, He in His mercy will overlook your minor errors.

Thirdly, a few basic principles of the true religion which had been presented hundreds of years before the revelation of the Quran in the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses (peace be upon them) have been reiterated so that the people did not remain involved in the misunderstanding that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had brought some new and novel religion, but they should know that these are the fundamental truths which the former Prophets of Allah have always been presenting in their respective ages. Besides, the same Books have been quoted to confirm the historical facts that the destruction of the Aad and the Thamud and of the people of the Prophets Noah and Lot was not the result of accidental calamities, but Allah has destroyed them in consequence of the same wickedness and rebellion from which the disbelievers of Makkah were not inclined to refrain and desist in any case.

After presenting these themes and discourses the Surah has been concluded, thus: The Hour of Judgment has approached near at hand, which no one can avert. Before the occurrence of that Hour you are being warned through Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Quran in the like manner as the former people had been warned before. Now, is it this warning that you find novel and strange? Which you mock and ridicule? Which you turn away from

and cause disorder so that no one else also is able to hear what it is? Don't you feel like weeping at your folly and ignorance? Abandon this attitude and behavior, bow down to Allah and serve Him alone.

This was that impressive conclusion hearing which even the most hardened deniers of the truth were completely overwhelmed, and when after reciting these verses of divine word the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) fell down in prostration, they too could not help falling down in prostration along with him.

1. By the Star^{*1} when it descends.

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ

*1 In the original the word *an-najm* has been used. Ibn Abbas, Mujahid and Sufyan Thauri opine that it implies the Pleides. Ibn Jarir and Zamakhshari have held this same interpretation as preferable, for in Arabic when the word *an-najm* is used absolutely, it usually implies the Pleides. Suddi says that it implies Venus; and Abu Ubaidah, the grammarian, holds that here the word *an-najm* has been used generically so as to express this idea: When the day dawned, and the stars set. In view of the context we are of the opinion that this last interpretation is more preferable.

2. Your companion^{*2} is not gone astray, nor is deluded.^{*3}

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ

*2 Your companion: implies the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and the addressees are the Quraish. The word *Sahib* as used in the original means a friend, a companion, a close associate. Here, making mention of the Prophet by the word *Sahib-u-kum* (your companion)

instead of Our Messenger is very meaningful. This is meant to make the people of the Quraish realize: The person being mentioned is no stranger to you. He is not an outsider whom you may not be knowing or recognizing already. He is a man of your own clan and tribe. He lives and moves among you; even your children know who and what he is, what his character is, what are his dealings, what are his ways and habits and characteristics, and how he has passed his life among you so far. If someone of you were to say an improbable thing about him, there would be a thousand men among you who knew him, who could see for themselves whether what was said actually applied to him or not.

*3 This is the thing for which an oath has been sworn by the setting star or stars. Going astray means a person's adopting a wrong way being unaware of the right way, and being deluded means his adopting the wrong way knowingly and consciously. The verse means: Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a well-known man among you. Your accusation that he has gone astray, or is misguided, is utterly wrong. In fact, he is neither gone astray nor misguided. Here, the propriety of swearing by the setting stars is that in the darkness of the starry night a person cannot see the things of his surroundings clearly, and from their vague appearances can form wrong judgments about them, e.g. he may take a tree for a ghost in the dark, a string for a snake, a rock in the sand for a beast of prey. But when the stars have set and the day has dawned, everything appears before man in its real form and shape,

and there remains no doubt whatsoever about the reality of things. The same is also the case of Muhammad (peace be upon him) among you. His life and personality is not hidden in darkness, but is manifest like the bright dawn. You are aware that this companion of yours is a right-minded, wise and sagacious man. How can somebody from among the Quraish have the misunderstanding that he has gone astray? You also know how well-intentioned and honest and righteous person he is. How can one of you form the view that he has knowingly adopted a crooked way not only for himself but has started inviting others also to the same falsehood?

3. And he does not speak of his own desire.

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۗ

4. It is not but a revelation that is revealed.*4

إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ

*4 It means this: The things for which you accuse him of having gone astray or been misled and deceived, have neither been fabricated by himself nor motivated by any selfish desire on his part, but they have been sent down, and are being sent down, to him by God. He did not intend to become a Prophet of his own desire so that he might have laid a claim to Prophethood in order to satisfy his desire, but when Allah appointed him to that office through revelation, then only did he rise to preach his mission and to tell you that he had been appointed God's Messenger to you. Likewise, this invitation to Islam, this teaching of the doctrine of Tauhid, this news about the gathering together of all mankind on the Day of Resurrection and their

accountability, the truths that he is presenting about the universe and man and the principles of leading a pure life, are not a philosophy propounded by himself, but the knowledge of all this has been bestowed on him by revelation. Likewise, this Quran that he recites before you, is also not of his own composition but it is divine word which is sent down to him by revelation.

“He does not speak of his own desire; It is not but a revelation that is revealed.” Here, the question arises: Which of the words spoken by the Prophet (peace be upon him) are Allah’s Words: Do they apply to everything that he spoke, or to some of his words and not to others? The answer is: As far as the Quran is concerned, the divine words apply to it most completely. As for the other words, apart from the Quran, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) spoke, they could inevitably be of three kinds:

First, those words which he employed for preaching religion and inviting others to Allah, and for explaining the themes, teachings and commands of the Quran, or for giving admonition and instruction to the people to fulfill the object for which the Quran was revealed. In this regard, obviously nobody can have the doubt that, God forbid, he fabricated these things from his own mind. In these matters, his position, in fact, was of the official interpreter of the Quran and of Allah’s authorized representative. Although these things were not revealed to him literally as the Quran was revealed; yet these were necessarily based on the same knowledge that he had been given by revelation. The only difference between the Quran and

these was that the Quran, both in word and in meaning, was entirely from Allah, and in these other things the meanings were those taught by Allah and the words those which he himself employed to express those meanings. On the basis of this very distinction, the Quran has been described as *wahi-jali* (manifest revelation) and the Prophet's (peace be upon him) other sayings as *wahi-khafi* (concealed revelation).

The second kind of the words were those which the Prophet (peace be upon him) spoke in connection with the struggle of raising Allah's Word and his services for establishing Islam. In this regard, he had to perform countless duties of different kinds as the leader and guide of the Muslim community. In this many a time he took counsel with his companions as well, and followed their advice instead of his own view. On being asked he sometimes told them that he was expressing a particular view not under Allah's command but as his personal opinion, and on several occasions it so happened that he said something on the basis of his own opinion and later an instruction came down against it from Allah. None of the things of this nature that he said or did could be based on a selfish motive. As for the question whether these sayings were based on divine inspiration, the answer is that except for the things in regard to which he made it explicit that they were not based on divine command, or about which he took counsel with his companions and accepted their advice, or with regard to a thing against which Allah sent down an instruction after he had said or done something on

the basis of his personal judgment, all other things were based on concealed revelation (*wahi-khafi*) just like the things of the first kind. For the office of the leader and guide of the Islamic movement and the chief of the believing community and the ruler of the Islamic State, which he held, was not self-invented or bestowed by the people, but he had been appointed to it by Allah, and whatever he said and did in carrying out the duties of this office, his position in it was of the representative of divine will. In this matter, whatever he said on the basis of his personal judgment, his judgment in those matters was approved by Allah, and was, derived from the light of the knowledge which Allah had blessed him with. That is why whenever his personal judgment was even slightly turned away from Allah's pleasure, it was immediately rectified by manifest revelation (*wahi-jali*). This rectification of some of his personal judgments is itself a proof that all the rest of his religious judgments and interpretations were precisely in accordance with divine will.

The third kind of the things were those he said concerning common matters of life as a man, which had nothing to do with the duties of Prophethood, which he said before being appointed a Prophet as well as continued saying even after having been appointed a Prophet. About this kind of the things it should be understood at the outset that there was no dispute with the disbelievers concerning them. They had not accused him of being a misled and misguided person because of these but because of the first two kinds of the things. These things were not disputed and therefore could

not become the cause of a verse from Allah. But although they were not the subject of any dispute, yet the fact is that in this private aspect of his life also never did the Prophet (peace be upon him) utter a word that was opposed to the truth, but at all times, under all conditions, his words and deeds remained within the bounds that Allah had prescribed for living his life as a Prophet (peace be upon him) and righteous man. Therefore, the light of revelation shone in that sphere as well. This same thing has been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in some authentic Ahadith. In Musnad Ahmad a tradition has been related on the authority of Abu Hurairah, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) once said: I never say anything but what is true and right. A companion said: O Messenger of Allah, you say things sometimes in jest also. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Indeed, I never say anything but the truth. According to Musnad Ahmad and Abu Daud, Abdullah bin Amr bin Aas is reported to have said: I used to write down whatever I heard from the sacred tongue of the Prophet (peace be upon him) so as to preserve it. The people of the Quraish forbade me to do this, saying: You are writing down everything whereas the Prophet (peace be upon him) is a man: he sometimes says things in the state of anger too. At this I gave up writing. Afterwards when I mentioned this before the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said: You should continue writing: By Him in Whose hand is my life, never have I said anything but the truth. (For a complete discussion of this question, see my book Tafhimat vol. 1, Article:

Prophethood and its Injunctions).

5. He has been taught by one mighty in power.*5

عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَى

*5 That is, there is no human being who teaches him this, as you seem to think, but he obtains this knowledge through a supernatural source. According to some people, mighty in power implies Allah Himself, but a great majority of the commentators agree that it implies the Angel Gabriel. This same view has been reported from Abdullah bin Masud, Aishah, Abu Hurairah, Qatadah, Mujahid and Rabi bin Anas. Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir, Razi, Alusi and others also have adopted this very view. Shah Waliyullah and Ashraf Ali Thanwi also have followed this same view in their translations. And the fact is that from the other explanations of the Quran, this very thing is also confirmed. In Surah Takweer it has been said: This indeed is the word of a noble Messenger, who has great power and high rank with the Owner of the Throne: there he is obeyed and held as trustworthy. And (O people of Makkah), your companion is not mad. He has seen that Messenger on the bright horizon. (verses 19-23). Then, in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 97, the Angel has been mentioned by name through whom this teaching had been revealed on the heart of the Prophet (peace be upon him): Say to them, whoever is enemy to Gabriel should understand that he has, by Allah's command, revealed to your heart the Quran. If these verses are read with this verse of Surah An-Najm, there remains no doubt that here mighty in power implies the Angel Gabriel and not Allah.

Here, some people express the doubt as to how the Angel Gabriel can be regarded as the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) teacher. For this would mean that he was the teacher and the Prophet (peace be upon him) his pupil, and this would place him above the Prophet (peace be upon him) in rank. But this suspicion is misplaced, because Gabriel did not impart instruction to the Prophet (peace be upon him) from any personal knowledge of his own, which might give him superiority over the Prophet (peace be upon him). Allah, in fact, had made him a means of conveying knowledge to the Prophet (peace be upon him), and he was the Prophet's (peace be upon him) teacher in the metaphoric sense for being only a medium of instruction. That does not give him any superiority whatever. To quote an example: After the Prayer was prescribed five times a day, Allah sent Gabriel to teach the Prophet (peace be upon him) the correct times of the Prayers, and he led him in the Prayers five times daily for two days. This has been related in Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi and Muwatta and other collections of the Ahadith, with authentic chains of reporters, and in this the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself has explained that he was the follower and Gabriel his leader in the Prayers. But his being made the leader only for the purpose of instruction does not mean that he was superior to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in rank.

6. One endowed with wisdom.*⁶ So he stood poised in front.

ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَىٰ



*6 Ibn Abbas and Qatadah take *dhu mirra-tin* of the text in the meaning of beautiful and grand. Mujahid, Hasan Basri, Ibn Zaid and Sufyan Thauri say that it means: strong and powerful. Saeed bin Musayyab has expressed the opinion that it means wise. In a Hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) has used this word in the sense of healthy and sound. In Arabic usage this word is used in the meaning of sound in judgment, wise and learned also. Allah has chosen this word for Gabriel here because he possesses both intellectual and physical powers to the highest degree.

7. And he was on the uppermost horizon.*7

وَهُوَ بِالْأَفْقِ الْأَعْلَى

*7 The horizon means the eastern edge of the sky where the sun rises and the day dawns. The same has been referred to as *ufuq-mubin* (bright horizon) in Surah Takweer, Ayat 23. Both the verses make it explicit that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw Gabriel for the first time, he had appeared on the eastern horizon of the sky; and there are several authentic traditions which show that at that time he was in his real shape in which Allah has created him. We shall quote all such traditions below.

8. Then he approached and came closer.

ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّى

9. Then he was at (a distance of) two bows length or even nearer.*8

فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى

*8 That is, After appearing on the uppermost edge of the sky, Gabriel started advancing towards the Prophet (peace

be upon him) till he reached and hung suspended about him in mid air. Then he bent down to him and came within just two bow-lengths or even closer. The commentators generally have taken *qaba-qausain* in the meaning of two bow-lengths, but Abdullah bin Abbas and Abdullah bin Masud have taken *qaus* in the meaning of a *dhira* (an arm-length, cubit), and have interpreted the words *kama qaba qausain*, saying that the distance between them was reduced to only two arm-lengths. And since all bows are not equal in length, the approximate distance has been expressed by two bow-lengths away or even closer.

10. Then He revealed unto His slave that which He revealed.*⁹

فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ

*⁹ The sentence *faauha ila abdihi ma auha* of the text can have two translations:

- (1) He (Gabriel) revealed to His (Allah's) servant whatever he revealed.
- (2) He (Allah) revealed to His own servant whatever He revealed.

According to the first translation, the meaning would be: Gabriel revealed to the servant of Allah whatever he had to reveal; according to the second: Allah revealed through Gabriel to His servant whatever He had to reveal. The commentators have given both these meanings; the first meaning, however, fits in better with the context, and the same has been reported from Hasan Basri and Ibn Zaid. Here, the question may be asked: How can the pronoun of *abd-i-hi* turn to Allah instead of to the subject of *auha*,

whereas Allah has nowhere been mentioned from the beginning of the Surah to this place? The answer is that wherever it becomes apparent from the context that the antecedent of a pronoun refers to a particular person, the pronoun turns to him automatically whether it has been mentioned before or not. There are several instances of this available in the Quran itself. In Surah Al-Qadr, Ayat 1, Allah says: We have sent it down in the night of glory. There is no mention of the Quran in this sentence, but the context explicitly shows that the antecedent of the pronoun is the Quran. At another place Allah says: If Allah were to seize the people because of their misdeeds, He would not leave any creature (unpunished) on its back. In this sentence there is no mention of the earth anywhere, but the context clearly shows that its back implies the earth's back. In Surah YaSeen, Ayat 69, it has been said: We have not taught him poetry, nor does poetry behoove him. Here, there is no mention of the Prophet (peace be upon him), neither before this sentence nor after it, yet the context is explicit that the antecedent of the pronouns is the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. In Surah Ar-Rahman, Ayat 26, it has been said: Whatever exists on it shall perish. There is no mention of the earth either before or after it, but the style clearly shows that the pronoun of *alaiha* turns to it. In Surah Al-Waqiah, Ayat 35, it has been said: We shall have created them especially. There is no noun or pronoun before or after it to which the pronoun of *hunna* may be referring. It is apparent from the context that it signifies the women of Paradise. Thus, as *auha ila abdi hi*

cannot at all mean that Gabriel revealed to his servant, the meaning necessarily would be that Gabriel revealed to the servant of Allah, or that Allah revealed to His own servant through Gabriel.

11. Belied not the heart what he saw.*10

مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى

*10 That is, as the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) observed all this in broad daylight in the waking condition, with open eyes, his heart did not deem it was a delusion, or that it was a jinn or a devil, who had appeared before him, or that it was an imaginary figure, or a vision that he was seeing while awake. His heart fully confirmed what his eyes saw that it was the Angel Gabriel and the message he was conveying was indeed God's revelation to him.

Here, the question arises: How is it that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not entertain any doubt at all concerning such a wonderful and extraordinary observation, and he confirmed with full faith that whatever his eyes saw was a real face and not an imaginary figure, nor a jinn nor devil? When we consider this question deeply we are led to five reasons for it:

First, that the external conditions in which this observation was made, testified to its truth and validity. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not observe this in darkness, or in a state of meditation, or in a vision, or in a sleep-like condition, but the day had dawned and he was fully awake, and he was seeing the whole scene in the broad daylight in the open with his own eyes precisely in the way as one sees

the other things in the world. If doubt is cast on this, then whatever we see in the day time, e.g. rivers, mountains, men, houses, etc., also would become doubtful and illusory. Second, that the Prophet's (peace be upon him) own internal condition also testified to its validity. He was in his full senses. He had no idea whatever in his mind that he should observe, or that he was going to observe such a thing. His mind was absolutely free from such a thought and any longing for it, and in this state he met with this experience suddenly. There was no room for doubting that the eyes were seeing an actual scene, but that an imaginary thing had appeared before his eyes.

Third, that the being who had appeared before him in that condition was so marvelous and magnificent, so beautiful and bright, that neither had he ever had any concept of such a being before that he could take it for a product of his own imagination, nor could a jinn or a devil have such an appearance that he would have taken him for a being other than an angel. Abdullah bin Masud has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: I saw Gabriel in the shape that he had six hundred wings. (Musnad Ahmad). In another tradition, Ibn Masud has further explained that each single wing of Gabriel was so extensive that it seemed to be covering the whole horizon. (Musnad Ahmad). Allah Himself has described him as *shadid al-quwa* (one mighty in power) and *dhu-mirra* (one endowed with great wisdom).

Fourth, that the teaching that the being was imparting also testified to the validity of the observation. The Prophet (peace be upon him) had no concept of the knowledge that

he received suddenly through him, a knowledge that comprehended the realities and truths of the whole universe. About it he could not have the doubt that it consisted of his own ideas which were being set and arranged by his own mind. Likewise, there was no ground for thinking either that it was Satan who was imparting that knowledge to him and thus deluding him, for it is not for Satan that he should teach, nor can he ever teach, the doctrine of Tauhid to man as against polytheism and idol-worship, that he should warn of the accountability of the Hereafter, that he should create contempt against ignorance and its practices, that he should invite people to moral excellences, and should exhort a person not only to accept that teaching himself but should also rise to eradicate polytheism, injustice, wickedness and sin from the world and replace these evils by the virtues of Tauhid, justice, equity and piety.

The fifth and by far the most important reason is that when Allah chooses a certain person for His Prophethood, He cleanses his heart of doubts and suspicions and evil suggestions and fills it with faith and conviction. In that state no hesitation or vacillation is caused in his mind about the validity of whatever his eyes see and his ears hear. He accepts with complete satisfaction of the heart every truth that is revealed to him by his Lord, whether it is in the form of an observation that he is made to witness with the eyes, or in the form of knowledge which he is inspired with, or in the form of a revelation that is recited to him literally. In all these cases the Prophet is fully aware that he is absolutely

safe and secure against Satanic interference of every kind, and whatever he is receiving in any form is precisely and definitely from his Lord. Like all God-given feelings this sense and feeling of the Prophet also is a certainty which does not admit of any misunderstanding. Just as the fish has a God-given sense of being a swimmer, the bird of being a bird, and the man of being a man, and there can be no likelihood of any misunderstanding in this regard, so has the Prophet also a God given sense of his being a Prophet. He does not even for a moment entertain the doubt that he has perhaps been involved in the misunderstanding of being a Prophet.

12. So do you dispute with him over what he saw.

أَفْتَمَرُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يَرَىٰ

13. And certainly he saw him at another descent.

وَلَقَدْ رَءَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ

14. By the lote tree of the utmost boundary.

عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ

15. Near by which is the Garden of Abode.^{*11}

عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ

***11** This is about the Holy Prophet's second meeting with Gabriel in which he appeared before him in his real shape and nature. The place where this meeting took place has been described as *Sidrat-al-muntaha*, along with which it has been said that nearby it is located *Jannat-al-mava* (Garden of Repose).

Sidrah in Arabic means the lote-tree and *muntaha* the extreme edge or limit. Thus, literally, *sidrat-al-muntaha*

means the lote-tree that is situated on the extreme edge or limit. Allama Alusi in his *Ruh al-Maani* has explained it thus: At this the knowledge of every learned man comes to an end; whatever is beyond it is known to none but Allah. Almost the same explanation of it has been given by Ibn Jarir in his commentary, and by Ibn Kathir in *An-Nihayah fi Gharib al-Hadith wal-Athar*. It is difficult for us to know what kind of a lote-tree it is that is situated at the farthest end of this physical world and what is its nature and state. These are the mysteries of the divine universe which are incomprehensible for us. In any case, it is some such thing for which there was no more appropriate word than *sidrah* in human language, in the sight of Allah.

Jannat al-mawa literally means the Jannat (Garden) that is to be an abode. Hasan Basri says that this is the same Jannat which the believers and righteous will be given in the Hereafter, and from this same verse he has argued that that Jannat is in the heavens. Qatadah says that this is the Jannat in which the souls of the martyrs are kept, it does not imply the Jannat that is to be given in the Hereafter. Ibn Abbas also says the same but adds that the Jannat to be granted to the believers in the Hereafter is not in the heavens but here on the earth.

16. When there enshrouded the lote tree that which shrouded.^{*12}

إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَى

***12** That is, its splendor and glory exceeds all description. The divine glory and effulgence was such as can neither be conceived by man nor can any human language depict it

adequately.

17. The sight did not dazzle,
nor it exceeded the limit. *13

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ
١٧

*13 That is, on the one hand, the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah was so firm and steadfast that even in the presence of the great divine splendor and glory his sight was not dazzled and he went on gazing at it with great composure. On the other hand, he was in such complete control of himself and so exclusively attentive that he kept his mind and his sight focused upon the object for which he had been summoned, and he did not let his sight wander to any side like a spectator's to have a glimpse of the wonderful objects present there. This can be understood by the example of a person who gets an opportunity to be present in the court of a mighty and powerful king, where he comes across such glory and splendor that had never even been conceived by him before. Now, if he be a shallow person, he would be struck with amazement, and if he be un-initiated in the court etiquette, he would become heedless of the royal presence and would turn his gaze to every side to look at the embellishments of the court. But a noble, reverent and dutiful person will neither be stupefied and confounded, nor will become lost in witnessing the court, but will present himself with full dignity and will keep his mind concentrated on the object for which he had been summoned in the royal court. This very virtue and quality of the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been esteemed in this verse.

18. Certainly he saw of the greatest signs of his Lord.*14

لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى



*14 This verse clearly states that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had not seen Allah but His wonderful signs. Even according to the context, this second meeting also took place with the same being with whom the first meeting had taken place. Therefore, one will have to admit that neither the one whom he had first seen on the uppermost horizon was Allah nor he whom he saw afterwards by the farthest lote-tree was Allah. Had he seen Allah Almighty on either occasion it would have been a great thing and must certainly have been mentioned here explicitly. About the Prophet Moses it has been said in the Quran that he had besought to see Allah And the reply given was: *Lan tarani* You cannot see Me. (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 143). Now, obviously this honor was not granted to the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). Had it been granted to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), it would by itself have been such an important thing which must have been stated in clear words. But we see that nowhere in the Quran has it been said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had seen his Sustainer and Lord. But in Surah Bani-Israil also, where mention has been made of the event of Miraj (Ascension), it has been said that: We had transported Our servant...so that We may show him some of Our signs, (*linuriya-hu min ayat-ina*), and here also in connection with his visit at *sidrat al-muntaha*, it has been said: He saw of the

greatest signs of His Lord (*laqad ra a min ayat-i Rabb-i-hil kubra*).

In view of these reasons apparently there was no ground for the dispute whether the Prophet (peace be upon him) on both these occasions had seen Allah Almighty or the Angel Gabriel. But, the reason that has given rise to this dispute is that the traditions of Hadith differ on this question. Below we reproduce in their sequence the Ahadith that have been reported from the different companions in this regard:

(1) Traditions of Aishah:

Masruq, as stated in Kitab at-Tafsir of Bukhari, asked Aishah: O mother of the faithful. Had Muhammad (peace be upon him) seen his Lord and Sustainer? She replied: Your question has terrified me. Why do you forget that if a person lays claim to three of the things, he would lay a false claim? (The first of these things that Aishah mentioned was): Whoever among you says that Muhammad (peace be upon him) had seen his Lord and Sustainer, tells a lie. Then Aishah recited these verses: *La tudriku-hul-absar*: Eyes cannot comprehend Him; and: *Makanali-bashar-in anyyukallima-hullah-u illis wahy-an au min-wara-i-hijab-in au yursila rasul an fayu-hia bi-idhni hi ma yasha-u*: It is not given to any mortal that Allah should speak to him, face to face; He, speaks either through revelation (secret instruction), or from behind a curtain, or He sends a messenger (an angel), who by Allah's command, reveals whatever He wills. (Surah Ash-Shura, Ayat 51). Then she said: The Prophet (peace be upon him) in fact had seen Gabriel in his real shape twice.

A part of this Hadith is also found in Bukhari (chapter 4 of Kitab atTauhid) And in the tradition that Bukhari has cited from Masruq in Kitab Bida al-Khalq, he states: Hearing this thing from Aishah, I asked: What would then Allah's words, *Thumma dana fa-tadalla, fa-Kana qaba qausain-i au adha*: mean? She replied: This refers to Gabriel; he always appeared before the Prophet (peace be upon him) in human shape, but on this occasion he had appeared before him in his real shape and nature and the whole horizon was filled with him.

In Muslim (Kitab al-Iman, Babu fi Dhikr Sidrat al-muntaha) this conversation between Aishah and Masruq has been related in greater detail, its most important part being this: Aishah said: The one who claims that Muhammad (peace be upon him) had seen his Lord and Sustainer imputes a lie to Allah. Masruq says: I was leaning back. Hearing this I sat up and said: Mother of the faithful, do not make haste: Has not Allah said: *wa laqad raa-hu bi-ufuq-i mubin?* and *laqad raa-hu nazlat-an ukhra*. Aishah replied: I was the first one in this ummah who inquired of the Prophet (peace be upon him) about this. He had replied: It was Gabriel. I have never seen him in his real shape and form in which Allah has created him except on these two occasions. On these two occasions I saw him descending from the heavens and his great presence was covering the whole space between the earth and the heavens.

Ibn Marduyah has related this tradition of Masruq, thus: Aishah said: I was indeed the first person who asked the

Prophet (peace be upon him): Did you ever see your Lord and Sustainer? He replied: No, I had only seen Gabriel descending from the heavens.

(2) Traditions of Abdullah bin Masud:

Bukhari (Kitab at-Tafsir), Muslim (Kitab al Iman) and Tirmidhi (Abwab at-Tafsir) contain a tradition on the authority of Zirr bin Hubaish, saying that Abdullah bin Masud gave this commentary of *fa-kana qaba qausain-i au adha*: The Prophet (peace be upon him) saw Gabriel in the shape that he had six hundred wings.

In the other traditions of Muslim, Zirr bin Hubaish has reported this very commentary of *Ma kadhab al-fu adu maraa* and *laqad ra a min ayat-i Rabbi-hil kubra* from Abdullah bin Masud.

In Musnad Ahmad this commentary of Ibn Masud has been reported by Abdur Rahman bin Yazid and Abu Wail also besides Zirr bin Hubaish. Furthermore, in Musnad Ahmad two more traditions of Zirr bin Hubaish have been related in which Abdullah bin Masud commenting upon *wa laqad raa-hu nazlat-an ukhra, inda-sidrat-ilmuntaha* stated: The Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah said that he saw Gabriel by the lote-tree, he had six hundred wings. Imam Ahmad has also cited a tradition on the same subject, on the authority of Shaqiq bin Salamah, in which he states that he heard Abdullah bin Masud saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself had said that he had seen Gabriel in that shape at *sidrat al-muntaha*.

(3) When Ata bin Abi Rabah asked Abu Hurairah the meaning of the verse *laqad raa-hu nazlat-an ukhra*, he

replied: The Prophet (peace be upon him) had seen Gabriel. (Muslim: Kitab al Iman).

(4) Imam Muslim has related in kitab al-Iman two traditions of Abdullah bin Shaqiq on the authority of Abu Dharr Ghifari, in one of which he says that he asked the Prophet (peace be upon him): Did you ever see your Lord? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: *Nur-un anna ara-hu*; and in the other he says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave this answer to his question: Raaitu nur-an. Of the first answer of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Ibn al-Qayyim has given this meaning in his Zadal-Maad: Between me and the sight of my Lord there was Light, and of the second this: I did not see my Lord but only a Light. Nasai and Ibn Abi Hatim have reported the saying of Abu Dharr, thus: The Prophet (peace be upon him) had seen his Lord with the heart (mind), not with the eyes.

(5) Imam Muslim in his Kitab al-Iman has related this tradition from Abu Musa al-Ashari: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The sight of no one from among His creatures has reached Allah Almighty.

(6) Traditions of Abdullah bin Abbas:

According to Muslim, when Abdullah bin Abbas was asked the meaning of: *Ma kadhab al-fu adu ma ara, wa laqad raa hu nazlat-an ukhra*, he said: The Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah saw his Lord twice with his heart. This tradition is also contained in Musnad Ahmad.

Ibn Marduyah has cited this saying of Ibn Abbas, on the authority of Ata bin Abi Rabah: The Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah had not seen Allah with the eyes but

with the heart.

Nasai contains a tradition from Ikrimah saying that Ibn Abbas said: Do you wonder at this that Allah made the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) His friend, blessed Moses (peace be upon him) with His Word and honored Muhammad (peace be upon him) with His sight? Hakim also has cited this tradition and held it as authentic.

In Tirmidhi, there is a tradition from Shabi to the effect that Ibn Abbas said in a gathering: Allah had distributed His sight and His Word between Muhammad (peace be upon him) and Moses (peace be upon him). He spoke to Moses twice, and Muhammad saw Him twice. Hearing these very words of Ibn Abbas, Masruq had approached Aishah with the question: Had Muhammad (peace be upon him) seen his Lord? She had replied: What you have said has made my hair stand on end. After this the same dialogue that we have cited above under the tradition of Aishah took place between Aishah and Masruq.

In one of the traditions reported in Tirmidhi from Ibn Abbas, he says: The Prophet had seen Allah Almighty. In yet another he says: He had seen Him twice, and in a third one: He had seen Him with the heart.

In Musnad Ahmad, a tradition from Ibn Abbas is to the effect: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: I saw my Lord, the blessed, the exalted. In another tradition he says: The Messenger of Allah said: Tonight my Lord came to me in the best shape. I think that by this the Prophet (peace be upon him) meant that he saw Allah Almighty in a vision.

Tabarani and Ibn Marduyah have related this tradition

also from Ibn Abbas: The Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah had seen his Lord twice, once with the eyes and the second time with the heart.

(7) Muhammad bin Kab al-Qurzi states that when some of the companions asked the Prophet (peace be upon him): Did you ever see your Lord? He replied: I have seen Him twice with my heart. (Ibn Abi Hatim). Ibn Jarir has related this very tradition, thus: He said: I have not seen Him with the eye, but with the heart twice.

(8) A tradition of Anas bin Malik which Imam Bukhari has cited in his Kitab at-Tauhid in connection with the event of the Miraj, on the authority of Sharik bin Abdullah, contains words to the effect: When the Prophet (peace be upon him) reached *sidrat al-muntaha*, Allah Almighty drew near him and hung suspended above him till there remained between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Him a distance equal to two bow-lengths or even less. Then, what Allah revealed to him included the command for 50 Prayers. But, besides the objections that Imam Khattabi, Hafiz Ibn Hajar, Ibn Hazm and Hafiz Abdul Haq (author of *Al-Jam bain al-Sahihain*) have raised in respect of the authenticity and subject-matter of this tradition, the main objection against it is that it clearly contradicts the Quran, for the Quran mentions two separate occasions when the experience of the vision took place, the first initially at the uppermost horizon to which reference has been made in: *Dane fa-tadalla, fa-kana qaba qausain-i au adna*, and a second time near *sidrat al muntaha*. But this tradition mixes up the two occasions and presents them both as one

occasion of the vision. Therefore, because of its being contradictory to the Quran, it cannot be acceptable in any case.

As for the other traditions that we have cited above, the weightiest among them are those that have been related from Abdullah bin Masud and Aishah, for both of them have unanimously reported this saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself that on neither occasion he had seen Allah but Gabriel, and these traditions fully conform to the explanations and allusions of the Quran. Furthermore, they are also confirmed by the sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which Abu Dharr and Hadrat Abu Musa al-Ashari have reported from him. On the contrary the traditions that have been cited from Abdullah bin Abbas in the books of Hadith are self-contradictory. In some he regards both the experiences as a vision with the eyes, in some both as a vision with the heart, in some one with the eyes and the other with the heart, and in some he wholly negates the vision with the eyes. In none of these traditions he has cited any saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself and where he has cited such a saying, it contains no mention of either of the two experiences stated in the Quran; besides, the explanation of one of his traditions given by the other indicates that the Prophet at some time had seen Allah Almighty not in the waking condition but in a vision during sleep. Therefore, in fact, for the commentary of these verses the traditions ascribed to Abdullah bin Abbas cannot be held as reliable. Likewise, although the traditions of Muhammad bin Kaab al-Qurzi

cite a saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him), they do not mention the names of the companions who might have heard this thing from the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. Moreover, in one of them it has been said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had clearly denied having seen Allah with the eyes.

19. Have you pondered over Lat, and Uzza.

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ

20. And Manat,^{*15} the third, the other.

وَمَنْوَةَ الثَّلَاثَةِ الْأُخْرَىٰ

***15** That is, you regard the teachings being given to you by Muhammad (peace be upon him) as erroneous and falsehood, whereas he is being given this knowledge by Allah, and Allah has made him see with his own eyes the verities to which he is testifying before you. Now consider it for yourself as to how irrational are the beliefs that you are following persistently and as to whom you are causing loss by opposing and resisting the person who is guiding you to the right way. In this connection, especially the three goddesses that were worshiped generally by the people of Makkah, Taif and other parts of Hejaz have been taken as an example. About them, they have been asked: Have you ever considered rationally whether they could have even the slightest role in the affairs of the Godhead of the earth and heavens? Or could they bear any relationship whatever with the Lord of the Universe?

The shrine of Lat was in Taif and the Bani Thaqif were so devoted to it that when Abraha was advancing to Makkah with his army of elephants to destroy the Kabah, the people

only in order to save the temple of their deity had provided the wicked man with guides to lead him to Makkah so that he should spare Lat, whereas like all the Arabs the people of Thaqif also believed that the Kabah is Allah's House. Scholars have disputed the meaning of Lat. According to Ibn Jarir Tabari, it is the feminine gender of Allah, i.e. originally this word was *allahatun* which became al-Lat. According to Zamakhshari, it is derived from *hva yalvi*, which means to turn to or bow to somebody. As the polytheists turned to it for worship and bowed to it and circumambulated it, it began to be called Lat. Ibn Abbas reads it as Latt (with a stress on t) and holds it is derived from *latt yalittu*, which means to churn and mix together. He and Mujahid state that this, in fact, was a man, who lived on a rock near Taif, and used to entertain the pilgrims to Makkah with barley drinks and food. When he died the people built a shrine to him on the same rock and began to worship him. But this explanation of Lat, in spite of having been reported on the authority of scholars like Ibn Abbas and Mujahid, is not acceptable for two reasons. First, that in the Quran it has been called Lat and not Latt; second, that the Quran describes all the three as goddesses, and according to this tradition Lat was a man, not a woman.

Uzza is derived from *izzat*, and it means the one (female) enjoying veneration and respect. This was the special goddess of the Quraish and her shrine was situated at Hurad in the valley of Nakhlah, between Makkah and Taif. The people of Bani Shaiban, who were the allies of the Bani Hashim, were its attendants. The Quraish and the people of

other tribes paid visits to it and presented offerings and made sacrifices to it. As for the Kabah, sacrificial animals were driven to it also and it was held in the highest esteem. Ibn Hisham relates that when Abu Uhaihah was on the point of death, Abu Lahab paid him a visit and found him weeping. Abu Lahab asked, Why do you weep, Abu Uhaihah? Are you afraid of death? And death is the destiny of everybody. He said: By God, I do not weep because of the fear of death, but I am grieved to think as to how Uzza will be worshipped after me. Abu Lahab said: It was neither worshipped for your sake in your lifetime, nor will it be given up after you have left the world. Abu Uhaihah said: Now I am satisfied that there are people who will take my place after me.

The shrine of Manat was situated at Qudaid by the Red Sea between Makkah and Madinah, and the people of Khuzaah and Aus and Khazraj were in particular its great devotees. People visited it as pilgrims, circumambulated it and made offerings and sacrifices before it. In the Hajj months as soon as the pilgrims became free from their visit to the Kabah and the religious services at Mina and Arafat, they would start raising cries of labbaik, labbaik even there for the purpose of visiting Manat, and the people who intended to go on this second hajj did not run between the Safa and the Marwah.

21. Are for your the males,
and for Him the females. ^{*16}

أَلَكُمُ الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَىٰ

*16 That is, you held these goddesses as daughters of Allah, Lord of the worlds, and did not consider while inventing

this absurd creed that as for yourselves you regarded the birth of a daughter as disgraceful, and desired to have only male children, but as for Allah you assign to Him only daughters.

22. This, then would be an unfair division.

تِلْكَ إِذَا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَى ﴿٢٢﴾

23. They are not but (mere) names which you have named, you and your forefathers, Allah has sent down no authority for that.*17 They follow not except a guess and that which (they) themselves desire.*18

إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ
وَأَبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ
سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا
تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ

And surely there has come to them guidance from their Lord.*19

مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ أَهْدَى ﴿٢٣﴾

*17 That is, those whom you call gods and goddesses are neither gods nor goddesses, nor do they possess any attribute of divinity, nor any share whatever in the powers of Godhead. You have of your own whim made them children of God and deities and associates in Godhead. Allah has sent down no authority which you may produce as a proof in support of your presumptions.

*18 In other words, the basic causes of their deviation are two: First, that they do not feel any need for the knowledge of reality for the purpose of adopting a creed and religion, but make a supposition on the basis of a mere conjecture and then put belief in it as though it were the reality,

Second, that they have, in fact, adopted this attitude in order to follow the desires of their souls: they desire that they should have such a deity as should help them attain their aims and objects in the world, and if at all there is to be a Hereafter, it should take the responsibility to have them granted forgiveness there too, But it should not impose any restriction of the lawful and the unlawful on them nor should bind them in any discipline of morality. That is why they do not feel inclined to worship One God as taught by the Prophets, and only like to worship these invented gods and goddesses.

*19 That is, in every age the Prophets appointed by Allah have been guiding these wicked people to the truth, and now Muhammad (peace be upon him) has come to tell them as to whom belongs Godhead in reality in the universe.

24. Or is there for man whatever he desires.*20

أَمْ لِلْإِنْسَانِ مَا تَمَنَّى

*20 Another meaning of this verse can be: Is man entitled to take anyone he pleases as his god? Still another meaning can be: Can the desire of man to have his prayers answered by these gods ever be fulfilled?

25. But to Allah belongs the after (life), and the former.

فَلِلَّهِ الْآخِرَةُ وَالْأُولَى

26. And how many angels are in the heavens whose intercession will not avail at all except after Allah has permitted to whom He wills and is pleased with.*21

وَكَم مِّن مَّلَكٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ لَا تُغْنِي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا مَن بَعَدَ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيَرْضَى

***21** That is, even if all the angels together intercede for a person, it cannot be beneficial for him not to speak of the intercession by these invented deities of yours, which can do no one any good. All the powers of Godhead rest with Allah. Even the angels cannot dare intercede for somebody before Him unless He permits it and is pleased to hear their intercession in his behalf.

27. Indeed, those who do not believe in the Hereafter, they name the angels with the names of females. ^{*22}

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ
لَيَسْمُونَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَسْمِيَةَ الْأُنثَى

***22** That is, their first folly is that they have taken these powerless angels who cannot even intercede for anyone before Allah as their deities. Their second folly is that they regard them as female and daughters of Allah. The basic reason for these errors is that they do not believe in the Hereafter. For, had they been believers in the Hereafter, they would never have behaved so irrationally and irresponsibly. Their denial of the Hereafter has made them heedless of their end, and they think that believing or disbelieving in God, or believing in a thousand gods, does not make any difference, for none of these creeds seems to entail any good or bad result in the present life of the world. Whether the people are deniers of God, or believers in many gods, or in One God, their crops ripen as well as

fail, they fall ill as well as recover from illness, and they pass through all kinds of circumstances, good as well as bad. Therefore it is not at all an important and serious matter for them that man should or should not take some one as a deity, or should take as many deities or of any kind as he likes of his choice. When according to them the decision as to what is truth and what is falsehood is to take place in this very world, depending on the results thereof appearing here, obviously the results here do not decide absolutely that one creed is true and another false. Therefore, the adoption of one creed and rejection of another is a matter of mere whim with these people.

28. And they have no knowledge of this. They follow not except a guess.*²³ And indeed, a guess can not avail against the truth at all.

وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ
إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ
الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا



*²³ That is, they have not adopted this creed about the angels on the ground that they had found through some means of knowledge that they were females and daughters of God, but they have presumed this on mere conjecture and have set up these shrines at which they pray for fulfillment of desires, make offerings and pay tributes.

29. So withdraw from him who turns away from Our remembrance,*²⁴ and seeks not but the life of the world.*²⁵

فَاعْرِضْ عَنْ مَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا
وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا



***24** *Dhikr* here may imply the Quran as well as mere admonition; it may also mean that he does not like that even God be mentioned before him.

***25** That is, you should not waste your time in making him understand the truth, for such a person will never be inclined to accept any invitation which is based on God-worship, which calls to objects and values higher than the material benefits of the world, and according to which the real aim of life may be the eternal success and well-being of the Hereafter. Instead of spending your time and energy on such a materialistic and ungodly person, you should devote attention to the people who are inclined to heed the remembrance of Allah and are not involved in the worship of the world.

30. This only^{*26} is their amount of knowledge.^{*27}

Indeed your Lord, He knows best of him who has gone astray from His way, and He knows best of him who is on the right path.

ذَالِكَ مَبْلُغُهُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ
وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن أَهْتَدَى

***26** This is a parenthetical sentence which has been inserted here as an explanation of the preceding verse.

***27** That is, these people neither know nor can think anything beyond the world and its immediate gains; therefore, it is futile merely to spend time and energy on them.

31. And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي

and whatever is on the earth,^{*28} that^{*29} He may recompense those who do evil with what they have done, and recompense those who do good with goodness.

الأَرْضِ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسَاءُوا
بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا
بِالْحُسْنَى

***28** In other words, neither the question whether a person is gone astray or is on right guidance, is to be decided in this world, nor has its decision been left to the judgment of the people of the world; the decision rests with Allah. He alone is the Master of the earth and heavens and He alone knows which way, out of the different ways being followed by the people of the world, is the way of guidance and which of error and deviation. Therefore, you should least bother if the polytheistic Arabs and the Makkan disbelievers think you are deluded and misguided and regard their own ignorance as truth and guidance. Leave them alone if they wish to remain lost in their falsehood. You need not waste your time in disputing with them.

***29** The theme is resumed here and connected as a continuous whole with verse 29. Without the parenthesis, it would read: Leave him alone so that Allah may requite the evildoers for their evil deeds.

32. Those who avoid major sins^{*30} and indecencies^{*31} except the minor offences.^{*32} Indeed, your Lord is vast in forgiveness.^{*33} He is Best Aware of you (from the

الَّذِينَ تَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْإِثْمِ
وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ

time) when He created you from the earth, and when you were hidden in the wombs of your mothers. So do not claim purity for yourselves. He knows best of him who fears (Him).

أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ أَنْتُمْ
أَجِنَّةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ فَلَا
تُرْكَوْا أَنْفُسَكُمْ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ
اتَّقَى



*30 For explanation, see E.N. 53 of Surah An-Nisa.

*31 For explanation, see E.N. 130 of Surah Al-Anaam and E.N. 89 of Surah An-Nahl.

*32 The word *lamam* as found in the original is used for a small quantity of something, or its slight effect, or its mere closeness, or its existence for a short time. This word is used to express the sense that a person did not commit an act but was very near to committing it.

On the basis of its usages some commentators have taken the word *lamam* in the meaning of minor sins. Some others have taken it in the meaning that a person should practically reach very near a grave sin but should desist from actually committing it. Still others take it in the sense of a person's remaining involved in a sin temporarily and then desisting from it. And according to some it implies that a person should think of, or wish, or intend to commit a sin but should take no practical steps towards it. In this regard, the views of the companions and their immediate followers are as follows:

Zaid bin Aslam and Ibn Zaid opine, and a saying of Abdullah bin Abbas is also to the same effect, that it

signifies those sins which the people had committed in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, then after embracing Islam they refrained from them.

Another view of Ibn Abbas is, and the same is also the view of Abu Hurairah, Abdullah bin Amr bin Aas, Mujahid, Hasan Basri and Abu Salih, that it implies a person's being involved in a grave sin or indecency temporarily, or occasionally, and then giving it up.

Abdullah bin Masud, Masruq and Shabi say, and the same has also been reported from Abu Hurairah and Abdullah bin Abbas in authentic traditions, that this implies a person's approaching the very point of a grave sin and crossing all its preliminaries but then restraining himself at the final stage, e.g. a person goes out with the intention of stealing but refrains from it in the end, or has close association with other women, but refrains from committing adultery.

Abdullah bin Zubair, Ikrimah, Qatadah and Dahhak say that this signifies those minor sins for which no punishment has been prescribed in the world nor any threat of punishment held out in the Hereafter.

Saeed bin al-Musayyab says that this implies one's thinking of a sin in the mind but restraining himself from committing it practically.

These are the different explanations which have been reported in the traditions from the companions and their immediate followers. The majority of the later commentators and doctors of law and jurists are of the opinion that this verse and verse 31 of Surah An-Nisa

classify sins into two main kinds: the major sins and the minor sins, and these two verses give man the hope that if he abstains from the major sins and open indecencies, Allah will overlook his minor errors. Although some distinguished scholars have also opined that no sin is minor and the disobedience of Allah is by itself a major sin, yet as stated by Imam Ghazali the distinction between the major and the minor sins is something which cannot be denied, for the sources of knowledge of the Shariah values and injunctions all point to this.

As for the question, what is the distinction between the major and the minor sins, and what kinds of sins are major and what kinds of them minor? we are satisfied that: Every such act is a major sin which has been forbidden by a clear ordinance of the divine Book and the Shariah of the Prophet (peace be upon him), or for which Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) have prescribed a punishment in the world, or have held out a threat of punishment in the Hereafter, or have cursed the one guilty of committing it, or given the news of infliction of punishment on those guilty of committing it. Apart from this class of sins all other acts which are disapproved by the Shariah, come under the definition of minor sins. Likewise, the mere desire for a major sin, or an intention to commit it, is also not a major sin but a minor sin; so much so that even crossing all the preliminaries of a major sin does not constitute a major sin unless one has actually committed it. However, even a minor sin becomes a major sin in case it is committed with a feeling of contempt for religion and of

arrogance against Allah, and the one guilty of it does not consider the Shariah that has declared it an evil worthy of any attention and reverence.

***33** That is, the forgiveness for the one guilty of minor sins is not for the reason that a minor sin is no sin, but for the reason that Allah Almighty does not treat His servants narrow-mindedly and does not seize them on trifling faults; if the servants adopt piety and abstain from major sins and indecencies, He will not seize them for their minor errors and will forgive them magnanimously on account of His infinite mercy.

33. Then, have you seen him who turned away.

أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي تَوَلَّى

34. And gave a little, and was grudging. ^{*34}

وَأَعْطَى قَلِيلًا وَأَكْدَى

***34** The reference is to Walid bin Mughirah who was one of the prominent chiefs of the Quraish. According to Ibn Jarir Tabari, this person had first become inclined to accept the invitation of the Prophet (peace be upon him), but when a polytheist friend of his came to know of his intention to become a Muslim, he counseled him not to give up his ancestral faith, and asked him that if he was afraid of the punishment of the Hereafter, he should pay him a certain amount of money and he would take the responsibility to suffer the punishment on his behalf. Walid accepted the offer and turned away from Allah's way. Then he paid only a little of the amount that he had promised to his polytheist friend and withheld the rest, The allusion to this incident was meant to toll the disbelievers of Makkah what kind of

errors and follies they were involved in because of their heedlessness of the Hereafter and their ignorance of the divine religion.

35. Does he have the knowledge of the unseen, so he sees. *35

أَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ فَهُوَ يَرَى



*35 That is, does he know that this conduct is in any way beneficial for him? Does he know that a person can save himself even in this way from the punishment of the Hereafter?

36. Or has he not had news of what was in the books of Moses.

أَمْ لَمْ يُنَبَّأْ بِمَا فِي صُحُفِ مُوسَى



37. And Abraham who fulfilled (his pledge). *36

وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّى



*36 In the following verses a resume is being given of the teachings sent down in the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses (peace be upon them). The Books of Moses (peace be upon him) signify the Torah. As for the Books of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) they have become extinct and no mention of them is found even in the holy scriptures of the Jews and Christians. Only in the Quran at two places have some parts of the teachings contained in the Books of the Prophet Abraham been cited, here and in the concluding verses of Surah Al-Ala.

38. That no, bearer of burdens, shall bear the

أَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى



burden of another.*³⁷

***37** From this verse three cardinal principles are derived:

- (1) That every person is responsible for himself for what he does.
- (2) That the responsibility of one man's act cannot be transferred to another unless he has a share in the commission of the act.
- (3) That even if a person wishes he cannot take on himself the responsibility of another man's act, nor can the actual culprit be let off on the ground that another person is willing to suffer the punishment on his behalf.

39. And that there is nothing for man except what he strives for.*³⁸

وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى



***38** From this verse also three important principles are derived:

- (1) That every person will get only the fruit of his own deeds.
- (2) That the fruit of one man's deeds cannot be given to another unless he has a share in that deed.
- (3) That none can attain anything without striving for it.

Some people wrongly apply these three principles to the economic problems of the world and conclude that no person can become the lawful owner of anything except of his own earned income. But this conclusion clashes with several laws and injunctions given by the Quran itself, e.g. the law of inheritance, according to which many individuals inherit a person and are regarded as his lawful heirs,

whereas the heritage is not their earned income. As for a suckling for instance, it cannot be proved by any stretch of imagination that its labor had any share in the wealth left by its father. Likewise, there are the injunctions about the zakat and voluntary charities according to which the wealth of one man is transferred to others only on the basis of their legal and moral entitlement and they become its lawful owners, whereas in the production of this wealth they did not make any contribution at all. Thus, it is against the intention of the Quran to take a verse of it and derive from it such conclusions as clash with the other teachings of the Quran itself.

Some other people regard these principles as concerning the Hereafter and raise the question whether, according to these principles, the deeds of one man can in some way be also beneficial for the other person, and whether the deeds of a person which he does for another person, or on his behalf, can be accepted from him, and whether it is also possible that a person may transfer the reward of his act to another. If the answer to these questions be in the negative, the sending of spiritual rewards (*isal thawab*) for the dead and performing Hajj on behalf of another, would be inadmissible; even the prayer of forgiveness for the other person would be meaningless, for this prayer also is not the concerned person's own act and deed. However, this extreme point of view has been adopted by none among the followers of Islam except the Mutazilites. Only they take this verse in the meaning that one man's acts and deeds can in no case be beneficial for the other. On the contrary, the

followers of the sunnah are unanimous that the prayer of one man is beneficial for the other because it is confirmed by the Quran; however, they differ only in details, and not in principles, as to whether the sending of spiritual rewards for another and doing a good work on behalf of another is beneficial or not.

(1) The term *isal-thawab* means that after a person has performed a good act, he may pray to Allah to grant its rewards to another. In this regard, Imam Malik and Imam Shafei have expressed the opinion that the rewards of the pure bodily acts of worship, e.g. the Prayer, the Fasting and recitals of the Quran, etc. cannot reach the other person; however, the rewards of one's monetary acts of worship, e.g. charities, or Hajj, which is a combination of the monetary and bodily worships, can reach the other, for the principle is that one man's act should not be beneficial for the other. But since according to authentic Ahadith the rewards of charities can be conveyed, and Hajj on behalf of another also can be performed, they admit the permissibility of conveying of rewards to the extent of this kind of the acts of worship only. On the contrary, the Hanafi viewpoint is that a man can send the reward of each of his virtuous acts as a gift to the other, whether it is the Prayer, or the Fast, or the recitation of the Quran, or remembrance of Allah, or charity, or Hajj and Umrah. The argument is that just as a man after carrying out a piece of work can tell the master to pay the wages to such and such other person instead of him, so after performing a good deed also he can pray to Allah to grant its rewards to such

and such other person instead of him. In this there is no rational ground for making exception of some kinds of virtues and keeping it restricted to some other kinds of virtues. The same is confirmed by a large number of the traditions:

A tradition, on the unanimous authority of Aishah, Abu Hurairah, Jabir bin Abdullah. Abu Rafi, Abu Talhah Ansari and Hudhaifah bin Usaid al-Ghifari has been reported in Bukhari, Muslim. Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Majah, Tabari, in Awsat, Musradrik and Ibn Abi Shaibah, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) got two rams and sacrificed one on behalf of himself and his family and the other on behalf of his ummah.

Muslim, Bukhari, Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud and Nasai have related a tradition from Aishah to the effect that a person said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): My mother has died suddenly. I think if she had a chance to speak, she would have asked me giving away something in charity. Now, if I give away something in charity on her behalf, will she get a reward for it? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Yes, she will.

In Musnad Ahmad there is a tradition from Abdullah bin Amr bin Aas to the effect, that his grandfather, Aas bin Wail, had vowed in the pre Islamic days of ignorance to sacrifice 100 camels. His uncle, Hisham bin Aas, sacrificed fifty camels of his own share. Amr bin Aas, asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) as to what he should do. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: If your father had affirmed faith in the Oneness of God, you may observe fasts

on his behalf or give something in charity, this would be beneficial for him.

A tradition has been reported in Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud, Nasai and Ibn Majah, on the authority of Hasan Basri, to the effect that Saad bin Ubadah asked the Prophet (peace be upon him): My mother has died. Should I give something in charity on her behalf? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied in the affirmative. Several other traditions bearing on the same subject also have been related in Bukhari, Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Nasai, Tirmidhi, Abu Daud, Ibn Majah, etc. on the authority of Aishah, Abu Hurairah and Ibn Abbas. According to which the Prophet (peace be upon him) permitted giving away of something in charity on behalf of the deceased person describing it as beneficial for him.

According to Daraqutni, a person said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): I have been serving my parents while they were alive, what should I do now when they are dead? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: This would also be their service if you offered the Prayer on their behalf along with your own Prayers, and observed the Fast on their behalf along with your own Fast. Another tradition in Daraqutni has been related from Ali according to which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: If a person passing by the graveyard recites: *Qul huwallahu ahad* eleven times and gives away its reward for the dead, all the dead ones will be granted their due shares of the rewards.

This large number of the traditions which support one another explicitly state that the transfer of the spiritual

rewards is not only possible but rewards of all kinds of acts of worship and virtuous deeds can be sent and conveyed and in it there is no specification of any particular kind of acts and deeds. In this connection, however, four things should be understood well:

First, that the reward of that act only can be transferred, which may have been performed purely for the sake of Allah and according to the Shariah injunctions; otherwise obviously an act which is performed for the sake of another than Allah, or in contravention of the Shari ah injunctions, cannot even entitle its doer himself to any reward, nothing to say of its transfer to another person.

Secondly, the gift of the rewards will certainly reach to those righteous persons who are staying as guests with Allah, but no rewards are expected to reach to those culprits who are placed in confinement there. The gift can reach the guests of Allah but the criminals of Allah cannot be expected to receive it. If a person sends his rewards to him because of a misunderstanding, it will not go waste but instead of reaching the culprit it will return to the actual worker himself just like the money order which returns to the sender in case it does not reach the one to whom it has been sent.

Thirdly, the transfer of the reward is possible but not the transfer of punishment. That is, it is possible that one may do a good deed and may willingly transfer its reward to the other and it reaches him, but it is not possible that one may commit a sin and transfer its punishment to the other and it reaches him.

The fourth thing is that a virtuous act is beneficial in two ways: First, on account of its those results which accrue to the soul and morality of the doer himself because of which he becomes worthy of a reward in the sight of Allah; Second, on account of the reward which Allah grants him as a gift and favor. The transfer of the spiritual reward does not concern the first but only the second. This can be understood by an example. A person tries to attain proficiency in the art of wrestling by constant practice. The strength and skill thus gained is in any way specially meant for his own self; it cannot be transferred to another. Similarly, if he is attached to a royal court, and there is a stipend fixed for him as a wrestler, he alone will receive it and no one else. However, in respect of the prizes and gifts that his patron may like to grant him as an appreciation for his creditable performance, he may request that they may be given to his coach, or parents, or some other benefactor, on his behalf. The same is the case with the virtuous deeds: their spiritual benefits are not transferable and their rewards also cannot be transferred to another, but as for their rewards and gifts he can pray to Allah that these may be granted to a near and dear one, or a benefactor of his. That is why it is termed as *isal thawab* (conveying of spiritual rewards) and not as *isal jaza* (conveying of material reward).

(2) Another form of a person's work being beneficial for another is that one should either do a virtuous deed on the desire or beckoning of another, or without his desire or beckoning, on his behalf, which, in fact, was obligatory for

him to carry out, but which he was unable to carry out himself. In this regard, the Hanafi jurists say that the acts of worship are of three kinds: purely physical, e.g. the Prayer; purely monetary, e.g. the zakat; and the compound acts of bodily and monetary worship, e.g. Hajj. As for the first kind, nobody can act as an agent of another. As for the second kind, one can act as an agent of the other, e.g. the husband can pay the zakat due on the ornaments of the wife. As for the third kind, one can act as an agent of the other only in case the actual person on whose behalf the act is being performed, is permanently, and not just temporarily, unfit to carry out his obligation himself. For example, Hajj can be performed on behalf of another only in case the person concerned is unable to go for Hajj himself, nor may have the hope that he would ever be able to perform it himself. The Malikis and the Shafei is also concur on, this. However, Imam Malik lays down the condition that if the father has willed that his son should perform Hajj after him, on his behalf, the son can perform Hajj on his father's behalf, otherwise not, But the traditions in this regard are very explicit. Whether the father has expressed the desire, or made a will or not, the son can perform Hajj on his behalf.

Ibn Abbas has related that a woman from the tribe of Khatham said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): The command for Hajj reached my father at a time when he has become very old: he cannot even sit on the camel's back. The Prophet replied (peace be upon him): You then may perform Hajj on his behalf. (Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad,

Tirmidi, Nasai). A tradition bearing on the same subject has also been related by Ali. (Ahmad, Tirmidhi).

Abdullah bin Zabair has made mention of a man of the same tribe of Khatham, who also put a similar question to the Prophet (peace be upon him) concerning his aged father. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked: Are you his eldest son? He answered in the affirmative. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: If your father had left behind a debt and you paid it off, would it stand paid on his behalf? He replied that it would. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Then you should likewise perform Hajj also on his behalf. (Ahmad, Nasai). Ibn Abbas relates that a woman from the tribe of Juhainah came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: My mother had vowed to perform Hajj but she died before performing her vow. Now, can I perform Hajj on her behalf? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: If your mother had left behind a debt, would you not have paid it? Likewise, you should also discharge the vow made to Allah, and Allah has a greater right that the vows made to Him be performed. (Bukhari, Nasai). Bukhari and Musnad Ahmad contain another tradition to the effect that a man came and put the same question to the Prophet (peace be upon him) concerning his sister as has been mentioned above, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave him also the same answer.

These traditions provide a clear proof that so far as the compound acts of bodily and monetary worships are concerned, one can act on behalf of another. As for the

purely bodily acts of worship, there are some Ahadith which prove the permissibility of acting on behalf of another in this kind of worship as well. For example, Ibn Abbas has related that a woman from the tribe of Juhainah asked the Prophet (peace be upon him): My mother had vowed to observe the Fast and she died without performing her vow. Now, can I observe the Fast on her behalf? The Prophet replied (peace be upon him): Observe the Fast on her behalf. (Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, Abu Daud). And Buraidah's tradition that a woman asked concerning her mother: She had one month's (according to another tradition two months) Fasts to observe; can I observe those Fasts on her behalf? The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that she could. (Muslim, Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Abu Daud). And Aishah's tradition that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: If a person dies and he had some Fasts to observe, his guardian should observe those Fasts on his behalf. (Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad). In the tradition related by Bazzar the Prophet's (peace be upon him) words are to the effect: If his guardian may so like, he may observe those Fasts on his behalf). On the basis of these very traditions the Ashab al-Hadith and Imam Auzai and the Zahiris have formed the view that one is also permitted to perform bodily acts of worship on behalf of the other. But Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik, Imam Shafei and Imam Zaid bin Ali have given the ruling that a fast cannot be observed on behalf of a dead person, and Imam Ahmad, Imam Laith and Ishaq bin Rahawaih opine that this can be done only in case the deceased person might have so vowed but might

not have been able to perform his vow. Those who oppose this give the argument that the reporters of the Ahadith, which prove its permissibility, have themselves given their rulings against it. Ibn Abbas's ruling has been related by Nasai, thus: No one should offer a Prayer or observe a Fast on behalf of another. And Aishah's ruling, according to Abdur Razzaq, is: Do not observe the Fast on behalf of your dead ones; feed (the needy) instead. The same has also been related from Abdullah bin Umar by Abdur Razzaq that the Fast should not be observed on behalf of the deceased person. This shows that in the beginning it was permissible to perform acts of bodily worship on behalf of others, but the practice that became established in the end was that it was not permissible to do so; otherwise it was not possible that those who have reported these Ahadith from the Prophet (peace be upon him), should have themselves given rulings against them.

In this connection, it should be understood well that fulfillment of an obligation on behalf of another can be beneficial only to those people who have themselves been keen and desirous of fulfilling their obligations and might have been unable to do so being rendered helpless by circumstances. But a person who deliberately shirked going for Hajj although he had the necessary means for it and had no feeling whatever of this obligation in his heart either, cannot be benefited even if several Hajj be performed on his behalf afterwards. This would be analogous to the case of a person who deliberately avoided paying his debts and had no intention to pay them till the

last. Afterwards even if every penny is paid off on his behalf, he would remain a debtor in the sight of Allah. The payment of the debts by another can relieve only such a person who in his lifetime was desirous of paying off his debts but was unable to do so due to straitened circumstances.

40. And that his striving will soon be seen.*39

وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَىٰ

*39 That is, in the Hereafter the people's deeds shall be examined and judged in order to see what provisions they have brought with them. As this sentence occurs immediately after the preceding sentence, it by itself indicates that the preceding sentence relates to the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter, and the view of those who present it as an economic principle relating to this world is not correct. To interpret a verse of the Quran in a way as is irrelevant to the context as well as clashes with the other ordinances of the Quran cannot be right.

41. Then he will be recompensed for it, the fullest recompense.

ثُمَّ يُجْزَاهُ الْجَزَاءَ الْأَوْفَىٰ

42. And that to your Lord is the final goal.

وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ

43. And that it is He who makes to laugh and makes to weep.*40

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَضْحَكَ وَأَبْكَىٰ

*40 That is, Allah provides the means both for joy and for grief. He controls good and ill luck. There is no one else in

the universe, who may have anything to do with making or marring of destinies.

44. And that it is He who causes death and gives life.

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَمَاتَ وَأَحْيَا ﴿٤٤﴾

45. And that He created the pair, the male and the female.

وَأَنَّهُ خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَى ﴿٤٥﴾

46. From a sperm drop when it is emitted.^{*41}

مِن نُّطْفَةٍ إِذَا تُمْنَى ﴿٤٦﴾

*41 For explanation, see E.Ns 27 to 30 of Surah Ar-Room; E.N. 77 of Surah Ash-Shura.

47. And that it is upon Him the other bringing forth.^{*42}

وَأَنَّ عَلَيْهِ النِّشْأَةَ الْآخِرَى ﴿٤٧﴾

*42 When this verse is read with the two preceding verses, the sequence by itself seems to provide the argument for the life-after-death also. The God Who has the power to give death and grant life and the God who brings about a creature like man from an insignificant sperm-drop, rather brings about two separate sexes - male and female - from the same substance and by the same method of creation, cannot be helpless to resurrect man once again.

48. And that it is He who makes rich and contents.^{*43}

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَغْنَى وَأَقْنَى ﴿٤٨﴾

*43 Different meanings have been given by the lexicographers and commentators of the word *aqna* as used in the original. According to Qatadah, Ibn Abbas took it in the meaning of *arda* (pleased), and according to Ikrimah in

the meaning of *qannaa* (satisfied). According to Imam Razi, whatever is given to a person over and above his need and requirement is *aqna*. Abu Ubaidah and several other lexicographers have expressed the view that *aqna* is derived from *qunya-tun*, which means lasting and secured property, e.g. the house, lands, gardens, cattle, etc. Ibn Zaid, however, has given quite a different meaning of it. He says that *aqua* here has been used in the sense of *afqara* (made penniless), and the verse means: He made whomever He pleased rich and whomever He pleased penniless.

49. And that it is He who is the Lord of Sirius.*44

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ رَبُّ الشَّعْرَى

*44 *Shiera* is the brightest star in the heavens, which is also known by the names of *Mirzam al-Jawza*, *al-Kalb al-Akbar*, *al-Kalb al-Jabbar*, *Ash-Shira al-Abur*, etc. In English it is called Sirius, Dog Star and Canis Majoris. It is 23 times as luminous as the Sun, but as it shines over eight light-years away from the earth, it appears to be smaller and less luminous than the Sun. The Egyptians worshiped it, for it made its appearance at about the time of the season when the annual floods were beginning in the Nile; the Egyptians believed that Sirius caused the Nile floods. The pagan Arabs also held the belief that this star influenced human destinies. That is why they worshiped it as a deity, and the Bani Khuzaah, the neighboring tribe of the Quraish, were particularly well-known for being its devotees. What Allah says means: Your destinies are not made and controlled by *Shiera* but by the Lord of *Shiera*.

50. And that He destroyed the former Aad.*45

وَأَنَّهُ رَآهِنَّ أَهْلَكَ عَادًا الْأُولَىٰ

*45 Aad Ula signifies the ancient Aad to whom the Prophet Houd (peace be upon him) had been appointed as a Prophet. When those people were inflicted with the torment in consequence of denying the Prophet Houd (peace be upon him), only the believers escaped the punishment. Their descendants are called Aad Ukhra, or the latter Aad, in history.

51. And Thamud, so He spared (them) not.

وَتَمُودًا فَمَا أَبْقَىٰ

52. And the people of Noah before. Indeed, they were more unjust and more rebellious.

وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ مِّن قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا هُمْ أَظْلَمَ وَأَطْغَىٰ

53. And the subverted settlements, He overthrew.

وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ أَهْوَىٰ

54. Then there covered them that which did cover.*46

فَغَشَّاهَا مَا غَشَّىٰ

*46 “The subverted settlements”: the settlements of the people of Lot, and “covered them that which did cover” probably imply the waters of the Dead Sea, which spread over their settlements after they had sunk underground, and covered the region even till this day.

55. Then*47 which of your Lord's favors will you doubt.*48

فَبِأَيِّ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ تَتَمَارَىٰ

*47 According to some commentators this sentence is also a

part of the resume of the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses, (peace be upon them) and according to others it ended with *Fa ghashsha-ha ma ghashsha*, and with this begins a new theme. According to the context, however, the first view seems to be preferable, for the following words This is a warning of the warnings already given, point out that the whole preceding passage is “of the warnings already given”, which had been sent down in the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses (peace be upon them).

***48** The word *tatamara*, as used in the text, means both to doubt and to wrangle. The address is directed to every listener. To every person who may be listening to this discourse, it is being said: Even after witnessing what has been the fate in human history of denying the bounties of Allah and of wrangling with the Prophets concerning them, will you still commit the same folly? What the former peoples had doubted was whether the bounties and blessings they were enjoying in the world, had been bestowed by One God, or by other associates of His, or by no one, but had become available by themselves. On account of this they wrangled with the Prophets. The Prophets asserted that all these blessings had been granted to them by God, and by One God alone; therefore, they should be grateful to Him and should serve Him alone; but the people did not believe this and wrangled with the Prophets on this very account. Now, O man: Don't you see in history what fate these nations met for entertaining this doubt and for their wrangling? Will you entertain the same doubt and indulge in the same wrangling as proved

disastrous for others?

In this connection, one should also bear in mind that the Aad and the Thamud and the people of Noah had passed long before the Prophet Abraham, and the people of Lot had met with the torment during his own lifetime. Therefore, there can be no difficulty in regarding this passage as a part of the resume of the Prophet Abraham's Books.

56. This is a warner of (the series of) warners of old. *49

هَذَا نَذِيرٌ مِّنَ النُّذُرِ الْأُولَىٰ

*49 The words in the original are: *Hadha nadhir-un-min-an-nudhur-il-ula*. The commentators have expressed three points of view in the explanation of this sentence. First, that *nadhir* here implies the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him); second, that it implies the Quran; third, that it implies the fate of the peoples already destroyed, which has been referred to in the foregoing verses. In view of the context, we are of the opinion that this last commentary is preferable.

57. That which is approaching is near. *50

أَزَفَتِ الْأَزْفَةُ

*50 That is, do not be under the delusion that there is yet enough time for thinking and consideration; therefore, you may not give immediate and serious attention to these things and may not decide that you should accept them without further delay. Nay: no one among you knows how much of the respite of life is left to him. Anyone of you can die at any time and the Last Hour can also take place suddenly. Therefore, do not think that the Hour of

Judgment is yet far off. Whoever has any concern for the Hereafter, should mend his ways forthwith, for one may not have a chance to take a second breath after the present breath.

58. None besides Allah can avert it.^{*51}

لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَاشِفَةٌ



*51 That is, when the Hour of Judgment does arrive, you will not be able to stop it, nor your deities other than Allah have the power to avert it. Allah alone can stop it but He will not.

59. Then is it at this statement you marvel.^{*52}

أَفَمِنْ هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ تَعْجَبُونَ



*52 The word *hadh-al-Hadith* as used in the original, signifies the whole teaching that was being presented in the Quran through the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and marvel implies the marvel that man expresses on hearing a novel and incredible thing. The verse means this: That to which Muhammad (peace be upon him) is inviting you is the same that you have already heard. Now, is it this very thing at which you marvel and feel alarmed, and express wonder as if something very strange and novel was being presented before you?

60. And you laugh and weep not.^{*53}

وَتَضْحَكُونَ وَلَا تَبْكُونَ



*53 That is, instead of weeping at your ignorance and deviation you, on the contrary, are mocking, the truth.

61. And you amuse yourselves.*54

وَأَنْتُمْ سَامِدُونَ

*54 Two meanings have been given of the word *samidun* by the lexicographers.

Ibn Abbas, Ikrimah and Abu Ubaidah, the grammarian, are of the view that in the Yarnanite tongue *sumud* means singing and playing, and the verse alludes that the disbelievers of Makkah, in order to suppress the recitation of the Quran and to divert the people's attention away from it, would start singing in a loud voice.

The other meaning of it given by Ibn Abbas and Mujahid is: *Sumud* means bending down the head out of arrogance; when the disbelievers of Makkah passed by the Prophet (peace be upon him), they would pass by him angrily with their faces lifted up. Raghib Isphahani in his *Mafradat* also has adopted the same meaning; accordingly, Qatadah has translated *samidun* into *ghafilun* and Saed bin Jubair into *muridun*.

62. So prostrate before Allah and worship Him.*55

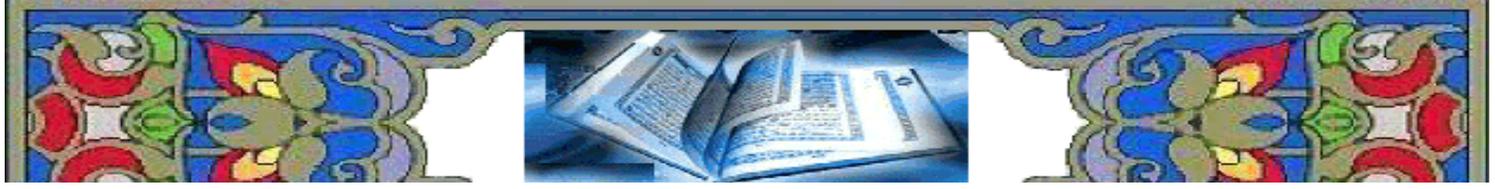
AsSajda

فَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ وَاعْبُدُوا

*55 According to Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Shafei and many other scholars, it is obligatory to perform a sajdah on the recitation of this verse. Although Imam Malik himself used to perform a sajdah here (as cited by Qadi Abu Bakr ibn al-Arabi in *Ahkam al-Quran*), yet he held the view that it was not obligatory to perform a sajdah here, the basis of

his view being this tradition of Zaid bin Thabit: I recited Surah an-Najm before the Prophet (peace be upon him), and he did not perform a sajdah. (Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Abu Daud, Nasai). But this Hadith does not negate the incumbency of the prostration here, for it is likely that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not perform the sajdah then due to some reason but might have performed it later. Other traditions on the subject are explicit that the prostration was always performed on this verse. Abdullah bin Masud, Ibn Abbas and Muttalib bin Abi Wadaah have unanimously stated that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited this Surah for the first time in the Kabah, he had prostrated himself and along with him the whole assembly of the believers and the disbelievers had also fallen down prostrate. (Bukhari, Ahmad, Nasai). Ibn Umar has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited Surah an-Najm in the Prayer and prostrated himself and lay long in that state. (Baihaqi, Ibn Marduyah). Saburat al-Juhani states that Umar recited Surah an-Najm in the Fajr Prayer and performed a sajdah, then stood up, recited Surah al-Zilzal and performed the ruku. (Saed bin Mansur). Imam Malik himself has related this act of Umar in his Muwatta (Bab Maja fi Sajud al-Quren).





الْقَمَر Al-Qamar

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the very first verse *Wan shaqqal-Qamar*, thereby implying that it is a Surah in which the word *al-Qamar* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

The incident of the *shaqq-al-Qamar* (splitting of the moon) that has been mentioned in it, determines its period of revelation precisely. The traditionists and commentators agree that this incident took place at Mina in Makkah about five years before the Prophet's (peace be upon him) hijrah to Al-Madinah.

Theme and Subject Matter

In this Surah the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned for their stubbornness which they had adopted against the invitation of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The amazing and wonderful phenomenon of the splitting of the moon was a manifest sign of the truth that the Resurrection, of which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was giving them the news, could take place and that it had approached near at hand. The great sphere of the moon had split into two

distinct parts in front of their very eyes. The two parts had separated and receded so much apart from each other that to the on-lookers one part had appeared on one side of the mountain and the other on the other side of it. Then, in an instant the two had rejoined. This was a manifest proof of the truth that the system of the universe was neither eternal nor immortal, and it could be disrupted. Huge stars and planets could split asunder, disintegrate, collide with each other, and everything that had been depicted in the Quran in connection with the description of the details of Resurrection, could happen. Not only this: it was also a portent that the disintegration of the system of the universe had begun and the time was near when Resurrection would take place. The Prophet (peace be upon him) invited the people's attention to this event only with this object in view and asked them to mark it and be a witness to it. But the disbelievers described it as a magical illusion and persisted in their denial. For this stubbornness they have been reproached in this Surah.

At the outset it has been said: These people neither believe in the admonition, nor learn a lesson from history, nor affirm faith after witnessing manifest signs with their eyes. Now they would believe only when Resurrection has taken place and they would be rushing out of their graves towards the summoner on that Day.

Then, the stories of the people of Noah and of Aad and Thamud and of the peoples of Lot and the Pharaoh have been related briefly and they have been reminded of the terrible punishments that these nations suffered when they

belied and disregarded the warnings given by the Prophets of God. After the narration of each story the refrain that has been provided is: This Quran is an easy means of admonition, which if a nation takes to heart and thereby takes the right way, the torment that descended on the former nations could be avoided. But it would indeed be a folly if instead of heeding the admonition through this easy means, one persisted in heedlessness and disbelieved until one was overtaken by the torment itself.

Likewise, after citing admonitory precedents from the history of the former nations, the disbelievers of Makkah have been addressed and warned to this effect: If you too adopt the same attitude and conduct for which the other nations have already been punished, why will you not be punished for it? Are you in any way a superior people that you should be treated differently from others? Or, have you received a deed of amnesty that you will not be punished for the crime for which others have been punished? And if you feel elated at your great numbers, you will soon see that these very numbers of yours are put to rout (on the battlefield) and on the Day of Resurrection you will be dealt with even more severely.

In the end, the disbelievers have been told that Allah does not need to make lengthy preparations to bring about Resurrection. No sooner does He give a simple command for it, it will take place immediately. Like everything else the universe and mankind also have a destiny. According to this destiny everything happens at its own appointed time. It cannot be so that whenever somebody gives a challenge,

Resurrection is brought about in order to convince him. If you adopt rebellion because you do not see it coming, you will only be adding to your own distress and misfortune. For your record which is being prepared by divine agents, has not left any misdeed of yours, great or small, unrecorded.

1. The Hour has drawn near, and the moon has split.*¹

أَقْرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَأَنْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ

*¹ That is, the splitting of the Moon asunder is a portent that the Hour of Resurrection of which you are being foretold, has drawn near at hand, and the order of the universe has begun to be disrupted. Moreover, the incident that a great sphere like the moon has split into two distinct parts is a specific proof of the fact that Resurrection of which you are being forewarned can take place. Obviously, when the Moon can split, the earth can also split, the orbits of the stars and planets can also change and the whole system of the heavens can also be disturbed. There is nothing eternal and everlasting and stable here so that Resurrection may be improbable.

Some people have taken this sentence to mean: The Moon will split. Although according to Arabic usage it is possible to take this meaning, the context clearly rejects it. In the first place, if this were the meaning, the first sentence would become meaningless. If the moon had not actually split at the time when this revelation was made, but it was going to split some time in the future, it would be absurd to say on the basis of this that the Hour of Resurrection had approached near at hand. After all, how can an incident

that is to take place in the future, be regarded as a sign of Resurrection's being near at hand, and how can such a testimony be put forward as a rational argument? Second, with this meaning in mind when we read the following verses, they appear to be altogether incoherent. The verses that follow clearly show that the people at that time had witnessed a sign that was a manifest portent of the possibility of Resurrection, but they rejected it as a magical illusion, and persisted in their belief that Resurrection was not possible. In this context, the words *inshaqq-al-Qamar* can be meaningful only if they are taken to mean: The moon split asunder. If they are taken to mean: The moon will split asunder, the entire following theme becomes disjointed. It will look like this:

The Hour of Resurrection has drawn near and the moon will split asunder. Yet whatever sign these people may see, they turn away and say: This is current magic! They have denied and followed only their own lusts.

Therefore, the truth is that the incident of the splitting of the moon is confirmed explicitly by the words of the Quran and it is not dependent upon the traditions of the Hadith. However, the traditions supply its details, and one comes to know when and how it had taken place. These traditions have been related by Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ahmad, Abu Uwanah, Abu Daud Tayalisi, Abdur Razzaq, Ibn Jarir, Baihaqi, Tabarani, Ibn Marduyah, and Abu Nuaim Tsfahani with many chains of transmitters on the authority of Ali, Abdullah bin Masud, Abdullah bin Abbas, Abdullah bin Umar, Hudhaifah, Anas bin Malik and

Jubair bin Mutim. Three of these authorities, viz, Abdullah bin Masud, Hudhaifah, and Jubair bin Mutim state that they were the eye-witnesses of this event; two of them cannot be its eye-witnesses, for this event took place before the birth of one (i.e. Abdullah bin Abbas) and at a time when the other (i.e. Anas bin Malik) was yet a child. But since both these scholars were companions, obviously they must have reported this event after they had heard it from the aged companions who had direct knowledge of it.

The information that one gathers from the various traditions is that this incident occurred about five years before the Hijrah. It was the 14th night of the lunar month; the moon had just risen when it suddenly split and its two parts were seen on either side of the hill in front. Then after a moment or so they rejoined. The Prophet (peace be upon him) at that time was at Mina. He told the people to mark it and be witnesses to it. The disbelievers said that Muhammad (peace be upon him) had worked magic on them; therefore, their eyes had been deceived. The other people said: Muhammad could have worked magic on us but not on all the people. Let the people from other places come, we shall ask them if they also had witnessed this incident. When the people from other places came, they bore evidence that they also had witnessed the same phenomenon.

Some traditions which have been related from Anas give rise to the misunderstanding that the incident of the splitting of the moon had happened twice. But, in the first place, no one else from among the companions has stated

this; second, in some traditions of Anas himself also the words are marratain (twice), and in some firqatain and shaqqatain (two pieces); third, the Quran mentions only one incident of the moon's splitting asunder. The correct view therefore is that this incident happened only once. As for the stories which are current among the people that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had made a gesture towards the moon and it split into two parts and that one part of the moon entered the breast of the garment of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and went out of the sleeve, have no basis whatsoever.

Here, the question arises: What was the real nature of this incident. Was it a miracle that the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed on the demand of the disbelievers of Makkah as a proof of his Prophethood? Or, was it only an accident that occurred on the moon by the power of Allah and the Prophet (peace be upon him) had only called the peoples' attention to it and warned them to mark it as a sign of the possibility and nearness of Resurrection? A large group of the Muslim scholars regards it as among the miracles of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and holds the view that it had been shown on the demand of the disbelievers. But this view is based only on some of those traditions which have been related from Anas. Apart from him no other companion has stated this. According to Fath al Bari, Ibn Hajar says: Apart from the narration by Anas, in no other narration of this story have I come across the theme that the incident of the splitting of the moon had taken place on the demand of the polytheists. (Bab Inshiqq

al-Qamar). Abu Nuaim Isfahani has related a tradition on this subject in Daleil an-Nubuwwat, on the authority of Abdullah bin Abbas also, but it has a weak chain of transmitters and none of the traditions that have been related with strong chains of transmitters in the collections of Hadith on the authority of Abdullah bin Abbas, contains any mention of this. Furthermore, neither Anas nor Abdullah bin Abbas was a contemporary of this incident. On the contrary, none of the companions, from among Abdullah bin Masud, Hudhaifah, Jubair bin Mutim, Ali, Abdullah bin Umar, who were contemporaries of the incident, has stated that the pagans of Makkah had demanded a sign from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to testify to his Prophethood on which he might have shown the miracle of the splitting of the moon. Above all, the Quran itself is also presenting this event not as a sign of the Prophethood but as a sign of the nearness of Resurrection. However, this was indeed conspicuous proof of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) truthfulness because it testified to the news that he was giving to the people of the coming of Resurrection.

The critics raise two kinds of objections against it. In the first place, they say it is impossible that a great sphere like the moon should split asunder into two distinct parts, which should get hundreds of miles apart and then rejoin. Secondly, they say if it had so happened, it would be a well-known event in the world and would have found mention in the books of History and Astronomy. But, in fact, both these objections are flimsy. As for the discussion of its

possibility, it could perhaps find credibility in the ancient days but on the basis of what man has come to know in the present day about the structure of the planets, it can be said that it is just possible that a sphere may burst because of its internal volcanic action and its two parts may be thrown far apart by the mighty eruption, and then may rejoin under the magnetic force of their center. As for the second objection, it is flimsy because the event had taken place suddenly and lasted a short time only. It was not necessary that at that particular moment the world might be looking at the moon. There was no explosion either that might have attracted the people's attention; there was no advance information of it that the people might be awaiting its occurrence and looking up at the sky. It could not also be seen everywhere on the earth but only in Arabia and the eastern lands where the moon had risen and was visible at that time. The taste and art of writing history also had not yet developed so that the people who might have witnessed it, should have made a record of it and then some historian might have gathered the evidence and preserved it in some book of History. However, in the Histories of Malabar mention has been made of a native ruler who had witnessed this phenomenon that night. As for the books of Astronomy and Calendars, this event might have been mentioned in them only if the event had affected the movement of the moon, its orbit and the times of its rising and setting. As no such thing happened, it did not attract the ancient astronomers' attention. The observatories were also not so developed that they might have taken notice of everything

happening in the heavens and preserved a record of it.

2. And if they see a sign, they turn away and say: “A continuous magic.”*2

وَإِنْ يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا

سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ

*2 The words *sahr-um mustamirr* of the text can have several meanings:

(1) That, God forbid, this magical illusion also is one of those magical performances that Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been performing day and night.

(2) That this certainly is a work of magic which has been performed with great expertise.

(3) That just as other works of magic have passed, so will this also pass without leaving any lasting effect behind.

3. And they denied and followed their desires.*3 And for every matter is a (time of) settlement.*4

وَكَذَّبُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ

وَكُلُّ أَمْرٍ مُّسْتَقَرٌّ

*3 That is, they still persisted in the same decision that they had made of denying the Hereafter and have not changed their mind even after having witnessed this manifest sign, mainly because it clashed with their desires of the flesh.

*4 That is, it cannot be so endlessly that Muhammad (peace be upon him) should go on inviting you to the truth while you persist in your falsehood stubbornly and his truth and your falsehood should never be established. All affairs ultimately have to reach an appointed end. Likewise, inevitably this conflict between you and Muhammad (peace be upon him) has also to reach an end. A time will certainly

come when it will be clearly established that he had been in the right and you in the wrong throughout. Likewise, the worshipers of the truth shall one day see the result of their worshiping the truth and the worshipers of falsehood of their worshiping the falsehood.

4. And indeed there has come to them of the news, that in which is deterrence.

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَنْبَاءِ مَا فِيهِ
مُزْدَجَرٌ

5. Profound wisdom, but warning benefits them not.

حِكْمَةٌ بَالِغَةٌ^ط فَمَا تُغْنِ الْأُنذُرُ

6. So turn away from them.*⁵ The Day the caller shall call to a terrible thing.*⁶

فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ يَدْعُ الدَّاعِ إِلَى
شَيْءٍ نُّكْرٍ

*⁵ In other words, leave them to themselves. When every effort has been made to make them understand the truth in the most rational ways, when instances have been cited from history to show them the evil results of the denial of the Hereafter, when the dreadful fates suffered by the other nations in consequence of their rejecting the Prophetic messages have been brought to their notice and yet they are disinclined to give up their stubbornness, they should be left alone to gloat over their follies. Now, they would believe only when after death they arise from their graves to see with their own eyes that the Resurrection of which they were being forewarned and exhorted to adopt the truth,

had actually taken place.

*6 Another meaning can be “an unknown thing”, a thing which they never could imagine, of which they never had any concept and no idea whatever that it also could occur.

7. Downcast their eyes,^{*7} they will come forth from the graves^{*8} as if they were locusts scattered.

خُشَعًا أَبْصَرُهُمْ تَخْرُجُونَ مِنْ
الْأَجْدَاثِ كَأَنَّهُمْ جَرَادٌ مُنْتَشِرٌ



*7 Graves do not signify only those pits in the earth in which a person might have been properly buried, but he would rise up from wherever he had died, or from wherever his dust lay, on the call of the caller to the plain of Resurrection.

*8 Literally: Their looks will be downcast. This can have several meanings:

(1) That they will appear terror-stricken.

(2) That they will be reflecting disgrace and humiliation, for as soon as they arise out of their graves they would realize that it was indeed the same second life which they had been denying, for which they had made no preparation, and in which they would have to present themselves before their God as culprits.

(3) That with awe-struck looks they would be watching the dreadful scenes before them, from which they would not be able to avert their eyes.

8. Hastening towards the caller, the disbelievers will

مُهْطِعِينَ إِلَى الدَّاعِ يَقُولُ

say: "This is a difficult day."

الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَسِرٌ

9. The people of Noah denied before them.*⁹ So they denied Our slave and said: "A madman." And he was rebuked harshly.*¹⁰

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ فَكَذَّبُوا
عَبْدَنَا وَقَالُوا مَجْنُونٌ وَازْدَجَرَ

*⁹ That is, they denied that the Hereafter has to take place when man will have to render an account of his deeds; they denied the Prophethood of the Prophet who was making his people aware of this truth; and they denied the teaching of the Prophet, which taught them what to believe and what creed and conduct they should adopt in order to pass the reckoning of the Hereafter.

*¹⁰ That is, the people not only belied the Prophet but also branded him as a madman; they uttered threats against him, showered him with curses and abuses; and did whatever possibly they could to stop him from preaching the truth, and thus made life extremely difficult for him.

10. So he called out to his Lord: "Indeed I am overcome, so give help."

فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَغْلُوبٌ فَانتَصِرْ

11. Then We opened the gates of heaven with torrential rain.

فَفَتَحْنَا أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَاءٍ مُنْهَرٍ

12. And We caused the earth to burst with springs,*¹¹ so

وَفَجَّرْنَا الْأَرْضَ عُيُونًا فَالْتَقَى

the waters met for a predestined purpose.

الْمَاءُ عَلَىٰ أَمْرٍ قَدِّدٍ ﴿١٢﴾

*11 That is, the earth so burst forth with springs at the command of Allah that it was no longer earth but presented a scene of the springs all around.

13. And We carried him upon a thing of planks and nails.*12

وَحَمَلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ ذَاتِ الْأَوْحِ وَدُسْرٍ ﴿١٣﴾

*12 This signifies the Ark which the Prophet Noah had built under Allah's care and guidance even before the coming of the Flood.

14. Sailing under Our eyes, a reward for him who had been rejected.*13

تَجْرِي بِأَعْيُنِنَا جَزَاءً لِّمَن كَانَ كُفِرًا ﴿١٤﴾

*13 Literally: This was a vengeance for the sake of him whose kufr had been committed. If kufr be taken in the sense of denial, it would mean: Whose message had been denied and rejected; and if it is taken in the meaning of ingratitude for a blessing, it would mean: Who was indeed a blessing for the people, but had been ungratefully rejected.

15. And indeed, We have left this as a sign.*14 Then is there any who would take admonition.

وَلَقَدْ تَرَكْنَاهَا آيَةً فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ ﴿١٥﴾

*14 It may also mean: We left this dreadful punishment as

a sign of warning, but in our opinion the preferable meaning is that the Ark was left as a sign of warning. Its resting and existence on a high mountain continued to warn the later generations of the wrath of God for thousand of years and kept on reminding them how the people who had disobeyed God on this earth had met their fall, and how the believers had been rescued from it. Imam Bukhari, Ibn Abi Hatim, Abdur Razzaq and Ibn Jarir have related traditions on the authority of Qatadah saying that at the time the Muslims conquered Iraq and al-Jazirah, this Ark still existed on Mount Judi (and according to a tradition, near the settlement of Baqirda), and the early Muslims had seen it. In the modern times also some people during their flights in the airplanes have sighted an Ark-like object on a peak in this region, which is suspected to be the Ark of Noah, and on the basis of the same, expeditions have been sent from time to time to search it out. (For further details, see E.N. 47 of Surah Al-Aaraf; E.N. 46 of Surah Houd, and E.N. 25 of Surah Al-Ankabut).

16. Then how was My punishment and warning.

فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِي ﴿١٦﴾

17. And We have indeed made the Quran easy to understand. Then is there any who would take admonition.*15

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ ﴿١٧﴾

*15 Some people have misconstrued the words *yassarnal-Quran* to mean that the Quran is an easy Book; no knowledge is required to understand it so much so that a

person even without the knowledge of the Arabic language, can write a commentary on it, and can deduce any injunctions he likes from its verses independent of the Hadith and Islamic Law, whereas the context in which these words occur, indicates that they are meant to make the people realize this: One means of the admonition are the dreadful torments that descended upon the rebellious nations, and the other means is this Quran, which guides you to the right path by argument and instruction. Obviously, this means of admonition is by far the easier one; then, why don't you take advantage of it and insist on meeting with the torment instead? It is indeed Allah's bounty that He has sent this Book through His Prophet and is warning you that the ways you are following lead only to destruction and your well-being lies only in following this way. This method of admonition has been adopted so that you are rescued even before you fall into the pit of destruction. Now, who could be more foolish than the one who does not believe in the admonition and realizes his error only after he has fallen into the pit.

18. Aad denied. Then how was My punishment and warning.

كَذَّبَتْ عَادٌ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي
وَنُذْرِي

19. Indeed, We sent upon them a raging wind in a day of constant calamity.*16

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي
يَوْمٍ نَحْسٍ مُّسْتَمِرٍّ

*16 That is, on a day the ill omen of which continued to

rage for several days. In Surah HaMim As-Sajdah, Ayat 16, the words are: *fi ayyam in nahisat*, in a few ill-omened days, and in Surah Al-Haqqah, Ayat 7, it has been said: This wind storm continued to rage for seven nights and eight days. It is said that the day on which the storm started was Wednesday. From this the idea spread that Wednesday was a day of ill-luck, and no work should be started on this day. Some very weak traditions also have been cited to support this view, which have further strengthened the idea that this day is ill-omened. For example, there is Ibn Marduyah and Khatib al-Baghdadi's tradition that the last Wednesday of the month is ill-omened, the ill-omen of which is endless. Ibn Jauzi regards this tradition as fabricated and Ibn Rajab as unauthentic. Hafiz Sakhavi says that all the methods through which this tradition has been reported, are weak. Likewise, Tabarani's tradition (Wednesday is a day of perpetual ill-luck) also has been declared as weak by the scholars of Hadith. In some other traditions one is also forbidden to start a journey, to do business transactions, to pare the nails, or to visit the sick on a Wednesday. They also say that leprosy starts on this day. But all these traditions are weak and these cannot be made the basis of any belief. The scholar Munawi says: To abandon Wednesday, taking it as ill-omened and to entertain the astrologer's whims in this regard is forbidden, strictly forbidden. For, all days belong to Allah. no day is beneficial by itself nor harmful. Allama Alusi says: All days are equal, Wednesday has no peculiarity about it. There is no hour in the night or day which might be good for one

person and bad for another. It is Allah Who creates favorable conditions for some people and adverse for others.

20. Sweeping away the people as though they were trunks of palm trees, uprooted.

تَنْزِعُ النَّاسَ كَأَنَّهُمْ أُعْجَازُ نَخْلِ
مُنْقَعِرٍ

21. Then how was My punishment and warning.

فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذْرِي

22. And We have indeed made the Quran easy to understand. Then is there any who would take admonition.

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ
مِنْ مُدْكِرٍ

23. Thamud denied the warning.

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِالنُّذْرِ

24. So they said: “A mortal man, among us alone, shall we follow him.^{*17} Indeed, we would then be in error and madness.”

فَقَالُوا أَبَشَرًا مِّنَّا وَاحِدًا نَّتَّبِعُهُ
إِنَّا إِذَا لَفِيَ ضَلَلٍ وَسُعْرٍ

***17** In other words, there were three reasons for their refusal to obey and follow the Prophet Salih:

- (1) He is a human being and not a super-human person so that we may regard him as superior to ourselves.
- (2) He is a member of our own nation, he is in no way superior to us.
- (3) He is a single man, one from among ourselves. He is not

a prominent chief with a large following, or an army of soldiers. Or a host of attendants so that we may acknowledge his superiority. They wanted that a Prophet should either be a superman, or if he be a common man, he should not have been born in their own land and nation, but should have descended from above, or sent from another land, and if nothing else, he should at least have been a rich man, whose extraordinary splendor should make the people believe why Allah had selected him alone for the leadership of the nation. This same was the error of ignorance in which the disbelievers of Makkah were involved. They also refused to acknowledge the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a Prophet on the basis that he was a man who moved about in the streets like the common men, had been born among them only the other day and now was claiming that God had appointed him as a Prophet.

25. “Has the reminder been given unto him among us. But, he is a liar, an insolent one.”*18

أَلْقَى الذِّكْرَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا بَلْ
هُوَ كَذَّابٌ أَشِرٌّ

*18 The word *ashir* of the original means a conceited, insolent person given to bragging of his own superiority over others.

26. They shall know tomorrow who is the liar, the insolent one.

سَيَعْمُونَ غَدًا مِّنَ الْكَذَّابِ
الْأَشِرِّ

27. Indeed, We are sending the she camel as a trial for them. So watch them and have patience.

إِنَّا مُرْسِلُوا النَّاقَةَ فِتْنَةً لَهُمْ
فَارْتَقِبْهُمْ وَأَصْطَبِرْ

28. And inform them that the water is to be shared between (her and) them. Every drinking will be witnessed.*19

وَنَبِّئْهُمْ أَنَّ الْمَاءَ قِسْمَةٌ بَيْنَهُمْ
كُلُّ شَرِبٍ مُحْتَضَرٌ

*19 This explains the verse: We are sending the she-camel as a trial for them. The trial was that suddenly a she-camel was produced before them and they were told that one day she would drink the water all by herself and the next day they would be allowed to have water for themselves and their cattle. On the day of her turn neither would any of them himself come to any of the springs and wells to take water nor bring his cattle for watering. This challenge was given on behalf of the person about whom they themselves admitted that he had no army and no hosts to support him.

29. Then they called their comrade, so he took (a sword) and hamstrung (her).*20

فَنَادَوْا صَاحِبَهُمْ فَتَعَاطَى فَعَقَرَ

*20 These words by themselves indicate that the she-camel roamed at will in their settlements for a long period of time. No one could dare approach a source of water on the day of her turn. At last, they called out to a haughty chief of theirs who was well known for his courage and boldness, and urged him to put an end to her. Emboldened by the false

encouragement, he took up the responsibility and killed the she-camel. This clearly means that the people were very frightened. They felt that she had extraordinary power, and so they dared not touch her with an evil intention. That is why the killing of a mere she-camel especially when the Prophet who had presented her, did not possess any army that could be a deterrent for them, amounted to undertaking a dangerous and difficult task. (For further details. see E.N 58 of Surah Al-Aaraf and E.Ns 104. 105 of Surah Ash-Shuara).

30. Then how was My punishment and warning.

فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذْرِي ﴿٣٠﴾

31. Indeed, We sent on them a single shout, so they became like the dry stubble of an animal pen. *21

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً
فَكَانُوا كَهَشِيمِ الْمُحْتَظِرِ ﴿٣١﴾

*21 The crushed and rotten bodies of the people of Thamud have been compared to the trampled and trodden twigs and pieces of bush lying around an enclosure for cattle.

32. And We have indeed made the Quran easy to understand. Then is there any who would take admonition.

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ
مِنْ مُدَّكِرٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

33. The people of Lot denied the warning.

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ بِالنُّذْرِ ﴿٣٣﴾

34. Indeed, We sent upon them a storm of stones,

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حَاصِبًا إِلَّا عَالٍ

except the family of Lot,
whom we saved before dawn.

لُوطٍ نَجَّيْنَاهُمْ بِسَحْرِ
٣٤

35. As a favor from Us,
thus do We reward those who
give thanks.

نِعْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي
مَنْ شَكَرَ
٣٥

36. And indeed he had
warned them of Our grasp,
but they did doubt the
warning.

وَلَقَدْ أَنْذَرَهُمْ بَطْشَتَنَا فَتَمَارَوْا
بِالنَّذْرِ
٣٦

37. And indeed they sought
his guests (for ill purpose). So
We blinded their eyes. Then
taste My punishment and
warning.*22

وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدُوهُ عَن ضَيْفِهِ
فَطَمَسْنَا أَعْيُنَهُمْ فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي
وَنُذِرْ
٣٧

*22 The details of this story have been given in Surah Houd, Ayats 77-83 and Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 61-74, a resume of which is as follows:

When Allah decided to punish those people with a torment, He sent a few angels in the guise of handsome boys as guests in the house of the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him). When the people saw such handsome guests in Lot's house, they rushed to it and demanded that they be handed over to them for the gratification of their lust. The Prophet Lot implored them to desist from their evil intention, but they did not listen and tried to enter his house to take hold of the guests forcibly. At this stage suddenly their eyes were blinded. Then the angels told Prophet Lot (peace be upon

him) that he and his household should leave the city before dawn; then as soon as they had left a dreadful torment descended on the people. In the Bible also this event has been described. The words are: And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. But the men (i.e. the angels) put forth their hand and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door. (Gen. 19: 9-11).

38. And indeed, there came upon them in the morning an abiding punishment.

وَلَقَدْ صَبَّحَهُم بُكْرَةً عَذَابٌ مُسْتَقِرٌّ

39. Then taste My punishment and warning.

فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِي

40. And We have indeed made the Quran easy to understand. Then is there any who would take admonition.

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ

41. And indeed, warning came to the people of Pharaoh.

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَ آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ النُّذُرُ

42. They denied Our signs, all of them. So We seized them with the seizure of an All Mighty, All Powerful.

كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كُلِّهَا فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ أَخْذَ عَزِيزٍ مُقْتَدِرٍ

43. Are your disbelievers better than those.*²³ Or, for you is an exemption in the scripture.

أَكْفَارُكُمْ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَوْلِيَّكُمْ أَمْ لَكُمْ
بِرَاءَةٌ فِي الزُّبُرِ ﴿٤٣﴾

*²³ The address here is directed to the Quraish, as if to say: When the other nation have been punished for adopting disbelief and showing stubbornness and denying the truth, why would you not be punished if you adopted the same attitude and conduct. For, you are not a special people in any way.

44. Or do they say: “We are a host victorious.”

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ نَحْنُ جَمِيعٌ مُّنتَصِرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

45. Soon shall this host be put to flight, and they will turn on their backs.*²⁴

سَيَهْرَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُولُونَ الدُّبُرَ ﴿٤٥﴾

*²⁴ This is a specific prophecy that was made five years before the hijrah, saying that the hosts of the Quraish who waxed proud of their strength would soon be put to rout by the Muslims. At that time no one could imagine how such a revolution would take place in the near future. Such was the helplessness of the Muslims that a group of them had already left the country and taken refuge in Habash and the rest of the believers lay besieged in Shiab Abi Talib, and were being starved by the Quraish boycott and siege. Under such conditions no one could imagine that only within next seven years the tables were going to turn. A pupil of Ahdullah bin Abbas has related that Umar used to say: When this verse of Surah Al-Qamar was sent down. I wondered what hosts it is that would be routed. But when

in the Battle of Badr the pagan Quraish were routed and they were fleeing from the battlefield, I saw the Messenger of Allah in his armor rushing forward and reciting this verse: *Sa-yuhzam-al -jamu yuwallun-ad-dubur*. Then only did I realize that this was the defeat that had been foretold. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim).

46. But the Hour is their time appointed. And the Hour will be more grievous and more bitter.

بَلِ السَّاعَةِ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَالسَّاعَةُ أَذْهَى وَأَمْرٌ

47. Indeed, the criminals are in error and madness.

إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعْرٍ

48. The Day they are dragged into the Fire on their faces, Taste you the touch of Hell.

يَوْمَ يُسْحَبُونَ فِي النَّارِ عَلَى وُجُوهِهِمْ ذُوقُوا مَسَّ سَقَرَ

49. Indeed, We have created all things by measure. *25

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ

*25 That is, nothing in the world has been created at random but with a purpose and destiny. A thing comes into being at an appointed time, takes a particular form and shape, develops to its fullest extent, survives for a certain period, and then decays and dies at an appointed time. Even according to this universal principle this world too has a destiny in accordance with which it is functioning till an appointed time and will come to an end at an appointed

tune. It will neither come to an end a moment earlier than its appointed time of end nor survive a moment longer; it has neither existed since eternity nor will exist till eternity, nor is it the plaything of a child which he may destroy as and when he likes.

50. And Our command is but one, as the twinkling of an eye.*26

وَمَا أَمْرُنَا إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ
بِالْبَصَرِ ﴿٥٠﴾

*26 That is, We shall not have to make any lengthy preparations for bringing about Resurrection, nor will it take long to come. For no sooner will a command be issued forth from Us, it will take place in the twinkling of an eye.

51. And indeed, We have destroyed gangs like you.*27 Then, is there any who would take admonition.

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا أَشْيَاعَكُمْ فَهَلْ مِنْ
مُذَكِّرٍ ﴿٥١﴾

*27 That is, if you think that the world is not the kingdom of a Wise and Just God but the lawless empire of a blind ruler, in which man may behave and conduct himself as he likes, without any fear of accountability, history is proof and an eye-opener for you, which shows that the nations that adopted such a way of life, have been sent to their doom, one after the other.

52. And every thing they have done is in written records.

وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَعَلُوهُ فِي الزُّبُرِ ﴿٥٢﴾

53. And every small and great (thing) is written.*28

وَكُلُّ صَغِيرٍ وَكَبِيرٍ مُسْتَطَرٌّ ﴿٥٣﴾

***28** That is, these people should not be under the delusion that whatever they did in the world has become extinct; nay, they should know that full record of the deeds of every person, every group and every nation lies preserved and it will be presented before them at the appropriate time.

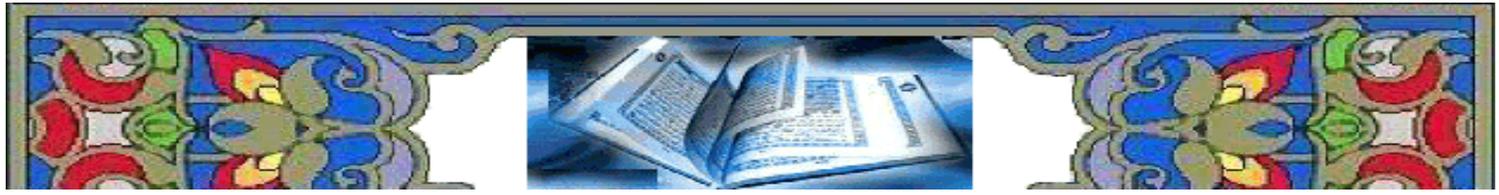
54. Indeed, the righteous will be in gardens and rivers.

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَهَرٍ

55. In a place of honor, in the Presence of a Sovereign Omnipotent.

فِي مَقْعَدٍ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ
مُّقْتَدِرٍ





الرَّحْمَن Ar-Rahman

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah is entitled *Ar-Rahman*, the word with which it begins. This title, however, deeply relates to the subject matter of the Surah too, for in it, from the beginning to the end, the manifestations of Allah's attribute of mercy and grace have been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

The commentators generally hold the view that this is a Makki Surah, though according to some traditions which have been cited on the authority of Abdullah bin Abbas, Ikrimah and Qatadah, it was revealed at Al-Madinah. But, first, there are also some other traditions from these very authorities, which contradict this view; second, its subject matter bears a closer resemblance with the Makki Surahs than with the Madani Surahs; rather it appears to belong to the very early Makkan period. However, there are several authentic traditions which testify that it had been revealed in Makkah many years before the hijrah.

Musnad Ahmad contains a tradition from Asma, daughter of Abu Bakr to the effect: I saw the Messenger (peace be

upon him) of Allah offering his Prayers in the sacred precincts of the Kabah facing the corner in which the Black Stone is fixed. This relates to the time when the divine command, *fasda bi-ma tumar* (so, proclaim publicly what you are being commanded) had not yet been revealed. The polytheists at that time were hearing the words, *Fa-biayyi alaa'i Rabbi kuma tukadhdhi ban*, being recited by him in the Prayer. This shows than this Surah had been sent down even before Surah Al-Hijr.

Al-Bazzar, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Al-Mundhir, Daraqutni (in Al Afrad), Ibn Marduyah and Ibn Al Khatib (in Al-Tarikh) have related, on the authority of Abdullah bin Umar, that once the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited Surah Ar-Rahman himself, or heard it recited before him, he said to the people: How is it that I am not hearing from you the kind of good answer that the jinn had given to their Lord? When the people asked what it was, he replied: As I recited the divine words, *fa bi-ayyi alaa'i Rabbi kuma tukadhdhi ban*, the jinn in response would repeat the words *La bi shaiin min nimati Rabbi-na nukadhdhib*: We do not deny any of our Lord's blessings.

A similar theme has been related by Tirmidhi, Hakim and Hafiz Abu Bakr al-Bazzar from Jabir bin Abdullah. Their tradition contains these words: When the people kept silent on hearing the Surah Ar-Rahman, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: I recited this very Surah before the jinn in the night when they had gathered together to hear the Quran. They responded to it better than you have. As I recited the divine words, *fa bi-ayyi alaa'i Rabbi kuma*

tukadhdhi ban (O jinn and men, which blessings of your Lord will you deny). They would respond to it, saying: O our Lord, do not deny any of your blessings. Praise is for You alone.

This tradition indicates that on the occasion of the incident that has been related in Surah Al-Ahqaf (verses 29-32) of the jinn's hearing the Quran from the Prophet (peace be upon him), he was reciting Surah Ar-Rahman in the Prayer. This happened in the 10th year of the Prophethood when the Prophet (peace be upon him) had halted at Makkah on his way back from Taif. Although in some other traditions it has been reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not know then that the jinn were hearing him recite the Quran, but afterwards Allah had informed him of this, it is not unreasonable to suppose that just as Allah had informed him of the jinn's hearing the Quran, so also Allah might have informed him as to what answer they were giving on hearing Surah Ar-Rahman.

These traditions only indicate that Surah Ar-Rahman had been revealed even before Surahs Al-Hijr and Al-Ahqaf. Besides, we come across another tradition which shows that it is one of those Surahs which were the earliest revelations at Makkah. Ibn Ishaq has related this on the authority of Urwah bin Zubair: The companions one day said to one another: The Quraish have never heard any one recite the Quran publicly to them, and who would read out the divine word aloud to them. Abdullah bin Masud said that he would. The companions expressed the apprehension that he might be subjected to a harsh treatment and said that it

should better be done by a person of a powerful family, who would protect him if the Quraish tried to subject him to violence. Abdullah said: Leave me alone, my Protector is Allah. So early next morning he went to the Kabah while the Quraish chiefs were sitting in their respective conferences. Abdullah arrived at the Maqam (station of Abraham) and began to recite Surah Ar-Rahman raising his voice as he did so. The Quraish first tried for a while to understand what he was saying. Then, when they realized that it was the word that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was representing as the Word of God, they fell upon him and began to hit him in the face. But Abdullah was not deterred, he continued to receive the slaps but continued to read the Quran as long as he could. At last, when he returned with a swollen face, the companions said that they apprehended the same. He replied: God's enemies were never so light for me as they were today. If you say, I will recite the Quran to them again tomorrow. They all said: No, you have done enough; you have made them listen to what they didn't want to bear. (Ibn Hisham, vol. 1, p. 336).

Theme and Subject Matter

This is the only Surah of the Quran in which besides men the jinn, who are the other creation of the earth endowed with freedom of will and action, have been directly addressed, and both men and jinn have been made to realize the wonders of Allah's power, His countless blessings, their own helplessness and accountability before Him. They have been warned of the evil consequences of His disobedience and made aware of the best results of His

obedience. Although at several other places in the Quran there are clear pointers to show that like the men, the jinn too are a creation who have been endowed with freedom of will and action and are accountable, who have been granted the freedom of belief and unbelief, of obedience and disobedience, and among them too there are the believers and the unbelievers, the obedient and the rebellious, as among human beings, and among them too there exist such groups as have believed in the Prophets sent by God and in the divine Books. This Surah clearly points out that the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Quran is meant both for men and for jinn and that his Prophethood is not restricted to human beings alone.

Although in the beginning of the Surah the address is directed only to human beings, for to them only belongs the vicegerency of the earth, among them only have the Messengers of Allah been raised, and in their tongues only have the divine Books been revealed, yet from verse 13 onward both the men and the jinn have been addressed and one and the same invitation has been extended to both.

The themes of the Surah have been couched in brief sentences in a specific sequence:

In vv. 1-4 it has been stated that the teaching of the Quran is from Allah Almighty and it is the very demand of His mercy that He should provide guidance to mankind through this teaching, for it is He Who has created man as a rational and intelligent being.

In vv. 5-6 it has been said that the whole system of the universe is functioning under Allah's sovereignty and

everything in the earth and heavens is subject to His command alone.

In vv. 7-9 another important truth that has been expressed is that Allah has established the entire system of the universe precisely and equitably on justice, and the nature of this system requires that those who dwell in it also should adhere to justice within the bounds of their authority and should not disturb the balance.

In vv. 10-25 besides mentioning the wonders and excellences of Allah's might, references have been made to His those bounties from which the jinn and men are deriving benefit.

In vv. 26-30 both the men and the jinn have been reminded of the truths that in this universe no one except One God is immortal and imperishable, and there is none, from the lowest to the highest, who does not stand in need of God for his survival and other requirements. Whatever is happening here, from the earth to the heavens, is happening under His administration and control.

In vv. 31-36 both the groups have been warned that the time is fast approaching when they will be called to account, which they will not be able to avoid, for God's kingdom is encircling them from every side; it is not in their power to flee it; if they are involved in the misunderstanding that they can, they may try to do so.

In vv. 37-38 it has been said that this accountability will be held on the Day of Resurrection.

In vv. 39-45 the evil end of the guilty ones, from among men and jinn, who have been disobeying Allah in the world has

been mentioned.

And from verse 46 to the end of the Surah mention has been made of those rewards and blessings which will be granted to the righteous men and jinn who have led pious lives in the world and lived with a clear understanding that they will have to appear before their Lord one day and render an account of their deeds and actions.

This whole discourse is couched in oratorical language. It is a spirited and eloquent address in the course of which after mentioning each of the wonders of Allah's great power, and each of the blessings bestowed by Him, and each of the manifestations of His Sovereignty and dominion, and each of the details of His punishment and rewards, the jinn and men have been over and over again questioned: Which then of the bounties and favors of your Lord will you deny? Below we shall explain that *alaa* is a word with many shades of meaning, which has been used in different senses at different places in this discourse, and this question to the jinn and men bears its own special meaning at every place according to the context.

1. The Beneficent.

الرَّحْمَنُ ١

2. Has taught the Quran.*1

عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ٢

*1 That is, the teaching of this Quran is not the production of a man's mind but its Teacher is the Merciful God Himself. Here, there was no need to tell as to whom Allah had imparted this Quranic teaching for the people were hearing it from the tongue of the Prophet Muhammad

(peace be upon him). Therefore, the situation by itself made it evident that the teaching had been imparted to Muhammad (peace be upon him).

To begin the discourse with this sentence is meant, first of all, to tell that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself is not its author, but its Teacher is Allah Almighty. Furthermore, there is another object also to which the word *Rahman* (Merciful) is pointing. If the purpose was only to say that that teaching is from Allah, and not the production of the Prophet's mind, there was no need to use an attribute of Allah instead of His proper name, and for that purpose any attribute from among the divine attributes could have been adopted, But when, instead of saying that Allah, or the Creator, or the Provider, has taught this, it was said: The Merciful (Ar-Rahman) has taught this Quran, it by itself gave the meaning that the revelation of the Quran for the guidance of mankind was nothing but Allah's mercy and grace, As He is most kind and Merciful to His creation, He did not like that He should leave them wandering in the darkness, and His mercy demanded that He should send down this Quran to bless them with the knowledge on which depends their right guidance and conduct in the world and their success and well-being in the Hereafter,

3. He has created man.*2

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ

*2 In other words, as Allah is the Creator of man, and it is the Creator's responsibility to provide guidance to His creation and show it the way by following which it may

fulfill the object of its creation, the revelation of this Quranic teaching from Allah is not only the demand of Allah's mercifulness but also the necessary and natural demand of His being the Creator. Who else would provide guidance to the creation if not the Creator. And if the Creator did not provide guidance, who else could. And what greater defect could there be for a creator that he should not teach his creation the method of fulfilling the object, for which it has been created? Thus, in fact, the arrangement and provision of the teaching for man by Allah is not anything strange; it would be strange if no such arrangement had been made at all. Allah has not just left alone whatever He has created in the Universe, but has given it the most appropriate structure by which it may play its role in the system of nature and has taught it the method of playing that role effectively and successfully. Thus, each single hair and each single cell of man's own body has been born with the knowledge of how it has to carry out the task in the human body for which it has been created, Then, after all how could man himself remain deprived and independent of his Creator's teaching and guidance. This theme has been presented in the Quran at different places in different ways, In Surah Al-lail, Ayat 12, it has been said: Indeed, it is for Us to tell the way. In Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 9, it is said that Allah has taken upon Himself to show the right way, when there exist crooked ways too. In Surah TaHa, Ayats 47-50, it has been stated that when the Pharaoh heard the prophetic message from the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and asked who was

his Lord who had sent him as a Messenger to him, the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Our Lord is He Who has given a distinctive form to everything and then guided it aright. That is, He has taught it the method by which it could carry out and fulfill the object of its creation in the system of existence. This is the reasoning by which an unbiased mind is satisfied that the coming of the Prophets and the Books from Allah for the instruction of man is the very demand of nature.

4. He has taught him
speech.*³

عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ

*³ One meaning of the word *bayan*, as used in the original, is the expressing of one's own mind, i.e. speaking and expressing one's thoughts and intentions. Its other meaning is to make distinction between things, which here signifies the distinction between good and evil, virtue and vice. According to those two meanings this brief sentence completes the above reasoning. Speech is the distinctive quality which distinguishes man from the animals and other earthly creatures, It is not merely the power of speech, but there are working behind it the faculties of reasoning and intellect, understanding and discernment, will and judgment, and other mental powers without which man's power of speech could not operate at all. Therefore, speech is in fact an express symbol of man's being an intelligent being who has been endowed with freedom and authority, and when Allah has blessed man with this distinctive quality, evidently the nature of instruction for him also cannot be the same as would be suitable for the

guidance of other creatures. Likewise, another distinctive quality of vital importance in man is that Allah has placed in him moral sense by virtue of which he can naturally distinguish between good and evil, truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, right and wrong, and this intuition and sense does not leave him even when he degrades himself to the lowest state of error and ignorance. The inevitable demand of these two distinctive qualities is that the method of instruction for man's conscious and voluntary life should be different from the innate, natural mode of instruction under which the fish has been taught to swim, the bird to fly, and the eye in the human body itself to wink and see, the ear to hear and the stomach to digest. Man in this sphere of his life himself recognizes the means like the teacher, the book, the school, the verbal and written instruction and reasoning and discussion as the modes of instruction, and does not regard the innate knowledge and intelligence as sufficient. Why should it then appear strange that for fulfilling the responsibility that falls upon the Creator of educating man, He has made the Messenger and the Book the means of his education and instruction? The mode of education has to suit the nature of the creation, And very rationally so. The Quran alone can be the means of educating the creation that has been taught *bayan* (speech) and not by other means that might suit the creatures which have not been taught the speech.

5. The sun and the moon
adhere to a schedule.*4

الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ

*4 That is, It is a powerful law and unalterable system that

binds the great planets together. Man is able to calculate and measure time, days, dates, and crops and seasons only because no change takes place in the rule that has been laid down for the rising and setting of the sun and of its passing through different stages. The innumerable creatures found on the earth are staying alive only because the sun and the moon have been accurately and precisely placed at particular distances from the earth and any increase or decrease in this distance is made in the right measure, in a particular order, otherwise if their distance from the earth increased or decreased haphazardly, no one, could possibly survive here. Likewise, the perfect relationship and harmony that has been established between the movements of the moon around the earth and the sun, has made the moon a universal calendar, which announces the lunar date every night to the whole world with perfect regularity.

6. And the stars^{*5} and the trees, prostrate.^{*6}

وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ

^{*5} The word used in the original is *an-najm*, the well-known meaning of which is the star; but in the Arabic lexicon this word is also used for the plants and creepers which do not have a stem, e.g. vegetable, melons, water melons, etc. The commentators disagree about the sense in which this word has been used here. Ibn Abbas, Saed bin Jubair, Suddi, and Sufyan Thauri have taken it in the meaning of stemless vegetation, for just after it the word *ash-shajar* (the tree) has been used and this meaning is more relevant to it. On the contrary, Mujahid, Qatadah and Hasan Basri have expressed the opinion that *an-najm*

here does not imply the plants of the earth, but the stars of the sky, as this is its well-known meaning. On hearing this word, the mind first turns to this very meaning, and the mention of the sun and the moon has been followed by the stars very naturally and relevantly. Though the majority of the commentators and translators have preferred the first meaning, and it cannot be held wrong either, we hold Hafiz Ibn Kathir's this opinion as sound that in view of both the language and the subject-matter the second meaning seems to be preferable. At another place in the Quran (Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 18) mention has also been made of the stars and the trees prostrating themselves, and there the word *nujum* (pl. of *najm*) cannot be taken in any other meaning than of the stars. The words of the verse are: *Alam tara annallaha yasjudu lahu man fis smawati wa man fil ardi wash-shamsu wal-qamaru wanujumu wal jibalu wash-shajaru wad-da wabbu wa kathirum-min-annasi*. In this verse *nujum* (stars) have been mentioned along with *shams* (sun) and *qamar* (moon), and *shajar* (trees) along with mountains and animals and it has been said that they all bow down to Allah.

*6 That is, the stars of the heavens and the trees of the earth, all are subject to Allah's command and obedient to His law. They cannot exceed the rule that has been set for them. What is meant to be impressed in these two verses is that the whole system of the universe has been created by Allah and is functioning in His obedience. Nothing from the earth to the heavens is independent, nor functioning under another's godhead, nor has anyone any share in God's

kingdom, nor has anyone the position that it should be made a deity. All are servants and slaves: the Master is One Almighty Lord alone. Hence, Tauhid alone is the truth which is being taught by this Quran. Apart from this, any one who is involved in polytheism and denial of God is, in fact, at war with the whole system of the universe.

7. And the heaven He raised high and He has set the balance.*7

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ
الْمِيزَانَ

*7 Almost all the commentators have interpreted *mizan* (balance) to mean justice, and “set the balance” to imply that Allah has established the entire system of the universe on justice. Had there been no harmony and balance and justice established among the countless stars and planets moving in space, and the mighty forces working in this universe, and the innumerable creatures and things found here, this life on earth would not have functioned even for a moment. Look at the creatures existing in the air and water and on land for millions and millions of years on this earth. They continue to exist only because full justice and balance has been established in the means and factors conducive to life; in case there occurs a slight imbalance of any kind, every tract of life would become extinct.

8. That you do not transgress within the balance.

أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ

9. And establish the weight with justice and do not make the balance deficient.*8

وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ

***8** That is, as you are living in a balanced universe, whose entire system has been established on justice, you should also adhere to justice. For if you act unjustly within the sphere in which you have been given authority, and fail to render the rights of others, you would indeed be rebelling against the nature of the universe; for the nature of this universe does not admit of injustice and perversion and violation of the rights. Not to speak of a major injustice, even if a person fraudulently deprives another of an ounce of something, by giving him short measure, he disturbs the balance of the entire universe. This is the second important part of the Quranic teaching that has been presented in these three verses. The first teaching is Tauhid and the second is justice. Thus, in a few brief sentences the people have been told what teaching has been brought by the Quran which the Merciful God has sent for the guidance of man.

10. And He^{*9} has laid (out) the earth for the creatures.^{*10}

وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ

***9** Now from here to verse 20, mention is being made of the blessing and bounties of God and of those manifestations of His Might by which both man and jinn are benefiting, and whose natural and moral demand is that although they have the option to believe or not to believe, they should adopt the way of their Lord's service and obedience willingly by their own free choice.

***10** The word *wada* in the original means to compose, make, prepare, keep and inscribe, and *anaam* the creatures, which includes man and all other living things. According

to Ibn Abbas, *anaam* includes everything which has a soul. Mujahid takes it in the meaning of the living creatures. Qatadah, Ibn Zaid and Shabi say that all living things are *anaam*. Hasan Basri says that both the men and the jinn are included in its meaning. The same meanings have been given by the lexicographers. This shows that the people who deduce from this verse the command of making land the state property are in error. This is an ugly attempt to introduce alien theories forcibly into the Quran which are neither supported by the words of the verse nor by the context. *Anaam* is not used only for human society but it includes all other creatures of the earth as well and setting of the earth for *anaam* does not mean that it should be the common property of all. Besides, the context here also does not indicate that the object of the verse is to state some economic principle. This, in fact, is meant to impress the truth that Allah made and prepared this earth in such a way that it became a fit abode for every kind of living being. It has not become so by itself, but by the Will and Power of the Creator. He in His wisdom placed it at a suitable distance and created such conditions on it which made it possible for the different species to exist and stay alive on it. (For explanation, see E.Ns 73, 74 of Surah An-Naml, E.Ns 29, 32 of Surah YaSeen, E.Ns 90, 91 of Surah Al-Mumin, E.Ns 11 to 13 of Surah HaMim As-Sajdah, E.Ns 7 to 10 of Surah Az-Zukhruf, E.N. 7 of Surah Al-Jathiyah).

11. Therein are fruits and palm trees with sheathed fruit.

فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ
الْأَكْمَامِ



12. And corn with husk and grain.*11

وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ

*11 That is, grain for men and husk for the animals.

13. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.*13

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ

*12 The word *alaa* as repeated over and over again in the subsequent verses has been translated differently at different places. Therefore, it would be useful to understand at the outset how vast this word is in meaning and what are the different shades of meaning it contains.

The lexicographers and commentators generally have explained *alaa* to mean blessings and bounties. The translators also have given this same meaning of this word, and the same has been reported from Ibn Abbas, Qatadah and Hasan Basri. The major argument that supports this meaning is the Prophet's (peace be upon him) own statement that the jinn on hearing this verse being recited would respond to it, saying *La bi-shai in-min-ni maatika Rabba-na nukadhdhib*: O our Lord, we do not deny any of Your blessings. Therefore, we do not subscribe to the view of some present-day scholars, who say that *alaa* is never used in the meaning of the blessing.

Another meaning of this word is power and wonders of power, or excellent manifestations of power. Ibn Jarir Tabari has reported that Ibn Zaid took the words *fabi-ayyi alaa i Rabbikuma* in the meaning of *fabi-ayyi qudrat-Allah*. Ibn Jarir himself has taken *alaa* in the meaning of power and might in his commentary of verses 37-38. Imam Razi

has also made this observation in his commentary of verses 14-16: These verses do not describe the blessings but the powers of Allah, and in the commentary of verses 22-23, this: These describe the wonders of power and not the blessings.

Its third meaning is virtue, praiseworthy qualities, and perfections. Though this meaning has not been mentioned by the lexicographers and commentators, this word has often been used in this meaning in Arabic poetry.

Thus, we have taken this word in its vastest meaning and translated it suitably keeping in view the context in which it occurs. However, at some places the word *alaa* may have several senses in one and the same place, but due to limitations of translation we have had to adopt only one meaning. For example, in this verse after making mention of the creation of the earth and of making the best arrangements for the supply of provisions to the creatures, it has been said: Which of the *alaa* of your Lord will you deny?" Here, *alaa* has not been used in the meaning of the blessings only but also in the meaning of the manifestations of Allah Almighty's Power and His praiseworthy attributes. It is a wonder of His Might that He fashioned this earth in such a marvelous manner that countless species of creatures live here and an endless variety of fruits and grain are grown on it. And it is due to His praiseworthy qualities that He not only created these creatures but also made arrangements for their sustenance and the supply of provisions for them; and the arrangements also so perfect that their food is not only nutritious but also pleasing to the

taste and sight. In this connection, reference has been made to only one excellence of Allah Almighty's workmanship for the sake of example, viz., the creation of the date-palm fruit in sheaths. Keeping this one example in view one may consider what excellences of art have been devised and shown in the packing of banana, pomegranates, orange, coconut and other fruits, and how each of the different sorts of the grains and pulses which we so thoughtlessly cook and eat, are produced finely packed and covered in ears and pods and clusters.

***13** Denying implies the several attitudes that the people adopt in respect of Allah Almighty's blessings and manifestations of His Might and His praiseworthy attributes. For example, some people do not at all admit that the Creator of all things is Allah Almighty. They think that all this is a mere byproduct of the matter, or an accidental happening, which is un-related with any wisdom and skill and workmanship. This is open denial.

Some other people do admit that the Creator of these things is Allah, but regard others beside Him also as associates in Godhead: they render thanks to others for His blessings: they adore others although they eat His provisions. This is another form of denial. Obviously, it would be the height of ingratitude if a person while admitting that a certain person had done him a favor rendered thanks to another, who had not in fact done him that favor, for this act of his would be an express proof that he regarded the other person as his benefactor whom he was rendering the thanks.

There are still others who acknowledge Allah alone as the Creator of all things and the Bestower of all blessings, but do not admit that they should obey the commands of their Creator and Sustainer and follow His injunctions. This is another form of ingratitude and denial of the blessings, for the person who behaves so denies the right of the Bestower of the blessing although he acknowledges the blessing itself. Some other people neither disavow the blessing nor deny the right of the Bestower of the blessing, but in practice there is no appreciable difference between their conduct and the conduct of a denier. This is not verbal denial but denial in practice.

14. He created man from dry rotten clay like the potter's.^{*14}

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَلٍ
كَالْفَخَّارِ

*14 The order of the initial stages of the creation of man, as given at different places in the Quran seems to be as follows:

- (1) *Turab*, i.e. earth or dust.
- (2) *Teen*, i.e. clay made by mixing water with earth.
- (3) *Teen-i-lazib*: sticky clay, i.e. a clay which becomes sticky when left alone for a long time.
- (4) *Hama in musnun*, i.e. clay with a stink in it.
- (5) *Salsal-im-min hema in masnun kalfakhkhar*, i.e. the rotten clay which when dried becomes like baked pottery.
- (6) *Bashar*, i.e. the one who was made from this last form of the earth, in whom Allah breathed of His Spirit, to whom the angels were commanded to bow down, and from whose

species his mate was created.

(7) *Thumma jaala naslahu min sulalatin-min-main mahin:* Then spread his progeny by means of an extract of the nature of a despicable water, for which the word *nutfah* has been used at other places.

For these stages one may look up the following verses of the Quran in sequence: *kamasali Adam khalaqa-hu min turab* (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 59); *badaa khalqal-insani min tin* (Surah As-Sajdah, Ayat 7); *Inna khalaqna hum min tinillazib* (Surah As-Saaffat, Ayat 11): the fourth and fifth stages have been described in the verse being explained, and the later stages in the following verses: *Inni khaliq-un basharan min teen. Faidha sawwaitu-hu wa nafakhtu-fihi min-ruhi faqau-lahu sajidin.* (Surah Suad, Ayats 71-72); *khalaqa-kum min-nafsin wahidatin wa khalaqa min-ha zaujaha wabaththa minhuma rijalan kathiran wa nisaan.* (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 1); *thumma Jaala naslahu min sulalatin-min mmaa-in-mahin.* (Surah As-Sajdah, Ayat 8); *fa-inna khalaq-na-kum min turabin thumma min nutfa-tin.* (Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 5).

15. And He created jinns from a smokeless flame of fire.*15

وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِّنْ نَّارٍ



*15 The words in the original are: *mim-marij-im-min-nar.* *Nar* signifies fire of a special nature and not the fire which is produced by burning wood or coal and *marij* means a pure, smokeless flame. The verse means that just as the first man was created out of earth, then passing through

various stages of creation, the clay model adopted the shape of a living man of flesh and blood, and then his progeny spread by means of the sperm-drop, so was the first jinn created from a pure flame of fire, or a fire free of smoke, and then the species of jinn spread from his progeny. The position of the first jinn among the jinn is the same as of Adam (peace be upon him) among human beings. After taking the shape of a living man, the body of Adam and the human beings born of his progeny retained no relationship with the dust from which they were originally created. Though even now our body is entirely a compound of the earthly substances, these substances have taken the form of flesh and blood and after being made a living body it has become quite a different thing from a mere lump of clay. The same also is true of the jinn. Their being also is essentially fiery. But just as we are not a mere lump of earth, so also they are not a mere flame of fire.

This verse proves two things. First, that the jinn are not simply spirit, but are material beings of a special nature, but since they have been composed of pure fiery substances, they remain invisible to human beings who have been created of earthly substances. The same has been referred to in this verse: Satan and his party see you from where you cannot see them. (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 27). Likewise, the jinn's being fast-moving, their adopting different shapes and forms easily and their penetrating into different places imperceptibly where things made of earthly substances cannot penetrate, or if they do, their penetration becomes perceptible, all these things are possible and

understandable only because they are essentially a fiery creation.

The other thing that we come to know from this verse is that the jinn are not only a creation of a wholly different nature from human beings, but the substance of their creation also is absolutely different from that of man, animal, vegetable and solid matter. This verse explicitly points out the error of the viewpoint of those people who regard the jinn as a kind of human beings. According to their interpretation, the meaning of creating man of the dust and the jinn of the fire is to describe the difference of the temperamental nature of the two kinds of the people; one kind of them are humble by nature, and they are men in the true sense, and the other kind of the people are wicked by nature and fiery in temper, who may better be called devils. This is, however, no commentary of the Quran but its distortion. In E.N. 14 above we have shown in detail how the Quran itself has fully described the meaning of creating man from the earth. After reading all these details, can a reasonable person understand that the object of all this is only to define the humility of the good men? Moreover, how can a sound-minded person understand that the meaning of creating man of rotten, dry clay and the jinn of the flame of pure fire is the difference of the separate moral characteristics of the two individuals or groups with different temperaments belonging to the same human species? (For further explanation, see E.N. 53 of Surah Adh-Dhariyat).

16. So which of the favors of your Lord^{*16} would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِالَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

*16 Here, in view of the context, It is more appropriate to translate *alaa* as “wonders of power”, but in this the aspect of the blessing is also present. Just as it is a wonderful manifestation of Allah’s power to have brought into existence marvelous creatures like man from the dust and the jinn from the flame of fire, so for both these creatures this is also a great blessing that Allah not only granted them a body but gave each such a structure and endowed each with such powers and capabilities that they became able to perform unique works in the world. Though we do not know much about the jinn, man is present before us. Had he been given the body of a fish or a bird or a monkey along with the human brain, he could not have used, with that body, the mental powers to any advantage. Then, is it not a supreme blessing of Allah that He blessed man with the most suitable body also, so that he may exploit the mental powers granted to him efficiently? Consider the hands, the feet, the eyes, the ears, the tongue and the erect stature as against the intellect and reason, and the capabilities of workmanship and artistic skill, and one will feel that the Creator has provided a deep relationship and harmony between them without which the human body would have remained useless. Then, the same thing points out Allah’s praiseworthy qualities too. How could the men and jinn of such quality and rank be brought into existence without knowledge, wisdom, mercy and a profound creative power? For such miracles of creation cannot be

performed by accidents and automatic blind and deaf laws of nature.

17. Lord of the two Easts, and Lord of the two Wests.*17

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ

*17 “The two Easts and the two Wests” may mean the two points of sunrise and the two points of sunset on the shortest day of winter and the longest day of summer as well as the easts and the wests of the two hemispheres of the earth. On the shortest day of winter the sun rises and sets making a small acute angle. On the contrary, on the longest day of summer it rises and sets making a wide obtuse angle. Between them its points of rising and setting go on shifting every day, for which at another place in the Quran (Surah Al-Maarij, Ayat 40) the words *Rabbul-mashariq wal-magharib* have been used. Likewise, at the time the sun rises in one hemisphere of the earth, it sets in the other hemisphere, thus producing two easts and two wests of the earth. There are several meanings of calling Allah Lord of the two Easts and the two Wests. First, that it is by His command that the system of the rising and setting of the sun and their changing pattern during the year is functioning. Second, that Allah alone is the Master and Ruler of the earth and the sun; had they their own separate lords, this regular system of the rising and setting of the sun on the earth could not have functioned and continued to function permanently. Third, that the Master and Sustainer of both the Easts and both the Wests is One Allah alone; to Him belong the creations living between them. He alone is nourishing them, and it is for their sustenance that

He has established this wise system of the rising and setting of the sun on the earth.

18. So which of the favors of your Lord^{*18} would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ ﴿١٨﴾

*18 Here also, although in view of the context, power seems to be a more conspicuous meaning of *alaa*, yet, besides, the aspect of blessing and praiseworthy qualities is also present in it. It is a great blessing that Allah Almighty has prescribed the rule of the rising and setting of the sun, for by means of it the changes of the crops and seasons are regulated with which countless interests of the men and animals and vegetables are attached. Likewise, it is Allah's mercy and providence and wisdom that He has made these arrangements by His power to meet the respective needs and requirements of the creatures He has created on the earth.

19. He let loose the two seas that they may meet together.

مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ ﴿١٩﴾

20. Between them is a barrier, which they do not transgress.^{*19}

بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ ﴿٢٠﴾

*19 For explanation see E. N. 68 of Surah Al-Furqan.

21. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٢١﴾

22. From them come out pearls^{*20} and corals.^{*21}

يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٢٢﴾

*20 According to Ibn Abbas, Qatadah, Ibn Zaid and Dahhak, *marjan* implies small pearls, but according to Abdullah bin Masud, this word is used for corals in Arabia.

*21 Literally: From both these seas come out pearls and corals. The objectors say that pearls and corals come out only from salt waters. How is it then that they are stated to come out from both the sweet and salt waters? The answer is that the seas contain both the sweet and the salt waters; therefore, whether it is said that these things come out from the combination of both, or from both kinds of waters, it would be one and the same thing. And it may well be that further investigations might reveal that both these things originate in the sea at the place where springs of sweet water gush out from the sea bed; and in their birth and development combination of both kinds of the water plays its part. Near Bahrain which has been famous for its pearl-fisheries for centuries, there exist springs of sweet water at the bottom of the Gulf.

23. Which is it, of the favors of your Lord that you deny.*22

فَبِأَيِّ آءِالَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

*22 Here also though the aspect of power in *alaa* is conspicuous, the aspect of the blessing and praiseworthy qualities is also not hidden. It is a blessings of God that these valuable things come out from the sea, and it is His Providence that for the satisfaction of the aesthetic taste of the creatures whom He had blessed with the taste for beauty and the love and longing for adornment, He created all sorts of these beautiful things in His world.

24. And His are the ships^{*23}
raised up high in the sea like
mountains.

وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ
كَالْأَعْلَامِ

***23** His are the ships: Ships became possible only by His power. It is He Who blessed man with the capability and skill that he may build ships for crossing the oceans. It is He Who created on the earth the material from which ships could be built, and it is He Who subjected water to the laws by which it became possible for the mountain-like ships to sail on the surface of the surging oceans.

25. So which of the favors of
your Lord would you deny.^{*24}

فَبِأَيِّ آءِالَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

***24** Here, the aspect of the blessing; and bounty is conspicuous in *alaa*, but the explanation given above shows that the aspect of power and good qualities is also present in it.

26. Everyone^{*25} that is
thereon will perish.

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ

***25** From here to verse 30, the jinn and the men have been informed of two realities:
First, neither you are immortal nor the provisions that you are enjoying in this world everlasting. Immortal and everlasting is the Being of the High and Supreme God alone Whose greatness this universe testifies, and by Whose grace and kindness you have been favored with these bounties. Now, if some one among you behaves arrogantly, it would be due to his own meanness. If a foolish person assumes

haughtiness in his tiny sphere of authority, or becomes god of a few helpless men who fall into his hand, this farce would not last long. A godhead that lags for a mere score or two score years in a corner of the earth whose size in this limitless universe is not even equal to a pea seed, and then becomes a legend of the past, is not something of which one may feel proud and arrogant.

The other important truth of which both these creations have been warned is: None of those whom you have set up as deities and removers of hardships and fulfiller of needs, apart from Allah, whether they are angels or prophets or the moon and the sun, or some other creation, can fulfill any of your needs. These helpless creatures and things themselves stand in need of Allah's help for their needs and requirements. They themselves pray to Him for help. When they are not able to remove their own hardships, how will they remove your hardships? Whatever is happening in this limitless universe, from the earth to the heavens, is happening under the command of One God alone. No one else has any share in His Godhead. No one therefore can influence anyone else's destiny in any way.

27. And there will remain the Countenance of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor.

وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ
وَإِلْكَرَامِ ﴿٢٧﴾

28. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny. *26

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٢٨﴾

*26 Here, as the context itself shows, the word *alaa* has been used in the sense of excellences and perfections.

Whoever of the mortal creatures is involved in vanity and self-arrogance and struts about thinking that his false godhead is everlasting, disavows Lord of the world's glory and majesty by his conduct, if not by his tongue. His pride and arrogance by itself is a denial of Allah Almighty's greatness and glory. Whatever claim he may make to an excellence by his tongue, or arrogate to himself such an excellence, it is indeed a disavowal of the rank and station of the real possessor of excellences and perfections.

29. Whoever is in the heavens and the earth asks Him. Every day He is in (bringing) a matter. *27

يَسْأَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ

*27 That is, He is continuously and endlessly functioning in this universe and creating countless new things with new and yet new forms and designs and qualities, He is giving death to one and life to another, exalting one and debasing another, causing one to recover and another to remain ill, rescuing a drowning one and drowning a floating one. He is providing sustenance to countless creatures in a variety of ways, His world never stays in the same state: it is changing every moment and its Creator arranges it in a new state and fashion every time, which is different from every previous form and fashion and state.

30. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny. *28

فَبِأَيِّ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

*28 Here, *alaa* seems to have been used in the sense of qualities and glories. Every person who commits polytheism of any kind, in fact, disavows one or the other of

Allah's attributes, A person's saying that such and such a saint has removed his disease, in fact, amounts to saying that Allah is not the Remover of disease and Restorer of health but the saint, Another one's saying that such and such a holy one has gotten him a job, in fact, amounts to saying that Allah is not the Sustainer and Lord but the particular holy person is his lord. Still another one's saying that his prayer has been answered at a particular shrine, in fact, amounts to saying that the command governing the world is not Allah's but the shrine's. In short, every polytheistic belief and utterance, in the final analysis, leads up to the disavowal of the divine attributes. Polytheism is nothing but that one should ascribe the divine attributes of being All-Hearing and All-Seeing, Almighty and All-Powerful, etc. to others than Allah, and should deny that Allah alone is the possessor of all these attributes.

31. We shall soon attend^{*29}
you, O you two burdens^{*30}
(jinn and men).

سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ أَيُّهَ الثَّقَلَانِ

^{*29} *Thaqalan* is derived from *thiql* which means a burden, and *thaqal* is the burden loaded on a conveyance. *Thaqalan* (dual) therefore would mean: two loaded burdens. Here this word refers to the jinn and men; who are both loaded on the earth. As the addressees here are those jinn and men who have turned away from the service and obedience of their Lord and Sustainer, they have been addressed as: O burdens of the earth, In other words, the Creator is warning these two unworthy groups of His creation, saying: You who have become a burden for My earth, I am soon

going to take you to task.

***30** This does not mean that Allah at this time is too busy to call the disobedient servants to account, but it means that Allah has arranged a special time-table according to which He will first bring into existence generation after generation of the jinn and men in the world till an appointed time, and will provide them with an opportunity to work in this examination center of the world; then at a specific hour the examination will be suddenly brought to a close, and all the jinn and men living at that time will be given death simultaneously. Then at another time which is preordained with Allah for calling the jinn and men to account, all the former and the latter generations of both the species will be resurrected and mustered at one and the same time. In view of this time-table the two species have been warned, as if to say: We are yet busy with the work of the first period, and the time for the second period has not yet come, not to speak of embarking on the work of the third period. But you may rest assured. The time is fast approaching when We shall be free to take you to task. This lack of leisure does not mean that Allah is too occupied with one kind of work to attend to another kind of work. But its nature is analogous to the occupation of a person who has set a time-table for different sorts of the works and in respect of a work whose time has not yet arrived according to the time-table, he may say that he at the moment is not free for it.

32. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny. ^{*31}

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمْ أَتُكذِّبَانِ



***31** Here, *alaa* can also be taken in the meaning of powers. In view of the context, each meaning seems to be appropriate in its own way. According to the first meaning, it would mean: Today you are being ungrateful for Our blessings and are being treacherous and disloyal by adopting the different attitudes of disbelief, polytheism, atheism, sin and disobedience, but tomorrow when the time comes for accountability, We shall see which of Our blessings you prove to be the result of a mere accident, or the fruit of your own ability, or manifestation of the kindness of a god or goddess or saint. In the second case, the meaning would be: Today you are mocking the doctrine of Resurrection and the gathering together of all mankind and jinn on the Day of Judgment and the accountability and the Heaven and Hell, and are harboring the misunderstanding that such things are not at all possible, but when We gather you together for accountability and all that you deny today will appear before you, then We shall see which of Our powers you deny.

33. O company of jinn and men, If you have the power to escape across the bounds of the heavens and the earth, then escape. You shall not escape, except with authority (from Allah).^{*32}

يَمَعَشَرَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنَّ
 أَسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا لَا
 تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ

***32** The heavens and the earth: The universe or the kingdom of God. The verse means to impress this: It is not

in your power to escape Allah's grasp. When the time for the accountability of which you are being foretold comes, you will be seized and brought before God in any case wherever you may be. To go out of God's reach you will have to flee from the universe of God for which you do not have the required power. If you feel that you have the power, then you may use that power if you so will.

34. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمْ تَكْذِبَانِ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. There shall be sent upon you a flame of fire and smoke,^{*33} then you will not be able to defend yourselves.

يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شُوَاظٌ مِّن نَّارٍ
وَنُحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرَانِ ﴿٣٥﴾

*33 The word *shuwaz*, as used in the original, means the pure, smokeless flame, and *nuhas* is the gross smoke without a flame. These two things, one after the other, will be let loose upon the men and jinn, when they try to escape the accountability of Allah.

36. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمْ تَكْذِبَانِ ﴿٣٦﴾

37. Then when the heaven bursts and becomes red like red leather.^{*34}

فَإِذَا أَنْشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ
وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ ﴿٣٧﴾

*34 This refers to the Day of Resurrection. Bursting of the heavens implies loosening of the discipline of the heavens, scattering of the celestial bodies, upsetting of the system of the heavens. And the meaning of reddening like red leather

is that during that great upheaval anyone, who looks up towards the sky, will feel as though the entire heavens were on fire.

38. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny. ^{*35}

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الرَّبِّ كَمَا تَكْذِبَانِ ﴿٣٨﴾

***35** That is, today you deem Resurrection impossible; you think Allah has no power to bring it about. But when it will have taken place and you see with your eyes all that you are being foretold, which of the powers of Allah will you then deny.

39. Then on that Day neither man, nor jinn will be questioned of his sin. ^{*36}

فِيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذَنْبِهِ إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٣٩﴾

***36** This is being explained by the subsequent sentence: The culprits there shall be recognized by their faces. It means that in that great assembly where all the former and the latter generations will have gathered together, there will be no need to ask as to who are the culprits, nor will any man or jinn need be asked whether he is a culprit or not. The dejected faces of the culprits, their terror-stricken eyes, their disturbed and alarmed countenances will themselves be enough to expose the secret that they are the culprits. When a crowd comprising both the guilty and the innocent people, is encircled by the police, the calm and tranquil of the innocent people and the bewildered and disturbed state of the guilty ones tell at one glance as to who in the crowd is the culprit and who is innocent. This general rule is in most cases belied in the world, because the

worldly police do not enjoy the reputation of being fair and just, rather on many an occasion they have turned out to be more bothersome for the gentle and innocent people than for the culprits. Therefore, here it is possible that when encircled by the police the gentle and innocent people might become even more terror-stricken than the criminals, but in the Hereafter, when every noble person will have complete faith in the justice of Allah, bewilderment will afflict only those whose conscience will be conscious of their being the culprits themselves, and who on their very arrival in the Court of God will become certain of their doom, which they had regarded as impossible or doubtful in the world and so had been committing every heinous sin and crime.

40. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.*³⁷

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ رَبِّكُمْ تَكْذِبَانِ



*³⁷ The real basis of the crime according to the Quran is that the servant, who is benefiting by the blessings of his Sustainer, should harbor the misunderstanding that the blessings have been bestowed by no one, but have reached to him of their own accord, or that the blessings are not the gift of God but the fruit of his own ability or good fortune, or that they are the gift of God, but God has no right on His servants, or that God Himself has not done him those favors but some other being has gotten these done for him. These are the wrong concepts on account of which man becomes independent of God and being free from His

obedience and service performs acts which He has forbidden, and avoids acts which He has enjoined. Seen in this light every crime and every sin is, in reality, a disavowal of the favors of Allah whether a person denies them by the word of mouth or not. But the person who, in fact, has no intention of the denial, but acknowledges the favors from the depths of his heart, commits an error occasionally because of human weakness, he shows repentance on it and tries to avoid it. This saves him from being included among the deniers. Apart from this, all other culprits are, in fact, beliers of Allah's blessings and deniers of His favors. That is why it has been said: When you will have been seized as culprits, then We shall see as to which of Our favors you deny. In Surah At-Takathur, Ayat 8, the same thing has been put thus: On that Day you will certainly be called to account for the blessings you had been granted. That is, it will be asked: Had We granted you these blessings or not. Then, what attitude did you adopt towards your Benefactor, and in what ways did you use His blessings.

41. The criminals shall be recognized by their marks, and they shall be seized by the forelocks and the feet.

يُعْرَفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ
فِيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ ﴿٤١﴾

42. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٤٢﴾

43. This is the Hell which the criminals deny.

هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا

المجرمون ﴿٤٣﴾

44. They will go around between it and the hot boiling water. *38

يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ ءَانِ ﴿٤٤﴾

*38 That is, in Hell they will feel oppressed with thirst again and again. and will rush towards the springs of water, but will find only boiling water, which will not satisfy their thirst, and they will thus continue to wander to and fro between Hell and the springs for ever and ever.

45. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny. *39

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الرَّبِّ كُفِرْتُمْ تَكْذِبَانِ ﴿٤٥﴾

*39 That is, will you even at that time be able to deny that God can bring about Resurrection, can give you another life after death, can call you to account, and can also make this Hell in which you are suffering punishment today.

46. And for him who fears to stand before his Lord *40 are two gardens. *41

وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٍ

﴿٤٦﴾

*40 Who fears...Lord: who fears God in whatever he does in the world, and dreads his accountability before Him in the Hereafter. Whoever holds this belief will inevitably avoid serving the lusts of his self, will avoid following every path blindly, will distinguish between the truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, pure and impure, and the lawful and the unlawful, and will not turn away deliberately from following the commands of God. This is

the real ground for the reward that is being mentioned below.

*41 *Jannat* actually means a garden. At some places in the Quran the entire world in which the righteous people will be kept, has been called *Jannat*, as though the whole of it was a garden. And at others it has been said that they will have *Jannaat* (Gardens) under which canals will be flowing. This means that that big Garden will comprise countless other gardens; and here precisely it has been stated that every pious man will be given two gardens in that big Garden, which will be particularly meant for him; it will have his own palaces in which he will live with his family and attendants like a king, and in it he will be provided with all that is being mentioned below.

47. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.*42



فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

*42 From here till the end, the word *alaa* has been used both for the blessings and for the powers, and there is an aspect of the praiseworthy qualities too in it. If we take the first meaning, the meaning of repeating the refrain in this context will be: If you like to deny the blessings of Allah, you may do so. The righteous will certainly receive these blessings from their Lord. In the second case the meaning would be: If you think it is impossible for Allah to create the Garden and bless His righteous servants with these bounties in it, you may think so. Allah certainly has the power to do this work and He will surely accomplish it. According to the third meaning, it means: You think that after having created this big world Allah now doesn't

bother whether a person behaves unjustly here or justly, works to promote the truth or falsehood, spreads evil or good, He will neither punish the oppressor nor redress the grievances of the oppressed, will neither appreciate good nor abhor evil, then, as you think, He is helpless too. He can build the heavens and the earth but cannot prepare Hell for punishing the wicked and cannot make Heaven for rewarding the followers of the truth. Thus, you may deny His praiseworthy attributes as you may, but tomorrow when He hurls the evildoers into Hell and blesses the worshipers of the truth in Heaven, will you even then be able to deny His these attributes.

48. Full of lush green branches.

ذَوَاتَا أَفْنَانٍ ﴿٤٨﴾

49. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الرَّبِّ كُفِرْتُمْ كَذَّبْتُمْ ﴿٤٩﴾

50. Wherein are two springs of running water.

فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ تَجْرِيَانِ ﴿٥٠﴾

51. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الرَّبِّ كُفِرْتُمْ كَذَّبْتُمْ ﴿٥١﴾

52. Wherein are two kinds of every fruit. ^{*43}

فِيهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ زَوْجَانِ ﴿٥٢﴾

***43** This can have two meanings:
 (1) The fruits of the two gardens will have their own special flavors and tastes. In one garden he will find one kind of the fruit clustering on its branches, and in the other, another kind.
 (2) In each garden there will be two kinds of fruit; one kind

of the familiar fruit known and tasted in the world, though much superior to that found in the world, and the other kind of the rare fruit never imagined and tasted before.

53. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمْ تَكْذِبَانِ ﴿٥٣﴾

54. Reclining upon carpets lined with silk brocade,^{*44} and the fruits of the two Gardens will be near at hand.

مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَى فُرُشٍ بَطَائِنُهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ وَجَنَى الْجَنَّتَيْنِ دَانٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

*44 That is, when their lining will be of such superior quality, you may imagine what will be the quality of the outer layer of the carpets.

55. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمْ تَكْذِبَانِ ﴿٥٥﴾

56. Therein are those of modest gaze,^{*45} whom neither man nor jinn will have touched before them.^{*46}

فِيهِنَّ قَاصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٥٦﴾

*45 This is the real character of the woman. She should neither be shameless nor immodest, but should have modesty in her looks.

That is why Allah while making a mention of women among the blessings of Paradise has first of all praised their modesty and chastity and not their beauty and physical charms. Beautiful women can get together in mixed clubs and film studios and beauty contests where only the

beautiful women are admitted, but a person of only low taste and mentality can show any interest in them. No noble person can find any charm in the beauty that attracts every evil look and is ready to fall in every lap.

***46** This means that in the worldly life whether a woman died a spinster, or as the wife of somebody, or died young, or as an old woman, in the Hereafter when all the righteous women enter Paradise, they will be made young and virgins. And any of the women who is made a life-partner of a righteous man, will not have been possessed by anyone before that husband, in Paradise.

This verse also shows that the righteous jinn too will enter Paradise like the righteous men. Men will have women from their own kind and the jinn their wives from their own kind: both the kinds will have their mates from their own particular kind. No person of one kind will be made a partner of a member of another kind with whom he cannot live as husband or wife naturally. The words of the verse “...whom neither man nor jinn will have touched before them,” do not mean that the women there will only be of human species and they will not have been touched by any man or jinn before their husbands, but its real meaning is: In Paradise there will be women of both the jinn and the human species; they all will be modest and untouched: neither a jinn female will have been touched by a jinn male before her husband in Paradise, nor a human female will have been touched by a human male before her husband in Paradise.

57. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٥٧﴾

58. As they are like rubies and coral.

كَأَنَّهُنَّ الْيَاقُوتُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٥٩﴾

60. Is there any reward for good other than good.^{*47}

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَنِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَنُ ﴿٦٠﴾

***47** That is, how, after all, is it possible that Allah should allow to go waste the sacrifices of those righteous servants and should deny them their rewards, who kept themselves subjected to restrictions throughout their lives for the sake of Allah, who avoided the unlawful and remained content with the lawful, who performed their duties faithfully and sincerely, rendered the rights of those to whom rights were due, and endured hardships against evil and upheld good?

61. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.^{*48}

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٦١﴾

***48** Obviously, the person who is a denier of Paradise and its rewards, actually denies many of Allah Almighty's praiseworthy attributes. Even if he believes in Allah, he holds a bad opinion about Him. In his view, He is a perverse ruler in whose lawless kingdom doing good is an exercise in futility. He is either blind or deaf and is, therefore, wholly unaware as to who in his kingdom is making sacrifices of life, wealth and labor for His sake. He

is un-appreciative and cannot distinguish between good and evil. Or as he seems to think, He is helpless and powerless. He may be very appreciative of the good but is unable to reward the doer of it. That is why it has been said: When in the Hereafter good will be rewarded with good in front of your very eyes, will you even then disavow the praiseworthy attributes of your Lord.

62. And besides these two, there will be two other gardens.*49

وَمِنْ دُونِهِمَا جَنَّاتٍ

*49 The word *doon* as used in *min doon-i-hima Jannatan* is employed in three different meanings in Arabic:

- (1) To be situated at a lower level than another thing.
- (2) To be inferior to something of better and nobler quality.
- (3) To be over and above something else.

On account of this difference in meaning, one probable meaning of these words is that every dweller of Paradise will be given two more gardens besides the two previously mentioned. Another probable meaning is that these two gardens will be inferior in quality and rank to both the first mentioned gardens: that is, the first two gardens will either be situated at a higher level than these two, or the first two gardens will be of a superior kind and these two of an inferior kind as compared to them. If the first probability is adopted, it would mean that these two additional gardens also will be for those dwellers of Paradise, who have been mentioned above, And in case the second probability is adopted, the meaning would be that the first two gardens will be for those nearest to Allah, and these two for the

people of the right hand. This second probability is strengthened by the two kinds of the righteous men as mentioned in Surah Al-Waqiah. First, the foremost, who have also been called the *muqarrabun*; second, the people of the right hand, who have also been entitled *ashab al-maimanah*; and for both these separate qualities of the two kinds of the gardens have been mentioned. Furthermore, this probability is also strengthened by the Hadith which Abu Bakr has related on the authority of his father, Abu Musa al-Ashari. In this he says: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Two *jannaat* (gardens) will be for the foremost among the righteous (or the *muqarrabin*), in which the utensils and articles of decoration will be of gold, and two *jannaat* for the followers (or the *ashab al yamin*), in which everything will be of silver. (Fath al-Bari, Kitab at-Tafsir: Surah Ar-Rahman).

63. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٦٣﴾

64. Dark green with foliage.*50

مُدَّهَامَّتَانِ ﴿٦٤﴾

*50 The word *madhammatan* has been used in praise of these gardens. *Mudhamma* is such luxuriant vegetation which because of its extreme luxuriance assumes a darkish hue.

65. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٦٥﴾

66. Wherein are two gushing springs.

فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ نَضَّاخَتَانِ ﴿٦٦﴾

67. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمْ أَتُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٦٧﴾

68. Wherein are fruit, and dates and pomegranates.

فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَنَخْلٌ وَرُمَّانٌ ﴿٦٨﴾

69. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمْ أَتُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٦٩﴾

70. Wherein are chaste and beautiful.

فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَاتٌ حِسَانٌ ﴿٧٠﴾

71. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمْ أَتُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٧١﴾

72. Fair ones, close guarded in pavilions.^{*51}

حُورٌ مَّقْصُورَاتٌ فِي الْخِيَامِ ﴿٧٢﴾

***51** For the explanation of *hoor* see E.Ns 28, 29 of Surah As-Saaffat and E.N. 42 of Surah Ad-Dukhan. The pavilions probably will be similar to those pitched for the nobles and rich people in the public parks. Most probably the wives of the dwellers of Paradise will live with them in their palaces, and in their parks there will be tents pitched here and there in which there will be the *hoors* to entertain them. Our this presumption is based on this that in the foregoing verses beautiful and chaste wives have been mentioned; now, here, mention of the *hoors* signifies that they will be a different kind of women from the wives. This presumption is further strengthened by the Hadith which Umm Salamah has reported. She says: I asked: O messenger of Allah, who are better, the women of the world or the *hoors*. The Prophet replied (peace be upon him), the women of the world are superior to the *hoors* in the same way as the outer layer of a

garment is superior to its lining. I asked: On what grounds? He replied: On the ground that the women have offered their Prayers, observed their Fasts, and performed other devotions. (Tabarani). This shows that the wives of the dwellers of Paradise will be the women who affirmed the faith in the world and left the world while they practiced good and right. They will enter Paradise in consequence of their faith and good deeds, and will deserve the blessings of Paradise on merit. They would either become the wives of their previous husbands of their own free will and choice if they (the previous husbands) too happened to be dwellers of Paradise. Otherwise, Allah will wed them to some other dweller of Paradise, if the two would like to live together as husband and wife. As for the *hoors*, they will not be entitled to dwell in Paradise as a result of any righteous deed of their own, but Allah will create them as young, beautiful women and bestow them also as a blessing among the other blessings on the dwellers of Paradise so that they may enjoy their companionship. But they will not in any case be creatures of the kind of the jinn and fairies, for man cannot cohabit with a kind other than his own. Therefore, most probably these would be those innocent girls who died immature and Allah will re-create them as young and beautiful women.

73. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِآلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٧٣﴾

74. Whom neither man nor jinn will have touched before them.

لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ

75. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٧٥﴾

76. Reclining on green cushions, beautiful carpets.^{*52}

مُتَّكِنِينَ عَلَى رَفْرَفٍ خُضْرٍ
وَعَبَقَرِيٍّ حِسَانٍ ﴿٧٦﴾

*52 The word *abqari* in the original is from *abqar*, the capital city of the jinn in the legends of the pre-Islamic Arabia. It was on that account that the Arabs called every fine and rare thing *abqari* as if it belonged to the fairyland and had no match in the material world. So much so that in their idiom the man who possessed extraordinary abilities and who performed wonderful works was also called *abqari*. The English word genius also is spoken in the same sense and is also derived from *genii* which is a synonym of jinn. That is why the word *abqari* has been used here to give an idea of the extraordinary exquisiteness of the provisions of Paradise to the Arabs.

77. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny.

فَبِأَيِّ آءِ الْآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ ﴿٧٧﴾

78. Blessed be the Name of your Lord, the Owner of Majesty and Honor.

تَبَارَكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَالِ
وَالْإِكْرَامِ ﴿٧٨﴾



أَلْوَاقِعَةُ Al-Waqiah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word *al-waqiah* of the very first verse.

Period of Revelation

According to the chronological order that Abdullah bin Abbas has given of the Surahs, first Surah TaHa was revealed, then Al-Waqiah and then Ash-Shuara (Suyuti: Al-Itqan). The same sequence has been reported from Ikrimah (Baihaqi: Dalail an Nubuwwat).

This is also supported by the story that Ibn Hisham has related from Ibn Ishaq about the affirmation of the Faith by Umar. It says that when Umar entered his sister's house, Surah TaHa was being recited. Hearing his voice the people of the house hid the pages of the Quran. Umar first seized his brother-in-law and when his sister rose in defense of her husband, he also hit her and wounded her on the head. When Umar saw blood on his sister, he was sorry for what he had done, and said to her: Show me the manuscript that you have concealed so that I may see what it contains. The sister said: You are unclean because of your polytheism: *wa*

anna-hu la yamassu-ha ill-at-tahir: Only a clean person can touch it. So Umar rose and washed himself, and then took up the manuscript to read it. This shows that Surah Al-Waqiah had been revealed by that time for it contains the verse: *La yamassu hu illal mutahharun*; and it had been established historically that Umar embraced Islam after the first migration to Habash, in the fifth year of the Prophethood.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is the Hereafter, Tauhid and refutation of the Makkan disbelievers' suspicions about the Quran. What they regarded as utterly incredible was that Resurrection would ever take place, then the entire system of the earth and heavens would be upset, and when all the dead would be resurrected and called to account, after which the righteous would be admitted to Paradise and the wicked would be cast into Hell. They regarded all this as imaginary, which could not possibly happen. In answer to this, it was said: When the inevitable event will take place, there will be none to belie its happening, nor will anyone have the power to avert it, nor prove it to be an unreal happening. At that time all peoples will be divided into three classes:

- (1) The foremost in rank and position.
- (2) The common righteous people.
- (3) Those who denied the Hereafter and persisted in disbelief and polytheism and major sins till the last.

How these three classes of the people will be rewarded and punished has been described in detail in verses 7-56.

Then, in verses 57-74 arguments have been given, one after the other, to prove the truth of the two basic doctrines of Islam, which the disbelievers were refusing to accept, viz. the doctrines of Tauhid and the Hereafter. In these arguments, apart from every thing else that exists in the earth and heavens, man's attention has been drawn to his own body and to the food that he eats and to the water that he drinks and to the fire on which he cooks his food, and he has been invited to ponder the question: What right do you have to behave independently of, or serve any other than, the God Whose creative power has brought you into being, and Whose provisions sustain you. And how can you entertain the idea that after having once brought you into existence, He has become so helpless and powerless that He cannot recreate you once again even if he wills to do so.

Then, in verses 75-82, their suspicions in respect of the Quran have been refuted and they have been made to realize how unfortunate they are that instead of deriving any benefit from the great blessing that the Quran is, they are treating it with scant attention and have set only this share of theirs in it that they deny it. If one seriously considers this matchless argument that has been presented in two brief sentences about the truth of the Quran, one will find in it the same kind of firm and stable system as exists among the stars and planets of the universe, and the same is the proof of the fact that its author is the same Being Who has created the universe. Then the disbelievers have been told that this Book is inscribed in that Writ of Destiny which is beyond the reach of the creatures, as if to say: You

think it is brought down by the devils to Muhammad (peace be upon him), whereas none but the pure angels has any access to the means by which it reaches Muhammad (peace be upon him) from the well guarded Tablet.

In conclusion, man has been warned, as if to say: You may brag and boast as you like and may shut your eyes to the truth in your arrogance of independence, but death is enough to open your eyes. At death you become helpless; you cannot save your own parents; you cannot save your children; you cannot save your religious guides and beloved leaders. They all die in front of your very eyes while you look on helplessly. If there is no supreme power ruling over you, and if your this assumption is correct that all it is you the world, and there is no God, then why don't you restore to the dying person his soul? Just as you are helpless in this, so it is also beyond your power to stop Allah from calling the people to account and mete out rewards and punishments to them. You may or may not believe it, but every dying person will surely see his own end after death. If he belongs to those nearest to God, he will see the good end meant for them; if he be from among the righteous, he will see the end prepared for the righteous; and if he be from among the deniers of the truth, he will see the end destined for the criminals.

1. When the inevitable event happens.

إِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ

2. There shall be none to deny its happening.*1

لَيْسَ لِمَنْ لَوْقَعْتَهَا كَاذِبَةٌ

*1 Opening the discourse with this sentence by itself

signifies that this is an answer to the objections that were being raised in the disbelievers' conferences against Resurrection. This was the time when the people of Makkah had just begun to hear the invitation to Islam from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In it what seemed most astonishing and remote from reason to them was that the entire system of the earth and heavens would one day be overturned and then another world would be set up in which all the dead, of the former and the latter generations, would be resurrected. Bewildered they would ask: This is just impossible! Where will this earth, these oceans, these mountains, this moon and sun go? How will the centuries-old dead bodies rise up to life? How can one in his senses believe that there will be another life after death and there will be gardens of Paradise and the fire of Hell? Such were the misgivings that were being expressed at that time everywhere in Makkah. It was against this background that it was said: When the inevitable event happens, there shall be no one to belie it.

In this verse the word *waqiah* (event) has been used for Resurrection, which nearly means the same thing as the English word inevitable, signifying thereby that it is something that must come to pass. Then, its happening has been described by the word *waqiah*, which is used for the sudden occurrence of a disaster.

Laisa li-waqati-ha kadhibat-un can have two meanings:

(1) That it will not be possible that its occurrence be averted, or stopped, or turned back; or, in other words, there will be no power to make it appear as an unreal

event.

(2) That there will be no living being to tell the lie that the event has not taken place.

3. Abasing (some), exalting (others).^{*2}

خَافِضَةٌ رَّافِعَةٌ

***2 Literally:** That which causes something or somebody to rise and to fall. Its one meaning can be that it will upset every order and it will turn things upside-down. Another meaning can also be that it will exalt the lowly and bring low the high and mighty; that is, on its advent the decision as to who is noble and who is ignoble among the people will be made on quite a different basis. Those who posed as honorable people in the world would become contemptible and those who were considered contemptible would become honorable.

4. When the earth is shaken with convulsion.^{*3}

إِذَا رُجَّتِ الْأَرْضُ رَجًا

***3** That is, it will not be a local earthquake that may occur in a restricted area, but it will shake the whole earth to its depths all of a sudden, and it will experience a tremendous jolt and tremors all through.

5. And the mountains are broken down, crumbling.

وَنُتَّتِ الْجِبَالُ بَسًّا

6. So they become as scattered dust.

فَكَانَتْ هَبَاءً مُنْبَثًّا

7. And you become three kinds.^{*4}

وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً

*4 Although the address apparently is directed to the people to whom this discourse was being recited, or who may read it or hear it read now, in fact the entire mankind is its addressee. All human beings who have been born since the first day of creation and will be born till the Day of Resurrection will ultimately be divided into three classes.

8. So those on the right hand.*⁵ What of those on the right hand.

فَأَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ
الْمَيْمَنَةِ



*5 The word *maintanah* in *ashab-al-maimanah*, in the original, may have been derived from *yamin*, which means the right hand, and also from *yumn*, which means good omen. If it is taken to be derived from *yamin*, then *ashab-al-maimanah* would mean: Those of the right hand. This, however, does not imply its lexical meaning, but it signifies the people of exalted rank and position. The Arabs regarded the right hand as a symbol of strength and eminence and honor, and therefore would seat a person whom they wished to do honor, on the right hand, in the assemblies. And if it is taken as derived from *yumn*, *ashab-al-maimanah* would mean fortunate and blessed people.

9. And those on the left hand.*⁶ What of those on the left hand.

وَأَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ
الْمَشْأَمَةِ



*6 The word *mashamah* in *ashab-al-mashamah*, in the original, is from *shum* which means misfortune, ill-luck and bad omen. In Arabic the left hand also is called *shuma*. The

Arabs regarded *shimal* (the left hand) and *shum* (bad omen) as synonyms, the left hand being a symbol of weakness and indignity. If a bird flew left on the commencement of a journey, they would take it as a bad omen; if they made a person sit on their left, it meant they regarded him as a weak man. Therefore, *ashab-al-mashamah* implies ill-omened people, or those who would suffer disgrace and ignominy, and would be made to stand on the left side in the court of Allah.

10. And those foremost, the foremost in the race.^{*7}

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ

^{*7} *Sabiqoon* (the foremost) implies the people who excelled others in virtue and love of the truth and in good works and responded to the call of Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) before others. They were also in the forefront in their response to the call for jihad, for spending their wealth for the sake of the needy and for public services, or for inviting others to virtue and truth. In short, they are ever ready for spreading the good and wiping out evil and making sacrifices and exerting themselves whenever there was need for it. On this very basis, in the Hereafter too, they will be placed in the forefront.

Thus, mankind, so to say, will be ranged in Allah's court like this: On the right hand, there will be the righteous, on the left the wicked, and in the forefront (nearest in divine presence) the *Sabiqoon* (the foremost in faith and good deeds). According to a Hadith reported by Aishah the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked the people: Do you know who, on the Day of Resurrection, will be the first to

be accommodated under the divine shade? The people said Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) only had the best knowledge. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Those who were such that when the truth was presented before them, they accepted it forthwith; when a right was asked of them, they discharged it gracefully; and their decision in respect of others was the same as in respect of their own selves. (Musnad Ahmad).

11. They will be those nearest.

أَوْلِيَّكَ الْمُقْرَبُونَ ﴿١١﴾

12. In the Gardens of delight.

فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿١٢﴾

13. A multitude from among the former people.

ثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

14. And a few from among those of later people.*8

وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

*8 The commentators have differed as to who are implied by the former And the latter people.

One group of them has expressed the view that the former people were the communities that passed away since the time of the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) till the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and the people of the latter day are those who will have lived in the world since the advent of the Prophet (peace be upon him) till the Day of Resurrection. Accordingly the verse would mean: The number of the *Sabiqoon* (the foremost in faith and good deeds) among the people who passed away during the thousands of years before the advent of the Prophet

Muhammad (peace be upon him) would be greater, and the number of those who would attain to the rank of the *Sabiqoon* among those people who have been born since the advent of the Prophet (peace be upon him), or will be born till the Day of Resurrection, will be less.

The second group says that the former and the latter in this verse imply the former and the latter people of the Holy Prophet's (peace be upon him) own ummah itself. That is, in his ummah the people belonging to the earliest period were the former among whom the number of the *Sabiqoon* will be greater, and the people of the later periods are the latter among whom the number of the *Sabiqoon* will be smaller.

The third group holds the view that this implies the former and the latter people of every Prophet's own ummah. That is, there will be numerous *Sabiqoon* among the earliest followers of every Prophet, but among his later followers their number will decrease. The words of the verse bear all the three meanings, and possibly all three are implied, for there is no contradiction between them. Besides, they give another meaning also and that too is correct: Every early period of a Prophet's following the proportion of the *Sabiqoon* in human population would be greater and in the later period less, for the number of the workers of good and right does not increase at the rate of increase of the human populations. They may be more numerous as against the *Sabiqoon* of the earliest period. But on the whole their number as against the world population goes on becoming less and less.

15. On jeweled couches.

عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَّوْضُونَةٍ

16. Reclining on them, facing each other.

مُتَّكِنِينَ عَلَيْهَا مُتَّقِيبِينَ

17. There wait on them immortal youths.*9

يَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُونَ

*9 This implies boys who will ever remain boys and stay young. Ali and Hasan Basri say that these will be those children who died before reaching their maturity; therefore, they will neither have any good works to their credit for which they may be rewarded, nor any evil deeds for which they may be punished, But obviously, this could imply those people who would not deserve Paradise. For, as for the true believers, about them Allah has guaranteed in the Quran that their children will be joined with them in Paradise (Surah At-Toor, Ayat 21). This is also supported by the Hadith, which Abu Daud, Tayalisi, Tabarani and Bazzar have related on the authority of Anas and Samurah bin Jundub, according to which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that the children of the polytheists will be attendants of the people of Paradise. (For further explanation, see E.N. 26 of Surah As-Saaffat and E.N. 19 of Surah At-toor).

18. With goblets, and pitchers, and a cup from a pure spring.

بِأَكْوَابٍ وَأَبَارِيقَ وَكَأْسٍ مِّن مَّعِينٍ

١٨

19. No headache will they get there from, nor will they be intoxicated.*10

لَا يُصَدَّعُونَ عَنْهَا وَلَا يُنْزِفُونَ



*10 For explanation, see E.N. 27 of Surah As-Saaffat; E.N. 22 of Surah Muhammad and E.N. 18 of Surah At-Toor.

20. And fruit, whichever they may choose.

وَفِكْهَةٍ مِّمَّا يَتَخَيَّرُونَ

21. And the flesh of fowls, whatever they may desire.*11

وَلَحْمِ طَيْرٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ

*11 For explanation, see E.N. 17 of Surah At-toor.

22. And fair ones with wide lovely eyes.

وَحُورٌ عِينٌ

23. The likeness of well guarded pearls.*12

كَأَمْثَلِ اللُّؤْلُؤِ الْمَكْنُونِ

*12 For explanation, see E.Ns 28, 29 of Surah As-Saaffat; E.N. 42, of Surah Ad-Dukhan and E.N. 61 of Surah Ar-Rahman.

24. Reward for what they used to do.

جَزَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

25. They shall not hear therein vain talk, nor sinful speech.*13

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْثِيمًا



*13 This is one of the major blessings of Paradise, which has been mentioned at several places in the Quran, viz. that in Paradise human ears will remain secure against idle and

frivolous talk, lying, backbiting slander, invective, boasting and bragging, taunts and mockery, satire and sarcasm. It will not be a society of foul-mouthed, indecent people who will throw mud at each other, but a society of noble and civilized people free of such frivolities. A person who has been blessed with some decency of manner and sense by Allah can very well feel what an agony it is in worldly life, a hope of deliverance from which has been given to man in Paradise.

26. Except the saying:
“Peace, Peace.”*14

إِلَّا قِيلًا سَلَامًا سَلَامًا

*14 Some commentators and translators have taken the words, *illa qilan salam-an salama*, to mean that in Paradise one will hear only the greeting of Peace, peace on every side; the correct view, however, is that it implies healthy and wholesome speech, i.e. such speech as may be free of the vices and blemishes, faults and evils, that have been mentioned in the preceding sentence. Here the word *salam* has been used nearly in the same sense as the English word sane.

27. And those on the right hand, what of those on the right hand.

وَأَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ مَا أَصْحَابُ
الْيَمِينِ

28. Among thornless lote trees.*15

فِي سِدْرٍ مَخْضُودٍ

*15 That is, lote-trees without thorns on them. This will be a superior kind of the lote-tree to be only found in Paradise,

and its fruit likewise will be much superior to that found in the world.

29. And clustered plantains.

۞ ۲۹ ۞
وَطَلْحٍ مَّنْضُودٍ

30. And outspread shade.

۞ ۳۰ ۞
وِظِلٍّ مَّمْدُودٍ

31. And water gushing.

۞ ۳۱ ۞
وَمَاءٍ مَّسْكُوبٍ

32. And abundant fruits.

۞ ۳۲ ۞
وَفِيهَا كَثِيرَةٌ

33. Neither out of reach, nor forbidden. *16

۞ ۳۳ ۞
لَا مَقْطُوعَةٍ وَلَا مَمْنُوعَةٍ

*16 The word *fakiha* of the text means: This fruit will neither be seasonal that its supply may fail when the season is over, nor its production will cease as it happens in a garden after its fruits has been picked. But in Paradise every kind of fruit will remain available in abundance in every season and will continue to be produced and supplied no matter how much of it is consumed. And *la mamnuah* means that there will be no prohibition or hindrance in obtaining fruit as it is in the gardens of the world, nor will it be out of reach because of thorns or height.

34. And upraised couches.

۞ ۳۴ ۞
وَفُرُشٍ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ

35. Surely, We have created them a (new) creation.

۞ ۳۵ ۞
إِنَّا أَنْشَأْنَاهُنَّ إِنِشَاءً

36. And made them
virgins.*17

فَجَعَلْنَهُنَّ أَبْكَارًا

*17 This signifies the virtuous women of the world, who will enter Paradise on the basis of their faith and good works. Allah will make them young no matter how aged they might have died in the world; will make them beautiful whether or not they were beautiful in the world; and will make them virgins whether they died virgins in the world or after bearing children. If their husbands also entered Paradise with them, they would be joined with them. Otherwise, Allah will wed them to another dweller in Paradise. This very explanation of this verse has been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in several Ahadith. According to Shama ile Tirmidhi, an old woman requested the Prophet (peace be upon him) to pray for her admission to Paradise. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: No old woman will enter Paradise. Hearing this the woman went back crying. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to the people: Tell her that she will not enter Paradise as an old woman, for Allah says: We shall create them anew and make them virgins. Ibn Abi Hatim has related, on the authority of Salamah bin Yazid, that he heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) explain this verse, thus: This implies the women of the world; whether they died virgins or married. Tabarani contains a lengthy tradition related from Umm Salamah according to which she asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) the meaning of the several references in the Quran to the women of Paradise. In answer, he explained this very verse and said:

These are the women who died as aged and decayed women, with sticky eyes and gray hair; after this old age Allah will again make them young and virgins. Umm Salamah asked: If a woman had several husbands in the world, one after the other, to whom will she belong in Paradise? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: She will be asked to make her own choice, and she will choose the one who had the best moral character. She will say: O my Lord, make me his wife, for he was the best in his conduct and dealings with me. O Umm Salamah, good moral conduct has carried off all the good of this world and the Hereafter. (For further explanation, see E.N. 51 of Surah Ar-Rahman).

37. Loving,^{*18} of equal age.^{*19}

عُرْبًا أَتْرَابًا

***18** The word *uruban* is used for the best feminine qualities of the woman in Arabic. This signifies a woman who is graceful and elegant, well-mannered and eloquent, and brimful of feminine feelings, who loves her husband with all her heart, and whose husband also loves her with all his heart.

***19** This can have two meanings:

- (1) That they will be of equal age with their husbands.
- (2) That they will be of equal age among themselves; i.e. all the women in Paradise will be of the same age and will eternally stay young.

Both of these meanings may be correct at one and the same time, i.e. these women may be of equal age among themselves and their husbands also may be made of equal

age with them. According to a Hadith: When the dwellers of Paradise enter it, their bodies will be without hair, their mustaches will be just appearing, but will yet be beardless, they will be handsome and fair-complexioned, with sturdy bodies and collyrium stained eyes; they will all be 33 years of age. (Musnad Ahmad: Marwiyat Abi Hurairah). Almost the same theme has been related in Tirmidhi by Muadh bin Jabal and Abu Saeed Khudri also.

38. For those on the right hand.

لِأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. A multitude of those from among the former.

ثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

40. And a multitude of those from among the later.

وَتَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

41. And those on the left hand, what of those on the left hand.

وَأَصْحَابِ الشِّمَالِ مَا أَصْحَابِ الشِّمَالِ ﴿٤١﴾

42. In the scorching wind and the boiling water.

فِي سُمُومٍ وَحَمِيمٍ ﴿٤٢﴾

43. And the shadow of black smoke.

وِظِلٍّ مِّنْ تَحْمُومٍ ﴿٤٣﴾

44. Neither cool nor refreshing.

لَّا بَارِدٍ وَلَا كَرِيمٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

45. Indeed they were, before that, indulging in luxury.

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُتْرَفِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

46. And they used to persist in great sin.*20

وَكَانُوا يُصِرُّونَ عَلَى الْحِنثِ الْعَظِيمِ



*20 That is, their prosperity had an adverse effect on them. Instead of being grateful to Allah Almighty, they had become deniers of His blessings. Lost in pleasure-seeking they had forgotten God and persisted in heinous sinning. Heinous sinning includes disbelief, polytheism and atheism as well as every grave sin of morality and conduct.

47. And they used to say: “When we are dead and become dust and bones, shall we indeed be resurrected.”

وَكَانُوا يَقُولُونَ أَإِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظْمًا أَأَنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ



48. And our forefathers of before.

أَوَّءَ آبَاؤُنَا الْأَوَّلُونَ



49. Say: “Surely the former and the later.”

قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ



50. “Shall be gathered together to an appointed meeting of a known day”

لَمَجْمُوعُونَ إِلَىٰ مِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ



51. “Then indeed, you the deviators, the deniers.”

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ أَيُّهَا الضَّالُّونَ الْمُكذِبُونَ



52. “You will eat of the tree of zaqqum.”*21

لَا كِلُونَ مِنْ شَجَرٍ مِّنْ زُقُومٍ ﴿٥٢﴾

*21 For the explanation of *zaqqum*, see E.N. 34 of Surah As-Saaffat.

53. “Then you fill with it your bellies.”

فَمَا لِكُونَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

54. “Then you will drink on it from the boiling water.”

فَشَرِبُونَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَمِيمِ ﴿٥٤﴾

55. “So you will drink as drink the thirsty camels.”

فَشَرِبُونَ شُرْبَ أَهْلِيمِ ﴿٥٥﴾

56. This will be their welcome on the Day of Judgment.

هَذَا نُزْلُهُمْ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿٥٦﴾

57. We have created you, then why do you not confirm.*22

نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ فَلَوْلَا تُصَدِّقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

*22 The arguments from here to verse 74 provide the reasoning to prove both the doctrines of Tauhid and of Hereafter rationally. For it was there two basic doctrines of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) teaching that the people of Makkah were debating and objecting to at that time.

*23 That is, why don’t you confirm that We alone are your Lord and God and We have the power to create you once again.

58. So have you seen that which you emit.

أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تُمْنُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. Is it you who create it or
are We the Creator.*24

ءَأَنْتُمْ تَخْلُقُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ

الْخَالِقُونَ

*24 In this brief sentence a very important question has been put before man. Apart from all other things in the world, if man only considers as to how he himself has come into being, he can then neither have any doubts left about the doctrine of Tauhid presented by the Quran nor about its doctrine of the Hereafter. The process of man's own creation starts when the male has conveyed his sperm to the womb of the female. But the question is: Has the sperm by itself become endowed with the capability of producing a child, and necessarily a human child? Or, has it been created by man himself, or by someone other than God? And, is it in the power of the man, or of the woman, or of another agency in the world, to cause conception by this sperm? Then, who is responsible for the gradual formation and development of the fetus in the mother's womb, its shaping and molding into a unique child, the provision in a particular proportion of different mental and physical powers and qualities in each child so that it develops into a unique person, except One God? Does someone, other than God, have any role to play in this? Is it done by the parents themselves? Or, by a doctor? Or, by the prophets or saints, who were themselves created in this very way? Or, by the sun and the moon and the stars, which are themselves subject to a law? Or, by nature, which is devoid of any knowledge, wisdom, will and authority? Then, is it also in

the power of someone other than God to decide whether the child is to be a boy or a girl? Whether it is to be beautiful or ugly, strong or weak, blind and deaf and a cripple or sound bodied, intelligent or stupid? Then, is it someone other than God who decides as to people of what caliber, good or bad, are to be created in a particular nation at a particular time, who would cause its rise or fall? If a person is not obdurate and stubborn, he will realize that no rational answer can be given to these questions on the basis of polytheism and atheism. Their rational answer is only one and it is this. Man is wholly and entirely the creation of God; and when the truth is this, what right has this man, the creation of God, to claim freedom and independence as against his Creator, or serve someone else beside Him.

As it is for Tauhid, so it is with regard to the Hereafter too. Man is created from a germ which cannot be seen without a powerful microscope. This germ combines in the darkness of the mother's body with the ovum (female germ) which is like itself an insignificant microscopic germ. Then by their combination a tiny living cell comes into being, which is the starting-point of human life. This cell also is too small to be seen without a microscope. Allah develops this insignificant cell in the mother's womb for nine months or so into a living human, and when its development and formation becomes complete, the mother's body itself pushes it out to be raised in the world. All human beings have been born into the world in this very way and are witnessing day and night this phenomenon of the birth of human beings like themselves. After this, only a foolish person could assert

that the God Who is creating human beings in this way today would not be able to create the human beings created by Himself in some other way tomorrow.

60. We have decreed death among you,^{*25} and We are not to be outdone.

نَحْنُ قَدَرْنَا بَيْنَكُمْ الْمَوْتَ وَمَا
نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ

*25 That is, like your birth your death is also under Our control. We decide as to who is to die in the mother's womb itself, who is to die soon after birth, and who is to die at a later stage. No power in the world can cause death to a person before the time appointed for his death by Us, nor can keep him alive after it even for a moment. The dying ones die in big hospitals even before the eyes of eminent doctors; and the doctors themselves also die at their appointed time. Never has anyone been able to know the time of death in advance, nor has anyone been able to avert the approaching death, nor to find out as to how and where and by what means will a certain person die.

61. In that We may change your likeness, and create you in (forms) that you do not know.^{*26}

عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُبَدِّلَ أَمْثَلَكُمْ وَنُنشِئَكُمْ
فِي مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

*26 That is, just as We were not powerless to create you in your present form and appearance, so We are also not powerless to change the method of your creation and bring you into being in another form and shape with another set of qualities and characteristics. Today the method We have adopted for your creation is that conception takes place by

the sperm then you are gradually formed and developed in your mother's womb, and then you are brought out as a child. This method of creation also has been devised by Us. But this is not the only method We know. On the Day of Resurrection, We can create you in the form of the man of the same age at which you died. Today We have set one particular measure for your sight and hearing and other faculties. But this is not the only measure that We have for man, which We may not have the power to change. On the Day of Resurrection, We shall change it so much so that you will be able to see and hear things which you cannot see or hear today. Today your skin and your limbs and your eyes do not possess the power of speech. But, it is We Who have given the tongue the power of speech; so We are not powerless to cause your every limb and every part of the skin of your body to speak by Our command on the Day of Resurrection. Today you live up to a certain age and then die. Your, this living and dying also is controlled by a law ordained by Us. Tomorrow We can make another law to control your life under which you may never die. Today you can endure punishment only to a certain extent: you cannot survive if the punishment is increased beyond it. This rule has also been made by Us. Tomorrow We can make another rule for you under which you will be able to suffer much severer punishments endlessly, and death would not come to you even if you were given the severest torment. Today you cannot imagine that an old man could return to youth, that he could never become ill, that a young man could never be old and that he could stay young

for ever and ever. But youth here changes into old age according to the biological laws made by Us. Tomorrow We can make some other laws for your life under which every old man may become young as soon as he entered Paradise and stay young and healthy eternally.

62. And indeed you know the first creation. Why then you do not take heed. ^{*27}

وَلَقَدْ عَلَّمْتُمُ النَّشْأَةَ الْأُولَىٰ فَلَوْلَا

تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

***27** That is, you already know how you were created in the first instance, how the sperm was transferred from the loins of the father by which you came into being, how you were nourished in the mother's womb, which was no less dark than the grave, and formed into a living human being, how an insignificant speck was developed and endowed with the heart and brain, eyes and ears, and hands and feet, and how it was blessed with the wonderful faculties of intellect and sense, knowledge and wisdom, workmanship and inventiveness, etc. Is this miracle in any way less wonderful than raising the dead back to life? And when you are witnessing this wonderful miracle with your own eyes and are yourselves a living evidence of it in the world, why don't you then learn the lesson that the same God Who by His power is causing this miracle to take place day and night, can also cause the miracle of life after death, Resurrection and Hell and Heaven to take place by the same power.

63. So have you seen that which you sow (cultivate).

أَفَرَأَيْتُم مَّا تَحْرُثُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

64. Is it you who make it grow, or are We the grower. *28

ءَأَنْتُمْ تَزْرَعُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ
الزَّارِعُونَ

*28 The above question drew the people's attention to the truth that they have been developed and nourished by Allah Almighty and have come into being by His act of creation. Now this second question draws their attention to this important truth that the provisions which sustain them are also created only by Allah for them, as if to say: Just as in your own creation human effort has nothing more to do than that your father may cast the sperm in your mother, so in the supply of the provisions for you also human effort has nothing more to do than that the farmer should sow the seed in the soil. The land in which cultivation is done was not made by you. The power of growth to the soil was not granted by you. The substances in it that become the means of your food are not provided by you. The seed that you sow is not made capable for growth by you. The capability in every seed that from it should sprout up the tree of the same species of whose seed it is has not been created by you. The process for changing this cultivation into blooming crops that is working under the soil and of arranging the required kind of weather and air and water above it does not owe anything in any way to your planning and skill. All this is the manifestation of Allah's power and providence. Then, when you have come into being only by His act of creation and are being sustained by His provision, how can you then have the right to pose yourself

as independent of Him, or have someone other than Him as your deity.

Although apparently this verse reasons out Tauhid, yet if one considers its theme a little more deeply, one finds in it the argument for the Hereafter, too. The seed that is sown in the soil is by itself dead, but when the farmer buries it under the soil, Allah infuses it with plant life, which puts out sprouts and blooms into spring. Thus, these countless bodies are rising from the dead in front of our eyes daily. Is this miracle in any way less wonderful so that a person may regard the other wonderful miracle of the life hereafter, which is being foretold by the Quran, as impossible?

65. If We will, We could turn it into chaff, and you would then be left lamenting.

لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ حُطَامًا فَظَلْتُمْ
تَفَكَّهُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

66. Surely, we are laden with debt.

إِنَّا لَمُغْرَمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

67. Nay, but we are deprived.

بَلْ نَحْنُ مُحْرَمُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

68. So have you seen the water that you drink.

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ
﴿٦٨﴾

69. Is it you who cause it to come down from the rain clouds, or do We cause it to come down. *29

ءَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ
الْمُنزِلُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

***29** That is, We have not only made arrangements of satisfying your hunger, but also of satisfying your thirst, This water that is even more essential for your life than bread has been arranged by Us, not by you. The seas in the earth have been created by Us. It is the heat of Our sun that causes their water to evaporate, and it is Our winds that cause the vapors to rise. Then it is by Our power and wisdom that the vapors collect and form into clouds. Then, by Our command the clouds divide in a particular proportion and spread over different regions of the earth so that the share of the water appointed for a particular region, should reach it. And also in the upper atmosphere, We bring about the cool that causes the vapors to change back into water. We have not only brought you into being but are also busy making all these arrangements for your sustenance without which you could not survive at all. Then, when the fact is that you have come into being by Our act of creation, are eating Our provisions and drinking Our water, where from have you gotten the right that you should pose to be independent of Us and serve someone else beside Us.

70. If We will, We could make it bitter.^{*30} Then why do you not give thanks.^{*31}

لَوْ نَشَاءُ جَعَلْنَاهُ أُجَاجًا فَلَوْلَا تَشْكُرُونَ



***30** In this sentence an important manifestation of Allah's power and wisdom has been pointed out. Among the wonderful properties that Allah has created in water, one property also is that no matter what different substances

are dissolved in water, when it changes into vapor under the effect of heat, it leaves behind all adulterations and evaporates only with its original and actual component elements. Had it not possessed this property the dissolved substances also would have evaporated along with the water vapors. In this case the vapors that arise from the oceans would have contained the sea salt, which would have made the soil saline and uncultivable wherever it rained. Then, neither could man have survived by drinking that water, nor could it help grow any vegetation. Now, can a man possessed of any common sense claim that this wise property in water has come about by itself under some blind and deaf law of nature? This characteristic by virtue of which sweet, pure water is distilled from saltish seas and falls as rain, and then serves as a source of water-supply and irrigation in the form of rivers, canals, springs and wells, provides a clear proof of the fact that the Provider has endowed water with this property thoughtfully and deliberately for the purpose that it may become a means of sustenance for His creatures. The creatures that could be sustained by salt water were created by Him in the sea and there they flourish and multiply. But the creatures that He created on the land and in the air, stood in need of sweet water for their sustenance and before making arrangement of the rainfall for its supply, He created this property in water that at evaporation it should rise clear and free of everything dissolved in it.

***31** In other words, why do you commit this ingratitude in that some of you regard the rainfall as a favor of the gods,

and some others think that the rising of the clouds from the sea and their raining as water is a natural cycle that is working by itself, and still others, while acknowledging it as a mercy and blessing of God, do not admit that God has any such right on them that they should bow to Him alone? How is it that while you derive so much benefit from this great blessing of Allah, in return you commit sins of disbelief and polytheism and disobedience of Him.

71. So have you seen the fire that you kindle.

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ النَّارَ الَّتِي تُورُونَ
 ٧١

72. Is it you who made the tree thereof to grow,^{*32} or are We the grower.

ءَأَنْتُمْ أَنْشَأْتُمْ شَجَرَتَهَا أَمْ نَحْنُ
 الْمُنشِئُونَ
 ٧٢

*32 The tree here either implies the tree that supplies wood for lighting a fire, or the trees of *markh* and *afar*, green sticks of which were struck one against the other to produce sparks in ancient Arabia.

73. We have made it a remembrance^{*33} and a provision for the dwellers in the wilderness.^{*34}

نَحْنُ جَعَلْنَاهَا تَذْكَرًا وَرَمْتًا
 لِلْمُقْوِينَ
 ٧٣

*33 Making the fire a means of remembrance means: The fire by virtue of its quality of being kindled at all times reminds man of his forgotten lesson that without it human life could not be any different from animal life. Because of the fire only did man learn to cook food for eating instead of eating it raw like the animals, and then new and ever

new avenues to industry and invention went on opening up before him. Obviously, if God had not created the means of kindling the fire and the substances that could be kindled, man's inventive potentialities would have remained dormant. But the man has forgotten that his Creator is a wise Sustainer, Who created him with human capabilities on the one hand, and on the other, created such materials on the earth by which his these capabilities could become active and operative. If he is not lost in heedlessness, the fire alone is enough to remind him of the favors and bounties of his Creator, which he is so freely enjoying in the world.

*34 The word *muqwin* in the original has been interpreted differently by the lexicographers. Some have taken it in the meaning of the travelers who have halted in the desert, some in the meaning of a hungry man, and some take it in the meaning of all those who derive benefit from the fire, whether it is the benefit of cooking food or of light or of heat.

74. So glorify the name of your Lord, the Supreme.*35

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٤﴾

*35 That is, mention His blessed name and proclaim that He is free from and far above the defects and faults and weaknesses that the pagans and polytheists ascribe to Him, and which underlie every creed of disbelief and every argument that is presented by the deniers of the Hereafter.

75. Then nay,*36 I swear by the places of the stars.

﴿٧٥﴾ فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ ﴿٧٥﴾

***36** That is, the truth is not what you seem to think it is. Here, the use of the word *la* (nay) before swearing an oath by the Quran's being Allah's revelation by itself shows that the oath has been sworn to refute certain objections that the disbelievers were raising with regard to the Quran.

76. And surely, that is indeed a great oath, if you could know.

وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لَّو تَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ



77. Indeed, this is a glorious Quran.^{*37}

إِنَّهُ لَقُرْءَانٌ كَرِيمٌ

***37** The places of the stars: the positions and phases and orbits of the stars and planets. The oath implies that just as the system of the celestial bodies is firm and stable, so also is this divine Word firm and stable. The same God Who has created that system has also sent down this Word. Just as there exists perfect consistency and harmony among the countless stars and planets found in the countless galaxies of the universe, whereas apparently they seem to be scattered, so also this Book presents a perfectly consistent, and systematic code of life in which detailed guidance has been given, on the basis of belief, about morals, modes of worship, civilization and culture, economic and social life, law and justice, peace and war, in short, about every aspect of human life, and there is nothing out of harmony with the other, whereas this system of thought has been expressed in scattered verses and discourses given on different occasions. Then, just as the system of the heavens set and planned by God is stable and unalterable, and does not ever

admit of the slightest variation, so also are the truths and instructions given , in this Book stable and unalterable: no part of these can be changed or displaced in any way.

78. In a well guarded Book.*38

فِي كِتَابٍ مَّكْنُونٍ

*38 This implies the well-guarded Tablet (*lohe-mahfuz*). For it the word *kitabin maknun* has been used, which means a writing kept hidden, i.e. a writing that is inaccessible to all. The Quran's having been inscribed in this well guarded Book means that before its being sent down to the Prophet (peace be upon him) it lay inscribed in the divine writ of destiny in which there is no possibility of any alteration or corruption taking place, for it is inaccessible to every kind of creation.

79. Which none can touch but the purified.*39

لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ

*39 This is a refutation of the accusation that the disbelievers used to level against the Quran. They regarded the Prophet (peace be upon him) as a sorcerer and asserted that he was being inspired with the Word by the jinn and Satans. An answer to it has been given at several places in the Quran, e.g. in Surah Ash-Shuara, where it has been said: This (lucid Book) has not been brought down by satans, nor does this work behoove them, nor are they able to do it. They have indeed been kept out of its hearing. (verses 210-212). The same theme has been expressed here, Saying: None but the purified can touch it. That is to say Not to speak of its being brought down by the Satans, or its

being tampered within any way when it is being revealed, none but the pure angels can come anywhere near it when it is being revealed from the well-guarded Tablet (*lohe-mahfuz*) to the Prophet (peace be upon him). The word *mutahharin* has been used for the angels in the sense that Allah has kept them free of every kind of impure feeling and desire. This same commentary of this verse has been given by Anas bin Malik, Ibn Abbas, Saeed bin Jubair, Ikrimah, Mujahid, Qatadah, Abul Aliyah, Suddi, Dahhak and Ibn Zaid, and the same also fits in with the context. For the context itself shows that after refuting the false concepts of the Makkan disbelievers about Tauhid and the Hereafter, now their false accusations against the Quran are being answered, and by swearing an oath by the positions of the stars, it is being stated that the Quran is an exalted Book, which is inscribed in the well-guarded divine writ, in which there is no possibility of any interference by any creation, and it is revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in such a safe way that none but the pure angels can touch it.

Some commentators have taken *la* in this verse in the sense of prohibition, and have interpreted the verse to mean: None who is unclean should touch it. Although some other commentators take *la* in the sense of negation and interpret the verse to mean: None but the clean and pure touch this Book, they express the opinion that this negation is a prohibition in the same way as the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying is a prohibition: A Muslim is a brother of a Muslim, he does not treat him unjustly. Although, here it

has been said that a Muslim does not treat the other Muslim unjustly, you it enjoins that a Muslim is not to treat the other Muslim unjustly. Likewise, although in this verse it has been stated that none but the clean and pure angels touch this Book, yet it enjoins that unless a person is purified, he should not touch it.

The fact, however, is that this commentary does not conform to the context of the verse. Independent of the context, one may take this meaning from its words, but if considered in the context in which the verse occurs, one does not see any ground for saying that: None is to touch this Book except the clean and purified people. For the addressees here are the disbelievers and they are being told, as if to say: This Book has been sent down by Allah, Lord of the worlds. Therefore, your suspicion that the satans inspire the Prophet (peace be upon him) with it is wrong. What could be the occasion here to enunciate the Shariah injunction that no one should touch it without purification? The most that one could say in this regard is that although this verse has not been sent down to enjoin this command, yet the context points out that just as only the purified (*mutahharin*) can touch this Book in the presence of Allah, so in the world also the people who at least believe in its being divine word should avoid touching it in the impure and unclean state.

The following are the traditions that bear upon this subject:

(1) Imam Malik has related in Muatta this tradition on the authority of Abdullah bin Abi Bakr Muhammad bin Amr

bin Hazm: The written instructions that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had sent to the Yamanite chiefs by the hand of Amr bin Hazm contained this instruction also: *La yamass-ul Quran a illa tahirun*. No one should touch the Quran except the pure one. This same thing has been related by Abu Daud from Imam Zuhri in the traditions which are immediately traced to the Prophet (peace be upon him), (marasil), saying that the writing that he had seen with Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Amr bin Hazm contained this instruction as well.

(2) The traditions from Ali in which he says: Nothing prevented the Prophet of Allah from reciting the Quran but the state of uncleanness due to sexual intercourse. (Abu Daud, Nasai, Tirmidhi).

(3) The tradition of Ibn Umar in which he states: The Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah said: The menstruating woman and the one who is unclean on account of sexual intercourse should not read any portion of the Quran. (Abu Daud. Tirmidhi).

(4) The tradition of Bukhari in which it has been said that the letter which the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent to Heraclius, the Roman emperor, also contained this verse of the Quran: *Yaahl al-Kitabi to alau ila kalimat-in sawaoun bainana wa baina-kum*.

The views that have been related from the Prophet's companions and their immediate followers are as follows: Salman, the Persian, saw no harm in reading the Quran without the ablutions, but even according to him touching the Quran with the hand in this state was not permissible.

The same also was the view of Saad bin Abi Waqqas and Abdullah bin Umar. And Hasan Basri and Ibrahim Nakhai also regarded touching the Quran with the hand without the ablutions as disapproved, (Al-Jassas, Ahkam al-Quran). The same has been reported from Ata, Taus, Shabi and Qasim bin Muhammad also. (Ibn Qudamah, Al-Mughni). However, according to all of them, reading the Quran without touching it with the hand, or reciting it from memory, was permissible even without the ablutions.

Umar, Ali, Hadrat Hasan Basri. Hadrat Ibrahim Nakhai and Imam Zuhri regarded reading the Quran in the state of uncleanness due to sexual intercourse and menstruation and bleeding after childbirth as disapproved. But Ibn Abbas held the view, and the same also was his practice, that one could recite from memory the portion of the Quran that one usually recited as ones daily practice. When Hadrat Saeed bin al-Musayyab and Saeed bin Jubair were asked about their view in this regard, they replied: Is not the Quran preserved in the memory of such a person? What then is the harm in reciting it? (Al-Mughni, 91-Muhalla by Ibn Hazm).

The following are the viewpoints of the jurists on this subject:

The Hanafi viewpoint has been explained by Imam Ala-uddin al-Kashani in his Badai-as-Sanai, thus: Just as it is not permissible to offer the Prayer without the ablutions, so also it is not permissible to touch the Quran without the ablutions, However, if the Quran is in a cast or a cover, it may be touched. According to some jurists, the case or

cover implies the binding, and according to others, the bag or the envelope or the wrapper in which the Quran is kept and can also be taken out. Likewise, the books of the commentary also should not be touched without the ablutions nor anything else in which a Quranic verse may have been written. However, the books of Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) may be touched although preferably they too may not be touched without the ablutions, for they also contain Quranic verses as part of argument and reasoning. Some Hanafi jurists hold the opinion that only that part of the Quran where the text may have been written should not be touched without the ablutions. As for the margins there is no harm in touching it, whether they are blank or contain notes on the text. The correct thing, however, is that the margins also are a part of the Book and touching them amounts to touching the Book. As for reading the Quran, it is permissible without the ablutions. In Fatawa Alamgiri children have been made an exception from this rule. The Quran can be given in the children's hand for teaching purposes whether they are in the state of ablutions or not. The Shafei viewpoint has been stated by Imam Nawawi in Al-Minhaj, thus: As it is for the Prayer and the circumambulation of the Kabah, it is also forbidden to handle the Quran or to touch a leaf of it without the ablutions. Likewise, it is also forbidden to touch the binding of the Quran, and also a bag, or a bow containing the Quran, or a tablet on which a part of the Quran may have been written for instructional purposes. However, it is lawful to touch the baggage of a person containing the

Quranic inscription. A child may touch the Quran without the ablutions, and a person without ablutions may turn over a leaf with a piece of wood, or something else, if he wants to read the Quran.

The Maliki position as stated in Al-Fiqh al-Madhab al-Arbah is: They concur with the other jurists in this that the state of ablutions is a prerequisite for touching the Quran, but in the matter of imparting instruction in the Quran they make both the teacher and the taught an exception from the rule, and allow even a menstruating woman to touch the Quran if she is engaged in learning or teaching it. Ibn Qadamah has cited in Al-Mughni this saying of Imam Malik: Although reading the Quran in the state of uncleanness due to sexual intercourse is forbidden, the woman who is discharging the menses is permitted to read it, for she would forget her recitations if prohibited from reading the Quran for a long time. The Hanbali viewpoint as stated by Ibn Qadamah is as follows: In the state of uncleanness due to sexual intercourse and menstruation and bleeding after childbirth it is not permissible to read the Quran or any complete verse of it. However, it is permissible to recite *bismillah*, *al-hamdu-lillah*, etc. for although these also are parts of one or the other verse, their recitation does not amount to recitation of the Quran. As for handling the Quran, it is not permissible in any case without the ablutions. However, one is not forbidden to touch a letter, or a book of Fiqh, or some other writing containing a Quranic verse. Likewise, one may handle even without the ablutions, something that contains the Quran.

The state of ablutions is also no pre-requisite for handling the books of exegesis. Furthermore, if a person who is not in the state of ablutions is required to handle the Quran under an immediate need, he may do so after purification with the dust (*tayammum*). Al-Fiqh alal-Madhahib al-Arabah also contains this ruling of the Hanbali Fiqh: It is not right for the children to handle the Quran without ablutions even when receiving instruction in it, and it is the duty of their guardians to make them perform the ablutions before they give the Quran to them.

The Zahiri viewpoint is that reading the Quran and handling it is permissible under all conditions, whether one is without the ablutions, or unclean due to sexual intercourse, or even if the woman is menstruating. Ibn Hazm has discussed this question fully in Al-Muhalla (vol. 1, pp. 77-84) and given arguments for the validity of this viewpoint and has concluded that none of the conditions laid down by the jurists for reading the Quran and handling it, is supported by the Quran and the Sunnah.

80. A revelation from the Lord of the Worlds.

تَنْزِيلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ



81. Then is it to this statement that you scorn.*40

أَفَبِعَظْمِ الْخَلْقِ اتَّخَذْتُمْ لِقَاءِ رَبِّكُمْ إِعْتِبَارًا وَلَئِن لَّمْ يَكُن لَّآيَاتُنَا قَدَرًا لَّخَلَّوْا بِهِمْ كَمَدَّ يَدْهُنًا عَلَىٰ سُهُوفِهِمْ فُلَّهُمْ خِرَافٌ وَهُمْ يُحْمَلُونَ



*40 Literally, *idhan* (from which *mudhinun* of the text is derived) means to treat something with contempt, to deny its due importance, to regard it as unworthy of serious attention, to hold it in light esteem.

82. And you make it your livelihood that you should declare it false.*41

وَتَجْعَلُونَ رِزْقَكُمْ أَنْكُمْ تَكْذِبُونَ



*41 In his commentary of *tajaluna rizqa-kum*, Imam Razi has expressed the view that probably the word *rizq* here means livelihood. Since the disbelieving Qaraish regarded the message of the Quran as harmful to their economic interests and feared that if it succeeded it would deprive them of their means of livelihood, the verse may also mean this: You have made the denial of this Quran a question of your economic interests, and for you the question of the right and wrong is of no consequence; the only thing of real importance in your sight is the bread for the sake of which you would least hesitate to oppose the truth and adhere to the falsehood.

83. Why, then, when (the soul) comes up to the throat (of the dying).

فَلَوْلَا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلُقُومَ



84. And you are at that moment looking.

وَأَنْتُمْ حِينِيذٍ تَنْظُرُونَ



85. And We are closer to him than you, but you do not see.

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا



تُبْصِرُونَ

86. Then why not if you are exempt from (future) account.

فَلَوْلَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِينِينَ



87. Bring it back (the soul), if you are truthful.

تَرْجِعُونَهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

88. Then if he was of those brought near.

فَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقْرَبِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾

89. (For him is) comfort and good provision and the blissful Garden.

فَرَوْحٌ وَرَيْحَانٌ وَجَنَّتُ نَعِيمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾

90. And if he was of those on the right hand.

وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٩٠﴾

91. Then peace be to you from those on right hand.

فَسَلَامٌ لَّكَ مِنَ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٩١﴾

92. And if he was of the deniers, gone astray.

وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُكْذِبِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾

93. Then the welcome will be of boiling water.

فَنَزَلُ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ ﴿٩٣﴾

94. And burning in Hell.

وَتَصْلِيَةٌ جَحِيمٍ ﴿٩٤﴾

95. Indeed, this is absolute truth.

إِنَّ هَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٩٥﴾

96. So glorify the name of your Lord, the Supreme. *42

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٩٦﴾

***42** Uqbah bin Amir Juhni relates that when this verse was sent down the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded that the people put it in their ruku, i.e. they should recite *Subhana-Rabbi-yal-Azim* in the position of *ruku* in the Prayer. And when the verse *Sabbi-hismi-Rabbi-kal-Aala* was sent down, he enjoined that they put it in their sajdah, i.e. they should recite *Subhana-Rabbi-yal-Aala* in *sajdah*. (Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibban, Hakim). This show that even the most minor details of the procedure enjoined by the Prophet (peace be upon him) for the Prayer are derived from the allusions given in the Quran.



آلْحَدِيدِ Al-Hadid

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its title from the sentence, *Wa anzalnal-hadida*, of verse 25.

Period of Revelation

This is unanimously a Madani Surah, and a study of its subject matter shows that it was probably revealed some time during the interval between the battle of Uhud and the truce of Hudaibiyah. This was the time when the tiny Islamic State of Al-Madinah had been hemmed in by the disbelievers and the handful of the ill equipped Muslims were entrenched against the combined power of entire Arabia. In this state Islam not only stood in need of the sacrifice of life from its followers, but it also needed monetary help and assistance. In this Surah a forceful appeal has been made for the same. This view is further strengthened by verse 10 in which Allah has addressed the believers to the effect: Those of you who would spend and fight after the victory can never be equal to those who have spent and fought before the victory. And the same is supported by the traditions that Ibn Marduyah has related

on the authority of Anas. In respect of the verse: *Alam yani lilladhina aamanu an takhshaa qulubu-hum li-dhikrillahi*, he says that 17 years after the commencement of the revelation of the Quran this verse was sent down to arouse the believers to action. Reckoned thus the period of the revelation of this Surah falls between the 4th and the 5th year after the hijrah.

Theme and Subject Matter

The theme of this Surah is to exhort the Muslims to spend in the cause of Allah. At the most critical juncture of the history of Islam when it was engaged in a life and death struggle against Arab paganism, this Surah was revealed to persuade the Muslims to make monetary sacrifices in particular and to make them realize that Islam did not merely consist in verbal affirmation and some outward practices but its essence and spirit is sincerity towards Allah and His religion. The faith of the one who was devoid of this spirit and who regarded his own self and wealth as dearer to himself than Allah and His religion was hollow and therefore of little worth in the sight of Allah.

For this object, first the attributes of Allah Almighty have been mentioned so that the listeners may fully realize as to who is addressing them. Then, the following themes have been expressed in sequence:

1. The inevitable demand of the faith is that one should not shirk spending his wealth for the sake of Allah. This would not only be contrary to the faith but also wrong realistically. For the wealth indeed belongs to Allah, on which man has been given proprietary rights only as His

vicegerent. Yesterday this wealth was in other people's possession, today it is with one particular man, and tomorrow it will pass into some one else's hand. Ultimately, it will go back to Allah, Who is the inheritor of everything in the universe. Only that much of this wealth will be of any use to a man, which he spends in the cause of Allah during the period it is in his possession.

2. Although making sacrifices for the sake of Allah is commendable in any case, the true worth of these sacrifices is determined by the nature of the occasion. There is an occasion when the power of paganism is overwhelming and there is a danger that it might subdue and overcome Islam completely; there is another occasion when Islam is in a stronger position in its struggle against un-Islam and the believers are attaining victories. Both these states are not equal as regards to their respective importance. Therefore, the sacrifices that are made in these different states would also not be equal. Those who sacrifice their lives and expend their wealth to further promote the cause of Islam when it is already strong cannot attain to the rank of those who struggled with their lives and their wealth to promote and uphold the cause of Islam when it was weak.

3. Whatever is spent for the cause of the truth is a loan on Allah, and Allah will not only return it increasing it manifold but will also give from Himself the best reward for it.

4. In the Hereafter the light shall be bestowed only on those believers who would have spent their wealth in the cause of Allah. As for the hypocrites who watched and

served only their own interests in the world, and who least bothered whether the truth or falsehood prevailed will be segregated from the believers in the Hereafter although they might have lived in close association with them in the world. They will be deprived of the light, and they will be counted among the disbelievers.

5. The Muslims should not behave like those followers of the earlier Books, whose lives have been spent in the worship of the world and whose hearts have become hardened due to negligence with the passage of time. He cannot be a believer whose heart does not melt at the remembrance of Allah and does not bow to the truth sent down by Him.

6. The sincere upholders of the truth and the true witnesses of the faith in the sight of Allah are only those believers who spend their wealth in His way sincerely, without any desire of show.

7. The life of this world is only a short lived spring and a means of pride and show. Its sports and pastimes, its adornments and decorations, its pride of place, its wealth and possessions, for which the people try to vie with one another, are transient. Its likeness is of the crop which flourishes and blooms, then turns pale and then finally is reduced to chaff. The everlasting life is the life hereafter when results of great consequence will be announced. Therefore, if one has to vie with another for something, one should strive for Paradise.

8. Whatever good man meets with and whatever hardship he suffers in the world, are pre-ordained by Allah. A true

believer is he who does not lose heart in affliction and is not puffed up with pride in good times. It is the character of a hypocrite and disbeliever that he is puffed up with pride when Allah favors him with His blessings, behaves boastfully and shows stinginess when called upon to spend in the cause of the same God Who blessed him, and also counsels others to be stingy like himself.

9. Allah sent His Messengers with clear signs and the Book and the law of justice so that the people may adhere to justice; besides, He sent down iron also so that power may be used to establish the truth and vanquish falsehood. Thus, Allah likes to see as to who from among the people would rise to support and succor His true religion even at the risk of their lives. Allah has created these opportunities for man's own advantage and development; otherwise Allah does not stand in need of others for His works.

10. Prophets came from Allah in the past, and by their preaching some people adopted the right path, but most of them persisted in wickedness. Then the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) came, whose teachings brought about many moral improvements in the lives of the people, but his community invented monasticism. Now Allah has sent the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Those who affirm faith in him and pass their life fearing Allah's accountability, will be given by Allah a double share of His mercy and He will bless them with the light by which they will see and walk the straight path among the crooked paths met with at every step in the life of this world. Although the followers of the earlier revelation regard

themselves as the monopolists of Allah's bounties, the fact remains that Allah Himself controls His bounties. He may bless with these whomever He pleases.

1. Glorifies Allah whatever is in the heavens and the earth.*¹ And He is the All Mighty, the All Wise.*²

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

*¹ That is, it has always been so that everything in the universe has proclaimed the truth that its Creator and Sustainer is free from every blemish and defect, every weakness, error and evil. He is glorified in His essence, He is glorified in His attributes, He is glorified in His works as well as His commands whether they relate to the creation, or to the religious law for mankind. Here *sabbaha* has been used in the past tense; at other places *yusabbihu* has been used which includes both the present and the future tenses. This would signify that every particle in the universe has always been extolling the glory of its Creator and Sustainer in the past, is doing at present and will continue to do the same in the future forever and ever.

*² That is, not only is He All-Mighty and All-Wise, but the truth is that He alone is All-Mighty and All-Wise. The word *Aziz* signifies a mighty and powerful Being Whose decrees cannot be prevented by any power in the world from being enforced, Whom no one can oppose and resist, Who has to be obeyed by every one whether one likes it or not, Whose rebel cannot escape His accountability and punishment in any way. The word *Hakim* signifies that whatever He does, He does it wisely. His creation, His

administration and rule, His commands and guidance, all are based on wisdom. None of His works is tarnished by any tract of folly or ignorance.

There is another fine point here, which one should fully understand. Seldom in the Quran has Allah's attribute of *Aziz* (All-Mighty) been accompanied by His attributes of being *Qawi* (Strong), *Muqtadir* (Powerful), *Jabber* (Omnipotent), *Dhuntiqaam* (Avenger) and the like, which only signify His absolute power, and this has been so only in places where the context demanded that the wicked and disobedient be warned of Allah's relentless punishment. Apart from such few places, wherever the word *Aziz* has been used for Allah, it has everywhere been accompanied by one Or other of His attributes of being *Hakim* (Wise), *Alim* (Knower), *Rahim* (Merciful), *Ghafur* (Forgiving), *Wahhab* (Generous) and *Hamid* (Praiseworthy). The reason is that if a being who wields un-limited power is at the same time unwise, ignorant, un-forgiving as well as stingy and devoid of character, its power and authority cannot but lead to injustice and wickedness. Thus, wherever injustice and wickedness is being committed in the world, it is only because the one who wields authority over others, is either using his power un-wisely and foolishly, or he is merciless and hardhearted, or evil-minded and wicked. Wherever power is coupled with these evil traits of character, no good can be expected to result. That is why in the Quran Allah's attribute of *Aziz* has necessarily been accompanied by His attributes of being All-Wise and Knowing, Compassionate and Forgiving, Praiseworthy and Generous. So that man

may know that the God Who is ruling this universe has, on the one hand, such absolute power that no one, from the earth to the heavens, can prevent His decrees from being enforced. But, on the other hand, He is also All-Wise: His each decision is based on perfect wisdom. He is also All-Knowing: whatever decision He makes, it is precisely according to knowledge. He is also Compassionate: He does not use infinite power mercilessly. He is Forgiving as well: He does not punish His creatures for trifling faults, but overlooks their errors. He is also Generous: He does not treat His subjects stingily, but liberally and benevolently. And He is also Praiseworthy: He combines in Himself all praiseworthy virtues and excellences.

The importance of this statement of the Quran can be better understood by those people who are aware of the discussions of the philosophy of politics and law on the question of sovereignty. Sovereignty connotes that the one who possesses it should wield un-limited power: there should be no internal and external power to change or modify his decision or prevent it from being enforced, and none should have any alternative but to obey him. At the mere concept of this infinite and un-limited power, man's common-sense necessarily demands that whoever attains to such power, should be faultless and perfect in knowledge and wisdom, for if the one holding this power is ignorant, merciless and evil, his sovereignty will inevitably lead to wickedness and corruption. That is why the philosophers, who regarded a single man, or a man-made institution, or an assembly of men as the holder of this power, have had to

presume that he or it would be infallible. But obviously, neither can unlimited sovereignty be actually attained by a human power, nor is it possible for a king, or a parliament, or a nation, or a party that it may use the sovereignty attained by it in a limited circle faultlessly and harmlessly. The reason is that the wisdom that is wholly free of every trace of folly, and the knowledge that fully comprehends all the related truths, is not at all possessed even by entire mankind, not to speak of its being attained by an individual, or an institution, or a nation. Likewise, as long as man is man, his being wholly free of and above selfishness, sensuality, fear, greed, desires, prejudice and sentimental love, anger and hate is also not possible. If a person ponders over these truths, he will realize that the Quran is indeed presenting here a correct and perfect view of sovereignty. It says that no one except Allah in this universe is possessor of absolute power, and with this unlimited power He alone is faultless, All-Wise and All-Knowing, Compassionate and Forgiving, and Praiseworthy and Generous in His dealings with His subjects.

2. His is the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He gives life and causes death, and He has power over all things.

لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

3. He is the First, and the Last, and the Manifest, and the Intimate.*³ And He is

هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ
وَالْبَاطِنُ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ



***3** That is, when there was nothing, He was, and when there will be nothing, He will be. He is the most Manifest of all the manifests, for whatever manifests itself in the world, does so only by His attributes and His works and His light. And He is the Most Hidden of all the hidden, for not only do the senses fail to perceive Him but the intellect and thought and imagination also cannot attain to His essence and reality. The best commentary in this regard is a supplication of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which Imam Ahmad, Muslim, Tirmidhi, and Baihaqi have related on the authority of Abu Hurairah, and Hafiz Abu Yala Mosuli in his Musnad on the authority of Aishah:

Antal Awwal, fa-laisa qablaka shaiin; wa Antal Akhir fa-laisa ba daka shaiin; wa Antal Zahir, fa-laisa fauqaka shaiin; wa Anfal Batin, fa laisa dunaka shaiin. You alone are the First; none is before You; You alone are the Last: none is after You; You alone are the Exalted none is above You; You alone are the Hidden: none is more hidden than You.

Here, the question arises: How does this accord with the immortality and eternal life of the dwellers of Paradise and Hell mentioned in the Quran when Allah alone is the Last and Eternal? Its answer has been provided by the Quran itself: Everything is perishable except Allah Himself. (Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 88). In other words no creature is immortal in its personal capacity; if a thing exists or continuous to exist, it does so because Allah keeps it so, and can exist only by His letting it exist; otherwise in its own

capacity everything is perishable except Allah. Immortality in Heaven and Hell will not be bestowed upon somebody because he is immortal by himself, but because Allah will grant him eternal life. The same is true of the angels, they are not immortal by themselves. When Allah willed they came into existence, and will continue to exist only as long as He wills.

4. It is He Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then ascended above the Throne.*⁴ He knows what goes into the earth and what comes out of it, and what comes down from the heaven and what goes up into it.*⁵ And He is with you wherever you may be.*⁶ And Allah is Seer of what you do.

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ
أَسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۚ يَعْلَمُ مَا
يَلْجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا
وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ
فِيهَا ۗ وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

*⁴ That is, He alone is the Creator of the universe as well as its Ruler. (For further explanation, see E.Ns 41, 42 of Surah Al-Aaraf; E.N. 4 of Suran Yunus; E.Ns 2 to 5 of Surah Ar-Raad, E.Ns 11 to 15 of Surah HaMim As-Sajdah).

*⁵ In other words, He is not only the Knower of the all but also of the parts. He knows each seed that goes under the layers of the soil, each leaf and bud that comes out of the

soil, each rain-drop that falls from the sky, and each molecule of the vapor that ascends from the seas and lakes to the sky. He is aware of every seed lying anywhere under the soil. That is how He causes it to split and sprout up and develop. He is aware of how much vapor has risen from each different place and where it has reached. That is how he collects it into cloud and distributes it and causes it to fall as rain in due measure on different place of the earth. The same is true of the details of everything that goes into the earth and comes out of it, and of everything that ascends to the sky and descends from it. If all this were not comprehended by Allah in His knowledge, it would not be possible for Him to plan and order each thing separately and to regulate and control it in a wise manner.

*6 That is, nowhere are you outside Allah's knowledge, His power, His rule, His management and administration. Allah knows wherever you are, whether in the earth, or the air, or the water, or in a secret place. Your being alive there is by itself a proof that Allah is providing for you in that very place. If your heart is beating, if your lungs are breathing, if yow hearing and yow sight are functioning, it is only because all parts of yow body are working under Allah's rule. And if death comes to you at any place; it comes because Allah takes a decision to stop providing for you and to recall you from the world.

5. His is the dominion of the heavens and the earth. And unto Allah all matters are brought back.

لَهُ مَلِكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ

6. He causes the night to enter into the day and causes the day to enter into the night. And He is Knower of what is in the breasts.

يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَهُوَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٦﴾

7. Believe in Allah and His Messenger^{*7} and spend^{*8} of that He has made you successor whereof.^{*9} So those who believe among you and spend,^{*10} for them is a great reward.

ءَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَأَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا جَعَلَكُمْ مُسْتَخْلِفِينَ فِيهِ فَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَأَنْفَقُوا لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿٧﴾

***7** The addressees here are not the non-Muslims, but, as is borne out by the whole subsequent discourse, the Muslims who had affirmed the faith and joined the ranks of the believers, but were not fulfilling the demands of the faith and conducting themselves as true believers should. It is obvious that non-Muslims cannot be invited to affirm the faith and then immediately asked to subscribe generously to the cause of jihad for the sake of Allah, nor can they be told that whoever would fight and spend his wealth in the cause of Allah before the victory, would attain to a higher rank than him who would perform these services later, For, when a non-Muslim is invited to the faith, the preliminary demands of it only are presented before him and not the ultimate once, Therefore, in view of the context, the meaning of saying: “Believe in Allah and His messenger,”

here would be: O people, who profess to have affirmed the faith and have joined the ranks of the Muslims, believe in Allah and Messenger (peace be upon him) sincerely and conduct yourselves as the true and sincere believers should.

*8 Here, by spending is not implied spending on public welfare, but, as is clearly borne out by the words of verse 10, it implies subscribing to the cause of the war effort that was being waged at that time under the leadership of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to uphold Islam against paganism. Two things, in particular, were such for which the Islamic Government at that time stood in great need of financial help. First, the war equipment; second, supporting and sustaining the oppressed Muslims, who, due to persecution by the disbelievers had emigrated, and were still emigrating, to Al-Madinah from every corner of Arabia, The sincere Muslims were trying their best to render as much help as they could but meeting the entire expenses in this regard was much beyond their means and resources, and their this same spirit of sacrifice has been commended in verses 10, 12, 18 and 19 below. But among the Muslims there were quite a number of well-to-do people, who were watching this struggle between Islam and paganism as mere spectators and had no feelings whatsoever that the faith they claimed to believe in also imposed certain rights on their life and wealth. This second kind of people are the addressees of this verse, They have been exhorted to believe sincerely, and to spend their wealth in the cause of Allah.

***9** This has two meanings and both are implied here. The first meaning is: The wealth that you possess is not, in fact, your personal property but has been given to you by Allah. You are not its exclusive master and owner. Allah has given you proprietary right over it as His vicegerent. Therefore, you should have no hesitation in spending it in the service of the real Master. It is not for the vicegerent to withhold the Master's wealth from being spent for the Master's own sake. The second meaning is: Neither has this wealth been with you since ever, nor will it remain in your possession for ever, Yesterday it was in some other people's possession; then Allah made you their successor and entrusted it to you, A time will come when it will not remain with you but some other people will succeed you as its owners, Therefore, in this short-lived ownership, when you are its trustees, spend it in the cause of Allah so that in the Hereafter you may be rewarded for it permanently and eternally. This same thing has been stated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a Hadith. Tirmidhi relates that once a goat was slaughtered in the Prophet's (peace be upon him) house and its flesh was given away to the poor. When he came to the house and asked: What remains of the goat? Aishah replied: Nothing but a shoulder. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) remarked: Nay, the whole goat but the shoulder. That is, whatever has been given away for the sake of Allah, has, in fact, been saved. According to another Hadith, a person asked: O Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, what kind of charity brings the highest reward? He replied: That you should give away

a thing in charity when you are hale and hearty: When you feel it could be saved and may like to invest it in the hope of earning more. Do not wait till death when you may say: Give this to so and so and that to so and so, for at that time the wealth has in any case to pass on to so and so. (Bukhari, Muslim). According to another Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Man says: My wealth! My wealth! whereas his own share in his wealth is no more than what he has eaten up, or worn away, or passed on in charity? Whatever remains will leave him and will be passed on to others (Muslim).

*10 Here again, spending wealth in the cause of jihad has been regarded as an essential demand of the faith and a proof of one's sincerity in it, as if to say: The true and sincere believer is he who does not shirk spending wealth on such an occasion.

8. And what is (the matter) with you that you do not believe in Allah, while the Messenger is inviting you to believe in your Lord^{*11} and He has taken a covenant with you,^{*12} if you are (true) believers.

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ
وَالرَّسُولِ يَدْعُوكُمْ لِتُؤْمِنُوا
بِرَبِّكُمْ وَقَدْ أَخَذَ مِيثَاقَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
مُؤْمِنِينَ



*11 That is, you are adopting this unbelieving attitude and conduct at a time when the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah is present among you, and you are receiving the invitation to the faith not through an indirect and remote means but directly through the Messenger (peace be upon

him) of Allah himself.

*12 Some commentators have taken this pledge to imply the pledge of service to Allah, which had been taken at the beginning of creation from the future offspring of Adam (peace be upon him), and some others take it for the pledge with which man has been naturally endowed to serve and obey Allah. But the truth is that it implies the conscious pledge of obedience to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) that every Muslim makes to his Lord by the affirmation of the faith. At another place in the Quran this same pledge has been referred to thus:

Keep in mind the blessing Allah has bestowed upon you and do not forget the solemn covenant which He made with you and which you confirmed, when you said: We have heard and submitted. Fear Allah for Allah knows the very secrets of the hearts. (Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 7).

Ubadah bin Samit relates: The Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah had made us pledge that we would listen and obey both in sound health and in ill health; would spend in the cause of Allah both in prosperity and in adversity; would enjoin the good and forbid the evil; would proclaim the truth for the sake of Allah and would not fear the blame of any one in this regard (Musnad Ahmad).

9. He it is who sends down upon His servant manifest verses that he may bring you out from darkness into the light. And indeed, Allah is to you Most

هُوَ الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ
آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لِّيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ
الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُمْ

Kind, Most Merciful.

لَرءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

10. What is (the matter) with you that you do not spend in the cause of Allah. And to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth.*¹³ Not equal among you are those who spent before the victory (of Makkah) and fought. Such are higher in rank than those who spent afterwards and fought. And to all Allah has made good promises.*¹⁴ And Allah is Knower of whatever you do.*¹⁵

وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تُنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَاثُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
لَا يَسْتَوِي مِنْكُمْ مَنْ أَنْفَقَ مِنْ
قَبْلِ الْفَتْحِ وَقَتَلَ أُولَئِكَ أَعْظَمُ
دَرَجَةً مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ بَعْدُ
وَقَاتِلُوا وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

***13** This has two meanings:

(1) Your wealth is not going to stay with you forever. One day you will leave it behind; then Allah alone will inherit it. Thus the best thing would be that you should spend it yourself in the cause of Allah so that your reward for it is guaranteed with Allah. If you do not spend it yourself, it will in any case return to Allah, but then you will not be entitled to any reward from Him.

(2) You should have no fear of indigence and poverty when you spend it in the cause of Allah, because Allah for Whose sake you would spend your wealth is the Owner of all the treasures of the heavens and the earth. He possessed not

only what He has bestowed on you today but has much more to bestow on you tomorrow. This same thing has been expressed at another place, thus:

O Prophet, say to them: My Lord gives abundantly to whomever of His servants He wills and sparingly to whomever He wills. Whatever you spend, He replenishes it by other provisions: He is the best of Providers. (Surah Saba, Ayat 39).

*14 That is, although both are entitled to the reward, yet the former are necessarily higher in rank than the latter, for they faced greater risks for the sake of Allah in difficult circumstances, which the latter not. They spent their wealth at a time when there appeared no remote chance of victory that would compensate for their expenditure, and they fought the disbelieves at a critical time when there was an ever present apprehension that the enemy might overpower and crush the followers of Islam completely. Mujahid, Qatadah and Zaid bin Aslam, from among the commentators, say that the word victory in this verso has been used for the conquest of Makkah, and Amir Shabi says that it refers to the truce of Hudaibiyah. The former view has been adopted by most of the commentators, and in support of the latter this tradition from Abu Saeed Khudri is presented: During the time when the truce of Hudaibiyah was concluded, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to us: In the near future there will appear the people whose deeds will make you look upon your own deeds as mean and trifling, but even if one of them possessed a mountain of gold and he spent all of it in the cause of Allah, he would

not attain to your spending two pounds, or even one pound of it. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Marduyah, Abu Nuaim Isfahani). Furthermore, it is also supported by the Hadith which Imam Ahmad has related on the authority of Anas. He says: Once a dispute arose between Khalid bin Walid and Hadrat Abdur Rahman bin Auf, in the course of which Khalid said to Abdur Rahman: You people assume your superiority over us on account of your past services. When this thing came to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) notice, he said: By God in whose hand is my lift, even if you people spent gold equal (in weight) to Mount Uhud, or equal to other mountains, you would not attain to the deeds of these people. From this it is argued that in this verse victory refers to the truce of Hudaibiyah, for Khalid bin Walid had embraced Islam after this truce and had participated in the conquest of Makkah. However, whether victory in this particular case is taken to imply the truce of Hudaibiyah or the conquest of Makkah, in any case the verse does not mean that the distinction of the ranks is confined to this one victory alone, but as a general principle it shows that those who fight and spend in the cause of Islam at the time when disbelief and disbelievers appear to be dominant and Islam seems to have no remote chance of victory, are far superior in rank to those who make sacrifices after the conflict between Islam and paganism has been decided in favor of Islam.

*15 That is, Allah does not bestow His favors blindly. He sees who has performed what deeds, under what kind of circumstances, and with what motive and then determines

the rank and the reward of the deed of each person with full justice and awareness.

11. Who is it that will lend to Allah a goodly loan, then He may double it for him, and for him is a noble reward.*16

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا
حَسَنًا فَيُضْعِفَهُ لَهُ وَلَهُ أَجْرٌ
كَرِيمٌ

***16** How Generous and Beneficent is Allah that if a man spends the wealth granted by Himself in His way, He calls it a loan Himself, provided that it is a good loan, that is, a loan which is given with a pure intention, without any selfish motive of winning reputation and renown, or of doing favor to somebody, but only for the sake of Allah's approval and to win His good-will and rewards. Allah makes two promises in this regard:

- (1) That He will repay it increasing it manifold.
- (2) That He will also give from Himself the best reward for it.

According to a Hadith reported by Abdullah bin Masud, when this verse was revealed and the people heard it from the Prophet (peace be upon him), Abud Dahdah Ansari asked: O Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, does Allah want a loan from us?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Yes, O Abud-Dahdah. He said: Kindly show me your hand. The Prophet (peace be upon him) extended his hand towards him. He took his hand in his own hand and said: I give away my garden in loan to my Lord. Abdullah bin Masud says that the garden had 600 date-

palms and also his own house in which his family lived. Saying this to the Prophet (peace be upon him) he went straight back home, and calling out to his wife said: Come out, O mother of Dahdah, I have loaned this garden to my Lord. She replied: Dahdah's father, you have made a good bargain, and she immediately vacated and left the garden with her children. (Ibn Abi Hatim). This incident throws light on the conduct of the sincere believers of that time, and from this one can also understand the kind of the good loan that Allah has promised to return increasing it manifold with a rich reward in addition.

12. On the Day you will see the believing men and the believing women, their light running forward before them and on their right,^{*17} (it will be said) good news for you this day (of) Gardens underneath which rivers flow, to abide therein. That is the great success.

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ
وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ بُشْرَانُكُمُ الْيَوْمَ جَنَّاتٌ
تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ
فِيهَا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

***17** This and the following verses show that the light on the Day of Judgment will be specifically meant for the righteous believers only. As for the disbelievers and the hypocrites and the wicked people, they will be wandering about in the darkness as they had been in the world. The light there will be the light of righteous deeds. The sincerity of the faith and the piety of the character and conduct will turn into light that will lend brightness to the personality of

the virtuous. The brighter the deed the more luminous will be his person, and when he will walk towards Paradise, his light will be running forward before him. The best explanation of it is Qatadah's mursal tradition in which he says; The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The light of some one will be so strong and sharp that it will be running on before him equal to the distance between Al-Madinah and Aden, of another equal to the distance between Madinah and Sana, and of another even less than that; so much so that there will be a believer whose light will just extend beyond his steps. (Ibn Jarir). In other words, the intensity of the light of a person will be proportionate to the extent of the good done and spread by him in the world, and the beams of his light will be running on before him in the Hereafter extending as far as his good will have extended in the world.

Here, a question may arise in the mind of the reader: One can understand the meaning of their light running on before the believers but what does their light running on only on their right hand mean? Will there be darkness on their left side? The answer is: When a man is walking with a light on his right hand, his left side also will be bright, though the fact of the matter is that the light will be on his right hand. This has been explained by the Hadith, which Abu Dharr and Abu Darda have reported, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: I shall recognize the righteous people of my ummah by their light which will be running on before them and on their right and on their left. (Hakim, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Marduyah).

13. On the Day the hypocrite men and the hypocrite women will say to those who believed: “Wait for us so that we may borrow from your light.”*18 It will be said: “Return behind you then seek light.” Then a wall shall be set up between them with a gate in it. Inside of it will be mercy and outside of it will be the punishment.*19

يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الْمُنْفِقُونَ
وَالْمُنْفِقَاتُ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
انظُرُونَا نَقْتَبِسْ مِنْ نُورِكُمْ قِيلَ
ارْجِعُوا وَرَاءَكُمْ فَالْتَمِسُوا نُورًا
فَضُرِبَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِسُورٍ لَهُ بَابٌ
بَاطِنُهُ فِيهِ الرَّحْمَةُ وَظَاهِرُهُ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِ الْعَذَابُ



*18 It means that when the believers will be going towards Paradise, the light will be before them, and the hypocrites will be stumbling about in the darkness behind. At that time they will call out to the believers, who lived with them together in the same Muslim society in the world, saying: Look back towards us awhile so that we also may get some light.

*19 This means that the people of Paradise will enter it through a gate and then the gate will be closed. On one side of the gate there will be the blessings of Paradise and on the other the torment of Hell. For the hypocrites it will not be possible to cross the barrier that will stand between them and Paradise.

14. They will call to them: “Were we not with you.”*20

يُنَادُونَهُمْ أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ قَالُوا

They will say: “Yes, but you led yourselves into temptation,^{*21} and you awaited (to your ruin),^{*22} and you doubted,^{*23} and wishful thinking deluded you until Allah's command came,^{*24} and the deceiver^{*25} (Satan) deceived you about Allah.”

بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِنَّكُمْ فَتَنْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ
وَتَرَبَّصْتُمْ وَارْتَبْتُمْ وَغَرَّتْكُمُ
الْأَمَانِيُّ حَتَّىٰ جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَغَرَّكُمْ
بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ



***20** That is, did we not live with you together in the same Muslim society? Did we not affirm the faith? Did we not offer the Prayers along with you and observe the Fast and perform the Hajj and pay the Zakat? Did we not sit with you in your assemblies and were we not bound in marriage ties and kinship with you? Then, how is it that we have been separated from you today?

***21** That is, in spite of your claim to be Muslims, you never believed like true and sincere Muslims and remained suspended between belief and unbelief. You still had your interests attached to disbelief and the disbelievers and you never gave yourselves up wholly to Islam.

***22** *Tarabbus* (from which *tarabbastum* of the text is derived) means to wait and tarry for an opportunity. When a person is unable to decide which of the two alternative ways he should choose but stands and waits to consider which way should be more favorable for him to follow, he is involved in *tarabbus*. The hypocrites had adopted the same attitude during the critical time of the conflict

between Islam and un-Islam. Neither were they siding with disbelief openly nor were spending their energy to support and help Islam with full conviction. They were sitting on the fence, waiting to see which party in the conflict became dominant, so that if it was Islam they may join it on the basis of their affirmation of the faith, and if it was unbelief they may side with its supporters taking advantage of their neutral position in the conflict.

***23** This implies different kinds of doubts that a hypocrite suffers from, and the same also are the actual causes of his hypocrisy. He doubts the existence of God, the Prophethood of the Prophet, the Quran's being Allah's book, the Hereafter, its accountability, and its rewards and punishments, and he doubts whether the conflict between the truth and falsehood is real, or a mere delusion; as for himself he considers the only truth to be that one should enjoy life and its pleasures to the full. For unless a person is involved in such doubts he can never be a hypocrite.

***24** This can have two meanings:

(1) Until death came to him, you could not shed this delusion till the last moment.

(2) That Islam became dominant, while you looked on unconcerned.

***25** That is, Satan.

15. So today, no ransom shall be accepted from you, nor from those who disbelieved. ^{*26} Your abode is the Fire. That will be your

فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْكُمْ فِدْيَةٌ وَلَا
مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مَأْوَانُكُمْ النَّارُ

patron.^{*27} And worst is the destination.

هِيَ مَوْلَانِكُمْ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

***26** This clearly shows that in the Hereafter the hypocrites will be doomed to the same fate as the disbelievers.

***27** The words *hiya maula kum* (Hell is your *maula*) can have two meanings:

(1) That Hell is the only proper place for you.

(2) That you never took Allah as your *maula* (friend, patron) so that He may look after you. Now Hell only is your *maula*, therefore, Hell now will look after you.

16. Has the time not come for those who believe that their hearts should submit humbly for the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth,^{*28} and they should not be like those who were given the Scripture before, then long ages passed over them so their hearts became hardened. And many among them are disobedient.^{*29}

۞ أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

۞

***28** Here again, the word believers is general, but it does not apply to all the Muslims; it refers to those particular Muslims who had professed the faith verbally and joined the followers of the Prophet (peace be upon him) though their hearts were devoid of any concern for Islam. They were watching that the pagan forces were bent upon wiping

out Islam; they had encircled the handful of Muslims from all sides, who were being made the target of persecution everywhere in Arabia, and thus the oppressed Muslims were fleeing to Al-Madinah empty-handed for refuge; the sincere Muslims were extending to them whatever economic help they could; yet they were, at the same time, engaged in a life and death struggle with the enemy. But, in spite of this, these people who professed the faith were not being moved at all. So, here, they are being put to shame. As if to say: What kind of believers are you? At this critical juncture for Islam, is it not yet the time that your hearts should melt at the mention of Allah and be filled with the spirit of sacrifice for the sake of His religion. Can the believers be such that they have no feelings for Islam when it is confronted with hard times. That they may sit unconcerned when they are summoned in the name of Allah. That the hearts may neither tremble out of fear of Allah nor bow to His command when He Himself should make an appeal for contributions in the Book sent down by Him, declaring it as a loan to Himself and plainly telling that the one who would regard his wealth as dearer than the cause of the true faith would be a hypocrite and not a believer.

***29** That is, the Jews and the Christians seem to have lost fervor and degenerated spiritually and morally hundreds of years after the passing away of their Prophets. But have you already become so depraved that while the Prophet (peace be upon him) is still present among you, and the Book of God is still being revealed, and not much time has passed over you since you affirmed the faith, and you have

started behaving like the Jews and the Christians who have reached this state through centuries of playing and tempering with the Book of Allah and its verses.

17. Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its death. Indeed, We have made clear for you the signs, that you may understand.*30

أَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ
مَوْتِهَا قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَعْقِلُونَ



*30 The point contained here should be well understood. At several places in the Quran the Prophethood and the revelation of the Book have been compared to the rainfall, for the effects produced by them on humanity are precisely like those produced by rain on the soil. Just as the dead earth swells and blooms as soon as it receives a shower of rain, so it is with the dead humanity in a country where a Prophet is raised through Allah's mercy and revelation begins to be sent down to him. It starts revealing those virtues which lay hidden and suppressed for ages. It starts manifesting from within itself excellent morals and good deeds and virtues of every kind. Allusion has been made to this truth here so as to open the eyes of the Muslims of the weak faith and to make them ponder their state. The way humanity was being reformed by the blessed rainfall of the Prophethood and revelation and the way it was being richly and generously blessed in every way was not a remote story for them. They were observing it themselves in the pious and righteous society of the companions and experiencing it day and night around them. Polytheism with all its evils

was present before them while the virtues and good things emanating from Islam were also blooming and flourishing before their eyes. Therefore, they did not need to be told any details. An allusion was enough to the effect. The signs of how Allah grants life to the dead earth through the rainfall of His mercy have been shown to you. Now you should use your common sense and consider it for yourself as to what benefit you are deriving from this blessing.

18. Indeed, the men who give charity, and the women who give charity,^{*31} and lend to Allah a goodly loan, it will be multiplied for them, and for them is a noble reward.

إِنَّ الْمُصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُصَدِّقَاتِ
وَأَقْرَضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا
يُضَعَفُ لَهُمْ وَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ



***31** *Sadaqah*, as an Islamic term, is the charity given sincerely and with a pure intention only with a view to seek Allah's good pleasure without making any show of it, and without the intention of doing any favor to the recipient. The donor should give it only because he has a true feeling of the service of his Lord. The word is derived from *sidq*, therefore, *sadaqat* (sincerity) is of its essence. No charity and no spending of the wealth can be a *sadaqah* unless it springs from a sincere and pure motive of spending only for the sake of Allah.

19. And those who believe in Allah and His Messengers,^{*32} those are the most

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

truthful,^{*33} and the witnesses^{*34} with their Lord. For them is their reward and their light.^{*35} And those who disbelieve and deny Our revelations, they are the dwellers of Hell.

وَالشَّهَادَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّمُ لَهُمْ
 أَجْرُهُمْ وَنُورُهُمْ وَالَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَئِكَ
 أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ



***32** Here, the believers imply those people of true faith whose attitude and conduct was absolutely different from that of the people of weak faith and the false claimants to Islam, and who were at that time vying with one another in making monetary sacrifices and were struggling with their lives in the cause of the true faith.

***33** *Siddiq* (most truthful) is the superlative from *sidq*; however, one should clearly understand that *sidq* is not merely a statement conforming to the truth, but a statement which is not only true in itself but its speaker also upholds it as a truth sincerely. For instance, if a person says that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is Allah's Messenger, this is by itself precisely according to the truth, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) is truly Allah's Messenger, but the person would be true in his statement only if he also believed and upheld him as Allah's Messenger. Therefore, a thing would be *sidq* if what was said was in conformity with the truth as well as with the speaker's own conscience. Likewise, *sidq* also contains the sense of faithfulness, sincerity and practical righteousness. *Sadiq-ul-waad* would be the person who kept his promise practically, who never broke it. *Sadiq* (true friend) would

be he who did full justice to friendship in the time of need, and who never proved faithless to anybody in any way. In war, *sadiq-fil-qital* (true soldier) would be the one who fought with all his heart and body and established his valor practically. Thus, *sidq* in essence implies that one's deed should fully conform to his word. The one who acts contrary to his word cannot be *sadiq*. On that very basis, the one who preaches one thing and acts contrary to it is regarded as a false preacher. With this meaning of *sidq* and *sadiq* in view one can fully appreciate the meaning of the superlative *sadiq*. It would inevitably imply a righteous person who is free from every impurity, who has never swerved from the truth and piety, who could never be expected to say anything against his conscience. Who believed in whatever he believed with full sincerity and remained faithful to it under all circumstances, and who has practically proved that he is a true believer in the full sense of the word. (For further explanation, see E.N. 99 of Surah An-Nisa).

***34** The early commentators have differed about the explanation of this verse. Ibn Abbas, Masruq, Dahhak, Muqatil bin Hayyan and others say that the previous sentence ended with *humssiddiqun*; and *wash-shuhada-uinda Rabbihim la-hum ajru-hum wa nuru-hum* is a separate and independent sentence. According to this explanation, the translation of the sentence would be: Those who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, are indeed the most truthful (as *siddiqun*); as for the true witnesses (*ash-shuhada*), they will have their reward and

their light from their Lord. Contrary to this, Mujahid and several other commentators regard this whole expression as one sentence. According to them the translation would be that which we have given in the text above. The two commentaries differ because the first group has taken the word *shahid* in the meaning of the martyr in the way of Allah and seeing that every believer is not a *shahid* in this sense, has taken *wash-shuhadau inda Rabbi-him* as a separate sentence. But the other group takes *shahid* in the meaning of the witness of the truth, and not in the sense of the martyr, and in this sense every believer is a *shahid*. We are of the opinion that this second commentary is preferable and this is;

And thus We have made you a middle nation that you may be witnesses against mankind, and the messenger may be a witness against you. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 143).

Allah had called you Muslims before this and has also called you (by the same name) in this (Quran) so that the Messenger may be a witness in regard to you and you may be witnesses in regard to the rest of mankind. (Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 78).

In a Hadith, Bara bin Azib has related that he heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say: The believers of my Ummah are *shahid* (the witnesses); then he recited this very verse of Surah Al-Hadid. (Ibn Jarir). Ibn Marduyah has related on the authority of Abu ad-Darda the tradition that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The one who emigrates from a land in order to save his life and his faith from temptation, is recorded as a *siddiq* (most truthful),

and when he dies, Allah takes his soul as a *shahid* (true witness). Then after this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited this very verse. (For the explanation of this meaning of shahadat, see E.N. 144 of Surah Al-Baqarah; E.N. 99 of Surah An-Nisa, E.N. 82 of Surah Al-Ahzab).

***35** That is, each one of them will receive the reward and the light of the measure and degree he deserves. They will all get their own respective rewards and lights and their shares have already been reserved for them.

20. Know that the life of this world is only play, and idle talk, and adornment, and boasting among you, and rivalry in increase of wealth and children. Like the example of rain whose (resulting) vegetation pleases the tillers, then it dries, then you see it turned yellow, then it becomes straw. And in the Hereafter is severe punishment, and forgiveness from Allah, and (His) good pleasure. And the life of the world is nothing but a deceiving enjoyment.*³⁶

أَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ
وَهُوَ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ
وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ
كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ
نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ
يَكُونُ حُطَمًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ
عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ
وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا
مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ



***36** To understand this theme fully one should keep the following verses of the Quran in mind: Surah Aal-Imran, Ayats 14-15; Surah Yunus, Ayats 24-25; Surah Ibrahim,

Ayat 18; Surah Al-Kahf, Ayats 45-46; Surah An-Noor, Ayat 39. In all these verses the truth that has been impressed on the mind is: The life of this world is a temporary life: its spring as well as its autumn is temporary. There is much here to allure man. But this, in fact, consists of base and insignificant things which man because of his shallowness of mind regards as great and splendid and is deluded into thinking that in attaining them lies supreme success. The truth however is that the highest benefits and means of pleasure and enjoyment that one can possibly attain in the world, are indeed short and insignificant and confined to a few years of temporary life and can be destroyed by just one turn of fate. Contrary to this, the life in Hereafter is a splendid and eternal life. Its benefits are great and permanent and its losses too are great and permanent. The one who attains Allah's forgiveness and His goodwill there, will indeed have attained the everlasting bliss beside which the entire wealth of the world and its kingdom become pale and insignificant. And the one who is seized in God's torment there, will come to know that he had made a bad bargain even if he had attained all that he regarded as great and splendid in the world.

21. Race one with another^{*37} towards forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose width is like the width of the heavens and the earth,^{*38} prepared for

سَابِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ
وَالْأَرْضِ أُعِدَّتْ لِلَّذِينَ

those who believe in Allah and His messengers. Such is the bounty of Allah, which He bestows upon whom He wills, and Allah is of infinite bounty.

ءَامِنُوا بِاللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦٓ ذٰلِكَ فَضْلُ
اللّٰهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ ذُو
الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٢١﴾

***37** *Musabaqat* (from which *sabiqu* of the original is derived) means to compete and vie with each other in order to excel. The meaning is: Give up your rivalries with one another for amassing wealth, and pleasures and benefits of the world and instead make the forgiveness of your Lord and Paradise the object of your struggle and rivalries.

***38** Some commentators have taken the word *ard* in *arduha ka-ardis-samai wal-ard* in the sense of breadth, but actually this word has been used here in the meaning of spaciousness and extensiveness. In Arabic the word *ard* is not only used for breadth, as a counterpart of length, but also for spaciousness, as it has been used in Surah HaMim As-Sajdah, Ayat 51: *fadhu dua in arid*: Then he is full of long supplications. Besides, one should also understand that the object here is not to foretell the area or extent of Paradise, but to give an idea of its vastness and extensiveness. Here its vastness has been described as the vastness of the heaven and earth, and in Surah Aal-Imran it has been said: Hasten to follow the path that leads to your Lord's forgiveness and to Paradise whose vastness is that of the universe, which has been prepared for the righteous (verse 133). When both these verses are read together, one gets the idea that the gardens and palaces

man will receive in Paradise will only serve as his dwelling-place but the entire universe will be his home. He will not be restricted to one place as he is in this world, where just for reaching the moon, his nearest neighbor in space, he has had to struggle hard for years and expend excessive resources only to overcome the difficulties of a short journey. There the whole universe will be accessible to him. He will be able to see whatever he would desire from his station and be able to visit whichever place he would like easily.

22. No affliction befalls upon the earth, nor in your own selves, except that it is in a Book^{*39} before We bring it into being.^{*40} Indeed that is easy for Allah.^{*41}

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ
مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ
عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

***39** A Book: the writ of destiny.

***40** Here, “it” may be referring to the affliction as well as to the earth, or the self of man, or in view of the context, to all the creatures.

***41** That is, it is not at all difficult for Allah to pre-ordain the destiny of each and every one of His creatures.

23. That you are not despaired over what you may lose, nor exult over that which has been given to you.^{*42} And Allah does not love all arrogant, boastful.

لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا
تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا
يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ

***42** In order to understand why this has been said in that context, one should keep in mind the conditions through which the Muslims were passing at the time this Surah was revealed. An ever present danger of attack by the enemy, battles in quick succession, a state of constant siege, hardships caused by economic boycott by the disbelievers, persecution of the converts to Islam everywhere in Arabia, these were the conditions that the Muslims were confronted with at that time. The disbelievers looked upon these as a proof of the Muslims having been forsaken and rejected, and the hypocrites took these as a confirmation of their own suspicions and doubts. As for the sincere Muslims, they were facing these bravely and resolutely, yet the excess of hardship and suffering would sometimes become trying even for them. So, the Muslims are being consoled, as if to say: No affliction, God forbid, has befallen you without the knowledge of your Lord. Whatever you are experiencing is according to the pre-ordained scheme of Allah, which is already recorded in the writ of destiny. And you are being made to pass through these trials and tribulations for the sake of your own training for the great service that Allah wills to take from you. If you are made to attain to success without passing through these hardships, weaknesses will remain in your character due to which you will neither be able to digest power and authority nor withstand the tempests and furies of falsehood.

24. Those who are misers and enjoin upon people miserliness. ^{*43} And whoever

الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ

turns away, then indeed Allah is All Sufficient, All Praiseworthy.*44

النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ
اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ



*43 The allusion is to the trait of character that everyone could experience among the hypocrites in the Muslim society itself. As regards to the outward affirmation of the faith, they could not be distinguished from the true Muslims. But owing to lack of sincerity they were not receiving the sort of training that was being given to the sincere Muslims. Therefore, the little prosperity and leadership that they were enjoying in an ordinary town of Arabia, was causing them to be swollen with pride. As for their stinginess, not only were they themselves unwilling to give away anything in the cause of God Whom they professed to believe in and the Messenger (peace be upon him) whom they professed to follow and the faith which they professed to have accepted, but also tried to prevent others from making any contribution, for, they thought, it was a useless cause. Obviously, if there had been no trials and tribulations, these worthless people, who were of no use to Allah, could not be separated from the sincere and worthy believers, and without weeding them out a mixed crowd of sincere and insincere Muslims could not be entrusted with the high office of leadership of the world, the great blessings of which the world subsequently witnessed in the rightly-guided Caliphate.

*44 That is, even if after hearing these words of admonition a person does not adopt the way of sincerity, faithfulness

and sacrifice for the sake of Allah and His religion, and wishes to persist in his stubbornness, which Allah disapproves, then Allah has no use for him, for Allah is All-Sufficient and Independent of His creatures. He does not stand in need of their help in any way. And He is All-Praiseworthy. People of only good qualities are acceptable to Him. People of evil character cannot be entitled to receive any favor from Him.

25. Indeed We sent Our messengers with clear signs, and We sent down with them the Scripture and the balance so that the people may stand by justice.*⁴⁵ And We sent down iron, wherein is great strength and benefits for the people.*⁴⁶ And that Allah may know who helps Him and His messengers unseen. Indeed, Allah is All Strong, All Mighty.*⁴⁷

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ
بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ
بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ
وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ
بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ



*⁴⁵ In this brief sentence the whole essence of the mission of the Prophets has been compressed, which one should clearly understand. It says that all the Messengers who came to the world from Allah, brought three things:

(1) Bayyenaat: manifest signs which clearly showed that they were really Allah's Messengers, and were not impostors; convincing arguments which made it evident

that what they were presenting as truth was really the truth, and what they condemned as falsehood was really falsehood. Clear instructions which told without any ambiguity what was the right way for the people in respect of beliefs, morals, acts of worship and dealings, which they should adopt, and what were the wrong ways which they should shun and avoid.

(2) **Kitab:** the Book which contained all the teachings required for the guidance of man so that people may turn to it for enlightenment.

(3) **Mizan:** the criterion of truth and falsehood which may precisely indicate, like a balance, the golden mean between two extremes in matters of thought, morals and dealings.

The object for which the Prophets were sent with these three things was that man's conduct in the world and the system of human life, individually as well as collectively, should be established with justice. On the in hand, every man should precisely know the rights of God, the rights of his self and the rights of all those people with whom he may have to deal in any way, and should fulfill them faithfully. And on the other hand, the system of collective life should be built on such principles as should eliminate every kind of injustice from society, should safeguard every aspect of civilization and social life against extremism, should establish correct balance and equity in all spheres of collective life, so that all elements of society should receive their rights equitably and fulfill their obligations and duties responsibly. In other words, the object of sending the prophets was to establish individual as well as collective

justice. They wanted to establish justice in the personal life of each individual so as to bring about poise and equilibrium in his mind, his character, his conduct and his dealings. They also wanted to establish the whole system of human society on justice so that both the individual and the society should assist and cooperate with each other in their spiritual, moral and material well-being instead of being a hindrance and obstacle.

***46** Sending down iron means creating iron in the earth just as in Surah Az-Zumar, Ayat 6 it has been said: He sent down for you eight heads of cattle, male and female. As whatever exists in the earth, has come here by Allah's command, and has not appeared by itself. Its being created has been expressed in the Quran as its being sent down.

The mention of sending down iron which has great strength and other benefits for men immediately after stating the object of the mission of the Prophets by itself indicates that by iron here is meant political and military power. Thus the verse means: Allah did not raise His Prophets in the world just to present a scheme for the establishment of justice, but it was also a part of their mission to endeavor to enforce it practically, to collect necessary power to establish justice in all spheres of life, to punish those who might disrupt it and to break the power of those who might resist it.

***47** That is, Allah does not need this help because He is weak and cannot use His power to accomplish this work, but He has adopted this method for the trial of men. Man can advance on the way of his progress and well-being only

by passing through this trial. Allah indeed has the power to subdue all the disbelievers by one command whenever He wills and give to His Messengers complete dominance over them, but in that case the believers in the Messengers would have nothing to do for which they should become entitled to rewards. That is why Allah instead of accomplishing this mission through His dominant power adopted the method of sending His Messengers to human beings with the signs and the Book and the criterion, and enjoined them to present the way of justice before the people and exhort them to refrain and desist from wickedness and injustice. At the same time, He gave us full option to accept the message of the Messengers or to reject it. He summoned those who accepted the invitation to come forward and help Him and His Messengers to establish justice, and to exert their utmost against those who were bent upon retaining the unjust system. Thus, Allah wants to see who among us reject the invitation to justice, who exert with their lives in order to retain injustice as against justice, who shirk supporting struggling for the cause of the message of justice after they have accepted it, and who stake their lives and their possessions for the sake of unseen God to help the truth become dominant in the world. Only for those who emerge successful in this test will avenues to future progress be opened up.

26. And indeed We^{*48} sent Noah and Abraham, and We placed in the progeny of them both the prophethood and the

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا النَّبُوَّةَ

Scripture. ^{*49} So among them is he who is guided, but many of them are disobedient. ^{*50}

وَالْكِتَابَ فَمِنْهُمْ مُهْتَدٍ
وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

***48** Now it is being told what corruptions appeared among those who believed in the Prophets who came to the world before the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) with the signs and the Book and the criterion.

***49** That is, whichever Messenger came with Allah's Book, was from the progeny of the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) and, after him, from the progeny of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him).

***50** Became transgressors and disobedient.

27. Then We caused Our messengers to follow in their footsteps, and We caused Jesus, son of Mary, to follow, and We gave him the Gospel, and We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy. ^{*51}

And monasticism, ^{*52} they innovated it. ^{*53} We ordained it not for them, but (they did so for) seeking the pleasure of Allah. Then they observed it not with its right observance. ^{*54} So we gave those who had believed

ثُمَّ قَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِم بِرُسُلِنَا
وَقَفَّيْنَا بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ
وَأَتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنجِيلَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي
قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً
وَرَحْمَةً وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا
كَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ
رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ
رِعَايَتِهَا فَآتَيْنَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا

among them their reward.
And many of them are
disobedient.

مِنْهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ
وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ
فَاسِقُونَ

***51** The words in the text are *rafat* and *rahmat*, which are almost synonymous. But when they are used together, *rafat* implies the compassion that a person feels on seeing another person in pain and distress, and *rahmat* is the feeling under which bhe tries to help him. As the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was highly compassionate and merciful towards the people, his this trait of character deeply influenced his disciples: therefore, they treated the people with pity and sympathy and served them with all their heart and soul.

***52** The root *rahb* (from which *rahbaniyyat* or *ruhbaniiyyat* is derived) means fear; thus *rahbaniyyat* means a mode of life which reflects fear and terror, and *ruhbaniiyyat* means the mode of life of the terrified. As a term it implies a person's abandoning the world out of fear (whether it is the fear of somebody's tyranny, or fear of the worldly temptations and distractions, or fear of one's personal weaknesses) and taking refuge in the jungles and mountains, or living alone as a hermit.

***53** The words in the original can have two meanings:
(1) That We did not enjoin monasticism (*ruhbaniiyyat*) upon them. We enjoined upon them only the seeking of Allah's good pleasure.
(2) That monasticism was not enjoined by Us. They of their own accord enjoined it on themselves, to seek Allah's good

pleasure. In both cases this verse makes it explicit that monasticism is an un-Islamic creed, and it has never been part of the true faith. The same thing has been stated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) thus: There is no monasticism in Islam. (Musnad Ahmed). In another Hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The monasticism of this ummah is to fight in the way of Allah. (Musnad Ahmed Musnad Abi Yala. That is, the way for this ummah to attain to spiritual piety lies not in abandoning the world but in fighting in Allah's way. This ummah does not flee to the jungles and mountains out of fear of temptations and distractions but counteracts them by resort to fighting in Allah's way. According to a tradition related both by Bukhari and by Muslim, one of the companions said that he would keep up Prayers throughout the night; another said that he would fast perpetually without ever observing a break; and a third one said the he would never marry and would have nothing to do with women. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to know of what they had resolved, he said: By God, I fear Allah the most and remain conscious of Him at all times; yet my way is that I observe the fast as well as break it. I keep up the Prayer during the night as well as have sleep. And I marry the women also. The one who does not follow my way, does not belong to me. Anas says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say: Do not be hard and severe to yourselves, lest Allah should be hard and severe to you. A community had adopted this way of severity towards itself, then Allah also seized it in severity. Look, the remainder of them are

found in the monasteries and churches. (Abu Daud).

***54** That is, they were involved in a double error. First, they imposed on themselves the restrictions which Allah had not imposed. Second, they did not observe in the right spirit the restrictions that they had imposed upon themselves with a view to attain to Allah's goodwill, and conducted themselves in a way as to earn Allah's wrath instead of His good pleasure.

To understand this theme fully we should have a look at the history of Christian Monasticism.

Until 200 years after the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), the Christian Church knew no monasticism. Its germs, however, were found in Christianity from the very beginning. To look upon asceticism as a moral ideal and to regard celibacy as superior to matrimonial and mundane life is the basis of monasticism. Both these existed in Christianity from the beginning. Owing to the sanctification of celibacy in particular, it was considered undesirable for those who performed religious services in the church to marry, have children and be involved in domestic chores; so much so that by the 3rd century monasticism began to spread like an epidemic in Christiandom. Historically, it had three main causes.

First, sensuality, immorality and worship of the world had so permeated the ancient polytheistic society that in their zeal to counteract it, the Christian scholars adopted the extremist way instead of the way of moderation. They so stressed chastity that the relationship between man and woman by itself came to be looked upon as filthy, even if it

was within marriage. They reacted so violently to monasticism that to possess property of any kind ultimately was considered a sin for a religious person and to live like a poor man and ascetic the criterion of moral excellence. Likewise, in their reaction to the sensuality of the polytheistic society, they touched the other extreme. They made withdrawal from pleasure and all material comforts, self denial and curbing of the desires as the object of morality. They regarded torturing the body by different sorts of harsh discipline as the climax and proof of a person's spirituality.

Secondly, when Christianity started achieving successes and spreading rapidly among the common people, the Church in its zeal to attract more and more adherents went on imbibing every evil that was prevalent in society. Thus, saint-worship replaced the ancient deities. Images of Christ and Mary began to be worshiped instead of the idols of Horus and Isis. Christmas took the place of Saturnalia. Christian monks began to practice every kind of occult art like curing the sick by amulets and magic incantations, taking omens and fortune-telling, driving out spirits, etc. as were prevalent in ancient days. Likewise, since the common people looked upon a dirty and naked person who lived in a cave or den as a holy and godly man, this very concept of sainthood became prevalent in the Christian Church, and legends of their miraculous powers began to abound in the memoirs of the Christian saints.

Thirdly, the Christians possessed no detailed law and definite traditions and practices to determine the bounds of

religion. They had given up Mosaic Law and the Gospel by itself afforded no perfect code of guidance. Therefore, the Christian doctors went on permitting every kind of innovation to enter the religion partly under the influence of alien philosophies, customs and practices and partly under their personal preference and whim. Monasticism was one such innovation. Christian scholars and doctors of law took its philosophy and rules and practices from the Buddhist monks, Hindu Yogis and ascetics, Egyptian Anchorites, Iranian Manicheans, and the followers of Plato and Plotinus, and made the same the means and methods of attaining self-purification, spiritual loftiness and nearness to God. Those who committed this error were not ordinary men. From the 3rd to the 7th century (i.e. till about the time the Quran began to be revealed) the religious personalities who were recognized as the foremost scholars and religious guides and leaders of Christendom, both in the East and in the West, St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Benedict, St. Gregory the Great, all were monks themselves and great upholders of monasticism. It was under their influence that monasticism became popular in the Church.

Historically, monasticism among the Christians started from Egypt. Its founder was St. Anthony (A.D. 250 -350) who is regarded as the father of Christian Monasticism. He set up the first monastery at Pispir (now Der al Memum) in the Fayum. Later he established another monastery on the coast of the Red Sea, which is now called Der Mar

Antonius. The basic cults of Christian Monasticism are derived from his writings and instructions. After this beginning the monastic movements spread like a flood in Egypt and monasteries for monks and nuns were set up everywhere in the land in some of which lived three thousand monks at a time. In 325 another ascetic, pachomius, appeared in Egypt, who founded ten major monasteries and nunneries for the monks and nuns. The monastic movement then began to spread in Palestine and Syria and different countries of Africa and Europe. The Christian Church in the beginning experienced some confusion in connection with monasticism, for although it recognized abandonment of the world, celibacy and voluntary poverty as an ideal of spiritual life, yet it could not declare marriage, producing children and possessing property or money to be sinful as the monks did. Subsequently, under the influence of holy men like St. Athanasius (d. 373), St. Basil (d. 379), St. Augustine (d. 430) and Gregory the Great (d. 609) many of the monastic rules became part and parcel of the Church.

This monastic innovation has some characteristics which are briefly as follows:

1. Inflicting pain on the body by severe exercises and novel methods. In this thing every monk tried to surpass the other. The achievements of these holy men as related in the memoirs of the Christian saints are to this effect: St. Macarius of Alexandria constantly carried on himself a weight of 80 pounds. For six months he slept in a swamp while poisonous flies preyed on his naked body. His

disciple, St. Eusebius, even surpassed his master in suffering severities and rigors. He moved about carrying a weight of 150 pounds, and lay in a dry well for three years. St. Saba ate the maize that would start stinking having been soaked in water for a whole month. St. Bassarion lay in thorny bushes for 40 days and did not rest his back on the ground for 40 years. St. Pachomius passed 15 years of his life, and according to another tradition 50 years, without putting his back on the ground. St. John remained standing in worship for three years during which he neither sat nor lay down, he would only recline at times against a rock. His food consisted of the offering that was brought for him every Sunday. St. Simeon Stylites (390-449) who is counted among the most illustrious Christian saints, used to observe an un-broken 40 days fast and smiling. Owing to such concepts the bond of marriage between man and woman came to be looked upon as filthy. A monk was forbidden even to look at a woman, not to speak of marriage, and was required to abandon his wife if he was married. As for men it was also impressed on the women that if they wished to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, they should shun marriage and remain spinsters and if they were married, they should separate from their husbands. St. Jerome, the distinguished Christian scholar, ruled that the woman who remained a spinster as a nun for the sake of Christ, was the bride of Christ, and her mother was the mother-in-law of Christ, i.e. God. Elsewhere St. Jerome says: To cut asunder the bond of marriage with the ax of chastity is the primary duty of the true devotee of God.

The first impact these teachings had on a Christian man or Christian woman, under religious fervor, was that his or her married life was ruined. And since there was no provision for divorce or separation in Christianity, the husband and the wife would separate from each other while they remained bound in wed-lock. St. Nilus was father of two children. When he came under the spell of monasticism, he immediately separated from his wife. St. Ammon, on the first night of his marriage, gave his bride a sermon on the filthiness of the marriage bond and then the two between themselves decided to keep aloof from each other throughout life. St. Abraham abandoned his wife on the very first night of marriage. The same was done by St. Alexis. The memoirs of the Christian saints are full of such incidents.

The Church continued to resist in one way or the other these extremist concepts for three centuries. In those days it was not required of a priest to be single and unmarried. If he was married before being appointed a minister, he could keep his wife. However, he was forbidden to marry after his appointment. Moreover, a person could not be appointed a minister if he had married a widow, or a divorced woman, or had two wives, or possessed a concubine. Gradually, by the 4th century, the concept became firm that for a married person it was odious to perform religious services in the Church. The Council of Gengra (A.D. 362) was the last one in which such ideas were held as anti-religious, but a little later in 386, Roman Synod counseled the priests to avoid marriage relations

and the following year Pope Siricius decreed that the priest who married, or continued to have sex relations with his wife if already married should be dismissed from office. Illustrious scholars like St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine upheld this decision most fervently, and after a little resistance it became fully enforced in the Western Church. In this period several councils were convened to consider the complaints to the effect that the people who were already married were having illicit relations with their wives even after their appointment to perform religious duties. Consequently, with a view to reform them, rules were made to the effect that they should sleep in the open, should never meet their wives in private, and should meet them only in the presence of at least two other men. St. Gregory has made mention of a wonderful priest who did not have any relation with his wife for 40 years, and when the woman approached him at his death-bed, he rebuked her, saying: Woman, keep away.

2. Their second characteristic was that they were dirty and against cleanliness and bodily care. Washing or applying water to the body was regarded as opposed to God-worship. For, according to them purification of the body was tantamount to pollution of the soul. St. Athanasius has faithfully described this virtue of St. Anthony that he never washed his feet during life. St. Abraham, from the day he entered Christianity, neither washed his face nor feet for 50 years. A famous nun Virgin Sylvia never allowed any part of her body except the fingers to become wet with water throughout life It is said of 130 nuns of 8 convent that they

never washed their feet and would shudder with horror at a mere reference to bath.

3. Monasticism practically forbade married life and ruthlessly discarded the institution of marriage. All religious writings of the 4th and 5th centuries are replete with the thought that celibacy is the highest moral virtue, and chastity meant that one should strictly abstain from sexual relation even if it was between husband and wife. The perfection of a pure spiritual life lay in complete self-denial, with no desire for physical pleasure. It was necessary to suppress any carnal desire because it strengthened animal nature. For them pleasure and sin were synonymous so much so that being happy was regarded as being forgetful of God. St. Basil forbade even laughing before Easter every year. Once he kept standing on one leg for a whole year. Often he would leave his monastery and retire to a well. Later he got a 60 foot high pillar erected near Antioch, which was three feet wide at the top and railed round. He spent the last 30 years of his life on this pillar and remained permanently exposed to the elements. His disciples carried food to him by ladder and removed his filth. He had even tied himself to the pillar by a string, which cut into his flesh; when the flesh became rotten, it bred worms; whenever a worm fell out, he would restore it to the sore, saying: Eat what God has given you. Crowds of pilgrims flocked to him from far and near. When he died the Christian world proclaimed that he was the best model of a Christian saint.

The memoirs of the Christian saints of this period are full

of such instances. One particular saint had the characteristic that he observed silence for 30 years. He was never seen speaking. Another had tied himself to a rock; another roamed the jungles and lived on grass; another moved about carrying a heavy load; another kept his limbs and body tied in fetters and chains; some saints lived in the dens of beasts, or in dry wells, or in old graves; and some others remained naked and concealed their private parts under long hair and would crawl on the ground. After death the bones of the illustrious saints were preserved in monastery. I saw a full library decked with such bones in St. Catherine's monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai. There were skulls and foot-bones and hand bones arranged separately. A glass-case contained the whole skeleton of a saint.

4. The most painful and pathetic chapter of ascetic monasticism is that it cut asunder man's relations with his parents, with his brothers and sisters, and even his children. For the Christian saints love of the parents for son, love of the brothers and sisters for brother and love of the children for father also was sinful. They believed it was necessary for man to break off all those relations for the sake of spiritual progress. In the biographies of the Christian saints one comes across highly pathetic and heart-rending incidents. A monk, St. Evagrius, had been undergoing severe exercises in the desert for many years. Suddenly one day letters reached him from his father and mother, who were passing their days in great agony without him. The saint, fearing that the letters might arouse feelings of

human love in his heart, cast the letters immediately into the fire, without even opening them. The mother and sister of St. Theodorus came to the monastery where he was staying, with recommendatory letters from many priests, and desired to have only a glimpse of him, but the saint refused to come out before them. St. Marcus' mother went to the monastery to see him. She somehow obtained the abbot's permission for it and requested him to order her son to come out before her, but the son was adamant to her prayers. At last, he implemented the abbot's orders by appearing before his mother disguised and with closed eyes. Thus, neither was the mother able to recognize her son, nor the son saw his mother. Another saint, St. Poemen and his six brothers lived in a desert monastery of Egypt. Years later their old mother came to know of their whereabouts and went to see them in the monastery. As soon as the brothers saw their mother coming, they hurried into their cell and shut the door. The mother started crying and wailing outside saying: I have traveled in this old age from a distant place only to have a glimpse of you. There will be no harm if only I see you. Am I not your mother. But the saints did not open the door and told the mother that they would meet her in the next world. Even more painful and piteous is the story of St. Simeon Stylites, who left his parents and remained away from them without any trace of his whereabouts for 27 years. The father died of grief. When the fame of the son's piety and holiness spread, the mother, who was still living in agony, came to know of his whereabouts. She came to the monastery to see him but

women were not allowed to enter. She prayed that either the son should call her in, or he should himself come out to let her have a glimpse of him, but the saint refused to oblige her. The woman lay at the entrance for three days and three nights and at last breathed her last in the same state. Then the holy man emerged from his seclusion, mourned his mother's death and prayed for her forgiveness.

In the same harsh way these saints treated their sisters and children. There is the story of Mutius, a prosperous man by all means. Drawn out suddenly by the religious impulse, he took his 8-year-old son and went to a monastery. But for the sake of his progress to holiness it was necessary that he should give up love of his son. Therefore, first the son was separated from him. Then the innocent child was subjected to harsh treatment before his very eyes and he watched it patiently. Then, the abbot of the monastery ordered him to go and cast the child into the river. He became ready even for this; then right at the time when he was going to throw the child into the river, the monks saved the child's life. Then it was admitted that he had actually attained to the rank of a holy man.

The viewpoint of Christian monasticism in these matters was that the one who sought love of God, should break off all relations of human love that bound him in the world to his parents, his brothers and sisters and his children. St. Jerome says: Even if your nephew clings to you with his hands round your neck; even if your mother calls you back in the name of having suckled you; even if your father obstructs your way and lies down before you, you should

hasten out to the banner of the cross, trampling the body of your father, without shedding a tear. Ruthlessness in this matter is piety itself. St. Gregory writes: A young monk who could not give up love of his parents, left the monastery one night in order to pay them a visit. God punished him for this error, for as soon as he returned to the monastery, he died. His body was buried in the grave but the earth did not accept it. He was placed in the grave again and again, and the earth threw him out every time. At last, St. Benedict placed a sacred offering on his chest, and then the grave accepted him. Of a nun it is said that for three days after her death, she remained subject to a torment because she had not been able to cleanse her heart of her mother's love. About a saint it is written that he never treated anyone harshly except his relatives.

5. Their practice of meting out ruthless, cruel and harsh treatment to their nearest relatives, made their human feeling dead, with the result that they would treat with utmost enmity those with whom they had any religious differences. By the beginning of the 4th century, 80 to 90 religious sects had arisen in Christianity. St. Augustine has made mention of 88 sects of his own time, each of which regarded the other with extreme hatred. And the fire of this hatred also was fanned by the monks, who were always in the forefront to halt and destroy the opponent sects by their machinations. Alexandria was a great center of this sectarian conflict.

There, in the beginning the Bishop of the Arian sect attacked the Athanasius party. Virgin nuns were dragged

out of their convents, stripped naked and beaten with thorny branches and branded in order to make them give up their creed. Then, when the Roman Catholics came to power in Egypt, they treated the Arian sect likewise; so much so that according to the prevalent view Arius himself was also poisoned. Once in the same city of Alexandria the monks of St. Cyril created a turmoil. They seized a nun of the opponent sect and took her into their church; they killed her, backed her body to pieces, and cast it into the fire. Rome was not any different from this. In 366, at the death of Pope Liberius, two sects nominated their respective candidates for papacy; this resulted in great bloodshed; so much so that in one day 137 dead bodies were taken out from one church.

6. Side by side with this retreat from the world and life of seclusion and poverty, wealth of the world was also amassed most avariciously. By the beginning of the 5th century the condition was that the bishop of Rome lived in his palace like kings, and when his conveyance emerged in the city, it would be as stately and splendid as of the emperor himself. St. Jerome complains of the conditions of his time (later part of the 4th century) saying that the feast hosted by many of the bishops out-classed the feasts of the governors. The flow of wealth to monasteries and churches had assumed the proportions of a deluge by the beginning of the 7th century (the age of the revelation of the Quran). It had been deeply impressed on the minds that a person who happened to commit a grave sin could be redeemed only by making an offering at a saint's shrine, or a sacrifice

at the altar of a church or monastery. Then the same world and its luxuries and comforts abstention from which was the mark of distinction of the monks, lay at their feet. The factor which, in particular, caused this decline was that when the common people developed extreme reverence for the monks because of their undergoing severe exercises of self-discipline and self-denial, hosts of world seeking people also donned the monk's garments and entered their ranks. Then under the garb of feigned poverty they turned acquisition of worldly wealth and possessions into a flourishing business.

7. In the matter of chastity monasticism was also repeatedly defeated in its fight against nature and defeated well and proper. In the monasteries some exercises of self-mortification were such as required the monks and nuns to live together in one and the same place, and they had often to pass the night in the same bed in their enthusiasm for more and more temptations. St. Evagarius, the well-known monk, has praised the self-control acquired by the Palestinian monks, saying: They had mastered their passion so completely that although they bathed with the women together, looked at their bodies, touched them, even embraced them, yet they remained invincible to nature. Although bathing was an odious thing in monasticism, such baths were also taken for the sake of exercise in self-control. At last, about the same Palestine, St. Gregory of Nyssa (d. 396) writes that it has become a center of wickedness and immorality. Human nature avenges itself on those who fight it. Monasticism fought it and ultimately

fell in the pit of immorality the story of which is a most shameful blot on the religious history of the 8th to 11th centuries. An Italian bishop of the 10th century writes: If the penal law for misconduct is practically enforced against those who perform religious services in the church, none would escape punishment except the boys, and if the law to remove illegitimate children from religious services was also enforced, there might perhaps be left no boy among the attendants of the church. Books of the medieval authors are replete with the complaints that the nunneries had become houses of prostitution. Within their four walls newborn babies were being massacred; the priests and religious attendants of the church had developed illicit connections even with forbidden relatives; the crime of the unnatural act had spread like an epidemic in the monasteries; and the practice of confession had become a means of immorality in the churches.

From these details, one can fully appreciate what corruption of Christianity is that which the Quran is alluding to when it says: The Christians themselves invented monasticism, but they did not observe it as it should have been observed.

28. O you who believe, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger,^{*55} He will grant you twofold of His mercy, and He will appoint for you a light by which you will walk,^{*56} and He will forgive

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَأَمِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ
مِن رَّحْمَتِهِ وَجَعَلَ لَكُم نُورًا
تَمْشُونَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ

you.^{*57} And Allah is All
Forgiving, All Merciful.

غُفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

***55** The commentators differ in the explanation of this verse, One group says that the address here is directed to the people who believed in the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). It is being said to them: Believe in the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) now; for this you will be given a double reward, one reward for believing in the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) and the other reward for believing in the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The second group says that the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are being addressed. They are being admonished to the effect: Do not rest content with your verbal affirmation of the faith only, but you should believe sincerely and truly. For this you will be given a double reward: one reward for giving up disbelief and turning to Islam, and the second reward for believing sincerely in Islam and remaining steadfast to it. The first commentary is supported by verses 52-54 of Surah Al-Qasas, and furthermore by the tradition reported by Abu Musa al-Ashari, according to which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: There are three men who will get a double reward, one of them is a person from among the followers of the earlier Books who believed in this earlier Prophet and then believed in the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). (Bukhari Muslim). The second commentary is supported by verse 37 of Surah Saba, which says that the righteous believers will have a double reward. From the point of view of argument both the commentaries

are equally weighty. However, considering the theme that follows, one feels that the second commentary is more in keeping with the context here; and in fact the whole theme of this Surah, from beginning to end, supports this very commentary. From the beginning of this Surah the addressees are the people who had entered Islam after affirming the Prophethood of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and it is they whom the Surah invites to believe sincerely and truly and not merely verbally with the tongue.

***56** That is, He will bless you with such a light of knowledge and vision in the world by which you will be able clearly distinguish at every step the straight way of Islam from the crooked paths of ignorance in different matters of life, and in the Hereafter He will grant you the light that has been mentioned in verse 12 above.

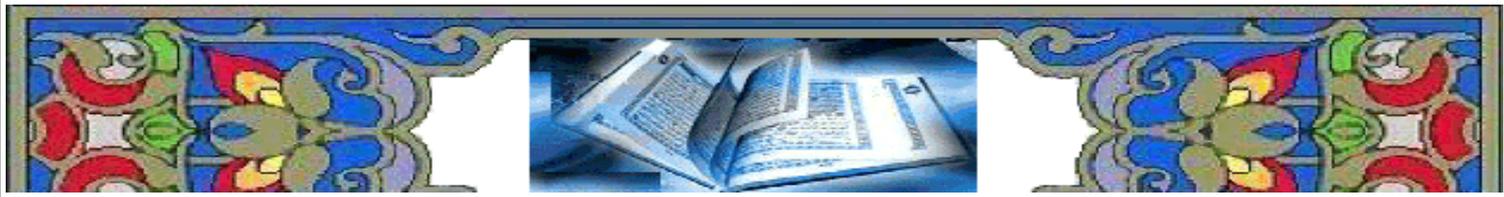
***57** That is, He will forgive you your errors that you may happen to commit due to human weaknesses in spite of your sincere efforts to fulfill the demands of the faith, and will also forgive those sins of yours that you had committed in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance.

29. So that the people of the Scripture may know that they do not have any power on anything over the bounty of Allah, and that the bounty is in the hand of Allah, which He bestows to whomever He wills, And Allah is of infinite

لَعَلَّآ يَـٰعَلَمَ أَهْلُ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ ٱلَّآ
يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ مِّنْ فَضْلِ ٱللَّهِ
وَإِنَّ ٱلْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ ٱللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن
يَشَآءُ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ ذُو ٱلْفَضْلِ ٱلْعَظِيمِ

bounty.





Al-Mujadilah الْمُجَادِلَة

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah is entitled *Al-Mujadalah* as well as *Al Mujadalah*, the title being derived from the word *tujadiluka* of the very first verse. As at the outset mention has been made of the woman who pleaded with the Prophet (peace be upon him) the case of *zihar* pronounced by her husband and urged him to suggest a way out of the difficult situation in order to save her and her children's life from getting ruined. Allah has described her pleading by the word *mujadalah*, the Surah came to be known by this very title. If it is read as *mujadalah*, it would mean pleading and arguing, and if it is read as *mujadilah*, it would mean the woman who pleaded and argued.

Period of Revelation

There is no tradition to tell as to when this incident of pleading and arguing took place, but there is a hint in the subject matter of the Surah on the basis of which it can be said with certainty that it happened some time after the battle of the Trench (Shawwal, 5 A.H.). In Surah Al-Ahzab, Allah while negating that an adopted son could be one's

real son, had just said this and no more: And Allah has not made those of your wives whom you divorce by *zihar* your mothers. But in that Surah there was nothing to the effect that to divorce a wife by *zihar* was a sin or a crime, nor anything about the legal injunction concerning it. Contrary to it, in this Surah the whole law relating to *zihar* has been laid down, which shows that these detailed injunctions were sent down some time after the brief reference to it in Surah Al-Ahzab.

Subject Matter and Topics

In this Surah, instructions have been given to the Muslims about the different problems that confronted them at that time.

From the beginning of the Surah to verse 6, legal injunctions about *zihar* have been given, along with which the Muslims have been strictly warned that it is contrary to their profession of the faith that they should still persist in the practices of ignorance after they have accepted Islam, that they should break the bounds set by Allah, or refuse to abide by them, or that they should make their own rules and regulations contradictory to them. For this there is not only the punishment of disgrace and humiliation in the world but in the Hereafter too there will be strict accountability for it.

In verses 7-10, the hypocrites have been taken to task for their secret whisperings and consultations by which they conspired and intrigued against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and because of their hidden malice and grudge greeted him, like the Jews, in a manner as to wish him ill

instead of well. In this connection, the Muslims have been consoled, as if to say: These whisperings of the hypocrites can do no harm to you. Therefore, you should go on doing your duty with full trust in Allah. Besides, they have also been taught this moral lesson: The true believers, when they talk secretly together, do not talk of sin and transgression and disobedience to the Messenger (peace be upon him). If they have to talk secretly together they should talk of goodness and piety.

In verses 11-13, the Muslims have been taught certain manners of social behavior and given instructions to eradicate certain social evils which were prevalent among the people then as they are today. If some people are sitting in an assembly, and more people arrive, they do not show even the courtesy as to squeeze in so as to make room for others, with the result that the newcomers have to keep standing, or to sit in the doorway, or to go back, or seeing that there is enough room yet start jumping over the people's heads to find room for themselves. This often used to be experienced in the Prophet's (peace be upon him) assemblies. Therefore, Allah gave the instruction, as if to say: Do not behave selfishly and narrow mindedly in your assemblies but do accommodate the new-comers also with an open heart.

Likewise, another vice found among the people is that when they go on a visit to somebody (an important person, in particular), they prolong their sitting and do not at all mind that encroaching upon his time unduly would cause him hardship. Then, if he tells them to leave, they mind it;

if he himself rises up from their assembly, they complain of his lack of manners; if he tells them indirectly that he has some other business to attend to, for which he needs time, they turn a deaf ear to his request. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself had to experience such misconduct of the people, who in their earnestness to benefit by his teaching did not at all see that they were wasting his precious time that was badly needed for other important works. At last, Allah in order to eradicate this bad manner, enjoined that when the people are asked to rise up from an assembly, they should rise up and disperse.

Another vice prevalent among the people was that each person wished to have secret counsel individually with the Prophet (peace be upon him) without any real need, or would like that he should approach him during an assembly and whisper something to him. This was not only embarrassing for the Prophet (peace be upon him) but also annoying for the people who sat in the assembly. That is why Allah imposed the restriction that anyone who wanted to consult him in private, should first give away something in charity. The object was that the people should be warned of this bad manner and made to give it up. Thus, the restriction was kept in force for a short while, and when the people had corrected their behavior, it was withdrawn. From verse 14 to the end of the Surah, members of the Muslim society, which was a mixture of the sincere Muslims and the hypocrites and those who wavered have been told plainly as to what is the criterion of sincerity in Islam. One kind of Muslims are those who are friends with

the enemies of Islam: they do not hesitate for the sake of their interests to be treacherous to the religion which they profess to believe in; they spread all sorts of doubts and suspicions against Islam and prevent the people from adopting the way of Allah. But since they are part of the Muslim community, their false profession of faith serves them as a cover and shield. The second kind of Muslims are those who, in the matter of Allah's religion, do not care even for their own father, brother, children, family or others. They do not cherish any feeling of love for the person who is an enemy of God and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and His religion. Allah, in these verses has explicitly stated that the people of the first kind, in fact, belong to Satan's party however hard they may try to convince others of their Islam by swearing oaths. And the honor of belonging to Allah's party is possessed only by the Muslims of the second kind. They alone are the true Muslims: they alone will attain to true success, and with them alone is Allah well pleased.

1. Certainly Allah^{*1} has heard the words of her who is pleading with you concerning her husband and complains to Allah. And Allah hears the argument between you both.^{*2} Indeed, Allah is All Hearing, All Seeing.

قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ
فِي زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ
يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ
بَصِيرٌ

*1 Here, hearing does not merely imply hearing a complaint but also redressing the grievances.

*2 The translators generally have translated these sentences in the past tense, which tends to give the meaning that the woman had left after relating her complaint and the Prophet (peace be upon him) some time later might have received this revelation. That is why Allah has said: We indeed heard what the woman said, who was pleading with you and complaining to Us, and We were at that time hearing the conversation of both of you. But in most of the traditions that have been reported in the Hadith about this incident, it has been stated that right at the time when the woman was relating the *zihar* pronounced by her husband and complaining to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the effect that if she was separated from her husband, she and her children would be ruined, the state of receiving revelation appeared on the Prophet (peace be upon him) and these verse's were sent down. On this basis we have preferred rendering these sentences in the present tense. The woman concerning whom these verses were sent down was Khaulah bint-Thalabah of the Khazraj tribe, and her husband, Aus bin Samit Ansari, was brother of Ubadah bin Samit, the chief of the Aus tribe. The story of the *zihar* upon her is related in detail below. What is worth mentioning here is that the incident of woman's complaint being heard by Allah Almighty and the coming down of the divine command immediately to redress her grievance was an event that earned her a place of honor and esteem among the companions. Ibn Abi Hatim and Baihaqi have related that once Umar was on his way out with some companions. On the way he came across a woman, who

stopped him; he immediately stopped and listened to what she had to say patiently with his head bent down, and did not move till she had finished. One of the companions said: O commander of the faithful, you held back the Quraish chiefs for so long for the sake of this old woman! Umar said: Do you know who she is? She is Khaulah bint-Thalabah, the woman whose complaint was heard at the seventh heaven. By God, even if she had kept me standing till the night, I would have kept standing. I would only have excused myself at the prayer times. Ibn Abdul Barr has related in Al-Istiab this tradition from Qatadah: When Umar came across this lady, on the way, he greeted her. After answering his greeting, she said: O Umar, there was a time when I saw you at the Ukaz festival. Then you were called Umair. You tended goats with the shepherd's staff in your hand. Then, not very long after this, you began to be called Umar. Then a time came when the people began addressing you as commander of the faithful. So, fear Allah with regard to your subjects, and remember that the one who fears Allah's punishment, for him the stranger also is like a close kinsman, and the one who fears death, may well lose that very thing which he wants to save. At this Jarud Abdi, who was accompanying Umar, said: O woman, you have talked insolently to the commander of the faithful. Thereupon Umar said: Let her say whatever she has to say. Do you know who she is? She was heard at the seventh heaven. So, she deserves to be heard longer and with greater attention by Umar. Imam Bukhari has also related briefly a story resembling to this.

2. Those among you who put away (zihar) their wives,^{*3} (should know that) they are not their mothers. Their mothers are none except those who gave them birth.^{*4} And indeed they say an ill word and a lie.^{*5} And indeed Allah is All Pardonning, All Forgiving.^{*6}

الَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ نِّسَائِهِمْ مَا هُنَّ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ إِنَّ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ إِلَّا اللَّائِي وَلَدْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَقُولُونَ مُنْكَرًا مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ وَزُورًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُوفٌ غَفُورٌ ﴿٢﴾

*3 Among the Arabs it often so happened that during a family quarrel, the husband in the heat of the moment would say to his wife: *Anti alayya ka-zahri ammi* which literally means: You are for me as the back of my mother. But its real meaning is: To have sexual relations with you would be like having sexual relations with my mother. Such words are still uttered by the foolish people, who, as the result of a family quarrel, declare the wife to be like their mother, or sister, or daughter, and make her unlawful for themselves like the prohibited women. This is called *zihar*. *Zahr* in Arabic is metaphorically used for riding and mounting. Thus, the conveyance is called *zahr*, because man rides on its back. As this word was employed in order to make the wife unlawful, it was termed *zihar*. In the pre-Islamic days this was looked upon as tantamount to the pronouncement of divorce, even of greater effect than that, for they took it to mean that the husband was not only severing his marital relations with his wife but was also declaring her to be unlawful for himself like his mother. On

this very basis, the Arabs thought reunion could be possible after a divorce but it was impossible after *zihar*.

***4** This is Allah's first decision concerning *zihar*. It means that if a person shamelessly compares the wife to his mother, his this utterance does not make his wife his mother, nor is she endowed with the sanctity that the mother enjoys. The mother's being mother is fact, for she has given birth to the man. On this very ground, she is eternally sacred and prohibited. Now, how will the woman who has not given him birth become his mother simply by a word of mouth, and how will sanctity and prohibition be established for her by reason, morality and law which, by virtue of this fact, is only reserved for the mother who gave birth. Thus, Allah by this condemnation abolished the custom of the pre-Islamic ignorance according to which the marriage contract between the husband, by pronouncing *zihar*, and the wife stood dissolved and she became absolutely forbidden for him like the mother.

***5** That is, to liken the wife to the mother is, in the first place, an absurd and shameful thing which no noble person should ever think of, not to speak of uttering it with the tongue. Secondly, it is also a falsehood, for if the one who says such a thing is giving the news that his wife has now become his mother for him, he is uttering falsehood, and if he is declaring that he has henceforth bestowed on his wife the sanctity of the mother, even then his claim is false, for God has not given him the authority that he may treat a woman as his wife as long as he likes and then start treating her as his mother as and when he likes. The

lawgiver is Allah Almighty, not he, and Allah has included in the order of motherhood the grandmothers, both paternal and maternal, mother-in-law, foster mother and the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) along with the woman who gave birth. Nobody has the right to include of his own whim another woman in this order, not to speak of the woman who has been his wife. This gives the second legal injunction. To pronounce *zihar* is a grave sin and forbidden act, the violation of which deserves to be punished.

*6 That is, such an utterance actually deserves to be punished much more severely, but it is Allah's kindness that He has, firstly, abolished the custom of ignorance and saved your family life from utter ruin, and secondly, has prescribed the lightest punishment for the culprits. And His supreme kindness is that the punishment too, is not any form of physical torture or imprisonment, but a few acts of worship and virtue, which are meant to reform you and help spread good in your society. In this connection, one should also understand that the acts of worship that have been prescribed by Islam as expiations for certain crimes and sins are neither mere punishments that they may be without the spirit of worship, nor mere acts of worship that they may entail no pain and suffering of the punishment. But both the aspects have been combined in them so that the culprit may experience pain as well as expiate his sin by means of performing a virtue and act of worship.

3. And those^{*7} who pronounce *zihar* from their

وَالَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ ثُمَّ

wives, then (wish to) go back on what they had said,^{*8} then (they must) free a slave before the two touch each other. That is what you are advised thereby.^{*9} And Allah is Aware of what you do.^{*10}

يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ
مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَتَمَاسَا ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ
تُوعِظُونَ بِهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

***7** From here begins the statement of the legal injunctions concerning *zihar*. To understand this, it is necessary that one should keep in mind the incidents of *zihar* that took place in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), for the code of law pertaining to *zihar* is derived from the verses and the judgments that the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave after the revelation of these verses in the cases of *zihar* brought before him.

According to Abdullah bin Abbas, the first case of *zihar* in Islam was the one relating to Aus bin Samit Ansari, on whose wife Khaulah's complaint Allah sent down these verse. Although the details of this case that the traditionists have cited from several reporters contain minor differences, yet the elements of legal import and significance are almost agreed upon. A resume of these traditions is as follows:

Aus bin Samit had grown a little peevish in old age and according to some traditions, had also developed an ailment resembling insanity. The reporters have described it by the word *lamam* which is not exactly madness in Arabic but a state resembling it. In this state he had also

pronounced *zihar* on his wife several times before, but in Islam this was the first occasion that he pronounced it as the result of a quarrel with her. Thereupon, his wife appeared before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and relating the whole story to him, said: O Messenger of Allah, is there any way out of this situation that could save me and my children from ruin. The Prophet's (peace be upon him) reply has been reported in different words by different reporters. In some traditions the words are to the effect: No command has been given to me so far in this regard, and in some others the words are: In my opinion you have become unlawful to him, and in still others: You are unlawful to him. At this, she began to cry and complain and told the Prophet (peace be upon him) over and over again that her husband had not pronounced the words of divorce; therefore, he should suggest a way by which she and her children and her old husband's life could be saved from ruin. But the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave her the same reply every time. In the meantime he underwent the state of receiving revelation and these verses were revealed. After this, he said to her (and according to other traditions, he called her husband and told him) to free a slave. When they expressed their inability to do so, he said that the husband would have to observe two months' fast consecutively. She said: Aus is such a man that unless he eats and drinks three times a day, his sight starts failing him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Then, you will have to feed 60 poor people. They submitted that they did not have the means for that unless they were helped out by

him. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave them food articles that could suffice 60 men for two meals. Different quantities of it have been mentioned in different traditions. According to some traditions Khaulah herself gave to her husband food articles equal in quantity to those given by the Prophet so that he may perform the expiation. (Ibn Jarir, Musnad Ahmad Abu Daud, Ibn Abi Hatim).

The second incident of zihar relates to Salamah bin Sakhr Bayadi. He had a somewhat abnormal appetite for sex. When the fasting month of Ramadan came, he, fearing that he might lose self-control in daytime in the state of fasting, pronounced *zihar* on his wife till the end of Ramadan. But he could not adhere to his pledge and went in to his wife one night. Penitent he appeared before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and told him what he had done. He told him to release a slave. He said he had no one else beside his wife, whom he could release. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then told him to observe two months' consecutive fast. He replied that it was during obligatory fasting itself that he had been unable to control himself and had become involved in trouble. The Prophet then said that he should feed 60 poor people, He replied that they were poor themselves and had gone to bed at night without food. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) got him a sufficient quantity of food articles from the collector of the zakat of Bani Zurayq so that he may feed 60 persons and may also save something for his children. (Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud, Tirmadhi).

The third incident that has been related without any

reference to the name is that a man pronounced *zihar* on his wife and then had sexual intercourse with her even before making the expiation. Then, when he came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to ask for the legal verdict, he commanded him to abstain from her till he had made the expiation. (Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Majah).

The fourth incident is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself heard a man calling his wife as sister. Thereupon he said to him angrily: Is she your sister. But he did not regard it as *zihar*. (Abu Daud).

These four are the reliable incidents that have been related in the Hadith through authentic channels, and through them only can one adequately understand the Quranic injunctions that have been laid down in the following verses.

***8** Literally: That they return to that which they said, but in view of the Arabic language and idiom great differences have occurred in determining the meaning of these words.

Their one meaning can be: If they repeat the words of *zihar* after they have uttered them once. The Zahiriyah and Bukair bin al-Ashajj and Yahya bin Ziyad al-Farm hold this very view, and a saying from Ata bin Abi Rabah also has been reported in support of the same. According to them, the pronouncement of *zihar* once is forgiven; however, if a person repeats it, he becomes liable to make the expiation. But this commentary is expressly wrong for two reasons: first, that Allah has condemned *zihar* as an absurd thing and a falsehood and then prescribed a penalty for it. Now, it is not conceivable that if a man utters

falsehood or absurdities once he should be excused and if he utters it the second time he should make himself liable to punishment. The second reason of its being wrong is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) never asked the man pronouncing *zihar* whether he had pronounced it once or twice.

Its second meaning is: If the people who were used to uttering *zihar* in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, repeat it in Islam, they will incur this punishment. This would mean that *zihar* should by itself be liable to punishment, and whoever utters the words of *zihar* for his wife, should become liable to make the expiation whether he may divorce the wife after it, or his wife may die; or he may have no intention of resuming conjugal relations with his wife. This view is hold by Taus, Mujahid, Shabi, Zuhri, Sufyan Thauri and Qatadah from among the jurists. They say that if the woman dies after the *zihar*, the husband cannot inherit her unless he has made the expiation.

The third meaning is: If after uttering the words of *zihar* the man may wish to go back on his words and make amends for what he said. In other words, *yaudon lima qalo* means that the man revoked what he had said.

The fourth meaning is: If the man may wish to make lawful what he had made unlawful for himself by pronouncing the *zihar*. In other words, it would mean that the person who had made a thing unlawful for himself has now returned to make it lawful views.

Most of the jurists have preferred and adopted one of these last two.

***9** In other words: This you are being enjoined for your own correction and admonition so that the members of Muslim society may give up this evil custom of ignorance and none of you may commit this folly. If you have to quarrel with your wife, you may quarrel with her like good people. if you intend to divorce her, then you should divorce her gracefully. It is absurd that you should compare her to your mother and sister whenever you have a quarrel with her.

***10** That is, Allah will certainly know, even if nobody else does, if a person pronounces *zihar*, and then quietly resumes normal conjugal relations with his wife without first atoning for the offense. Such people cannot in any way escape Allah's punishment.

4. Then he who does not find (a slave) should fast two successive months before the two touch each other. And he who is unable (to do even this) should feed sixty needy ones.^{*11} This is so that you may believe in Allah and His Messenger.^{*12} And those are the limits (set) by Allah. And for the disbelievers there is a painful punishment.^{*13}

فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ
مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسَا
فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فإِطْعَامُ سِتِّينَ
مِسْكِينًا ذَٰلِكَ لَتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ
وَرَسُولِهِ ۚ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

***11** This is the divine commandment in respect of *zihar*. The following are the details of the law that the jurists of Islam have derived from the words of this verse, the

judgments of the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah and the general principles of Islam.

(1) This law of *zahir* abrogates the Arabian custom of ignorance according to which the marriage contract stood annulled and the woman became permanently forbidden to the husband. Likewise, this law annuls all those laws and customs which regard *zihar* as a meaningless custom, which is of no legal effect, and permit man to continue having marital relations with his wife as usual even after having compared her to his mother and other prohibited relations. For in the sight of Islam the sanctity of the mother and other prohibited relations is not such an ordinary thing that a man may even think of the comparison between them and his wife, not to speak of uttering it with the tongue. Between the two extremes the position adopted by the Islamic law in this regard is based on three principles: (a) That the marriage contract is not annulled by *zihar*, but the woman continues to be the husband's wife as usual, (b) that the woman becomes only temporarily prohibited to the man by *zihar*, and (c) that this prohibition operates till the time that the husband makes the expiation, and that the expiation only can remove the prohibition.

(2) As for the person pronouncing *zihar*, it is agreed that the *zihar* of that husband is only reliable, who is of sound mind and mature age and pronounces the words of *zihar* in his right senses; the *zihar* of the child or of the insane person is not reliable. Moreover, the *zihar* of the person who might not be in his right senses at the time of pronouncing its words is also not reliable, e.g. if he mutters

words during sleep, or is senseless, due to any reason. However, the jurists have differed on the following points:

(a) About the person who pronounces *zihar* in the state of intoxication. A great majority of them including the four Imams have given the verdict that since he has intentionally used the intoxicant, his *zihar*, like his divorce, will be regarded as valid legally, for he has undergone this state deliberately. However, if he has taken a medicine on account of illness and has been intoxicated, or has been compelled to take wine in intense thirst in order to save life, his *zihar* and divorce pronounced in that state will not be enforced. This very view is held by the Hanafis and the Shafeis and the Hanbalis and also the same was the view commonly held by the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Contrary to it, Uthman held the view that the *zihar* and divorce pronounced in the state of intoxication are not reliable. Imam Tahawi and Karkhi from among the Hanafis hold this view as preferable and a statement of Imam Shafai also supports it. According to the Malikis the *zihar* pronounced in the state of intoxication will be reliable in case the person concerned has not wholly lost his senses, but talks sensibly and coherently and knows what he is saying.

(b) According to Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Malik, only the *zihar* of the husband who is a Muslim is reliable. These injunctions do not apply to the non-Muslim subjects of the Islamic state, for the Quranic words: *Alladhina yazahiruna minikum*: those from among you who put away their wives by *zihar*, have been addressed to the Muslims,

and the fasting, which is one of the three kinds of the expiations prescribed in the Quran, obviously cannot be applicable to the non-Muslim subjects. According to Imam Shafei and Imam Ahmad, these injunctions will be applicable both to the Muslims and to the non-Muslims; however, there is no fasting for the non-Muslim subject: he may only free a slave or feed 60 poor.

(c) Can a woman also, like a man, pronounce *zihar*. For instance will it be *zihar* if she says to her husband: You are for me as my father, or I am for you like your mother. The four Imams say that this is not *zihar* and the legal injunctions of *zihar* do not apply to it at all. For the Quran in express words has laid down these injunctions in respect of the cases where the husbands pronounce *zihar* on their wives, and the authority to pronounce *zihar* can be held only by him who holds the authority to pronounce divorce. Just as the Shariah has not given the woman the power to divorce the husband, so it has also not given her the power to make her ownself unlawful to her husband. This same is the view of Sufyan Thauri, Ishaq bin Rahawaiyh, Abu Thaur and Laith bin Saad. They regard such a pronouncement by a woman as meaningless and without effect. Imam Abu Yusuf says that though this is not *zihar*, it will entail for the woman the atonement of the oath, for the pronouncement of such words by the woman means that she has sworn not to have marital relations with her husband. This same is the view of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal as cited by Ibn Qadamah. Imam Auzai says that if before marriage the woman said that if she married a

particular man he would be for her as her father, it would be *zihar*, and if she says such a thing after marriage it would be in the nature of an oath, which would entail the atonement for the oath. Contrary to it, Hasan Basri, Zuhri, Ibrahim Nakhai and Hasan bin Ziyad Lului say that this is *zihar* and will entail the expiation prescribed for *zihar* by the woman; however, the woman will not have the right to prevent the husband from coming in to her before making the expiation. Ibrahim Nakhai has cited this incident in support of this view. Musab, son of Zubair, sent a proposal of marriage to Aishah bint Talhah. She turned down the proposal, saying: If I married him, he would be for me as the back of my father (*huwa alayya ka-zahri abi*). After some time, she decided to marry him willingly. When the jurists of Al-Madinah were asked for their ruling on it, many jurists including several companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) ruled that Aishah would have to make an expiation for the *zihar*. After citing this incident Ibrahim Nakhai has expressed his own opinion, saying that if Aishah had said this thing after the marriage it would not have entailed the expiation. But since she said this before marriage when she had the option to marry, or not to marry, the expiation became obligatory on her.

(3) The excuse of a sensible and mature person, who pronounces the express words of *zihar* in his full senses, cannot be acceptable that he uttered the words in a state of anger, or in jest, or in love, or that he had no intention of the *zihar*. However, in respect of the words which are not express in this regard, and which can give different

meanings, the injunction will vary according to their nature. Below we shall tell what words of *zihar* are expressed and what words are not expressed.

(4) It is agreed upon by all that *zihar* can be pronounced on the woman who is a wedded wife of the man. However, there is a difference of opinion whether *zihar* can also be pronounced on the other woman or not. In this matter, the following are the different viewpoints:

The Hanafis say that if a man says to the other woman: If I marry you, you will be for me as the back of my mother, then whenever he marries her, he will not be allowed to touch her without first making the expiation. This same is the verdict of Umar. During his caliphate a man said such words to a woman and afterwards married her. Umar ruled that he would have to make the expiation for the *zihar*.

The Malikis and the Hanbalis have also expressed the same opinion, and they add this to it: If the woman was not specified, but the man said words to the effect that all women were for him like that, then whichever woman he married, he would have to make the expiation before touching her. The same is the opinion of Saed bin al-Musayyab, Urwah bin Zubair, Ata bin Abi Rabah, Hasan Basri and Ishaq bin Rahawaiyh.

The Shafeis say that *zihar* before marriage is meaningless. Ibn Abbas and Qatadah also hold the same opinion.

(5) Can *zihar* be pronounced for a fixed term. The Hanafis and the Shafeis say that if a man has pronounced *zihar* for a certain period of time, he will have to make the expiation

if he touches the wife before the expiry of that time; however, the *zihar* will become ineffective when the time has elapsed. Its argument is the incident concerning Salamah bin Sakhr Bayadi, who had pronounced *zihar* upon his wife for the month of Ramadan, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not tell him that the fixation of the time limit was meaningless. On the contrary, Imam Malik and Ibn Abi Laila say that whenever *zihar* is pronounced it will be forever and the specification of time will be of no effect, for the prohibition that has occurred cannot become void of its own accord on the expiry of the time.

(6) If the *zihar* is conditional, expiation will become incumbent whenever the condition is violated. For instance, if a man says to his wife: If I enter the houses you will be to me as the back of my mother, then whenever he enters his house, it will be unlawful for him to touch his wife without first making the expiation.

(7) In case the words of *zihar* are repeated several times to a wife, the Hanafis and the Shafeis say that whether this is done in one sitting or in several sittings, it will entail as many expiations as the number of the times the word were repeated, unless the man might have repeated the words only to stress what he had said before. Contrary to this, Imam Malik and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal say that no matter how often the words are repeated, it will entail only one expiation. The same is the view of Shabi, Taus, Ata bin Abi Rabah Hasan Basri and Auzai. Ali's ruling is that if the repetition is made in one sitting, there will be only one expiation, and if in different sittings, then there will be as

many expiations as the number of the sittings in which the repetition was made. The same is the view of Qatadah and Amr bin Dinar.

(8) If *zihar* is pronounced upon two or more wives simultaneously in one and the same set of words, e.g. if addressing them the husband says: You are to me as the back of my mother, the Hanafis and the Shafeis say that separate expiations will have to be made to make each of them lawful. The same is the opinion of Umar, Ali, Urwah bin Zubair, Taus, Ata, Hasan Basri, Ibrahim Nakhai, Sufyan Thauri and Ibn Shihab Zuhri. Imam Malik and Imam Ahmad say that in this case one and the same expiation will suffice for all. Rabiah, Auzai, Ishaq bin Rihawaiyh and Abu Thaur also have expressed the same opinion.

(9) It is agreed upon by all that if a man repeats *zihar*, again after making expiation for it once, the wife will not be lawful to him unless he makes another expiation.

(10) Although it is sinful, according to the four Imams, to establish marital relations with the wife before making the expiation, and the man should ask for Allah's forgiveness for it, and should refrain from repeating such a thing, yet it will entail only one expiation. The Prophet (peace be upon him) had exhorted the people who had committed such an offense in his time to implore Allah for forgiveness and not to touch the wife unless they had made the expiation, but he did not enjoin any additional expiation besides the expiation for *zihar*. Amr bin Aas, Qabisah bin Dhuaib, Saed bin Jubair, Zuhri and Qatadah say that it will entail

two expiations and Hasan Basri and Ibrahim Nakhai have given the opinion that this will entail three expiations. Probably the Ahadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave his ruling on this matter did not reach these scholars.

(11) As to comparison of the wife to whom would be *zihar*, the jurists have expressed different views:

Amir Shabi says that her comparison to the mother only is *zihar*, and the Zahiriyyah say that her comparison only to the mother's back is *zihar*, for the injunction does not apply to anything else. No section of the Islamic jurists, however; agrees with them in this regard, for the reason given by the Quran of the wife's comparison to the mother being sinful is that it is absurd and a lie. Now, obviously comparison of the wife to the women whose sanctity is just like the mother's would be as absurd as it is in the case of the mother. Therefore, there is no reason why the commandment in that case should not be the same as in the case of the comparison to the mother.

The Hanafis say that in this command are included all those women, who are permanently prohibited to man on the basis of lineage, fosterage, or marital relationship, but the women who may only be temporarily prohibited and can become lawful at any time, are not included in this, e.g. the wife's sister, her maternal and paternal aunts, or another woman, who is not the man's wedded wife. It will be *zihar* if comparison is made with such a part of the permanently prohibited woman's body as is forbidden for men to look at. However, it will not be *zihar* if comparison

is made of the wife's hand, foot, head, hair, tooth, etc. to the back of a permanently prohibited woman, or of the wife to her head, hand, foot, etc. for it is not unlawful to look at these parts of the mother's or sister's body. Likewise, to say to the wife: Your hand is like my mother's hand, or your foot is like my mother's foot, is not *zihar*.

The Shafeis say that in this command are included only those women, who were, and are, permanently prohibited, i.e. mother, sister, daughter etc. but this does not include those women, who may have been lawful at some time, e.g. the foster-mother, foster-sister, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, or those who may become lawful at any time, e.g. the wife's sister. Apart from these temporarily prohibited women, it will be *zihar* to compare the wife to such parts of the permanently prohibited woman's body as are not normally mentioned out of reverence and respect, As for those parts which are mentioned out of reverence and respect, it will be *zihar* to make a comparison with them only in case this is done with the intention of *zihar*; for instance, if a man says to his wife: You are to me like my mother's eye, or like my mother's hand, foot or belly, or he compares the wife's belly, or breast, with the mother's belly, or breast, or says that the wife's head, back or hand is to him as his mother, it will be *zihar* if said with the intention of *zihar* and reverence if said with the intention of reverence.

The Malikis say that to compare the wife to any of the prohibited women is *zihar*, so much so that even if a man says to his wife: You are to me like the back of such and

such other woman, it would be *zihar*. Furthermore, they say that it would be *zihar* to compare any part of the mother's body, or of an eternally prohibited woman's body, to the wife, or to any part of the wife's body, without any condition that the parts thus compared be such as may look at any part of the mother's body as he looks at the wife's.

The Hanbalis include in this command all those women, who may be eternally prohibited, though they may have been lawful before, e.g. the mother-in law, or foster-mother. As for the women who may become lawful at any time later (e.g. the wife's sister), Imam Ahmad's one statement concerning them is that comparison to them is not *zihar*. Moreover, according to the Hanbalis to compare any part of the wife's body to any part of the prohibited woman's comes under *zihar*. However, the non-permanent parts like the hair, nails, teeth, etc. are excluded from this command.

(12) The jurists agree that to say to the wife: You are to me like the back of my mother, is expressly *zihar*, for the Arabs used this very formula for *zihar*, and the Quranic command was also sent down only concerning this. However, the jurists have disagreed as to which of the other words are such as clearly come under *zihar*, and which are such whose amounting or not amounting to *zihar* will be dependent upon the speaker's intention.

With the Hanafis, the express words of *zihar* are those in which a lawful woman (the wife) may have been clearly compared to an unlawful woman (i.e. any woman from

among the eternally prohibited women), or compared to such part of the body which is forbidden for a man to look at, like saying: You are to me like the belly or the thigh of my mother, or of such and such prohibited woman. Apart from these, the other words are disputed. According to Imam Abu Hanifah, if the man says: You are forbidden to me like the back of my mother, it is expressly *zihar*, but according to Imams Abu Yusuf and Muhammad it would be *zihar* if there was the intention of *zihar* and divorce if there was the intention of divorce. The view generally held by the Hanafis is that if the man says: You are as my mother, or like my mother, it is *zihar* if said with the intention of *zihar* and irrevocable divorce if said with the intention of divorce, and meaningless if there was no such intention at all. However, according to Imam Muhammad this is express *zihar*. If the man calls his wife his mother or sister or daughter, it is an absurdity upon which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had expressed great anger, but he did not regard it as *zihar*. If the man says: You are forbidden to me like my mother, it would be *zihar* if said with the intention of *zihar*, and divorce if said with the intention of divorce, and *zihar* if there was no intention at all. If he says: You are to me like my mother, or as my mother, his intention will be questioned. If he said this out of respect and reverence, it would be respect and reverence, if with the intention of divorce, it would be divorce. If there was no intention whatsoever, it would be meaningless according to Imam Abu Hanifah, but would entail the atonement of the oath, though not of *zihar*

according to Imam Abu Yusuf and would be *zihar* according to Imam Muhammad.

With the Shafeis, the express words of *zihar* are that a man should say to his wife: You are to me, or with me, or for me, like the back of my mother, or you are like the back of my mother, or your body, or your self, is to me like the body or self of my mother. Apart from these, in respect of all other words the decision will be dependent on the speaker's intention.

According to the Hanbalis, every such word by which a man may have compared his wife, or a part from among the permanent parts of her body, to a prohibited woman, or to a part from among the permanent parts of the prohibited woman's body clearly, would be regarded as express in the matter of *zihar*.

The Malikis' viewpoint is almost the same. However, in the details they have given different rulings. For instance, according to them, a man's saying to his wife: You are to me as my mother, or like my mother, is *zihar* if said with the intention of *zihar*, divorce if said with the intention of divorce, and *zihar* if there was no intention at all. According to the Hanbalis, it may be regarded only as *zihar* provided there was the intention. If a man says to his wife: You are my mother, this is *zihar* according to the Malikis, but according to the Hanbalis it would be *zihar* if said in a state of anger on account of a quarrel, and it would not be *zihar* if it was said out of love and affection, although it is wrong. If a man says: You have divorce on you: you are like my mother, according to the Hanbalis this is divorce,

not *zihar*, and if he says: You are like my mother: you have divorce on you, both *zihar* and divorce will take place. To say: you are forbidden to me as the back of my mother, is *zihar* according to both the Malikis and the Hanbalis, whether the words were said with the intention of divorce, or without any intention.

In this discussion about the words of *zihar* one should clearly understand that all the disputes of the jurists in this regard relate to the words and usage of the Arabic language. Obviously the people who speak other languages will neither pronounce *zihar* in Arabic nor will utter an exact and accurate translation of the Arabic words and sentences at the time they pronounce *zihar*. Therefore, if one has to decide whether a word or a sentence comes under the definition of *zihar*, or not, one should not examine it from the point of view of its being an exact translation of the words given by the jurists, but one should only see whether the speaker had compared his wife in the sexual context clearly to any of the women in the prohibited degrees, or whether there was the probability of other meanings also in his words. Its most conspicuous example is the Arabic sentence itself about which all the jurists and commentators agree that this very sentence was used for *zihar* in Arabic, i.e. *Anti alayya kazahri ummi* (you are to me like the back of my mother). Probably, in no other language of the world can the man pronouncing *zihar* use words that may be a literal translation of this Arabic sentence. However, he can certainly use words of his own language, which may have precisely the same meaning for

which an Arab used this sentence. The meaning of this sentence was: To have sexual intercourse with you would be like having sexual intercourse with my mother, or as some foolish person might say to his wife: If I come in to you, I would be going in to my mother.

(13) In the Quran what has been mentioned as entailing the expiation is not the mere *zihar* but one's *aud* (returning) after the *zihar*. That is, if a man only pronounces the *zihar* and does not return, he does not incur any expiation. Now, the question is, what is this *aud* (returning) that entails the expiation. In this regard, the jurists have held the following viewpoints:

The Hanafis say that *aud* is the intention to have the sexual intercourse, but it does not mean that the mere intention should entail the expiation; so much so that the man may have to make the expiation even if he does not take any practical step after the intention. But its correct meaning is that the man who wishes to remove the prohibition that he had imposed on him by pronouncing *zihar* of severing marital relations with his wife, should first make the expiation, for this prohibition cannot be removed without the expiation.

Three statements have been cited from Imam Malik in this regard, but his most well known and authentic statement, according to the Malikis, is in full agreement with the Hanafi viewpoint, as stated above. He says that what the man had made unlawful for himself by *zihar* was the sexual relation with his wife. Now, *aud* means that he should return to establish the same relation with her.

Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal's view as cited by Ibn Qadamah is almost the same as of the two Imams as noted above. He says that after the *zihar*, expiation has necessarily to be made to make the sexual intercourse lawful. The man who wants to make it lawful after having pronounced *zihar*, in fact, wants to return from the prohibition. Therefore, he has been enjoined to make the expiation before making it lawful for himself, precisely like the man who wants to make the other woman lawful for himself and has to marry her before she could be lawful for him.

Imam Shafeis viewpoint is quite different. He says that a man's keeping his wife as usual and detaining her in wedlock as before after having pronounced *zihar* is *aud*, for as soon as he pronounced *zihar* he, in fact, forbade himself to keep her as wife. Therefore, if he did not divorce her immediately on pronouncing *zihar* and kept her back for so long that he could utter the words of divorce, he committed *aud* and the expiation became incumbent upon him. This means that if after pronouncing *zihar* the man did not pronounce divorce in the next breath, expiation would become incumbent, whether afterwards he might decide not to keep the woman as wife and might have no intention of having marital relations with her. So much so that even if he divorced his wife after a few moments' thought, according to Imam Shafei, he would still have to make the expiation.

(14) The Quranic injunction is that the pronouncer of *zihar* must make the expiation before the two, the husband and the wife, touch each other. All the four Imams agree that

according to this verse not only is the sexual intercourse prohibited before the expiation but it is also prohibited that the husband touch the wife in any way. The Shafei's regard only touching with desire as prohibited. The Hanbalis regard every kind of pleasure seeking as forbidden; and the Malikis regard even casting of the look at the wife's body for the sake of pleasure as unlawful. According to them only casting of the look at the face and hands is an exception.

(15) If after *zihar*, a man divorces his wife, he cannot touch her without first making the expiation in case it is a revocable divorce. If it is an irrevocable divorce, and he remarries her, he still will have to make the expiation before he could touch her. So much so that even if he has divorced her thrice, and the woman after marrying another man becomes a widow, or is divorced, and then the pronouncer of *zihar* remarries her, she will not be lawful to him unless he first makes the expiation. For, he has forbidden her to himself by comparing her to his mother or other prohibited woman, and this prohibition cannot be removed without the expiation. All the four Imams agree about this.

(16) It is incumbent upon the woman that she should not allow the husband who has pronounced *zihar* on her to touch her until he makes the expiation. And since the marital relationship is a right of the woman of which the husband has deprived her by *zihar*, she can go to the court of law if he does not make the expiation. The court will compel the husband to make the expiation to remove the barrier he has raised between himself and her. And if he

does not comply, the court can award him lashes or imprisonment or both. This also is agreed upon by all the four schools of law. However, the difference is that in the Hanafi Fiqh this is the only way out for the woman; if the court does not help her out of the situation, she will remain suspended under *zihar* indefinitely. For, *zihar* does not dissolve the marriage contract, it only forbids the husband to have marital relations with the wife. According to the Maliki school if the husband pronounces *zihar* and keeps the wife suspended with a view to punish her, the law of *eila* will be applied against him, which means that he cannot keep her suspended for more than four months. (For the law of *eila*, see E.Ns 245 to 247 of Surah Al-Baqarah). According to the Shafeis, although in *zihar* the law of *eila* can be applied only if the husband might have pronounced *zihar* for a specific period, which does not exceed four months. Yet, since according to them the expiation becomes incumbent upon the husband from the very moment he keeps back the woman as wife, it is not possible that he may keep her suspended for along period indefinitely.

(17) The express commandment of the Quran and the sunnah is that the first expiation for *zihar* is to free a slave. If a man cannot afford this, he can expiate by fasting two months consecutively; and if he cannot do even this, then he can feed 60 poor. But if a man cannot expiate in any of the three ways, he will have to wait till he has the means to act in one or the other way, because the Shariah has not prescribed any other form of expiation. However, the

sunnah confirms that such a person should be helped out so that he can make the third kind of the expiation. The Prophet (peace be upon him) helped such people out of the public treasury, who were caught in this awkward situation by a mistake of their own, and were helpless to expiate in any of the three prescribed ways.

(18) The Quran enjoins to release a neck (*raqabah*) as expiation, which applies both to a male and a female slave, and there is no restriction of the age in it. It would be sufficient to release a suckling child who may be in the state of slavery. However, the jurists have disagreed whether both the believing and the unbelieving slaves can be released, or whether only the believing slave will have to be released. The Hanafis and the Zahiriyyah say that it is enough to release a slave, whether a believer or an unbeliever, as expiation for *zihar* for the Quran only mentions *raqabah* (the neck); it does not say that it has to be a believer. On the contrary; the Shafeis, the Malikis and the Hanbalis impose the condition that it has to be a believing slave. They have held this injunction as analogous to the other expiations in which release of *raqabah* has been made conditional upon his being a believer.

(19) If the pronouncer of *zihar* cannot afford to release a slave, the Quran enjoins him to fast for two successive months before the two can touch each other. As for the details of acting on this divine command, the viewpoints of the different juristic schools are as follows:

(a) All agree that the months imply the lunar months. If fasting is begun with the sighting of the new moon, one will

have to complete two months' un-interrupted fasting. If fasting is begun on another date in the month, according to the Hanafis and the Hanbalis, one will have to fast for 60 days consecutively; and according to the Shafeis, one will observe a total of 30 fasts in the first and the third months and observe the whole of the middle lunar month, whether it is of 29 days or 30 days.

(b) The Hanafis and the Shafeis say that fasting should be begun at a time when within the next two months there should neither fall the month of Ramadan nor the two Eid days, nor the day of sacrifice, nor the Tashriq days (10th to 13th of Dhil-Hajj) for the observance of the Ramadan fast and its abandonment on the Eid days and the day of Sacrifice and Tashriq days, in the course of the expiation fasting, would break the succession of the fasting, and the pronouncer of *zihar* would have to start fasting afresh. The Hanbalis say that observance of the Ramadan fast and its abandonment on the forbidden days do not break the succession.

(c) In the course of the two months whether one abandons a fast on account of a valid excuse, or without a valid excuse, in both cases the succession will break according to the Hanafis and the Shafeis, and one will have to start fasting afresh. The same is the opinion of Imam Muhammad Baqir, Ibrahim Nahkai, Saed bin Jubair, and Sufyan Thauri. According to Imam Malik and Imam Ahmad, fasting can be abandoned on account of illness or a journey and this does not break the succession; however, succession does break if the fast is abandoned without a valid reason.

Their reasoning is that the nature of the expiation fast is not obligatory as of the Ramadan fast: when that fast can be abandoned on account of an excuse, there is no reason why this cannot be. The same is the viewpoint of Abdullah bin Abbas, Hasan Basri, Ata bin Abi Rabah, Said bin al-Masayyab, Amr bin Dinar, Shabi, Taus, Mujahid, Ishaq bin Rahawaiyh, Abu Ubaid and Abu Thaur.

(d) If the man commits sexual intercourse with the wife under *zihar* within the two months of fasting, according to all the Imams, the succession will break, and he will have to begin fasting anew, for he has been enjoined to fast for two successive months before he could touch the wife.

(20) According to the Quran and the Sunnah, the third kind of expiation (feeding the 60 poor) can be made only by him who does not have the power to make the second expiation (fasting for two months successively). The details of acting on this command as worked out by the jurists are as follows.

(a) According to all the four Imams, being powerless to observe the fast means that one should either be powerless due to old age, or due to illness, or due to the reason that one may not be able to abstain from sexual intercourse for two successive months, and may become impatient at any time in the course of fasting. The validity of all these three excuses is confirmed by the Ahadith that have been cited in connection with the cases of Aus bin Samit Ansari and Salamah bin Sakhr Bayadi. However, about illness there is a little difference of opinion among the jurists. The Hanafis say that the excuse of illness will be valid only in case there

is no hope of recovery, or there is the fear that the disease may worsen on account of fasting. The Shafeis say that if fasting is likely to cause a severe hardship by which the man may feel the danger of its being interrupted, this excuse also can be valid. The Malikis say that if the man strongly feels that he will be able to observe the fast in the future, he may wait till then, and if he has no such feeling, he should feed the poor. The Hanbalis say that the apprehension that the disease will worsen by fasting is a sufficient excuse for not fasting.

(b) Food can be given only to those poor people whose maintenance is not the obligatory responsibility of the man concerned.

(c) The Hanafis say that food can be given to both the Muslim and the non Muslim subjects of the Islamic State, but not to the belligerent disbelievers and to those who have been given protection. The Malikis, the Shafeis and the Hanbalis say that the Muslim needy ones only can be fed.

(d) There is full agreement that feeding implies to feed two times a day to fill. However, there is a difference of opinion about the meaning of feeding. The Hanafis say that it is equally valid to feed with cooked food two times a day or to give away grain sufficient to meet the food requirements of a needy person two times a day, For the Quran has used the word *itam*, which means both to provide food and to feed. But the Malikis, the Shafeis and the Hanbalis do not regard feeding with cooked food as correct; they think it is necessary to give away grain. In case grain is given, there is

full agreement that the grain should be the staple food in the city or area, and all the poor people should be given it equally.

(e) According to the Hanafis, it is also valid if one and the same poor person is fed or given food for 60 days, though it is not correct to give him food for 60 days on one and the same day. However, the other three schools do not think it is valid to provide food to one and the same poor man; it is necessary to give food to 60 persons. It is not permissible in any of the four schools to provide food to 60 men at one time and to another 60 at another time.

(f) This is also not permissible according to any of the four schools that one may fast for 30 days and then feed 30 poor ones, for two different expiations cannot be combined. If one has to fast, he should fast for two months successively, and if one has to feed, he should feed 60 poor once.

(g) Although in connection with the expiation of feeding the Quran does not use words to the effect that this expiation should also be made before the husband and the wife can touch each other yet the context demands that this restriction will apply to this third kind of expiation as well. That is why the four Imams do not regard it as permissible that the man should go to his wife during the time the expiation of feeding is being performed. However, the difference is that according to the Hanbalis the man who commits this offense, will have to feed the poor afresh, but the Hanafis show leniency, for in respect of this third expiation there is no mention of before the two touch each other in the Quran, and this provides a basis for the

concession.

***12** So that you may believe: So that you may adopt the attitude of a true and sincere believer. Obviously, the addressees of this verse are not the pagans and polytheists, but the Muslims who had already affirmed the faith. To tell them, after reciting to them a Shariah injunction: This is being enjoined so that you may believe in Allah and His Messenger, clearly signifies that the conduct of the person who continues to follow the traditional law of paganism even after hearing the divine command would be contradictory to his profession of the faith. It is not the character of a believer that when Allah and His Messenger have prescribed a law for him in some matter of life, he should set it aside and follow some other law of the world, or go on following his own wishes and desires.

***13** Here “disbeliever” does not imply the denier of Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him), but the person who adopts the attitude and conduct of a disbeliever even after affirming faith in Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him). In other words, it means: This, in fact, is a characteristic of the disbelievers that even after hearing the command of Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him), they should go on following their own whims, and continue to practice the customs of ignorance, for a true and sincere believer would never adopt such an attitude. The same thing has been said in Surah Aal-Imran after enjoining the imperative duty of Hajj: And the one who disbelieves (i.e. does not obey this commandment), then Allah is Self-Sufficient and does not stand in need of anyone in the

worlds. (verse 97). At neither place has the word *kufr* been used in the sense that whoever continues to have marital relations with the wife after *zihar* without making the expiation, or thinks that divorce has taken place by the mere pronouncement of *zihar* on the wife, or does not go to perform Hajj, in spite of the means, should be declared an apostate and disbeliever by the religious court and regarded as excommunicated by the Muslims. But it means that in the sight of Allah such people as may reject His commandments by word or deed, or may at least bother to know as to what bounds their Lord has set for them, what He has forbidden and what He has enjoined, what He has made lawful and what unlawful, are not counted among the believers.

5. Indeed, those who oppose Allah and His Messenger^{*14} shall be abased as those before them were abased.^{*15} And We have certainly sent down clear signs. And for the disbelievers there is a disgraceful punishment.^{*16}

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
كَبِتُوا كَمَا كَبَتَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
وَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ
وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ

^{*14} Those who oppose: Those who do not recognize the bounds set by Allah and instead set some other bounds for themselves. Ibn Jarir Tabari has given this commentary of this verse: That is, the people who resist Allah with regard to the bounds and duties enjoined by Him, and set for themselves some other bounds instead of the bounds set by Him. Baidawi has given this commentary of it: That is, they

show hostility towards and dispute with Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him), or set other bounds for themselves than the bounds set by them, or adopt the bounds set by others. Alusi in his *Ruh Al-Maani* has concurred with Baidawi in this commentary and cited the statement of Shaikh-ul-Islam Sadullah Chalpi to the effect: In this verse a threat has been held out to those kings and evil rulers who have framed many such rules as are opposed to the bounds set by the Shariah, and called them law. Here, Allama Alusi has dwelt upon the constitutional status (i.e. constitutional from the Islamic viewpoint) of the man made laws as against the Shariah laws and concluded thus:

There can be no doubt in the disbelief of the person who regards this law as commendable and superior to the Shariah and says that it is wiser and better suited to the genius of the people. And when the Shariah injunction in a particular matter is pointed out to him, he is angry, as we have seen some of those who are under the curse of Allah.

***15** The word used in the original is *kubt*, which means to disgrace, to destroy, to curse, to drive off, to push out, to debase. What is meant to be said is that the communities of the former Prophets who resisted Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and rebelled against His commandments have already gone to their doom. Now those from among the Muslims who adopt the same attitude in life will also meet with the same evil end. Whenever the people made their own laws contradictory to divine law, or adopted laws made by others, they were

deprived of Allah's bounty and grace, with the result that their lives were filled with deviations, immoralities and moral and social evils, which caused them to be ultimately degraded and humiliated even in this world. If the same error now is committed by the community of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), there is no reason why it should continue to be regarded with favor by Allah and He may go on protecting it from a disgraceful destruction for ever and ever. Allah had neither any ill will against the communities of His former Messengers nor has He any special connection with the community of this Messenger (peace be upon him).

***16** A little consideration of the context shows that here two punishments of this attitude have been mentioned:
 (1) *Kubt*, i.e. debasement and humiliation of this world.
 (2) *Adhab muhin*, i.e. a disgraceful torment that they will suffer in the Hereafter.

6. On the Day when Allah will resurrect them all together, then He will inform them of what they did. Allah has kept account of it while they forgot it.^{*17}
 And Allah is witness over all things.

يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُهُم
 بِمَا عَمِلُوا أَخْصَنُ اللَّهُ وَنَسُوهُ
 وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

***17** That is, their having forgotten their own attitude and conduct does not mean that it is dead and forgotten altogether. For them the disobedience of God and resistance to His commands may be an ordinary matter

which they may forget easily once they have indulged in it and may not even regard it as anything objectionable, which they should have avoided, yet in the sight of God it is no ordinary matter at all. With Him every misdeed of theirs has been noted down, His register contains a full record of every deed done by a person, when and where it was done, what was his own reaction to it, what were its consequences and how far and in what forms did they appear and spread in the world.

7. Have you not seen^{*18} that Allah knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. There is no secret conversation of three, but He is the fourth of them, nor of five but He is the sixth of them,^{*19} nor of less than that, nor more except He is with them wherever they may be.^{*20} Then He will inform them of what they did on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed, Allah is Knower of all things.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا
يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا
هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ
سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا أَدْنَى مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا
أَكْثَرُ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيَّنَ مَا كَانُوا
ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

*18 From here to verse 10 continuously the hypocrites have been taken to task for the attitude they had adopted in the Muslim society. Although apparently they were a part of the Muslim community, secretly they were a separate

group from the believers. Whenever the Muslims saw them, they found them whispering secretly together. That is how they conspired and made all sorts of plans in order to create rifts in the ranks of the Muslims, and to cause alarm and spread mischief among them.

***19** The question may arise why have three and five been mentioned here instead of two and three? Why has two and then four been left out? The commentators have given many answers to this question but in our opinion the correct answer is that this style has been adopted for maintaining the literary beauty of the Quran. Without this the style would have suffered from blemishes. Therefore, after making mention of three and five whisperers the gap has been filled up in the following sentence by saying: whether the whisperers are fewer than three, or more than five, in any case Allah is always with them.

***20** This Allah's being associated with them is, in fact, in the sense of Allah's being All-Knowing and All-Aware, All-Hearing and All-Seeing and His being absolute in power, and not in the sense that Allah, God forbid, is a person who is secretly and invisibly present among the five persons as their sixth associate. This, in fact, is meant to make the people realize that they may be holding secret counsels in safe and hidden places and may be able to conceal their plans from the world but they cannot keep them concealed from Allah, that they may escape from every power of the world, but they cannot escape the grasp of Allah.

8. Have you not seen those who were forbidden from

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نُهُوا عَنِ

secret conversation, then they returned to that which they had been forbidden.*²¹ And they converse secretly of sin and transgression and disobedience to the Messenger. And when they come to you, they greet you with that (word) by which Allah has not greeted you,*²² and they say to themselves: “Why does Allah not punish us for what we say.”*²³ Hell is sufficient for them, they will (enter to) burn therein. An evil is that destination.

النَّجْوَى ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا نُهُوا
عَنْهُ وَيَتَنَجَّجُونَ بِالْآثِمِ
وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَةِ الرَّسُولِ
وَإِذَا جَاءُوكَ حَيَّوْكَ بِمَا لَمْ يُحَيِّكَ
بِهِ اللَّهُ وَيَقُولُونَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَوْلَا
يُعَذِّبُنَا اللَّهُ بِمَا نَقُولُ حَسْبُهُمْ
جَهَنَّمُ يَصَلُّونَهَا فَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ



*²¹ This shows that before the revelation of this verse the Prophet (peace be upon him) had forbidden the people this practice. Yet when they did not desist, Allah directly sent down this verse containing His warning and wrath for such people.

*²² This was the common practice of the Jews and the hypocrites. According to several traditions, some Jews came before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: *As-sam alaika ya abul-Qasim*. That is, they pronounced *as-sam alaika* in such a manner as to give the impression that they had said *as-salam alaika* (peace be on you), which is the Islamic way of greeting. But actually they had said *sam*, instead of *salam*, which means death. In response the

Prophet said: *wa-alaikum*. Aishah retorted: May death visit you and the curse of Allah. The Prophet warned her, saying: Aishah, Allah does not like abusive language. She submitted: Didn't you hear, O Messenger of Allah what they said. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: And didn't you hear what reply I gave? I said: And the same upon you. (Bukhari, Muslim, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim). Abdullah bin Abbas has stated that both the Jews and the hypocrites had adopted this very way of greeting. (Ibn Jarir).

*23 That is, they regarded it as a proof of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) not being a Messenger. They thought that if he had been a true Messenger, they would be punished by a torment as soon as they greeted him in that way. Since there was no torment while they were greeting him day and night like that, he was not a Messenger of Allah.

9. O you who believe, when you converse secretly, then do not converse about sin and transgression and disobedience to the Messenger, but converse of righteousness and piety. And fear Allah, Him unto whom you shall be gathered. *24

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا
تَنَجَّيْتُمْ فَلَا تَتَنَجَّجُوا بِالْإِثْمِ
وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَةِ الرَّسُولِ
وَتَنَجَّجُوا بِالْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

*24 This shows that *najwa* (talking secretly together) by itself is not forbidden, but it s being lawful or unlawful

depends upon the character of the people who hold secret consultations and upon the circumstances under which such consultations are held, and upon nature of the consultations themselves, If the people whose sincerity, righteousness and purity of character are well known, are seen talking secretly together, nobody would have any misgiving that they were planning mischief. On the contrary, the whispering and secret consultations of the people who are notorious for their evil and wicked character, produce in every mind, the suspicion that they are engaged in a new conspiracy. Likewise, if a couple of persons talk for some time together on some matter secretly, it is not objectionable, but if some people have formed themselves into a gang and constantly engaged in a whispering campaign against the Muslim community, this would indeed be a prelude to some mischief. If nothing else, it would at least stir up divisions among the Muslims. Above all, the thing that decides whether *najwa* (secret counsel) is lawful or unlawful is the nature of the things talked of it. If two men hold a secret counsel in order to bring a dispute to an end, and to restore a person's right, or to bring a dispute to an end, or to restore a person's right, or to promote a good cause, it is no evil, but rather an act of virtue, On the contrary, if the same secret counsel between two men is held with a view to creating mischief, or usurping the rights of others, or committing a sin, obviously the object itself would be evil and the secret counsel about it evil added to evil.

In this connection, the teaching given by the Prophet (peace

be upon him) of social etiquette is: When three men are sitting together, no two of them should whisper to each other, for this would cause anguish to the third. (Bukhari, Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Thirmidhi, Adu Daud). In another Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Two men should not whisper together, without the leave of the third, for this would cause him anguish. (Muslim). This objectionable sort of whispering also applies to the case when two of the three men start talking in a language which is not understood by the third, and even more objectionable would be that during their whispering they should look towards the third person or gesticulate in a manner as to suggest that he is the topic of discussion between them.

10. Secret conversation is only from Satan, that he may cause grief to those who believe, and he cannot harm them at all except by permission of Allah. And in Allah let the believers put their trust. *25

إِنَّمَا النَّجْوَى مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ
لِيَحْزُنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَيْسَ
بِضَارِهِمْ شَيْءٌ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ
وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

***25** This has been said so that if a Muslim watches some other people whispering, which causes him the doubt that it is directed against him, he should not feel so offended as to start planning a counter-attack on the basis of mere suspicion, or begin to nourish grief, or malice, or undue concern in his heart. He should understand that no one can harm him except by Allah's leave. This conviction would

inspire him with such confidence that he would feel delivered of many a useless worry and imaginary danger and leaving the wicked to themselves would remain engaged in peacefully doing his duty. The believer who has trust in Allah is neither a faint-hearted person, whose peace of mind could be ruined by every doubt and suspicions nor so shallow and mean-minded as would lose his cool when confronted by the evildoers and start behaving in an unjust manner himself.

11. O you who believe, when it is said to you, make room in the assemblies, then make room. Allah will make room for you.*²⁶ And when it is said, come up higher, then go up higher.*²⁷ Allah will exalt those who believe among you, and those who have been granted knowledge, in ranks.*²⁸ And Allah is Aware of what you do.

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ
تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ
فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَإِذَا
قِيلَ آنشُرُوا فآنشُرُوا يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

خَيْرٌ

***26** This has been explained in the introduction to this Surah. Some commentators regard this command as restricted to the assemblies of the Prophet (peace be upon him). But as pointed out by Imam Malik, the correct view is that this is a general instruction for the assemblies held by the Muslims. One of the rules of etiquette taught by

Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) to the Muslims is that when they are sitting in an assembly and some more people arrive, they should have the courtesy to accommodate the newcomers and should squeeze in together as far as possible to make room for them to sit. The new-comers should also have the courtesy not to press in forcibly and make others rise up in order to take their place. In the Hadith Abdullah bin Umar and Abu Hurairah have reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Nobody should make another person rise up so as to take his place, but you should yourself make room for others. (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim). And Abdullah bin Amr bin Aas reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: It is not lawful for a person that he should forcibly press in between two men except by their leave. (Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi).

***27** Abdur Rahman bin Zaid bin Aslam has stated that the people used to prolong their sitting in the Prophet's (peace be upon him) assemblies and tried to sit till the end. This caused him inconvenience and discomfort as well as hindrance in his daily chores. At this Allah sent down this command, teaching the people the etiquette: When you are told to rise up from the assembly, you should rise up and disperse. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir).

***28** That is, you should not think that if in the Prophet's (peace be upon him) assembly you had to sit a little farther away from him for the sake of making room for others, you would be reduced in rank or if you were asked to rise up and disperse from the assembly, you were disgraced. The

real means of exaltation of ranks is faith and knowledge, and not an opportunity to sit nearest to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his assembly and sit the longest. If a person happened to sit nearer to him, it does not mean that he became exalted in rank, for the high ranks belong only to those who have attained to the wealth of knowledge and faith. Likewise, the person who prolonged his sitting with the Prophet (peace be upon him) only to cause him inconvenience and discomfort, in fact, displayed lack of good manners. His there sitting near him for a long time will not exalt him in rank in any way. Far higher and exalted in rank in the sight of Allah is he who attained to taste faith and knowledge and imbibed the morals that should belong to a believer.

12. O you who believe, when you consult the Messenger in private, then present before your consultation some charity.*²⁹ That is better for you and purer. But if you do not find (the means for it), then indeed, Allah is All Forgiving, All Merciful.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا نَجَّيْتُمْ
الرَّسُولَ فَقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ
نَجْوَانِكُمْ صَدَقَةً ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
وَاطْهَرُ فَإِن لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ



*²⁹ According to Abdullah bin Abbas, this command was sent down because the Muslims had started requesting the Prophet (peace be upon him) for private counsel much too frequently, and this put him to great inconvenience. At last, Allah willed to relieve His Prophet (peace be upon him) of

this burden. (Ibn Jarir). Zaid bin Aslam says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would never turn down the request of anyone, who wanted to consult him in private. Whoever desired to have private counsel with him, he would oblige him. Often it so happened that the people would ask for private counsel in matters in which there was no real need. This was the time when all of Arabia was engaged in war against Al-Madinah. Sometimes, after a person had made such a request, Satan would whisper into the ears of the people the idea that he had brought to the Prophet (peace be upon him) the news of invasion by such and such tribes, and this would cause rumors to spread in Al-Madinah. On the other hand, this would give the hypocrites an opportunity to say that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a credulous person, who listened to and believed in whatever anyone told him. Because of this Allah imposed the restriction that anyone who wanted to have private counsel with the Prophet should first give away something in charity. (Ibn Arabi: Ahkam al-Quran). Qatadah says that some people talked to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in private in order to show their superiority to others.

Ali says when this was enjoined the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him, What should be the quantity of the charity, should it be one dinar. I said: This is more than the people can afford. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then asked: Should it be half a dinar. I said: This is also too much. Then he asked what it should be. I said: Gold equal to a barley grain. The Prophet (peace be upon him)

remarked: Your advice is for too little. (Ibn Jarir, Tirmidhi, Musnad, Abu Yala). In another tradition Ali says: This is a verse of the Quran which no one acted upon except me. As soon as it was enjoined, I offered the charity and consulted the Prophet about a problem. (Ibn Jarir, Hakim, Ibn al-Mundhi, Abd bin Humaid).

13. Are you afraid that you will have to present, before your consultation in private, charities. Then when you do not do (so), and Allah has forgiven you, then establish prayer and give poor due and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah is Aware of what you do.*³⁰

ءَأَشْفَقْتُمْ أَن تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ
نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقْتُمْ فَأِذْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا
وَتَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَأْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ



***30** This second command was sent down some time after the first command, and it concealed the injunction of giving something in charity. However, there is a difference of opinion as to how long the injunction remained in force. Qatadah says it remained in force for less than a day and then was abrogated. Muqatil bin Hayyan says that it remained in force for ten days; and this is the longest period of its life mentioned in any tradition.

14. Have you not seen those who have taken as friends a people with whom Allah has

﴿ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا
غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا هُمْ مِنْكُمْ

become angry.*³¹ They are
neither of you nor of
them,*³² and they swear to a
false oath and they know.*³³

وَلَا مِنْهُمْ وَتَحْلِفُونَ عَلَى الْكَذِبِ
وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

*31 The allusion is to the Jews of Al-Madinah whom the hypocrites had taken for friends.

*32 That is, they are neither sincere in their connections with the believers, nor with the Jews: their relations with both are based on selfish interests.

*33 A false oath: that they have believed in and have accepted Muhammad (peace be upon him) as their guide and leader and are faithful to Islam and the Muslims.

15. Allah has prepared for them a severe punishment. Indeed, evil is that which they are doing.

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا إِنَّهُمْ
سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

16. They have taken their oaths as a covering, and they hinder (people) from the path of Allah.*³⁴ So for them is a disgraceful punishment.

اتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَنِ
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

*34 That is, on the one hand, they swear oaths to their faith and fidelity to make the Muslims believe that they belong to them, and on the other, they sow doubts and suspicions against Islam and the followers of Islam and the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Islam in the hearts of the people, so that they should turn away from Islam in disgust taking their word to be a true inside picture of Islam, coming from the Muslims themselves.

17. Never will avail them their wealth, nor their children anything against Allah. Those are the dwellers of the Fire, They will abide therein.

لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا
أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنْ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ



18. The Day when Allah will resurrect them all together, then they shall swear to Him as they swear to you,^{*35} and they think that they have something (to stand upon). Is it not indeed they who are the liars.

يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَحْلِفُونَ
لَهُ كَمَا يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ ۖ وَتَحْسَبُونَ
أَنَّهُمْ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ ۚ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ
الْكَٰذِبُونَ



***35** That is, not being content with swearing oaths before the people in this world, they will swear false oaths also before Allah Himself in the Hereafter, for falsehood and fraud has become second nature with them, which they will not give up even after death.

19. Satan has overcome them and has caused them forget Allah's remembrance. Such are the party of Satan. Is it not indeed the party of Satan who are the losers.

أَسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ
فَأَنسَاهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ حِزْبُ
الشَّيْطَانِ ۚ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ الشَّيْطَانِ
هُمُ الْخٰسِرُونَ



20. Indeed, those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, such will be among those most humiliated.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
أُولَئِكَ فِي الْأَذَلِّينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

21. Allah has decreed: “I and My Messengers shall most certainly prevail.”*³⁶ Indeed, Allah is All Powerful, All Mighty.

كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَأَغْلِبَنَّ أَنَا وَرُسُلِي
إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٢١﴾

***36** For explanation, see E.N. 93 of Surah As-Saaffat.

22. You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day loving those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred.*³⁷ Those, He has decreed in their hearts faith, and has supported them with a spirit from Himself. And He will admit them to the Gardens underneath which rivers flow, to abide therein. Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. Those are the party of Allah. Is it not indeed the party of Allah who are the

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ
حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا
ءَابَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ
أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي
قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ
مِّنْهُ وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ
أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ

successful.

اللَّهُ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

***37** Two things have been stated in this verse: first, a matter of principle, and the second, a statement of fact. The matter of principle is that faith in the true religion and love of the opponents of the religion are contradictory things, which cannot conceivably co-exist in one and the same place. It is absolutely impossible that love of the faith and love of the enemies of Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) should co-exist in one and the same heart, just as a person's love for himself and his love for his enemy cannot co-exist in his heart simultaneously. This is as if to say: If you see a person who professes the faith as well as keeps relations of love with the opponents of Islam, you should never be involved in the misunderstanding that he might perhaps be true in his profession in spite of his this attitude and conduct. Likewise, the people who have established relations with Islam and the opponents of Islam simultaneously, should themselves also consider their position well and see what they actually are. Are they believers or hypocrites? And what actually they want to be. Do they want to live as believers or as hypocrites? If they have any righteousness left in them and any feeling that from a moral viewpoint hypocrisy is the meanest and most abject attitude for man, they should give up their attempt to ride in two boats simultaneously. Faith wants them to be decisive. If they want to remain believers, they should sever and sacrifice all those connections that clash with their relationship with Islam. If they hold another relation

dearer to themselves than the relationship with Islam, then they should better give up their false profession of Islam. Here, Allah has not just stated the principle but has also presented the fact as a model before those who professed the faith. The true believers had in fact severed all connections that clashed with their relationship with Allah's religion. This had been witnessed by entire Arabia in the battles of Badr and Uhud. The emigrants from Makkah had fought against their own tribe and closest kinsmen only for the sake of Allah and His religion. Abu Ubaidah killed his father, Abdullah bin al-jarrah. Musab bin Umair killed his brother, Ubaid bin Umair. Umar killed his maternal uncle, Aas bin Hisham bin Mughirah. Abu Bakr became ready to fight his son, Abdur Rahman. Ali, Hamzah and Ubaidah bin al-Harith killed Utbah, Shaibah and Walid bin Utbah, who were their close kinsmen. About the prisoners of war captured at Badr, Umar gave the opinion that they should all be put to the sword, and proposed that a relative should kill a relative. In the same battle of Badr when Musab bin Umair saw that an Ansari Muslim had captured his real brother, Abu Aziz bin Umair, and was tying him, he shouted out to him, saying: Tie him tight: his mother is a rich woman. She will pay you a large ransom. Abu Aziz said: You are a brother and say this. Musab replied: Not you, but this Ansari Muslim is my brother now who has captured you. In the same battle of Badr, Abul Aas the son-in-law of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was taken as a prisoner and was shown no special favor any different from the other

prisoners on account of his relationship with the Prophet (peace be upon him). Thus, the world was made a witness to the fact and shown the character of the sincere Muslims and their profound relationship with Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him).

Dailami has related this invocation of the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the authority of Muadh: *Alla-humma la taj al li-fajir-in* (and according to another tradition, *il-fasiq-in*) *alayya yadan wa la ni mata fa yuwadda-hu qalbi fa-inni wajad-tu fima uhitu ilayya la tajidu qaum-an yu minuna billahi wal-yaum il-akhir-i yuwaaddiuaa man haadd-Allahs wa Rasulahu*: O God, let not the wicked (and according to another tradition, the sinful) do me a favor because of which I may have love for him in my heart, for in the revelation sent down by You, I have also found this: You will never find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day loving those who oppose Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him).



Al-Hashr

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah derives its name from the mention of the word *al-hashr* in verse thereby implying that it is the Surah in which the word *al-hashr* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Bukhari and Muslim contain a tradition from Saeed bin Jubair to the effect: When I asked Abdullah bin Abbas about Surah Al-Hashr, he replied that it was revealed regarding the battle against the Bani an-Nadir just as Surah Al-Anfal revealed regarding the Battle of Badr. In another tradition from Saeed bin Jubair, the words cited from Ibn Abbas are: *Qul, Surah an-Nadir*. Say, it is Surah an-Nadir. The same thing has also been related from Mujahid, Qatadah, Zuhri, Ibn Zaid, Yazid bin Ruman, Muhammad bin Ishaq and others. They are unanimous that the followers of the Book whose banishment has been mentioned in it, imply the Bani an-Nadir. Yazid bin Ruman, Mujahid and Muhammad bin Ishaq have stated that this whole Surah, from beginning to end was revealed regarding this very battle.

As for the question as to when this battle took place, Imam

Zuhri has stated on the authority of Urwah bin Zubair that it took place six months after the Battle of Badr. However, Ibn Saad, Ibn Hisham and Baladhuri regard it as an event of Rabi al-Awwal, A.H.4, and the same is correct. For all traditions agree that this battle took place after the incident of Bir Maunah, and historically also it is well known that the incident of Bir Maunah occurred after the Battle of Uhud and not before it.

Historical Background

In order to understand the subject matter of this Surah well, it is necessary to have a look at the history of the Al-Madinah and Hejaz Jews, for without it one cannot know precisely the real causes of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) dealing with their different tribes the way he did.

No authentic history of the Arabian Jews exists in the world. They have not left any writing of their own in the form of a book or a tablet which might throw light on their past, nor have the Jewish historians and writers of the non-Arab world made any mention of them, the reason being that after their settlement in the Arabian peninsula they had detached themselves from the main body of the nation, and the Jews of the world did not count them as among themselves. For they had given up Hebrew culture and language, even the names, and adopted Arabism instead. In the tablets that have been unearthed in the archaeological research in the Hejaz, no trace of the Jews is found before the first century of the Christian era, except for a few Jewish names. Therefore, the history of the Arabian Jews is based mostly on the verbal traditions prevalent among the

Arabs most of which had been spread by the Jews themselves.

The Jews of the Hejaz claimed that they had come to settle in Arabia during the last stage of the life of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). They said that the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had dispatched an army to expel the Amalekites from the land of Yathrib and had commanded it not to spare even a single soul of that tribe. The Israelite army carried out the Prophet's command, but spared the life of a handsome prince of the Amalekite king and returned with him to Palestine. By that time the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had passed away. His successors took great exception to what the army had done, for by sparing the life of an Amalekite it had clearly disobeyed the Prophet and violated the Mosaic law. Consequently, they excluded the army from their community, and it had to return to Yathrib and settle there for ever. (Kitab al-Aghani, vol. xix, p. 94). Thus the Jews claimed that they had been living in Yathrib since about 1200 B.C. But, this had in fact no historical basis and probably the Jews had invented this story in order to overawe the Arabs into believing that they were of noble lineage and the original inhabitants of the land.

The second Jewish immigration, according to the Jews, took place in 587 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, destroyed Jerusalem and dispersed the Jews throughout the world. The Arab Jews said that several of their tribes at that time had come to settle in Wadi al-Qura, Taima, and Yathrib. (Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan). But

this too has no historical basis. By this also they might have wanted to prove that they were the original settlers of the area.

As a matter of fact, what is established is that when in A. D. 70 the Romans massacred the Jews in Palestine, and then in A. D. 132 expelled them from that land, many of the Jewish tribes fled to find an asylum in the Hejaz, a territory that was contiguous to Palestine in the south. There, they settled wherever they found water springs and greenery, and then by intrigue and through money lending business gradually occupied the fertile lands. Ailah, Maqna, Tabuk, Taima, Wadi al Qura, Fadak and Khaiber came under their control in that very period, and Bani Quraizah, Bani al-Nadir, Bani Bahdal, and Bani Qainuqa also came in the same period and occupied Yathrib.

Among the tribes that settled in Yathrib the Bani al Nadir and the Bani Quraizah were more prominent for they belonged to the cohen or priest class. They were looked upon as of noble descent and enjoyed religious leadership among their co-religionists. When they came to settle in Al-Madinah there were some other tribes living there before, whom they subdued and became practically the owners of this green and fertile land. About three centuries later, in A. D. 450 or 451, the great flood of Yemen occurred which has been mentioned in verses 16-17 of Surah Saba. As a result of this different tribes of the people of Saba were compelled to leave Yemen and disperse in different parts of Arabia. Thus, the Bani Ghassan went to settle in Syria, Bani Lakhm in Hirah (Iraq), Bani Khuzaah between

Jeddah and Makkah and the Aus and the Khazraj went to settle in Yathrib. As Yathrib was under Jewish domination, they at first did not allow the Aus and the Khazraj to gain a footing and the two Arab tribes had to settle on lands that had not yet been brought under cultivation, where they could hardly produce just enough to enable them to survive. At last, one of their chiefs went to Syria to ask for the assistance of their Ghassanide brothers; he brought an army from there and broke the power of the Jews. Thus, the Aus and the Khazraj were able to gain complete dominance over Yathrib, with the result that two of the major Jewish tribes, Bani an-Nadir and Bani Quraizaha were forced to take quarters outside the city. Since the third tribe, Bani Qainuqa, was not on friendly terms with the other two tribes, it stayed inside the city as usual, but had to seek protection of the Khazraj tribe. As a counter measure to this, Bani al Nadir and Bani Quraizah took protection of the Aus tribe so that they could live in peace in the suburbs of Yathrib.

Before the Prophet's (peace be upon him) arrival at Al-Madinah until his emigration the following were the main features of the Jews position in Hejaz in general and in Yathrib in particular.

1. In the matter of language, dress, civilization and way of life they had completely adopted Arabism, even their names had become Arabian. Of the 12 Jewish tribes that had settled in Hejaz, none except the Bani Zaura retained its Hebrew name. Except for a few scattered scholars none knew Hebrew. In fact, there is nothing in the poetry of the

Jewish poets of the pre-Islamic days to distinguish it from the poetry of the Arab poets in language, ideas and themes. They even inter-married with the Arabs. In fact, nothing distinguished them from the common Arabs except religion. Notwithstanding this, they had not lost their identity among the Arabs and had kept their Jewish prejudice alive most ardently and jealously. They had adopted superficial Arabism because they could not survive in Arabia without it.

2. Because of this Arabism the western orientalists have been misled into thinking that perhaps they were not really Israelites but Arabs who had embraced Judaism, or that at least majority of them consisted of the Arab Jews. But there is no historical proof to show that the Jews ever engaged in any proselytizing activities in Hejaz, or their rabbis invited the Arabs to embrace Judaism like the Christian priests and missionaries. On the contrary, we see that they prided themselves upon their Israelite descent and racial prejudices. They called the Arabs the Gentiles, which did not mean illiterate or uneducated but savage and uncivilized people. They believed that the Gentiles did not possess any human rights; these were only reserved for the Israelites, and therefore, it was lawful and right for the Israelites to defraud them of their properties by every fair and foul means. Apart from the Arab chiefs, they did not consider the common Arabs fit enough to have equal status with them even if they entered Judaism. No historical proof is available, nor is there any evidence in the Arabian traditions, that some Arab tribe or prominent clan might

have accepted Judaism. However, mention has been made of some individuals, who had become Jews. The Jews, however, were more interested in their trade and business than in the preaching of their religion. That is why Judaism did not spread as a religion and creed in Hejaz but remained only as a mark of pride and distinction of a few Israelite tribes. The Jewish rabbis, however, had a flourishing business in granting amulets and charms, fortune telling and sorcery, because of which they were held in great awe by the Arabs for their knowledge and practical wisdom.

3. Economically they were much stronger than the Arabs. Since they had emigrated from more civilized and culturally advanced countries of Palestine and Syria, they knew many such arts as were unknown to the Arabs; they also enjoyed trade relations with the outside world. Hence, they had captured the business of importing grain in Yathrib and the upper Hejaz and exporting dried dates to other countries. Poultry farming and fishing were also mostly under their controls. They were good at cloth weaving too. They had also set up wine shops here and there, where they sold wine which they imported from Syria. The Bani Qainuqa generally practiced crafts such as that of the goldsmith, blacksmith and vessel maker. In all these occupations, trade and business these Jews earned exorbitant profits, but their main occupation was trading in money lending in which they had ensnared the Arabs of the surrounding areas. More particularly the chiefs and elders of the Arab tribes who were given to a life of pomp,

bragging and boasting on the strength of borrowed money were deeply indebted to them. They lent money on high rates of interest and then would charge compound interest, which one could hardly clear off once he was involved in it. Thus, they had rendered the Arabs economically hollow, but it had naturally induced a deep rooted hatred among the common Arabs against the Jews.

4. The demand of their trade and economic interests was that they should neither estrange one Arab tribe by befriending another, nor take part in their mutual wars. But, on the other hand, it was also in their interests, that they should not allow the Arabs to be united and should keep them fighting and entrenched against each other, for they knew that whenever the Arab tribes united, they would not allow them to remain in possession of their large properties, gardens and fertile lands, which they had come to own through their profiteering and money lending business. Furthermore, each of their tribes also had to enter into alliance with one or another powerful Arab tribe for the sake of its own protection so that no other powerful tribe should overawe it by its might. Because of this they had not only to take part in the mutual wars of the Arabs but they often had to go to war in support of the Arab tribe to which their tribe was tied in alliance against another Jewish tribe which was allied to the enemy tribe. In Yathrib the Bani Quraizah and the Bani an-Nadir were the allies of the Aus while the Bani Qainuqa of the Khazraj. A little before the Prophet's (peace be upon him) emigration, these Jewish tribes had confronted each other in support of

their respective allies in the bloody war that took place between the Aus and the Khazraj at Buath.

Such were the conditions when Islam came to Al-Madinah, and ultimately an Islamic State came into existence after the Prophet's (peace be upon him) arrival there. One of the first things that he accomplished soon after establishing this state was unification of the Aus and the Khazraj and the Emigrants into a brotherhood, and the second was that he concluded a treaty between the Muslims and the Jews on definite conditions, in which it was pledged that neither party would encroach on the rights of the other, and both would unite in a joint defense against the external enemies. Some important clauses of this treaty are as follows, which clearly show what the Jews and the Muslims had pledged to adhere to in their mutual relationship.

The Jews must bear their expenses and the Muslims their expenses. Each must help the other against anyone who attacks the people of this document. They must seek mutual advice and consultation, and loyalty is a protection against treachery. They shall sincerely wish one another well. Their relations will be governed by piety and recognition of the rights of others, and not by sin and wrongdoing. The wronged must be helped. The Jews must pay with the believers so long as the war lasts. Yathrib shall be a sanctuary for the people of this document. If any dispute or controversy likely to cause trouble should arise, it must be referred to God and to Muhammad (peace be upon him) the Apostle of God. Quraish and their helpers shall not be given protection. The contracting parties are bound to help

one another against any attack on Yathrib, Every one shall be responsible for the defense of the portion to which he belongs (*lbn Hisham*, vol. ii, pp. 147 to 150).

This was on absolute and definitive covenant to the conditions of which the Jews themselves had agreed. But not very long after this they began to show hostility towards the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah and Islam and the Muslims, and their hostility and perverseness went on increasing day by day. Its main causes were three.

First, they envisaged the Prophet (peace be upon him) merely as a chief of his people, who should be content to have concluded a political agreement with them and should only concern himself with the worldly interests of his group. But they found that he was extending an invitation to belief in Allah and the Prophethood and the Book (which also included belief in their own Prophets and scriptures), and was urging the people to give up disobedience of Allah and adopt obedience to the divine commands and abide by the moral laws of their own prophets. This they could not put up with. They feared that if this universal ideological movement gained momentum, it would destroy their rigid religiosity and wipe out their racial nationhood.

Second, when they saw that the Aus and the Khazraj and the Emigrants were uniting into a brotherhood and the people from the Arab tribes of the surrounding areas, who entered Islam, were also joining this Islamic Brotherhood of Madinah and forming a religious community, they feared that the selfish policy that they had been following of sowing discord between the Arab tribes for the promotion

of their own well being and interests for centuries, would not work in the new system, but they would face a united front of the Arabs against which their intrigues and machinations would not succeed.

Third, the work that the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah was carrying out of reforming the society and civilization included putting an end to all unlawful methods in business and mutual dealings. More than that, he had also declared taking and giving of interest as impure and unlawful earning. This caused them the fear that if his rule became established in Arabia, he would declare interest legally forbidden, and in this they saw their own economic disaster and death.

For these reasons they made resistance and opposition to the Prophet (peace be upon him) their national ideal. They would never hesitate to employ any trick and machination, any device and cunning, to harm him. They spread every kind of falsehood so as to cause distrust against him in the people's minds. They created every kind of doubt, suspicion and misgiving in the hearts of the new converts so as to turn them back from Islam. They would make false profession of Islam and then would turn apostate so that it may engender more and more misunderstandings among the people against Islam and the Prophet (peace be upon him). They would conspire with the hypocrites to create mischief and would cooperate with every group and tribe hostile to Islam. They would create rifts between the Muslims and would do whatever they could to stir them up to mutual feuds and fighting. The people of the Aus and the

Khazraj tribes were their special target, with whom they had been allied for centuries. Making mention of the war of Buath before them they would remind them of their previous enmities so that they might again resort to the sword against each other and shatter their bond of fraternity into which Islam had bound them. They would resort to every kind of deceit and fraud in order to harm the Muslims economically. Whenever one of those with whom that had business dealings, would accept Islam, they would do whatever they could to cause him financial loss. If he owed them something they would worry and harass him by making repeated demands, and if they owed him something, they would withhold the payment and would publicly say that at the time the bargain was made he professed a different religion, and since he had changed his religion, they were no longer under any obligation towards him. Several instances of this nature have been cited in the explanation of verse 75 of Surah Aal-Imran given in the commentaries by Tabari, Nisaburi, Tabrisi and in Ruh al Maani.

They had adopted this hostile attitude against the covenant even before the Battle of Badr. But when the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Muslims won a decisive victory over the Quraish at Badr, they were filled with grief and anguish, malice and anger. They were in fact anticipating that in that war the powerful Quraish would deal a death blow to the Muslims. That is why even before the news of the Islamic victory reached Al-Madinah, they had begun to spread the rumor that the Prophet (peace be

upon him) had fallen a martyr and the Muslims had been routed, and the Quraish army under Abu Jahl was advancing on Al-Madinah. But when the battle was decided against their hopes and wishes, they burst with anger and grief. Kaab bin Ashraf, the chief of the Bani an-Nadir, cried out: By God, if Muhammad has actually killed these nobles of Arabia, the earth's belly would be better for us than its back. Then he went to Makkah and incited the people to vengeance by writing and reciting provocative elegies for the Quraish chiefs killed at Badr. Then he returned to Al-Madinah and composed lyrical verses of an insulting nature about the Muslim women. At last, enraged with his mischief, the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent Muhammad bin Maslamah Ansari in Rabi al-Awwal, A. H. 3, and had him slain. (Ibn Sad, Ibn Hisham, Tabari).

The first Jewish tribe which, after the Battle of Badr, openly and collectively broke their covenant were the Bani Qainuqa. They lived in a locality inside the city of Al-Madinah. As they practiced the crafts of the goldsmith, blacksmith and vessel maker, the people of Al-Madinah had to visit their shops fairly frequently. They were proud of their bravery and valor. Being blacksmiths by profession even their children were well armed, and they could instantly muster 700 fighting men from among themselves. They were also arrogantly aware that they enjoyed relations of confederacy with the Khazraj and Abdullah bin Ubbay, the chief of the, Khazraj, was their chief supporter. At the victory of Badr, they became so provoked that they began to trouble and harass the Muslims and their women

in particular, who visited their shops. By and by things came to such a pass that one day a Muslim woman was stripped naked publicly in their bazaar. This led to a brawl in which a Muslim and a Jew were killed. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself visited their locality, got them together and counseled them on decent conduct. But the reply that they gave was: O Muhammad, you perhaps think we are like the Quraish. They did not know fighting; therefore, you overpowered them. But when you come in contact with us, you will see how men fight. This was in clear words a declaration of war. Consequently, the Prophet (peace be upon him) laid siege to their quarters towards the end of Shawwal (and according to some others, of Dhi Qadah) A. H. 2. The siege had hardly lasted for a fortnight when they surrendered and all their fighting men were tied and taken prisoners. Now Abdullah bin Ubayy came up in support of them and insisted that they should be pardoned. The Prophet conceded his request and decided that the Bani Qainuqa would be exiled from Al-Madinah leaving their properties, armor and tools of trade behind. (Ibn Saad, Ibn Hisham, Tarikh Tabari).

For some time after these punitive measures (i.e. the banishment of the Qainuqa and killing of Kaab bin Ashraf, the Jews remained so terror stricken that they did not dare commit any further mischief. But later when in Shawwal, A. H. 3, the Quraish in order to avenge themselves for the defeat at Badr, marched against Al-Madinah with great preparations, and the Jews saw that only a thousand men had marched out with the Prophet (peace be upon him) as

against three thousand men of the Quraish, and even they were deserted by 300 hypocrites who returned to Al-Madinah, they committed the first and open breach of the treaty by refusing to join the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the defense of the city although they were bound to it. Then, when in the Battle of Uhud the Muslims suffered reverses, they were further emboldened. So much so that the Bani an-Nadir made a secret plan to kill the Prophet (peace be upon him), though the plan failed before it could be executed. According to the details, after the incident of Bir Maunah (Safar, A. H. 4) Amr bin Umayyah Damri slew by mistake two men of the Bani Amir in retaliation, who actually belonged to a tribe which was allied to the Muslims, but Amr had mistaken them for the men of the enemy. Because of this mistake their blood money became obligatory on the Muslims. Since the Bani an-Nadir were also a party in the alliance with the Bani Amir, the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to their clan along with some of his companions to ask for their help in paying the blood money. Outwardly they agreed to contribute, as he wished, but secretly they plotted that a person should go up to the top of the house by whose wall the Prophet (peace be upon him) was sitting and drop a rock on him to kill him. But before they could execute their plan, he was informed in time and he immediately got up and returned to Al-Madinah.

Now there was no question of showing them any further concession. The Prophet (peace be upon him) at once sent to them the ultimatum that the treachery they had

meditated against him had come to his knowledge; therefore, they were to leave Al-Madinah within ten days. If anyone of them was found staying behind in their quarters, he would be put to the sword. Meanwhile Abdullah bin Ubayy sent them the message that he would help them with two thousand men and that the Bani Quraizah and Bani Ghatafan also would come to their aid; therefore, they should stand firm and should not go. On this false assurance they responded to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) ultimatum saying that they would not leave Al-Madinah and he could do whatever was in his power. Consequently, in Rabi al-Awwal, A. H. 4, the Prophet (peace be upon him) laid siege to them, and after a few days of the siege (which according to some traditions were 6 and according to others 15 days) they agreed to leave Al-Madinah on the condition that they could retain all their property which they could carry on the camels, except the armor. Thus, Al-Madinah was rid of this second mischievous tribe of Jews. Only two of the Bani an-Nadir became Muslims and stayed behind. Others went to Syria and Khaiber.

This is the event that has been discussed in this Surah.

Theme and Subject Matter

The theme of the Surah as stated above, is an appraisal of the battle against the Bani an-Nadir. In this, on the whole, four things have been discussed.

1. In the first four verses the world has been admonished to take heed of the fate that had just befallen the Bani an-Nadir. A major tribe which was as strong in numbers as the

Muslims, whose people boasted of far more wealth and possession, who were by no means ill equipped militarily and whose forts were well fortified, could not stand siege even for a few days, and expressed their readiness to accept banishment from their centuries old, well established settlement even though not a single man from among them was slain. Allah says that this happened not because of any power possessed by the Muslims but because the Jews had tried to resist and fight Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him), and those who dare to resist the power of Allah, always meet with the same fate.

2. In verse 5, the rule of the law of war that has been enunciated is: The destruction caused in the enemy territory for military purposes does not come under spreading mischief in the earth.

3. In verses 6-10 it has been stated how the lands and properties, which come under the control of the Islamic State as a result of war or peace terms, are to be managed. As it was the first ever occasion that the Muslims took control of a conquered territory, the law concerning it was laid down for their guidance.

4. In verses 11-17 the attitude that the hypocrites had adopted on the occasion of the battle against the Bani an-Nadir has been reviewed and the causes underlying it have been pointed out.

5. The entire last section (verses 18-24) is an admonition for all those people who had professed to have affirmed the faith and joined the Muslim community, but were devoid of the true spirit of the faith. In it they have been told what is

the real demand of the faith, what is the real difference between piety and wickedness, what is the place and importance of the Quran which they professed to believe in, and what are the attributes of God in Whom they claimed to have believed.

1. Glorifies Allah whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And He is the All Mighty, the All Wise.*1

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

*1 For explanation, see E.Ns 1, 2 of Surah Al-Hadid. The object of this introductory sentence before making an appraisal of the banishment of the Bani an-Nadir is to prepare the mind to understand the truth that the fate this powerful tribe met was not the result of the power of the Muslims but a manifestation of the power of Allah.

2. He it is who expelled those who disbelieved among the people of the Scripture from their homes*2 at the very first assault.*3 You did not think that they would leave, and they thought that their fortresses would protect them from Allah,*4 but Allah came upon them from where they had not expected.*5 And He cast terror into their hearts (so) they destroyed

هُوَ الَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ
لِأَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ مَا ظَنَّتُمْ أَنْ
يُخْرِجُوا وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهم مَانِعَتُهُمْ
حُصُونُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَأَتَهُمُ اللَّهُ
مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوا وَقَذَفَ
فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ يُخْرِبُونَ

their houses by their (own) hands, and the hands of the believers.*⁶ So take admonition, O you who have eyes.*⁷

بُيُوتِهِمْ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَيْدِي
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِي
الْأَبْصَارِ



*2 Here, the reader should understand one thing at the outset so as to avoid any confusion about the banishment of the Bani an-Nadir. The Prophet (peace be upon him) had concluded a formal written treaty with the Bani an-Nadir. They had not broken this agreement as such that it should have become void. But the reason why they were attacked was that after making different kinds of minor violations of it, they at last committed such an offense which amounted to the breach of trust. That is, they plotted to kill the leader of the other party to the treaty, i.e. the Islamic State of Al-Madinah. The plot became exposed, and when they were accused of breaking the agreement they could not deny it. Thereupon, the Prophet (peace be upon him) told them either to leave Al-Madinah or to be ready for a war. This notice was in accordance with this injunction of the Quran: If you ever fear treachery from any people, throw their treaty openly before them. (Surah Al-Anfal, Ayat 58). That is why Allah is describing their exile as His own action, for it was precisely in accordance with divine law. In other words, they were not expelled by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Muslims but by Allah Himself. The other reason why Allah has described their exile as His own action has been stated in the following verses.

*3 The word *hashr* in the text means to gather the scattered individuals together or to take out scattered individuals after mustering them together. Thus, the words *li-awwal-il-hashr* mean: with the first *hashr* or on the occasion of the first *hashr*. As for the question, what is implied by the first *hashr* here, the commentators have disagreed on it. According to one group it implies the banishment of the Bani an-Nadir from Al-Madinah, and this has been described as their first *hashr* in the sense that their second *hashr* took place in the time of Umar, when the Jews and the Christians were expelled from the Arabian peninsula, and the final *hashr* will take place on the Day of Resurrection. According to the second group it implies the gathering of the Muslim army together to fight the Bani an-Nadir; and *li-awwal-il-hashr* means that as soon as the Muslims had gathered together to fight them, and no blood yet had been shed, they, by the manifestation of Allah's power, offered to be banished from Al-Madinah of their own accord. In other words, these words have been used here in the meaning of at the very first assault. Shah Waliullah has translated it at the first gathering of the army. Shah Abdul Qadir has translated it at the first mustering. In our opinion this translation very nearly gives the meaning of these words.

*4 To understand this one should keep in mind the fact that the Bani an-Nadir had been well established here for centuries. They lived in compact populations outside Al-Madinah without any lien element. Their settlement was well fortified, which had fortified houses as are generally

built in feud-ridden tribal areas. Then their numerical strength also equaled that of the Muslims, and inside Al-Madinah itself many of the hypocrites were their supporters. Therefore, the Muslims could never expect that they would, even without fighting, be so unnerved by the siege as to leave their homes willingly. Likewise, the Bani an-Nadir also could not have imagined that some power would compel them to leave their homes within six days. Although the Bani Qainuqa had been expelled before them, and their false pride of valor had proved to be of no avail, they lived in a locality inside Al-Madinah and did not have any separate fortified settlement; therefore, the Bani an-Nadir thought that their inability to withstand the Muslims was not exceptionable, Contrary to this, in view of their own fortified settlement and strongholds, they could not imagine that some power could turn them out so easily. That is why when the Prophet (peace be upon him) served a notice on them to leave Al-Madinah within ten days, they boldly retorted, saying: We are not going to quit, you may do whatever you please.

Here, the question arises, on what basis has Allah said: They were thinking that their fortresses would save them from Allah. Did the Bani an-Nadir really know that they were not facing Muhammad bin Abdullah (peace be upon him) but Allah? And did they, in spite of knowing this, think that their fortresses would save them from Allah? This is a question which would confound every such person who does not know the psychology of the Jewish people and their centuries-old traditions. As regards the common men,

no one can imagine that despite their knowing consciously that they were facing Allah, they would entertain the false hope that their forts and weapons would save them from Allah. Therefore, an ignorant person would interpret the divine word, saying that the Bani an-Nadir in view of the strength of their forts were apparently involved in the misunderstanding that they would remain safe from the Prophet's (peace be upon him) attack, but in reality they were fighting Allah and from Him their forts could not save them. But the fact is that the Jews in this world are a strange people, who have been knowingly fighting Allah: they killed the Prophets of Allah knowing them to be His Prophets, and they declared boastfully and arrogantly that they had killed the Prophets of Allah. Their traditions say that their great Patriarch, the prophet Jacob (peace be upon him), wrestled with Allah throughout the night and Allah could not throw him even till daybreak. Then, when at daybreak Allah asked Jacob to let Him go, Jacob replied that he would not let Him go until He blessed him. Allah asked him his name, and he answer Jacob. Allah said that his name would no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you strove with God and with men, and prevailed. (See Gen. 32: 25-29 in the latest Jewish translation; The Scriptures, published by the Jewish Publication Society of America 1954). In the Christian translation of the Bible too this subject has been rendered likewise. In the footnote of the Jewish translation, Israel has been explained as: He who striveth with God. In the Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature the meaning given of Israel by the Christian scholars is:

Wrestler with God. Then in Hosea (O.T.) the Prophet Jacob (peace be upon him) has been praised thus: By his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed. (Ch. 12: 3-4). Now, obviously, the people of Israel are the children of the same Prophet Israel who, according to their faith, had striven with God and wrestled with Him. For them it is not at all difficult that they should stand firm and fight even God. On this very basis, they, even according to their own profession, killed the Prophets of God, and under the same false pride they put the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) on the cross and bragged: We have killed Jesus Christ, son of Mary, Messenger of Allah. Therefore, it was not against their traditions that they fought Muhammad (peace be upon him) despite their knowledge that he was Allah's Messenger. If not their common people, their rabbis and learned men knew well that he was the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah. The Quran itself contains several evidences to this effect. (For instance, see E.Ns 79, 95 of Surah Al-Baqarah; E.Ns 190, 191 of Surah An-Nisa; E.Ns 70, 73 of Surah As-Saaffat).

*5 Allah's coming down upon them does not mean that Allah was staying in another place whence He attacked them. But this is a metaphoric expression. The object is to give the idea that while facing Allah they were thinking that Allah could chastise them only by bringing an army against them from the front and they were confident that they would resist that force by their fortifications. But Allah attacked them from whence they had not thought it

possible; and this was that He made them weak and broke their power of resistance from within after which neither their weapons nor their strongholds could help them.

***6** That is, the destruction occurred in two ways: from outside the Muslims besieged them and started demolishing their fortifications, and from within, first they raised obstacles of stone and wood to stop the Muslims from advancing, and for this purpose broke their own houses for the material; then, when they became certain that they would have to vacate the place, they started pulling down their houses, which they had so fondly built and decorated, with their own hands, so as to render them useless for the Muslims later. When they settled peace with the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the condition that they would be spared their lives but would have the permission to carry away whatever they could, except the weapons and armor, they started removing the frames of the doors and windows, even pegs, so much so that some people removed the beams and wooden ceilings, which they put upon the back of their camels and left.

***7** There are many lessons which one can learn from this event, which have been alluded to in this brief but eloquent sentence. These Jews were none other but the followers of the former Prophets: they believed in God, in the Book, in the former Prophets and the Hereafter. Accordingly, they were the former Muslims. But when they turned their back on religion and morality and adopted open hostility to the truth only for the sake of their selfish desires and worldly motives and interests, and showed scant regard for their

treaties and agreements, Allah's grace was turned away from them, otherwise Allah had no personal enmity with than. Therefore, first of all, the Muslims themselves have been admonished to heed their fate and learn a lesson from it, lest they too should start behaving as if they were the beloved children of God, as the Jews did, and should be involved in the misunderstanding that their being included among the followers of the last Prophet of God would by itself guarantee for them Allah's bounty and His support, apart from which they were not bound to adhere to any demand of religion and morality. Besides, those people of the world also have been asked to learn a lesson from this event, those who oppose the truth consciously, and then place reliance upon their wealth and power, their means and resources, thinking that these would save them from the divine punishment. The Jews of Al-Madinah were not unaware that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had not risen for the supremacy of a people or tribe, but he was presenting an ideological invitation the addressees of which were all men, and every man, no matter what race or country he belonged to, could join his ummah by accepting the invitation, without discrimination or distinction. They were themselves witnessing that Bilal of Habash, Suhaib of Rome, and Salman of Persia enjoyed the same position and status in the Muslim community as was enjoyed by the people of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) own house. Therefore, they were not feeling any danger that the Quraish and the Aus and the Khazrij would gain an upper hand over them. Nor were they unaware that the

ideological invitation that he was presenting was precisely the same as their own Prophets had been presenting. The Prophet (peace be upon him) never put forward any claim that he had come with a new religion, unknown to the people, and that the people should give up their former religion and accept his religion instead. But what he claimed was that the religion being presented by him was the same that the Prophets of God had been preaching and presenting since the beginning of creation. And from their Torah they could themselves confirm that it was actually the same religion, the principles of which were not any different from the principles of the religion of the Prophets. On the same basis they were told in the Quran: Affirm faith in the teaching sent down by Me, which confirms the teaching that you already possess, and you should not be its first deniers. They were also witnessing what character and morals the Prophet (peace be upon him) possessed, and what revolution had taken place in the lives of those who had accepted his message. For a long time the Ansar of Al-Madinah had been their closest neighbors. They knew what kind of people they had been before embracing Islam and what they became after their conversion to Islam. Thus, they were well aware of the invitation of the inviter and of the results of accepting the invitation. But in spite of witnessing and knowing all this, only on account of their racial prejudice and worldly interests, they spent all their energy against the message of truth about which there was no room for doubt at least in their minds. After such an obvious and open hostility to the truth they expected that

their strongholds would save them from Allah, whereas the whole human history bears evidence that the one who is resisted by the power of God, cannot save and protect himself by any weapon, means or device.

3. And if it had not been that Allah had decreed expulsion for them, He would have punished them in this world.*⁸ And for them, in the Hereafter, is the punishment of the Fire.

وَلَوْلَا أَنْ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجَلَاءَ
لَعَذَّبْتَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ فِي الآخِرَةِ
عَذَابُ النَّارِ

*⁸ Would have punished them in this world: world have caused them to be annihilated. That is, had they fought instead of surrendering to save their lives, they would have been completely wiped out. Their men would have perished in the war and their womenfolk and children would have been taken prisoners and there would be no one to have them ransomed.

4. That is because they opposed Allah and His Messenger, and whoever opposes Allah, then indeed Allah is severe in punishment.

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُّوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ اللَّهَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ
الْعِقَابِ

5. Whatever you cut down of the palm trees, or left standing upon their trunks, it was by permission of

مَا قَطَعْتُمْ مِّن لِّينَةٍ أَوْ
تَرَكْتُمُوهَا قَائِمَةً عَلَىٰ أُصُولِهَا

Allah,^{*9} and that He may disgrace the disobedient.^{*10}

فَبِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلِيُخْزِيَ الْفَاسِقِينَ



***9** The reference is to the fact that the Muslims cut down or burnt many of the palm-trees that stood in the oases around the settlement of the Bani an-Nadir in order to facilitate the siege, However, they left those trees standing which did not obstruct the military operations. At this the hypocrites of Al-Madinah and the Bani Quraizah, and the Bani an-Nadir themselves raised a clamor, saying that, on the one hand, Muhammad (peace be upon him) prohibited spreading disorder in the world, but, on the other hand, fruit trees were being cut down by his command, which amounted to spreading disorder in the world. At this Allah sent down the command: Whatever trees you cut down, or whatever you left standing, your neither act was unlawful, but it had Allah's permission. The legal injunction that is derived from this verse is that the destruction caused for the sake of military operations does not come under spreading disorder in the world. But spreading disorder in the world is that an army under the fit of war hysteria should intrude into the enemy territory and start destroying the crops, cattle, gardens, houses and everything in its way without any reason. In this matter, the general instruction is the same which Abu Bakr Siddiq gave while dispatching the Muslim army to Syria: Do not cut down fruit trees, do not destroy crops, do not ravage the settlements. This was precisely in accordance with the

Quranic teaching, which condemns those who spread chaos: When they get power they direct all their efforts towards spreading corruption in the land, destroying harvests and killing people. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 205). But the specific command in respect of the war exigencies is that if destruction is necessary for military operations against the enemy, it is lawful. Thus, Abdullah bin Masud has given this explanation in the commentary of this verse: The Muslims had cut down only those trees of the Bani an-Nadir that stood on the battlefield. (Tafsir Nisaburi). Some of the Muslim jurists have overlooked this aspect of the matter and expressed the opinion that the permissibility of cutting the trees of the Bani an-Nadir was confined only to that particular event. It does not make it generally permissible that whenever war necessitates, trees of the enemy be cut down and burnt. Imam Auzai, Laith and Abu Thaur hold this same opinion. But the majority of the jurists hold the view that for the sake of important military operations it is permissible. However, this is not permissible for the purpose of mere destruction and pillage.

One may ask: This verse of the Quran could satisfy the Muslims, but how could those who did not accept the Quran as divine word be satisfied at this reply to their objection that both acts were permissible as they had Allah's permission for it? The answer is: This verse of the Quran was sent down to satisfy only the Muslims; it was not sent down to satisfy the disbelievers. Since due to the objection of the Jews and the hypocrites, or due to their own thinking, they had been involved in the misgiving

whether they were guilty of spreading disorder in the earth. Allah gave them the satisfaction that both the acts, cutting down some trees to facilitate the siege and leaving some other trees standing which did not obstruct the siege, were in accordance with divine law.

The traditionists in their traditions have disagreed the point whether the order to cut and burn the trees had been given by the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself, or whether the Muslims had done it of their own accord, and then later asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about its legal aspect. Abdullah bin Umar has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself had ordered it. (Bukhari, Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarir). The same also has been reported by Yazid bin Ruman (Ibn Jarir). On the contrary, Mujahid and Qatadah say that the Muslims had on their own cut down the trees, then a dispute arose among them whether what they had done was permissible or not. Some said it was permissible and some said it was not. At last Allah sent down this verse and approved the act of both. (Ibn Jarir). The same thing is supported by a tradition of Abdullah bin Abbas: The Muslims were confused because some of them had cut the trees and others had not; therefore, they wanted to ask the Prophet (peace be upon him) as to who would be rewarded for the act and who would be punished (Nasai). Those of the jurists who have preferred the first tradition give the argument that this was the Prophet's personal judgment, which was later ratified by revelation from Allah, and this is a proof of the fact that in matters where no divine command existed, the

Prophet (peace be upon him) used to follow his personal judgment. On the other hand, those jurists who have preferred the second tradition argue that the two groups of the Muslims had adopted two different views on the basis of their own personal judgments and Allah ratified both. Therefore, if the learned men arrive at different conclusions by judicious exercise of their personal judgment, then although their opinions might differ, they would all be correct in the divine Shariah.

*10 That is, Allah willed that they should be disgraced if you cut down the trees and also if you left them standing. In the first case, they were disgraced when they saw that the trees of the gardens which they had planted with their own hands and which they had owned since ages, were being cut down before their very eyes and they were watching it helplessly. Even an ordinary peasant and gardener cannot tolerate another's misappropriation or intrusion into his field or garden. He would protect his field or garden at the risk of his life if somebody tried to destroy it in his presence. For, if he cannot prevent destruction of his property, it would be a sign of his extreme humiliation and weakness. But here a whole tribe, which had been living at this place fearlessly and boldly for centuries, was watching helplessly that its neighbors had invaded its gardens and were destroying the trees while it could do nothing. After this even if they stayed on in Al-Madinah, they would have lived in disgrace and humility. In the second case, they were disgraced when on leaving Al-Madinah they saw that the lush green gardens which had been in their possession till

the previous day were now passing into the possession of the Muslims. If they had the power they would have laid waste the entire gardens by their own hands so that not a single whole tree passed into the hands of the Muslims. But in their helplessness they left the city, despaired and grief-stricken, leaving everything intact behind.

6. And that which Allah gave as booty to His Messenger^{*11} from them, you made no expedition for this with horses, nor (with) camels, but Allah gives His Messengers authority over whom He wills, and Allah has power over everything.^{*12}

وَمَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْهُمْ
فَمَا أَوْجَفْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ خَيْلٍ وَلَا
رِكَابٍ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَلِّطُ رُسُلَهُ
عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ



*11 From here to the end of verse 10, Allah explains how the lands and properties that were restored to the Islamic State after the exile of the Bani an-Nadir, are to be managed and administered. As it was the first occasion that a land was conquered and included in the Islamic territory, and many more lands were destined to be conquered in the future, the law governing the conquered lands was enunciated at the outset. Here, a note-worthy point is that Allah at this place has used the words: *Ma-afa-Allahu ala Rasuli-hi-min-hum*: Whatever Allah restored to His Messenger from them. These words clearly imply that the rebels of Allah Almighty are not entitled to own the earth and things existing on it. If they have become their owners

and are appropriating them, their ownership and appropriation of these things is, in fact, in the nature of usurpation of a master's property by a dishonest servant. The real right of these properties is that these should be spent and used in the service and obedience of their real Master, Allah, Lord of the worlds, according to His will, and their this use is possible only through the agency of the righteous believers. Therefore, the true position of the properties which pass from the ownership of the disbelievers into the hands of the Muslims as the result of a lawful war, is that their real Owner has withdrawn them from His disobedient and disloyal servants, and restored them to His obedient and loyal servants. That is why, in the terminology of the Islamic Law such properties have been described as *Fai* (restored properties).

*12 That is, the restoration of these properties to the Muslims is not the result of the effort of the actual fighting army so that the army on that basis may have the right that the properties may be distributed among the soldiers, but its real nature is that Allah by His bounty has given dominance to His Messengers and the system that they represent over them. In other words, the passing of these properties into the Muslims' hands is not the direct result of the effort and struggle of the fighting army, but the result of the total strength that Allah has bestowed on His Messenger and his community and the system established by him. Therefore, these properties are quite different in nature from the spoils of war and so cannot be distributed among the soldiers as such.

Thus, the Shariah has made a distinction between *ghanimah* (spoils of war) and *fai* (restored properties). The injunction in respect of the *ghanimah* has been given in Surah Al-Anfal, Ayat 41, and it is this: It should be divided in five parts, four parts of which be distributed among the fighting army and the fifth deposited in the Public Treasury (Bait al-Mal), and expended on the items mentioned in the verse. As for the *fai*, the injunction is that it should not be distributed among the army, but it should be reserved for the items of expenditure being stated in the following verse. The distinction between the two has been made plain by the words: You have not rushed your horses and camels on them, which imply the military operations. Thus, the properties which are taken as a direct result of such operations are the *ghanimah* and those which are not the result of these operations are the *fai*. The distinction between *ghanimah* and *fai* that has been mentioned in this verse, has been explained in greater detail by the jurists of Islam. *Ghanimah* are only those transferable properties which are taken from the enemy during military action; other than these things, e.g. lands, houses and other transferable and nontransferable properties of the enemy, are excluded from the definition of *ghanimah* and are *fai*. The source of this explanation is the letter that Umar had written to Saad bin Abi Waqqas after the conquest of Iraq. In that letter he wrote: Distribute the properties and goods which the soldiers of the army collected and brought to your camp among the Muslims who participated in the war, and leave the lands and the canals with those who

work on them so that the proceeds thereof are used for the salaries of the Muslims. (Abu Yusuf, Kitab al-Kharaj, p. 24; Abu Ubaid, Kitab al-Amwal, p. 59; Yahya bin Adam, Kitab al-Kharaj, pp. 27-28, 48). On this very basis, Hasan Basri says: Whatever is taken from the enemy camp is the right of those who won victory over it, and the lands are for the Muslims. (Yahya bin Adam, p. 27). And Imam Abu Yusuf says: Whatever the Muslims take from the enemy troops, and whatever goods and arms and cattle they collect and bring to their camp is *ghanimah*; from this one-fifth will be deducted and the rest distributed among the soldiers. (Kitab al-Kharaj, p. 18). The same is the opinion of Yahya bin Adam, which he has expressed in his Kitab al-Kharaj (p. 27). Even more than this, what makes the distinction between *ghanimah* and *fai* is that after the Battle of Nahawand when the *ghanimah* had been distributed and the conquered lands had been included in the Islamic State, a man named Saib bin Aqra found two bags of jewels outside the fort. He was confused whether it was the *ghanimah* which should be distributed in the army, or the *fai* which should be deposited in the Bait al-Mal. Consequently, he came to Al-Madinah and put the matter before Umar, who decided that it should be sold and the price should be deposited in the Bait al-Mal. From this it becomes clear that *ghanimah* are only those transferable properties which are taken by the soldiers during the war. After the war is over, the transferable properties also, like the nontransferable properties, become *fai*. Imam Abu Ubaid relates this event and says: The properties that are

seized from the enemy by the use of force, when the war is still in progress, are *ghanimah* and what is taken after the war is over, when the territory has become dar al-Islam (abode of Islam), is *fai*, which should be reserved for the common people of the dar al-Islam; the law of the one-fifth (*khums*) will not be applicable to it. (Kitab al-Amwal p. 254).

After defining *ghanimah* thus, the rest of the properties, wealth and lands, which pass from the disbelievers ownership to the Muslims may be divided into two main kinds, first those which are taken as a result of actual fighting (*fanwatan* in Fiqh terminology); second, those which are taken by the Muslims as a result of the peace terms whether peace is concluded because of the pressure of the military power of the Muslims, or their dread and awe, and in this are also included all those properties which pass into the Muslims ownership in every other way than as a result of actual fighting. The differences that have arisen among the jurists of Islam have been only concerning the first kind of the properties in order to determine their correct legal position, for they do not come under those upon which you have not rushed your horses and camels. As regards to the second kind of the properties, all agree that they are *fai*, for the Quran has explicitly laid down the injunction about them. Below we shall discuss in detail the legal position of the first kind of the properties.

7. That which Allah gave as booty to His messenger from the people of the townships,

مَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ

it is for Allah, and for the Messenger, and for near relatives, and the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarers,*¹³ so that it does not become commodity among the rich of you.*¹⁴ And whatever the Messenger gives you, so take it, and what he forbids you from, refrain. And fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is severe in punishment.*¹⁵

الْقُرَىٰ لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي
الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ
السَّبِيلِ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ
الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ
الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ
فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ
الْعِقَابِ



*¹³ In the preceding verse what was pointed out was why these properties should not be distributed among the fighting army like the spoils, and why the legal injunction concerning them is different from that concerning the spoils. Now in this verse it is being stated as to who are entitled to have a share in these properties.

The first share in these is of Allah and His Messenger. The detail of how the Prophet (peace be upon him) acted on this injunction has been related by Malik bin Aus bin al-Hadathan on the authority of Umar, thus: The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to take from it necessary expenses for himself and his family and the rest he used to spend on arranging arms and conveyances for Jihad. (Bukhari, Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Daud, Tirmadhi, Nasai and others). After the passing away of the Prophet (peace be upon him) this share was transferred to the Public

Treasury of the Muslims so that it is spent in the service of the mission which Allah had entrusted to His Messenger (peace be upon him). Imam Shafai is reported to have expressed the opinion that the share which was specifically meant for the Prophet's (peace be upon him) person, is for his caliph after him, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) was entitled to it on the basis of his office of leadership and not on the basis of the office of Apostleship. But the view of the majority of the Shafei jurists in this matter is the same as of the other jurists, viz. that this share now is reserved for the religious and collective welfare of the Muslims, and not for any particular person.

The second share is of the kinsfolk, and this implies the kinsfolk of the Prophet (peace be upon him), i.e. the Bani Hashim and the Bani al-Muttalib. This share was set aside so that, besides meeting his own and his family's requirements, the Prophet (peace be upon him) could also fulfill his obligations towards those of his relatives who stood in need of his help, or whom he felt like helping. After the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him), this ceased to be a separate and independent source, because like the right of the orphans and the wayfarers and the indigent among the Muslims, looking after the rights of the needy among the Bani Hashim and the Bani al-Muttalib also became the responsibility of the Public Treasury. However, they were treated as superior to others in so far as they had no share in the zakat. Abdullah bin Abbas has related that in the time of Abu Bakr and Umar and Uthman, the first two shares were dropped and only the remaining three

shares (i.e. those for the orphans and the indigent and the wayfarers) were kept as of those entitled to *fai*. Then Ali also acted on the same in his time, Muhammad bin Ishaq has related on the authority of Imam Muhammad Baqir that although Ali's personal opinion was the same as of the people of his house (that this share should be given to the relatives of the Prophet, peace be upon him), he did not think that he should act against the practice of Abu Bakr and Umar. Hasan bin Muhammad bin Hanafiyah says that after the Prophet (peace be upon him), a difference of opinion arose about these two shares (i.e. the share of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and the share of his relatives). Some people said that the first share should go to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) caliph, some said that the second share should go to the relatives of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and still others said that the second share should be given to the relatives of the caliph. At last, a consensus was reached that both the shares be spent on the requirements of Jihad. Ata bin Saib says that Umar bin Abdul Aziz in his time had started sending the share of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the share of the relatives to the Bani Hashim. The opinion of Imam Abu Hanifah and of most of the Hanafi jurists is that in this matter the same practice is correct as was being followed in the time of the righteous Caliphs. (Abu Yusuf, Kitab al-Kharaj pp. 19-21). Imam Sharei's opinion is that both the rich and the needy from among the people whose being descended from the Bani Hashim and the Bani al-Muttalib is confirmed, or is well known, can be given shares from *fai*. (Mughni al-

Muhtaj). The Hanafis say that only their needy people can be helped from this; however, their right to this is greater than that of others. (Ruh al-Maani). According to Imam Malik, there is no restriction on the government in this matter. It can spend on any head that it deems fit and proper, but the better course is that it should give preference to the people of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) house. (Hashiyah ad-Dusuqi ala-sh-Sharh-al-Kabir).

About the remaining three shares there is no dispute among the jurists. However, the difference between Imam Shafei and the other Imams is that according to Imam Shafei the total properties of *fai* are to be divided into five equal parts one part of which is to be spent on the above-mentioned heads in such a way that one-fifth of it is spent on the common benefits of the Muslims, one-fifth on the Bani Hashim and the Bani al-Muttalib, one-fifth on the orphans, one-fifth on the indigent and one-fifth on the wayfarers. However, Imam Malik, Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Ahmad do not concur with this division. Their opinion is that the whole of *fai* is for the welfare and common benefit of the Muslims. (Mughni al-Muhtaj).

***14** This is one of the most important verses of the Quran, which lays down the basic principle of the economic policy of the Islamic community and government. Wealth should circulate among the whole community and not only among the rich lest the rich should go on becoming richer day by day and the poor becoming poorer. This policy has not merely been enunciated in the Quran, but for the same objective the Quran has forbidden interest, made the zakat

obligatory, enjoined that *khums* (one-fifth) be deducted from the booty, exhorted the Muslims to practice voluntary charity, has proposed such forms of different kinds of atonements that the flow of wealth is turned towards the poor classes of society, and has made such a law of inheritance that the wealth left by every deceased person spreads among the largest circle of the people. Apart from this, stinginess has been condemned and generosity commended as a noble moral quality, the well-to-do people have been told that in their wealth there is a definite share of the beggar and the indigent, which they must discharge not as charity but as the right of the concerned people, and the law enjoined in respect of a major source of revenue of the Islamic government (i.e. *fai*) is that its one portion must necessarily be spent on supporting the poor class of society. In this connection, it should also be borne in mind that there are two main sources of the revenue of the Islamic government: *zakat* and *fai*. The *zakat* is charged from the Muslims on their total extra capital, cattle, wealth, trade goods and agricultural produce, which is over and above the minimum exemption limit (*nisab*), and most of it is reserved for the poor. And *fai* comprises all the revenues including *jizyah* and taxes which are received from the non-Muslims; a major part of this is also set aside for the poor. This gives a clear hint to the effect that an Islamic government should manage its revenues and expenditure and the financial and economic affairs of the country on the whole in such a manner that the wealthy and influential people are not allowed to have their monopoly over the

means and resources of wealth, and the flow of wealth is neither turned from the poor to the rich nor it should remain circulating only among the rich.

***15** In view of the context the verse means: Accept without question whatever decision the Prophet (peace be upon him) gives about the management of the properties of the Bani an-Nadir, and likewise about the distribution of *fai* properties and goods afterwards. One should take whatever the Prophet (peace be upon him) gives him, and the one whom he does not give anything, should neither protest nor demand it. But since the words of the command are general, its application is not restricted to the distribution of the *fai* properties and goods only, but its intention is that in all matters the Muslims should obey the Prophet (peace be upon him). This intention of the command becomes all the more clear when we consider that as against “whatever the Messenger gives you” the words used are “whatever he forbids you” and not “whatever he does not give you.” If the object of the command were restricted to call obedience to the distribution of all properties and goods only, then as against “whatever he gives you” the words should have been “whatever he does not give you.” The use of the forbidding or restraining words in this context by itself shows that the object of the command is to enjoin obedience to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in whatever he commands and forbids. The same thing has been stated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. According to Abu Hurairah he said: When I command you to do a thing, do it as far as you can; and when I forbid you to do a thing,

restrain from it. (Bukhari, Muslim). About Abdullah bin Masud it has been related that once during a speech he said: Allah has cursed the woman who practices such and such a fashion. Thereupon a woman approached him and asked: Wherefrom have you derived this thing? For I have not seen such a thing anywhere in the Book of Allah. Abdullah replied: Had you studied the Book of Allah, you would certainly have found it therein. Have you not read the verse: *Ma ata-kum ar-rasulu fa-khudu hu wa ma naha-kum anhu fantahu*: Take whatever the Messenger gives you, and refrain from whatever he forbids you. When she said that she had read this verse, Abdullah said: So the Prophet (peace be upon him) has forbidden this act, and has given the news that Allah has cursed the women who practice it. The woman agreed that she had understood the command. (Bukhari, Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Musnad Ibn abi Hatim).

8. (And it is) for those poor emigrants who have been expelled from their homes and their possessions.*16 They seek bounty from Allah and (His) pleasure, and they help Allah and His Messenger. It is those who are the truthful.

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ
 أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ
 يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا
 وَيَنْصُرُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ
 هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

*16 This implies those people who at that time had been expelled from Makkah and other parts of Arabia only

because they had embraced Islam. Before the conquest of the territory of the Bani an-Nadir these emigrants had no permanent means of sustenance. Therefore, it was commanded that in the properties which were then taken, and in the *fai* properties which are taken in future there is also a share of these people along with the common poor people and the orphans and the wayfarers. With these properties all such people should be helped, who are forced to emigrate for the cause of Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) to the abode of Islam. Accordingly, the Prophet (peace be upon him) distributed a part of the properties taken from the Bani an-Nadir among the emigrants and the oases which the Ansar had set aside for the support and maintenance of their emigrant brothers were returned to them. But it is not correct to think that the emigrants had this share in the *fai* only at that time. In fact, the intention of the verse is to point out that till Resurrection it is the duty of the Islamic government of the country to settle the people who are exiled and compelled to take refuge in it because of being Muslims and to enable them to stand on their feet economically; and it should also spend on this head from the *fai* properties besides the *zakat* funds.

9. And (also for) those who entered the city and the faith before them. They love those who have emigrated to them,^{*17} and find in their hearts no need for what

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا

they were given, and they prefer them above themselves even though they may be needy.*18 And whoever is saved from the greed of his own self, so it is those who are the successful.*19

أُوتُوا وَيُؤْتِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ
وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَنْ يُوقِ
شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُفْلِحُونَ

*17 This implies the Ansar. In other words, not only are the emigrants entitled to *fai* but those Muslims also are entitled to receive their share from it who were already living in the abode of Islam (Al-Madinah).

*18 This is in praise of the Ansar, the Muslims of Al-Madinah. When the emigrants came from Makkah and other places to their city, they offered their gardens and oases to the Prophet (peace be upon him) with the request that he distribute them among their emigrant brethren-in-faith. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: These people do not know gardening: they have come from a region where there are no gardens. Could it not be that you (the Ansar) continue to work in the gardens and oases and make the emigrants partners in the produce? The Ansar submitted: We have heard and obeyed. (Bukhari, Ibn Jarir). Thereupon the emigrants said: We have never seen any people so self-sacrificing as the Ansar, for they would work and labor and make us partners in the produce. We think they would thus be entitled to all spiritual rewards. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Nay, as long as you would praise them and pray for their well-being, you also

would get your rewards. (Musnad Ahmad). Then, when the territory of the Bani an-Nadir was taken, the Prophet (peace be upon him) made this proposal to the Ansar: Now one way of managing it is that your properties and the gardens and the oases left by the Jews be combined together and then the whole distributed among you and the emigrants. The second way is that you take back your properties, and the lands vacated by the Jews be distributed among the emigrants. The Ansar said: You may please distribute these evacuee properties among the emigrants and may give them of our properties also as you please. At this Abu Bakr cried out: May Allah reward you, O assembly of the Ansar, with the best of everything. (Yahya bin Adam, Baladhuri). Thus, with the willing consent of the Ansar the properties left by the Jews were distributed only among the emigrants, and from among the Ansar only Abu Dujanah, Sahl bin Hunaif and (according to some) Harith bin as-Simmah were given shares, for they were poor people. (Baladhuri, Ibn Hisham Ruh al-Maani). The same self-sacrificing spirit was shown by the Ansar when the territory of Bahrain was annexed to the Islamic State. The Prophet (peace be upon him) wished that the conquered lands of that territory be given to the Ansar, but they submitted: We would not take any share from it unless a similar share was given to our emigrant brothers. (Yahya bin Adam). Allah has praised the Ansar for this very spirit of self-sacrifice.

***19** The word used here means “is saved” and not “was safe”, for without Allah's help and succor no one can attain

to the wealth of the heart (liberal-mindedness) by his own power and effort. This is a blessing of God, which one can attain only by God's bounty and grace. The word *shuhha* is used for stinginess and miserliness in Arabic. But when this word is attributed to the self of man, it becomes synonymous with narrow-mindedness, niggardliness, mean spiritedness and small-heartedness, and not mere stinginess: it is rather the root cause of stinginess itself. Because of this very quality man avoids acknowledging even the good qualities of another, not to speak of recognizing his rights and discharging them. He wants that he alone should gather up everything in the world, and no one else should have anything of it. He never feels content with his own right, but usurps the rights of others, or at least wants to have for himself all that is good in the world and should not leave anything for others. On this very basis one's being saved from this evil has been described in the Quran as a guarantee for success. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has counted it among the most evil qualities of man which are the root cause of corruption and mischief. Jabir bin Abdullah has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Avoid *shuhha* for it was *shuhha* which ruined the people before you. It incited them to shed each other's blood and make the sacred and forbidden things of others lawful for themselves. (Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Baihaqi, Bukhari in Al-Adab). The tradition of Abdullah bin Umar contains the following words: It led them to commit wickedness and they committed it. It commanded them to commit sins and they committed sin. It urged them

to break off all connections with the kindred and they broke off all connections with them. (Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud, Nasai). Abu Hurairah has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Faith and *shuhha* of the self cannot combine in one and the same heart. (Ibn Abi Shaibah, Nasa Baihaqi in Shuab al-Iman, Hakim). Abu Said Khudri has stated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Two of the qualities are such that they cannot combine in a Muslim: stinginess and misbehavior. (Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Bukhari in Al-Adab). It is as a result of this very teaching of Islam that, apart from individuals, the Muslims as a nation are still the most generous and liberal minded people in the world.

10. And (also for) those who came after them^{*20} saying: “Our Lord forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith, and do not put in our hearts any malice towards those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Full of Kindness, Most Merciful.”^{*21}

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ
يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا
وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا
بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا
لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رءُوفٌ
رَحِيمٌ

***20** In the injunctions laid down up to here, it has been ruled that in the *fai* properties there are the rights of Allah and His Messenger and the Messenger’s relatives and the orphans and the indigent and the wayfarers and the

emigrants and the Ansar and of the Muslim generations which will be born till the Day of Resurrection. It is this important legal ruling of the Quran in the light of which Umar introduced the new system in respect of the lands and properties of the conquered territories of Iraq, Syria and Egypt and of the possessions of the previous governments and rulers of those countries. When these countries were conquered; some of the distinguished companions among whom were included prominent men like Zubair, Bilal, Abdur Rahman bin Auf and Salman Farsi, insisted that these should be distributed among the armies who had fought and conquered them. They thought that those properties did not come under those upon which you have not rushed your horses and camels, but the Muslims had conquered them by rushing their horses and camels on them. Therefore, except for those cities and territories which surrendered without the war, all the rest of the conquered lands came under *ghanimah* for which the legal command is that one fifth of the lands and the people be given to the public treasury and the remaining four parts be distributed among the soldiers. But this opinion was not correct on the ground that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had not distributed the lands and the people of any territory conquered by fighting in his time after the deduction of one-fifth, like the booty. Two of the most conspicuous precedents of his time were the conquest of Makkah and the conquest of Khaiber. Of these he handed over Makkah intact to its inhabitants. As for Khaiber, according to Bushair bin Yasar, he divided it into 36 parts,

of which he set aside 18 parts for collective benefits and requirements of the Muslims and distributed the remaining 18 among the army. (Abu Daud, Baihaqi, Abi Ubaid: Kitab al-Amwal; Yahya bin Adam: Kitab al-Kharj Baladhuri: Futuh al-Buldan; Ibn Human: Fath al-Qadir). This action of the Prophet (peace be upon him) made it clear that the command in respect of the conquered lands, even if they might have been taken by fighting, is not the same as of the *ghanimah* otherwise he would never have given the whole of Makkah intact to the people of Makkah, and would have set aside exactly one-half of the properties of Khaiber for the common benefits of the Muslims instead of deducting its one-fifth for the public treasury. Thus, what was established on the basis of the Sunnah was: In respect of the territories conquered by fighting, the ruler of the Muslims has the authority that he may take any decision that he deems fit keeping in view the conditions of the time. He can distribute them if he so likes but if a territory has an unusual nature and importance, as Makkah had, he can also treat its inhabitants with favor, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) treated the people of Makkah.

But as the conquests had not yet become common in the Prophet's time and separate injunctions in respect of the different kinds of conquered territories had not yet become clearly known to the people, so when big countries were annexed to Islam in the time of Umar, the companions were faced with the problem whether the territories conquered by force were in the nature of *ghanimah* or *fai*. After the conquest of Egypt, Zubair demanded: Distribute this,

whole land just as the Prophet (peace be upon him) had distributed Khaiber. (Abu Ubaid). About the conquered territories of Syria and Iraq, Bilal insisted: Distribute all the lands among the fighting forces just as the spoils are distributed. (Abu Yusuf, Kitab al-Kharaj). On the other hand, Ali gave this opinion: Leave these lands in possession of the peasants so that they continue to remain a source of income for the Muslims. (Abu Yusuf, Abu Ubaid,). Likewise, the opinion of Muadh bin Jabal was: If you distributed these lands, evil consequences would occur. Because of this distribution large properties will pass into the hands of those few people, who have conquered them. Then, when these people pass away and their properties pass on to their heirs and there is left only one woman or only one man from among them, nothing might remain for the future generations to meet their needs and even to meet the expenses of safeguarding the frontiers of the Islamic State. Therefore, you should so settle things that the interests of both the present and of the future generations are equally safeguarded. (Abu Ubaid, p. 59; Fath al-Bari, vol. vi, p. 138). Umar calculated and found that if the territories of Iraq were distributed, each individual would receive two or three peasants on the average as his share, (Abu Yusuf. Abu Ubaid). Thereupon he arrived at the judicious conclusion that those territories should not be distributed. Thus, the replies that he gave to those who demanded their distribution, were as follows:

Do you want that for the people who come afterwards there should not remain anything. (Abu Ubaid).

What will happen of the Muslims who came afterwards when they find that the land along with its peasants has been distributed and the people have inherited their forefathers? This is not at all just. (Abu Yusuf).

What will be left for the Muslims who came after you? I am afraid if I distribute it, you would fight among yourselves over water. (Abu Yusuf).

Had I no thought for those who would come afterwards, I would distribute every territory that I conquered just as the Messenger of Allah had distributed Khaiber. (Bukhari, Muwatta, Abu Ubaid).

Nay: this is the real estate. I will withhold it so that the needs and requirements of the conquering forces and of the common Muslims continue to be met by it. (Abu Ubaid).

But the people were not satisfied with these replies, and they started saying that he was being unjust. At last, Umar convened a meeting of the consultative body of the companions and put the matter before it. Here are some of the sentences of the speech that he made on this occasion: I have given you this trouble so that you may join me in shouldering the trust that has been put in me for governing your affairs. I am one of you, and you are the people who affirm the truth today. Every one of you has the option to agree to or differ from what I say. I do not wish that you should follow my desire. You have the Book of Allah, which states the whole truth. By God, if I have said something which I want to enforce, I have no object in view except the truth. You have heard those who think that I am being unjust to them and want to deprive them of their rights,

whereas I seek Allah's refuge that I should commit an injustice. It would be vicious on my part if I withheld from them something which actually belonged to them and gave it to another. But I can see that no other land after the land of the Khosroe is going to fall. Allah has given the properties of the Persians and their lands and their peasants in our possession. I have distributed the booty taken by our armies among them after the deduction of the *khums* (one fifth), and am thinking of distributing the rest which yet remains. But as for the lands my opinion is that I should not distribute them and their peasants, but should levy revenue on the lands and *jizyah* on the peasants, which they should always pay, and this should be the *fai* for the common Muslims and their children and the armies of today and for the generations yet to come. Don't you see that we need the troops who should be appointed to protect these our frontiers? Don't you see that in territories like Syria, Al-Jazirah, Kufah, Basra, Egypt we should station our troops, and they should be regularly for their services? So, if I distribute these lands along with their peasants, how shall we meet these expenses.

The debate went on for two or three days. Uthman, Ali, Talhah, Abdullah bin Umar and others concurred with Umar, but nothing could be decided. At last, Umar rose and said: I have found an argument in the Book of Allah, which is decisive in this matter. Then, he recited these very verses of Surah Al-Hashr from *Ma afaa Allahu* to *Rabbana innaka Raufur-Rahim*, and argued: The people of this day only are not entitled to receive a share in these properties

bestowed by Allah, but Allah has also joined with them those people who will come after them. Then, how can it be that we should distribute the *fai* properties which are meant for all, only among the conquerors and leave nothing for the later generations? Moreover, Allah says: So that this wealth does not remain circulating among your rich people only. But if distribute it among the conquerors, it will remain circulating only among your rich and nothing would be left for others. This argument satisfied everybody and consensus was reached that all the conquered territories should be declared *fai* for the common benefits of the Muslims, which should be left with those who work on those lands and they should be put under revenue and *jizyah*. (Abu Yusuf Kitab al-Kharaj, pp. 23-27, 35; Al-Jassas, Ahkam al-Quran).

Accordingly, the real position of the conquered lands that came to be established was that the Muslims in their collective capacity are their owners; the people who were already working on them would be recognized as cultivators on behalf of the Muslims; they would continue to pay the prescribed revenue to the Islamic government on those lands, their rights as cultivators would pass from generation to generation as heritage, and they would even be allowed to sell those rights, but they will not be the real owners of the land, but its real owners will be the Muslim community. Imam Abu Ubaid in his Kitab al-Amwal has stated this legal position, thus:

Umar left the lands of the territory of Iraq in the hands of its people; he levied tax on their lands and *jizyah* per head

on the people. (p. 57).

When the head of the Islamic government leaves the lands in the hands of the people of the conquered territories, they would be allowed to pass the lands on as heritage and would also be allowed to sell them. (p. 84).

In the time of Umar bin Abdul Aziz, Shabi was asked: Is there a treaty with the people of the territory of Iraq. He replied: There is no treaty, but when the revenue was accepted from them, it amounted to a treaty with them. (Abu Ubaid, p. 49; Abu Yusuf, p. 28).

In the time of Umar, Utbah bin Furqad purchased a piece of land by the Euphrates. Umar asked him from whom he had purchased the land. He replied that he had purchased it from its owners. Umar said: Its owners are these people, i.e. the emigrants and the Ansar. Thus, Umar held the opinion that the real owners of those lands were the Muslims. (Abu Ubaid, p. 74).

Accordingly, the properties of the conquered countries which were declared as the collective property of the Muslims were the following:

- (1) Those lands and territories which come under the control of the Islamic government in consequence of a peace treaty.
- (2) The ransom or revenue or *jizyah* which the people of a territory may have agreed to pay, without fighting, in order to seek refuge from the Muslims.
- (3) Those lands and properties which the owners might have abandoned and fled.
- (4) The properties the owners of which were slain and no

survivor was left to own them.

(5) The lands which were not under any ownership previously.

(6) The lands which were already in the ownership of the people, but were left with their previous owners and they were put under *jizyah* and revenue.

(7) Estates of the previous ruling dynasties.

(8) Properties of the previous governments.

(For details, see Bada-i as-Sanai, vol. vii, pp. 116-118; Yahya bin Adam Kitab al-Kharaj. pp. 22, 64; Mughni al-Muhtaj, vol. iii, p. 93; Hashiyah ad-Dusuqi ala-sh-Sharah al-Kabir, vol. ii, p. 190; Ghayat al-Muntaha, vol. i, pp. 467-471).

Since these properties were declared as *fai* with the consensus of the companions, the jurists of Islam also have agreed in principle on their being regarded as *fai*. However, they have differed in certain matters, the details of which are briefly as follows:

The Hanafis say that as regards to the lands of the conquered territories the Islamic government (Imam in juristic terminology has the option that it may distribute them among the forces of conquest after deduction of the *khums* (one fifth), or may leave them with the former owners and put the owners under *jizyah* and the lands under revenue. In this case the land will be regarded as a legacy for the Muslims. (Badai as-Sanai, Al-Jassas, Ahkam al-Quran; Sharah al-Anayah al-Hedayah; Fath al-Qadir). The same view has Abdullah bin Mubarak cited for Imam Sufyan Thauri. (Yahya bin Adam; Abu Ubaid, Kitab

al-Amwal).

The Malikis say that as soon as the lands have been conquered they automatically become a legacy for the Muslims. It does not need the Imam's ruling or the willingness of the Muslim soldiers to declare them a legacy. Besides, the well known view among the Malikis is that not only the lands but the houses and buildings of the conquered territories are also, as a matter of fact, a legacy for the Muslims. However, the Islamic government will not charge the rent for them. (Hashiyah ad-Dusuqi).

The Hanbalis agree with the Hanafis that the Imam has the option to distribute the lands among the soldiers or to declare them as a legacy for the Muslims, and with the Malikis that although the houses of the conquered territories are included in the legacy, no rent will be levied on them. (Ghayatal Muntaha which is a collection of the legal rulings of the Hanbali School of juristic thought and a source book for legal rulings since the 10th century).

The Shafei's viewpoint is that all the transferable properties of the conquered territory are *ghanimah*, and all the non-transferable properties (lands, houses, etc.) are *fai*. (Mughni al-Muhtaj).

Some jurists have expressed the opinion that if the Imam wants to declare the lands of the territory taken by fighting as a legacy for the Muslims, he must first obtain the willingness of the conquering forces. For this they cite this argument: Umar, before the conquest of Iraq, had promised Jarir bin Abdullah al-Banali, the people of whose tribe constituted one-fourth of the army, which fought the

Battle of Qadisiyah, that they would be given one-fourth of the conquered territory. Thus, they retained this territory for two or three years. Then Umar said to them: Had I not been responsible and answerable in the matter of division, I would have left with you whatever has been given to you. But now I see that the people have grown in numbers; therefore, my opinion is that you return it to the common people. Jarir acceded to this, and Umar gave him 50 dinars as a prize. (Abu Yusuf, Kitab al-Kharaj; Abu Ubaid, Kitab al-Amwal). From this they argue that Umar had decided to declare the conquered territories as a legacy for the Muslims only after obtaining the willingness of the conquerors. But the majority of the jurists do not admit this argument. For in respect of all the conquered territories no such willingness of the conquerors ever was taken. Only in the case of Jarir bin Abdullah this was done because Umar had made a promise with him prior to any collective decision about the conquered lands. Therefore, he had to obtain his willingness only in order to be free from the obligation of the promise. This cannot be cited as a general law.

Another section of the jurists says that even after declaring the lands as a legacy, the government retains the option that it may redistribute the lands among the conquerors. For this they argue from this tradition: Once Ali said to the people in an address: Had not there been the apprehension that you would fight among yourselves, I would have distributed the suburban lands among you. (Abu Yusuf, Kitab al-Kharaj; Abu Ubaid, Kitab al-Amwal). But the

majority of jurists do not admit this argument either. They are unanimous that when the people of the conquered territory have once been allowed to retain their lands and put under *jizyah* and revenue, the decision can never be changed later. As for the tradition attributed to Ali, Abu Bakr al-Jassas has discussed it at length in his *Ahkam al-Quran* and proved it to be not authentic.

*21 In this verse although the real object is only to point out that in *fai* not only the people of the present generation but the Muslims of the later periods and their future generations also have a share, yet, besides, the Muslims have also been taught an important moral lesson that they should never have any malice against other Muslims in their hearts, and they should continue to pray for the forgiveness of the Muslims who have gone before them instead of cursing and abusing them. The bond that binds the Muslims together is that of a common faith. If a person values his faith as the most important thing in his heart, inevitably he would be a well-wisher of all those people who are his brethren-in faith. He can have ill-will and malice and hatred towards them in his heart only when the value of the faith decreases in his sight and he starts valuing other things more. Therefore, it is the requirement of faith that a believer's heart should be free from every trace of malice and hatred against the other believers. In this matter the best lesson is given by a Hadith which Nasai has related from Anas. According to him, once it so happened that for three days continuously the Prophet (peace be upon him) declared in his assembly that a person was going

to appear before them who belonged to the dwellers of Paradise, and every time it would be a certain person from among the Ansar. At this Abdullah bin Amr bin Aas became curious as to what deeds the person concerned performed on the basis of which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had repeatedly given the good news of his admission to Paradise. Thus, he made an excuse and spent three consecutive nights in his house to see how he performed his worship, but during the night he did not see anything unusual. At last, he asked him directly as to what special acts and devotions he performed on the basis of which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had given the great good news about him. He replied: You have seen how I perform my worship, but there is one thing which might have carved me this reward: I do not harbor any malice or evil design against any Muslim, nor feel jealous of him on account of any good that Allah might have bestowed on him.

This does not mean that if a Muslim finds an error in another Muslim's word or deed, he should avoid calling it an error. Faith does not demand this. But to describe an error as a mistake on the basis of an argument and to state it to be so in a polite and decent manner is one thing and harbor malice and hatred and resort to invective and abuse is quite another thing. It is wrong if one resorts to this in respect of his contemporaries, but worse if one resorted to this in respect of the dead people of the past. For the person indulging in such a thing would be a most filthy person for he is not even inclined to forgive the dead. And the worst

would be that a person should resort to invective and abuse in respect of those illustrious people who had done full justice to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) companionship in a period full of extreme tribulations and hardships and had struggled with their lives to spread the light of Islam in the world and enabled us today to be blessed with the faith. One can hold any opinion if he thinks that such and such party of them was in the right and such and such in the wrong in its viewpoint in the differences that arose between them, and can even express his opinion in a reasonable and decent way, but to resort to exaggeration in support of one party so that the heart is filled with spite and hatred against the other is an evil which no God-fearing person would commit. Those who indulge in such a thing against the clear teaching of the Quran, generally present the excuse that the Quran forbids to bear malice towards the believers and the ones towards whom they bear the malice were not believers but hypocrites. But this allegation is even worse than the sin in defense of which the excuse is presented. For these very verses of the Quran in the context of which Allah has taught the Muslims of the later generations not to bear malice towards the Muslims who have gone before them and to pray for their forgiveness, are sufficient to refute this allegation. In these verses three groups have been mentioned, one after the other, who are entitled to receive a share in *fai*. the Emigrants, the Ansar and the Muslims coming after them; and the Muslims of the later periods have been enjoined that they should pray for the forgiveness of the Muslims who had embraced the

faith before them. Obviously, in this context those who had embraced the faith before them could not be any other than the Emigrants and the Ansar. Then Allah in verses 11-17 of this Surah Al-Hashr itself has told us who were the hypocrites. This makes it absolutely clear that the hypocrites were the people who had encouraged the Jews on the occasion of the battle of the Bani an-Nadir; as against them, the believers were those who were on the side of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this battle. After this, can a Muslim who has any fear of God in his heart, have the boldness to deny the faith of the people to whose faith Allah Himself has borne the testimony.

Imam Malik and Imam Ahmed arguing from this verse, have expressed the opinion that there is no share in *fai* for the people who malign the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). (Ibn al-Arabi, Ahkam al-Quran; Ghayat al-Muntaha). But the Hanafis and the Shafeis have not concurred with this, the reason being that Allah while declaring the three groups to be entitled to *fai*, has praised a conspicuous quality of each group but none of these qualities is a condition which may determine whether a group should or should not be given a share in *fai*. About the Emigrants it has been said: They seek Allah's bounty and His goodwill, and are ever ready to succor Allah and His Messenger. This does not mean that an Emigrant who lacks this quality, is not entitled to have a share in *fai*. About the Ansar, it has been said: They love those who have migrated to them and entertain no desire in their hearts for what is given to them and prefer others about

themselves even though they be needy themselves. This also does not mean that a member of the Ansar who has no love for the Emigrants and who is desirous of getting for himself what is being given to them, has no share in *fai*. Therefore, the quality of the third group that they pray for the forgiveness of those who embraced the faith before them and they pray that they should not have any malice in their hearts towards any other believer is also no condition to make one entitled to *fai*, but this is in praise of a good quality and an instruction as to what should be the attitude of the believers towards the other believers and especially in respect of those believers who have gone before them.

11. Have^{*22} you not seen those who are hypocrites. They say to their brothers who have disbelieved from among the people of the Scripture: "If you are expelled, we will surely leave with you, and we will not obey in your regard anyone, ever, and if war is waged against you, we will surely help you." And Allah bears witness that they are indeed liars.

﴿ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا
 يَقُولُونَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَئِنْ أُخْرِجْتُمْ
 لَنَخْرُجَنَّ مَعَكُمْ وَلَا نُطِيعُ
 فِيكُمْ أَحَدًا أَبَدًا وَإِنْ قُوتِلْتُمْ
 لَنَنْصُرَنَّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ
 إِنَّهُمْ لَكَذِبُونَ ﴾

*22 From the style of this whole section (verses 11-17), it appears that it was revealed at the time when the Prophet (peace be upon him) had served a notice on the Bani an-

Nadir to leave Al-Madinah within ten days, but had not yet laid siege to their quarters. As has been mentioned about, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) served the notice to the Bani an-Nadir, Abdullah bin Ubayy and other leaders of the hypocrites of Al-Madinah sent them a message to the effect that they would come to their aid with two thousand men, and that the Bani Quraizah and the Bani Ghatafan would also rise in their support; therefore, they should stand firm and should never surrender to the Muslims. For if the Muslims waged a war against hem, they would fight them from their side; and if they expelled hem, they also would go out with them. Thereupon Allah sent down these verses. Thus, chronologically this section is an earlier revelation and the first section a later revelation, when the Bani an-Nadir had actually been driven out of Al-Madinah. But in the Quran the order of the two passages has been reversed for the reason that the subject matter of the first section is of greater importance

12. If they are expelled, they will not leave with them, and if war is waged against them, they will not help them. And (even) if they help them, they will surely turn their backs, then they will not be helped.

لَيْنَ أَخْرَجُوا لَا يَخْرُجُونَ مَعَهُمْ
وَلَيْنَ قُوتِلُوا لَا يَنْصُرُونَهُمْ وَلَيْنَ
نَصَرُوهُمْ لِيُوَلُّنَّ الْأَدْبَرَ ثُمَّ لَا
يَنْصُرُونَ

13. There is a greater fear of you, in their hearts, than of Allah.^{*23} That is because they are a people who

لَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ رَهَبَةً فِي صُدُورِهِمْ
مِّنَ اللَّهِ^ج ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا

understand not.*24



***23** That is, the reason why they dare not face you openly in the field is not that they are Muslim: and have fear of God in their hearts and are afraid that despite their claim to the faith when they come out to help the disbelievers as against the believers, they will be held accountable before God. But what actually restrains them from facing you is that when they see your profound love and spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion for Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the great unity and concord in your ranks, they become dispirited. They know well that although you are few in number, the spirit of martyrdom which has turned each single individual among you into a gallant warrior and the organization which has molded you into a solid body, will also crush them along with the Jews when they clash with you in the battlefield. Here one should bear in mind the fact that if a person harbors the fear of another than God in his heart, it is in fact a negation of the fear of God. Obviously, the person who considers one of the dangers as lesser and the other greater, pays no heed to the first but does whatever he can to safeguard himself against the greater danger.

***24** A great truth has been expressed in this brief sentence. A person who has sense knows that the real power to be feared is the power of Allah and not the power of men. Therefore, he will avoid every such thing as may call for the punishment of Allah, whether there is any human power to call him to account for it or not, and he will come out to

accomplish any duty which Allah has enjoined on him, whether he is opposed and hindered by all the powers of the world. But a man, who has no sense, determines his attitude and conduct in view of the human powers, instead of Allah's power, in all matters of life, because Allah's power for him is imperceptible and human powers are perceptible. If he avoids something, he will avoid it, not because of the fear of Allah's punishment for it, but because of a human power, which may be there to take him to task. And if he does something he will do is not because Allah has enjoined it, but because some human power has ordered or approved of it, and will reward him for it. This very distinction between intelligence and folly, in fact, distinguishes the character and conduct of a believer from that of an unbeliever.

14. They will not fight against you together, except in fortified townships, or from behind walls. Their enmity among themselves is severe. You think of them as united, whereas their hearts are divided.*25 That is because they are a people who have no sense.

لَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ جَمِيعًا إِلَّا فِي قُرَى
 مُحَصَّنَةٍ أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ جُدُرٍ بَأْسُهُمْ
 بَيْنَهُمْ شَدِيدٌ تَحْسَبُهُمْ جَمِيعًا
 وَقُلُوبُهُمْ شَتَّىٰ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا
 يَعْقِلُونَ



*25 This refers to the second weakness of the hypocrites. The first weakness was that they were cowardly. They feared the men instead of fearing God and had no higher aim of life before them like the believers, which might

impel them to fight for it even at the cost of life. And their second weakness was that they had no common tie between them except hypocrisy, which might unite them together into a strong band. The only thing that had brought them together was that they were all feeling highly upset at the flourishing leadership and rule of Muhammad (peace be upon him), who was an outsider in their city, and at the warm reception and help which their own compatriots, the Ansar, were giving to the Emigrants. Because of this jealousy they wanted them to join hands together and in conspiracy with the enemies of Islam of the surrounding areas should somehow put an end to this alien power and authority. But apart from this negative objective there was no positive common aim to unify them. Each of their chiefs had his own separate band, each craved for his own leadership. No one was sincere to the other, but each bore such jealousy and malice for the other that they could neither forget their mutual enmities nor desist from harming the other fatally even while facing those whom they regarded as their common enemy.

Thus, at the outset, even before the battle against the Bani an-Nadir took place, Allah analyzed the internal state of the hypocrites and informed the Muslims that there was no real danger from their side; therefore, they should not feel alarmed at the rumors that when they lay siege to the Bani an-Nadir, the leaders of the hypocrites would attack them from the rear with two thousand men, and also bring the Bani Quraizah and the Bani Ghatafan along against them. All this was empty boasting which would be exposed at the

very beginning of the trial.

15. (Theirs is) like the example of those shortly before them, they tasted the evil consequence of their affair.*26 And for them is a painful punishment.

كَمَثَلِ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَرِيبًا
ذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
أَلِيمٌ

*26 The allusion is to the disbelievers of the Quraish and the Jewish clan of the Bani Qrainuqa who had been defeated by a handful of ill-equipped Muslims in spite of their larger numbers and superior equipment, due mainly to these weaknesses.

16. The likeness of Satan when he says to man: "Disbelieve." Then when he disbelieves, he (Satan) says: "I am indeed disassociated from you. Indeed, I fear Allah, Lord of the worlds."*27

كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ
أَكْفُرْ فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ قَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ
مِّنْكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ
الْعَالَمِينَ

*27 That is, these hypocrites are treating the Bani an-Nadir in much the same way as Satan treats men. Today they are urging them to stand firm and go forth and clash with the Muslims making them believe that they would come to their aid, but when they actually clash with the Muslims, they would renounce their pledges and promises and would never even look back to see their fate. The same way does Satan treat every disbeliever, and a similar treatment had he given to the disbelieving Quraish at Badr, as has been

mentioned in Surah al-Anfal, Ayat 48. First, he incited them with false hopes and brought them out to confront the Muslims, saying: Today no one can overcome you, for I am with you. But when the two forces met in battle, he took to his heels, saying: I have nothing to do with you. I see that which you cannot see. Indeed, I fear Allah.

17. So the outcome of them both is that they will be in the Fire, abiding therein. And that is the recompense of the wrongdoers.

فَكَانَ عَاقِبَتُهُمَا أَنَّهُمَا فِي النَّارِ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ جَزَاؤُ
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

18. O you^{*28} who believe, fear Allah, and let every soul look to what it has sent forth for tomorrow.^{*29} And fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is All Aware of what you do.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

*28 It is a rule of the Quran that whenever the hypocritical Muslims are taken to task for their hypocrisy, they are given admonition also so that whoever of them has some life left in his conscience, may feel remorse for his conduct and attitude and may make an effort, out of the fear of Allah, to come out of the pit into which his worship of the self has thrown him. This whole section (verses 18-24) consists of such admonition.

*29 For tomorrow: for the Hereafter. That is, this whole

worldly life is “today”, whose “tomorrow” is the Day of Resurrection, which is going to follow it. Adopting this style Allah has, in a wise manner, made man understand the truth that just as that person is highly foolish, who gambles away his all for the enjoyment of today and does not realize whether tomorrow he would be left with anything to eat and a place of shelter or not, so is also that person only working for his own doom, who is too absorbed in making his world to pay heed to the Hereafter, whereas the Hereafter is to follow this world just as today is to be followed by tomorrow, and there he would find nothing if he has sent nothing ahead for the morrow. Besides, the other wise point here is that every person has been appointed his own censor. Unless a person develops in himself the sense of what is good for him and what is evil, he cannot appreciate whether what he is doing will make his future in the Hereafter or mar it. And when this sense becomes active in himself, he will have to calculate and see for himself whether the way in which he is spending his time, his wealth, his energies and capabilities leads to Heaven or Hell. To do so is in his own interest; for if he does not do so he will ruin his own future itself.

19. And do not be like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget their own selves.^{*30} It is those who are the disobedient.

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ
فَأَنسَاهُمْ أَنفُسَهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْفَاسِقُونَ

***30** That is, forgetfulness of God inevitably leads to

forgetfulness of one's own self. When man forgets that he is slave to the Almighty, he will inevitably form a wrong view of his position in the world, and his whole life will go wrong because of this basic error. Likewise, when he forgets that he is slave to nobody except Allah, he does not serve the one whose slave actually he is not. This also is a grave and all-pervading misunderstanding, which corrupts his whole life. Man's real position in the world is that of a slave; he is not free and self-sufficient; and he is slave of only One God, and is no one else's slave beside Him. The person who does not know this truth, does not in fact know himself. And the person who in spite of knowing this, forgets it at any moment, may commit an act at that very moment, which a disbeliever, or a polytheist or a man forgetful of God only would commit. Man's remaining firm and steadfast on the right path entirely depends on his remembering God at all times. For as soon as he, becomes heedless of Him, he becomes heedless of himself and this very heedlessness turns him into sinfulness.

20. Not equal are the dwellers of Hell and the dwellers of Paradise. The dwellers of Paradise, they are the successful.

لَا يَسْتَوِي أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ وَأَصْحَابُ
الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ
الْفَائِزُونَ

21. If We had sent down this Quran upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbling and splitting

لَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى جَبَلٍ
لَرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ

asunder by the fear of Allah.*³¹ And these are the parables We present to the people that perhaps they may reflect.

خَشِيَةَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَلُ
نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

***31** The parable means that if a huge creation like a mountain had the sense and knowledge that it had been made responsible and accountable, like man, before Allah Almighty, for its deeds, it would have trembled from the fear of it. But how heedless, senseless and thoughtless is the man, who understands the Quran, and has known the whole truth through it, yet he is neither seized by any fear nor feels worried as to what answer he would make to his God about the responsibilities that have been placed on him. On the contrary, when he reads the Quran, or hears it being read, he remains un-moved as if he were a lifeless and senseless stone, which is not supposed to hear and see and understand anything. (For further explanation, see E.N. 120 of Surah Al-Ahzab).

22. He ^{*32} it is Allah, other than whom there is no god, ^{*33} the Knower of the Invisible and the Visible. ^{*34} He is the Beneficent, the Most Merciful. ^{*35}

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ
الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ ۖ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ
الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٢﴾

***32** These verses explain what kind of God He is, and what are His attributes, Who has sent this Quran to you, Who has placed these responsibilities on you, and before Whom

you have to render an account of your deeds in the end. This mention of the divine attributes immediately after the above theme automatically gives man the feeling that he has not to deal with an ordinary being but with Almighty Allah Who has such and such attributes. Here, one should also understand that although in the Quran, the attributes of Allah Almighty have been stated in a unique way, which gives a clear concept of the divine Being, there are two places where the attributes of Allah have been mentioned in a most comprehensive way, in the verse of the *Alkursi* (Al-Baqarah, Ayat 255) and in these verses of Surah Al-Hashr.

***33** That is, He is the One besides Whom none else has the rank, position, attributes and powers of Godhead so that he may be worshiped and served as god.

***34** That is, He knows whatever is hidden from the creatures as well as whatever is known and visible to them. Nothing of this universe is unknown to Him. He directly knows whatever has happened in the past, whatever exists at present and whatever will happen in the future. He does not stand in need of any means or medium of knowledge.

***35** That is, He alone is the Being Whose mercy is limitless, which covers the whole universe and blesses and benefits everything in it. None else in the world is the bearer of such all-pervading, infinite mercy. The mercy of every other being, characterized by the ability of mercy, is partial and limited, and that quality too is not essentially its own, but bestowed by the Creator for a specific need and purpose. He has created the quality of mercy for some other creature. He has created it in order to make one creature a

means for the development and well-being of the other creature. This by itself is a proof that Allah's Mercy is infinite.

23. He it is Allah, other than whom there is no god, the Sovereign Lord,^{*36} the Holy One,^{*37} Peace,^{*38} the Keeper of Faith,^{*39} the Guardian,^{*40} the Majestic,^{*41} the Compeller,^{*42} the Superb.^{*43} Glorified be Allah above all that they ascribe as partner (unto Him).

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ
الْمُهَيَّمُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ
الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا
يُشْرِكُونَ



***36** The word used in the original is *al-Malik*, which means that He alone is the real Sovereign. Moreover, the word *al-Malik* in its general sense also gives the meaning that He is King of the entire universe and not of a particular region or of a specific country. His Sovereignty and rule comprehends the entire universe.

He is Master of everything. Everything submits itself to His command and power and authority, and there is nothing to delimit His Sovereignty. At different places in the Quran all aspects of Allah's Sovereignty have been presented and explained fully.

And whoever exists in the heavens and the earth, belongs to Him. All are obedient to Him. (Surah Ar-Room, Ayat 26).

He administers the affairs of the world from the heavens to the earth. (Surah As-Sajdah, Ayat 5).

To Him belongs the dominion of the earth and the heavens,

and all matters are referred to Him for decision. (Surah Al-Hadid, Ayat 5).

He has no partner in His sovereignty. (Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 2).

In His hand is the absolute control of everything. (Surah Ya Seen, Ayat 83).

Doer of whatever He wills. (Surah Al-Burooj, Ayat 16).

He is accountable to none for what He does, but all others are accountable (to Him). (Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 23).

Allah rules and there is none to reverse His decrees. (Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 41).

The Being Who gives protection while none can give protection against Him. (Surah Al-Momin, Ayat 88).

Say: O Allah, Sovereign of the Kingdom, You bestow kingdom on whomever You will, and You take it away from whomever You will. You exalt whomever You will and You abase whomever You will. All that is good is in Your power; indeed You have full power over all things. (Surah Aal-i-Imran, Ayat 26).

These explanations make it abundantly clear that Allah is not King in some limited or metaphoric sense but He is real King in the most perfect and complete sense of sovereignty. As a matter of fact, if sovereignty in its true sense is at all found somewhere, it is found only in Allah's Kingship. Apart from this, wherever it is claimed to be, whether in the person of a king or dictator, or in a class or group or family, or in some nation, he or it possesses no sovereignty at all, for sovereignty is not a gift, which may at one time be granted and at another time withdrawn, which may be in

danger of being usurped, the establishment and existence of which may be temporary and temporal, and the sphere of power and authority of which may be circumscribed and restricted by many other conflicting powers.

***37** *Al-Quddus* is a superlative. It means that Allah is far exalted that He should have a fault or defect or demerit. He is the purest Being. No evil can be imagined about Him. Here, one should clearly understand that the attribute of holiness is a foremost accompaniment of sovereignty. Man's intellect and nature refuse to believe that a being who is the bearer of sovereignty may be mischievous, ill behaved, ill-natured, who may be characterized with these base qualities from whose power and authority his subjects might be in danger of suffering evil instead of being blessed with good. That is why wherever man thinks sovereignty is centered, he assumes holiness also to be there, even if it is not there, for absolute sovereignty is inconceivable without holiness. But, obviously, there is no real Sovereign, nor can there be, except Allah, Who is the Holy. Whether it is monarchy, or sovereignty of the people, or dictatorship of the socialist system, or some other form of human rule, in any case holiness for it is inconceivable.

***38** The word *As-Salam* as used in the original means peace and Secure, Allah's being called *As-Salam* means that He is peace and safety personified. He is far exalted that some calamity or weakness or defect should befall Him, or His Perfection should suffer a decline or blemish.

***39** The word *Al-Mumin* is derived from *amun*, which means to secure from fear, and Mumin is one who provides

security to others. Allah has been called *Al-Mumin* in the sense that He provides security to His creatures. His creatures are secure from the fear that He would ever wrong them, or deprive them of their rights, or allow their rewards to go to waste, or would violate the promises He has made with them. Then, since no object has been mentioned with this subject, but the epithet of *Al-Mumin* has been used absolutely, it automatically gives the meaning that His security comprehends the entire universe and all that it contains.

***40** The word *Al-Muhaimin* has three meanings:

- (1) The Guardian and Protector.
- (2) The Observer who sees what everyone does.
- (3) The Being Who has taken up the responsibility to fulfill the needs and requirements of the people.

Here also, since the word *Al-Muhaimin* has been used absolutely, and no object has been mentioned of this subject, therefore, it by itself gives the implied meaning that He is guarding and protecting all creatures, is watching the acts and deeds of everyone, and has taken up the responsibility of sustaining and providing for every creature in the universe with its needs and requirements.

***41** *Al-Aziz*: such an Almighty Being against Whom no one may dare raise his head, no one may have the power to resist His decrees, before Whom everyone may be helpless and powerless.

***42** The word *al-Jabbar* as used in the original is derived from *jabr* which means setting something right by use of power, reforming something by force. Allah has been called

Al-Jabbar in the sense that He sets the system of His universe right by the use of power and enforces His will, which is entirely based on wisdom. Moreover, the word *Jabbar* also contains the meaning of greatness and glory. Thus, a palm-tree which is too tall for the people to pluck its fruit is called *jabbar* in Arabic. Likewise, an act which is grand and glorious is called *amal jabbar*.

*43 The word *Al-Mutakabbir* has two meanings.

- (1) The one who is not actually great but poses as great.
- (2) The one who is actually great and sets himself up as such.

Whether it is man or Satan, or some other creature, since greatness does not, in fact, belong to it, its posing itself as great and claiming superiority over others is, a false claim and a vice. Contrary to this, Allah Almighty is truly Great and greatness actually belongs to Him, and everything in the universe is low and insignificant as against Him. Therefore, His being Great and setting Himself up as Great is no false claim but reality; it is not an evil quality but a virtue and excellence, which no one else has but Allah.

24. He is Allah, the Creator,^{*44} the Shaper out of nothing, the Fashioner.^{*45} His are the excellent names.^{*46} Glorifies Him^{*47} whatever is in the heavens and the earth And He is the All Mighty, the All Wise.^{*48}

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَلِيقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ
لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ
مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

*44 That is, those who regard a creature as an associate in

His powers, authority, attributes, or in His Being, in fact, utter a grave falsehood, for Allah is far exalted that anybody or anything should be an associate with Him in any sense.

*45 That is, the entire world and everything in it, from the initial plan of its creation till its coming into existence in its final, finished form, is entirely Allah's work of creation. Nothing has come into existence by itself nor come about accidentally, nor has anyone else the least share in its creation and development. Here, Allah's act of creation has been described in three separate stages, which take place one after the other. First is the stage of *khalq*, which means to ordain, or to plan. It is like an engineer's conceiving the design of a building, which he intends to build for a specific purpose and draws out its detailed diagram and model. The second stage is *barr*, which actually means to separate, to cut, to split asunder. The Creator has been called *Al-barii* in the sense that He enforces the plan He has conceived and brings out the thing from non-existence into existence. It is Analogous to the engineer's putting marks on the ground of the full measurements of the building according to the plan, digging the foundations, raising the walls and completing all the practical preliminaries of the construction work. The third stage is *taswir*, which means to give shape; here it implies giving something its final complete shape. In all these three stages there is no resemblance whatever between Allah's work and human works. None of human plans is such as may not have been derived from previous models and plans. But each of Allah's plans is, unique and

His own original creation. Whatever man makes, he makes it by combining the substances created by Allah. He does not bring anything from nonexistence into existence, but composes and constructs by different methods whatever is present and available. Contrary to this, Allah has brought everything from non-existence into creation, and the substance itself of which He has made the universe is created by Him. Likewise, in the matter of giving shape also man is not the inventor but an imitator, and only a poor imitator. The real Maker of forms and shapes is Allah, Who has given a unique and matchless shape to every species and individual and has never repeated exactly the same shape or form.

***46** Names imply the adjectives, and “His are the excellent names” means that those adjectives which indicate or express some kind of defect are not appropriate for Him. He should be remembered by those names which express His attributes of Perfection. In the Quran these beautiful names of Allah have been mentioned here and there, and in the Hadith 99 names of that Exalted and Pure Being have been enumerated which Timidhi and Ibn Majah have related on the authority of Abu Hurairah. If one studies these names as mentioned in the Quran and the Hadith carefully, he can easily understand what words would be appropriate and suitable if one has to remember Allah in another language.

***47** That is, everything proclaims with the tongue, or otherwise, that its Creator is free from every fault and defect, weakness and error.

*48 For explanation, see E.N. 2 of Surah Al-Hadid.





الْمُمْتَحِنَةُ Al-Mumtahinah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

In verse 10 of this Surah, it has been enjoined that the women who emigrate to daral-Islam (the Islamic State) and claim to be Muslims, should be examined, hence the title *Al-Mumtahinah*. The word is pronounced both as *mumtahinah* and as *mumtahanah*. The meaning according to the first pronunciation being “the Surah which examines” and according to the second, “the woman who is examined.”

Period of Revelation

The Surah deals with two incidents, the time of the occurrence of which is well known historically. The first relates to Hatib bin Abz Baltaa, who, a little before the conquest of Makkah, had sent a secret letter to the Quraish chiefs informing them of the Prophet’s intention to attack them. The second relates to the Muslim women, who had started emigrating from Makkah to Al-Madinah, after the conclusion of the truce of Hudaibiyah, and the problem arose whether they were also to be returned to the disbelievers, like the Muslim men, according to the conditions of the truce. The mention of these two things

absolutely determines that this Surah was revealed during the interval between the truce of Hudaibiyah and the conquest of Makkah. Besides, there is also a third thing that has been mentioned at the end of the Surah to the effect; What should the Prophet (peace be upon him) make the women to pledge when they come to take the oath of allegiance before him as believers? About this part also the guess is that this too was revealed some time before the conquest of Makkah, for after this conquest a large number of the Quraish women, like their men, were going to enter Islam simultaneously and had to be administered the oath of allegiance collectively.

Theme and Topics

This Surah has three parts;

The first part consists of verses 1-9, and the concluding verse 13 also relates to it. In this strong exception has been taken to the act of Hatib bin Abi Baltaa in that he had tried to inform the enemy of a very important war secret of the Prophet (peace be upon him) only for the sake of safe guarding his family. This would have caused great bloodshed at the conquest of Makkah had it not been made ineffective in time. It would have cost the Muslims many precious lives; many of the Quraish would have been killed, who were to render great services to Islam afterward; the gains which were to accrue from conquering Makkah peacefully would have been lost, and all these serious losses would have resulted only because one of the Muslims had wanted to safeguard his family from the dangers of war. Administering a severe warning at this blunder, Allah has

taught the believers the lesson that no believer should, under any circumstances and for any motive, have relations of love and friendship with the disbelievers, who are actively hostile to Islam, and a believer should refrain from everything which might be helpful to them in the conflict between Islam and disbelief. However, there is no harm in dealing kindly and justly with those disbelievers who may not be practically engaged in hostile activities against Islam and persecution of the Muslims.

The second part consists of verses 10-11. In this a social problem has been settled, which was agitating the minds at that time. There were many Muslim women in Makkah, whose husbands were pagans, but they were emigrating and reaching Al-Madinah somehow. Likewise, there were many Muslim men in Al-Madinah, whose wives were pagans and had been left behind in Makkah. The question arose whether the marriage bond between them continued to be valid or not. Allah settled this problem forever, saying that the pagan husband is not lawful for the Muslim women, nor the pagan wife lawful for the Muslim husband. This decision leads to very important legal consequences, which we shall explain in our notes below.

The third section consists of verse 12, in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been instructed to ask the women who accept Islam to pledge that they would refrain from the major evils that were prevalent among the womenfolk of the pre-Islamic Arab society, and to promise that they would henceforth follow the ways of goodness which the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah may enjoin.

1. O you^{*1} who believe, do not take My enemies and your enemies as friends, extending towards them affection while they disbelieved in that which has come to you from the truth. They drive out the Messenger and you because you believe in Allah, your Lord. If you have come forth to strive in My way and seeking My good pleasure, you show them affection secretly, and I know of what you have concealed, and what you have declared. And whoever does so from among you, then he has indeed gone astray from the right way.

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا
 عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ
 تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ
 كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ
 يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ
 تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
 خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِي سَبِيلِي
 وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي تُسِرُّونَ إِلَيْهِمْ
 بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ
 وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ
 ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿١﴾

*1 It would be appropriate to give at the outset the details of the incident concerning which these verses were revealed so that the subject that follows is understood easily. The commentators agree, and Ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah, Urwah bin Zubair and others also have unanimously reported that these verses were revealed at the time when a letter of Hatib bin Abi Baltaa to the pagans of Makkah was intercepted.

It so happened that, when the Quraish broke the treaty of Hudaibiyah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) started making preparations for an invasion of Makkah, but he did not tell anyone, except a few close companions, about the goal of the expedition. At about the same time a woman arrived from Makkah, who had been a slave-girl of the Bani Abdul Muttalib, and then after her freedom had adopted singing as her profession. She complained of poverty to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and requested for financial help. The Prophet (peace be upon him) appealed to Bani Abdul Muttalib and he satisfied her need. When she was about to leave for Makkah, Hatib bin Abi Baltaa met her and quietly gave her a letter addressed to some of the Makkah chiefs and paid her ten dinars so that she kept the secret and carried the letter to the addressees secretly. When she had just left Al-Madinah, Allah informed the Prophet (peace be upon him) of it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) immediately sent Ali, Zubair and Miqdad bin Aswad after her with the instruction: Make haste. At Raudah khaki (12 miles from Al-Madinah on the road to Makkah) you will meet a woman, who carries a letter from Hatib to the pagans of Makkah. Seize that letter by any means you like. If she delivers the letter willingly, let her go; if she refuses to deliver it, kill her. When these companions reached the place, they found the woman there. They demanded the letter from her. She replied that she had a letter. They searched her but could find no letter. At last, they told her to deliver the letter, otherwise they would strip her and search her. When she

saw that there was no way of escape, she took out the letter from her hair-plait and delivered it to them, and they brought it to the Prophet (peace be upon him). When the letter was opened and read, it was found to contain information to the Quraish that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was making preparations to attack them. (In different traditions different wordings of the letter have been reported but the purport of all is one and the same). The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked Hatib what induced him to act thus. He replied: Do not make haste in this matter of mine. I have not done this because I have become a disbeliever or an apostate, and have started preferring disbelief to Islam. But the truth is that my near and dear ones are still in Makkah. I do not belong to the tribe of the Quraish, but had settled there under the guardianship of some of them. The families of the Emigrants, which are still in Makkah, will be defended and protected by their tribes and clans, but I have no tribe which could give protection to my family. Therefore, I sent this letter in order to keep the Quraish under obligation so that they did not harm my children. (According to Hatib's son Abdur Rahman, Habit had his children and brother still in Makkah at that time, and according to Hatib's own report his mother was also there). Hearing what Hatib had to say, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to the people: Hatib has told you the truth. That is, the real motive of his action was this and not any treachery against Islam or any intention to support disbelief. Umar rose and said: Permit me, O Messenger of Allah, that I should cut off this hypocrite's head. He has

been treacherous to Allah and His Messenger and the Muslims. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: This man has participated in the Battle of Badr. You may not know, O Umar, Allah may have looked favorably at the people of Badr and said: Do as you please, I have forgiven you. (The words in the last sentence are different in different traditions. In some these are to the effect: I have granted you forgiveness; in some other: I am your forgiver; and in still an other: I will forgive you). Hearing this Umar wept and said: Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge. This is a resume of those many traditions which Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, Abu Daud, Timidhi, Nasai, Ibn Jarir Tabari, Ibn Hisham, Ibn Hibban and Ibn Abi Hatim have related on the authority of several reliable transmitters. The most authentic of these is the tradition which Ali's secretary, Ubaidullah bin Abu Rafi, heard from Ali himself, and from him Ali's grandson, Hasan bin Muhammad bin Hanafiyah, heard and conveyed to the later reporters. In none of these there is any mention that Hatib was pardoned when he presented this excuse. But there is no hint either to show that he was awarded some punishment. That is why the Muslim scholars have concluded that Hatib's excuse was accepted and he was pardoned.

2. If they gain the upper hand over you, they will be enemies to you and will extend against you their hands and their tongues with

إِنْ يَتَّقَوْكُمْ يَكُونُوا لَكُمْ أَعْدَاءً
وَيَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَأَلْسِنَتَهُمْ

evil, and they wish that you would disbelieve.*2

بِالسُّوءِ وَوَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٢﴾

*2 Although what has been said up to here, and what follows in this regard, was revealed in connection with the incident relating to Hatib, Allah, instead of dwelling on his case only, has given the believers this lesson forever. It is contrary to the profession of the faith that a person should act, out of any motive or reason, in a way detrimental to the interests of Islam and subservient to the interests of disbelief when a conflict is going on between Islam and disbelief and some people have adopted a hostile attitude towards the Muslims only because they are Muslims. Even if a person be wholly free from any ill-will against Islam and acts thus not with an evil intention but for the sake of a dire personal need, the act anyhow is unbecoming of a believer, and whoever acts thus strays from the right way.

3. Never will benefit you your relationships nor your children on the Day of Resurrection.*3 He will judge between you.*4 And Allah is Seer of what you do.*5

لَنْ تَنْفَعَكُمْ أَرْحَامُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣﴾

*3 The allusion is to Hatib. As he had acted thus only in order to ensure that his mother and brother and children remained safe in the event of a war, it is being said: The relations for whose sake you have committed this grave error, will not save you on the Day of Resurrection. No one

will dare come forward in the court of Allah and say: Our father, or our son, or our brother had committed this sin for our sake; therefore, we may be punished instead of him. At that time everyone will be worried only about himself, and weighed down with the anxiety of somehow saving himself from the consequences of his own acts, not to speak of being ready to take the burden of another's sins on him. This thing has been expressed in clearer words at several other places in the Quran. At one place it has been said: To save oneself from the torment of that Day, the culprit will wish to give his children, his wife, his brother, his kinsfolk, who gave him shelter, and all the people of the earth, in ransom that this device might rescue him. (Surah Al-Maarij, Ayats 11-14). And at another place it is said: On the Day man shall flee from his brother and his mother and his father and his wife and his children. Each one of them, on that Day, shall have enough to occupy him so as to make him heedless of others. (Surah Abasa, Ayats 34-37).

***4** That is, all worldly relations and bonds of love and friendship shall be rendered void in the Hereafter. The people will not be judged as groups and parties and families, but every person will have to present himself as an individual and render his own account only. Therefore, no one in the world should commit a wrong for the sake of a relationship or friendship or fraternity, for he will himself have to face all its consequences, and no one else will become a partner in a matter of his personal responsibility.

***5** The following conclusions are deduced from the details of the case of Hatib, as mentioned above, and the verses

which were revealed in this connection:

(1) Whatever the motive of the person, it was in itself an act of espionage, and a very dangerous kind of espionage on a critical occasion. The enemy, who was absolutely unaware, had been informed of the immanent attack from Al-Madinah. Then it was not a case based on suspicion but a letter written by the concerned person himself had been intercepted, after which no other proof of the guilt was required. These were not peace but war time conditions; yet the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not place Hatib in confinement without giving him a chance of self defense. This option was also not given to him in private but publicly before the people. This makes it manifest that there is no room in Islam for such laws and regulations under which the ruler may have the right in any case to imprison a person only on the basis of his own knowledge or suspicion. Islam also does not recognize the method of trying a person secretly in secret.

(2) Hatib was not only one of the emigrants but also a participant in the Battle of Badr, and enjoyed a distinguished place among the companions. But despite this a serious crime happened to be committed by him and Allah took him to task for this in the Quran as is evident from the above verses. In the Hadith too, his case has been narrated in detail and also among the commentators there may be none who has not made a reference to it. These are some of the evidences which prove that the companions were not innocent. They also could commit errors because of human weaknesses, and errors happened to be

committed by them practically. The teaching of regarding them with respect and reverence that Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) have given, does not at all require that if one of them happened to commit an error, it should not be mentioned, for evidently, if this were their demand, neither would Allah have mentioned them in His Book, nor the companions and their successors and the traditionists and the commentators would have related their details in their traditions and books.

(3) The view that Umar expressed in the case of Hatib concerned the apparent aspect of the act. His reasoning was that the act was clearly in the nature of treachery to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and the Muslims. Therefore, Hatib was a hypocrite and deserved to be put to death. But the Prophet (peace be upon him) rejected his viewpoint and explained the viewpoint of the Islamic Shariah, saying: Decision should not be given only on the outward form of the act but it should also be seen what evidence is given by the past life and general character of the person, who happens to commit the act and the circumstances under which he commits it. The act, no doubt, smacked of espionage but did the attitude of the person concerned towards Islam and the followers of Islam until then indicate that he could do such a thing with the intention of treachery to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and the Muslims. He was one of those who had emigrated for the sake of the faith. Could he have made such a sacrifice without sincerity? He fought in a critical battle like Badr for the sake of his faith when the

Muslims were facing an enemy much better equipped and three times their number. Could the sincerity of such a person be doubted or could it be believed that he had the slightest inclination towards the Quraish. He was telling the plain truth that his family at Makkah did not enjoy the protection of any tribe or clan, which the families of the other emigrants enjoyed; therefore, he acted thus during war time only in order to safeguard his children from the persecution of the disbelievers. The facts confirmed that he did not really belong to any tribe at Makkah and this too was known that his family members were still back at Makkah. Therefore, there was no reason why his statement should be taken as false and the opinion formed that his real motive was not this but the intention of treachery. No doubt, for a sincere Muslim even with a good intention it was not lawful that he should inform the enemy of the military plans of the Muslims only for the sake of his personal interests, yet there is a great difference between the error of a sincere Muslim and the treachery of a hypocrite. Both cannot be awarded the same punishment only on the basis of the similarity between their acts. This was the Prophet's (peace be upon him) decision in this case, and Allah confirmed it in the verses of Surah Al-Mumtahinah. A careful study of the above three verses will show that in these Allah has certainly reprimanded Hatib, but it is a kind of a reprimand administered to a believer and not the one administered to a hypocrite. Moreover, no penalty, or physical punishment was awarded to him, but he was administered a severe rebuke publicly and let off,

which meant that in a Muslim society even a blot on the honor of a guilty believer and his falling into disrepute was also a very severe punishment.

(4) About the great merit of those companions who fought at Badr, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: You may not know Allah might have looked favorably at the people of Badr and said: Do as you please, I have forgiven you. This does not mean that the companions of Badr were forgiven each and every sin and they were at liberty to commit whatever sin and crime they pleased, for forgiveness had already been guaranteed to them. This was neither meant by the Prophet (peace be upon him) nor the companions ever understood it in this meaning, nor any companion of Badr after hearing this good news ever thought that he was free to commit any sin, nor ever any rule was made on the basis of this in the Islamic Shariah that if a companion of Badr happened to commit a sin, he should not be given any punishment for it. As a matter of fact, if one considers the circumstances under which this was said and the words that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used on this occasion carefully, one can clearly understand the meaning to be this: It would not be anything impossible if in view of the great and meritorious services that the companions rendered at Badr out of sincerity and devotion and at the very risk of their lives for the sake of Allah and His religion, Allah might have forgiven all their former and latter sins mercifully. Therefore, you should not suspect such a companion of treachery and hypocrisy, and should accept the excuse that

he himself was presenting for his crime.

(5) From the Quran and the Prophet's (peace be upon him) sayings it also becomes evident that a Muslim's being involved in espionage for the disbelievers by itself is not a sufficient basis for the conclusion that he has become an apostate, or is devoid of the faith, or is a hypocrite. For reaching such a conclusion if there are some other circumstances and evidences, it would be a different thing; otherwise by itself this act is only a crime, not a sign of disbelief.

(6) From these verses of the Quran it also becomes evident that for a Muslim it is in no case permissible that he should spy for the disbelievers, no matter how gravely his own life and property, or that of his near and dear ones, might be endangered.

(7) When Umar asked for the Prophet's (peace be upon him) permission to put Hatib to death for the crime of espionage, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not say that the crime was not punishable with death, but declined permission on the ground that Hatib's being a companion of Badr was an express proof of his being sincere, and the statement given by him was correct that he had acted thus not out of any good wishes for the enemies but for the sake of safeguarding his family from any possible persecution to death. From this, one section of the jurists has argued that the general law in respect of a Muslim spy is that he should be put to death, unless there are very weighty reasons for awarding him a lesser punishment or a mere reprimand. But the jurists have disputed this question. Imam Shafei

and some other jurists hold the view that the Muslim spy is punishable, but not with death. Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Auzai maintain that he will be subjected to corporal punishment and long imprisonment. Imam Malik says that he will be put to death, but the Maliki jurists hold different views on this question. Ashhab says that the Muslim ruler has vast powers in this matter. He can exercise his judgment keeping in view the circumstances of the crime and the culprit and award him any punishment. A saying of Imam Malik and Ibn al-Qasim also is to the same effect. Ibn al Majishun and Abdul Malik bin Habib say that if the culprit is a habitual spy, he should be put to death. Ibn Wahb says that the punishment of the spy is death, but if he repents of spying, he may be pardoned. Sahnun says that one cannot know whether his repentance is genuine or deceptive; therefore, he should be put to death. There is also a saying of Ibn al-Qasim in support of this. And Asbagh says that the belligerent spy is punishable with death, but the Muslim or dhimmi spy should be given corporal punishment instead of the death sentence, unless he be helping the enemies openly as against the Muslims. (Ibn al-Arabi, Ahkam al-Quran; Umdat al-Qari; Fath al-Bari.)

(8) The Hadith that has been cited above also permits that for the investigation of the crime not only the male but the female accused can also be stripped if so required. Although Ali, Zubair and Miqdad had not stripped the woman, yet they had threatened her that if she did not produce the letter, they would strip and search her.

Obviously, if it were not lawful, the three illustrious companions could not have threatened her thus. And one can understand that they must have reported the story of their expedition on their return to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Had he expressed his displeasure, it must have been reported. That is why the jurists have held it as permissible. (Umdat al-Qari).

4. There is indeed for you an excellent example in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people: “Surely, we are disassociated from you and from whatever you worship besides Allah. We have rejected you,^{*6} and there has arisen, between us and you, hostility and hatred for ever, until you believe in Allah, the One.” Except for the saying of Abraham to his father, I shall certainly ask forgiveness for you, though I have no power for you before Allah over anything.^{*7} “Our Lord, in You have we put our trust, and to You have we turned, and to You is the journeying.”

قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي
 إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قَالُوا
 لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَّاءُ مِنْكُمْ وَمِمَّا
 تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا
 بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ
 الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى
 تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحَدَهُ إِلاَّ
 قَوْلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ
 لَأَسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ وَمَا أَمْلِكُ
 لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ رَبَّنَا
 عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ
 أَنبْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ



*6 That is, we reject you. We neither consider you to be in the right nor your religion. The inevitable demand of the faith in Allah is denial of *taghut* (Satan): Whoever rejects *taghut* and believes in Allah has taken a firm support that never gives way. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 256).

*7 In other words, it means: Though there is an excellent example for you in Abraham's (peace be upon him) conduct in that he expressed disapproval of his pagan people and broke off all connections with them, yet his promise to pray for the forgiveness of his pagan father and then carrying it out practically is not worth following, for the believers should not have even this much relationship of love and sympathy with the disbelievers. In Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 113, Allah has clearly warned: It does not behoove the Prophet (peace be upon him) and those who have believed that they should pray for the forgiveness of the polytheists even though they be near kinsmen. Thus, no Muslim is allowed to pray for the forgiveness of his unbelieving kinsmen on the basis of the argument that the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had done so. As for the question, why did the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) pray thus, and did he carry out his promise practically. The answer has been provided by the Quran in full detail. When his father expelled him from the house, he had said on his departure: I bid you farewell: I will pray to my Lord for your forgiveness. (Surah Maryam, Ayat 47). On the basis of this very promise he prayed for him twice. One prayer is contained in Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 41: Lord, forgive me and my parents and the believers on the Day

when reckoning will be hold. And the second prayer is in Surah Ash Shuara, Ayat 86: Forgive my father, for indeed he is from among those who have strayed and do not disgrace me on the Day when the people will be raised back to life. But afterwards when he realized that the father for whose forgiveness he was praying, wan an enemy of Allah, he excused himself from it and broke off even this relationship of love and sympathy with him.

As regards to the prayer of Abraham for his father, it was only to fulfill a promise he bad made to him, but when he realized that he was an enemy of Allah, he disowned him. The fact is that Abraham was a tender-hearted, God fearing and forbearing man. (Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 114).

A study of these verses makes the principle manifest that only that act of the prophet is worthy of following, which they persistently practiced till the end. As regards to those acts which they themselves gave up or which Allah restrained them from practicing or which were forbidden in the divine Shariah, they are not worth following, and no one showed follow such acts of theirs on the basis of the argument that that was such and such a prophet's practice. Here also another question arises which may create confusion in some minds. In the verse under discussion, the saying of the Abraham (peace be upon him), which Allah has declared as not worth following, has two parts. The first part is that he said to his father: I will pray for your forgiveness, and the second: I have no power to get anything for you from Allah. Of these the first thing of not being a worthy examples to be followed is understandable,

but, what is wrong with the second thing that that too has been made an exception from being an example worthily of imitation, whereas it by itself is a truth? The answer is that the saying of the Abraham (peace be upon him) has been included in the exception for the reason that when a person after making a promise with another to do something, says that it is not in his power to do anything beyond that for him, it automatically gives the meaning that if it were in his power to do anything further for him, he would have done that too for his sake. This makes his relationship of sympathy with the other person even more manifest. On that very basis this second part of the saying of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) also deserved to be included in the exception, although its subject was true in so far as it does not lie even in the power of a Prophet to have a person forgiven by Allah. Allama Alusi in his Ruhul-Maani has also given this same answer to this question.

5. “Our Lord, make us not a trial for those who have disbelieved.*⁸ And forgive us, our Lord, You indeed are the All Mighty, the All Wise.”

رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
وَأَغْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ

*8 There are several ways in which the believers can become a cause of trial for the disbelievers, for which every believer should seek Allah’s refuge. For example:

(1) The disbelievers may gain upper hand over them and consider it a proof of their being in the right and the believers being in the wrong.

(2) The persecution of the believers by the disbelievers may become unbearable with the result that they may yield to them and abandon their faith and moral values. This would subject the believers to public ridicule and would provide the disbelievers with an opportunity to humiliate and debase them and their religion.

(3) In spite of being the standard-bearers of the true faith the believers may lose their moral superiority that should accrue to them as believers. And the people may see the same defects and deficiencies in their character as are commonly found in an un-Islamic community. This would give the disbelievers an opportunity to say that the faith of the believers was in no way superior to their disbelief. (For further details see E.N. 8.3 of Surah Yunus).

6. Certainly there is for you an excellent example in them, for him who is hopeful of (meeting with) Allah and the Last Day.*⁹ And whoever turns away, then indeed Allah, He is All Sufficient, Self Praiseworthy.*¹⁰

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيهِمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ
لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ
الْآخِرَ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ
الَّذِي الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

*⁹ Who is hopeful of Allah and the Last Day: Who expects that one Day he will have to present himself before Allah and is hopeful that Allah will treat him benevolently and help him attain to success in the Hereafter.

*¹⁰ That is, Allah has no need of such believers, who profess to believe in His religion as well as maintain friendly relations with His enemies. He is Self Sufficient:

His Godhead does not require that they should acknowledge Him as God. He is Self-Praiseworthy, i.e. His being praiseworthy is not dependent on the people's praising and glorifying Him. If they affirm the faith, they do so not for any good of Allah, but for their own good. And they cannot gain anything from their affirmation of the faith until they break off all connections of love and friendship with the enemies of Allah as the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and his companions did.

7. It may be that Allah will place affection between you and those with whom you are at enmity.*11 And Allah is All Powerful. And Allah is All Forgiving, All Merciful.

عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَجْعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ
الَّذِينَ عَادَيْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ مَوَدَّةً ۗ وَاللَّهُ
قَدِيرٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾

*11 Although the true believers were following the exhortation to sever their connections with the unbelieving kinsmen patiently, yet Allah knew how hard it was to break off one's connections with his parents, brothers and sisters and near relations. Therefore, Allah consoled them with the hope that a time would soon come when their same relations would become Muslims and their today's enmity would again change into love tomorrow. When this thing was said no one could understand how this would happen. But hardly a few weeks had passed after the revelation of these verses when Makkah fell and the people of Quraish began to enter Islam in large numbers, and the Muslims witnessed with their own eyes how the hope they were given

materialized.

8. Allah does not forbid you, regarding those who have neither fought you in the matter of religion, nor driven you out of your homes, that you treat them kindly and deal justly towards them. Indeed Allah loves those who are just. *12

لَا يَنْهَىٰكُمْ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ
يُقْتَلُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوا
مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا
إِلَيْهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ



*12 Here a doubt may arise in the minds. It is all right to treat the disbelievers, who are not hostile, kindly, but should only they be treated unjustly? And should the disbelievers, who are hostile, be treated unjustly? The answer is that in this context, the word justice, in fact, has been used in a special sense. It means: Justice demands that you should not be hostile to those who are not hostile to you, for it is not justice to treat the enemy and the non-enemy alike. You have every right to adopt a stern attitude towards those who persecuted you for embracing Islam and compelled you to leave your homes and pursued you even after your expulsion. But as for those who were not partners in persecuting you, you should treat them well and should fulfill the right they have on you because of blood and other relationships.

9. Allah only forbids you, regarding those who fought you in (the matter of) religion, and expelled you

إِنَّمَا يَنْهَىٰكُمْ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ
قَاتَلُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُواكُمْ

from your homes, and helped (others) in your expulsion, that you take them for friends. And those who take them for friends, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.*13

مِن دِيرِكُمْ وَظَهَرُوا عَلَى
إِحْرَاجِكُمْ أَنْ تَوَلَّوهُمْ وَمَنْ
يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ



*13 The instructions to sever relations with the disbelievers given in the preceding verses, could cause the people the misunderstanding that this was because of their being the disbelievers. Therefore, in these verses it has been made clear that its real cause is not their disbelief but their hostility to Islam and their tyrannical treatment of the followers of Islam. The Muslims, therefore, should distinguish between the hostile disbeliever and the non-hostile disbeliever, and should treat those disbelievers well who have never treated them with evil. Its best explanation is the incident that took place between Asma, daughter of Abu Bakr, and her disbelieving mother. A wife of Abu Bakr's was Qutaylah bint Abdul Uzza, who was a disbeliever and had remained behind in Makkah after the migration. Asma had been born of her. After the peace treaty of Hudaibiyah when the traffic opened between Makkah and Madinah, she came to Al-Madinah to see her daughter and also brought some gifts. Asma herself has related that she went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and asked: Should I see my mother. And can I treat her as a daughter should treat her mother. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Yes, treat her as your mother. (Musnad

Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim). Asma's son, Abdullah bin Zubair, has given further details of this incident. He says that Asma in the beginning had refused to see her mother. Then, when she received Allah and His Messenger's permission she met her. (Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim). This by itself leads to the conclusion that a Muslim's serving his unbelieving parents and his helping his unbelieving brothers and sisters and relatives is permissible when they are not hostile to Islam. Likewise, one can also spend his charities on the indigent among the dhimmis. (Al-Jassas, Ahkam al-Quran; Ruh al-Maani).

10. O you who believe, when the believing women come to you as emigrants, examine them. Allah is best Aware of their faiths. Then, if you find them to be true believers, then do not return them to the disbelievers.*¹⁴ They are not lawful for them (the disbelievers), nor are they (the disbelievers) lawful for them. And give to them (the disbelievers) that which they have spent (on them). And there is no sin on you that you marry them when you have given them their dues.*¹⁵ And do not hold back

يَأْتِيَنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا جَاءَكُمْ
 الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ مَهَاجِرَاتٍ
 فَامْتَحِنُوهُنَّ ۗ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِهِنَّ
 فَإِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوهُنَّ مُؤْمِنَاتٍ فَلَا
 تَرْجِعُوهُنَّ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ لَا هُنَّ
 حِلٌّ لَهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحِلُّونَ لَهُنَّ
 وَءَاتُوهُنَّ مَّا أَنْفَقُوا ۖ وَلَا جُنَاحَ
 عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ إِذَا
 ءَاتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ ۗ وَلَا

disbelieving women (in marriage). And ask for what you have spent (on your disbelieving wives), and let them (the disbelievers) ask for what they have spent (on their Muslim wives).^{*16} That is Allah's command. He judges between you. And Allah is All Knowing, All Wise.

تُمْسِكُوا بِعِصَمِ الْكَوَافِرِ وَسْأَلُوا
مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ وَلْيَسْأَلُوا مَا أَنْفَقُوا
ذَٰلِكُمْ حُكْمُ اللَّهِ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ



***14** The background of this injunction is that after the peace treaty of Hudaibiyah, in the beginning, the Muslim men started fleeing Makkah, while arriving at Al-Madinah they were sent back according to the terms of the treaty. Then the Muslim women started arriving and first of all, Umm Kulthum Uqbah bin Abi Muait emigrated to Al-Madinah, The disbelievers invoked the treaty and demanded return, and two brothers of Umm Kulthum, Walid bin Uqbah and Amarah bin Uqbah, came to Al-Madinah to take her back. At this the question arose whether the treaty of Hudaibiyah applied to the women as well. Allah has answered this very question here, saying: If they are Muslims, and it is ascertained that they have emigrated only for the sake of the faith and for no other motive, they are not to be returned.

Here, a complication has arisen on account of the narration of the Hadith from the viewpoint of the meaning and content, and it must be resolved. The traditions that are

found in the Ahadith about the conditions of the treaty of Hudaibiyah are mostly traditions narrated from the viewpoint of the meaning and purport. About the condition under discussion the words in the different traditions are different. In some the words are to the effect: Whoever reaches us from you, we will not return him, but whoever reaches you from us, you shall return. In some others the words are to the effect: Whoever of his companions comes to the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah without the permission of his guardian, he will send him back. And in still another, the words are: Whoever, from the Quraish goes to Muhammad (peace be upon him) without the permission of his guardian, he will return him to Quraish. The style of these traditions by itself shows that this condition of the treaty has not been reported in the actual words of the treaty, but the reporters have reported its purport in their own words. But since most of the traditions are of the same nature, the commentators and traditionists generally have understood that the treaty was general, which applied to both men and women, and the women too were to be returned according to it. Later, when this injunction of the Quran that the believing women were not to be returned, came to their knowledge, they interpreted it to mean that Allah in this verse had decided to break the treaty in so far as it related to the believing women. But this was not an ordinary thing which should be accepted so easily. If the treaty was general, without any exception in respect of men and women, it could not be lawful for one party to amend it unilaterally and change a part of it by

itself. And even if such a thing happened, it is strange that the Quraish did not protest against it, whereas they remained on the lookout for an opportunity to raise objections against everything that the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Muslims did. Had they found that the Prophet had committed a breach of the treaty conditions, they would have raised a loud clamor. But we do not find any trace of it in any tradition that they took an exception to this ruling of the Quran. Had this question been carefully considered the problem could have been resolved by reference to the actual words of the treaty. But many people paid no attention to it. If some scholars (e.g. Qadi Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi) did pay any attention, they did not hesitate to say that the reason why the Quraish did not raise any objection was that Allah had miraculously sealed their mouths in this matter. It is strange how these scholars felt satisfied at this explanation.

The fact of the matter is that this condition of the peace treaty had been proposed by the disbelieving Quraish, and not by the Muslims, and the words that Suhail bin Amr, their representative, had gotten included in the treaty were: And that whichever man (*rajul*) come to you from us, even if he be on your religion, you will return him to us. These words of the treaty have been reproduced in Bukhari (Kitab ash-Shurut: Bab ash-Shurut fil-Jihad wal-Masalahah) through authentic channels. It may be that Suhail used the word *rajul* in the meaning of a person, but this might be the meaning he had in his mind. The word written in the treaty was *rajul*, which is used for a full-

grown man in Arabic. That is why when the brothers of Umm Kulthum bint Uqbah came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and demanded her return, (according to Imam Zuhri's tradition), Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) refused to return her, saying: The condition was about the men, not the women. (Ibn al-Arabi, Ahkam al-Quran; Loam Razi, Tafsir Kabir) Until then the people of Quraish themselves were under the delusion that the treaty applied to all kinds of emigrants, men or women; But when the Prophet (peace be upon him) drew their attention to these words of the treaty, they were struck dumb and had to accept this decision.

According to this condition of the treaty the Muslims had the right to decline return of any woman who emigrated from Makkah to Al-Madinah for any reason whatsoever. But Islam was interested only in safeguarding the believing women and not to make the holy city of Al-Madinah a place of refuge for every kind of female fugitive. Therefore, Allah enjoined: Ascertain by examination the faith of the women who emigrated to you and profess to have believed; and when it is fully ascertained that they have emigrated with genuine faith, and no other motive, do not return them. Thus, the procedure adopted for carrying out this command was that the women who emigrated were questioned whether they believed in the oneness of Allah and the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and had emigrated only for the sake of Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him), and not out of any worldly consideration, e.g. hatred of the husband, or love of

somebody in Al-Madinah, or some other worldly motive. Only those women who gave satisfactory answers to these questions were allowed to stay, others were sent back. (Ibn Jarir on the authority of Iba Abbas, Qatadah, Mujahid, Ikrimah, Ibn Zaid).

In this verse a basic principle of the law of evidence has also been stated and its further clarification has been made by the procedure that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had prescribed for implementing it, The verse enjoins three things:

- (1) Examine the faith of the emigrating women who present themselves as believers.
- (2) Allah alone knows the truth about their faith; the Muslims have no means to find out whether they have really believed or not.
- (3) When it has been ascertained that they are believers, they are not to be returned.

Then, in accordance with this injunction, the method that the Prophet (peace be upon him) prescribed for examining and ascertaining the faith of the women was that the statement given by them on oath should be relied on and it should be made sure after necessary examination that they had no other motive of emigration than the faith. First, it gives the principle that for taking decision on different matters it is not necessary for the court to have direct knowledge of the truth; for the court only that knowledge is sufficient which is obtained through evidence. Second, the statement given by a person on oath will be regarded as reliable until it is proved to be false by a clear evidence.

Third, whatever declaration a person himself may make about his creed and faith, will be accepted and no search will be made into finding out, whether what he states actually constitutes his faith or not, unless there is a clear indication to the contrary. And fourth, in the personal affairs of a person, which no one else can know, his own statement will be trusted. e.g. in the matters of divorce and the waiting period (*iddat*) the woman's own statement about her menstrual course and state of purity will be regarded as reliable, whether it is true or false. According to these very rules, in the science of the Hadith also, those traditions will be accepted, the apparent state of whose reporters testifies to their being righteous, unless, of course, there are other circumstances which forbid the acceptance of a particular tradition.

***15** This means that, a Muslim who wants to marry any of these women should pay a fresh dower and marry her. The dowers to be repaid to their unbelieving husbands will not be considered their dowers.

***16** Four very important injunctions have been laid down in these verses, which relate both to the family law of Islam and to the international law.

First, that the woman who becomes a Muslim is no longer lawful for her unbelieving husband nor her unbelieving husband is lawful for her.

Second, that the marriage of the married woman who becomes a Muslim and emigrates from the abode of disbelief (*dar al-kufr*) to the abode of Islam (*dar al-Islam*) is automatically annulled, and any Muslim who likes can

marry her after paying her dower.

Third, that it is not lawful for a man who becomes a Muslim to retain his wife in wedlock if she likes to remain an infidel.

Fourth, that if there exist relations of peace between the abode of disbelief and the abode of Islam, the Islamic government should try to settle the question of the return of dowers with the non-Muslim government, thus: The dowers of the married women of the disbelievers, who become Muslims and emigrate to the abode of Islam, should be returned by the Muslims, and the dowers of the unbelieving married women of the Muslims who are left behind in the abode of disbelief, should be taken back from the disbelievers.

The historical background of these injunctions is as follows: In the beginning of Islam, there were many such men, who accepted Islam but their wives did not become Muslim, and there were many such women who became Muslim but their husbands did not accept Islam. Abul Aas, the husband of Zainab, a daughter of the Prophet (peace be upon him), was a non-Muslim and he remained non-Muslim for several years. In the early period no command had been given to the effect that the pagan husband was unlawful for the Muslim wife and the pagan wife was unlawful for the Muslim husband. Therefore, the marital relations continued to exist between them. Even after the migration for several years, it so happened that many women became Muslim and emigrated to Al-Madinah while their pagan husbands remained in the abode of disbelief. Likewise,

many Muslim men emigrated and their pagan wives were left in the abode of disbelief. But in spite of this their marriage continued. This was creating complications for the women in particular, for the men could marry other women, but this was not possible for the women. Until their marriage with their previous husbands was dissolved, they could not remarry. After the peace treaty of Hudaibiyah when these verses came down, they annulled the previous marriage between the Muslims and the pagans, and laid down an absolute and clear law for guidance in future. The jurists of Islam have codified this law under four major titles:

First, the case when both the man and the wife are in the abode of Islam and one of them becomes a Muslim and the other remains an infidel.

Second, the case when both the man and the wife are in the abode of disbelief, and one of them becomes a Muslim and the other remains an infidel.

Third, the case when one of the spouses becomes a Muslim and emigrates to the abode of Islam and the other remains an infidel in the abode of disbelief.

Fourth, the case when either of the Muslim spouses becomes an apostate.

Below we give the viewpoints of the jurists with regard to all the four cases separately:

(1) In the first case, if the husband has accepted Islam and his wife is a Christian or a Jewess, and she remains faithful to her religion, their marriage will endure, for it is permissible for a Muslim to have a wife who is a follower of

the earlier scriptures. This is agreed upon by all jurists. And if the wife of the man who has accepted Islam, is not a follower of the earlier Books, and she adheres to her faith, the Hanafis say that Islam will be presented before her; if she accepts it, the marriage will endure; if she refuses to accept it, separation will be effected between them. In this case, if consummation between them had taken place, the woman will be entitled to the dower; if there was no consummation, she will not be entitled to any dower, for separation has been caused because of her refusal. (Al-Mabsut; Hedayah; Fath al-Qadir). Imam Shafei and Imam Ahmad say that if the spouses did not have consummation, the woman would be outside wedlock as soon as the man accepted Islam, and if consummation had taken place; the woman will remain in wedlock till three menstruations. During this period if she accepts Islam of her own free will, the marriage will continue, otherwise it will become void automatically as soon as she is free from her third menstrual course. Imam Shafei also adds that it is not right to present Islam before the woman on the basis of the pledge of non-interference in religion that the dhimmis have been given by the Muslims. But this, in fact, is a weak argument; for it would be interference in the dhimmi woman's religion if she was compelled to accept Islam. It is no interference to tell her that if she accepted Islam, she would continue to be her husband's wife, otherwise she would be separated from him. In Ali's time there has been a precedent of this nature. An Iraqi landowner who was a Majusi by religion accepted Islam and his wife remained an

unbeliever, AlI presented Islam before her, and when she refused to accept it, he effected separation between them. (Al-Mabsut). Imam Malik says that if consummation has not taken place, the unbelieving wife would forthwith cease to be the wife as soon as the man embraced Islam, and if consummation has taken place, Islam would be presented before the woman, and in case she refuses to accept it, separation will result. (Ibn Qudamah, Al-Mughni).

And if Islam has been accepted by the woman and the man remains an infidel, whether he is a follower of an earlier scripture or a non-follower, the Hanafis say that Islam will be presented before the husband whether consummation between them has taken place or not. If he accepts it, the woman will continue to be his wife; if he rejects it, the qadi will effect separation between them. So long as the man does not refuse to accept Islam, the woman will remain his wife, but he will not have the right to have sexual relations with her. In case the husband refuses, separation will become effective just like an irrevocable divorce. If consummation has not taken place before this, the woman will be entitled to half the dower, and if it has taken place, the woman will be entitled to full dower as well as maintenance during the waiting period (*iddat*). (Al-Mabsut; Hedayah; Fath at-Qadir). According to Imam Shafei, marriage will dissolve as soon as the woman accepted Islam in case consummation has not taken place, and in case it has taken place, the woman will continue to be the man's wife till the end of the waiting period. If in the mean-time he accepts Islam, marriage will remain valid, otherwise

separation will take place as soon as the waiting period comes to an end. But in the case of the man, Imam Shafei has also expressed the same opinion as he has expressed about the woman as cited above. That is, it is not right to present Islam before him. But this is a weak opinion. In the time of Umar, on several occasions, the woman accepted Islam and the man was invited to Islam; when he refused to accept it, separation was effected between the spouses. There is, for examples the case of the wife of a Christian of the Bani Taghlib, which was brought before him. Umar said to the man: Accept Islam, otherwise I will effect separation between you two. He declined, and the Caliph enforced the decree. The case of a newly converted lady of Bahz al-Malik was sent to him. In her case too he ordered that Islam be presented before her husband; if he accepts it well and good, otherwise separation be effected between them. These incidents had happened in front of the companions and no dispute or difference of opinion has been reported. (Al-Jassas, Ahkam al-Quran; Al Mabsut; Fath al-Qadir). Imam Malik's opinion in this connection is that if the woman becomes a Muslim before the consummation of marriage Islam should be presented before the husband; if he accepts it, well and good; otherwise separation should be effected forthwith. And if consummation has taken place, and the woman has accepted Islam afterwards, she will have to wait till the end of the waiting period. If the husband accepts Islam in the meantime, marriage will continue otherwise separation will take place as soon as the waiting period expires. A saying of

Imam Ahmad is in support of Imam Shafei. His other saying is to the effect that the event of the difference of religion between the spouses will in any case lead to immediate separation, whether consummation between them has taken place or not. (Al-Mughni).

(2) If in dar al-kufr (abode of disbelief) the woman becomes a Muslim and the man remains an infidel, or the man becomes a Muslim and the wife (who neither is Christian nor Jew but is follower of a non-revealed religion) remains an infidel, the Hanafi viewpoint is that separation will not take place, whether consummation between them has taken place or not, until the woman completes three menstrual courses, or until she passes three months in case she is non-menstruating. If in the meantime the other spouse is also converted, marriage will remain valid, otherwise separation will take place on the expiry of the term. Imam Shafei, in this case also, distinguishes between the occurrence of consummation and its non-occurrence. He maintains that if there was no consummation, separation would occur immediately on the event of the difference of religion between the spouses. And if the difference of religion has occurred after the consummation, marriage will continue valid until the end of the waiting period. If in the meantime the other spouse does not accept Islam, marriage will dissolve as soon as the waiting period comes to an end. (Al Mabsut, Fath al-Qadir, Al-Jassas Ahkam al-Quran).

In case where along with the difference of religion between the spouses the separation of abode also takes place, i.e. one of them remains an infidel in daral-kufr (the non-Muslim

state) and the other emigrates to dar al-Islam (the Islamic state), the Hanafi viewpoint is that marriage between them will automatically dissolve. If the emigrant is the woman, she has the right to remarry immediately; she does not have to observe any waiting period. However, her husband will have to abstain from sexual intercourse until after she has discharged the menses once; and if she is pregnant, even then marriage can be contracted, but the husband must abstain from cohabitation until after the delivery. Imam Muhammad and Imam Abu Yusuf have differed from Imam Abu Hanifah in this. They say that the woman has to observe the waiting period; and if she is pregnant, she cannot contract marriage before the delivery. (Al-Mabsut; Hedayah; AI-Jassas, Ahkam al-Quran). Imam Shafei, Imam Ahmad and Imam Malik maintain that the separation of abode has nothing to do with this, for the real thing is only the difference of religions. If this difference takes place between the spouses, the injunctions to govern this are the same as those which govern it in case such a difference takes place between the spouses in the Islamic state (Al-Mughni). Imam Shafei along with his above cited opinion has also expressed the view that if the emigrant Muslim woman has emigrated after a quarrel with her infidel husband, with the intention of dissolving his marital right, an immediate separation will take place not on the basis of the separation of abode (*ikhtilaf dar*) but on the basis of her this intention. (Al-Mabsut Hedayah).

But a careful consideration of the Quranic verse under discussion clearly shows that in this matter the most sound

opinion is the one that Imam Abu Hanifah has expressed. Allah has sent down this verse concerning the believing women who emigrated and about them He has said that they are no longer lawful for the pagan husbands whom they have left behind in dar al-kufr, and has allowed the Muslims of the Islamic state to marry them after they have paid them the dowers. On the other hand, the emigrant Muslims have been addressed and enjoined not to keep those of their pagan wives in wedlock, who are left in dar al-kufr, and to ask of the disbelievers the dowers that they had given to those women. Obviously, these injunctions do not pertain only to the difference of religion, but it is the difference of abode that has given these injunctions this particular form. If on account of migration the marriages of the Muslim women with their pagan husbands had not become dissolved, how could the Muslims be permitted to marry them. And that too in a way that the permission does not contain any reference to the observance of the waiting period by them. Likewise, if even after the revelation of the command, “and you also should not hold back unbelieving women in marriage” the pagan wives of the Muslim emigrants had continued to be their wives, they also would have been commanded to divorce them. But there is no reference here to this either. No doubt, it is correct that after the revelation of this verse, Umar and Talhah and some other emigrants had divorced their wives, but this is no proof that such a thing was at all necessary, and their severing of the marital relationship with those wives depended on their pronouncing divorce on them, and if

they had not pronounced the divorce, the wives would have continued to be their legal wives.

In response to this, three events of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) time are quoted as precedents, which are regarded as a proof that even after the revelation these verses the prophet (peace be upon him), in spite of the separation of abode, allowed the marriage relationship to continue between the believing and the unbelieving spouses. The first event is this, a little before the conquest of Makkah, Abu Sufyan visited the Islamic army at Marr az-Zahran (present Wadi Fatimah) and accepted Islam, and his wife, Hind, remained a pagan in Makkah. Then Hind accepted Islam after the conquest of Makkah, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) ruled that their previous marriage would continue to be valid. The second event is that after the conquest of Makkah, Ikrimah bin Abu Jahl and Hakim bin Hizam fled Makkah and in their absence the wives of both became Muslims. Then they sought the Prophet's protection for their husbands and went and brought them back. Both the men come before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and accepted Islam and in their case too he held their previous marriages as valid. The third event relates to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) own daughter, Zainab, who emigrated to Al-Madinah and her husband, Abul-Aas, was left an infidel in Makkah. About him Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah contain a tradition on the authority of Ibn Abbas, saying that he came to Al-Madinah in A.H. 8 and became a Muslim, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) allowed his

daughter to continue in marriage with him, without renewal of marriage. But the first two of these events, in fact, do not come under the definition of the difference of abode. For the difference of abode does not mean a person's temporarily leaving one place for another, or his fleeting to another place, but the difference takes place only in case a person emigrates from one place and settles down in another place and the difference of nationality takes place between him and his wife. As for the event relating to Zainab, there are two traditions, one related on the authority of Ibn Abbas, as referred to above, and the other related by Imam Ahmad, Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah on the authority of Abdullah bin Amr bin Aas. In this second tradition it has been stated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) allowed his daughter to continue as the wife of Abul-Aas after renewal of the marriage, and with a fresh dower. Thus, in the first place, this precedent, due to the difference in reporting, no longer remains a definite argument with those who deny the legal effect of the separation of abode. Secondly, if they insist on the authenticity of Ibn Abbas's tradition, it contradicts their own viewpoint. For, according to their viewpoint, the marriage of the spouses between whom difference of religion takes place and who have consummated their marriage remains valid only until three menstruations. In the meantime if the other party also accepts Islam, the marriage continues to be valid, otherwise it dissolves automatically as soon as the third menstrual course starts. But in the case of Zainab from which they take their argument, the difference of religion between the

spouses had taken place several years earlier. Abul Aas had affirmed the faith six years after Zainab's emigration, and at least two years before his conversion to Islam the injunction had been revealed in the Quran, according to which the Muslim woman had been forbidden for the pagans.

(4) The fourth case is of apostasy. Its one form is that both the husband and the wife should become apostates together, and the other that one of them becomes an apostate and the other remains a Muslim.

If both the husband and the wife become apostates together, the Shafeis and the Hanbalis say that their marriage contracted in Islam will dissolve immediately if this happened before consummation, and after the lapse of the waiting period if it happened after consummation. On the contrary, the Hanafis hold the view that although according to common sense their marriage should dissolve, yet in the time of Abu Bakr, when thousands of people became apostates, and then again became Muslims, the companions did not direct anyone to renew the marriage; therefore, we accept this unanimous decision of the companions and admit, contrary to common sense, that in case both the husband and the wife become apostates together, their marriages do not dissolve.(Al Mabsut; Hedayah; Fath al-Qadir Al-Fiqh alal-Madhahib al-Arbah). If the husband becomes an apostate and the wife continues to be Muslim, according to the Hanafis and the Malikis, the marriage will dissolve immediately, whether this happens before consummation or after it. But the Shafeis and the

Hanbalis in this connection make a distinction between the two states. If it happens before consummation, the marriage will dissolved immediately, and if it happens after consummation it will endure till the end of the waiting period, In the meantime if the person returns to Islam, marriage will continue to hold good, otherwise, on the expiry of the waiting period, it will be deemed to have dissolved since he became an apostate. That is, the woman will not have to observe another waiting period afresh. All the four jurists agree that if this happened before consummation, the woman would be entitled to half the dower, and if after consummation to full dower.

And if the woman became an apostate, the old ruling of the Hanafis was that in this case too marriage would dissolve immediately. But later the scholars of Balkh and Samarkand gave the ruling that in case the woman becomes an apostate, separation does not take place immediately; and by this their object was to discourage the women from adopting this course in order to get rid of their husbands. The Malikis verdict is somewhat similar. They say that if circumstances testify that the woman adopted this course only as a pretence to win separation from the husband, separation will not take place. The Shafeis and the Hanbalis say that in case of the woman's turning an apostate too, the law is the same as in case of the husband's turning an apostate. That is, if she became an apostate before consummation, marriage would dissolve immediately and if after consummation, Marriage will endure till the end of the waiting period. If conversion takes

place in the meantime marriage will continue to hold good, otherwise it will be deemed to have dissolved since the time of apostasy. There is consensus with regard to the dower. If the woman became an apostate, before consummation she would not be entitled to any dower, and if she adopted apostasy after consummation, she would be entitled to full dower. (Al-Mabsut. Hedayah; Fath al-Qadlr, Al Mughni; Al-Fiqh alal-Madhahib al-Arbah).

11. And if any of your wives have gone from you to the disbelievers, and afterward you obtain (something), then give those whose wives have gone the equivalent of what they have spent.^{*17} And fear Allah in whom you are believers.

وَإِنْ فَاتَكُمْ شَيْءٌ مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ إِلَى
الْكَفَّارِ فَعَاقِبْتُمْ فَانْتُوا الَّذِينَ
ذَهَبَتْ أَزْوَاجُهُمْ مِّثْلَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ
مُؤْمِنُونَ

***17** This thing had two alternatives and the verse applies to both. First, with the disbelievers with whom the Muslims had treaty relations, they wanted to settle the matter, thus: We shall return the dowers of the women who have emigrated to us, and you will return the dowers of the pagan wives of our men who have been left on your side. But the disbelievers did not agree to this. However, according to Imam Zuhri, the Muslims, in obedience to the divine command became ready to return the dowers of the women who were left behind with the pagans in Makkah, but the pagans refused to return the dowers of the women

who had emigrated to the Muslims in Al-Madinah. Thereupon Allah enjoined that the dowers of the emigrant women, which were to be returned to the pagans, should be collected together in Al-Madinah instead of sending these to pagans; then from these collections disbursements should be made to those to whom the dowers were due from the pagans according to what was due to them.

The second alternative was that there were several converts to Islam, who had emigrated to the abode of Islam from the territories of the disbelievers with whom the Muslims had no treaty relations, leaving their pagan wives behind. Likewise, some women had also become converts and emigrated, leaving their pagan husbands behind. About them it was decreed that the matter should be settled in the abode of Islam itself on the bargain basis. That is, when the dowers were not being returned by the disbelievers, no dowers should be returned to them. Instead, the dower of the woman who had emigrated to the abode of Islam, should be paid to the person whose wife had been left with the disbelievers.

But in case the account could not be settled equitably thus, and the amount of the dower due on behalf of the disbelieving wives of Muslims, who were left in the abode of disbelief, exceeded the amount of the dowers of the Muslim women who had emigrated, it was enjoined that the deficiency be made up from the spoils that the Muslims took in the wars against the disbelievers. Ibn Abbas has related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would command that the loss of the person who did not receive his

share of the dower be made up from the spoils. (Ibn Jarir). This same view has been adopted by Ata, Mujahid, Zuhri, Masruq Ibrahim Nakhai, Qatadah, Muqatil and Dahhak. All these scholars say, that the people whose dowers are left with the disbelievers, should be paid these from the collective spoils taken from the enemy. That is, before the booty is distributed, the dead dowers of the people should be paid and then the distribution made in which these people too should be given their equal shares along with the other soldiers. Some jurists say that the loss of such people can be made up not only from the spoils but even from the *fai* properties. But a large section of the scholars does not subscribe to this view.

12. O Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you,^{*18} in that they will not associate anything with Allah, nor will they steal,^{*19} nor will they commit adultery, nor will they kill their children,^{*20} nor will they bring a slander forged between their own hands and feet,^{*21} nor they will disobey you in what is right,^{*22} then accept their pledge^{*23} and ask Allah to forgive them. Surely, Allah is All Forgiving, All Merciful.

يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ
يُبَايِعَنَّكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ
بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ
وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ
بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ
وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِيَنَّكَ فِي
مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعْهُنَّ وَأَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ
اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

***18** As we have explained above, this verse was sent down some time before the conquest of Makkah. After the conquest the Quraish started coming to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in large numbers to take the oath of allegiance. From the men he took the oath himself on Mount Safa. As for the women he appointed Umar to administer the oath to them on his behalf and to ask them to pledge that they would refrain from the things mentioned in this verse. (Ibn Jarir, on the authority of Ibn Abbas; Ibn Abi Hatim, on the authority of Qatadah). Then, on his return to Al-Madinah he ordered the Muslim women of Al-Madinah to be gathered together in a house and he sent Umar to take the oath from them. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Marduyah, Bazzar, Ibn Hibban, on the authority of Umm Atiyyah Ansariah). On the Eid day also, after his address to men, he went to the assembly of women and in his sermon to them, he recited this verse and asked them to pledge that they would refrain from the things mentioned in it. (Bukhari on the authority of Ibn Abbas's tradition). Apart from these occasions, at different other times also, the women came before the Prophet (peace be upon him) individually as well as collectively to take the oath of allegiance, as mentioned in several Ahadith.

***19** In Makkah, when the oath of allegiance was being administered, Hind bint Utbah, wife of Abu Sufyan, asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) its explanation and said: Messenger of Allah, Abu Sufyan is rather stingy. Will it be sinful if I take out something from his wealth without his permission to meet my own and my children's needs. The

Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Nay, but only, justly and lawfully; i.e. take only that much as may actually suffice for your needs. (Ibn al-Arabi, Ahkam al-Quran).

***20** This also includes abortion, whether it is abortion of the legitimate or of the illegitimate fetus.

***21** This implies two kinds of calumny:

(1) A woman's accusing other women of having illicit relations with other men and her spreading such stories among the people, for the women are generally prone to spreading such things.

(2) A woman's delivering a child by somebody else and making her husband believe that it is his. Abu Daud has related a tradition from Abu Hurairah saying that he heard the Prophet say: The woman who brings such a child into a family as does not actually belong to it, has no connection with Allah, and Allah will never admit her to Paradise.

***22** In this brief sentence two important points of the law have been stated:

First, that obedience even to the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been restricted to "in what is good", although about the Prophet (peace be upon him) no one could imagine that he would order somebody to do an evil. From this it automatically follows that no one in the world can be obeyed outside the bounds of divine law. For when obedience to Allah's Messenger himself is conditional upon "in what is good", who else can have a position to demand unconditional obedience and require the people to obey and follow each of his commands, laws, rules or customs, which are opposed to the law of Allah? The Prophet (peace be

upon him) has stated this principle, thus: There is no obedience in the disobedience of Allah; obedience is only in what is good and right. (Muslim, Abu Daud, Nasai). Our great doctors have derived this very theme from this verse, Abdur Rehman bin Zaid bin Aslam says:

Allah has not said that they should not disobey you (the Prophet) but that they should not disobey you in what is good.

Then, when Allah Almighty has made obedience even to the Prophet himself conditional upon this, how can another person have the right that he should be obeyed in anything but what is good? (Ibn Jarir).

Imam Abu Bakr al-Jassas writes:

Allah knew that His Prophet (peace be upon him) never enjoined anything but what was good. Still He restricted obedience to him only in what is good, so that no one ever may find a provision to obey the kings when they enjoined something outside the obedience of Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: He who obeys a creature in disobedience to the Creator, Allah appoints the same creature over him in power. (Ahkam al-Quran).

Allama Alusi says:

This command refutes the view of those ignorant people who think that obedience to the ruler is absolutely necessary. Allah has restricted even obedience to His Messenger (peace be upon him) only in what is good, whereas the Messenger (peace be upon him) never enjoins anything but what is good. This is meant to warn the people that obedience to no one is lawful in disobedience to the

Creator. (Ruh al-Maani).

Thus, this command in fact, is the foundation stone of the rule of law in Islam. The rule is that anything which is opposed to the law of Islam is a crime, and no one has the right to enjoin any such thing on any one. Anyone who enjoins anything against the law, is a culprit; and the one who obeys such a command is also a culprit. No subordinate can escape the punishment on the basis of the excuse that his superior officer had ordered him to do something which was a crime in the law.

The other thing which has great legal import is that in this verse after enjoining five prohibitions only one positive command has been given, namely that the Prophet (peace be upon him) will be obeyed in all good things. As for the evils, the major evils in which women of the pre-Islamic days were generally involved, have been mentioned and a pledge taken from them to refrain from them. But as for the good works, they have neither been mentioned nor any pledge taken to observe them. The only pledge that has been taken is that they will have to obey the Prophet (peace be upon him) in every good work that he enjoins. Now obviously, if the good works be only those which Allah Almighty has enjoined in the Quran, the pledge should have been to the effect: You will not disobey Allah, or You will not disobey the injunctions of the Quran. But when the pledge taken was to the effect: You will not disobey any good work that is enjoined by the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, it automatically leads to the conclusion that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been given vast

powers for the reformation of society, and it is obligatory to obey all his commands, whether they are found in the Quran or not.

On the basis of this very legal authority the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked the women to pledge that they would refrain from all those evils which were prevalent among the women of the Arabian society at that time, and gave several such commands as have not been mentioned in the Quran. One may study the following Ahadith in this connection:

Ibn Abbas, Umm Salamah, Umm Atiyyah Ansariah and others have reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) while administering the oath of allegiance to the women asked them to pledge that they would refrain from mourning over the dead. These traditions have been related by Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai and Ibn Jarir.

A tradition reported by Ibn Abbas contains this detail: The Holy Prophet appointed Umar to administer the oath of allegiance to the women and commanded that he should forbid them to mourn over the dead, for in the days of pre-Islamic ignorance women used to tear their clothes and hair, scratched their faces and bewailed in aloud voice. (Ibn Jarir).

Zaid bin Aslam has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him), while administering the oath of allegiance forbade the women to scratch their faces, tear their garments, bewail and sing verses while mourning over the dead. (Ibn Jarir). Another tradition bearing on the same subject has been reported by Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Jarir from a woman who was among the women taking the oath

of allegiance.

Qatadah and Hasan Basri say that one of the things that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had made the women to pledge also was that they would refrain from talking with the other men freely. Ibn Abbas has explained it in a tradition, thus: That they would not talk with the other men in private. Qatadah has further explained it thus: Hearing this command Abdur Rahman bin Auf said: O Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, sometimes it so happens that we are not present in the house and somebody comes to see us. The Prophet replied: I do not mean this. That is, the woman is not forbidden to tell the visitor that the master of the house is not present. (These traditions have been cited by Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatim).

Abdullah bin Amr bin al-Aas has reported another tradition from Umaimah bint-Rugaiqah, maternal aunt of Fatimah, saying: The Prophet (peace be upon him) made me to pledge that I would neither bewail the dead nor display myself like the women of the pre-Islamic paganism. (Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarir).

Salmah bint Qais, a maternal aunt of the Prophet (peace be upon him), says: I went before the Prophet (peace be upon him) with some other women of the Ansar to take the oath of allegiance. He made us to pledge that we would abstain from the things mentioned in this verse, and then said: Do not defraud your husbands. When we were about to leave, a woman said to me: Go and ask the Prophet (peace be upon him) what is meant by defrauding the husbands? When I went and asked the explanation, he replied: This

that you should defraud him of his money and expend it on others. (Musnad Ahmad).

Umm Atiyyah says: The Prophet (peace be upon him) after administering to us the oath commanded us that we would attend the Eid congregational prayers, but the Friday prayer is not obligatory for us, and he forbade us to follow the bier. (Ibn Jarir).

The people who think that the constitutional powers and authority that the Prophet (peace be upon him) possessed emanated from his position as a ruler instead of his position as a Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, and say that since he was also the ruler at the time, whatever commands he gave in that capacity were only meant to be obeyed during his time, say an absurd thing. Consider the Prophet's (peace be upon him) commands and instructions that we have cited above. If these instructions given by him for the reformation of the woman had emanated only from his position as a ruler how could these reforms then be introduced and enforced among the women of the Muslim society of the entire world forever? Which ruler has there been in the world, who might have had the position that a command issued by him just once for a reform might have become enforced in the Muslim society everywhere in the world forever? (For further explanation, see E.N. 15 of Surah Al-Hashr).

***23** Several authentic Ahadith show that in the Prophet's (peace be upon him) time the procedure of administering the oath of allegiance to the women was different from that to the men. For the men the procedure was that the ones

pledging allegiance would give their hand in the hand of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and take the oath. As for the women; the Prophet (peace be upon him) never took any woman's hand in his own hand, but adopted other different methods. In this connection, the following traditions have been reported:

Aishah says: By God, in connection with the oath of allegiance the Prophet's (peace be upon him) hand never touched any other woman's hand. While administering the oath of allegiance to a woman, he would only say to her: I have accepted your allegiance. (Bukhari, Ibn Jarir).

Umaisah bint Ruqaiyah has stated: I along with some other women went before the Prophet (peace be upon him) to pledge allegiance, and he made us to pledge according to this verse of the Quran. When we said: We will not disobey you in what is good and right, he said: As far as it is in your power. We submitted: Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) are more kind to us than we could be to ourselves. Then we said: O Messenger of Allah, stretch your hand so that we may pledge allegiance. He replied: I do not shake hands with women: I only make them take the pledge. So he made us to pledge. In another tradition she has stated: The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not take the hand of any of us in his own hand. (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim).

Abu Daud in Marasi has related this from Shabi: While administering the oath of allegiance to the women, a sheet of cloth was stretched towards the Prophet (peace be upon him), which he took in his hand and said: I do not take the

woman's hand in my hand. This same subject has been related by Ibn Abi Hatim from Shabi, by Abdur Razzaq from Ibrahim Nakhai and by Saeed bin Mansur from Qais bin Abi Hazim.

Ibn Ishaq, in Maghazi has related this from Aban bin Salih: The Prophet (peace be upon him) would put his hand in a vessel full of water and then the woman also would put her hand in the same vessel. In Bukhari, a tradition from Abdullah bin Abbas is to the effect: After giving the Eid congregational sermon, the Prophet (peace be upon him) went through the rows of the men to the place where the women were sitting. There, in his address, he recited this verse of the Quran, then asked the women: Do you promise to act according to it? A woman from the assembly replied: Yes, O Messenger of Allah.

In a tradition related by Ibn Hibban, Ibn Jarir, Bazzar and others, Umm Atiyyah Ansariah has stated this: The Prophet (peace be upon him) extended his hand from outside the house and we extended our hands from inside the house. But this does not prove that the women might have shaken hands with the Prophet (peace be upon him), for Umm Atiyyah has not made any mention of the shaking of hands. Probably on this occasion for the purpose of taking the pledge the Prophet (peace be upon him) might have extended his hand from outside and the women their hands from inside the house towards him without any of their hands touching his.

13. O you who believe, take not as friends the people

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا

upon whom Allah has become angry, who have despaired of the Hereafter just as the disbelievers have despaired of those who are in the graves. *24

غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ قَدْ يَيْسُوا مِنَ
الْآخِرَةِ كَمَا يَيْسُ الْكُفَّارُ مِنَ
أَصْحَابِ الْقُبُورِ ﴿١٣﴾

***24** The words in the original can have two meanings: First, that they have despaired of their well-being and rewards in the Hereafter just as the deniers of the life-after-death have despaired of the resurrection of their near and dear ones, who are dead and gone into the graves. This meaning has been given by Abdullah bin Abbas and Hasan Basri, Qatadah and Dahak.

The second meaning can be: They have despaired of the mercy and forgiveness of the Hereafter just as the disbelievers, who are lying in the graves, have despaired of every good, for they are certain of their being involved in the punishment. This meaning has been related from Abdullah bin Masud and from Mujahid, Ikrimah, Ibn Zaid, Kalbi, Muqatil, Mansur.



الصَّفَّ As-Saff

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah derives its name from the sentence *yuqatiluna fi sabili-hi-saffan* of verse 4; thereby implying that it is a Surah in which the word *saff* occurred.

Period of Revelation

It could not be known from any reliable tradition, but a study of its subject-matter shows that this Surah probably was revealed in the period closely following the Battle of Uhud, for by reading between the lines perceives a clear description of the conditions that prevailed in that period.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is to exhort the Muslims to adopt sincerity in faith and to struggle with their lives in the cause of Allah. It is addressed to the Muslims with weak faith as well as those who had entered Islam with a false profession of the faith and also those who were sincere in their profession. Some verses are addressed to the first two groups, some only to the hypocrites, and some only to the sincere Muslims. The style itself shows where one particular group has been addressed and where the other.

At the outset the believers have been warned to the effect: Most hateful it is in the sight of Allah that you should say that which you do not do, and He indeed loves those who fight in the cause of the truth, standing like a solid structure, against the enemies of Allah.

In verses 5-7 the people of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) community have been warned that their attitude towards their Messenger (peace be upon him) and their religion should not be like the attitude that the Israelites had adopted towards the Prophets Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them). In spite of acknowledging the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) as a Messenger of God they continued to malign him as long as he lived, and in spite of witnessing clear signs from the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) they denied him without any hesitation. Consequently, the Israelites became perverse, incapable of benefiting from divine guidance. This is certainly not an enviable state which another nation should imitate.

Then, in verses 8-9 a proclamation has been made with the challenge: The Jews and the Christians, and the hypocrites, who are conspiring with them, may try however hard they may to extinguish this light of Allah, it will shine forth and spread in the world with all its brightness, and the religion brought by the true Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah shall prevail over every other religion however hateful it may be to the pagans and polytheists.

In verses 10-13, the believers have been told that the way to success both here and in the Hereafter is only one: that they should believe in Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon

him) sincerely and should exert their utmost in Allah's way with their selves and their wealth. As a reward for this they will earn immunity from Allah's punishment, forgiveness of their sins and the eternal Paradise in the Hereafter, and will be blessed with Allah's good pleasure, succor and victory in the world.

In conclusion, the believers have been exhorted to the effect that just as the disciples of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) had helped him in the cause of Allah, so should they also become helpers of Allah, so that they too are blessed with the same kind of good pleasure and approval of Allah as had been the believers before them against the disbelievers.

1. Glorifies Allah whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And He is the All Mighty, the All Wise.*¹

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

*¹ This is a brief introduction to this discourse. For its explanation, see E.Ns 1,2 of Surah Al-Hadid. The discourse has been opened with this introduction so that before hearing or reading what is going to follow, one may well understand that Allah is free from and far above this that the functioning of His Godhead should depend on someone's faith and another one's help and sacrifices. If He exhorts the believers to adopt sincerity in faith and urges them to exert their utmost for the success and victory of the truth, that is for the sake of their own good; otherwise the will of Allah is accomplished by His own power and by His

own design, whether somebody makes no effort at all towards its implementation, and whether the whole world joins together to frustrate and resist it stubbornly.

2. O you who believe, why do you say that which you do not do.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوۡا لِمَ تَقُوۡلُوۡنَ
مَا لَا تَفْعَلُوۡنَ ﴿٢﴾

3. Most hateful it is in the sight of Allah that you should say that which you do not do.^{*2}

كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنۡدَ ٱللَّهِ اَنۡ تَقُوۡلُوۡا
مَا لَا تَفْعَلُوۡنَ ﴿٣﴾

^{*2} One meaning of this passage is general as is apparent from its words. It has a special meaning also, which becomes evident when this verse is read along with the verse that follows. The first meaning is that there should be complete agreement between a true Muslim's word and deed: he should carry into effect whatever he says, and when he has no intention of doing it, or has no power for it, he should not say it. To say one thing and do another is one of the most hideous characteristics of man, in the sight of Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has explained that a person's being characterized by this quality is a sign that he is not a believer but a hypocrite. According to a Hadith, he said: The hypocrite has three signs even if he offered the Prayer and observed the Fast, and professed to be a Muslim: That is when he spoke he lied; when he made a promise, he broke it; and when he was entrusted with something, he proved dishonest. (Bukhari, Muslim).

In another Hadith he said: Four characteristics are such

that the one who has all four, is a hypocrite through and through, and the one who has one of these, has one characteristic of hypocrisy in him until he gives it up. That is when he is entrusted with something, he proves dishonest; when he speaks, he lies; when he makes a promise, he breaks it; and when he quarrels he crosses all limits of morality and decency. (Bukhari, Muslim).

The jurists of Islam have almost unanimously held the view that if a person makes a pledge to Allah (e.g. vows to do something), or enters into an agreement with others, or promised somebody to do something, it is obligatory for him to fulfill it, unless the thing he has promised is by itself sinful. If it is sinful, he should not observe or carry out the agreement or promise, but should expiate its violation as mentioned in Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 89 above. (Al-Jassas and Ibn alArabi, Ahkam al-Quran).

This much for the general meaning of these verses. As for their special meaning, it becomes obvious when these are read along with the verse that follows. The object is to reprove those people who talked much and made tall promises to fight and lay down their lives in the cause of Islam, but when the time came of their test and trial, they fled the battlefield. The people of weak faith have been taken to task for this weakness at several places in the Quran. For instance, in Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 77, it has been said: Have you also marked those to whom if was said, withhold your hands (a while from war) and establish the salat and pay the zakat. Now that they have been commanded to fight, some of them fear the people as they

should fear Allah, or even more than that. They say: Our Lord, why have You prescribed fighting for us? Why have You not given us further respite. And in Surah Muhammad, Ayat 20: Those who have believed, were saying, why is not a Surah sent down (to enjoin fighting). But when a decisive Surah was sent down in which fighting had been mentioned, you saw those in whose hearts was a disease, looking towards you like the one under the shadow of death. On the occasion of the Battle of Uhud in particular, the weaknesses to which allusions have been made continuously from verse 121 to verse 171 of Surah Aal-Imran became all the more conspicuous and visible. The commentators while explaining the background of the revelation of these verses have mentioned the different forms of the weaknesses to which exception has been taken here. Ibn Abbas says that before the fighting was proscribed, there were some people among the Muslims who said: Would that we could know the act that is most lovable in the sight of Allah, so that we would perform the same. But when they were told that it was fighting in the cause of Allah, it became most difficult for them to carry out their promise. Muqatil bin Hayyan has stated that in the Battle of Uhud these very people were put to the test, and they abandoned the Prophet (peace be upon him) and fled. Ibn Zaid says that many of the people made the Prophet (peace be upon him) believe that they would go out with him to fight the enemy whenever it was so required, but when the time of the test came their promises proved false. Qatadah and Dahhak say that if some people did take

pan in the battle, they accomplished nothing, but on their return from the battlefield they boasted and bragged, saying: We put up a brave fight and we achieved such and such a victory. It is such people who have been rebuked by Allah in these verses.

4. Indeed, Allah loves those who fight in His Way in ranks as though they were a structure joined firmly.*3

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ
فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا كَأَنَّهُمْ بِنِينَ
مَرْصُوصُونَ

*3 First, it shows that only those believers are blessed with Allah's good pleasure and approval, who are prepared to fight in His way, disregarding every kind of danger. Secondly, that Allah likes an army which has three characteristics:

(1) It fights in Allah's way with full understanding, and does not fight for a cause disapproved by Allah.

(2) It is not undisciplined, but is well-organized and well-arrayed for battle.

(3) It offers stiff resistance to the enemy as though it were a solid cemented structure. Then, this last quality is by itself highly meaningful. No army can stand in the battle array like a solid structure unless it has the following characteristics.

(1) Complete agreement in the faith and the objective, which should smite soldiers and officers in a well-knit body.

(2) Confidence in one another sincerity, which cannot be created unless everybody is genuinely sincere in his aim

and free from impure motives; otherwise the severe test of war will not allow anyone's insincerity to remain hidden, and when confidence is lost, the members of the army start suspecting instead of trusting one another.

(3) A high standard of morality without which neither can the officers and soldiers of the army have love and respect for each other, nor can they remain immune from mutual clashes and conflicts.

(4) Love of the common objective and a firm resolve to achieve it, which should inspire, the whole army with an invincible spirit of gallantry, devotion and self sacrifice, so that it may actually face the enemy like a solid cemented structure in the battle field.

Such were the foundations on which a powerful military organization was raised under the leadership of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Mighty powers of the day clashed with it and were annihilated. No power of the world then could dare face it for centuries.

5. And when Moses said to his people: "O my people, why do you hurt me, and you certainly know that I am indeed Allah's messenger to you."^{*4} So, when they went astray, Allah caused their hearts to become astray. And Allah does not guide the disobedient people.^{*5}

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يٰقَوْمِ
لِمَ تُوذُونِي وَقَدْ تَعْلَمُونَ أَنِّي
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا
زَاغَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي
الْقَوْمَ الْفٰسِقِينَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

***4** At several places in the Quran details have been given of how the Israelites in spite of acknowledging the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) as a Prophet of God and their own benefactor maligned him and proved disloyal to him. For this see Surah Al Baqarah, Ayats 51, 55, 60, 67-71; Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 153; Surah Al-Maidah, Ayats 20-26; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 138-141; 148-151; Surah TaHa, Ayats 86-98. In the Bible too, the Jewish history written by the Jews themselves is replete with such events; for instance, see Exodus, 5: 20-21, 14: 11- 12, 16: 2-3, 17: 3-4; Numbers, 11: 1-15, 14: 1-10, ch. 16, 20: 1-5. Here, allusion to these events is meant to warn the Muslims that they should not adopt the same attitude towards their Prophet as the Israelites had adopted towards their Prophet, otherwise they would meet the same fate as was met by the Israelites.

***5** That is, it is not Allah's way to force the people to follow the right way of guidance if they are bent upon following the crooked ways of sin and disobedience. From this it automatically follows that the deviation of a person or nation is not initiated by Allah but by the person or the nation itself. But the law of Allah is that He provides means of deviation only for the one who chooses deviation, so that he may go astray into whatever alleys he may like. Allah has granted man the freedom of choice. Now it is for every man and for every group of men to decide whether he or it wants to obey their Lord, or not, and whether he or it chooses the right way for it or one of the crooked ways. There is no compulsion from Allah in this choice. If somebody chooses the way of obedience and guidance,

Allah does not push him forcibly towards deviation and disobedience; and if somebody is resolved to follow disobedience instead of the way of righteousness, it is not Allah's way to make him adopt the way of obedience and guidance forcibly. But this also is the truth that a person who chooses a particular way for himself, cannot follow it practically unless Allah provides for him the ways and means and creates for him the conditions which are necessary for following it. This is Allah's grace and favor without which no one's efforts can be meaningful and productive. Now, if a person is not at all interested in seeking Allah's grace for righteousness, but seeks His grace for adopting evil, he is given the same. And when he receives the grace for doing evil, he becomes temperamentally perverse accordingly and the course of his action and effort goes on becoming crooked until at last the capability to do and accept good in him is gradually lost and destroyed. This is what is meant by, when they adopted perverseness, Allah caused their hearts to become perverse. In this state it is against the law of Allah that the one who wants to adopt deviation, and is actively and earnestly engaged in seeking it, and is expending all his thought and energy to move further and further on towards it, should be forcibly turned towards guidance, for such an action would negate the object of the test and trial, for which man has been granted the freedom of choice in the world. For if a man adopts righteousness through such guidance, there is no reason why he should be entitled to any reward whatever. Rather in such a case, the one who was not

guided forcibly and was left in deviation on that account, should not be subjected to any punishment, for the responsibility for his deviation would lie on Allah, and at the time of his accountability in the Hereafter, he could present the argument: When there existed the rule of granting guidance forcibly in the world, why was I deprived of that favor? This is the meaning of the words: Allah does not guide the transgressors. That is, Allah does not grant the favor of adopting the way of obedience to those, who have chosen the way of sin and disobedience for themselves of their own free will.

6. And when Jesus, son of Mary, said:^{*6} “O children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you, confirming that which was (revealed) before me of the Torah,^{*7} and giving the good news of a messenger who shall come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad.”^{*8} Then when he came to them with clear signs, they said: “This is plain magic.”^{*9}

وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَبْنِي
إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ
مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ
التَّوْرَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ
بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ
بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ

*6 This relates to the second disobedience of the children of Israel. The first disobedience they committed in the beginning of their great era of power and prosperity, and this second towards the very end of it, after which they

came under the wrath and curse of God for ever and ever. The object of relating these two events here is to warn the Muslims of the consequences of adopting the attitude of disobedience towards their Prophet as the Israelites had adopted towards their Prophet.

*7 This sentence has three meanings and all three are correct:

(1) That I have not brought any new religion, but the same religion that the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had brought. I have not come to repudiate the Torah, but to confirm it just as the Messengers of God have always been confirming the Messengers who came before them. Therefore, there is no reason why you should hesitate to acknowledge my apostleship.

(2) I answer to the good news that is there in the Torah about my advent. Therefore, instead of opposing me you should receive, and welcome me as the one whose coming had been foretold by the former Prophets.

(3) The Third meaning becomes obvious when the sentence is read along with the sentence which follows it and it is this: I confirm the good news given by the Torah about the coming of Allah's Messenger, named Ahmad (peace be upon him), and give the good news of his coming myself. According to this third meaning, this saying of the Prophet Jesus (peace be on him) alludes to the good news which the Prophet Moses (peace be on him) had given to his people about the advent of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). In it he says:

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from

the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying: Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. (Deut. 18: 15-19).

This is an express prophecy of the Torah, which applies to none but the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In it the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) is conveying to his people this direction of Allah: I will raise up for you a Prophet from among your brethren. Obviously, the brethren of a nation cannot be a tribe or a family of the nation itself, but another nation to which it is related racially. If it had implied the coming of a Prophet from among the children of Israel themselves, the words would have been to the effect: I shall raise up a Prophet for you from among yourselves. Hence, the brethren of the Israelites can inevitably imply the Ishmaelites, who are their relatives by lineage, being the children of the Prophet Abraham (peace be on him). Moreover, no Israelite Prophet can correspond to this prophecy for the reason also that not one but many Prophets appeared among the

Israelites after the prophet Moses and the Bible is replete with their history.

The other thing foretold in the prophecy is that the Prophet to be raised up would be like unto the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). This obviously does not imply that he would resemble the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) in physical features or circumstances of life, for in this respect no individual can ever be like another individual; it also does not mean the resemblance in the characteristics of Prophethood, for this characteristic is common to all those Prophets who came after the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). Therefore, no Prophet can have this quality that he should be like unto him in this characteristic. Thus, resemblance in these two aspects becomes out of the question. The only aspect of resemblance on the basis of which the peculiarity of a Prophet of the future becomes understandable is that that Prophet should be a bearer of divine law like the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). And this peculiarity is found in none but the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), for all the Prophets who appeared before him among the Israelites were the followers of the Law of Moses (peace be upon him); none of them had brought a permanent divine law of his own.

This interpretation is further strengthened by these words of the prophecy. According to all that thou (i.e. the Israelites) desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord thy God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto them, They

have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth. In this passage Horeb means the mountain on which the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had received the divine law first of all, and the prayer that the Israelites made was: If we are given a divine law in the further, it should not be given to us under the dreadful conditions like those which were created at the foot of Mt. Horeb while giving us the law. These conditions have been mentioned both in the Quran and in the Bible. (See Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 55, 56, 63; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 155, 171. Bible: Exodus, 19: 17-18). In answer to it, the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) tells the Israelites: Allah has granted your prayer. He says that He will raise up a Prophet for you, in whose mouth He will put His own words. That is, at the time of bestowing the new divine law, He will not create the dreadful conditions which were created at the foot of Mt. Horeb. Instead of that, divine words will be put in the mouth of the Prophet who would be appointed to that office, and he will recite those words before the people. A study of this explanation leaves no room for the doubt that the prophecy applies to another than the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Only he after the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) has been granted an enduring and permanent divine law. At its bestowal no assembly of the people was called as was called of the Israelites at the foot of Mt. Horeb, and no such conditions were created during the time it was bestowed as were created in their case there.

***8** This is a very important verse of the Quran, which has been subjected to severe adverse criticism as well as treated with the worst kind of criminal dishonesty by the opponents of Islam, for it says that the Prophet Jesus (peace be on him) had given the good news of the coming of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) by name. Therefore, it is necessary that we study and discuss it in some details.

(1) In this verse the name mentioned of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is Ahmad. Ahmad has two meanings: the one who gives the highest praise to Allah, and the one who is most highly praised by others, or the one who is most worthy of praise among men. Authentic traditions confirm that this too was a well known name of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Muslim and Abu Daud Tayalisi have related on the authority of Abu Musa al-Ashari that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: I am Muhammad, I am Ahmad, and I am the Assembler. Other traditions on the subject have been related by Imam Malik, Bukhari, Muslim, Darimi, Tirmidhi, and Nasai from Jubair bin Mutim, This name of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was well known among the companions as is borne out by the poetry of Hassan bin Thabit.

It is also confirmed by history that the sacred name of the Prophet was not only Muhammad (peace be upon him) but also Ahmad. Arabic literature bears evidence that nobody in Arabia had been named Ahmad before the Prophet (peace be upon him), and after him innumerable people have been named Ahmad in the world. This is the greatest

proof that since his Prophethood this name has been most well known among the people of his community. Had it not been a name of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the parents would not have named their children Ghulam Ahmad, assigning them Ahmad's slavery.

(2) The Gospel of St. John bears evidence that at the advent of the Prophet Jesus Christ (peace be upon him), the Israelites were awaiting the appearance of three persons: of the Christ, of Elias (i.e. the second coming of the Prophet Elias) and of that prophet.

In the words of the Gospel: And this is the record of John (the Prophet John: Yahya) when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered: No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? That we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptize thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? (John, 1: 19-25).

These words expressly show that the Israelites were awaiting another Prophet besides the Prophet Christ (peace be upon him) and the Prophet Elias (peace be upon him), and he was not the Prophet John (peace be upon him). The belief about the coming of that Prophet was so well known

and well established among the Israelites that a mere reference to him as “that prophet” was enough to call attention to him without any need to add: The one who has been foretold in the Torah. Furthermore, it also shows that the advent of the prophet to whom they were referring was absolutely confirmed, for when these questions were asked of the Prophet John (peace be upon him), he did not say that no other prophet was to come and therefore the questions were irrelevant.

Consider now the predictions that have been cited in the Gospel of St. John from chapter 14 to chapter 16 continuously:

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but ye know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you. (14: 16-17).

These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (14: 25-26).

Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. (14: 30).

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me. (15: 26).

Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come

unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. (16: 7).

I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you. (16: 12 15).

(4) In order to determine the exact meaning of these passages one should first know that the language spoken by the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) and his contemporary Palestinians was a dialect of the Aramaic language, called Syriac. More than 200 years before the birth of Jesus (peace be upon him) when the Seleucides came to power, Hebrew had become extinct in this territory and been replaced by Syriac. Although under the influence of the Seleucide and then the Roman empires, Greek also had reached this area, it remained confined only to that class of the people, who after having access to the higher government circles, or in order to seek access to them, had become deeply Hellenized. The common Palestinians used a particular dialect of Syriac, the accents and pronunciations and idioms of which were different from the Syriac spoken in and around Damascus. The common people of the country were wholly unaware of Greek. So much so that when in A.D. 70 the Roman General Titus, after taking Jerusalem, addressed the citizens in Greek, he had to be

translated into Syriac, This makes it evident that whatever the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) spoke to his disciples must necessarily be only in Syriac.

Secondly, one should know that all the four Gospels contained in the Bible were written by the Greek-speaking Christians, who had entered Christianity after the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). The traditions of the sayings and acts of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) reached to them through the Syriac speaking Christians, not in the written form but as oral traditions, and they translated these Syriac traditions into their own language and incorporated them in their books. None of the extant Gospels was written before 70. The Gospel of St. John was probably compiled a century after the Prophet Jesus in Ephesus, a city in Asia Minor. Moreover, no original copy even of these Gospels in Greek, in which these were originally written, exists. None of the Greek manuscripts that have been discovered and collected from here and there belong to the period before the inventions of printing dates before the 4th century. Therefore, it is difficult to say what changes might have taken place in these during the first three centuries. What makes it particularly doubtful is that the Christians have been regarding it as quite lawful to tamper with their Gospels intentionally as and when they liked. The author of the article Bible in Encyclopedia Britannica (Ed. 19731) writes:

The main sources of the evidence and of the variations are the manuscripts of the N.T., dating from the and to the 10th century or even later. In the process of copying, these

manuscripts underwent the revisions that necessitate textual criticism. Some of these revisions were unintentional, as the scribe skipped a word or a line or as he mistook one character for another. Other revisions came from the desire of the scribe to harmonize the text of one Gospel with another or of one Testament with the other; or from his pious wish to correct or clarify the text at another point. But now that variations in the text exist, collection of the manuscripts is a difficult task.

Under such conditions as these, it is very difficult to say with absolute certainty that the sayings of the Prophet Jesus (peace be on him) found in the Gospels have been preserved, reproduced and cited faithfully and accurately, and that no change has taken place anywhere.

The third and a very vital point is that even after the conquest by the Muslims, for about three centuries, the Palestine Christians retained Syriac, which was not replaced by Arabic until the 9th century A.D. The information that the Muslim scholars of the first three centuries obtained through the Syriac speaking Christians about the Christian traditions, should be more authentic and reliable than the information of those people whom it reached through translation after translation from Syriac into Greek and then from Greek into Latin. For there were greater chances of the original Syriac words spoken by the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) remaining preserved with the Palestinian Christians than with others.

(5) Keeping these undeniable historical facts in mind, let us consider the fact that in the passages cited from St. John's

Gospel above, the Prophet Jesus (peace be on him) is giving the news about one coming after him, about whom he says: He will be the prince of this world (Sarwar Alam), he shall abide with you forever, he will guide you into all truth and he shall testify of me (i.e. of Jesus himself). By interpolating words like the Holy Ghost and the Spirit of truth, in the passages of St. John. every effort has been made to corrupt the real meaning, but despite that if these passages are read carefully, one can clearly see that the one whose coming has been foretold, will not be a spirit but a man, and an extraordinary man, whose teaching will be universal, all pervasive and enduring till the Last Day. For this particular person the word Madadgar (helper) has been used in the Urdu translation, and the Greek word used in St John's original Gospel, according to the Christians, was Paracletus. But the Christian scholars themselves have been faced with great difficulties in determining its meaning. In the original Greek Paraclete has several meanings: to call to a particular place, to call for help, to warn, to tempt and incite, to implore and pray. Moreover, in Hellenic sense, it gives these meanings: to console, to give satisfaction, to encourage. Wherever this word has been used in the Bible, it does not fit in well with the context anywhere. Origen has translated it consolator at some places and deprecator at others. But the other commentators have rejected both these translations, for in the first place these are not correct according to Greek grammar; second, these meanings do not go well with context wherever this word has occurred in the passages. Some other translators have translated it

Teacher, but this meaning, too, cannot be derived from the Greek usage, Tertullian and Augustine have preferred the word Advocate, and some other scholars have adopted words like assistant, comforter, cosoler, etc. (See Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature under Peracletus).

(6) Now, it is interesting to note that in Greek itself there is another word pericyltos, which means the praised one. This word is exactly synonymous with Muhammad (peace be upon him). In pronunciation it closely resembles Peracletus. It cannot be a remote possibility that the Christians who have been used to making alterations in their religious books as and when they liked, might have effected a little variation in the spelling of this word in the prophecy related by St. John when they saw that it went against their set belief and creed. The original Greek Gospel composed by St. John does not exist either; therefore it is not possible to check which of the two words had actually been used in it.

(7) But the decision is not solely dependent on this as to which word had St. John actually used in Greek, for in any case that too was, a translation and the Prophet Jesus' (peace be upon him) language, as we have explained above, it was Palestinian Syriac. Therefore, the word that he might have used in his good news must necessarily be a Syriac word. Fortunately, we find that original Syriac word in the Life of Muhammad by Ibn Hisham. Along with that we also come to know its synonymous Greek word from the same book. Ibn Hisham, on the authority of Ibn Ishaq, has reproduced the complete translation of 15: 23-27 and of

16:1 of the Gospel according to yuhannus (Yuhanna: John), and has used the Syriac word Munhamanna instead of the Greek Paraclete. Then, Ibn Ishaq or Ibn Hisham has explained it this: The Munhamanna in Syriac means Muhammad and in Greek the Peracletus. (Ibn Hisham, vol. 1, p. 248).

Now, historically, the language of the common Palestinian Christians until the 9th century A.D. was Syriac. This land was included in the Islamic territories in the first half of the 7th century. Ibn Ishaq died in 768 A.D. and Ibn Hisham in 828 A.D. This means that in the time of both the Palestinian Christians spoke Syriac, and for neither it was difficult to have contacts with the Christian subjects of their country. Moreover, in those days there also lived hundreds of thousands of Greek speaking Christians in the Islamic territories. Therefore, It was also not difficult for them to find out which particular word of Greek was synonymous with a certain word of Syriac. Now, if in the translation reproduced by Ibn Ishaq the Syriac word Munhamanna has been used, and Ibn Ishaq or Ibn Hisham has explained that its Arabic equivalent is Muhammad and Greek Peracletus, there remains no room for the doubt that the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) had given the good news of the coming of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself by name. Along with that it also becomes known that in the Greek Gospel of John the word actually used was Pericyltos, which the Christian scholars changed into Peracletus at some later time.

(8) Even an older historical evidence in this connection is

the following tradition from Abdullah bin Masud:

When the Negus summoned the emigrants from Makkah to his court and heard the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from Jaafar bin Abi Talib, he said: God bless you and him from whom you have come. I bear witness that he is Messenger of Allah, and he is the same one whose mention we find in the Gospel, and the same one good news about whom had been given by Jesus (peace be upon him) son of Mary. (Musnad Ahmad). This has been related in Hadith from Jaafar himself and also from Umm Salamah. This not only proves that in the beginning of the 7th century the Negus knew that the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) had foretold the coming of a Prophet, but also that a clear pointer to that prophet existed in the Gospel on the basis of which the Negus did not take long to form the opinion that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was that prophet. However, from this tradition one cannot know whether the source of information with the Negus about the good news given by the Prophet Jesus was (peace be upon him) this same Gospel of St. John, or whether there existed some other means also at that time for this information.

(9) The truth is that the four Gospels which the Christian Church has recognized as Canonical are neither an authentic means of knowing the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) Prophecies about the Prophet (peace be upon him) nor are they a reliable source for knowing the correct biography and the original teachings of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) himself, but by far the more trust-

worthy means for this is the Gospel of Barnabas which the Church has declared as heretical and apocryphal. The Christians have done whatever they could to conceal it, and it remained lost to the world for centuries. In the 16th century only one copy of its Italian translation existed in the library of Pope Sixtus V, and no one was allowed to read it. In the beginning of the 18th century it came into the hands of one John Toland. Then, changing different hands it found its way in 1738 into the Imperial Library of Vienna, In 1907 an English translation of this Italian manuscript was printed at the Clarendon Press, Oxford, but probably soon after its printing the Christian world realized that the book cut at the very root of the faith which was attributed to the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). Therefore, its printed copies were destroyed somehow, and then it never went into print any more. Another copy of it, a Spanish translation from the Italian manuscript, existed in the 18th century, which has been mentioned by George Sale in his Preface and Preliminary Discourse to the English translation of the Quran. This too was made to disappear, and no trace of it exists anywhere today. I had an opportunity to see a copy of the English translation published from Oxford and I have read it word by word. I feel that it is indeed a great blessing of which the Christians have kept themselves deprived only out of prejudice and stubbornness.

Wherever this Gospel is mentioned in Christian literature, it ill condemned as a forged Gospel, which perhaps some Muslim has composed and ascribed to Barnabas. But this is

a great falsehood which has been uttered only for the reason that it contains at several places clear prophecies about the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In the first place, a perusal of this Gospel shows that it could not have been written by a Muslim. Secondly, had it been written by a Muslim, it would have spread extensively among the Muslims and the writings of the Islamic scholars would have contained plentiful references to it. On the contrary, the Muslims had no knowledge of its existence before George Sale wrote his Preliminary Discourse to his translation of the Quran. No mention of any kind is found of the Gospel of Barnabas in the books of the Muslim writers like Tabari, Yaqubi, Masudi, Al-Benrni, Ibn Hazm and others, who were fully conversant with Christian literature when they discuss Christianity. The best catalogs of the books found in the libraries of the Islamic world were Al-Fihrist of Ibn an-Nadim and Kashfas-Zunnun of Haji-Khalifah, and these too are without any mention of it. No Muslim scholar before the 19th century has ever mentioned the name of the Gospel of Barnabas, The third and most important argument to refute the claim that the Gospel has been written by a Muslim is that about 75 years before the birth of the Prophet (peace be upon him), in the time of Pogo Gelasius I, the list prepared of canonical books, which were banned for reading by a Papal decree also included the Gospel of Barnabas (Evangelium Barnabe). The question is: Who was the Muslim at that time, who forged this Gospel? The Christian scholars themselves have admitted that the Gospel of Barnabas

remained prevalent in Syria, Spain, Egypt, etc. during the early days of Christianity for a long time and that it was banned as heretical in the 6th century.

(10) Before we reproduce the good news given by the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) about the advent of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from this Gospel, it would be useful to introduce it briefly so that the reader may know its importance and also understand why the Christians are so angry with it.

None of the writers of the four Gospels which have been included in the Bible as authentic and canonical, was a companion of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), and none of them has either made the claim that the information recorded by him in his Gospel was obtained from the companions of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), They have, in fact, made no mention of the sources from which they obtained their information, which could show whether the reporter himself witnessed the events and heard the sayings that he was describing or whether they reached him through one or more than one transmitters. On the contrary, the author of the Gospel of Barnabas states that he is one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus (peace be upon him), that he followed Jesus (peace be upon him) from the beginning till the end, and that he is recording the events that he witnessed with his own eyes and the sayings that he heard with his own ears. Not only this, in the end of the Book he says that on his departure from the world the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) had made him responsible for removing the prevalent

misunderstandings about himself and for informing the world of the correct events.

Who was this Barnabas? In the Acts of the Apostles a person so named is very frequently mentioned. He came of a Jewish family of Cyprus. He has been praised for his services in connection with the preaching of Christianity and rendering help and assistance to the followers of the Christ. But nowhere has it been told as to when he embraced Christianity; his name does not either appear in the list of the twelve original disciples which has been given in the three Gospels. Therefore, one cannot say that the author of this Gospel is the same Barnabas or some other person. The list of the disciples given by Barnabas differs from the one given by Matthew and Mark only in two names: Thomas instead of whom Barnabas has given his own name and Simon the Canaanite instead of whom he has named Judas son of Jacob. In the Gospel of Luke this second name is also there. Therefore, it would be correct to assume that some time later only in order to exclude Barnabas from the disciples the name of Thomas was included so as to be rid of his Gospel. To effect such changes in their scriptures has never been anything unlawful with the Christian scholars.

If one goes through the Gospel with an unbiased mind and compares it with the four Gospels of the New Testament, one cannot help feeling that it is far superior to them. In it the events of the life of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) have been described in much greater detail, in a manner as though somebody was actually witnessing what

was happening and was himself a partner in those events. As against the incoherent stories of the four Gospels this historical account is more coherent. From it one can fully understand the series of events unfolding themselves. In it the teachings of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) have been given in a clearer, more effective and expanded form than in the other Gospels. The themes of the Unity of God, refutation of polytheism, attributes of God, essence of worship and morality have been presented in a most forceful, rational and exhaustive way. In the other Gospels one does not find even a fraction of the instructive parables which clothe the themes. This Gospel also shows in much greater detail what wise methods the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) used for the teaching and training of his disciples. Anyone who has any acquaintance with the language, style and temperament of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) will be compelled to admit after a perusal of this Gospel that it is not a fictitious document, which might have been forged in a later period. But the truth is that in it the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) appears before us in his true grandeur and glory much more conspicuously than anywhere in the four canonical Gospels. In it there is no trace of those contradictions which abound in the four Gospels in respect of his different sayings.

In the Gospel of Barnabas the life of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) and his teachings are found precisely according to the life and teachings of a Prophet of God. He presents himself as a Prophet, and confirms all the former

Prophets and Books. He clearly states that there is no other means of knowing the truth except through the teachings of the Prophets, and the one who abandons the Prophets, in fact, abandons God. He presents the doctrines of the Unity of God, Prophethood, and the Hereafter precisely as taught by all the Prophets. He exhorts the people to perform the Prayer, observe the Fast and pay the Zakat. The description that Barnabas has given of his Prayers at a number of places shows that the times he observed for his Prayers were the same times of Fajr (Dawn), Zuhr (Early afternoon), Asr (Late afternoon), Maghrib (Sunset), Isha (Late Evening) and Tahajjud (Before Dawn), and he always performed his ablutions before the Prayer. He acknowledged David (peace be upon him) and Solomon (peace be upon him) as the Prophets, although the Jews and Christians have excluded them from the list of the Prophets. He regarded the Prophet Ishmael (peace be upon him) as the intended victim of the sacrifice, and he makes a Jewish rabbi admit that the intended victim was indeed the Prophet Ishmael (peace be upon him), and not the Prophet Isaac (peace be upon him), as the Israelites have made the people believe. His teachings about the Hereafter, Resurrection, Hell and Heaven are about the same as given in the Quran.

(11) The reason why the Christians have become opponents of the Gospel of Barnabas is not that it contains clear and definite good news about the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) at several places, for they had rejected this Gospel even before his birth. To understand the real cause

of their anger a little further discussion is needed.

The earliest followers of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) believed him only as a Prophet, followed the Mosaic Law, did not detach themselves from the other Israelites in the matter of beliefs, religious injunctions and rites of worship, and differed from the Jews only in that they had affirmed faith in the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) as the Messiah (the Christ) whereas the Jews had refused to acknowledge him as the Messiah. Later, when St. Paul entered this community, he also started preaching and proclaiming this religion to the Romans and the Greeks as well as other non-Jewish and non-Israelite communities.

For this purpose he invented an altogether new religion, the beliefs, doctrines and injunctions of which were entirely different from those taught by the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). This man had never met the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) but was a bitter enemy of him during his lifetime, and even remained an enemy of his followers for several years after him. Then, when he entered his community and started inventing a new religion, he did not cite any saying of Jesus (peace be upon him) as his authority but based everything on his own inspiration. The only object before him while framing the new religion was to make it acceptable to the gentile world. He declared that a Christian was free from all restrictions of the Jewish Law. He abolished all restrictions of the lawful and the unlawful in food. He repudiated the circumcision, which was particularly disagreeable to the non-Jewish world. So much so that he innovated the doctrine of the divinity of

Christ and his being son of God and the Atonement for the original sin of mankind by dying on the Cross, for it immensely suited the polytheistic taste of the common man. The early followers of Christ resisted these innovations, but the flood gate opened by St. Paul caused a huge multitude of the non-Jewish Christians to enter this religion against whom the handful of the Christians could not stand for long. However, until about the end of the 3rd century A.D. there were still many people who denied the divinity of Christ. But in the beginning of the 4th century (in 325 A.D.) the Nicaea Council recognized the Pauline doctrines and admitted them as the basis of Christianity. Then the Roman Empire itself turned Christian and in the reign of Emperor Theodosius Christianity became the state religion. Consequently, all the books that clashed with this doctrine were declared as heretical, and only those books were held as canonical which agreed with it. In 367 A.D. for the first time a collection of reliable and accepted books was issued by an epistle of Athanaseus, which was ratified in 382 A.D. in a meeting under Pope Damasius. Towards the end of the 5th century Pope Gelasius confirming this collection as authentic also issued a list of the books which were spurious, whereas no Christian scholar has ever made the claim that any of the Pauline doctrines which were made the criterion for declaring certain religious books as authentic and others as not authentic, had been taught by the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) himself. More than that, even in the Gospels which are admitted to the canonical collection no saying of the Prophet Jesus (peace

be upon him) himself is recorded, which may confirm these doctrines.

The Gospel of Barnabas was included among the rejected books because it clashed with this official creed. Its author at the outset states that the object of his Gospel is:

To reform the ideas of those who, being deceived of Satan, under presence of piety, are preaching most impious doctrine, calling Jesus son of God, repudiating the circumcision ordained of God forever, and permitting every unclean meat; among whom also Paul hath been deceived.

He says that during the lifetime of Jesus, first of all the polytheistic Roman soldiers witnessing his miracles started calling him God and son of God. Then this epidemic infected the common Israelites also. At this Jesus was much grieved and upset. He repudiated this false belief about himself repeatedly and cursed those who spoke thus of him. Then he sent his disciples throughout Judea to refute it and blessed them also with the ability to work the same miracles which issued from himself, so that the people be made to give up the false idea that the one who performed those miracles was God or son of God. In this connection he reproduces the full discourses of the Prophet Jesus in which he repudiated this false belief and tells how upset he was at the circulation of this mischief. Moreover, he strongly refutes the Pauline doctrine that Christ died on the Cross. He narrates as an eye-witness that when Judas Iscariot took money from the high priest and brought soldiers to have Jesus arrested, four angels at God Almighty's

command carried him away and Judas was so changed in speech and in face as to be like Jesus. Thus, it was he who was put on the cross and not Jesus. Thus, this Gospel cuts at the root of Pauline Christianity and ratifies what the Quran says in this regard, whereas 115 years before the revelation of the Quran, the Christian priests had rejected it on account of these very assertion.

(12) The above discussion makes it abundantly clear that the Gospel of Barnabas is, in fact, a more reliable Gospel than the so called canonical Gospels. It represents the Prophet Jesus' (peace be upon him) teachings and the events and deeds of his life and his sayings correctly; it is the Christian people's own misfortune that they have lost, only because of their stubbornness, the opportunity they were given to correct their beliefs and to know the real teachings of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). Now we can quote with full satisfaction the glad tidings about the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which Barnabas has reported from the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). In these glad tidings at some places the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) mentions the Prophet by name, at some he calls him Rasul-Allah (Messenger of Allah), at some he uses the word Messiah for him, at some Admirable, and at other places employs sentences which give the same meaning as: *La-ilaha-ill-Allah, Muhammad ar-Rasul-Allah*. It is difficult for us to reproduce all pieces of the good news here, for they are scattered throughout the book in different wordings and in different contexts. We reproduce below only a few of them as specimen:

For all the prophets, that are one hundred and forty-four thousand, whom God hath sent into the world have spoken darkly. But after me shall come the Splendor of all the prophets and holy ones, and shall shed light upon the darkness of all that the Prophets have said, because he is the messenger of God. (Ch. 17).

The Levites and the scribes said: If thou be not the Messiah nor Elijah, or any prophet, wherefore dost thou preach new doctrine, and make thyself of more account than the Messiah? Jesus answered: The miracles which God worketh by my hands show that I speak that which God willeth; nor indeed do I make myself to be accounted as him of whom ye speak. For I am not worthy to unloose the ties of the hosen or the latchets of the shoes of the messenger of God whom ye call Messiah, who was made before me, and shall come after me, and shall bring the word of truth, so that this faith shall have no end. (Ch. 42).

Verily I say unto you, that every prophet when he is come hath borne to one nation only the mark of the mercy of God. And so their words were not extended save to that people to which they were sent. But the messenger of God, when he shall come, God shall give to him as it were the seal of his hand, insomuch that he shall carry salvation and mercy to all the nations of the world that shall receive his doctrine. He shall come with power upon the ungodly, and shall destroy idolatry, insomuch that he shall make Satan confounded. Continuing his speech with the disciples, the Prophet Jesus makes it clear that he will be born of the Ishmaelites, (Ch.43).

I therefore say unto you that the messenger of God is a splendor that shall give gladness to nearly all that God hath made, for he is adorned with the spirit of understanding and of counsel the spirit of wisdom and might, the spirit of fear and love, the spirit of prudence and temperance; he is adorned with the spirit of charity and mercy, the spirit of justice and piety, the spirit of gentleness and patience, which he hath received from God three times more than he hath given to all his creatures. O blessed time, when he shall come to the world. Believe me that I have seen him and have done him reverence, even as every prophet hath seen him: seeing that of his spirit God giveth to them prophecy. And when I saw him my soul was filled with consolation, saying: O Muhammad, God be with thee, and may he make me worthy to untie thy shoe latchet, for obtaining this I shall be a great prophet and holy one of God. (44).

Jesus answered: Let not your heart be troubled, neither be ye fearful: for I have not created you, but God our creator who hath created you will protect you. As for me, I am now come to the world to prepare the way for the messenger of God, who shall bring salvation to the world. But beware that ye be not deceived, for many false prophets shall come, who shall take my words and contaminate my gospel. Then said Andrew: Master, tell us some sign, that we may know him. Jesus answered: He will not come in your time, but will come some years after you, when my gospel shall be annulled, insomuch that there shall be scarcely thirty faithful. At that time God will have mercy on the world,

and so he will send his messenger, over whose head will rest a white cloud, whereby he shall be known of one elect of God, and shall be by him manifested to the world. He shall come with great power against the ungodly, and shall destroy idolatry upon the earth and it rejoiceth me because that through him our God shall be known and glorified, and I shall be known to be true; and he will execute vengeance against those who shall say that I am more than man. He shall come with truth more clear than that of all the prophets. (Ch. 72).

For the promise of God was made in Jerusalem, in the temple of Solomon, and not elsewhere. But believe me, a time will come that God will give his mercy in another city, and in every place it will be possible to worship him in truth. And God in every place will have accepted true prayer with mercy ... I am indeed sent to the house of Israel as a prophet of salvation; but after me shall come the Messiah, sent of God to all the world; for whom God hath made the world. And then through all the world will God be worshiped, and mercy received. (Ch. 82).

Jesus answered: As God liveth, in whose presence my soul standeth, I am not the Messiah whom all the tribes of the earth expect, even as God promised to our father Abraham, saying: In thy seed will I bless all the tubes of the earth. (Gen. 22; 18). But when God shall take me away from the world, Satan will raise again this accursed sedition; by making the impious believe that I am God and son of God, whence my words and my doctrine shall be contaminated, insomuch that scarcely shall there remain thirty faithful

ones: whereupon God will have mercy upon the world, and will send his messenger for whom he hath made all things; who shall come from the south with power, and shall destroy the idols with the idolaters; who shall take away the dominion from Satan which he hath over men. He shall bring with him the mercy of God for salvation of them that shall believe in him, and blessed is he who shall believe his words. (Ch. 96).

The priest asked: After the coming of the messenger of God, shall other prophets come? Jesus answered: There shall not come after him true prophets sent by God, but there shall come a great number of false prophets, whereat I sorrow, For Satan shall raise them up by the just judgment of God, and they shall hide themselves under the pretext of my gospel: (Ch. 97).

Then said the priest: How shall the Messiah be called, and what sign shall reveal his coming? Jesus answered: The name of the Messiah is admirable, for God himself gave him the name when he had created his soul, and placed it in a celestial splendor. God said: Wait Muhammad; for thy sake I will to create paradise, the world, and a great multitude of creatures whereof I make thee a present, insomuch that whoso shall bless thee shall be blessed, and whoso shall curse thee shall be accursed, When I shall send thee into the world, I shall send thee as my messenger of salvation, and thy word shall be true, insomuch that heaven and earth shall fail, but thy faith shall never fail. Muhammad is his blessed name (Ch. 97).

Barnabas writes that on one occasion Jesus spoke to his

disciples and said that one of them (who was to be Judas Iscariot) would sell him to the enemies for 30 pieces of gold.

Then said:

Whereupon I am sure that who shall sell me, be slain in my name, for that God shall take me up from the earth, and shall change the appearance of the traitor so that everyone shall believe him to be me; nevertheless when he dieth an evil death, I shall abide in that dishonor for a long time in the world. But when Mohammad shall come, the sacred messenger of God, that infamy shall be taken away. And this shall God do because I have confessed the truth of the Messiah, who shall give me this reward that I shall be known to be alive and to be a stranger to that death of infamy. (Ch. 1: 12).

To the disciples Jesus said: Verily I say unto you that if the truth had not been erased from the book of Moses, God would not have given to David our father the second. And if the book of David had not been contaminated, God would not have committed the Gospel to me; seeing that the Lord our God is unchangeable, and hath spoken but one message to all men. Wherefore, when the messenger of God shall come, he shall come to cleanse away all where with the ungodly have contaminated my book. (Ch.124).

In these clear and comprehensive prophecies there are only three things which at first sight appear to be doubtful. First, that in these and in several other passages of the Gospel of Barnabas the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) has denied his own self being the Messiah. Second, that not only in these but at many other places also in this Gospel

the Messenger's actual name Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been mentioned, whereas this is not the way the Prophets make prophecies: they do not mention the actual name of the one coming in the future. Third, that in these the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been called the Messiah.

The answer to the first objection is that not only in the Gospel of Barnabas but in the Gospel according to Luke also it is mentioned that the Prophet Jesus had forbidden his disciples to call him the Christ (the Messiah). The words in Luke are: He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God. And he strictly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing. (9: 20-21). Probably the reason was that about the Messiah whom the Israelites were awaiting, they thought he would subdue the enemies of truth by the sword. Therefore, the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) said that he was not that Messiah but he would come after him.

The answer to the second objection is that no doubt in the extant Italian translation of Barnabas the Holy Prophet's name has been written as Mohamed, but no one knows through how many different languages has this book reached the Italian. Obviously, the original Gospel of Barnabas must be in Syriac, because that was the language of Jesus (peace be upon him) and his companions. If the original book were extant, it could be seen what name of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was written in it. Now what one can assume is that originally the Prophet Jesus

(peace be upon him) must have used the word Munhamanna as we have explained above by citing Ibn Ishaqs reference to St. John's Gospel. Then different translators may have translated it in their own languages. Later, probably some translator seeing that the name given in the prophecy was exactly synonymous with the word Mohamed may have written this very sacred name of the Prophet. Therefore, the mere appearance of this name only is not enough to give rise to the doubt that the entire Gospel of Barnabas has been forged by a Muslim.

The answer to the third objection is that the word Messiah is an Israelite technical term, which has been used in the Quran particularly for the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) for the reason that the Jews had denied his being the Messiah; otherwise it is neither a Quranic term nor has it been used anywhere in the Quran in the meaning of the Israelite term. Therefore, if the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) used the word Messiah for the Prophet (peace be upon him), and the Quran has not used this word for him, it is not right to conclude that the Gospel of Barnabas ascribes something to him which the Quran denies. In fact, it was customary with the Israelites that when somebody or something was set aside for a sacred cause, the person or thing was anointed with the holy oil on the head and consecrated. This anointing with the oil was called mesh in Hebrew, and the one thus anointed messiah. Utensils were likewise anointed and set aside for use in the house of worship. The priests were also anointed when they were appointed to priesthood. The kings and the prophets too

were anointed when they were designated to kingship or prophethood by God. Thus, according to the Bible, there have been many messiahs in the history of the Israelites. The Prophet Aaron (peace be upon him) was a messiah as a priest, Moses (peace be upon him) as a priest and a prophet, Saul as a king, David as a king and a prophet, Melchizedek as a king and a priest, and Al-Yasa (Elisha) was a messiah as a prophet. Somebody's being appointed by God had become synonymous with being a messiah. For instance, in I Kings, it has been said that God commanded the Prophet Elijah to anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphet of Abelmebola shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. (19: 1516). None of these was anointed with oil. Their being commissioned by God amounted to their being anointed. Thus, according to the Israelite concept the word messiah was, in fact, synonymous with being commissioned by God, and in this very meaning had the Prophet Jesus (peace be on him) used this word for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). For an explanation of the Israelite meaning of the word messiah, see Messiah in Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature).

Later, it was no longer regarded as necessary to appoint a person by their beliefs and morals and civilization on any philosophy and doctrine they please. As against the ways of such people, it is being said that the Messenger of Allah has not been sent to make a compromise with than, but with the object that he should cause the guidance and religion of

truth which he has brought from Allah to prevail over all religions, i.e. every aspect of the way of life. This mission he has to accomplish in any case whether the disbelievers and polytheists like it or not, and whoever they support it or resist it. This declaration has been made in the Quran at two other places. In Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 33 and Surah Al-Fath, Ayat 28. Here it has been re-iterated for the third time. (For further explanation, see E.N. 32 of Surah At-Taubah and E.N. 51 of Surah Al-Fath).

*9 The word *sehr* here does not mean magic but deception and fraud, which is also a well known meaning of this word in Arabic. Thus, the verse means: When the Prophet (peace be upon him) whose coming had been foretold by the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) came with the clear signs of his prophethood, the Israelites and the followers of Jesus declared his claim to prophethood to be a deception and fraud.

7. And who could be more unjust than he who invents a lie against Allah^{*10} and he is being invited towards Islam.^{*11} And Allah does not guide wrongdoing people.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ
الْكَذِبَ وَهُوَ يُدْعَىٰ إِلَى
الْإِسْلَامِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الظَّالِمِينَ



*10 Who invents a lie against Allah: Declares the Prophet sent by Allah to be a false prophet and regards the revelations of Allah to His Prophet as forged by the Prophet himself.

*11 That is, there could be no greater injustice than that

besides calling a true Prophet (peace be upon him) a false prophet, one should start hurling abuses on him and employing all sorts of lies and false allegations and slanders to defeat his mission although the Prophet (peace be upon him) is calling him to Allah's worship and His obedience.

8. They seek to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, and Allah will perfect His light, however much the disbelievers may dislike.*12

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ
بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ
كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ

*12 One should bear in mind that these verses were sent down in A.H. 3 after the Battle of Uhud, when Islam was confined only to the city of Al-Madinah, the Muslims were only a few thousands in number, and entire Arabia was bent upon wiping out this religion. The defeat that the Muslims had suffered at Uhud, had sullied their image of power and the tribes of the surrounding areas had been emboldened. Under such conditions it was said: No one will succeed in blowing out this light of Allah, but it will shine forth and spread throughout the world. This was a clear prediction which literally came true. Who could know except Allah at that time of what was the future of Islam? Human eyes could only see that it was a flickering candle and violent winds were blowing to put it out forever.

9. He it is who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth that He may manifest it over all

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ
بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَىٰ

religions, however much the idolaters may dislike. *13

الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ



*13 The idolaters: The *mushriks*, those who combine the service of others with the service of Allah and mix other religions in the religion of Allah. Those who are not prepared to see that the entire system of life is established on the obedience and guidance of One God. Those who insist that they will worship any deity they like.

10. O you who believe, shall I tell you of a bargain *14 that will save you from a painful punishment.

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا هَلْ أَذُكُم
عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنَجِّيكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِ



*14 A bargain is something in which a person employs his wealth, time, labor and talent in order to earn a profit. In the same sense the faith and jihad in the cause of Allah have been called a bargain, as if to say: If you exert all your powers and spend all your resources in the way of Allah, you will get the profits that are being mentioned in the following verses. This same theme has been expressed in Surah At-Taubah in another way. (See E.N. 106 of Surah At-Taubah).

11. You should believe in Allah and His Messenger, *15 and should strive in the cause of Allah with your wealth

تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

and your lives. That is better for you if you only knew.*16

بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ذَالِكُمْ خَيْرٌ
لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

*15 When the believers are asked to believe, it automatically gives the meaning that they should become sincere Muslims: they should not rest content with oral profession of the faith but should be ready and willing to make every sacrifice in the cause of their faith.

*16 That is, this bargain is far superior for them to every worldly bargain.

12. He will forgive for you your sins and admit you into gardens underneath which rivers flow, and excellent abodes in Gardens of Eternity. That is the great success.*17

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
وَمَسْكِنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ
ذَالِكِ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾

*17 The real profits of the bargain that they will attain in the eternal lift of the Hereafter are:

- (1) Immunity from the punishment of Allah.
- (2) Forgiveness of sins.
- (3) Entry into the Paradise the blessings of which are eternal and everlasting.

13. And another (favor) that you love, help from Allah and victory near at hand.*18 And give good news

وَأُخْرَى تُحِبُّونَهَا نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ
وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

to the believers.

***18** Although victory and success in the world is a great blessing of Allah, yet for the believer the thing of real importance is not this but the success of the Hereafter. That is why the gain of the worldly life has been mentioned as second and the result accruing in the Hereafter first.

14. O you who believe, be helpers of Allah, as Jesus, son of Mary, said to the disciples: ***19** “Who will be my helpers towards Allah.” ***20** The disciples said: “We are helpers of Allah.” Then, a faction of the children of Israel believed and a faction disbelieved. So We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became dominant. ***21**

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا أَنْصَارَ
اللَّهِ كَمَا قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ
لِلْحَوَارِيِّينَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ
قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ
فَعَامَنْتَ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ بَنِي
إِسْرَائِيلَ وَكَفَرْتَ طَائِفَةٌ فَأَيَّدْنَا
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا عَلَىٰ عَدُوِّهِمْ
فَأَصْبَحُوا ظَاهِرِينَ



***19** For the companions of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) the word disciples generally has been used in the Bible, but later the term apostle became prevalent for them among the Christians, and in the sense that they were God’s apostles, but in the sense that the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) used to send them to different parts of Palestine as his preachers. Among the Jews this word was

already in use for those who were sent to collect subscriptions for the Temple. However, the Quranic term *hawari* is better than both the Christian terms. The essence of this word is *hur*, which means whiteness. The washer man is called *hawari* because he whitens clothes by washing them. A pure and un-adulterated thing is also called *hawari*. The flour from which bran has been sifted is known as *huwwara*. In this very meaning this word is used for a sincere friend and an unselfish supporter. Ibn Sayyidah says: Anyone who exaggerates in helping another is his *hawari*. (Lisan al-Arab).

***20** This is the last place in the Holy Quran where those who exert themselves in calling the people to Allah's religion and to cause it to become dominant over disbelief, have been called helpers of Allah. Before this, this very theme has been expressed in Aal-Imran, Ayat 52; Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 40; Surah Muhammad, Ayat 7; Surah Al-Hadid, Ayat 25 and Surah Al-Hashr, Ayat 8. And we have explained these verses in E.N. 50 of Surah Aal-Imran; E.N. 84 of Surah Al-Hajj; E.N. 12 of Surah Muhammad; E.N. 47 of Surah Al-Hadid.

Moreover, in E.N. 9 of Surah Muhammad light has been also thrown on an aspect of this question. In spite of this some people seem to have the confusion that when Allah Almighty is All-Powerful, Self-Sufficient, and Independent of the help of all His creatures, how then can a man be a helper of Allah? To remove this confusion we shall further explain this point here.

In fact, these people have not been called helpers of Allah

for the reason that Allah, Lord of the worlds, (God forbid) stood in need of any help from some of His creatures, but because in the sphere of life in which Allah Himself has granted man freedom of belief and disbelief, obedience and disobedience. He does not will to make the people His believers and obedient servants by means of His power and might. Instead, He adopts the method of admonition and instruction to show them the right way through His Prophets and Books. The one who accepts this admonition and instruction willingly is a Momin. The one who submits practically to His commands is a Muslim and devout God-worshiper. The one who adopts an attitude of God-consciousness is a Muttaqi. The one who vies with others for good works is a Muhsin. And over and above this, the one who starts working for the reformation of the people by means of the same method of admonition and instruction and for establishing the system of Allah's obedience instead of disbelief and wickedness, is declared by Allah as His own helper, as has been mentioned in clear words at several places in the verses cited above. If the object were to designate such people as helpers of Allah's religion and not of Allah, the words would have been ansaru din-Allah and not ansar-Allah, yansuruna din-Allah and not yansurun-Allah, intansuruna din-Allah and not in-iansurun-Allah. When in order to convey and express a theme; Allah has adopted one and the same style at several places, successively, it proves conclusively that the actual object is to designate these people as helpers of Allah. But this helpfulness, God forbid, is not in the sense that these people

fulfill some need of Allah for which He requires their help, but it is in the sense that these people participate in the cause which Allah wills to accomplish through His Prophets and His Books instead of His great power and might.

***21** Those who disbelieved in Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) are the Jews, and those who believed in him are the Christians as well as the Muslims, and Allah granted both these domination over the disbelievers of Christ. This is meant to requires the Muslims that just as the believers of Christ have dominated over his disbelievers in the past, so will the believers of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) prevail over his disbelievers.



الْجُمُعَةُ Al-Jumuah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

It is derived from the sentence *idha nudiya-lis-salati-min-yaumil-Jumuati* of verse 9. Although in this Surah injunctions about the Friday congregational Prayer have also been given, yet *Jumuah* is not the title of its subject-matter as a whole, but this name too, like the names of other Surahs, is only a symbolic title.

Period of Revelation

The period of the revelation of the first section (verses 1-8) is A. H. 7, and probably it was revealed, on the occasion of the conquest of Khaiber or soon after it. Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nasai and Ibn Jarir have related on the authority of Abu Hurairah that he and other companions were sitting in the Prophet's (peace be upon him) assembly when these verses were revealed. About Abu Hurairah it is confirmed historically that he entered Islam after the truce of Hudaibiyah and before the conquest of Khaiber, and Khaiber was conquered, according to Ibn Hisham, in Muharram, and, according to Ibn Saad, in Jamadi al-Awwal, A.H. 7. Thus presumably Allah might have sent

down these verses, addressing the Jews, when their last stronghold had fallen to the Muslims, or these might have been revealed when, seeing the fate of Khaiber, all the Jewish settlements of northern Hijaz had surrendered to the Islamic government.

The second section (verses 9-11) was revealed shortly after the emigration, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) had established the Friday congregational Prayer on the 5th day after his arrival at Madinah. The incident that has been referred to in the last verse of this section must have occurred at a time when the people had not yet received full training in the etiquette of religious congregations.

Theme and Subject Matter

As we have explained above, the two sections of this Surah were sent down in two different periods. That is why their themes as well as their audiences are different. Although there is a kind of harmony between them on account of which they have been put together in one Surah, yet we should understand their themes separately before we consider the question of their harmony.

The first section was sent down at a time when all Jewish efforts to obstruct the message of Islam during the past six years had failed. First, in Al-Madinah as many as three of their powerful tribes had done whatever they could to frustrate the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him), with the result that one of the tribes was completely exterminated and the other two were exiled. Then by intrigue and conspiracy they brought many of the Arab tribes together to advance on Al-Madinah, but in the Battle

of the Trench they were all repulsed. After this, Khaiber had become their stronghold, where a large number of the Jews expelled from Al-Madinah had also taken refuge. At the time these verses were revealed, that too was taken without any extraordinary effort, and the Jews at their own request agreed to live there as tenants of the Muslims. After this final defeat the Jewish power in Arabia came to an end. Then, Wadil-Qura, Fadak, Taima, Tabuk, all surrendered one after the other, so much so that all Arabian Jews became subdued to the same Islam which they were not prepared to tolerate before. This was the occasion when Allah Almighty once again addressed them in this Surah, and probably this was the last and final address that was directed to them in the Quran. In this they have been reminded of three things:

1. You refused to believe in this Messenger only because he was born among a people whom you contemptuously call the gentiles. You were under the false delusion that the Messenger must necessarily belong to your own community. You seemed to have been convinced that anyone who claimed to be a prophet from outside your community must be an impostor, for this office had been reserved for your race, and a messenger could never be raised among the gentiles. But among the same gentiles Allah has raised a Messenger (peace be upon him) who is reciting His Book in front of your very eyes, is purifying souls, and showing the right way to the people whose misdeeds are well known to you. This is Allah's bounty, which He may bestow on anyone He may please. You have

no monopoly over it so that He may bestow it on whomever you may please and may withhold it from whomever you may desire it to be withheld.

2. You had been made bearers of the Torah, but you did not understand your responsibility for it nor discharged it as you should have. You are like the donkey which is loaded with books, and which does not know what burden it is bearing. Rather you are worse than the donkey, for the donkey is devoid of sense, but you are intelligent. You not only shirk your responsibility of being bearers of Allah's revelations deliberately. Yet, you are under the delusion that you are Allah's favorites and the blessing of apostleship has been reserved for you alone. More than that, you seem to entertain the notion that whether you fulfill the demands of Allah's message or not, Allah in any case is bound not to make any other than you the bearer of His message.

3. If you really were Allah's favorites and you were sure of having a place of honor and high rank reserved with Him, you would not have feared death so much as to prefer a life of disgrace to death. It is only because of this fear of death that you have suffered humiliation after humiliation during the past few years. Your this condition is by itself a proof that you are fully conscious of your misdeeds, and your conscience is aware that if you die with these misdeeds, you will meet with a greater disgrace before Allah in the Hereafter than in this world.

This is the subject-matter of the first section. The second section that was sent down many years later, was appended

to this Surah because in it Allah has bestowed Friday on the Muslims as against the Sabbath of the Jews, and Allah wanted to warn the Muslims not to treat their Friday as the Jews had treated their Sabbath. This section was sent down on an occasion when a trade caravan arrived in Al-Madinah right at the time of the Friday congregational service and hearing its din and drum the audience, except for 12 men, left the Prophet's (peace be upon him) Mosque and rushed out to the caravan, although the Prophet (peace be upon him) at that time was delivering the sermon. Thereupon it was enjoined that after the call is sounded for the Friday Prayer all trade and business and other occupations become forbidden. The believers should then suspend every kind of transaction and hasten to the remembrance of Allah. However, when the Prayer is over, they have the right to disperse in the land to resume their normal occupations. This section could be made an independent Surah in view of the commandments that it contains about the congregational service on Friday, and could also be included in some other Surah, but, instead, it has been included here particularly in the verses in which the Jews have been warned of the causes of their evil end. Its wisdom is the same as we have explained above.

1. Glorifies Allah whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, the Sovereign, the Holy, the All Mighty, the All Wise.*¹

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ الْعَزِيزِ
الْحَكِيمِ



*1 For explanation, see E.Ns 1, 2 of Surah Al-Hadid, and E.Ns 36, 37, 41 of Surah Al-Hashr. This introduction bears a deep relevance to the theme that follows. In spite of the fact that the Jews of Arabia were witnessing clear signs of Prophethood in the person of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his high character and works and in spite of the clear good news given by the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) in the Torah, which only applied to him, they were denying him only because they did not want to acknowledge the prophethood of a person who did not belong to their own community and race. They openly proclaimed that they would believe only in that which had come to them, and would not accept any teaching, which came through a non-Israelite prophet, even if it was from God. For this attitude in the following verses they have been reproved. Hence the reason for beginning the discourse with the introductory sentence. First, it says that everything in the universe is glorifying Allah; that is, the entire universe testifies that Allah is free from all those faults and weaknesses because of which the Jews have formed the concept of their racial superiority. He is not related to anyone. He has nothing to do with favoritism. He treats all His creatures with equal justice, mercy and care. No particular race and nation is His favorite so that He may be bound to bless it whatever it may do. And He is not prejudiced against any race or nation so that He may deprive it of His bounties even if it possesses all the good qualities. Then, it says that He is the Sovereign; that is, no worldly power can restrict His authority and powers, as if

to say: You, O Jews, are His servants and subjects. It is not for you to decide whom He should appoint His Messenger, and whom He should not, for your guidance. Then, it says that He is Holy; that is, He is far exalted and glorified that His judgments may be mistaken. Human judgments may have mistakes but His decrees are perfect. In the end, two more attributes of Allah have been mentioned. That He is All-Mighty, i.e. none can fight Him and win and that He is All-Wise, i.e. whatever He does, it is always the very demand of wisdom, and His plans and designs are so well-planned that none in the world can hinder and frustrate them.

2. He it is who has sent among the unlettered ones*2 a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His verses, and purifying them, and teaching them the Book and wisdom,*3 whereas before this they were indeed in manifest error.*4

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ
رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ
وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي
ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ



*2 Here the word *ummi* (gentile) has been used as a Jewish term and there is a subtlety in it. The verse means: The All-Mighty and All-Wise Allah has raised a Messenger (peace be upon him) among the Arabs whom the Jews contemptuously consider the gentiles and much below themselves, The Messenger (peace be upon him) has not risen of his own wish and will, but has been raised by Him

Who is the Sovereign of the universe, Who is All-Mighty and All-Wise, Whose power can be resisted and opposed only to one's own loss and peril.

One should know that the word *ummi* has occurred in the Quran at several places but in different meanings at different places. At one place it has been used for the people who do not possess any revealed scripture, which they may be following, as in Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 20, where it has been said: Ask those who possess the Book and those who do not possess (*ummis*); Have you accepted Islam. Here, the *ummis* imply the Arab polytheists, and they have been regarded as a separate class from the followers of the Book, i.e. the Jews and the Christians. At another place, it has been used for the illiterate people among the Jews and Christians, who are ignorant of the Book of Allah, as in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 78: Among the Jews there are some illiterate people (*ummis*) who have no knowledge of the Book but are guided by mere conjecture and guess-work. At still another place, this word has been used purely as a Jewish term, which implies all the non-Jewish people, as in Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 75 (The actual cause of this dishonesty of theirs is that they say): We are not to be called to account for our behavior towards the non-Jews (*ummis*). This third meaning of *ummi* is implied in the verse under discussion. It is a synonym of the Hebrew word *goyim*, which has been translated gentiles in the English Bible and implies all the non-Jewish or the non-Israelite people of the world.

But the real significance of this Jewish term cannot be

understood only by this explanation of it. The Hebrew word goyim originally was used only in the meaning of a nation, but gradually the Jews reserved it first for the nation other than themselves, then they gave it the special meaning that all the nations other than the Jews were un-civilized, irreligious, unclean and contemptible; so much so that in its connotations of hatred and contempt this word even surpassed the Greek term barbarian which they used for all the non-Greeks. In rabbinical literature, goyim are such contemptible people, who cannot be considered human, who cannot be made companions in a journey, who cannot be saved even if one of them is drowning. The Jews believed that the Messiah of the future would destroy all the goyim and burn them to annihilation (For further explanation, see E.N. 64 of Surah Aal-Imran).

*3 These characteristics of the Prophet (peace be upon him) have been mentioned at four places in the Quran and everywhere with a different object. These have been mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 29 to tell the Arabs that the mission of the Prophet, which they were regarding as a calamity and affliction for themselves, was indeed a great blessing for which the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them) had been praying for their children. In Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 151, these have been mentioned to exhort the Muslims to recognize the true worth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and to derive full benefit from the blessing which they had been granted in the form of his Apostleship. These have been reiterated in Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 164 to make the hypocrites and the

people of weak faith realize what great favor Allah had done to them by raising His Messenger (peace be upon him) among them, and how foolish they were in not appreciating this. Now, here in this Surah these have been repeated for the fourth time with the object to tell the Jews: The mission that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is performing in front of you, is evidently the mission of a Messenger. He is reciting the revelations of Allah, the language, themes and style of which testify that these are indeed divine revelations. He is purifying and reforming the lives of the people, cleansing their morals and habits and dealings of every evil element, and adorning them with the finest moral qualities. This is the same task which all the Prophets before him have been performing. Then he does not rest content only with the recitation of the revelations, but he is making the people understand the real aim of the divine Book by word and deed and by the practical model of his life and imparting to them the wisdom and knowledge which none but the Prophets have imparted so far. This very character and way of life and practical model is the conspicuous characteristic of the Prophets by which they are recognized. Then how stubborn you are that you refuse to recognize and believe in the Messenger (peace be upon him) whose truth is manifestly proved by his wonderful works only because Allah has not raised him among you but among the people whom you call the *ummis* (gentiles).

*4 This is another proof of his prophethood, which has been presented to open eyes of the Jews. These people had been living in Arabia for centuries and no aspect of the

religious, moral, social and cultural life of the Arabs was hidden from them. Referring to the state of their previous life it is being said: You are an eyewitness of the revolution that has taken place in the life of this nation within a few years under the guidance and leadership of Muhammad (peace be upon him). You are fully aware of the condition in which these people were involved before embracing Islam. You are also aware of their transformation afterwards, and you are also witnessing the condition of those people of this very nation, who have not yet embraced Islam. Is the clear and manifest difference which even a blind man can perceive not enough to convince you that this revolution can be brought about by none but a Prophet.

3. And others of them who have not yet joined them.*5

And He is All Mighty, All Wise.*6

وَأَخْرَيْنَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ
 وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

*5 That is, the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) is not restricted only to the Arabs but is meant for other nations and races as well, who have not yet joined the believers, but are going to be born till the Last Day. The word *minhum* (of them) in the original can have two meanings:

- (1) That those other people will be of the *ummis* i.e. the non-Israelite nations of the world.
- (2) That they will be believers in Muhammad (peace be upon him), though they have not yet joined the believers, but will join them later on. Thus, this verse is one of those

verses which explicitly state that the Message of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is meant for all mankind forever. The other places where this theme has occurred in the Quran are: Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 19; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 158; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 107; Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 1; Surah Saba, Ayat 28. (For further explanation, see E.N. 47 of Surah Saba).

*6 That is, it is a manifestation of Allah's own power and wisdom that among an un-civilized, un-lettered people He has raised a great Prophet (peace be upon him), whose teachings are so revolutionary and contain such eternal and universal principles as can provide a sound basis for the whole of mankind to be a single unified community, which can obtain guidance from those principles forever. An impostor, however hard he may have tried, could not have attained this position and rank. Not to speak of a backward people like the Arabs; even the most intelligent and talented man of the most advanced nation of the world cannot have the power that he may revolutionize a nation so completely, and then give such comprehensive principles to the world that all mankind may follow it as one community and be able to run a universal and all-pervasive system of one way of life and one civilization forever. This is a miracle which has taken place only by Allah's power, and only Allah on the basis of His wisdom has chosen the person, the country and the nation for it.

4. That is the bounty of Allah, He bestows it to whom He wills. And Allah is the

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ

Owner of great bounty.

وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٤﴾

5. The example of those who were entrusted with the Torah and then did not take (apply)^{*7} it is the example of a donkey^{*8} laden with books. Wretched is the example of people who deny the revelations of Allah.^{*9} And Allah does not guide wrongdoing people.

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْإِیمَارِ یَحْمِلُ أَصْفَارًا بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآیَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا یَهْدِی الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥﴾

***7** This sentence has two meanings, a general meaning and a special meaning. The general meaning is that the people who were entrusted with the knowledge and practice of the Torah and with the responsibility of guiding the world according to it, neither understood this responsibility nor discharged it as they should have. The special meaning is being the bearers of the Torah these people should have been foremost to join hands with the Messenger (peace be upon him), good news about whose advent had been already given in the Torah, but, instead, they have been in the forefront to oppose him and have thus failed to fulfill the demand of the teaching of the Torah.

***8** That is, just as a donkey loaded with books does not know what it is loaded with, so are these people loaded with the Torah and they do not know what this Book was sent for and what are its demands.

***9** That is, they are even worst than a donkey, who is

without sense and therefore is excusable. But these people have intelligence, they read and teach the Torah and are fully aware of its meaning. Yet they are turning away from its guidance and refusing willfully to acknowledge and believe in the Prophet (peace be upon him) who even according to the Torah teaches the truth. They are guilty not because of ignorance but because of denying Allah's revelation deliberately.

6. Say: "O you who are Jews,^{*10} if you claim that you are favored of Allah,^{*11} excluding (all other) mankind, then wish for death if you are truthful."^{*12}

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ هَادُوا إِنْ
زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ لِلَّهِ مِنْ دُونِ
النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
صَادِقِينَ



***10** This point is noteworthy. It has not been said: O Jews. But: O you who have become Jews, or who have adopted Judaism, the reason being that the way of life brought by the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and the Prophets after and before him, was Islam itself. None of those Prophets was a Jew, nor had Judaism been born in their time, but Judaism as such came into being much later. It is ascribed to the tribe which descended from Judah, the fourth son of the Prophet Jacob (peace be upon him). When after the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him), his kingdom broke into two parts, this tribe became ruler over the state which came to be known as Judea. The other tribes of the Israelites established their separate state which

became famous as Samaria. Then Assyria not only destroyed Samaria but also wiped out those Israelite tribes which had founded that state. After that only the decedents of Judah besides those of Benjamin remained. Who because of the predominance of the descendants of Judah, began to be called the Jews. Judaism is the name of the framework of the doctrines, customs, and religious rules and regulations which the priests, rabbis and learned men of this race prepared according to their own ideas, theories and trends for many centuries. This framework started being shaped in the 4th century B.C. and continued to develop till the 5th century A.D. It contains a very small element of the divine guidance brought by the Messengers of Allah, and even that element has been corrupted. That is why at many places in the Quran they have been addressed as *alladhina hadu*, O you who have become Jews. All of these were not the Israelites but there were among them also converts who had embraced Judaism. Whenever in the Quran the children of Israel have been addressed, the words are: O children of Israel, and where the followers of Judaism have been addressed, the words are; *alladhina hadu*, O you who have become Jews.

***11** At several places in the Quran, their claim has been described in detail, as in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 111, they say: none shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew. In Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 80: The fire of Hell is not going to touch us, and even if it does at all, it will be only for a few days, and in Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 18: We are the sons of Allah and His beloved ones. Same such claims are also found in

the books of the Jews themselves. The world at least knows that they regard themselves as the chosen people of God, and cherish the false notion that God has a special relationship with them, which is not shared by any other human group or class.

***12** This has been stated for the second time in the Quran, addressing the Jews. First, in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 94-96, it was said, Say to them: If the abode of the Hereafter with Allah is exclusively reserved for you and not for the rest of mankind, then you should long for death, if you are sincere in your claim. Believe it that they will never wish for it, for (they are fully aware of) what they have sent before them for the Hereafter. And Allah knows well the mentality of the transgressors. You will find that of all mankind, they are the greediest for life; any they are even greedier than the idolaters. Each one of them longs to have a life of a thousand years, but a long life can by no means remove them away from the doom, for Allah is watching whatever they are doing. Now the same thing has been repeated here. But this is not a mere repetition. In the verses of Surah Al-Baqarah, it was said when no war had yet taken place between the Muslims and the Jews. In this Surah it was reiterated at the time when after several battles their power in Arabia had been finally and absolutely crushed. These battles and their results proved by experience and observation that what had been said in Surah Al-Baqarah was correct. In Al-Madinah and Khaiber, the Jewish strength was much superior to that of the Muslims both in numbers and in resources. Then they

had the pagans of Arabia and the hypocrites of Al-Madinah also as their allies who were bent upon wiping out the Muslims. But in spite of this great disparity in numbers the Muslims overwhelmed the Jews mainly because they were least afraid of dying for the cause of Allah. They were rather fond of it, and would enter the battlefield fully prepared to embrace death. For they believed that they were fighting in the way of God and had complete faith that the one who fell martyr in His way would be blessed with Paradise. Contrary to this, the Jews were not prepared to fight and lay down their life for any cause, neither the cause of God, nor the cause of their nation nor for their own self, properties and honor. They only loved to live, in whatever way or fashion it be. This had made them cowardly.

7. And they will not wish for it, ever, because of what their hands have sent before them.^{*13} And Allah is Aware of wrongdoers.

وَلَا يَتَمَنَّوْنَہٗ اَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ
اَیْدِیْہُمْ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِیْمٌ بِالظَّالِمِیْنَ



*13 In other words, their flight from death is not without a reason. Whatever they may say, their conscience is fully aware of how they are behaving towards Allah and His religion and what consequences can be expected of the misdeeds they are committing in the world. That is why they are afraid to appear at the court of God.

8. Say: “Indeed, the death which you flee from, certainly, will meet you. Then you will be returned

قُلْ اِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِی تَفِرُّوْنَ
مِنْہٗ فَاِنَّہٗ مُلَاقِیْکُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّوْنَ

to the Knower of the Invisible and the Visible, then He will inform you of what you used to do.”

إِلَىٰ عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾

9. O you who believe, when the call is made to the prayer on the day of Jumah,^{*14} then hasten to the remembrance of Allah and leave off trading.^{*15} That is better for you if you knew.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ
لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا
إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ذَٰلِكُمْ
خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩﴾

***14** Three things in this sentence are particularly noteworthy:

- (1) That call to the Prayer is mentioned here.
- (2) That the mention is of the call to such a Prayer as has to be performed particularly only on Fridays.
- (3) That these things have not been mentioned so as to suggest that the call is to be made for the Prayer and a particular Prayer is to be performed on Friday, but the style and context clearly show that the call to the Prayer and the particular Prayer were both already being performed and practiced on Friday.

The people, however, were being negligent in that on hearing the call to the Prayer. They would not hasten to it but would remain occupied in their worldly activities and trade and business transactions. Therefore, Allah sent down this verse to make the people realize and appreciate the importance of the call and the Prayer and to exhort

them to hasten to perform it as a duty. If these three things are considered deeply, they prove this absolute truth that Allah enjoined on the Prophet (peace be upon him) certain commands which were not revealed in the Quran, and these commands were also as obligatory as those revealed in the Quran itself. The call to the Prayer is the same as *adhan* which is being called the world over five times daily in every mosque. But neither its words have been stated anywhere in the Quran nor the method of calling the people to the Prayer has been taught. Its method was prescribed by the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Quran has only confirmed it twice, here and in Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 58. Likewise, this particular Prayer of Friday, which the Muslims of the entire world are performing has neither been enjoined in the Quran nor its time and method of performance described anywhere. This was also prescribed by the Prophet (peace be upon him), and this verse of the Quran was revealed only to stress its importance and obligatory nature. In spite of this express argument anyone who claims that the Shariah commandments are only those which have been stated in the Quran, is not in fact a denier of the Sunnah but of the Quran itself.

Before proceeding further, let us understand a few other things also about *Jumuah* (the Friday congregational Prayer):

(1) *Jumuah* is an Islamic term. In the pre-Islamic days of ignorance the Arabs called it the Arabah day. In Islam when it was declared as a congregational day of the Muslims, it was re-named as *Jumuah*. Although according

to the historians, Kab bin Luayy, or Qusayy bin Kilab, also had used this name for this day, for he used to hold an assembly of Quraish on this day (Fath-al-Bari), yet by this practice the ancient name did not change, and the common Arabs continued to call it the Arabah Day. The real change took place when Islam gave it this new name.

(2) Before Islam, setting aside of a day in the week for worship and regarding it as an emblem of the community was prevalent among the followers of the earlier scriptures. Among the Jews the Sabbath (Saturday) had been fixed for this purpose, because on this day Allah had delivered the children of Israel from the bondage of the Pharaoh. In order to distinguish themselves from the Jews the Christians took Sunday as their distinctive emblem. Although it had neither been enjoined by the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) nor mentioned anywhere in the Gospel, yet the Christians believe that after his death on the Cross the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) had risen from the grave on this day and ascended to heaven. On this very basis the later Christians ordained it as the day of worship, and then in 321 A.D. the Roman Empire instituted it as a holiday by decree. In order to distinguish its community from both these communities, Islam adopted Friday as the day of collective worship as against Saturday and Sunday.

(3) It is known from the tradition reported by Abdullah bin Masud and Abu Masud Ansari that the Friday congregational Prayer had been enjoined on the Prophet (peace be upon him) some time before the Hijrah in

Makkah itself. But at that time he could not act on it, for in Makkah it was not possible to perform any worship collectively. Therefore, he sent a written instruction to the people who had emigrated to Al-Madinah before him that they should establish the Friday congregational Prayer there. Thus, Musab bin Umair, the leader of the earliest emigrants, offered the first Friday Prayer at Al-Madinah with 12 followers. (Tabarani, Daraqutni). Kaab bin Malik and Ibn Sirin have reported that even before this the Muslims of Al-Madinah had decided mutually, on their own initiative, that they would hold a collective service on one day in the week. For this purpose they had selected Friday as against the Sabbath of the Jews and Sunday of the Christians, and the first Friday Prayer was led by Asad bin Zurarah at the place of Bani Bayadah and 40 Muslims participated in it. (Musnad Ahmad Abu Daud, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibban, Abd bin Humaid, Abdur Razzaq, Baihaqi). This shows that the Islamic taste and trend at that time was itself demanding that there should be a day on which maximum number of Muslims should gather together and worship collectively. And this was also a demand of the Islam itself that it should be a day other than Saturday and Sunday so that the symbol of the Muslim community should be distinctive from the emblems of the Jewish and the Christian communities. This was a wonderful manifestation of the Islamic trends and tastes of the Prophet's companions that many a time it so happened that even before a thing was enjoined their taste proclaimed that the spirit of Islam demanded its introduction.

(4) The establishment of the Friday congregational Prayer was one of the earliest things that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did after his emigration to Al-Madinah. After leaving Makkah he reached Quba on Monday and stayed there for four days. On the fifth day, which was a Friday, he preceded to Al-Madinah. On the way at the place of Bani Salim bin Auf, time came for the Friday Prayer and he performed the first Friday congregational Prayer at this very place. (Ibn Hisham).

(5) The time appointed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) for this Prayer was after the declining of the sun, the same time which is for the Zuhr Prayer. The written instruction that he had sent to Musab bin Umair before the hijrah was: Seek nearness to Allah by means of two rakahs of the Prayer when the sun declines after midday on Friday. (Daraqutni). This same instruction he gave orally after hijrah as well as practically led the Friday Prayer at the same time. Traditions on this Subject have been related on the authority of Anas, Salamah bin Akwa, Zubair bin al-Awwam, Sahl bin Saad, Abdullah bin Masud, Ammar bin Yasr and Bilal in the collection of Hadith, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to perform the Friday Prayer after the declining of the sun: (Musnad Ahmad Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Nasai, Tirmidhi).

(6) This is also confirmed by his practice that on this day the Prophet (peace be upon him) led the Friday congregational Prayer instead of the Zuhr Prayer, and this Prayer consisted of two rakahs and he gave the Sermon before it. This was the only difference between the Friday

Prayer and the Zuhr Prayer on other days. Umar says: According to the command enjoined by the tongue of your Prophet (peace be upon him) the traveler's Prayer consists of two rakahs, the Fajr Prayer consists of two rakahs, and the Friday Prayer consists of two rakahs. This is the complete, not the shortened Prayer and the Friday Prayer has been shortened only because of the Sermon.

(7) The call to the Prayer that has been mentioned here implies the call that is made just before the Sermon, and not the call that is made much before the Sermon to announce that the prayer time has begun. There is a tradition in the Hadith from Saaib bin Yazid to the effect that in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) there used to be only one call that was made after the Imam (leader in Prayer) had taken his seat on the pulpit. The same practice also continued in the time of Abu Bakr and Umar. When population increased in the time of Uthman, he ordered another call to be made in the bazaar of Al-Madinah at his house, Az-Zaura. (Bukhari, Abu Daud, Nasai, Tabarani).

***15** In this command remembrance implies the Friday sermon, for the first thing that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do after the call was to deliver the sermon, and he always led the Prayer after delivering the sermon. Abu Hurairah has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The angels on Friday go on writing down the names of the people as they arrive. Then, when the Imam comes out to deliver the sermon, they stop writing the names and turn their attention to the remembrance (i.e. the

sermon). (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Nasai). This Hadith also shows that the remembrance implies the sermon. The exhortation of the Quran itself points to the same thing. First, it says: Hasten to the remembrance of Allah; then a little below it says: Then, when the Prayer is over, disperse in the land. This shows that on Friday the order of the service is that first there is the remembrance of Allah and then the Prayer. The commentators also agree that remembrance either implies the sermon, or the sermon and the Prayer both.

Using the word *dhikr-Allah* for the sermon by itself gives the meaning that it should contain themes relevant to the remembrance of Allah. For instance, praising and glorifying Allah, imploring Him to bless His Messenger (peace be upon him), exhorting and instructing the audience to obey His commands and follow His Shariah, commending His pious and righteous servants, etc. On this very basis, Zamakhshari writes in *al-kashshaf*: Praising the wicked and tyrannical rulers in the Friday Sermon, or mentioning their names and praying for them, has nothing to do with the remembrance of Allah; this would be the remembrance of Satan.

Hasten to the remembrance of Allah does not mean that one should come to the mosque running, but it means that one should make haste for it. The commentators also agree on this very meaning. Hastening, according to them means that on hearing the call one should immediately start making preparations to attend the mosque. The Hadith even forbids coming to the mosque for the Prayer running.

Abu Hurairah has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: When the Prayer has begun, one should come walking to it with calm and dignity, and not running. Then, one should join in whatever remains of the Prayer, and should make up whatever he has missed independently later. In Sihah Sittah, Abu Qatadah Ansari says: Once we were offering the Prayer under the leadership of the Prophet (peace be upon him) when suddenly we heard some people coming to join the Prayer running. When the Prayer was concluded, the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked: What was the noise about. They replied; We came running for the Prayer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said; Don't do that, whenever you come for the Prayer, come with calm and dignity. Join behind the Imam in whatever remains of the Prayer, and make up whatever you have missed independently. (Bukhari, Muslim). Leave off your trading also includes every other worldly activity and business which prevents one from getting ready for the Prayer with full attention and care. Buying and selling has been particularly forbidden, for commerce flourishes on Fridays. People from the surrounding areas gather together at a central place, the merchants also arrive with their merchandise, and the people become occupied in buying the necessities of daily use. The prohibition however is not restricted only to buying and selling, but it applies to all other occupations as well. And since Allah has forbidden these, jurists of Islam agree that after the call has been sounded for the Friday Prayer all forms of trade, business and worldly occupation become forbidden.

This command absolutely confirms the obligatory nature of the Friday Prayer. In the first place, the exhortation to hasten for it after one has heard the call is by itself a proof of its being obligatory. Then, the prohibition of a lawful thing like trade and business at the time of the Prayer also shows that it is obligatory in nature. Moreover, the elimination of the obligatory Zuhr Prayer on Friday and its being replaced by the Friday Prayer is a clear proof that it is obligatory in nature. For, an obligatory duty becomes eliminated only when the duty replacing it is more important. This very thing has been supported in many Ahadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) exhorted the Muslims in most emphatic words to attend the Friday Prayer and has declared it in clear words to be obligatory. Abdullah bin Masud has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: I feel I should ask somebody to stand in my place to lead the Prayer, and I myself should go and set fire to the houses of the people who do not come for the Prayer. (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhari). Abu Hurairah, Abdullah bin Abbas and Abdullah bin Umar say: We heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say this in the Friday Sermon: The people should refrain from giving up the Friday Prayer; otherwise Allah will seal up hearts and they will become totally heedless. (Musnad Ahmad, Muslim, Nasai). From the traditions reported by Abu al-Jad Damri, Jabir bin Abdullah and Abdullah bin Abi Aufa from the Holy Prophet one comes to know that Allah seals up the heart of the person who abandons three Friday Prayers, one after

the other, without a genuine reason and lawful excuse. Rather, in one tradition the words are to the effect: Allah turns the heart of such a one into the heart of a hypocrite. (Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud, Nasai, Tirmidhi Ibn Majah Darimi, Hakim, Ibn Hibban, Bazzar, Tabarani in al-Kabir. Hadrat Jabir bin Abdullah says that the Prophet said: From today till Resurrection the Friday Prayer is obligatory on you. Allah will neither bless nor set right the condition of the one who abandons it disregarding it or considering it an ordinary thing. Note it well: the Prayer of such a one will be no prayer at all, his zakat will be no zakat at all, his Hajj no Hajj, his fasting no fasting, and no good done by him will be good, until he repents. Then, for the one who repents, Allah is Most Forgiving. (Ibn Majah, Bazzar). Another tradition, which is very close in meaning to this has been cited by Tabarani in Auset from Ibn Umar. Furthermore, there are many traditions in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) has declared the Friday Prayer as obligatory in clear words. Abdullah bin Amr bin al-Aas has related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The Friday Prayer is obligatory on every person who hears the call to it. (Abu Daud Daraqutni). Jabir bin Abdullah and Abu Saeed Khudri say that he said in a Sermon: Know that Allah has enjoined the Friday Prayer as a duty on you. (Baihaqi). However, He has exempted the women, children, slaves, the sick and the travelers from this duty. Hafsah has reported that the Prophet said: Attendance at the Friday Prayer is obligatory on every adult male. (Nasai). Tariq bin Shihab's tradition contains

this saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): The Friday congregational Prayer is obligatory on every Muslim except the slave, women, children and the sick. (Abu Daud, Hakim). In the tradition of Jabir bin Abdullah, his words are to the effect: Friday Prayer is obligatory on the person who believes in Allah and the Last Day unless it is a woman, or a traveler, or a slave, or a sick man. (Daraqutni, Baihaqi). On account of these very exhortations of the Quran and the Hadith the entire Ummah is agreed that the Friday congregational Prayer is of obligatory nature.

10. Then, when the prayer is concluded, then disperse in the land and seek of Allah's bounty,^{*16} and remember Allah much,^{*17} that you may achieve success.^{*18}

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ
وَأذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ



***16** This does not mean that after the Friday is over, it is obligatory to go in search of livelihood, but it only implies permission. As it was ordered to stop all worldly business as soon as the call was made for the Prayer, so it is allowed that after the Prayer is over, the people may dispose and resume or pursue whatever occupation or business they may like. It is just like the prohibition of hunting in the state of ihram, but after ihram is put off, one is told to hunt. (Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 2). That does not mean that one must hunt, but that one may hunt if one so likes. Or, for instance, in Surah An-Nisa, permission to marry more than one wife has been given, saying: Marry two or three or four

women whom you choose. Here, although the verb is in the imperative mood, no one has taken it in the meaning of a command. This gives the principle that the imperative form of the verb does not always imply an obligation or command. It sometimes implies the permission and sometimes exercise of choice or preference. The context determines where it implies the command, where the permission and where Allah's approval of the act, and not that the act is obligatory. Immediately after this very sentence itself, it has been said: And remember Allah much. Here also the verb is in the imperative mood, but obviously it implies exercise of one's choice and not that it is a duty or compulsion.

Here, another thing worthy of mention is that although in the Quran, Friday has not been declared a public holiday like the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday, yet no one can deny that Friday is a symbol of the Muslim community precisely in the same way as Saturday is a Jewish and Sunday a Christian symbol. And if declaring a day in the week a public holiday be a cultural necessity, then just as the Jews naturally select Saturday for it and the Christians Sunday, so a Muslim (if he has any Islamic feeling) will necessarily select only Friday for this purpose. The Christians did not even hesitate to impose their Sunday on some other countries where Christian population was negligible. When the Jews established their state in Palestine, the first thing they did was to announce Saturday as the weekly holiday instead of Sunday. In pre-partitioned India one conspicuous distinction between British India

and the Muslim states was that in one part of the country Sunday was observed as a closed holiday and in the other Friday. However, where the Muslims lack Islamic values, they hold to Sunday even after attaining to sovereign power as we see in Pakistan. In case of excessive westernization, Friday is replaced by Sunday as the weekly holiday as was done by Mustafa Kamal in Turkey.

***17 Remember Allah much: Do not forget Allah even when you are otherwise occupied, but remember Him under all circumstances and remain conscious of Him at all times. (For explanation, see E.N. 63 of Surah Al-Ahzab).**

***18 At several places in the Quran, after giving an instruction or an admonition or a command words to the effect: “perhaps you achieve success” or “perhaps you may be shown mercy” have been used. The use of “perhaps” on such occasions does not mean that Allah, God forbid, is entertaining a doubt, but it is in fact a royal style of address. It is just like a kindly master’s giving out hope to his servants to continue doing their best so that they may achieve and win the desired goal and reward, It contains a subtle promise which fills the servant with hope and he carries out his duties and obligations with enthusiasm.**

As the commands pertaining to the Friday congregational prayer come to an end here, it would be useful to give a resume of the injunctions that the four schools of juristic thought have derived from the Quran, the Hadih, traditions of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the general principles of Islam.

According to the Hanafi school of thought, the time for the

Friday Prayer is the same as for Zuhr Prayer. The Friday Prayer can neither be held before it nor after it. Business and trade become forbidden with the first call to the Prayer and not with the second call which is made after the Imam has taken his place on the pulpit, for the words of the Quran in this regard are explicit and definite. Therefore, whichever call is made for the Friday Prayer after the declining of the sun when the Prayer time begins, the people should stop conducting business on hearing it. However, if a person has made a bargain at that time, it will not be void, but will only be a sin. The Friday Prayer cannot be held in every settlement but only in the misr-Jami which has been defined as a large town or city where there are market places, adequate security arrangements, and which has large enough population so that if all the people upon whom attendance at the Friday Prayer is obligatory gather together, they should be too many for the principal mosque to hold. The people who live outside the city will have to offer the Prayer in the city only in case the call to the Prayer reaches them, or if they live within six miles of the city. The Prayer may not necessarily be held in the mosque, it may also be held in the open field and also on a ground which is outside the city but a part of it. The Friday Prayer can be validly held only in a place where any and every person may come to attend it without any hindrance. It will not be valid if it is held in a restricted place where every person is not allowed to join in no matter how many people may gather together. For the Prayer to be valid there should at least be three men (according to

Imam Abu Hanifah beside the imam, or two men including the imam (according to imams Abu Yusuf and Mohammad), upon whom it is obligatory to attend the Friday Prayer. A person will be exempt from the Prayer if he is on a journey, or is so ill that he cannot walk to attend it, or is disabled of both the legs, or is blind (but according to Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad, a blind person will be exempt from the Prayer duty only in case he does not find a man who can take him along for the Prayer), or he apprehends a danger to his life and honor, or an unbearable financial loss from a tyrant, or it is raining heavily and there is slush and rainwater on the way, or he is a prisoner. For the prisoner and the disabled, it is undesirable that they should perform the Zuhr Prayer on Friday in congregation. For those also who have missed the Friday Prayer it is undesirable to perform the Zuhr Prayer collectively, The sermon is one of the pre-requisites of the Friday Prayer to be valid, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) never performed the Friday Prayer without the sermon. The sermon must necessarily precede the prayer, and there should be two sermons. From the time the Imam steps towards the pulpit for the sermon, every kind of speech becomes forbidden till he brings it to an end; no prayer may be performed during it, whether one can hear the imam at the place where one is sitting or not. (Hedayah, Al-Fath ul-Qadir; al-Jassas: Ahkam al-Quran; Al-Fiqh alai-Madhahib al-Arbah; Umdat al-Qari).

According to the Shafeis, the time of the Friday Prayer is the same as of the Zuhr Prayer. Trade and business become

forbidden and hastening to the remembrance of Allah becomes obligatory from the time the second call is sounded, i.e. the call which is sounded after the imam has taken his place on the pulpit. However, if a person carries out a transaction at this time, it does not become void. The Friday Prayer can be held in every such settlement among the permanent residents of which there are 40 such men upon whom it is incumbent to perform the Prayer. Attendance at the Friday Prayer is obligatory for those people of the suburbs whom the call may reach. The Friday service must be held within the bounds of the settlement, but it may not necessarily be held in the mosque. Thus, it is not obligatory for nomadic peoples who live in tents in the desert. For the Prayer to be valid there should at least be 40 such men including the imam in the congregation upon whom the Prayer is incumbent. A person would be exempt from the Prayer if he is on a journey, or intends to stay at a place for four or less than four days provided that the journey is lawful, or he is old or sick and cannot go to attend the Prayer even by a conveyance, or is blind and does not find a man who can take him along for the Prayer, or apprehends danger to life or property or honor, or is a prisoner provided that this imprisonment has not been caused by his own crime. There should be two sermons before the Prayer. Although it is according to the sunnah to sit quiet during the sermon, yet speech is not forbidden. For the person who is sitting close to the imam so that he can hear the sermon, speech is disapproved, but he can respond to a greeting, and can recite prayer on the

Prophet (peace be upon him) aloud when he hears his name being mentioned. (Mughni al-Muhtaj Al-Fiqh al-Madhahib al-Arbah).

According to the Malikis, the Friday Prayer time begins from the declining of the sun and lasts till such time in the evening that the sermon and the Prayer can be concluded before sunset. Business transactions become forbidden and hastening becomes obligatory with the second call. If a transaction takes place after it, it would be void and sinful. The Friday Prayer can be held in the settlements, residents of which live in permanent houses and do not migrate in the summer or the winter, and whose needs and requirements are met in the same settlements, and who can defend themselves on the basis of their strength. In temporary dwelling places the Friday Prayer cannot be established even though many people may be staying there and staying for long periods. Attendance at the Prayer is obligatory for the people who live within three miles of the settlement where the Prayer is held. The Prayer can be held only in the mosque, which is inside the settlement or adjoining it, and the building of which is not inferior to the houses of the common residents of the place. Some Malikis have also imposed the condition that the mosque should be roofed, and arrangements for offering collective Prayer five times daily should also exist in it. However, the better known view of the Malikis is that for the Prayer to be valid the mosque's being roofed is no pre-requisite. The Friday Prayer can also be held in a mosque which has been built only for the Friday Prayer and no arrangements exist in it

for the five daily Prayers. For the Prayer to be valid there must at least be 12 other men, apart from the imam, in the congregation upon whom the Friday Prayer is incumbent. A person would be exempt from it if he is on a journey, or intends to stay for less than four days at a place during the journey, or is so ill that he cannot come to the mosque, or has an ailing mother or father, or wife, or child, or he is nursing a stranger who has nobody else to nurse him, or has a close relative who is seriously ill, or at the point of death, or apprehends an unbearable loss to property, or a danger to his life or honor, or is hiding from fear of imprisonment or punishment, provided that he is a wronged and oppressed person, or it is raining heavily and there is slush and rainwater on the way, or the weather is oppressive due to excessive heat or cold. The Prayer has to be preceded by two sermons; so much so that if the sermon is given after the Prayer, the Prayer has to be repeated, and the sermons must necessarily be delivered inside the mosque. It is forbidden to offer a voluntary Prayer after the imam has stepped towards the pulpit, and to talk when the sermon has begun, even if one is not hearing it. However, if the imam indulges in meaningless and absurd things in the sermon, or uses abusive language for a person who does not deserve it, or starts praising a person for whom praise is unlawful, or starts reciting something irrelevant to the sermon, the people have the right to protest. Furthermore, it is reprehensible that a prayer be made in the sermon for the temporal ruler, unless the imam apprehends danger to his life. The imam must necessarily

be the same person who leads the Prayer; if another person than the one who gave the sermon led the Prayer it would be void. (Hashiyah ad-Dusuqi ila-sh-Sharh al-Kabir, Ibn Arabi, Ahkam al-Quran; Al-Fiqh alal-Madhahib al-Arba'h).

According to the Hanbalis, the Friday Prayer time begins when the sun has risen about a spear's length high and lasts till the beginning of the Asr Prayer time in the afternoon, but performing the Prayer before the declining of the sun is just permissible but after it obligatory and meritorious. Business transactions become forbidden and hastening to the Prayer becomes obligatory with the second call, A transaction contracted after it has no effect in the law. The Prayer can be held only at a place where 40 men on whom the Friday Prayer is incumbent have permanently settled in houses (and not in tents) and are not nomadic tribesmen. For this purpose, it will not make any difference if the houses of the settlement or its different parts are scattered or compact; if their combination is called by one name, it will be one settlement even if its different parts are miles apart. Attendance at the Prayer will be obligatory for the people who live within three miles of the settlement. The congregation should consist of 40 men including the imam. The Prayer may not necessarily be performed in the mosque; it may be performed in the open as well. A person will be exempt from it if he is on a journey and intend to stay in the settlement for four or less than four days, or is so ill that he cannot come to the mosque even by a conveyance, or is blind unless he can grope his way to the

mosque; (it is not obligatory for the blind man to come for the Prayer with another man's help), or he is prevented by extreme weather or heavy rain or slush and rainwater, or he is hiding to escape persecution or apprehends danger to life or honor, or fears an unbearable financial loss, The Prayer should be preceded by two sermons. The person who is sitting so close to the imam that he can hear him, is forbidden speech; however, the one sitting far away, who cannot hear the sermon, can speak. The people have to sit quiet during the sermon whether the person delivering the sermon is a just man or an unjust man. If Eid falls on a Friday, the people who have performed the Eid Prayer will be exempt from the Friday Prayer. In this matter, the viewpoint of the Hanbalis is different from that of the other three Imams. (Ghayat al-Muntaha; Al-Fiqh al-Madhahib al-Arbah),

All jurists agree that if the person upon whom the Friday Prayer is not incumbent, joins in the Prayer, his Prayer would be valid, and he would be absolved from the Zuhr Prayer.

11. And when they see a merchandise or an amusement, they rush to it and leave you standing.*19

Say: "That which is with Allah is better than amusement and than merchandise.*20 And Allah is the best of providers.*21"

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَهْوًا أَنْفَضُوا
إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ
اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِو وَمِنَ التِّجَارَةِ
وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ



***19** This is the incident because of which the commandments pertaining to the Friday congregational Prayer have been enjoined in the preceding verses. Its narrative as related in the collections of Hadith, on the authority of Jabir bin Abdullah, Abdullah bin Abbas, Abu Hurairah, Abu Malik, and Hasan Basri, Ibn Zaid, Qatadah and Muqatil bin Hayyan is as follows: A trade caravan from Syria arrived in Al-Madinah right at the time of the Friday Prayer and its people started playing their drums to announce their arrival. The Prophet (peace be upon him) at that time was delivering the sermon, Hearing the drum the people in the congregation became impatient and rushed out towards Baqi where the caravan had halted, except for 12 men. The most authentic tradition in this narrative is of Jabir bin Abdullah, which has been related by Imam Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abu Uwanah, Abd bin Humaid, Abu Yala and others through reliable channels. The only diversity is that in some traditions it is stated that the incident took place when the Prayer was in progress; in others that it happened when the Prophet was delivering the sermon. However, what appears to be correct when the tradition of Jabir and those of others are read together is that it happened during the sermon. Where Jabir says that it happened during the Friday Prayer, he in fact has used the word Friday Prayer for the combination of the sermon and the Prayer. According to the tradition of Abdullah bin Abbas, seven women had remained behind with 12 men. (Ibn Marduyah). Qatadah says that one woman remained with 12 men, (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim).

According to the tradition of Daraqutni 40 individuals remained, of Abd bin Humaid 7 individuals and of Farra 8 individuals. But all these are weak traditions. The tradition of Qatadah that such a thing happened thrice is also weak. (Ibn Jarir). The authentic tradition in this regard is of Jabir, according to which the number of those who remained behind is stated to be 12. Apart from one tradition of Qatadah, all traditions of the other companions and their followers agree that this happened only once. When read together different traditions about those who remained behind show that they included Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Abdullah bin Masud, Ammar bin Yasir, Salim (slave of Hudhaifah) and Jabir bin Abdullah. The tradition related by Hafiz Abu Yala from Jabir bin Abdullah says that when the people rushed out like that and only 12 companions were left behind, the Prophet (peace be upon him) addressed them, saying: By Him in Whose hand is my life, if all of you had left, and none had remained behind, this valley would have overflowed with fire. A theme resembling this has been cited by Ibn Marduyah from Abdullah bin Abbas and by Ibn Jarir from Qatadah.

The Shiite scholars have used this incident also for taunting and finding fault with the companions. They say that abandoning the sermon and the Prayer by such a large number of the companions for the sake of worldly gain and amusement is a proof that they preferred the world to the Hereafter. But this is a misplaced objection that can be raised only if one keeps his eyes closed to realities. As a

matter of fact, this incident took place just after the migration. At that time, on the one hand, the collective training of the companions was in the initial stages, and on the other, the disbelievers of Makkah had subjected the people of Al-Madinah to a strict economic blockade because of which necessities of life had become scarce in the city. Hasan Basri says that the people at time were starving and the prices had risen abnormally high. (Ibn Jarir). Under such conditions when a trade caravan arrived, the people rushed out to buy things of daily need lest these were sold out before the Prayer was concluded. This was a weakness and error which became suddenly manifest due to insufficient training and severity of the conditions. But whoever sees the sacrifices made by the companions for the cause of Islam afterwards and sees what piety and righteousness they displayed in the matter of worship and dedication and dealings can never dare bring against them the allegation that they preferred the world to the Hereafter unless he himself bears malice against the companions.

However, just as this incident does not support the critics of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), so it also does not support the ideas of those people who cherish exaggerated notions about them and claim that they never committed any error, or if they committed some, it should not be mentioned, for making mention of their error and calling it an error is derogatory and it reduces one's reverence and respect for them, and its mention goes against the verses of the Quran and the Hadith, which state

that the companions are Allah's favorite people and have already been forgiven all their errors and mistakes. All this is exaggeration for which there is no basis in the Quran and the Hadith. Here, everyone can see for himself that Allah Himself has mentioned the error that happened to have been committed by a large number of the companions, in the Book that will be read by the entire ummah till Resurrection, and in the same Book which speaks of their having been forgiven and being chosen people of Allah. Then in the books of the Hadith and commentary also details of this error have been described by all scholars, from the companions to the major scholars among the followers of the Sunnah. Does it mean that Allah has made this mention in order to destroy the reverence for the same companions whose reverence and esteem He wants to instill in all our hearts? And does it mean that the companions and their followers and the traditionists and commentators have mentioned these details of this incident because they were unaware of the religious aspect of the matter which these zealots show and describe? And have the people who read Surah Al-Jumuah and study its commentary really lost reverence and esteem for the companions from their hearts? If the answer to each of these questions is in the negative, and it is surely in the negative, then all those exaggerated ideas and notions, which some people express and show in regard to the reverence of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) companions, are erroneous.

The truth is that the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were not supernormal beings: they were only

human born in this very world. Whatever they attained, they attained through the persistent training imparted by the Prophet (peace be upon him) over many years. The method of this training as we learn from the Quran and the Hadith was; Whenever a weakness appeared in them, Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) turned immediate attention to it, and a program of education and training was established to overcome and eradicate it. In the matter of this very Friday Prayer, we see that when the incident of the trade caravan occurred, Allah sent down this section of the verses of Surah Al-Jumuah to administer warning and teach the etiquette of the Friday Service. Along with this the Prophet (peace be upon him) impressed on the people the importance of the obligatory nature of the service continuously in his sermons as explained in E.N. 15 above. All these instructions are found in the Hadith in clear words. Abu Saeed Khudri says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Every Muslim must have full bath on Friday, should clean his teeth, put on the best available clothes, and use perfume if possible. (Musnad Ahmad Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Nasai). Salman Farsi says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The Muslim who has bath on Friday, cleans and purifies himself as far as possible, applies oil to his hair, or uses perfume if available, and comes to the mosque and takes his place without disturbing others, then offers the (voluntary) Prayer that Allah has destined for him, then listens quietly when the imam speaks, he will have his sins and errors committed since the previous Friday forgiven. (Bukhari,

Musnad Ahmad). Traditions containing almost the same theme have been reported by Abu Ayub Anati, Abu Hurairah and Nubaishat alHudhali also from the Prophet (peace be upon him). (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Tabarani). Abdullah bin Abbas says that the Prophet said: The person who speaks when the imam is delivering the sermon is like the donkey loaded with books, and the person who tells him to keep quiet has also rendered his own Prayer void. (Musnad Ahmad). Abu Huraira says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: If on Friday during the sermon you said to a person, keep quiet, you too behaved wrong. (Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai, Tirmidhi, Abu Daud). Traditions closely resembling this have been related by Imam Ahmad, Abu Daud and Tabarani from Ali and Abu ad-Darda. To the person delivering the sermon also the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed that he should not deliver a lengthy sermon to try the people's patience. His own practice on Friday was that he gave brief sermons and led short Prayers. Jabir bin Samurah says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would never give a lengthy sermon, he was always very brief. (Abu Daud). Abdullah bin Abi Aufa says: The Prophet's (peace be upon him) sermon used to be shorter than the Prayer, and the Prayer a little longer than the sermon. (Nasai). According to Ammar bin Yasir, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The prolongation of the Prayer and the brevity of the sermon are a sign that the Imam has deep insight in religion. (Musnad Ahmad, Muslim). Almost the same theme Bazzar has related from Abdullah bin Masud.

All this shows how the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught the people the etiquette of the Friday congregational service till it began to be performed in the unique manner unknown in the congregational worship of any other people in the world.

***20** This sentence by itself shows what was the nature of the error committed by the companions. God forbid, if it had been due to any weakness of the faith, or due to giving the world preference over the Hereafter, Allah's wrath and displeasure and reprimand would have been much severer. But since there was no such weakness, and whatever happened was only due to insufficient training, Allah first taught the people the etiquette of the Friday service, then, after pointing out the error, promised them that the reward they would get with Allah for listening to the sermon and performing the Prayer would be much greater than worldly gains and amusements.

***21** That is, Allah is by far the best of all those providers who become a means of providing sustenance in the world, though only metaphorically. Sentences such as this have occurred at several places in the Quran, At some places Allah has been called the best of Creators, at others the best of Forgivers, the best of Rulers, the best of those who show mercy, or the best of Helpers. At all these places the reference of providing, creating, forgiving, showing mercy and offering help to the creatures is metaphorical, and to Allah real. It means that Allah is the best Provider, Creator, Forgiver, Helper and Bestower of Mercy of all those who appear to be giving you wages and means of

sustenance, or who appear to be making things by their skill and workmanship, or who seem to be pardoning the errors of others, or showing mercy and helping other in this world.





Al-Munafiqoon

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the sentence *Idha jaa kal-munafiqoona* of verse 1. This is the name of the Surah as well as the title of its subject matter, for in it a review has been made of the conduct and attitude of the hypocrites themselves.

Period of Revelation

As we shall explain below this Surah was revealed either during the Prophet's (peace be upon him) return journey from his campaign against Bani al-Mustaliq, or immediately after his arrival back at Al-Madinah, and we have established by argument and research in the Introduction to Surah An-Noor that the campaign against Bani al-Mustaliq had taken place in Shaban A.H. 6. Thus, the date of the revelation of this Surah is determined precisely.

Historical Background

Before we mention the particular incident about which this Surah was revealed, it is necessary to have a look at the history of the hypocrites of Al-Madinah, for the incident

that occurred on this occasion had a whole series of events behind it, which ultimately led up to it.

Before the Prophet's (peace be upon him) emigration to Al-Madinah the tribes of the Aus and the Khazraj, fed up with their mutual rivalries and civil wars, had almost agreed on the leadership of one man and were making preparations to crown him their king. This was Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul, the chief of the Khazraj. Muhammad bin Ishaq has stated that among the people of Khazraj his authority was never contested and never had the Aus and the Khazraj rallied to one man before this. (Ibn Hisham, vol. II, p. 234)

Such were the conditions when the voice of Islam reached Al-Madinah and the influential people of both the tribes started becoming Muslims. When before the emigration, invitation was being extended to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to come to Al-Madinah, Abbas bin Ubadah bin Nadlah Ansari wanted to defer this invitation for the reason that Abdullah bin Ubayy also might join in the declaration of allegiance and invitation to the Prophet (peace be upon him), so that Al-Madinah might become the center of Islam by common consent. But the delegation that arrived in Makkah to declare their allegiance did not give any importance to the proposal of Abbas bin Ubadah, and all its members, who included 75 men from both the tribes, became ready to invite the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the face of every danger (Ibn Hisham, vol. II, P. 89). We have given the details of this event in the Introduction to Surah Al-Anfaal.

Then, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) arrived in Al-

Madinah, Islam had so deeply penetrated every house of the Ansar that Abdullah bin Ubayy became helpless and did not see any other way to save his leadership than to become a Muslim himself. So, he entered Islam along with many of his followers from among the chiefs and leaders of both the tribes although their hearts were burning with rage from within. Ibn Ubayy in particular was filled with grief, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) had deprived him of his kingship. For several years his hypocritical faith and grief of being deprived of his kingdom manifested itself in different ways. On the one hand, when on Fridays the Prophet (peace be upon him) took his seat to deliver the sermon, Abdullah bin Ubayy would stand up and say: O people, the Messenger of Allah is present among you, by whom Allah has honored you; therefore, you should support him and listen to what he says and obey him. (Ibn Hisham, vol. III, p. 111). On the other, his hypocrisy was being exposed day by day and the true Muslims were realizing that he and his followers bore great malice against Islam, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Muslims.

Once when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was passing on the way Abdullah bin Ubayy spoke to him in harsh words. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) complained of it to Hadrat Saad bin Ubadah; he said: O Messenger of Allah, don't be hard on him, for when Allah sent you to us we were making a diadem to crown him, and, by God, he thinks that you have robbed him of his kingdom. (Ibn Hisham vol: II, pp. 237-238).

After the Battle of Badr when the Prophet (peace be upon him) invaded the Jewish tribe of Bani Qainuqa on their breaking the agreement and un-provoked revolt, this man stood up in support of them, and holding the Prophet (peace be upon him) by his armor, said: These 700 fighters have been helping and protecting me against every enemy; would you cut them down in one morning? By God, I will not leave you until you pardon my clients. (Ibn Hisham, vol. III, pp. 51- 52).

On the occasion of the Battle of Uhud this man committed open treachery and withdrew from the battlefield with 300 of his companions. One should note that at this critical moment when he so acted, the Quraish had marched upon Al-Madinah with 3,000 troops and the Prophet (peace be upon him) had marched out with only 1,000 men to resist them. Of these 1,000 this hypocrite broke away with 300 men and the Prophet (peace be upon him) was left with only 700 men to meet 3,000 troops of the enemy in the field. After this incident the common Muslims of Al-Madinah came to realize fully that he was certainly a hypocrite and his companions were also his associates in hypocrisy. That is why when on the very first Friday, after the Battle of Uhud, this man stood up as usual to make a speech before the Prophet's (peace be upon him) sermon, the people pulled at his garment, saying: Sit down you are not worthy to say such things. That was the first occasion in Al-Madinah when this man was publicly disgraced. Thereupon he was so filled with rage that he left the mosque jumping over the heads of the people. At the door

of the Mosque some of the Ansar said to him: What are you doing? Go back and ask the Prophet (peace be upon him) to pray for your forgiveness. He retorted: I do not, want him to pray for my forgiveness." (Ibn Hisham, vol. III, p. 111).

Then in A. H. 4 the Battle of Bani an-Nadir took place. On this occasion he and his companions supported the enemies of Islam even more openly. On the one side, the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his devoted companions were preparing for war against their enemy, the Jews, and on the other, these hypocrites were secretly sending messages to the Jews to the effect: Stand firm we are with you: if you are attacked, we will help you, and if you are driven out, we too will go out with you. The secret of this intrigue was exposed by Allah Himself, as has been explained in Surah Al-Hashr, Ayats 11-17.

But in spite of being so exposed the reason why the Prophet (peace be upon him) was still treating him kindly was that he had a large band of the hypocrites behind him. Many of the chiefs of both the Aus and the Khazraj were his supporters. At least a third of the population of Al-Madinah consisted of his companions, as became manifest on the occasion of the Battle of Uhud. Under such conditions it was not prudent to wage a war with these internal enemies combined with the external enemies. On this very account, in spite of being fully aware of their hypocrisy the Prophet (peace be upon him) continued to deal with them according to their apparent profession of faith for a long time. On the other hand, these people too

neither possessed the power nor the courage to fight the believers openly as disbelievers, or to join hands with an invader and face them in the battlefield. Apparently they were a strong hand but inwardly they had the weakness which Allah has vividly portrayed in Surah Al-Hashr, Ayats 12-14. Therefore, they thought their well being lay only in posing as Muslims. They came to the mosque, offered the prayers, gave away the zakat, and would make tall oral claims to the faith, which the true Muslims never felt the need to do. They would offer a thousand justifications for each of their hypocritical acts by which they would try to deceive their compatriots, the Ansar, into believing that they were with them. By these designs they were not only saving themselves from the disadvantages which could naturally accrue if they separated themselves from the Ansar brotherhood, but also taking advantage of the opportunities to make mischief which were available to them as members of the Muslim brotherhood.

These were the causes which enabled Abdullah bin Ubayy and like minded hypocrites to get an opportunity to accompany the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his campaign against the Bani al-Mustaliq, and they simultaneously engineered two great acts of mischief which could shatter the Muslim unity to pieces. However, by virtue of the wonderful training in discipline that the Muslim had received through the pure teaching of the Quran and the companionship of the Prophet (peace be upon him) both acts of mischief were stopped in time, and the hypocrites themselves were disgraced instead. One of

these was the mischief that has been mentioned in Surah An-Noor, and the other which has been mentioned in this Surah.

This incident has been related by Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, Nasai, Tirmidhi, Baihaqi, Tabari, Ibn Marduyah, Abdur Razzaq, Ibn Jarir Tabari, Ibn Saad and Muhammad bin Ishaq through many reliable channels. In some traditions the expedition in which it took place has not been named, and in others it has been connected with the Battle of Tabuk. But the authorities on the battles fought by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and history agree that this incident took place on the occasion of the campaign against the Bani al-Mustaliq. The following seems to be the real story when all the traditions are read together.

When after crushing down the power of Bani al-Mustaliq the Islamic army had made a halt in the settlement at the well of al-Muraisi. Suddenly a dispute arose between two men on taking water from the well. One of them was Jehjah bin Masud Ghifari, a servant of Umar appointed to lead his horse. The other was Sinan bin Wabar al-Juhani, whose tribe was an ally of a clan of the Khazraj. Harsh words between them led to fighting and Jehjah kicked Sinan, which the Ansar, on account of their ancient Yamanite tradition, took as a great insult and disgrace. At this Sinan called out the men of Ansar and Jehjah the emigrants for help. Hearing about the quarrel Ibn Ubayy started inciting and calling the men of the Aus and the Khazraj to come out and help their ally. From the other side some emigrants

also came out. The dispute might have led to a fight between the Ansar and the Muhajirin themselves at the very place where they had just fought an enemy tribe jointly and crushing it had halted in its own territory. But hearing the noise the Prophet (peace be upon him) emerged and said: What is this call of paganism. What have you to do with such a call, leave it, it is a dirty thing. Thereupon the leading men of the two sides met and settled the dispute. Sinan pardoned Jehjah and peace was restored.

After this every person whose heart was disaffected came to Abdullah bin Ubayy and they all said to him: Until now we had our hopes attached to you and you were protecting us, but now it seems you have become a helper of these paupers against us. Ibn Ubayy was already enraged. These words made him burst out, thus: This is what you have done to yourselves. You have given these people shelter in your country, and have divided your property among them. So much so that they have now become our rivals. Nothing so fits us and the paupers of Quraish (or the companions of Muhammad, peace be upon him) as the ancient saying: Feed your dog to fatten it and it will devour you. If you hold back your property from them, they would go elsewhere. By God, when we return to Al-Madinah, the honorable ones will drive out from it the mean ones.

Zaid bin Arqam, a young boy, also happened to be present in the assembly at that time. He heard this and mentioned it before his uncle, and his uncle who was one of the Ansar chiefs went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and told him the whole story. The Prophet (peace be upon him)

called Zaid and asked him what had happened and he repeated every word of what he had heard. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Zaid, you are perhaps displeased with Ibn Ubayy; you might have been mistaken in hearing; you might have imagined Ibn Ubayy said this. But Zaid was sure and firm. He said: No, I swear by God I have heard him say this and that. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) called Ibn Ubayy, and he came and swore that he had not said any such thing. The people of the Ansar also said: a boy says this: he might have been mistaken in what he heard. Ibn Ubayy is a venerable old man and our chief. Do not believe what a boy says against him. The elderly people of the tribe reproved Zaid also, who became depressed and held his peace. But the Prophet (peace be upon him) knew Zaid as well as Abdullah bin Ubayy. Therefore, he fully understood what had actually happened.

When Umar came to know of this, he came to the Prophet and said: Please allow me to put this hypocrite to the sword. Or, if you do not think it is fit to give me the permission you may tell Muadh bin Jabal, or Abbad bin Bishr, or Sad bin Muadh, or Muhammad bin Maslamah from among the Ansar to go and kill him. But the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: No, the people will say Muhammad (peace be upon him) kills his own companions. After this he ordered the people to set off immediately, although it was at a time when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was not accustomed to travel. The forced march continued for 30 hours at a stretch so that the people

became exhausted. Then he halted, and as soon as they touched the ground they fell asleep. This he did to distract their minds from what had happened at the well of al-Muraisi. On the way Usaid bin Hudair, an Ansar chief, met the Prophet (peace be upon him), and said: O Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, today you ordered the people to set off at a time which was disagreeable for traveling; a thing you have never done before. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Have you not heard of what your friend said. When he asked who he meant, the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Abdullah bin Ubayy. He asked what he had said. The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered: He has asserted that when he returns to Al-Madinah, the honorable ones will drive out from it the mean ones. He answered: By God, O Messenger of Allah, you are the honorable one and he is the mean one; you will drive him out whenever you want to.

By and by the news spread among the Ansar soldiers and it enraged them against Ibn Ubayy. The people advised him to go to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and request for his forgiveness, but he retorted: You asked me to believe in him, and I believed in him; you asked me to pay the zakat on my property, and I paid the zakat too; now the only thing left is that I should bow down to Muhammad (peace be upon him). This further enraged the believing Ansar and everyone started reproaching and cursing him. When the caravan was about to enter Al-Madinah, Abdullah, the son of Abdullah bin Ubayy, stood before his father with a drawn out sword, and said: You had said that when you

reached Al-Madinah, the honorable ones would drive out the mean ones. Now, you will know who is honorable you or Allah and His Messenger. By God, you cannot enter Al-Madinah until the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) permits you to enter. At this Ibn Ubayy cried out: O people of Khazraj, look, my own son is preventing me from entering Al-Madinah. The people conveyed this news to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and he said: Tell Abdullah to let his father come home. Abdullah said: If this is the Prophet's (peace be upon him) order, then you may enter. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Umar: Now what do you think, Umar. Had you killed him on the day when you asked my permission to kill him, many people would have trembled with rage. Today if I order them to kill him, they will kill him immediately. Umar replied: By God, I realize there was greater wisdom behind what the Apostle of Allah said than what I said. These were the circumstances under which this Surah was revealed, most probably after the Prophet's (peace be upon him) return to Al-Madinah.

1. (O Muhammad), when the hypocrites come to you, they say: "We bear witness that you are indeed Allah's Messenger." And Allah knows that you are indeed His Messenger. And Allah bears witness that surely the Hypocrites are liars.*1

إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ قَالُوا
نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ
إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُهُ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّ
الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١﴾

*1 That is, Although the thing they are uttering with the tongue is true by itself, it does not reflect their belief. Therefore they lie when they say that they bear witness that you are a Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah. Here, one should clearly understand that an evidence or witness is composed of two things: first, the actual thing to which one bears the witness; second, the concerned person's own belief about the thing to which he bears the witness, Now, if the thing by itself is true and the belief of the bearer of witness also corresponds to what he says, he will be truthful in every respect. And if the thing in itself is false; but the bearer of the witness believes it to be right and true, he will be regarded as truthful in one way, for he is truthful in expressing his belief, and liar in another way, for the thing he is bearing witness to is by itself false. Contrary to this, if the thing by itself is true but the belief of the bearer of the witness is opposed to it, he will be regarded as truthful because he is testifying to the right thing, and a liar because his own belief is contrary to what he is saying with the tongue. For instance, if a believer states that Islam is a true religion, he is truthful in every respect, but if a Jew, while he is steadfast in his Judaism, states the same thing, he would be stating the right thing but his evidence would be regarded as false, for he is testifying against his faith and belief. And if he calls it a false religion, he would be uttering a false thing but he would be bearing a true witness according to his belief.

2. They have taken their oaths as a shield*² so they

أَتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَن

can hinder (others) from the way of Allah.*³ Indeed it is evil that which they do.

سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



*2 That is, they use the oaths that they swear to convince others of their Islam and faith as a shield to save themselves from the wrath of the Muslims so that they do not treat them as they treat their open enemies.

These oaths may imply the oaths which they usually swear to convince others of their faith as well as those which they swore when they were caught committing some hypocritical act, and also those oaths which Abdullah bin Ubayy had sworn to contradict the report given by Zaid bin Arqam. Besides these, there is another probability that Allah might have regarded this statement of theirs as an oath: We bear witness that you are Allah's Messenger. This last probability has given rise to a dispute among the jurists, namely: If a person states something with the words: I bear witness, will it be regarded as an oath or not? Imam Abu Hanifah and his companions (except Imam Zufar), Imam Sufyan Thauri and Imam Auzai regard it as an oath (Yamin in the Shariah terminology). Imam Zufar says that it is not an oath. Two sayings from Imam Malik have been reported in this connection: First, that it is an oath absolutely, and second, that if while saying: I bear witness, his intention was to say: My God, I bear witness, or I bear witness before God, it would be a statement on oath, otherwise not. Imam Shafei says: Even if the person says the words: I bear witness before God. it would not be a

statement made on oath, unless he uttered these words with the intention of swearing an oath, (Al-Jassas, Ahkam al-Quran; Ibn alArabi, Ahkam al-Quran).

*3 The verb *sadd* in Arabic is transitive as well as intransitive. Therefore, *saddu-un sabil-Allah* means; They turn away from the way of Allah, as well as: they turn others away from the way of Allah. According to the first meaning the verse would mean: By means of these oaths, they first plant themselves firmly among the Muslims and then invent ways to escape fulfilling demands of the faith and to avoid obedience to Allah and His Messenger. According to the second meaning it would mean: They use their false oaths as a cover for committing evil deeds. Posing as Muslims they weaken the Muslim community from within: find out the secrets of the Muslims and convey these to their enemies: create doubts about Islam among the non-Muslims and use such devices for inspiring the simple Muslims with evil suggestions which only a hypocrite in the guise of a Muslim could do, for an open enemy of Islam cannot use them.

3. That is because they believed, then they disbelieved, so a seal has been put on their hearts, so they do not understand.*4

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا
فَطُبِعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا
يَفْقَهُونَ

*4 In this verse believing means professing the faith in order to be counted among Muslims, and disbelieving means not to believe sincerely and to persist in disbelief as

usual. The verse means to say that when they, after due thought, decided to adopt this hypocritical attitude instead of adopting either belief or disbelief plainly, Allah caused a seal to be set on their hearts and deprived them of the grace to adopt the attitude and conduct of a true, sincere and noble person. Now, their power of understanding has been lost, their moral sense has become dead, and while following this way they never even feel that their habit of always telling lies, their deceitful behavior and the ever present contradictions between their word and deed is a wretched state in which they have involved themselves.

This is one of those verses in which the meaning of “causing a seal to be set on the heart of somebody by Allah” has been made clear. These people did not become hypocrites because Allah had set a seal on their hearts; so faith did not enter them, and they became hypocrites under compulsion. But, in fact, Allah set a seal on their hearts only when they decided to persist in disbelief in spite of professing the faith outwardly. Then, they were deprived of the capacity to believe sincerely and of the grace of the moral attitude resulting from it, and were helped to persist in the hypocrisy and hypocritical morals, which they had chosen to adopt for themselves.

4. And when you see them, their figures would marvel you. And if they speak, you listen to their speech.^{*5} They are like blocks of timber propped up.^{*6} They deem

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ
وَإِنْ يَقُولُوا تَسْمَعُ لِقَوْلِهِمْ كَأَنَّكُمْ
خُشْبٌ مُّسْنَدَةٌ تَحْسَبُونَ كُلَّ

every shout to be (directed) against them.*⁷ They are the enemies,*⁸ so beware of them.*⁹ May Allah destroy them.*¹⁰ How are they being perverted.*¹¹

صِيْحَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ هُمْ اَلْعَدُوُّ
فَاَحْذَرْهُمْ قَتَلَهُمُ اللهُ اَنِي
يُؤْفَكُونَ

*5 Abdullah bin Abbas has stated that Abdullah bin Ubayy was a strongly built, healthy, handsome and smooth-tongued person, and the same was the case with most of his companions. They were all the nobles of Al-Madinah. When they came to sit in the Prophet's (peace be upon him) assembly, they would sit reclining on cushions against the walls and would talk agreeably and convincingly. From their outward appearance and manner of speech no one could imagine that those honorable people of the city would be so wretched and degraded in their character.

*6 That is, those who sit reclining on cushions against the walls, are not but but pieces of timber. Comparing them to timber is meant to imply that they are devoid of the moral sense which is the essence of humanity. Then by comparing them to blocks of timber propped up against the wall, it has also been pointed out that they are absolutely worthless, for the timber would be useful only when it has been utilized in making of a ceiling, or a door frame, or a piece of furniture. A block of timber that has just been placed against a wall serves no useful purpose at all.

*7 This brief sentence portrays the state of their guilty conscience. Since they fully knew what game of hypocrisy they were playing under the screen of their superficial

faith, they always remained in a state of alarm, thinking as to when the secret of their treason might be exposed, or the believers might feel disgusted with their evil deeds and machinations and take them to task for them. If ever a cry was raised anywhere in the city, or a noise was heard; they immediately grew alarmed and thought it was directed against themselves.

*8 In other words, these hidden enemies are more dangerous than the open enemies.

*9 That is, do not be deceived by their outward appearances. Beware of them, for they can deceive you at any moment.

*10 This is not a curse but a declaration of the verdict about them by Allah that they have become worthy of His punishment and He will certainly inflict His punishment on them. It is also possible that Allah may not have used these words in their literal sense but in the meaning of a curse and condemnation according to Arabic idiom.

*11 It has not been pointed out as to who perverts them from belief to hypocrisy. This by itself makes it clear that there is not one but many factors responsible for their perversion. There is Satan, there are their evil friends, and there are their own selfish motives. Someone's wife or children become his motive, and someone is driven to perversion by the evil ones in his society, or by jealousy, spite and pride.

5. And when it is said to them: "Come, the Messenger of Allah will ask

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا يَسْتَغْفِرْ

forgiveness for you.” They turn their heads aside, and you see them evading and they are arrogant.*12

لَكُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ لَوَّأَ رُءُوسَهُمْ
وَرَأَيْتَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ وَهُمْ
مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ

*12 That is, they not only refuse to come to the Messenger to seek forgiveness, but also on hearing the invitation they shake their heads with arrogance and pride, and remain adamant, thinking that it would be disgraceful for them to approach the Messenger (peace be upon him) to seek forgiveness. This is a clear sign that they are not believers.

6. It is the same for them, whether you ask forgiveness for them, or do not ask forgiveness for them. Allah shall never forgive them.*13 Surely, Allah does not guide the people who are disobedient.*14

سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَسْتَغْفَرْتَ لَهُمْ أَمْ
لَمْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ لَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الْفَاسِقِينَ

*13 This thing was reiterated in Surah At-Taubah, which was revealed three years after Surah Al-Munafiqoon, even in stronger words. In that Surah, Allah, while addressing the Prophet (peace be upon him) said this about the hypocrites: O Prophet (it will be all the same) whether you beg forgiveness for them or not, for Allah will not forgive them even if you beg forgiveness for them seventy times. This is because they have disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger, and Allah does not show guidance to the

wrongdoers. (Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 80). A little further on in that Surah it was again said: And never perform the funeral prayer for anyone of them who dies nor stand at his grave, for they have denied Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and died while they were transgressors. (Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 84).

*14 Two things have been stated in this verse. First, that the prayer of forgiveness can be beneficial only for those who are guided aright. Let alone a common man, even if Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) himself prays for the forgiveness of the person, who has turned away from guidance and adopted the way of sin and transgression instead of obedience, he cannot be forgiven. Second, that it is not Allah's way to bless with guidance those who do not seek His guidance. If a person himself turns away from Allah's guidance, rather shakes his head with arrogance and rejects the invitation when he is called towards guidance, Allah has no need that He should go after him with His guidance and implore him to come to the right path.

7. They are those who say: "Do not spend on those who are with Allah's Messenger, until they disperse." And for Allah are the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not understand.

هُمُ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ لَا تُنْفِقُوا عَلَيَّ
مَنْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى
يَنْفِضُوا^ق وَلِلَّهِ خَزَائِنُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا
يَفْقَهُونَ



8. They say: “If we return to AlMadinah, the more honorable will surely expel from it the meaner.”*¹⁵ And to Allah belongs honor, and to His Messenger, and to the believers,*¹⁶ but the hypocrites do not know.

يَقُولُونَ لَئِن رَّجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ
لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنَهَا الْأَذَلَّ
وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ
وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَلَكِنَّ
الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

*¹⁵ Zaid bin Arqam says: When I reported these words of Abdullah bin Ubayy to the Prophet (peace be upon him), and Abdullah bin Ubayy came and disowned them on oath, the elderly people of the Ansar, and even my own uncle, reproved me for this; so much so that I felt that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had also mistaken me for a liar and Abdullah bin Ubayy for a truthful person. This caused me great anguish and grief. Then, when these verses were revealed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) called me, and taking hold of my ear, said: The boy’s ear was truthful Allah has himself testified to what it had heard. (Ibn Jarir. In Tirmidhi also there is a tradition on the same subject).

*¹⁶ That is, all honor belongs to Allah in virtue of His essence, to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in virtue of his prophethood, and to the believers in virtue of their faith. As for the disbelievers, the wicked people and the hypocrites, they have no share whatsoever in the real true honor.

9. O you*¹⁷ who believe, let not your possessions nor

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ

your children distract you from the remembrance of Allah.*¹⁸ And whoever does that, then those are the losers.

أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادِكُمْ عَنْ
ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ
فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

*17 Now a word of admonition is being addressed to all those people who have entered Islam, whether they are true and sincere believers, or those who profess the faith merely verbally. As we have explained at several places above. the words *alla-dhina amanu* in the Quran are sometimes used to address the true believers and sometimes to address the hypocrites, for they profess the faith only with the tongue, and sometimes to address the Muslims of all kinds in general. The context itself shows which group is the audience at a particular place.

*18 The mention of the possessions and the children, in particular, has been made for man mostly turns away from the demands of the faith for the sake of their well being and interests and becomes involved in hypocrisy, weakness of faith, or wickedness and disobedience; otherwise it implies everything of the world that allures and absorbs man so completely that he becomes heedless of the remembrance of God. This heedlessness in respect of the remembrance of God is indeed the root cause of all evil. If man only remembers that he is not free but the servant of One God, and that God is fully aware of all his actions and deeds, and he will be held accountable one day before Him for all his actions and deeds, he would never be involved in any

deviation and wickedness, and if ever he commits an error due to a human weakness, he will immediately rectify it as soon as he comes to realize his wrongdoing and repent.

10. And spend from that which We have provided you before death should come to any of you, then he should say: “My Lord, why did You not relieve me for a little while so that I should have given in charity and become among the righteous.”

وَأَنْفِقُوا مِنْ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ
أَنْ يَأْتِيَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ
فَيَقُولَ رَبِّ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنِي إِلَى
أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ فَأَصَّدَّقَ وَأَكُنْ مِنَ
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. And never will Allah delay a soul when its term has come. And Allah is Informed of what you do.

وَلَنْ يُؤَخِّرَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِذَا جَاءَ
أَجَلُهَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
﴿١١﴾





التَّغَابُنِ At-Taghabun

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the sentence *Dhalika yaum-ut taghabun* of verse 9, thereby implying that it is the Surah in which the word at *taghabun* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Muqatil and Kalbi say that it was partly revealed at Makkah and partly at Al-Madinah. Abdullah bin Abbas and Ata bin Yasar say that verses 1-13 were revealed at Makkah and verse 14-18 at Al-Madinah. But the majority of commentators regard the whole of the surah as a Al-Madinan revelation. Although there is no internal evidence to help determine its exact period of revelation, yet a study of its subject matter shows that it may have been revealed at an early stage at Al-Madinah. That is why it partly resembles the Makkan Surahs and partly the Madinan Surahs.

Theme and Subject Matter

The theme of this Surah is invitation to the faith and obedience (to Allah) and the teaching of good morals. The

sequence followed is that the first four verses are addressed to all men; verses 5-10 to those men who do not believe in the invitation of the Quran; and verses 11-18 to those who accept and believe in this invitation.

In the verses addressed to all men, they have been made aware in a few brief sentences of the four fundamental truths:

First, that the universe in which they live is not Godless, but its Creator, Master and Ruler is an All Powerful God, and everything in it testifies to His being most Perfect and absolutely faultless.

Second, that the universe is not without purpose and wisdom, but its Creator has created it with truth, no one should be under the delusion that it is a mock show, which began without a purpose and will come to an end without a purpose.

Third, that the excellent form that God has created you with and the choice that He has given to you to choose between belief and unbelief is not a useless and meaningless activity so that it may be of no consequence whether you choose belief or unbelief. In fact, God is watching as to how you exercise your choice.

Fourth, that you have not been created irresponsible and un-answerable. You have to return ultimately to your Creator, and have to meet the Being who is aware of everything in the universe, from Whom nothing is hidden, to Whom even the innermost thoughts of the minds are known.

After stating these four fundamental truths about the

universe and man, the address turns to the people who adopted the way of unbelief, and their attention is drawn to a phenomenon which has persisted throughout human history, namely that nation after nation has arisen and ultimately gone to its doom. Man by his intellect and reason has been explaining this phenomenon in a thousand ways, but Allah tells the real truth and declares that the fundamental causes of the destruction of the nations were only two:

First, that they refused to believe in the Messengers whom He sent for their guidance, with the result that Allah too left them to themselves, and they invented their own philosophies of life and went on groping their way from one error to another.

Second, that they also rejected the doctrine of Hereafter, and thought this worldly life to be an end in itself, and that there was no life hereafter when they would have to render an account of their deeds before God. This corrupted their whole attitude towards life, and their impure morals and character so polluted the world that eventually the scourge of God itself had to descend and eliminate them from the scene.

After stating these two instructive truths of human history, the deniers of the message of truth have been admonished to wake up and believe in Allah, His Messenger and the light of guidance that Allah has sent in the form of the Quran if they want to avoid the fate met by the former peoples. Besides, they have been warned that the Day shall eventually come when all the former and the latter

generations will be collected at one place and the fraud and embezzlement committed by each will be exposed before all mankind. Then the fate of each man will be decided finally on the basis as to who had adopted the path of the faith and righteousness and who had followed the way of disbelief and denial of the truth. The first group shall deserve eternal Paradise and the second shall be doomed to everlasting Hell.

Then, addressing those who adopt the way of the faith, a few important instructions have been given:

First, that whatever affliction befalls a person in the world, it befalls him by Allah's leave. Whoever in this state of affliction remains steadfast to the faith, Allah blesses his heart with guidance; otherwise although the affliction of the one who in confusion or bewilderment turns away from the path of the faith, cannot be averted except by Allah's leave, yet he becomes involved in another, the greatest affliction of all, namely that his heart is deprived of the guidance of Allah.

Secondly, that the believer is not required to affirm the faith with the tongue only, but after the affirmation of the faith he should practically obey Allah and His Messenger. If he turns away from obedience he would himself be responsible for his loss, for the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) has become absolved from the responsibility after having delivered the message of truth.

Thirdly, that the believer should place his trust in Allah alone and not in his own power or some other power of the world.

Fourthly, that the worldly goods and children are a great trial and temptation for the believer, for it is their love which generally distracts man from the path of faith and obedience. Therefore, the believers have to beware some of their children, and wives lest they become robbers for them on the way of God directly or indirectly; and they should spend their wealth for the sake of God so that their self remains safe against the temptations of Satan.

Fifthly, that every man is responsible only to the extent of his power and ability. Allah does not demand that man should exert himself beyond his power and ability. However, the believer should try his best to live in fear of God as far as possible, and should see that he does not transgress the bounds set by Allah in his speech, conduct and dealings through his own negligence.

1. Glorifies Allah whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.*¹ To Him belongs the dominion*² and to Him belongs the praise,*³ and He has power over all things.*⁴

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ
وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

*1 For explanation, see E.N. 1 of the commentary on Surah Al-Hadid. A study of the following theme by itself shows why the discourse has begun with this sentence. What has been stated below about the universe and man is that Allah alone is their Creator, Master, Ruler, and He has not made this universe without purpose and wisdom, that man has not been created and left irresponsible, so that he may act

as he may please, and there should be nobody to call him to account, and that the Ruler of this universe is not a care-free and ignorant king so that he may have no knowledge of what is happening in his kingdom. The best introduction to this theme could be the same as has been couched in this brief sentence. In view of the context, the introduction means: In whichever direction you may turn your gaze, from the earth to the limitless vastnesses of the heavens, you will clearly see that everything from a particle to the great galaxies not only testifies to the existence of God but also bears evidence that its God is free from every defect, every weakness and error. Had there been the least probability of a defect or fault, weakness or deficiency, in His essence and attributes, in His acts and decrees, this perfect and wise system could not have come into being at all, nor continue to function so consistently and immutably from eternity to eternity.

***2** That is, the Kingdom of the universe solely belongs to Him. He has not just created it and left it alone after giving it the initial creation, but He alone is actually ruling over it every moment. No one else has any role or share whatsoever in this rule and sovereignty. If others possess temporarily and on a limited scale some powers of ownership or rule somewhere in the universe, these are not their personal powers, which they might have acquired by virtue of their own ability, but these have been granted to them by Allah. They possess these powers as long as Allah wills, and they can be withdrawn as and when He so desires.

*3 In other words; He alone is worthy of all praise. Whatever other being has any praiseworthy quality, it has been granted by Allah. And if *hamd* (praise) be taken in the sense of *shukr* (thankfulness), the meaning would be: In reality Allah alone is worthy of being thanked, for all good things in the world have been created by Him, and He alone is the real Benefactor of all kinds of creation. When we thank another being for favor, we thank it for the reason that Allah conveyed His blessing through it or him to us, otherwise neither the being itself is the creator of the blessing nor could it convey the blessing to you without Allah's permission and help.

*4 That is, He is the possessor of absolute power: He can do whatever He wills, there is no power to restrain or limit His Omnipotence.

2. He it is Who created you, then among you is the disbeliever, and among you is the believer.*5 And Allah is All Seer of whatever you do.*6

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ
وَمِنْكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
بَصِيرٌ



*5 It has four meanings and all are correct in their respective places:

First, that He alone is your Creator, yet some of you deny His being the Creator and others acknowledge this truth. This meaning becomes obvious when the first and the second sentences are read together.

Second, that He Himself has created you with the nature that if you choose to adopt unbelief, you may do so, and if

you choose to affirm belief, you may do so. He has not compelled you to either accept or reject the faith. Therefore, you yourselves are responsible for your adopting belief or unbelief. This meaning is confirmed by the following sentence: Allah sees whatever you do. That is, by giving you this choice He has put you to the test, and He is watching how you exercise this choice.

The third meaning is, He has created you with a sound, wholesome nature, which demands that you should all adopt the way of the faith, yet some of you adopted unbelief, which was opposed to the nature and purpose of their creation, and some of you adopted the way of the faith, which was in conformity with their nature. This theme becomes obvious when this verse is read along with verse 30 of Surah Ar-Room which says: Set your face sincerely and truly towards faith, and be steadfast on the nature whereupon Allah has created mankind. There can be no alteration in the nature made by Allah. This is the right and true faith. And this very theme is explained by several Ahadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) has repeatedly stated that every man has been created on true human nature; then polytheism and deviation befall him from outside (For further explanation, see E.Ns 42 to 47 of the commentary of Surah Ar-Room). Here, it may be pointed out that no divine Book has ever presented the concept of man's being a sinner by birth, which Christianity has embraced as its fundamental doctrine for 1,500 years. Recently even Catholic scholars themselves have started expressing the view that there is no basis for

this doctrine in the Bible. The famous German biblical scholar Rev. Herbert Haag writes in his book, *Is Original Sin in Scripture*: Among the earliest Christians, at least till the 3rd century A.D. there existed no such creed that man was a sinner by birth, and when this idea started spreading among the people, the Christian scholars continued to contradict it for two centuries. At last in the 5th century A.D. St Augustine by the power of his logic made this idea a part of the fundamental beliefs of Christianity. Mankind is heir to the original sin committed by Adam, and there is no way to salvation for man except through the Atonement made by Christ.

The fourth meaning is: Only Allah brought you into existence from nonexistence: you were not, then you became. This was such a simple thing that if you had thought over it seriously and seen that life is the real blessing through which you are benefiting by the other blessings in the world, none of you would have adopted the attitude of disbelief and rebellion against your Creator. But some of you did not give it due thought or thought wrongly, and adopted the way of disbelief, and some others adopted the same way of belief and faith which was the very demand of correct thinking.

*6 In this sentence seeing does not merely mean to see, but it automatically gives the meaning that man will be rewarded or punished according to his actions and deeds. It is just like a master's taking a person into service and then telling him: I shall see how you perform your duties, which implies: If you perform your duties well, I shall reward you

fully; otherwise I shall call you to account for your negligence.

3. He has created the heavens and the earth with truth, and has shaped you, and made good your shapes, and to Him is the journeying.*7

خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ
وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ
الْمَصِيرُ

*7 In this verse three things have been stated in their sequence, which are well connected logically:

First, it has been said that Allah has created this universe with the truth. When the word with the truth is spoken for a news, it means a true news; when it is spoken for a command, it means a command based on justice; when it is spoken for a statement, it means a correct statement; and when it is used for an act, it implies an act which is wise, reasonable and useful. Now, *khalq* (to create) is an act; therefore, to say that the universe has been created with the truth, would inevitably mean that the universe has not been created for fun but it is a serious work of a Wise Creator: everything in it has a rational object and purpose, and the element of its being purposeful is so evident that if a sensible person understands the nature of a thing well, it cannot be difficult for him to know the rational and wise purpose for which it has been created. All of modern science testifies that whenever man has succeeded in understanding the true nature of a thing by careful thought, research and investigation, he has also come to know eventually the purpose and object of its creation, and

this understanding of its purpose has led him to countless inventions which are now being used in civilized human life. This could not be possible, had this universe been the plaything of a carefree person, devoid of any wisdom and purpose. (For further explanation, see E.N. 46 of Surah Al-Anaam; E.N. 11 of Surah Yunus; E.N. 26 of Surah Ibrahim; E.N. 46 of Surah An-Nahl; E.Ns 15, 16 of Surah Al-Anbiya, E.N. 102 of Surah Al-Mominoon; E.N. 75 of Surah Al-Ankabut; E.N. 6 of Surah Ar-Room; E.N. 34 of Surah Ad-Dukhan; E.N. 28 of Surah Al-Jathiyah).

Secondly, it has been said that in this universe Allah has created man in the best shape. Shape here does not imply only man's face but his whole bodily structure; it also includes all those powers and abilities which man has been granted to function in this world. In both these aspects man has been given the best shape and form among the creatures of the earth, and on the same basis he has become worthy to rule over all the universe. He has been given an erect stature; he has been given most appropriate feet to walk on; he has been given most suitable hands to work with; he has been given such senses and organs to acquire knowledge by which he obtains every kind of information; he has been given a powerful mind to think and understand and deduce results from the body of acquired information; he has been given a moral sense and a power of discrimination by which he distinguishes between good and evil, right and wrong; he has been given the power of decision by using which he selects his own course of action, and decides as to where he should employ his efforts and

where he should not. He has even been given the freedom that he may acknowledge his Creator and serve Him if he so likes and reject Him if he pleases, or may make whomever he likes his gods, or rebel even against Him Whom he regards as his God. Along with all these capabilities and powers Allah has granted him the authority to appropriate everything created by Him, and he is practically using this authority in the world. (For further explanation, see E.N. 91 of Surah Al-Momin).

The third thing which logically follows from the first two, as explained above has been stated in the third sentence of the verse: To Him you have to return in the end. Obviously, when a creature endowed with power and authority has been created in a wise and purposeful system of the universe, wisdom does not require that he should be left to live irresponsibly in the world, but it necessarily requires that that creature should be accountable to the Being Who has granted it this position and rank and blessed it with these powers; Returning in this verse does not merely mean to return but to return for accountability. In the following verses it has been explained that this return will not be in this life but into the second life after death, and its right time will be when all mankind will be resurrected and gathered together simultaneously for accountability, and in consequence of the accountability man will be rewarded or punished on the ground whether he had used the powers given him by God in the right way or the wrong way. As for the question, why cannot this accountability be held in the present life of the world, and why is its right time only the

second life after death, and why is it necessary that this accountability be held only when all mankind has passed away from this world, and all the former and the latter generations have been resurrected and gathered together simultaneously? If man only uses his common sense a little, he can understand that all this is perfectly rational as well as the very demand of wisdom and reason that accountability should be held in the second lift and of all mankind together. The first reason is that man is accountable for his whole life-work. Therefore, the right time of his accountability should necessarily be when his life-work has come to an end. The second reason is that man is responsible for all those effects and influences which he produces by his acts on the lives of others, and those influences and effects do not come to an end with his death but continue to influence others till ages after him. Therefore, true accountability call he held only when the life-work of entire mankind has come to an end and all the former and the latter generations are gathered together simultaneously for accountability. (For further explanation, see E.N. 30 of Surah Al-Aaraf; E.Ns 10, 11 of Surah Yunus; E.N. 105 of Surah Houd; E.N. 35 of Surah An-Nahl; E.N. 9 of Surah Al-Hajj; E.N. 27 of Surah An-Naml; E.Ns 5, 6 of Surah Ar-Room; E.Ns 29, 30 of Surah Suad, E.N. 80 of Surah Al-Momin, E.Ns 27 to 29 of Surah Al-Jathiyah).

4. He knows all that is in the heavens and the earth. And He knows whatever you

يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

conceal and whatever you reveal.*⁸ And Allah is All Knower of what is in the breasts.*⁹

وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُسِرُّونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

*⁸ Another translation can be: Whatever you do secretly and whatever openly.

*⁹ That is, He is aware not only of those acts of man, which come to the notice of the people but He knows also those acts which remain hidden from them. Moreover, He does not only see the superficial form of the acts, but also knows what intention and purpose underlay each act of man and with what motive and aim he did whatever he did. This is such a truth that if man ponders over it seriously, he can fully understand that justice can be done only in the Hereafter, and only in God's court can real justice be possibly done. Man's own intellect itself demands that man must be punished for each of his crimes. But everyone knows that in the world most of the crimes remain hidden, or the culprit escapes punishment because of insufficient evidence, or even if the crime becomes revealed, the culprit is so influential and powerful that he cannot be punished. Then the intellect of man also requires that man should not be punished only because his behavior resembles a criminal act, but it should be ascertained that he has committed the act intentionally and deliberately and at the time he committed it, he was acting as a responsible agent, his intention, in fact, was to commit the crime, and he knew that what he was doing was a crime. That is why the worldly courts inquire into these things when they decide

the cases, and regard such an inquiry as a demand of the rule of justice. But are there any means available in the world by which these things may be precisely ascertained beyond every shadow of doubt? Considered from this viewpoint, this verse also bears a deep logical relevance to Allah Almighty's saying: He has created the earth and the heavens with truth. The necessary demand of creating them with truth is that perfect justice should prevail in this universe. Such justice can be established only when every act of a responsible man may not only remain concealed from the eyes of the one administering justice but the intention with which a person performed an act also should not remain hidden from him. And obviously, there cannot be any being, apart from the Creator of the universe, who can administer such justice. Now, if a person denies Allah and the Hereafter, he in fact, asserts that we humans live in a universe which is devoid of justice, which is rather a place where justice cannot possibly be done. The person whose intellect, mind and conscience feel satisfied at such an assumption would be a shameless creature if be thought he was being progressive and rationalistic and those people antiquated and retrogressive who accept a highly rational concept about the universe, which the Quran presents.

5. Has not reached you the news of those who had disbelieved before, so they tasted the evil results of their deeds. And theirs will be a painful punishment. ^{*10}

أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ
قَبْلُ فَذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ



***10** That is, the evil that they tasted in the world in consequence of their misdeeds was neither the real punishment of their crimes nor the full punishment. The real and full punishment they have yet to suffer in the Hereafter. However, the people can learn a lesson from the torment that visited them. They can see how the nations which adopted an attitude of unbelief against their Lord, went an degenerating and consequently met with an evil and disgraceful end. (For further explanation, see E.Ns 5, 6 of Surah Al-Aaraf, E.N. 105 of Surah Houd).

6. That was because their messengers came to them with clear signs,^{*11} but they said: “Shall human beings guide us.”^{*12} So they disbelieved and turned away, and Allah was not in need (of them), and Allah is Free of need, Praiseworthy.^{*13}

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُ كَانَتْ تَأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُمْ
بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالُوا أَبَشَرٌ يَهْدُونَنَا
فَكَفَرُوا وَتَوَلَّوْا ۗ وَاسْتَغْنَى اللَّهُ ۗ
وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ



***11** The word *bayyinet* as used in the original has a vast meaning. *Bayyin* (singular of *bayyinat*) in Arabic is something which is very clear and manifest. Saying about the Prophets that they came with *bayyinat* gives the meaning that firstly, they brought such manifest signs as bore clear testimony to their having been appointed by Allah. Secondly, they presented whatever they presented with rational and clear arguments. Thirdly, there was no ambiguity in their teaching. They clearly explained what was the truth and what was falsehood, what was lawful and

what was unlawful, what path man should follow and what he should avoid.

*12 This was then the foremost and basic cause of their degeneration and ruin mankind could not have known the right course of action in the world unless their Creator gave them the correct knowledge, and there could be no practical means of bestowing such knowledge by the Creator unless He blessed some of the human beings with the knowledge and entrusted them with the duty to convey it to other human beings. For this purpose, He sent the Prophets with the manifest signs (*bayyinat*) so that there was no reasonable ground for the people to doubt their being on the truth. But the people refused to believe that a human being could be a Messenger of God. Then, obviously there could be no other way for them to receive guidance. (For further explanation, see E.N. 11 of Surah YaSeen). In this connection, however, a strange manifestation of the ignorance and folly of human beings is seen. They have in fact, never shown any hesitation in accepting the guidance of men, so much so that they have carried out gods of wood and stone according to their guidance, they have made human beings themselves God, the incarnation of God, even son of God. And they have adopted such strange viewpoints by following the guidance of their misleaders blindly, which ruined human civilization and morals altogether. But when the Messengers of God came to them with the truth, and they presented the pure truth before them without any selfish motive, they said: Shall mere human beings show us guidance? This amounted to saying

that if a human begin misled them, they would follow his guidance willingly, but if he showed the right path to them, his guidance was not acceptable.

*13 That is, when they treated the guidance sent down by Allah with indifference, then Allah also became indifferent to them and did not care what pit they fell in. Allah did not stand in need of their acknowledging Him as God in order to sustain and support His Godhead. Nor was He in need of their worship, nor of their praise and adoration. He, in fact, willed to show them the right path only for their own good and well-being. But when they turned away from it, Allah also became heedless of them. Then, neither He gave them guidance, nor remained responsible for their protection, nor saved them from being afflicted with calamities, nor prevented them from bringing about their own ruin for they themselves were not keen for His guidance and help.

7. Those who disbelieve claim that they will never be resurrected.*14 Say: “Yes, by my Lord, you will certainly be resurrected,*15 then you will surely be informed of what you did.*16 And that is easy for Allah.”*17

زَعَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ لَنْ يُبْعَثُوا
قُلْ بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّي لَتُبْعَثُنَّ ثُمَّ لَتُنَبَّؤُنَّ
بِمَا عَمِلْتُمْ وَذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ



*14 That is, this was the second basic error in which the deniers of the truth have been involved in every age, and which has ultimately brought about their ruin. Although no denier of the Hereafter ever had any means of knowing, nor has he today, nor will he have in the future, that there

is no life after death, but these ignorant people have always asserted the same thing, whereas there neither exists any intellectual basis for denying the Hereafter with absolute certainty nor any scientific basis for it.

***15** This is the third place where Allah Almighty has instructed His Prophet to tell the people by swearing an oath by his Lord that such a thing shall certainly happen. First, in Surah Yunus, it was said: They ask, is what you say really true. Tell them: Yes, by my Lord, it is absolutely true and you have no power to avert it. (verse 53). Then, in Surah Saba, it was said: The disbelievers say: How is it that Resurrection is not overtaking us. Say: By my Lord, it will surely overtake you. (verse 3).

Here, the question arises: What difference does it make for a disbeliever in the Hereafter whether you give him the news of its coming by swearing an oath or without swearing an oath. When he does not believe in it at all, will he believe in it only because you are asserting this on oath. The answer is: In the first place, the addressees of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were the people who knew from their personal knowledge and experience that he had never uttered a lie in his life. Therefore, even if they might have forged the most shameless slander against him with their tongue, yet in their hearts they could never conceive that a truthful man like him could say a thing on oath by Allah of which he himself was not convinced by knowledge and experience. Secondly, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not only present the doctrine of the Hereafter but also gave highly rational arguments for it. What distinguishes a

Prophet from others is that the arguments, however strong and cogent, that others may give for the Hereafter, can at the most make the listener admit that the occurrence of the Hereafter is more reasonable and probable than its absence. On the contrary, a Prophet stands at a notch higher level than a philosopher. His real position is not that he has arrived at the conclusion of the necessity of the Hereafter by the exercise of reason. But his real position is that he has the knowledge that the Hereafter shall occur and says with conviction that it shall surely occur. Therefore, only a Prophet can swear an oath to declare this but not a philosopher. Then, faith in the Hereafter can be generated only by a Prophet's statement; the reasoning of a philosopher does not have the power to induce even himself to adopt it as his religious creed on the basis of his own argument, not to speak of another person. If the philosopher is really correct, he cannot go beyond, should be or ought to be. Only a Prophet can assert with conviction that a thing is and certainly is.

***16** This is the purpose for which the children of Adam will be resurrected. This also contains the answer to the question: What is the special need for it. If one keeps in view what has been discussed concerning verse 1,4 above, one can easily understand that in this universe, which has been created with the truth, it would be highly unreasonable to imagine about man who has been given freedom to choose either belief or unbelief, who has been granted authority to appropriate many of the things in this universe, and who after choosing the way of belief or

unbelief has accomplished much good or done evil on his own responsibility by making the right or the wrong use of his authority during his life. That when he has done all this the good done by the virtuous and the evil committed by the criminal, one should neither bear any fruit, nor should there be any time when his deeds and actions should be subjected to security. The person who asserts such an irrational thing inevitably commits one of the two absurdities: either he thinks that although this universe is based on wisdom, yet a creature like man, who has been endowed with authority, has been created and left irresponsible here; or he thinks that this universe is a random creation devoid of the wisdom of a Wise Creator. In the first place, he makes a contradictory statement, for the existence of an irresponsible creature, endowed with authority, in a universe based on wisdom, is clearly against justice and wisdom. In the second case, he cannot give any rational being like man should come into being in a haphazardly created, foolish universe, and how he conceived the idea of justice. Only a stubborn person could uphold the belief that folly could generate wisdom and injustice could generate justice, or the one who has become a mental patient because of his obsession for hair splitting.

*17 This is the second argument for the Hereafter. The first argument was for its necessity and this second is for its possibility. Obviously, when God could create such a grand and wonderful system of the universe without any difficulty and when He could create human beings in the world in the first instance, it cannot be difficult for Him to resurrect the

same human beings and summon them before Himself for the purpose of accountability.

8. So believe in Allah and His Messenger and the light (the Quran) that We have sent down.*¹⁸ And Allah is All Aware of what you do.

فَعَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالنُّورِ
الَّذِي أَنْزَلْنَا وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
خَبِيرٌ

*¹⁸ That is, when this is the truth and the whole human history testifies that the real cause of the destruction of the nations has been their disbelieving the Messengers and their denial of the Hereafter, then they should not insist on meeting the same doom by following their example, but should believe in the guidance presented by Allah and His Messenger and the Quran. Here, as the context itself shows, by the light that We have sent down, means the Quran. Just as light itself is clearly seen and reveals everything that was hidden in darkness around it, so is the Quran a light whose being based on the truth is self-evident; in its light man can solve and understand every problem that he cannot solve and understand exclusively by means of his own knowledge and intellect. Anyone who has the light can clearly see the straight path of truth out of the countless, crooked paths of thought and action, and can follow the straight path throughout life in such a way that at every step he can know where the crooked bypaths are misleading and where the pitfalls of destruction are situated on the way, and what is the path of safety and security among them.

9. The day when He will gather you for the Day of Gathering,^{*19} that will be a Day of mutual Loss and Gain.^{*20} And whoever believes in Allah and does righteous deeds,^{*21} He will remove from him his evil deeds and admit him into Gardens, underneath which rivers flow, to abide therein forever. This is the great success.

يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ ذَلِكَ
يَوْمُ التَّغَابُنِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ
وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُكْفِرْ عَنْهُ
سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

***19** The Day of Gathering: the Resurrection, when all human beings born in the world from the beginning of creation till the Last Day will be gathered together simultaneously. This theme has been fully explained in the Quran at several places; e.g. in Surah Houd it has been said: That will be the Day when all the people shall gather together and will witness everything that will happen there. (verse 103). And in Surah Al-Waqiah: Say to them; Surely, the former and the latter, all shall be gathered together one day, the hour of which has already been appointed. (verse 50).

***20** The word *yaum-ut-taghabun* as used in the original is too vast in meaning to be explained in a word, or even a sentence, of any other language. Of all the names of the Resurrection that occur in the Quran, this name probably is the most meaningful. Therefore, an explanation is

necessary to understand its meaning.

Taghabun is from *ghabn*, which can be pronounced both as *ghabn* and as *ghaban*. *Ghabn* is mostly used concerning commercial and business transactions and *ghaban* concerning opinion. Lexically, it has other meanings also, e.g. heedlessness, forgetfulness, a person's being deprived of his share, a man's harming another inadvertently in business or mutual dealing, etc.

The derivative *taghabun* implies the occurrence of *ghabn* between two or more persons. Thus, *taghabun-al-qaum* means some people's treating others fraudulently, or a person's harming another person and the other's being harmed and damaged by him, or one's taking away the share of another and the other's being deprived of his share, or a person's incurring loss in business and another's gaining a profit, or some people's proving heedless or weak-minded in comparison to others.

Now consider that in this verse it has been said about the Resurrection: That will be a Day of *taghabun* (mutual loss and gain) among the people. These words automatically give the meaning that in the world *taghabun* is a common thing, but this *taghabun* is superficial and deceptive, not the real and factual *taghabun*, the real *taghabun* will take place on the Day of Resurrection. There it will become manifest as to who actually incurred the loss and who actually earned the profits, who actually was deceived and who proved to be prudent and sensible, who actually had invested all his life capital in a wrong bargain and become bankrupt and who had invested all his energies and

abilities, wealth and time, in a good bargain and earned all the benefits and gains, which the former also could have earned had he not been deceived in understanding the truth about the world.

The commentators while explaining the meaning of youm-ut-taghabun have given several meanings of it, which are all correct, and throw light on different aspects of its meaning. Some commentators have explained that on that Day the dwellers of Paradise will take away that share of the dwellers of Hell which they would have had in Paradise had they done good deeds in the world as did the dwellers of Paradise and the dwellers of Hell will take away that share of the people of Paradise, which they would have had in Hell had they done evil deeds in the world. This is supported by a Hadith, which Bukhari has related in kitab ar-Riqaq, on the authority of Abu Hurairah, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Whoever goes to Paradise will be shown the place which he would have had in Hell had he done evil deeds in the world so that he may give more and more thanks to God; and whoever goes to Hell will be shown the place which he would have had in Paradise had he done good deeds in the world so that he may feel more and more remorseful.

Some other commentators say that on that Day, the wronged one will take away so many of the good deeds done by the wrongdoer as may be a suitable compensation for the wrong suffered, or the wrongdoer will be equal in weight with his usurped rights. For on the Day of Resurrection man will not possess any wealth which he may

give to make up for the wrong done, there the only commodity worth exchange will be one's conduct. Therefore, whoever had wronged another in the world, will have to make up for the wrong done by surrendering some of his own good deeds in his favor, or by taking some of his sins on himself and suffering the punishment for them. This theme also has been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Ahadith. In Bukhari (Kitab ar-Riqaq) a tradition has been related from Abu Hurairah, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Whoever bears a burden of a wrong done to his brother, should compensate him for it here, for in the Hereafter no one will have any wealth or money for compensation. There, some of his good deeds will be taken from him and given away to the wronged person, or if he did not have enough good deeds, some of the sins of the wronged person will be transferred to him. Likewise, in Musnad Ahmad there is a tradition from Jabir bin Abdullah bin Unais, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: No dweller of Paradise will enter Paradise and no dweller of Hell will enter Hell until he will have compensated the other person for the wrong done to him so much so that one will have to compensate even for a slap given to another person. We asked; How will this compensation be made when on Resurrection we shall be naked and penniless? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Compensation will be made by means of the good deeds and the evil deeds. In Muslim and Musnad Ahmad there is a tradition from Abu Hurairah, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) once asked the people sitting

in his assembly: Do you know who is poor. The people replied: He who has nothing to possess. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: In my *ummah* the poor is he who appeared before his God on the Day of Resurrection with his acts of the Prayer and the Fast and the payment of the Zakat, while he had abused some one, usurped the property of another, and shed blood or hit still another. Then his good deeds were taken away and given over to each of the wronged and when nothing was left of his good deeds to make compensation, some of the sins of each wronged one were transferred to him and he was cast into Hell. In another Hadith which Muslim and Abu Daud have related on the authority of Buraidah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: If in the absence from home of a soldier for the cause of Allah, a person treats his wife and the people of his house treacherously, the person would be made to stand before the soldier on the Day of Resurrection, and the latter would be asked to take away whatever he liked from his good deeds. Saying this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) turned to us and said: Then what do you say. That is, what do you think he would leave with him.

Some other commentators say that the word *taghabun* is mostly used concerning commerce and business, and in the Quran at several places the attitude that the believer and the unbeliever adopt in their worldly lives has been compared to trade and commerce. If the believer giving up disobedience adopts obedience and invests his life and wealth and effort for the cause of God, he is giving up a bad bargain and investing his capital in a business which will

fetch him much gain and profit in the end. On the contrary, if an unbeliever abandons the way of obedience and invests his entire capital in the way of disobedience to God, he in fact, is a trader who has purchased deviation for guidance, and will incur loss in the end. The gain and the loss of both will become manifest on the Day of Resurrection. It may well so happen in the world that the believer appears to be the loser and the disbeliever the gainer. But in the Hereafter they will see who actually had made the right bargain and who the wrong bargain. This theme has occurred at many places in the Quran, e.g. in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 16, 175, 207; Surah Al-Imran, Ayats 77, 177; Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 74; Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 111; Surah An-Nah, Ayat 195; Surah Fatir, Ayat 29; Surah As-Saff, Ayat 10.

Yet another form of *taghabun* is that in the world the people go on cooperating with one another in unbelief and sin, injustice and wickedness, with full peace of mind with the confidence that they are enjoying fully mutual love and friendship. The mutual intrigues and comradeship of the members of wicked families' immoral guides and their followers, gangs of thieves and robbers, alliances of corrupt and unjust officers and officials, groups of dishonest traders, industrialists and land owners, groups established to spread deviation, error and mischief, and nations and governments which support and uphold injustice and wickedness in the world, is based on the same confidence. The individuals belonging to each of these groups harbor the impression that they are good companions of one

another and their mutual cooperation is proving very successful. But when these people reach the Hereafter, they will suddenly wake up to the realization that they had been grievously mistaken and deceived. Each one of them would feel that the one whom he considered his best father, brother, wife, husband, child, friend, companion, leader, guide, disciple or supporter and helper, had been, in fact, his worst enemy. Every kind of relationship and friendship and bond of love and reverence will change into enmity. They will all abuse and curse each other and each one will desire that maximum responsibility of his crimes be laid on the other and will strive to get him severely punished. This theme also has occurred at many places in the Quran, e.g. in Surah Al-Baqrah, Ayat 167; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 37 to 39; Surah Ibrahim, Ayats 21-22; Surah Al-Mominoom, Ayat 101; Surah Al-Ankaboot, Ayats 12, 13, 25; Surah Luqman, Ayat 33; Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayats 67,68; Surah Saba, Ayats 31 to 33; Surah Fatir, Ayats 18; Surah As-Saaffat, Ayats 27 to 31; Surah Suad, Ayats 59 to 61; Surah HaMim As-Sajdah, Ayat 29; Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayat 67; Surah Ad-Dukhan, Ayat 41; Surah Al-Maarij, Ayats 10 to 14; Surah Abasa, Ayats 34 to 36.

***21** Believing in Allah does not merely imply believing that Allah exists but believing in Him in the way Allah Himself has taught through His Messenger and His Book. This belief by itself includes belief in apostleship and belief in the Book. Likewise a good act also does not imply every such act as man may himself have adopted considering it a good act, or following a man-made criterion of morality, but it

implies the righteous act that is in accordance with the law sent down by God. Therefore no one should have the misunderstanding that believing in Allah and doing good deeds, without the medium of the Messenger and the Book will lead to the results being mentioned below. Whoever studies the Quran carefully cannot remain unaware that according to it no such belief is genuine belief in Allah and no such act is righteous at all.

10. And those who disbelieve and deny Our revelations,^{*22} such are the companions of the Fire, abiding therein. And worst indeed is the destination.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا
بِعَايَتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٠﴾

***22** These words by themselves make manifest the meaning of unbelief (*kufr*). Unbelief is nothing but denying the verses of Allah's Book to be divine revelation, rejecting the truth expressed therein and refusing to follow and obey the commandments given in them; its results are those being mentioned below.

11. No affliction^{*23} can ever befall except by permission of Allah.^{*24} And whoever believes in Allah, He guides his heart,^{*25} and Allah is All Knower of all things.^{*26}

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ
اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ ۗ
وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾

***23** The discourse now turns to the believers. While reading this passage one should keep in mind the fact that at the

time when these verses were revealed. Muslims were passing through great hardships. After years of persecution at Makkah they had left their home and emigrated to Madinah, where the sincere Muslims who had given them refuge had been doubly burdened. On the one hand, they had to support and sustain hundreds of the emigrants who were coming to them from different parts of Arabia. On the other, they had become the target of the persecution and enmity of the enemies of Islam of entire Arabia.

***24** This same theme has also occurred in Surah Al-Hadid, Ayats 22-23 above and we have explained it in E.Ns 39 to 42 of the commentary of that Surah. The same circumstances under which this thing was said there and the same object for which it was said underlie the verses here as well. This means that afflictions and hardships do not descend of themselves, nor has anyone in the world the power to cause an affliction to descend on anyone he may like by his own authority. All calamities wholly depend on Allah's leave. He may allow an affliction to descend upon someone or may disallow it. And Allah's leave in any case is based on one or other wisdom, directed to some ultimate good, which man neither knows, nor can understand.

***25** That is, it is only belief in Allah which keeps man on the right path even in the face of an onslaught of afflictions and does not let him waver under the most trying circumstances. The one whose heart is devoid of belief either looks upon afflictions as a result of mere chance, or thinks they are brought or prevented by worldly powers, or considers them to be the work of such imaginary powers

which human superstition regards as potent in bringing good and causing evil, or believes that God is the real Doer of everything but does not believe so truly and sincerely in all these different cases man degenerates. He endures the affliction, but then yields and bows to every false god, accepts every humiliation, is ready to do any mean thing and commit any wrong act he does not hesitate to abuse God, even commits suicide. On the contrary, the heart of the person who knows and believes sincerely that everything is in the hands of Allah. He alone is the Master and the Ruler of the universe. That only by His permission can an affliction befall and only by His command can it be averted. Such a person is blessed by Allah with the grace of patience and submission and of acquiescing in divine will, and is granted the power to face every circumstance with determination and courage. Even under the most straitened circumstances the candle of the hope of Allah's bounty lights up his way. No affliction, however severe and trying, can dishearten him as to cause him to swerve from the right path or bow to falsehood, or invoke others than Allah for the redress of his grievances. Thus, every affliction opens up for him a new door to well-being and happiness and no affliction remains an affliction for him. In fact, it becomes, in the final, a blessing in disguise. For whether he falls a victim to it or passes through it safely, in each case he emerges successful from the trial set for him by his Lord. This same thing has been stated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a Hadith which has been reported unanimously by all the reporters, saying: Strange is the

affair of the believer! Whatever Allah decrees for him is good for him. When an affliction befalls him, he endures it patiently, and this proves good for him. When he is blessed with prosperity, he thanks his Lord, and this too proves good for him. Such a good fortune only falls to the lot of a believer.

*26 In this context this has two meanings: First, that Allah knows who really believes and what is the measure of his belief. So, on the basis of His knowledge, He grants guidance only to that heart, which has belief in it, and grants it guidance precisely in accordance with the measure of belief. Another meaning can also be: That Allah is not unaware of the condition of His believing servants. He has not left them alone after having invited them to faith and subjected them at the same time to severe trials and temptations of the world. He knows exactly what hardships a believer is passing through in the world, and under what circumstances he is fulfilling the demands of his faith. Therefore, O believers, you should rest assured that whatever affliction descends upon you by Allah's leave, in Allah's knowledge it must be directed to some ultimate good, which must be for your own well-being. For Allah is well-wisher of His believing servants. He does not will to subject them to afflictions and hardships without good reason.

12. And Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, but if you turn away, then upon Our Messenger is only to

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ
فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَى

convey clearly.*27

رَسُولِنَا أَلْبَلَّغُ الْمُبِينُ

*27 In view of the context, it means: Whatever the circumstances, good or bad, you should remain steadfast to obedience to Allah and His Messenger. But if under the pressure of hardships you turned away from obedience, you would only harm your own selves. The only responsibility of Our Messenger was to guide you to the right path, which the Messenger has fulfilled in the best way possible.

13. Allah, there is no god except Him. And upon Allah let the believers put their trust.*28

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ
فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

*28 That is, all divine powers belong to Allah alone. No one else has any power to make or mar your destiny. He alone can bring about a good time and He alone can avert a bad time. Therefore, whoever believes sincerely that Allah is One, has absolutely no other choice than to place his full trust in Him and to continue doing his duty as a believer with the conviction that goodness and well being only lie in the way that Allah has shown him. If he attains to success in this way, it will only be by Allah's help and leave; there is no other helper. And if he encounters difficulties, hardships, dangers and disasters in this way, Allah alone will rescue him, for there is no other rescuer beside Him.

14. O you who have believed, indeed, among your

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ

wives and your children there are enemies to you, so beware of them. And if you pardon and overlook and forgive, then indeed, Allah is All Forgiving, All Merciful.*29

أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا
لَكُمْ فَأَحْذَرُوهُمْ وَإِن تَعْفُوا
وَتَصْفَحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ



***29** This verse has two meanings:

According to the first meaning, it applies to most of those difficulties which are encountered by many believing men from their wives and the women from their husbands and the parents from their children in following the way of God. It seldom so happens in the world that a man has a wife or a wife has a husband, who are full companions and helpers of each other in the matter of faith and righteousness, and that both may also have such children as may be the comfort of their eyes as regards to faith and deeds, morals and conduct. But generally it so happens that if the husband is righteous and honest, the wife and children look upon his honesty and piety and righteousness as a misfortune for themselves, and want that the husband and the father should earn Hell for their sake, and, by giving up the distinction between the lawful and the unlawful, should provide means of luxury and enjoyment, sin and vice, for them in every passable way. On the contrary, many a time a pious believing woman happens to have a husband, who does not at all approve her obedience to the laws of God. And the children, following in the

footsteps of the father, make the life of the mother miserable by their deviation and evil deeds. Then, particularly, when during the conflict between Islam and unbelief a man's faith demands that he should suffer losses for the sake of Allah and this religion, run risks, emigrate from the country or even endanger his life by joining the war against unbelief, the greatest hindrance in his way are the people of his own household.

The second meaning relates to those special circumstances which most of the Muslims were facing at the time these verses were sent down, and also today they are faced by every person who embraces Islam in a non-Muslim society. At that time in Makkah and in other parts of Arabia a situation that was commonly being experienced was that a man would embrace Islam but his wife and children would not only be disinclined to accept it but would try their best to press him to give up Islam. And similar were the situation encountered by the women who alone embraced Islam in the family.

Addressing the believers who may be confronted with either situation, three things have been impressed:

First, they have been warned as if to say: Although from the worldly point of view these are the dearest relations of man, yet from the religious point of view, they are your enemies. This enmity may be for the reason that they hinder you from good and induce you to do evil, or that they restrain you from belief and pull you towards unbelief, or that their sympathies are with the unbelievers, and through you if they ever come to know any of the war

secrets of the Muslims, they convey it to the enemies of Islam. Owing to these the nature and quality of enmity may vary, but in any case it is enmity; and if you hold your faith dearer to your heart, you should regard them as your enemies. In their love you should never forget that between you and them there stands the barrier of belief and unbelief, or of obedience and disobedience.

Then, it is said: Beware of them. That is, you should not ruin your eternal life for the sake of their worldly life. Let not their love so overwhelm you that they become a hindrance for you in your relationship with Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and your loyalty to Islam. Do not place such reliance on them that the secrets of the Muslim community should come to their notice and through them reach your enemies only by your negligence and carelessness. This is the first thing of which the Prophet (peace be upon him) has warned the Muslims in a Hadith: A person will be brought up on the Day of Resurrection, and it will be proclaimed: His wife and children ate up all his good deeds.

In the end, it is said: If you pardon and overlook and forgive, Allah is surely All-Forgiving, All-Merciful. It means: You are being made aware of their enmity so that you may beware of them and do your best to save your faith from them. This warning does not, however, mean that you should treat your wife and children harshly, or strain your relations with them so as to make your own and their domestic life miserable and wretched. For if you did so, two of the disadvantages would obviously result: First, it

may close down every avenue to the reformation of the wife and children forever; second, it may give rise to suspicions and misgivings against Islam in the society and the people around may form the impression that a Muslim turns unduly rigid and ill-tempered for his own children in his own house as soon as he has embraced Islam.

In this connection, one should also keep in mind that in the beginning when the people became Muslims, they encountered a special difficulty if their parents were unbelievers. They would press their children to give up the new faith. They would face another difficulty when their wives and children (or in case of women, their husbands and children) persisted unbelief and would force them to abandon the faith of truth. About the first difficulty, instruction was given in Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayat 8 and Surah Luqman, Ayat 14-15, saying: Treat your parents well but if they press you to join with Me another about whom you have no knowledge, do not obey them at all. About the second difficulty the instruction has been given here, saying: You must try to save your faith from your children and family members but do not treat them harshly, but rather politely and leniently. (For further explanation, see Surah At-Taubah, Ayats 23-24; E N. 37 of Surah Al-Mujadalah; E.Ns 1 to 3 of Surah Al-Mumtahanah; E.N. 18 of Surah Munafiqoon).

15. Your wealth and your children are only a trial. And Allah has with Him an immense reward.*30

إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ
وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ



***30** For explanation, see E.N. 23 of Surah Al-Anfaal. Here one should also keep in view the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying which Tabarani has related on the authority of Abu Malik al-Ashari, saying: Your real enemy is not he whom, if you kill there is success for you, and if he kills you, there is Paradise for you; but your real enemy may be your own child who is born of your own loins, or the wealth of which you are the owner. That is why here as well as in Surah Al-Anfaal, Ayat 28, Allah says: If you save yourselves from the temptation and allurements of worldly possessions and children and succeed in keeping love of them subject to the love of Allah, there are rich rewards for you with Allah.

16. So fear Allah as much as you can,^{*31} and listen and obey and spend, that is better for your own selves. And whoever is saved from the greed of his own self. Then such are those who are truly successful.^{*32}

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَأَسْمِعُوا
وَأَطِيعُوا وَأَنْفِقُوا خَيْرًا
لِّأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ
نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ



***31** At another place in the Quran it has been said: Fear Allah as rightfully He should be feared. (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 102). At still another place: Allah does not burden any one with a responsibility heavier than he can bear. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 286) And here: Fear Allah as much as you can. When these three verses are read together it

appears that the first verse sets an ideal which every believer should try to attain. The second verse lays down the principle that no one has been required to exert himself beyond his power and ability, for in Allah's religion one has been made responsible only for what is within his power and ability. This verse enjoins every believer to try to attain piety and consciousness of God as far as he can. He should carry out His commands and avoid His disobedience as best as he possibly can. For if he shows laxity in this regard, he will not be able to escape punishment. However, one will not be held accountable for what was beyond his power and Allah alone can decide best what was really beyond a person's power and ability.

*32 For explanation, see E.N. 19 of Surah Al-Hashr.

17. If you loan Allah a goodly loan, He will double it*33 for you and will forgive you. And Allah is Appreciative, Forbearing.*34

إِنْ تُقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا
يُضْعِفُهُ لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ
شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

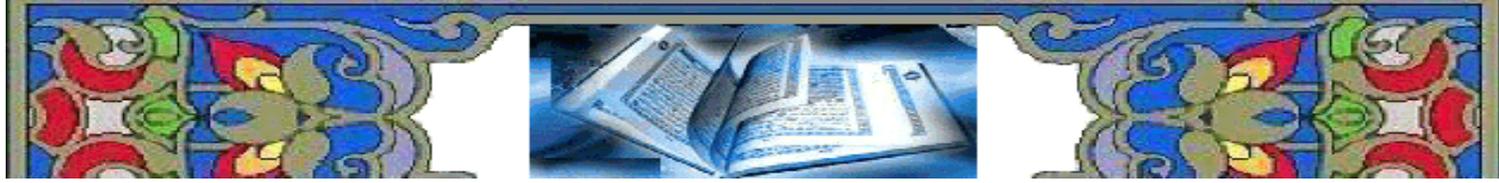
*33 For explanation, see E.N. 267 of Surah Al-Baqarah; E.N. 33 of Surah Al-Maidah; E.N. 16 of Surah Al-Hadid.

*34 For explanation, see E.Ns 52, 59 of Surah Fatir; E.N. 42 of Surah Ash-Shura.

18. Knower of the Invisible and the Visible, the All Mighty, the All Wise.

عَلِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ





الطَّلَق At-Talaq

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful
Name

At-Talaq is not only the name of this Surah but also the title of its subject matter, for it contains commandments about *Talaq* (divorce) itself. Hadrat Abdullah bin Masud has also described it as Surah an-Nisa-al-qusra, i.e. the shorter Surah an-Nisa.

Period of Revelation

Abdullah bin Masud has pointed out, and the internal evidence of the subject matter of the Surah confirms the same, that it must have been revealed after those verses of Surah Al-Baqarah in which commandments concerning divorce were given for the first time. Although it is difficult to determine precisely what is its exact date of revelation, yet the traditions in any case indicate that when the people started making errors in understanding the commandments of Surah Al-Baqarah, and practically they also began to commit mistakes, Allah sent down these instructions for their correction.

Theme and Subject Matter

In order to understand the commandments of this Surah, it

would be useful to refresh one's memory about the instructions which have been given in the Quran concerning divorce and the waiting period (*Iddat*).

Divorce may be pronounced twice; then the wife may either be kept back in fairness or allowed to separate in fairness. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 229).

And the divorced women (after the pronouncement of the divorce) must wait for three monthly courses... and their husbands are fully entitled to take them back (as their wives) during this waiting period, if they desire reconciliation. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 228).

Then, if the husband divorces his wife (for the third time), she shall not remain lawful for him after this divorce, unless she marries another husband. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 230).

When you marry the believing women, and then divorce them before you have touched them, they do not have to fulfill a waiting period, the completion of which you may demand of them. (Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 49).

And if those of you who die, leave wives behind, the women should abstain (from marriage) for four months and ten days. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 234).

The rules prescribed in these verses were as follows:

1. A man can pronounce at the most three divorces on his wife.
2. In case the husband has pronounced one or two divorces, he is entitled to keep the woman back as wife within the waiting period and if after the expiry of the waiting period the two desire to re-marry, they can re-

marry, there is no condition of legalization (*tahlil*). But if the husband has pronounced three divorces, he forfeits his right to keep her as his wife within the waiting period, and they cannot re-marry unless the woman re-marries another husband and he subsequently divorces her of his own free will.

3. The waiting period of the woman, who menstruates, and marriage with whom has been consummated, is that she should pass three monthly courses. The waiting period in case of one or two divorces is that the woman is still the legal wife of the husband and he can keep her back as his wife within the waiting period. But if the husband has pronounced three divorces, this waiting period cannot be taken advantage of for the purpose of reconciliation, but it is only meant to restrain the woman from re-marrying another person before it comes to an end.

4. There is no waiting period for the woman, marriage with whom has not been consummated, and who is divorced even before she is touched. She can re-marry, if she likes, immediately after the divorce.

5. The waiting period of the woman whose husband dies, is four months and ten days.

Here, one should understand well that Surah At-Talaq was not sent down to annul any of these rules or amend it, but it was sent down for two purposes;

First, that the man who has been given the right to pronounce divorce should be taught such judicious methods of using this right as do not lead to separation, as far as possible however, if separation does take place, it

should only be in case all possibilities of mutual reconciliation have been exhausted. For in the divine law provision for divorce has been made only as an unavoidable necessity; otherwise Allah does not approve that the marriage relationship that has been established between a man and a woman should ever break. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: Allah has not made lawful anything more hateful in His sight than divorce. (Abu Daud). And: Of all the things permitted by the law, the most hateful in the sight of Allah is the divorce. (Abu Daud).

The second object was to complement this section of the family law of Islam by supplying answers to the questions that had remained after the revelation of the commandments in Surah Al-Baqarah. So, answers have been supplied to the following questions: What would be the waiting period of the women, marriage with whom has been consummated and who no longer menstruate, or those who have not yet menstruated, in case they are divorced? What would be the waiting period of the woman, who is pregnant, or the woman whose husband dies, if she is divorced? And what arrangements would be made for the maintenance and lodging of the different categories of divorced women, and for the fosterage of the child whose parents have separated on account of a divorce?

1. O Prophet, when you divorce women, so divorce them for their (prescribed waiting) periods,^{*1} and count the period.^{*2} And fear

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ
فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ لِعَدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا

Allah, your Lord. Do not expel them out of their (husbands') houses, nor should they (themselves) leave,^{*3} except in case they commit a clear indecency.^{*4}

And these are the limits of Allah. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah will certainly wrong his own self. You know not, Allah may after this bring about a matter (of reconciliation).^{*5}

الْعِدَّةَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ لَا
تُخْرِجُوهُنَّ مِنْ بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا
يُخْرِجْنَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ
مُبَيِّنَةٍ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ
يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ
لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ
ذَلِكَ أَمْرًا

***1** That is, O believers, you should not make undue haste in the matter of pronouncing divorce: your minor family quarrels should not so incite you that you should pronounce the final divorce in a fit of anger and there remains no chance for reconciliation. However When you have to divorce your wives, you should divorce them for their prescribed waiting period. Pronouncing divorce for the waiting period has two meanings and both are implied here.

First, that you should divorce them at a time when their waiting period can begin. This thing has already been prescribed in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 228. The waiting period of the married woman who menstruates is three monthly courses after the pronouncement of divorce. If this commandment is kept in view the only appropriate time of

pronouncing divorce that the waiting period may duly begin is when she is not in her courses, for the waiting period cannot begin from the course during which she may have been divorced, and divorcing her in that state would mean that, contrary to the divine command, her waiting-period should extend to four courses instead of three courses. Furthermore, this commandment also demands that the woman should not be divorced in the period of purity during which the husband may have had sexual intercourse with her. For in this case, at the time divorce is pronounced, neither the husband nor the wife can know whether she has conceived in consequence of the intercourse or not. Because of this neither the waiting period can begin on the hypothesis that this would be reckoned in view of the succeeding monthly courses nor on the hypothesis that this would be the waiting period of a pregnant woman. So, this commandment lays down two rules simultaneously. First, that divorce should not be pronounced during menstruation. Second, that divorce may be pronounced either in the period of purity during which there was no sexual intercourse with the woman, or in the state when the woman's being pregnant was known. A little consideration of the matter will show that the restrictions imposed on the pronouncement of divorce are for good reasons. The reason for imposing the restriction on the pronouncement of divorce during menstruation is that in this state the husband and the wife are somewhat estranged from each other because of the prohibition of sexual intercourse in this state and also from the medical

viewpoint it is confirmed that the woman is not temperamentally normal during the courses. Therefore, if a quarrel starts between them in this state, both the husband and the wife would be helpless to an extent to put an end to it, and if the matter is deferred till the woman is free from her courses, there is the possibility that the woman also may return to her normal temperamental state and the mutual attraction that nature has placed between them also may work and reunite them. Likewise, the reason for prohibiting the pronouncement of divorce during the purity period in which sexual intercourse may have taken place, is that if in consequence of it conception takes place, it can neither be known to the husband nor to the wife. Therefore, it cannot be a suitable time for pronouncing the divorce. If the man comes to know that conception has taken place, he would think a hundred times before deciding finally whether he should pronounce divorce or not on the woman who carries his child in her womb. The woman also in view of the future of her child would try her best to remove the causes of her husband's displeasure. But if a decision is taken blindly, in undue haste, and then it is known that conception had taken place, both will regret it later.

This is the first meaning of divorcing for the prescribed waiting period, which applies only to those women marriage with whom has been consummated, who menstruate and may possibly conceive. As for its second meaning it is this: If you have to divorce your wives, you should divorce them till the expiry of their waiting period.

That is, do not pronounce three divorces all at once leading to permanent separation, but pronounce one, or at the most two divorces, and wait till the end of the waiting period, so that there remains some chance for reconciliation for you at any time during this period. According to this meaning; this commandment is also useful in respect of those woman marriage with whom has been consummated and who menstruate as well as of those who no longer menstruate, or those who have not yet menstruated, or those whose pregnancy at the time of the pronouncement of divorce is known. If this divine command is rightly followed, no one will regret after having pronounced divorce, for if divorce is pronounced in this way, there remains room for reconciliation within the waiting period, and even after the expiry of the waiting period the possibility remains that the separated husband and wife may remarry if they wish reconciliation.

This same meaning of *talliqu-hunna li-iddati hinna* (divorce them for their prescribed waiting-period) has been given by the earliest commentators. Ibn Abbas has given this commentary of it: One should not pronounce divorce during menstruation nor in the period of purity (*tahr*) during which the husband may have had sexual intercourse. But one should leave the wife alone till she attains purity after the course; then one may pronounce a single divorce on her. In this case even if there is no reconciliation and the waiting period expires, she would be separated by the single divorce. (Ibn Jarir).

Abdullah bin Masud says: Divorce for the waiting period

means that one should pronounce the divorce in the woman's state of purity without having had an intercourse with her. The same commentary has been reported from Abdullah bin Umar, Ata, Mujahid, Maimun bin Mahran, Muqatil bin Hayyan, and Dahhak, Ibn Kathir. Ikrimah has explained it thus: One may pronounce the divorce in the state when the woman's being pregnant is known, and not when one has had sexual intercourse with her and it is not known whether she has conceived or not. (Ibn Kathir). Both Hasan Basri and Ibn Sirin say: Divorce should be pronounced during the state of purity without having had sexual intercourse or when the woman's being pregnant becomes known. (Ibn Jarir).

The intention of this verse was best explained by the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself on the occasion when Abdullah bin Umar had divorced his wife while she was discharging the menses. The details of this incident have been reported in almost all collections of Hadith and the same, in fact, are the source of the law in this connection. It so happened that when Abdullah divorced his wife while she was menstruating, Umar came before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and mentioned it to him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) expressed great displeasure and said: command him to take her back and keep her as his wife till she is purified, that she again menstruates and is again purified: then if he so desires he may divorce her in her state of purity without having any sexual intercourse with her. This is the waiting period which Allah Almighty has prescribed for the divorce of women. In a tradition the

words are to the effect: Either one may pronounce the divorce in the woman's state of purity without having a sexual intercourse, or in the state when her being pregnant becomes fully known.

The intention of this verse is further explained by a few other Ahadith which have been reported from the prophet (peace be upon him) and some of the major companions. Nasai has related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was informed that a person had pronounced three divorces on his wife in one sitting. He stood up in anger and said: Are the people playing with the Book of Allah, although I am present among you? Seeing the Prophet's extreme anger on this occasion, a person asked: Should I not go and kill the man?

Abdur Razzaq has reported about Ubadah bin as-Samit that his father pronounced one thousand divorces on his wife. He went before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and asked his ruling on it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: By the three divorces the woman stood separated from him along with Allah's disobedience, and 997 pronouncement remained as acts of injustice and sin, for which Allah might punish him if He so willed and forgive him if He so willed.

In the details of the incident concerning Hadrat Abdullah bin Umar, which have been related in Daraqutni and Ibn Abi Shaibah, another thing also is that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded Abdullah bin Umar to take his wife back, he asked: Had I pronounced three divorces on her, could I have taken her back even then?

The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: No, she would have stood separated from you, and this would have been an act of sin. In another tradition the Prophet's (peace be upon him) words are to the effect: Had you done this, you would have committed disobedience of your Lord while your wife would have been separated from you.

The legal rulings reported from the companions in this regard are also in complete conformity with the Prophet's (peace be upon him) injunctions. According to a tradition in Muwatta, a person came to Abdullah bin Masud and said: I have pronounced eight divorces on my wife. Ibn Masud asked: What legal opinion have you been given in this regard? He said: I have been told that the woman stands separated from me. Ibn Masud said: The people have said the right thing: the legal position is the same as they have told you.

Abdur Razzaq has related from Alqamah that a person said to Ibn Masud: I have pronounced 99 divorces on my wife. He said: Three divorces separate her from you; the rest are (acts of sin) excesses.

Waki bin al-Jarrah in his sunah has reported this very viewpoint of both Uthman and Ali. A person came to Uthman and said: I have pronounced a thousand divorces on my wife. He replied: She stood separated from you by three divorces. When a similar problem was presented before Ali he replied; By three divorces she stood separated from you. You may distribute the rest of your pronouncements on the rest of your wives if you so like.

Abu Daud and Ibn Jarir have related, with a little variation

in wording, a tradition from Mujahid, saying: While I was sitting with Ibn Abbas, a person came and said: I have pronounced three divorces on my wife. Ibn Abbas heard it but kept silent for so long that I thought he was perhaps going to return his wife to him. Then he said: One of you first commits the folly of pronouncing the divorces; then he comes and says: O Ibn Abbas, O Ibn Abbas! whereas Allah has said that whoever fears Him in whatever he does, He will open a way for him out of the difficulties. You did not fear Allah; now I do not find any way for you: you have disobeyed your Lord, and your wife stands separated from you.

Another tradition, which also has been reported from Mujahid and related with a little variation in wording in muwatta and Tafsir by Ibn Jarir, says: A person pronounced a hundred divorces on his wife; then he asked Ibn Abbas for his opinion. He replied: By three divorces she stood separated from you. With the other 97 you made a jest of the revelations of Allah! This is according to Muwatta. According to Ibn Jarir the words of Ibn Abbas were to the effect: You disobeyed your Lord, and your wife stood separated from you, and you did not fear Allah that He might open a way for you out of the difficulty.

Imam Tahavi has related that a man came to Ibn Abbas and said: My uncle has pronounced three divorces on his wife. He replied: Your uncle has disobeyed Allah and committed a sin and followed Satan. Now, Allah has left no way open for him out of the difficulty.

According to a tradition in Muwatta and Abu Daud, a man

pronounced three divorces on his wife before the consummation of marriage; then desired to remarry her, and came out to know the legal aspect of the matter. The reporter of the Hadith, Muhammad bin Iyas bin Bukair, says: I accompanied him to Ibn Abbas and Abu Hurairah. The reply each one gave was: You have let slip from your hand whatever opportunity was there for you. Zamakhshari has stated in al-Kashshaf that Umar used to beat the man who would pronounce three divorces on his wife (at one and the same time) and then would enforce his divorces.

Saeed bin Mansur has related this very thing from Anas on sound authority. In this connection, the general opinion of the companions which Ibn Abi Shaibah and Imam Muhammad have related from Ibrahim Nakhai was: The companions approved of this method that one may pronounce a single divorce on the wife and leave her alone till she completes three monthly courses. These are the words of Ibn Abi Shaibah. The words of Imam Muhammad are to the effect: The approved method with them was that in the matter of divorce one should not exceed one divorce till the waiting period is completed.

The detailed law that the jurists of Islam have compiled with the help of these Ahadith and traditions in the light of the above mentioned Quranic verse, is as follows:

(1) The Hanafis regard divorce as of three kinds: Ahsan, hasan, and bidi. The ahsan form of divorce is that one may pronounce only one divorce on his wife during a tahr (purity) period in which one must refrain from sexual

intercourse and leave the wife to complete her waiting period. The hasan form of divorce is that one may pronounce one divorce in each period of purity: in this case pronouncement of three divorces, one each in three periods of purity, is also not against the Shariah, although the best approved method is to pronounce only one divorce and leave the wife to complete her waiting period. The bidi form of divorce is that one must pronounce three divorces in a single sitting, or pronounce three divorces at different times during the same period of purity, or pronounce divorce during menstruation, or pronounce it in the period of purity during which he has had a sexual intercourse. Of these whichever course one may adopt one will be guilty a sin. This is the law in respect of the woman marriage with whom has been consummated and who has regular courses. As for the woman marriage with whom has not been consummated, she can be divorced both in the state of purity and during menstruation, and this is according to the sunnah. And if the woman is such a one marriage with whom has been consummated who no longer menstruates, or the one who has not yet menstruated, she can be divorced even after the sexual intercourse for there is no chance of her being pregnant. And if the woman is pregnant, she also can be divorced after the sexual intercourse, for her pregnancy is already established. But the method of pronouncing divorce on these women according to the sunnah, is that the divorce may be pronounced at the interval of one month in each case. However, the ahsan method is that only one divorce may be

pronounced and the woman left to complete her waiting period. (Hedayah, fath al-Qadir, Ahkam al-Quran Al-Jassas, Umdat al-Qari).

According to Imam Malik divorce is also of three kinds. sunni, *bidi makruh* and *bidi haram*. The divorce according to the sunnah is that a single divorce be pronounced on the woman marriage with whom has been consummated and who menstruates, during her state of purity without having had sexual intercourse, and the woman be left to complete her waiting period. The *bidi makruh* form is that divorce be pronounced in the period of purity during which one may have had sexual intercourse, or more divorces than one be pronounced in the period of purity while there was no sexual intercourse, or three divorces be pronounced, one each in separate periods of purity within the waiting-period, or three divorces be pronounced all at once. And *bidi haram* is that divorce be pronounced during menstruation. (Hashiyah ad-Dusuqi alal-Sharh-al-Kabir Ibn al- Arabi, Ahkam al-Quran).

The authentic viewpoint of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal which is generally agreed upon by the Hanbalis is: The approved method (i.e. the one according to the sunnah) of divorcing a wife with whom marriage has been consummated and who menstruates is that a single divorce be pronounced on her in her period of purity without having had sexual intercourse with her, and then she be left to complete her waiting period. But if she is given three divorces, one each in three separate periods of purity or three divorces in one and the same period of purity, or divorced thrice at once,

or divorced during the courses, or divorced in the period of purity during which the husband has had sexual intercourse and her being pregnant is not known, all these would be disapproved and forbidden forms of divorce. But if the woman is such that marriage with her has been consummated but who no longer menstruates, or such who has not yet menstruated, or is pregnant, in her case there is neither any difference of approved and disapproved with regard to time nor with regard to the number of divorces pronounced. (Al-Insaf fi Marifat-ar-Rajih min al-Khilaf ala Madhhab Ahmad bin Hanbal).

According to Imam Shafei, in the matter of divorce the difference between the approved (i.e. according to the sunnah) and the reprehensible (i.e. against the sunnah) forms of divorce is only with regard to time and not with regard to number, That is, to pronounce divorce on a woman marriage with whom has been consummated and who menstruates, during menstruation or to pronounce divorce on a ovarian, who can conceive, during such a period of purity in which the husband has had sexual intercourse with her and the woman's pregnancy is unknown, is disapproved and forbidden. As for the number, whether three divorces are pronounced at one time, or pronounced in the same period of purity, or pronounced in separate periods of purity, they are not against the sunnah in any case. In case the woman is such that marriage with her has not been consummated, or the one who no longer menstruates, or the one who has not yet menstruated, or the one whose being pregnant is known,

there is no difference between the approved and the disapproved forms of divorce. (Mughni al-Muhtaj).

(2) A divorce being irregular, reprehensible, forbidden, or sinful with the four Imams does not mean that it does not have effect. According to all the four Sunni Schools, whether a divorce is pronounced during menstruation, or thrice at once, or pronounced in the period of purity during which the husband has had sexual intercourse and the woman's being pregnant is unknown, or pronounced in a manner disapproved by an Imam, in any case it does become effective, although the pronouncer commits an act of sin. But some other scholars differ in this regard from the four Imams.

Sai bin al-Musayyab and some other immediate followers of the companions say that the divorce of the person who pronounces it during menstruation, or pronounces it thrice at one time, does not take place at all. The same is the opinion of the Imamiah sect of the Shias. The basis of this opinion is that since this form of divorce is forbidden and utterly irregular, it is ineffective, whereas the Ahadith that we have cited above, clearly show that when Abdullah bin Umar divorced his wife during menstruation, the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded him to take her back; had the divorce not taken effect at all, the command to take the wife back would have been meaningless. And this also confirmed by many Ahadith that the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the major companions considered the pronouncement of more divorces than one at one time sinful but did not regard his divorce as ineffective.

Taus and Ikrimah say that only one divorce takes place if divorce is pronounced thrice at once, and this very view has been adopted by Imam Ibn Taimiyyah. The source of his this opinion is that Abu as-Sahba asked Ibn Abbas: Don't you know that in the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Abu Bakr and in the early period of Umar a triple divorce was considered a single divorce? He replied: Yes. (Bukhari, Muslim). And in Muslim, Abu Daud and Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Abbas's this statement has been cited: In the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Abu Bakr and during the first two years of the caliphate of Umar a triple divorce was considered a single divorce. Then Umar expressed the view: As the people have started acting hasty in a matter in which they had been advised to act judiciously and prudently, why should we not enforce this practice? So, he enforced it.

But this view is not acceptable for several reasons. In the first place, according to several traditions Ibn Abbas's own ruling was against it, as we have explained above. Secondly, it is contrary to those Ahadith also, which have been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the major companions, in which the ruling given about the pronouncement of a three-fold divorce at one time is that all his three divorces become effective. These Ahadith have also been cited above. Thirdly, from Ibn Abbas's own tradition itself it becomes evident that Umar had publicly enforced the triple divorce in the assembly of the companions, but neither then nor after it these companions ever expressed any difference of opinion. Now, can it be

conceived that Umar could decide an issue against the Sunnah? And could the companions also accept his decision without protest? Furthermore, in the story concerning Rukanah bin Abdi Yazib, a tradition has been related by Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Imam Shafei, Darimi and Hakim, saying that when Rukanah pronounced three divorces on his wife in one and the same sitting, the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him to state on oath whether his intention was to pronounce one divorce only, (That is, the two subsequent divorces were pronounced only to lay emphasis on the first divorce; the triple divorce was not intended to create separation permanently). And when he stated this on oath, the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave him the right to take his wife back. This brings out the truth of the matter as to what kind of divorces were considered a single divorce in the earliest period of Islam. On this very basis, the interpreters of the Hadith have explained the tradition of Ibn Abbas thus: As in the early period of Islam deceit and fraud in religious matters was almost unknown among the people, the statement of the pronouncer of a triple divorce was admitted that his real intention was to pronounce only a single divorce, and the two subsequent divorces had been pronounced only for the sake of emphasis. But when Umar saw that the people first pronounced three divorces in haste and then presented the excuse of pronouncing them only for the sake of emphasis, he refused to accept this excuse. Imam Nawawi and Imam Subki regard this as the best interpretation of the tradition from Ibn Abbas, Finally, there is disagreement in the

traditions of Abu as-Sahba himself, which he has related concerning the saying of Ibn Abbas. Muslim, Abu Daud and Nasai have related from this same Abu as-Sahba another tradition; saying that on an inquiry by him. Ibn Abbas said: When a person pronounced a three-fold divorce on his wife before consummation of marriage, it was considered a single divorce in the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Abu Bakr and in the early period of Umar, Thus, one and the same reporter has reported from Ibn Abbas traditions containing two divergent themes and this diversity weakens both the traditions.

(3) As the Prophet (peace be upon him) had commanded the pronouncer of the divorce during menstruation to take his wife back, the dispute has arisen among the jurists as to what is the exact sense of this command. Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Shafei, Imam Ahmad, Imam Auzai, Ibn Abi Laila, Ishaq bin Rahawaih and Abu Thaur say that such a person would be commanded to take his wife back, but would not be compelled to do so. (Umdat al-Qari). The Hanafi viewpoint as stated in Hedayah is that in this case taking the wife back is not only preferable but also obligatory. In Mughni al-Muhtaj the Shafei viewpoint has been stated to be that the approved (i.e. one according to Sunnah) method for the one who has pronounced divorces during menstruation, but has not pronounced a triple divorce, is that he should take his wife back, and should refrain from pronouncing divorce in the following period of purity, but should pronounce it, if he so likes, in the period

of purity when the wife has become free from her next menstrual course and attained purity, so that his revocation of the divorce pronounced during menstruation is not taken in jest. The Hanbali viewpoint as presented in Al-Insaf is that in this state it is preferable for the pronouncer of divorce to take his wife back. But Imam Malik and his companions say that pronouncement of divorce during menstruation is a cognizable offense. Whether the woman makes a demand or not, it is in any case the duty of the ruler that if such an act of some one is brought to his notice, he must compel the person to take his wife back and should continue to press him till the end of the waiting-period; and if he refuses to take her back, he should imprison him; if he still refuses, he should beat him; and if he still does not accede, the ruler should give his own decision, saying: I return your wife to you. And the ruler's this decision would be effective after which it would be lawful for the man to have sexual intercourse with the woman, whether he intends to take her back or not, for the ruler's intention represents his intention. (Hashiyah ad-Dusuqi). The Malikis also say that if the person, who has taken his wife back willingly or unwillingly, after divorcing her during menstruation, has made up his mind to repudiate her, the preferable method for him is that he should refrain from divorcing her in the period of purity following the menstruation during which he divorced her, but should divorce her in the period of purity following the next menstruation. The prohibition to pronounce divorce in the period of purity following the menstruation in which

divorce was pronounced, has been enjoined so that the return of the pronouncer during menstruation does not remain merely oral, but he should have sexual intercourse with the woman during the period of purity. Then, since the pronouncement of divorce in the period of purity in which sexual intercourse has taken place is prohibited, the right time for pronouncing it is the following period of purity only. (Hashiyah ad-Dusuqi).

(4) As to the question: Till when has the pronouncer of one revocable divorce the power to take his wife back? Difference of opinion has arisen among the jurists and this difference has occurred on the question: What do the words *thalathata quru-in* of Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 228 imply: three menstruation or three periods of purity? According to Imam Shafei and Malik, *qara* implies a period of purity, and this view is held on the authority of Aishah, Ibn Umar and Zaid bin Thabit. The Hanafi viewpoint is that *qara* implies menstruation and the same is the authentic viewpoint of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal too. This view is based on the authority of all the four rightly-guided Caliphs, Abdullah bin Masud, Abdullah bin Abbas, Ubayy bin Kab, Muadh bin Jabal, Abu ad-Darda, Ubadah bin as-Samit and Abu Musa al-Ashari. Imam Muhammad in his Muwatta has cited a saying of Shabi, saying that he met thirteen of the Prophet's companions and they all held this same opinion, and this very view was adopted by many of the immediate followers of the companions also.

On account of this difference of opinion, according to the Shafeis and the Malikis, the waiting period of the woman

comes to an end as soon as she enters the third menstruation, and the man's power to take her back is terminated. And if the divorce has been pronounced during menstruation, this menstruation will not be counted towards the waiting-period but the waiting-period will come to an end as soon as the woman enters the fourth menstruation. (Mughni al-Muhtaj; Hashiyah ad-Dusuqi). The Hanafis viewpoint is that if the menstrual discharge in the third menstruation stops after ten days, the waiting-period of the woman will come to an end with it whether she takes purification bath or not; and if the discharge ceases within less than ten days, the waiting-period will not come to an end until the woman has taken her purification bath, or until a prayer time has passed. In case water is not available, according to Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Abu Yusuf, the man's right to return to her will be terminated, when she has performed her prayer with *tayammum* (purification with dust), and, according to Imam Muhammad, as soon as she has performed *tayammwn* itself. (Hedayah). Imam Ahmad's authentic viewpoint which is held by the majority of the Hanbalis is that as long as the woman does not have her purification bath after the third menstruation, the man's right to return to her will remain. (Al-Insaf).

(5) As for the question that is the method of taking the wife back? The jurists agree that the person, who has pronounced a revocable divorce on his wife, can return to her whenever he likes before the expiration of the waiting-period, whether the woman is desirous of this or not, for

the Quran says: Their husbands are best entitled to take them back as their wives during this waiting-period. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 228). From this it can automatically be concluded that until the expiry of the waiting-period, the marriage tie remains intact and the husbands can take them back before they are separated absolutely and finally. In other words, taking the wife back does not mean renewal of marriage for which the woman's consent may be necessary. After being unanimous so far, the jurists have different opinions about the method of taking the wife back.

According to the Shafeis, return can take place only by the oral word, not by conduct. If the husband does not say with the tongue that he has taken the wife back, no act of intercourse or intimacy, even if performed with the intention of resuming marital relationship, will be considered resumption of the relationship. Rather in this case seeking of any kind of enjoyment from the woman is unlawful even if it is without lust. But there is no ban on having sexual intercourse with the woman, who has been divorced revocably, for the scholars have not agreed on its being unlawful. However, the one who believes in its being unlawful will be punishable. Furthermore, according to the Shafei viewpoint, it is in any case, incumbent to pay a proper or customary dower (*mahr mithal*) in case the husband has intercourse with the wife whom he had divorced revocably, whether after it he takes her back orally or not. (Mughni a-Muhtaj).

The Malikis say that return can be effected both orally and

by conduct. If for the purpose of resumption by word of mouth the husband uses express words, the resumption will take place whether he intended it or not; even if he uttered express words of resumption in jest, these words would amount to return and resumption. But if the words are not express, they would be considered resumption of relationship only in case they were pronounced with the intention of resumption. As for resumption by conduct, no act whether it is an act of intimacy or sexual intercourse, can be considered resumption as long as it has not been performed with the intention of the resumption of marital relation. (Hashiyah adDusuqi; Ibn Arabi; Ahkam al-Quran).

As for resumption of relationship by the word of mouth, the Hanafi and the Hanbali viewpoint is the same as the Maliki. As for resumption by conduct, the ruling of both the Schools, contrary to the Malikis, is that if the husband performs sexual intercourse with the woman whom he has divorced revocably within the waiting-period, it would by itself amount to resumption whether there was the intention of resumption or not. However, the difference between the viewpoints of the two Schools is that according to the Hanafis every act of intimacy amounts to resumption even if it is of a lesser degree than sexual intercourse; whereas the Hanbalis do not regard a mere act of intimacy as resumption of marital relationship. (Hedayah, Fath al-Qadir, Umdat al-Qari Al-Insaf).

(6) As for the consequences of *talaq as-sunnah* (regular form of divorce according to the sunnah) and *talaq al-bidi*

(irregular form of divorce) the difference is this: In case one or two divorces have been pronounced, the divorced woman and her former husband can re-marry by mutual consent even if the waiting-period has expired. But if a man has pronounced three divorces, resumption of marital relation is neither possible within the waiting-period, nor after the expiry of the waiting period, unless, however, the woman marries another person, the marriage is duly contracted and consummated, and then either the second husband divorces her or dies; then if the woman and her former husband wish to re-marry by mutual consent, they can do so. In most collections of the Ahadith, a tradition has been reported on sound authority, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked: A man pronounced three divorces on his wife, then the woman married another man and the two had privacy but there was no intercourse; then he divorced her. Now, can this woman re-marry her former husband? The Prophet replied: No, unless her second husband has enjoyed her just as her first husband had enjoyed her. As for the pre-arranged marriage (*tahlil*) which is meant to legalize the woman for her former husband, so that she would marry another man, who would divorce her after having had sexual intercourse with her, this is invalid according to Imam Abu Yusuf, and according to Imam Abu Hanifah, the woman would become lawful for her former husband by this ceremony but such a thing is reprehensible to the extent of being unlawful. Abdullah bin Masud has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Allah has

cursed both, the legaliser (*muhallil*) and the one for whom legalization is performed (*muhallil-lahu*). (Tirmidhi, Nasai). Uqbah bin Amir says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked his companions: Should I not tell you as to who is a hired bull? The companions said that he should. He said: It is he who performs *tahlil* (legalization of marriage). Allah's curse falls both on the *muhallil* (legalizer) and on the *muhallal-lahu* (the one for whose sake marriage is legalized). (Ibn Majah, Daraqutni).

*2 This command is addressed to the men as well as the women and the people of their families. It means: Do not treat divorce lightly; it is a grave matter, which gives birth to many legal questions for the man, the woman, their children and the people of their house. Therefore, when divorce is pronounced, its time and date should be remembered and also the state in which divorce was pronounced on the woman; one should keep an accurate account of when the waiting period started and when it would expire. On this reckoning will depend the determination of the following questions: Till when the husband has the power to take the wife back? Till when he has to keep her in the house? Till when is he bound to maintain her? Till when will he inherit the woman and the woman him? When will the woman be separated from him finally and obtain the right to remarry? And if this matter takes the shape of a law-suit, the court also in order to arrive at the correct decision, will need to know the correct date and time of pronouncing the divorce and the woman's state at the time, for without this information, it cannot give

the right decision on the questions arising from the divorce in respect of the women who have been enjoyed, or not, pregnant, or not, who menstruate, or no longer menstruate, and who have been divorced revocably or irrevocably.

*3 That is, neither should the man turn out the woman in anger, nor the woman herself should leave the house in anger and haste. The house is hers during the waiting-period, and both the man and the wife should live together so that advantage may be taken if there is any chance of reconciliation. If the divorce is revocable, the husband may at any time be inclined towards the wife, and the wife also may try to win the husband's pleasure by removing the causes of dispute and difference. If both stay together in the same house, there may appear many an occasion for reconciliation during the three months or the three menstrual periods, or till child birth in case of pregnancy. But if the man turns her out in angry haste, or the woman returns to her parents imprudently, chances of reconciliation diminish, and the divorce generally leads to permanent separation. That is why the jurists have even suggested that in case of a revocable divorce the woman should adorn herself during her waiting-period so as to attract the husband. (Hedayah; Al-Insaf).

The jurists agree that the revocably divorced woman has a right to lodging and maintenance during the waiting-period, and it is not lawful for the woman to leave the house without the husband's permission, nor is it lawful for the husband to turn her out of the house. If the husband turns her out, he will be guilty of an act of sin and if the woman

leaves of her own accord, she will not only commit a sin but will also forfeit her right to lodging and maintenance.

***4** Several meanings of this have been given by different jurists. Hasan Basri, Amir Shabi, Zaid bin Aslam, Dahhak, Mujahid, Ikrimah, Ibn Zaid, Hammed and Laith say that it implies adultery. Ibn Abbas says that it implies abusive language that the woman may continue to use against the husband and the people of his house even after the divorce, during the waiting-period. Qatadah says that it implies the woman's disobedient to her husband. That is, if the wife has been divorced because of her disobedience, she may continue to be disobedient to her husband even during the waiting-period. Abdullah bin Umar, Suddi, Ibn as-Saib and Ibrahim Nakhai say that this implies the woman's leaving the house of herself. That is, in their opinion the woman's leaving the house in the waiting-period by itself amounts to committing an open indecency, and the command: Nor should they themselves leave the house except in case they commit an open indecency, is an admonition of this nature: Do not abuse others except in case you wish to be known as a discourteous person. According to the first three of these four viewpoints, "except in case" is related with "Do not turn them out of their houses," and the sentence means that if they are guilty of immorality or of using invectives or of disobedience, it would be lawful to turn them out of the houses. And according to the fourth view, it is related with "nor should they themselves leave their houses," and it means that if they leave their houses they would be guilty of open indecency.

***5** Both these sentences refute the viewpoint of those who hold that divorce does not take place at all if it is pronounced during menstruation or thrice at once, and also the view of those who think that a triple divorce amounts to a single divorce. The question arises: If an irregular (*bidi*) divorce does not take place, or a triple divorce amounts to a single revocable divorce, what then is the need of saying: Whoever transgresses the bounds set by Allah (i.e. the method taught by the Sunnah), would wrong his own self; and you do not know Allah may after this bring about a situation of reconciliation? These two things would be meaningful only in case pronouncement of divorce against the method taught by the Sunnah should be harmful for which one may have to regret later, and the pronouncement of a triple divorce at once may not leave any room for reconciliation; otherwise, obviously by pronouncing a divorce which does not take effect at all one does not transgress the bounds set by Allah, which may be regarded as wronging one's own self, and after a divorce which is in any case only revocable there does remain room for reconciliation; thus, there would be no need to say: Allah may after this bring about a situation of re-conciliation. Here, one should again understand well the mutual relationship between verses 228-230 of Surah Al-Baqarah and these verses of Surah At-Talaq. In Surah Al-Baqarah the number of divorces laid down is three of which after pronouncing the first two one retains the right to take his wife back and the right to re-marry her in case the wailing-period has expired, without resort to legalization (*tahlil*),

and if divorce is pronounced for the third time, the husband forfeits both these rights. These verses of Surah At-Talaq were not sent down to amend or cancel this rule but to teach the people how to use wisely the powers that they have been given to divorce their wives, which if used rightly could save homes from ruin, could protect the husband from remorse if he had pronounced a divorce. could provide him maximum opportunities for reconciliation, and even if separation had taken place, could show him a way to reunite in marriage as a last resort if the couple so desired. But if a person happens to use these powers unwisely, in a wrong way, he could only be wronging his own self and wasting all opportunities for making amends. It is just like a father's giving three hundred rupees in his son's possession and telling him to spend the amount as he may like; then advising him to the effect: Spend the money given to you carefully, at the right place, and piece meal, so that you may benefit by it fully. Otherwise, if you spend it unwisely and carelessly in wrong places, or spend the whole of it at once, you will incur losses, and then I would not give you any more. This advice would be meaningless if the father did not give the amount in the son's possession at all, so that if he had wanted to spend it in a wrong place, he should be powerless to spend it, or if he had wanted to spend the whole amount, he could only take out a part of it while the rest lay safe with him in any case. If the condition be such, there could obviously be no need for this kind of advice.

2. Then when they have reached their term, either retain them in a fair manner,^{*6} or part with them in a fair manner. And call to witness two just men from among you,^{*7} and establish testimony for Allah. With this you are admonished, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day.^{*8} And whoever fears Allah, He will appoint for him a way out.^{*9}

فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ
بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ فَارِقُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ
وَأَشْهِدُوا ذَوَىٰ عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ
وَأَقِيمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ لِلَّهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ
يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَن كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَن يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ تَجْعَلْ
لَهُ مَخْرَجًا



***6** That is, in case you have pronounced one or two revocable divorces, you should take a decision before the expiry of the waiting-period whether you would keep the wife in wedlock or send her away. If you decide to keep her, then you should keep her with honor and dignity and not with a view to tormenting and harassing her and getting another opportunity to prolong her waiting-period by divorcing her once again; and if you decide to part with her, then you should part with her gracefully, without indulging in any quarrel or vilification. If you still owe her the dower, or a part of it, pay it off, and give her something in addition also at her departure according to your means, as has been enjoined in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 241. (For further explanation, see E.N. 86 of Surah Al-Ahzab).

***7** Ibn Abbas says that this implies calling to witness two

men both at divorce and at reconciliation. (Ibn Jarir). Imran bin Husain was asked: A man divorced his wife and then took her back, but he neither called anybody to witness pronouncement of the divorce nor resumption of the relation. He replied: You pronounced the divorce against the sunnah and you took your wife back against the sunnah. You should call to witness men both at divorce and at resumption of relation, and you should not commit this mistake again. (Abu Daud, Iba Majah). But the four Sunni Imams agree that to call men to witness the divorce and the resumption and separation is no condition for these acts to be valid, so that if there was no witness, neither divorce should take place nor resumption should be valid nor separation. But this condition has been enjoined so that the parties may not deny any of the facts later and in case there was a dispute the matter might be settled easily and any suspicions and doubts might also be removed. This command is just like the command: Have witnesses in case of commercial transactions. (Surah Al-Baqarat, Ayat 282). This does not mean that it is obligatory to have witnesses at business transactions, and if there was no witness, the transaction would be invalid; but this is a wise instruction which has been given to prevent disputes and it is good to follow it. Likewise, in the case of divorce and resumption also although a person's act and conduct would be legally valid even without the witnesses yet caution demands that whatever is done, it should be witnessed, simultaneously or later, by two just men.

*8 These words clearly show that the instructions given

above are in the nature of advice and not law. If a man pronounces divorce against the approved method as explained above, or fails to reckon the waiting-period accurately, or expels the wife from the house without a good reason, or returns to her at the end of the waiting-period only to harass her, or sends her away after a quarrel, or fails to call the men to witness the divorce, reconciliation, or separation, it will not affect the legal effects of divorce or reconciliation or separation at all. However, his acting against Allah's advice would be a proof that his heart was devoid of the taste faith in Allah and the Last Day. That is why he adopted a course which a true believer would never adopt.

*9 The context itself shows that here "fearing Allah in whatever one does" means to pronounce divorce in accordance with the approved method taught by the Sunnah, to reckon the waiting-period accurately, to avoid turning the wife out of the house, to take the wife back if one decides to keep her at the expiry of the waiting-period with the intention of keeping her equitably and to send her away in a fair manner if one decides to part with her, and to call two just men to witness the divorce, reconciliation or separation, as the case may be. In respect of this, Allah says that whoever acts in fear of Him, He will open for him a way out of the difficulties. This automatically gives the meaning that whoever does not fear Allah in these matters, will create for himself such complications and difficulties from which he will find no way out.

A study of these words clearly shows that the view of those

who hold that the irregular (*bidi*) form of divorce does not take place at all and of those who regard a triple divorce pronounced at once or during the same period of purity as a single divorce, is not correct. For if an irregular form of divorce does not take place at all, it does not create any complication from which one may have to find a way out; and if only a single divorce takes place when one has pronounced three divorces at once, then also there arises no need for a person to seek a way out of a difficulty or complication.

3. And He will provide for him from where he could not imagine.^{*10} And whoever trusts in Allah, then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah brings to fulfillment His decrees.^{*11} Indeed, Allah has appointed a measure for everything.

وَيَرْزُقُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بَلِغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا



***10** It means: keeping the divorced wife in the house during the waiting period, to maintain her and to pay her the dower, or something in addition at departure certainly burdens a man financially. To spend on a woman whom one has already decided to send away because of strained relations will surely be irksome, and if the man is also poor, this expenditure will further pinch him. But a man, who fears Allah, should endure all this gracefully. Allah is not niggardly as the people are. If a person spends his wealth in accordance with His law, He will provide for him in a

manner beyond all expectations.

***11** That is, there is no power that can prevent Allah's decree from enforcement.

4. And those who have despaired of menstruation among your women, if you are in doubt, then their (waiting) period is three months,^{*12} and (likewise) those who have not menstruated yet.^{*13} And for those who are pregnant, their term is when they deliver their burden.^{*14} And whoever fears Allah, He will make his matter easy for him.

وَأَلَّتِي يَيْسَنَ مِنَ الْمَحِيضِ مِنْ
نِسَائِكُمْ إِنْ أَرْتَبْتُمْ فَعِدَّتُهُنَّ ثَلَاثَةُ
أَشْهُرٍ وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَحِضْ وَأُولَاتُ
الْأَحْمَالِ أَجَلُهُنَّ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ
حَمْلَهُنَّ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ
أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا



***12** This is in respect of the women who no longer menstruation and have reached menopause because of age. Their waiting-period will be reckoned from the day divorce was pronounced on them and three months imply three lunar months. If divorce was pronounced at the commencement of the lunar month, it is agreed that the waiting-period will be reckoned with regard to the sighting of the new moon; and if it was pronounced somewhere in the middle of the month, according to Imam Abu Hanifah, three months will have to be completed reckoning each month of 30 days. (Badaias-Sami).

As for the women whose courses are irregular due to some

reason, the jurists have held different opinions:

Saeed bin al-Musayyab says that Umar ruled: If the woman who has been divorced stops having menses after having them once or twice after the divorce, she will wait for 9 months. If signs of pregnancy appear, well and good, otherwise after the passage of 9 months, she should observe the waiting-period of three additional months. Then she would be lawful for marriage to another person.

Ibn Abbas, Qatadah and Ikrimah say that the waiting-period of the woman who has not menstruated for a year is three months.

Taus says that the waiting-period of the woman who menstruates once in a year, is three menstruations. This very opinion has been reported from Uthman, Ali and Zaid bin Thabit.

Imam Malik relates that a person by the name Habban divorced his wife during the period when she was suckling her child. A year passed on it, but she did not have the menses. Then the man died. The divorced wife laid claim to inheritance. The case came before Uthman. He consulted with Ali and Zaid bin Thabit, and gave the decision that the woman was an heiress. The argument given was that the woman was neither of those women a who might have despaired of menstruation, nor of those girls who may not have menstruated yet: therefore, up till the husband's death she was on the menses she had discharged last, and had still to pass her waiting-period.

The Hanafis say that the waiting-period of the woman, who no longer menstruates, which may not be on account of

menopause so that there may be no hope of her having it later will either be reckoned from the menstruation if she has it in the future, or in accordance with the age at which women generally reach menopause, and after attaining that age she will pass three months of the waiting period in order to be released from the marriage bond. The same opinion is held by Imam Shafei, Imam Thauri and Imam Laith, and the same also is the view of Umar, Uthman and Zaid bin Thabit.

Imam Malik has adopted the view of Umar and Abdullah bin Abbas and it is this: The woman will first pass nine months. If she does not have her menses during this period, she will pass three months of the waiting-period like the woman who has despaired of menstruation. Ibn al-Qasim explaining the viewpoint of Imam Malik says: The period of nine months will be reckoned from the day she became free from the previous menstrual discharge and not from the day divorce was pronounced on her. (All these have been taken from al-Jassas, Ahkam al-Quran and al-Kasani, Badai as-Sanai).

Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal says that if the woman whose waiting-period started from menstruation despairs of menstruation during the waiting-period, she will be required to pass the waiting-period of the menopausal woman and not of the women who menstruate regularly. And if she stops menstruating and the cause of the cessation is unknown, she will first pass nine months in the doubt of pregnancy, and then will have to complete three months of the waiting-period, And if the cause of the cessation of the

menses becomes known, e.g. a disease, or suckling, or some other cause, she will lie in the waiting-period till the time that either she starts having the menses again so that the waiting-period may be reckoned in accordance with the courses, or she reaches menopause and may pass the waiting-period of the menopausal woman. (Al-Insaf).

***13** They may not have menstruated as yet either because of young age, or delayed menstrual discharge as it happens in the case of some women, or because of no discharge at all throughout life which, though rare, may also be the case. In any case, the waiting-period of such a woman is the same as of the woman, who has stopped menstruation. That is three months from the time divorce was pronounced.

Here, one should bear in mind the fact that according to the explanations given in the Quran the question of the waiting period arises in respect of the women with whom marriage may have been consummated, for there is no waiting-period in case divorce is pronounced before the consummation of marriage. (Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 49). Therefore, making mention of the waiting-period for the girls who have not yet menstruated, clearly proves that it is not only permissible to give away the girl in marriage at this age but it is also permissible for the husband to consummate marriage with her. Now, obviously no Muslim has the right to forbid a thing which the Quran has held as permissible.

The girl who is divorced in the state when she has not yet menstruated and then she starts having the menses during the waiting-period, will reckon her waiting-period from the

same menstruation and her waiting-period will be reckoned just like the woman who menstruates regularly.

***14** The consensus of scholarly opinion is that the waiting-period of the pregnant divorced woman is till child birth. But a difference of opinion has occurred about whether the same also applies to the woman whose husband may die during her pregnancy. The dispute has arisen because in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 234 the waiting-period of the woman whose husband dies has been laid down as four months and ten days, and there is no mention whatever whether this injunction applies to all widows generally or only to those who are not pregnant.

Ali and Abdullah bin Abbas, reading both these verses together, have drawn the rule that the waiting-period of the pregnant divorced woman is till child-birth, but that of the pregnant widow is the longer of the two periods, whether it be of the divorced woman or of the pregnant woman. For example, if delivery takes place before four months and ten days, she will have to observe a waiting period of four months and ten days, and if it does not take place till then, her waiting period will come to an end at delivery. The same is the viewpoint of the Imamiah sect of the Shias.

Abdullah bin Masud says that this verse of Surrah At-Talaq was sent down after the verse of Surah Al-Baqarah; therefore, the later injunction has made the earlier injunction particularly applicable to the non pregnant widow, and has laid down the waiting-period of every pregnant woman as till child birth, whether she is divorced or widowed. Accordingly, whether delivery takes place

immediately after the husband's death, or takes longer than four months and ten days, the woman's waiting-period in any case will come to an end at the birth of the child. This view is supported by this tradition of Ubayy bin Kaab. He says: When this verse of Surah At-Talaq came down, I asked the Prophet (peace be upon him): Is it both for the divorced woman and for the widow? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Yes. In another tradition the Prophet (peace be upon him) further explained it thus: The waiting period of every pregnant woman is till child-birth. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abu Hatim). Ibn Hajar says that although its reliability is questionable, yet as it has been related through several chains of transmitters, one has to admit that it has some basis. More than that, it is further confirmed by the incident concerning Subaiah-i Aslamiyyah which occurred in the sacred time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. She became a widow during her pregnancy and a few days after her husband's death (according to some traditions 20 days, (according to others 23 days, 25 days, 35 days or 40 days) she delivered her burden. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked for his ruling concerning her and he permitted her to re-marry. This incident has been related by Bukhari and Muslim in different ways on the authority of Umm Salamah. This same incident has been related by Bukhari Muslim, Imam Ahmed, Abu Daud, Nasai and Ibn Majah with different chains of transmitters on the authority of Miswar bin Makhramah also. Muslim has cited this statement of Subaiah-i Aslamiyyah herself: I was the wife

of Saed bin Khawalah. He died during the Farewell Pilgrimage when I was pregnant. A few days after his death I gave birth to a child. A man told me that I could not remarry before the expiry of four months and ten days. I went and asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) and he gave the verdict: You have become lawful as soon as you gave birth to the child: you can re-marry if you so like. This tradition has been related briefly by Bukhari also.

This same viewpoint has been reported from a large number of the companions. Imam Malik, Imam Shafei, Abdur Razzaq, Ibn Abi Shaibah and Ibn al-Mundhir have related that when Abdullah bin Umar was asked concerning the pregnant widow, he replied that her waiting-period is till childbirth. At this a man from among the Ansar confirmed, saying: Umar had said that even if the deceased husband had not yet been buried, and his body still lay on bed in the house and his wife gave birth to a child, she would become pure and lawful for remarriage. The same opinion was held by Abu Hurairah, Abu Mansur Badri and Aishah, and the same has been adopted by the four Sunni Imams and the other early jurists.

The Shafeis say that if the pregnant woman has more children than one in her womb, her waiting-period will come to an end at the birth of the last child; even if it is still born, the waiting-period will expire at its birth. In case of abortion, if the mid-wives, on the basis of their knowledge and experience, state that it was not merely a piece of flesh but had human form, or that it was not a tumor but a human embryo, their statement will be admitted and the

waiting period will expire. (Mughni, al-Muhtaj). The viewpoint of the Hanbalis and the Hanafis is also very close to it. But in case of abortion, their viewpoint is that unless the human form is clearly visible, the mid-wives' statement that it is human embryo, will not be admitted and this will not bring the waiting-period to an end. (Bade ias-Sanei; Al-Insaf). But in the modern times by means of medical investigation it can be easily ascertained whether what has been expelled from the womb was actually something of the nature of human fetus or a kind of tumor or congealed blood. Therefore, whenever it is possible to obtain expert medical opinion, it can be easily decided whether what is described as abortion, was really abortion or not, and whether it has brought the waiting-period to an end or not. However, in cases when such medical investigation is not possible, the viewpoint of the Hanbalis and the Hanafis itself is preferable and it is not fit to rely on the ignorant mid-wives.

5. That is the command of Allah, which He has sent down to you. And whoever fears Allah, He will remove from him his evil deeds, and will enhance his reward.*15

ذَٰلِكَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ أَنْزَلَهُ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

*15 Although this is a general exhortation which applies to all matters and conditions of human life, yet in this particular context the object is to warn the Muslims to follow the commands mentioned above in fear of God, no matter what responsibilities they may have to shoulder in

consequence thereof, for as a reward for this Allah will remove their ills and will forgive their sins and will enhance their rewards in the Hereafter. Obviously, the waiting-period of the divorced woman whose term has been prescribed as three months will be longer than that of the woman whose term has been appointed as three menstruation, and the term of the pregnant woman may be several months longer. To shoulder the responsibility of the maintenance and lodging of the woman whom a man may have decided to give up, during this whole period, will be an unbearable burden for the people, but Allah's promise is that He will lighten the burden that is borne in fear of Him and in following His command, by His special bounty and grace, and will reward the person much more generously and richly in comparison to the small burden borne by him in the world.

6. Lodge them (in the waiting period) where you (yourselves) live, according to your means, and do not harm them, so as to oppress them.*¹⁶ And if they are pregnant, then spend on them until they deliver their burden.*¹⁷ Then if they suckle (the child) for you, then give them their wages, and confer among yourselves in kindness.*¹⁸ And if you

أَسْكِنُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ سَكَنْتُمْ مِنْ
وَجَدِكُمْ وَلَا تَضَارُّوهُنَّ لِتُضَيِّقُوا
عَلَيْهِنَّ ۚ وَإِنْ كُنَّ أَوْلَاتٍ حَمَلٍ
فَأَنْفِقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَضَعْنَ
حَمْلَهُنَّ ۚ فَإِنْ أَرْضَعْنَ لَكُمْ
فَاعَاتُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ ۚ وَأَتَمِّرُوا
بَيْنَكُمْ بِمَعْرُوفٍ ۚ وَإِنْ تَعَاَسَرْتُمْ

make difficulties (for each other) then another (woman) would suckle him.^{*19}

فَسْتَرْضِعُ لَهُ دَأْخَرَى

***16** The jurists agree that if the woman has been divorced revocable, the husband is responsible for her lodging and maintenance. They also agree that if the woman is pregnant, the husband will bear the responsibility of her lodging and maintenance till child-birth whether she has been divorced revocable or irrevocably. However, the difference of opinion has arisen about whether the non-pregnant woman who has been divorced irrevocably is entitled to both lodging and maintenance, or only to lodging, or to neither.

One group says that she is entitled to both lodging and maintenance. This is the opinion of Umar, Abdullah bin Masud, Ali bin Husain (Imam Zain al-Abidin), Qadi Shuraih and Ibrahim Nakhai. The same has been adopted by the Hanafis, and the same is also the viewpoint of Imam Sufyan Thauri and Hasan bin Saleh. This is supported by the Hadith of Daraqutni in which Abdullah bin Jabir reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The woman who has been divorced thrice has a right to lodging and maintenance during the waiting-period. This is further supported by those traditions in which it has been reported that Umar had rejected the Hadith of Fatimah bint-Qais, saying: We cannot abandon the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of our Prophet (peace be upon him) on the word of a woman. This shows that the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the knowledge of Umar must be that such a

woman is entitled to both maintenance and lodging. Furthermore in a tradition from Ibrahim Nakhai there is the explanation that Umar rejecting the Hadith of Fatimah bint-Qais, had said: I have heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say that such a woman has a right to lodging as well as to maintenance. The first argument that Imam Abu Bakr al Jassas has given in his discussion of this question in his Ahkam al-Quran is that Allah has explicitly said: Divorce them for their prescribed waiting periods. This divine command also applies to that person who might have taken his wife back after divorcing her twice in the first instance, and now he is left with only one divorce to pronounce. His second argument is: When the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught this method of pronouncing divorce that one should either pronounce divorce in such a period of purity in which one may not have had sexual intercourse, or in a state when the signs of a woman's being pregnant might have appeared. In this he did not make any distinction between the first, second, or final divorce. Therefore, the divine command: Lodge them (in the waiting period) where you yourselves live, will be regarded as relevant to every form of divorce. His third argument is: The maintenance and lodging of the pregnant woman, whether divorced revocable or irrevocably, is binding on the husband, and in respect to the non-pregnant revocably divorced woman also both these rights are binding. This shows that the maintenance and lodging have not been made incumbent on the basis of pregnancy but because both are legally bound to stay in the husband's house. Now,

if the same injunction be applicable to the irrevocably divorced non-pregnant woman also, there can be no reason why her lodging and maintenance should not be incumbent on the man divorcing her.

The second group says that the irrevocably divorce woman has a right to lodging but not to maintenance. This is the viewpoint of Saed bin al-Musayyab, Suleman bin Yasar, Ata, Shabi, Auzai, Laith and Abu Ubaid, and Imam Shafei and Imam Malik also have adopted the same. But in Mughni al-Muhtaj a different viewpoint of Imam Shafei has been stated as will be explained below.

The third group say that the irrevocably divorced woman is neither entitled to lodging nor to maintenance. This is the viewpoint of Hasan Basri, Hammad Ibn Laila, Amr bin Dinar, Taus, Ishaq bin Rahawaih and Abu Thaw. Ibn Jarir has cited this very viewpoint as of Ibn Abbas, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal and the Imamiah sect of the Shias also have adopted the same, and in Mughni al-Muhtaj the viewpoint of the Shafeis also has been stated to be this: The woman who is passing her waiting-period on the basis of divorce has an obligatory right to lodging, whether she is pregnant or not, but for the woman who has been irrevocably divorced, it is not obligatory. And for the non-pregnant irrevocably divorced woman there is neither maintenance nor clothing. This viewpoint in the first place is based on this verse of the Quran: You do not know: Allah may after this bring about a situation (of reconciliation). From this they conclude that this could be correct only about a revocably divorced woman, and not about an

irrevocably divorced one. Therefore, the command of lodging the divorced woman in the house is specifically applicable only to the revocably divorced woman. Their second reasoning is from the Hadith of Fatimah bint-Qais, which has been reported in the collections of Hadith through many authentic channels.

This Fatimah bint-Qais al-Fihriyyah was one of the earliest emigrants. She was esteemed for her wisdom and sagacity, and the consultative body of the companions on the occasion of Umar's martyrdom had met together at her house. She was first married to Abu Amr bin Hafs bin al-Mughirah al-Makhzumi. After she was separated by him by three divorces, the Prophet (peace be upon him) married her to Usamah bin Zaid. According to reports, her husband, Abu Amr had pronounced two divorces on her. Then, when he was sent to Yemen along with Ali, he also sent from there the third and final divorce. According to some, lodge her in the house during the waiting-period and maintain her. According to some others, she herself had laid claim to maintenance and lodging. Whatever be the case, the husband's relatives refused to concede her claim. Thereupon she took her case to the Prophet (peace be upon him), and he gave the decision that she was neither entitled to maintenance nor to lodging. According to a tradition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The husband is under obligation to provide maintenance and lodging to the woman only in case he had a right to return to her, but when he had no such right, she was neither entitled to maintenance nor to lodging. (Musnad Ahmad). Tabarani

and Nasai have also related almost the same tradition, the concluding words of which are to the effect: But when she is not lawful for him until she marries another man than him, there is neither maintenance for her nor lodging. After giving this decision the Prophet (peace be upon him) first commanded her to pass her waiting period in the house of Umm Sharik and then told her to stay in the house of Ibn Umm Muktum.

However, the arguments of those who have not accepted this Hadith are as follows:

In the first place, she had been commanded to leave the house of her husband's relatives because she was rude of tongue and they were fed up with her ill-temper. Saed bin al-Musayyab says: This lady by reporting her Hadith has misguided the people. The truth is that she was rude and impudent, that is why she was lodged in the house of Ibn Umm Maktum. (Abu Daud). In another tradition Saed bin al Musayyab is reported to have said: She had been impudent and rude to her husband's relatives; that is why she was commanded to shift from that house. (Al-Jassas). Suleman bin Yasar says: Her expulsion from the house was because of her ill-temper. (Abu Daud).

Secondly, her tradition was repudiated by Umar at a time when many of the companions were still living, and the matter could be fully investigated. Ibrahim Nakhai says: When this Hadtih of Fatimah reached Umar, he said: We cannot abandon a verse of the Book of Allah and a saying of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) because of the saying of a woman who seems to be conjecturing. I have

myself heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say that the woman who has been divorced irrevocably is entitled to both lodging and maintenance. (AI-Jassas). Abu Ishaq says: I was sitting with Aswad bin Yazid in the mosque of Kufah, when Shabi made mention of the Hadith of Fatimah bint-Qais. Aswad thereupon threw pebbles at Shabi and said: When in the time of Umar this tradition of Fatimah was brought to his notice, he said: We cannot cast off the Book of our Lord and the Sunnah of our Prophet (peace be upon him) on the strength of the tradition of a woman. Maybe she has forgotten. The woman has a right to maintenance as well as to lodging, for Allah says: Do not turn them out of their houses. This tradition has been reported in Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi and Nasai with some variation in wording.

Thirdly, during the reign of Marwan when a dispute arose in respect of the irrevocably divorced woman, Aishah had subjected the tradition of Fatimah bint-Qais to severe criticism. Qasim bin Muhammad says: I asked Aishah: Don't you know the incident concerning Fatimah? She replied: Better not mention the Hadith of Fatimah. (Bukhari), The words of Aishah in the other tradition related by Bukhari are to the effect: What has happened to Fatimah? Is she not afraid of God? In the third tradition Urwah bin Zubair says that Aishah said: There is no good for Fatimah in reporting this hadith. In still another tradition Urwah says that Aishah expressed great indignation against Fatimah and said: She in fact was in an empty house, where she had no sympathizer; therefore, for

the sake of her convenience the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed her to change her house.

Fourthly, this lady was later married to Usamah bin Zaid, and Muhammad bin Usamah says: Whenever Fatimah made mention of this Hadith, my father would throw at her whatever fell in his hand. (Al-Jassas). Obviously, had not Usamah known that the Sunnah was contrary to what Fatimah said, he could not have felt so annoyed at the mention of this Hadith.

***17** There is complete consensus that whether the woman has been divorced revocably or irrevocably, her husband is responsible for her lodging and maintenance till child-birth if she is pregnant. However, a difference of opinion has arisen in case the husband of the pregnant woman may have died, irrespective of whether he may have died after pronouncing the divorce, or may not have pronounced any divorce and the woman may have been widowed during pregnancy. In this regard, the jurists have expressed the following views:

(1) Ali and Abdullah bin Masud hold that she has an obligatory right to maintenance in the husband's undivided legacy. The same has also been cited as the view of Abdullah bin Umar, Qadi Shuraih, Abul Aliyah, Shabi and Ibrahim Nakhai, and a saying of Abdullah bin Abbas also supports the same. (Alusi, Al-Jassas).

(2) Ibn Jarir has cited another view of Abdullah bin Abbas to the effect: If the deceased person has left some inheritance, expenditure should be made on her from the share of the child of her womb; and if he has left no

inheritance, the heirs of the deceased should spend on her, for Allah says: And the same responsibility for the maintenance of the mother devolves upon the heir. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 233).

(3) Jabir bin Abdullah, Abdullah bin Zubair, Hasan Basri, Hadrat Saed bin al-Musayyab and Ata bin Abi Rabah say that there is no maintenance for her in the inheritance of the deceased husband. A third saying from Abdullah bin Abbas also has been cited to be the same. (Al-Jassas). This means that she can meet her expenses from the share of inheritance that she may receive from the husband's legacy, but she has no right of inheritance on the husband's combined legacy, which may burden the other heirs.

(4) Ibn Abi Laila says: Her maintenance in the deceased husband's legacy is as obligatory as is somebody's debt obligatory in his legacy. (Al-Jassas). That is, just as a debt has to be paid out of a combined legacy, so also should her maintenance be paid out of it.

(5) Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Abu Yusuf, Imam Muhammad and Imam Zufar say: She has neither any right to lodging in the deceased husband's legacy nor to maintenance, for nothing belongs to the deceased after death: whatever remains after him belongs to the heirs. The widowed pregnant woman, therefore, cannot have any maintenance in their property. (Hedayah, Al-Jassas). The same is the viewpoint of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (Al-Insaf).

(6) Imam Shafei says: There is no maintenance for her; but she has a right to lodging (Mughni al-Muhtaj). His

reasoning is based on the incident concerning Furaiah bint-Malik, sister of Abu Saed Khudri: when her husband was put to death, the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded her to pass her waiting-period in the house of her husband. (Abu Daud, Nasai, Timitidhi). Furthermore, they deduce their view from the tradition of Daraqutni: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: there is no maintenance for the widowed pregnant woman. The same is the view of Imam Malik also. (Hashiyah ad-Dusuqi).

- *18** This divine command teaches several important things:
- (1) That the woman is the owner of her milk; otherwise, obviously she could not be authorized to receive wages for it.
 - (2) That as soon as she becomes free from the marriage bond with her previous husband at child-birth, she is not legally bound to nurse her child; but if the father desires that she nurse it, and she also is willing for it, she would suckle it and would be entitled to receive the wages.
 - (3) that the father also is not legally bound to have the child suckled only by its mother;
 - (4) that the maintenance of the child is the responsibility of the father.
 - (5) that the mother is best entitled to suckle the child, and the other woman can be employed for suckling only in case the mother herself is not willing for it, or demands too high a wage for the father to pay. The sixth rule that automatically follows is that if the other woman also demands the same wages as the mother, then the mother's right is superior.

The following are the opinions of the jurists in this regard: Dahhak says: The child's mother is best entitled to suckle it, but she has the option to suckle it or not. However, if the child does not take to the new nurse-maid, the mother will be compelled to suckle it. A similar opinion is held by Qatadah, Ibrahim Nakhai and Sufyan Thauri. Ibrahim Nakhai adds: In case another woman is not available for nursing the child, the mother will be compelled to nurse it. (Ibn Jarir). According to Hedayah: If at the separation of the parents the child has not yet been weaned, it is not obligatory that the mother alone should suckle it. However, if another woman is not available, the mother would be compelled to suckle the child. And if the father says: I shall employ another woman to suckle the child on wages instead of having it suckled by the mother on wages, and if the mother demands the same wages as the other woman, or is willing to perform the service gratis, the mother's right will be regarded as superior. And if the child's mother demands higher wages, the father will not be compelled to accede to her demand.

***19** This contains a severe rebuke both for the father and for the mother. The style clearly shows that if the two do not settle the question of the child's suckling amicably, overlooking the previous bitterness that led to divorce, it is not approved by Allah, The woman has been warned to the effect: If you demand too high a wage only in order to embarrass the man, the fosterage of the child is not dependent on you alone: some other woman will nurse it. And the man has also been warned as if to say: It would be

unfair if you pressed the mother unjustly only because she was the mother. In this connection, also see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 233 for details.

7. Let the rich man spend according to his means, and he whose provision is restricted, so let him spend from what Allah has given him. Allah does not burden a person beyond what He has given him. Allah will bring about ease after hardship.

لِيُنْفِقَ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّن سَعَتِهِ ^ص وَمَن قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا ءَاتَاهُ اللَّهُ لَا يَكْلِفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَا ءَاتَاهَا سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا



8. And how many a town ^{*20} rebelled against the command of its Lord and His messengers, so We called it to a severe account and punished it with a terrible punishment.

وَكَأَيِّن مِّن قَرْيَةٍ عَتَتْ عَن أَمْرِ رَبِّهَا وَرُسُلِهِ فَحَاسَبْنَاهَا حِسَابًا شَدِيدًا وَعَذَّبْنَاهَا عَذَابًا نُّكْرًا



*20 Now, the Muslims are being warned of the fate they would meet in this world and in the Hereafter if they disobeyed the commands they have been given through the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah and His Book and the rewards they would receive if they adopted obedience.

9. So that it tasted the evil consequence of its affair, and the outcome of its

فَذَاقَتْ وَبَالَ أَمْرِهَا وَكَانَ عَاقِبَةُ

affair was loss.

أَمْرَهَا خُسْرًا

10. Allah has prepared for them a severe punishment (in the Hereafter). So fear Allah, O you men of understanding who have believed. Indeed, Allah has sent down to you an admonition.

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا
فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ الَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا قَدْ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكُمْ ذِكْرًا

11. A Messenger (Muhammad),^{*21} who recites to you the verses of Allah, clearly guided, that He may bring out those who believe and do righteous deeds from darkness into light.^{*22} And whoever believes in Allah and does righteousness, He shall admit him into Gardens underneath which rivers flow, they shall abide therein for ever. Allah has (prepared) for such a one an excellent provision.

رَسُولًا يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ
مُبَيِّنَاتٍ لِيُخْرِجَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ
إِلَى النُّورِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ
صَالِحًا يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا
قَدْ أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ لَهُ وَرِزْقًا

***21** Some of the commentators opine that admonition here implies the Quran and Messenger, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Some others say that admonition implies the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself, because

he was admonition for the people through and through. We are of the opinion that this second interpretation is more correct, for according to the first commentary the sentence would read: We have sent down to you an ddmonition and sent such a Messenger. Obviously, there is no need for such an interpolation in the Quranic passage when it is perfectly meaningful, even more so, without it.

***22** Out of darkneses into light: out of the darkneses of ignorance into the light of knowledge. The full significance of this divine saying becomes obvious only when one studies the other ancient and modern family laws of the world pertaining to divorce, waiting-period and provision of maintenance. This comparative study will show that in spite of the un-ending alterations, modifications and continual legislation no nation has been able so far to build for itself such a rational, natural and socially useful law as had been given by this Book and the Messenger (peace be upon him) who brought it 1500 wears ago. It has never stood in need of revision nor it ever will. There is no occasion here for a detailed comparative study of it; we have, however, given a brief specimen of it in the concluding portion of our book Huquq az-Zaujain; the scholars who are interested in the subject can for themselves compare the world's religious and secular laws with this law of the Quran and Sunnah.

12. It is Allah who has created seven heavens and of the earth,^{*23} the like of them. (His) command

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَتَنَزَّلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ

descends among them, so that you may know that Allah has power over all thing, and that Allah encompasses all things in knowledge.

لَتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا



***23** “The like of them” does not mean that He created as many earths as the heavens, but it means that He has also created several earths as He has created several heavens. “Of the earth” means that just as this earth which is inhabited by man is serving as bed and cradle for the creatures living on it, so has Allah made and set other earths also in the universe.





التَّحْرِيمِ At-Tahrim

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah derived its name from the words *lima tuharrimu* of the very first verse. This is not a title of its subject matter, but the name implies that it is the Surah in which the incident of *tahrim* (prohibition, forbiddance) has been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

In connection with the incident of *tahrim* referred to in this Surah, the traditions of the Hadith mention two ladies who were among the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) at that time Safiyyah and Mariyah Qibtiyyah. The former (i.e. Safiyyah) was taken to wife by the Prophet (peace be upon him) after the conquest of Khaiber, and Khaiber was conquered, as has been unanimously reported, in A.H. 7. The other lady, Mariyah, had been presented to the Prophet (peace be upon him) by Muqawqis, the ruler of Egypt, in A.H. 7 and she had borne him his son, Ibrahim, in Dhil-Hijjah, A.H. 8. These historical events almost precisely determine that this Surah was revealed some time during A.H. 7 or A.H. 8.

Theme and Topics

This is a very important Surah in which light has been thrown on some questions of grave significance with reference to some incidents concerning the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

First, that the powers to prescribe the bounds of the lawful and the unlawful, the permissible and the forbidden, are entirely and absolutely in the hand of Allah and nothing has been delegated even to the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah himself, not to speak of any other man. The Prophet (peace be upon him) as such can declare something lawful or unlawful only if he receives an inspiration from Allah to do so whether that inspiration is embodied in the Quran or imparted to him through other means. However, even the Prophet (peace be upon him) is not authorized to declare anything made permissible by Allah unlawful by himself, much less to say of another man.

Second, that in any society the position of a Prophet (peace be upon him) is very delicate. A minor incident experienced by an ordinary man in his life may not be of any consequence, but it assumes the status of law when experienced by a Prophet (peace be upon him). That is why the lives of the Prophets have been kept under close supervision by Allah so that none of their acts, not even a most trivial one, may deviate from divine will. Whenever such an act has emanated from a Prophet, it was rectified and rectified immediately so that the Islamic law and its principles should reach the people in their absolute purity not only through the divine Book but also through the

excellent example of the Prophet, and they should include nothing which may be in disagreement with divine will.

Third, and this automatically follows from the above mentioned point, that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was checked on a minor thing, which was not only corrected but also recorded, it gives us complete satisfaction that whatever actions and commands and instructions we now find in the pure life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) concerning which there is nothing on record in the nature of criticism or correction from Allah, they are wholly based on truth, are in complete conformity with divine will and we can draw guidance from them with full confidence and peace of mind.

The fourth thing that we learn from this discourse is that about the Messenger (peace be upon him) himself, whose reverence and respect Allah Himself has enjoined as a necessary part of the faith of His servants. It has been stated in this Surah that once during his sacred life he made a thing declared lawful by Allah as unlawful for himself only to please his wives; then Allah has severely reproved for their errors those very wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him), whom He Himself has declared as mothers of the faithful and worthy of the highest esteem and honor by them. Then, this criticism of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the administration of the warning to the wives has not also been made secretly but included in the Book, which the entire ummah has to read and recite forever. Obviously, neither the intention of making mention of it in the Book of Allah was, nor it could be, that Allah

wanted to degrade His Messenger (peace be upon him) and the mothers of the faithful in the eyes of the believers; and this also is obvious that no Muslim has lost respect for them, in his heart after reading this Surah of the Quran. Now, there cannot be any other reason of mentioning this thing in the Quran than that Allah wants to acquaint the believers with the correct manner of reverence for their great personalities. A Prophet is a Prophet, not God, that he may commit no error. Respect of the Prophet has not been enjoined because he is infallible, but because he is a perfect representative of divine will, and Allah has not permitted any of his errors to pass by unnoticed. This gives us the satisfaction that the noble pattern of life left by the Prophet (peace be upon him) wholly and fully represents the will of Allah. Likewise, the companions or the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were human, not angels or supernatural. They could commit mistakes. Whatever ranks they achieved became possible only because the guidance given by Allah and the training imparted by Allah's Messenger had molded them into the finest models. Whatever esteem and reverence they deserve is on this very basis and not on the presumption that they were infallible. For this reason, whenever in the sacred lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him) the companions or the wives happened to commit an error due to human weakness, they were checked. Some of their errors were corrected by the Prophet (peace be upon him), as has been mentioned at many places in the Hadith. Some other errors were mentioned in the Quran and Allah Himself corrected them

so that the Muslims might not form any exaggerated notion of the respect and reverence of their elders and great men, which might raise them from humanity to the position of gods and goddesses. If one studies the Quran carefully, he will see instances of this one after the other. In Surah Aal-Imran, in connection with the Battle of Uhud, the companions have been addressed and told: And Allah has certainly fulfilled His promise to you, when you were killing them (enemy) by His permission. Until when you lost courage, and you disputed about the order (of Muhammad) and you disobeyed, after what He had shown you that which you love. Among you are some who desired the world, and among you are some who desired the Hereafter. Then He made you turn back from them (defeated), that He might test you. And He has surely forgiven you. And Allah is Most Gracious to the believers. (verse 152).

In Surah An-Noor, in connection with the slander against Aishah, the companions were told: Why, when you heard it (the slander), did not think the believing men and the believing women good of their own people, and said: This is a clear lie. Why did they not bring to (prove) it four witnesses. Then when they (slanderers) did not produce the witnesses, then it is they, with Allah, who are the liars. And if (it were) not for the favor of Allah upon you, and His mercy in the world and the Hereafter, would surely have touched you, regarding that wherein you had indulged, a great punishment. When you received it with your tongues, and uttered with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge, and you thought of it insignificant, and with

Allah it was tremendous. And why, when you heard it, did you not say: It is not for us that we speak of this. Glory be to You (O Allah), this is a great slander. Allah admonishes you that you repeat not the like of it ever, if you should be believers. (verses 12-17).

In Surah Al-Ahzab, the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) have been addressed thus: O Prophet (Muhammad), say to your wives: If you should desire the life of the world and its adornment, then come, I will make a provision for you and send you off (by divorce), a graceful sending. And if you should desire Allah and His Messenger and the abode of the Hereafter, then indeed, Allah has prepared for those who do good amongst you an immense reward. (verses 28-29).

In Surah Al-Jumuah about the companions it was said: And when they saw a merchandise or an amusement, they rushed to it and left you standing. Say: That which is with Allah is better than amusement and merchandise. And Allah is the best of providers. (verse 11).

In Surah Al-Mumtahinah, Hatib bin Abi Baltaah, a companion who had fought at Badr, was severely taken to task because he had sent secret information to the disbelieving Quraish about the Prophet's (peace be upon him) invasion before the conquest of Makkah.

All these instances are found in the Quran itself, in the same Quran in which Allah Himself has paid tribute to the companions and the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) for their great merits, and granted them the certificate of His good pleasure, saying: Allah became pleased with

them and they became pleased with Allah. It was this same moderate and balanced teaching of the reverence and esteem of the great men, which saved the Muslims from falling into the pit of man-worship in which the Jews and the Christians fell, and it is a result of the same that in the books that the eminent followers of the Sunnah have compiled on the subjects of the Hadith, commentary of the Quran and History, not only have the excellences and great merits of the companions and Prophet's wives and other illustrious men been mentioned, but also no hesitance has been shown in mentioning the incidents relating to their weaknesses, errors and mistakes, whereas those scholars were more appreciative of the merits and excellences of the great men and understood the bounds and limits of reverence better than those who claim to be the upholders of reverence for the elders today.

The fifth thing that has been explicitly mentioned in this Surah is that Allah's religion is absolutely fair and just for every person. No relationship or connection even with the most righteous person can be beneficial for him in any way and no relationship or connection with the most evil and wicked person can be harmful for him in any way. In this connection three kinds of women have been cited as examples before the Prophet's (peace be upon him) wives in particular. One example is of the wives of the Prophets Noah and Lot (peace be upon them), who, if they had believed and cooperated with their illustrious husbands, would have occupied the same rank and position in the Muslim community which is enjoyed by the wives of the

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). But since they were disbelievers, their being the wives of the Prophets did not help them and they fell into Hell. The second example is of the wife of Pharaoh who, in spite of being the wife of a staunch enemy of God, believed and chose a path of action separate from that followed by the Pharaoh's people. And her being the wife of a staunch disbeliever did not cause her any harm, and Allah made her worthy of Paradise. The third example is of Maryam (Mary), who attained to the high rank because she submitted to the severe test to which Allah had decided to put her. Apart from Mary no other chaste and righteous girl in the world ever has been put to such a hard test that in spite of being unmarried, she might have been made pregnant miraculously by Allah's command and informed what service her Lord willed to take from her. When Maryam accepted this decision, and agreed to bear, like a true believer, everything that she inevitably had to bear in order to fulfill Allah's will, then did Allah exalt her to the noble rank of *Sayyidatu an-nisa fil-Jannah*: Leader of the women in Paradise. (Musnad Ahmad).

Besides, another truth that we learn from this Surah is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not receive from Allah only that knowledge which is included and recorded in the Quran, but he was also given information about other things by revelation, which has not been recorded in the Quran. Its clear proof is verse 3 of this Surah. In it we are told that the Prophet (peace be upon him) confided a secret to one of his wives, and she told it to another. Allah

informed the Prophet (peace be upon him) of this secret. Then, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) warned his particular wife on the mistake of disclosure and she said: Who has informed you of this mistake of mine. He replied: I have been informed of it by Him Who knows everything and is All-Aware. Now, the question is where in the Quran is the verse in which Allah has said: O Prophet, the secret that you had confided to one of your wives, has been disclosed by her to another person, or to so and so. If there is no such verse in the Quran, and obviously there is none, this is an express proof of the fact that revelation descended on the Prophet (peace be upon him) besides the Quran as well. This refutes the claim of the deniers of Hadith, who allege that nothing was sent down to the Prophet (peace be upon him) apart from the Quran.

1. O Prophet, why do you make unlawful that which Allah has made lawful for you.*¹ Seeking to please your wives.*² And Allah is All Forgiving, All Merciful.*³

يَأْيَهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ
لَكَ تَبْتَغِي مَرْضَاتَ أَزْوَاجِكَ
وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

*1 This is not, in fact, a question but an expression of disapproval. The object is not to ask the Prophet (peace be upon him) why he had done so, but to warn him that his act to make unlawful for himself what Allah had made lawful is not approved by Allah. This by itself gives the meaning that nobody has the power to make unlawful what Allah has made lawful; so much so that the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself also did not possess any such power.

Although the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not regard this as unlawful as a matter of faith nor legally but only forbade himself its use, yet since he was not an ordinary man but Allah's Messenger, and his forbidding himself something could have the effect that his followers too would have regarded it as forbidden, or at least reprehensible, or the people of his community might have thought that there was no harm in forbidding oneself something his Allah had made lawful, Allah pointed it out to him and commanded him to refrain from such prohibition.

*2 This shows that in this case the Prophet (peace be upon him) had not made a lawful thing unlawful because of a personal desire but because his wives had wanted him to do so, and he had made it unlawful for himself only in order to please them. Here, the question arises: why has Allah particularly made mention of the cause of making the thing unlawful besides pointing out the act of prohibition? Obviously, if the object had been to make him refrain from making a lawful thing as unlawful, this could be fulfilled by the first sentences and there was no need that the motive of the act also should have been stated. Making mention of it in particular clearly shows that the object was not to check the Prophet (peace be upon him) only for making a lawful thing as unlawful, but along with that to warn the his wives also to the effect that in their capacity as the Prophet's wives they had not understood their delicate responsibilities and had made the Prophet (peace be upon him) do a thing which could lead to making a lawful thing as unlawful.

Although it has not been mentioned in the Quran as to

what it was that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had made forbidden upon himself, yet the traditionists and commentators have mentioned in this regard two different incidents, which occasioned the revelation of this verse. One of these relates to Mariyah Qibiyyah (Mary, the Copt lady) and the other to his forbidding upon himself the use of honey.

The incident relating to Mariyah is that after concluding the peace treaty of Hudaibiyah, one of the letters that the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent to the rulers of the adjoining countries was addressed to the Roman Patriarch of Alexandria also, whom the Arabs called Muqawqis. When Hatib bin Abi Baltaa took this letter to him, he did not embrace Islam but received him well, and in reply wrote: I know that a Prophet is yet to rise, but I think he will appear in Syria. However, I have treated your messenger with due honor, and am sending two slave-girls to you, who command respect among the Coptics. (Ibn Saad). One of those slave-girls was Sirin and the other Mariyah (Mary). On his way back from Egypt, Hatib presented Islam before both and they believed. When they came before the Prophet (peace be upon him), he gave Sirin in the ownership of Hassan bin Thabit and admitted Mariyah into his own household. In Dhil-Hijjah, A.H. 8 she gave birth to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) son, Ibrahim. (Al-Istiab; Al-Isabah). This lady was very beautiful. Hafiz Ibn Hajar in Al-Isabah has related this saying of Aishah about her: No woman's entry into the Prophet's household vexed me so much as that of Mariyah,

because she was very beautiful and pleased him much. Concerning her the story that has been narrated in several ways in the Hadith is briefly as follows:

One day the Prophet (peace be upon him) visited the house of Hafsah when she was not at home. At that time Mariyah came to him there and stayed with him in seclusion. Hafsah took it very ill and complained of it bitterly to him. Thereupon, in order to please her, the Prophet (peace be upon him) vowed that he would have no conjugal relation with Mariyah in future. According to some traditions, he forbade Mariyah for himself, and according to others, he also swore an oath on it. These traditions have been mostly reported by the immediate successors of the companions without mentioning any intermediary link. But some of these have been reported from Umar, Abdullah bin Abbas and Abu Hurairah also. In view of the plurality of the methods of narration, Hafiz Ibn Hajar in Fath al-Bari has expressed the view that there is some truth in the story. But in none of the six authentic collections of the Hadith has this story been narrated. In Nasai only this much has been related from Anas: The Prophet (peace be upon him) had a slave-girl with whom he had conjugal relations. Then, Hafsah and Aishah began to point out this to him repeatedly until he forbade her for himself. There upon, Allah sent down this verse: O Prophet, why do you make unlawful that which Allah has made lawful for you.

The other incident has been related in Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Nasai and several other books of Hadith from Aishah herself and its purport is as follows:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) usually paid a daily visit to all his wives after the Asr Prayer. Once it so happened that he began to stay in the house of Zainab bint-Jahsh longer than usual, for she had received some honey from somewhere as a gift and the Prophet was very fond of sweet things; therefore, he would have a drink of honey at her house. Aishah states that she felt envious of this and spoke to Hafsah, Saudah and Safiyyah about it and together they decided that whoever of them was visited by the Prophet, she should say to him: Your mouth smells of maghafir. Maghafir is a kind of flower, which gives out an offensive smell, and if the bee obtains honey from it, it is also tainted by the same odor. They all knew that the Prophet was a man of very fine taste and he abhorred that he should emit any kind of unpleasant smell. Therefore, this device was contrived to stop him from staying in the house of Zainab and it worked. When several of his wives told him that his mouth smelt of maghafir, he made a promise not to use the honey any longer. In one tradition his words are to the effect: Now, I will never have a drink from it: I have sworn an oath. In another tradition he only said: I will never have a drink from it, and there is no mention of the oath. And in the tradition which Ibn al Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Tabarani and Ibn Marduyah have related from Ibn Abbas the words are to the effect: By God, I will not drink it.

Our eminent scholars regard this second version as correct and the first as unreliable. Imam Nasai says: About honey the Hadith reported from Aishah is authentic, and the story of forbidding Mariyah for himself by the Prophet (peace be

upon him) has not been narrated in a reliable way. Qadi Iyad says: The truth is that this verse was sent down concerning honey and not Mariyah. Qadi Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi also regards the story about honey as correct and the same is the opinion of Imam Nawawi and Hafiz Badruddiu Aini. Ibn Humam writes in Fath al-Qadir: The story of the prohibition of honey has been narrated in Bukhari and Muslim from Aishah who was herself a party to it; therefore, it is much more reliable.

Hafiz Ibn Kathir says: The truth is that this verse was sent down about forbidding honey upon himself by the Prophet (peace be upon him).

*3 That is, although the act of making a lawful thing unlawful only in order to please your wives was an act unbecoming of your high and responsible office, yet it was no sin, which might have entailed a punishment. Therefore, Allah has only pointed it out to you and corrected it, and has forgiven you for this error.

2. Allah has ordained for you absolution from your oaths.*4

And Allah is your protector, and He is the All Knowing, the All Wise.*5

قَدْ فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ تَحِلَّةَ أَيْمَانِكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ



*4 It means: Act according to the method Allah has prescribed for absolution from oaths by expiation in Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 89 and break your promise that you have made to forbid yourself of a lawful thing. Here, an important legal question arises and it is this: Is this

command applicable to the case when a person has forbidden upon himself a lawful thing on oath, or is forbidding oneself a lawful thing by itself tantamount to swearing an oath, whether the words of the oath have been used or not. The jurists in this regard have expressed different opinions:

One section of them says that mere forbidding oneself of a lawful thing is not an oath. If a person without swearing an oath has forbidden upon himself a wife, or some other lawful thing, it is an absurd thing which does not entail any expiation, but he can resume without any expiation the use of the thing that he had forbidden for himself. This is the opinion of Masruq, Shabi, Rabiah and Abu Salamah; and the same view is held by Ibn Jarir and all the Zahiris. According to them forbidding oneself of something would be an oath only in case express words of oath are used when forbidding it for oneself. In this regard, their reasoning is that since the Prophet (peace be upon him) while forbidding himself a lawful thing had also sworn an oath, as has been reported in several traditions, Allah told him to act according to the method that had been appointed for absolving oneself from oaths.

The second group says that to forbid oneself something without using the words of oath is not an oath by itself, but the case of the wife is an exception. If a person has forbidden himself a garment, or an article of food, it is meaningless, and one can use it without expiation. But if concerning a wife or a slave-girl he has said: I forbid myself an intercourse with her, she would not become unlawful

and forbidden, but one would have to expiate the oath before going in to her. This is the opinion of the Shafeis. (Mughni al-Muhtaj). And a similar opinion on this question is held by the Malikis. (Ibn al-Arabi, Ahkam al-Quran).

The third group says that to forbid oneself something is by itself an oath even if the words of oath have not been used. This is the opinion of Abu Bakr, Aishah, Umar, Abdullah bin Masud, Zaid bin Thabit and Abdullah bin Abbas. Although from Ibn Abbas another opinion has been reported in Bukhari to the effect: If a man has forbidden himself his wife, it is meaningless, yet it has been interpreted to mean that according to him this is not divorce but an oath which entails an expiation. For, in Bukhari, Muslim and Ibn Majah, another saying of Ibn Abbas has been reported that to forbid oneself one's wife entails an expiation, and in Nasai the tradition is to the effect that when Ibn Abbas was asked his opinion on this, he said: She is not forbidden to you, but you must pay the expiation. And in Ibn Jarir's tradition the words of Ibn Abbas are to the effect: If the people forbid themselves what Allah has made lawful for them, they must expiate their oath. This same is the opinion of Hasan Basri, Ata, Taus, Suleman bin Yasar, Ibn Jubair and Qatadah, and the same has been adopted by the Hanafis. Imam Abu Bakr al-Jassas says: The words of the verse *lima tuharrimu* do not indicate that the Prophet (peace be upon him) along with forbidding himself the lawful thing had also sworn an oath, therefore, one will have to admit that *tahrim* (to forbid oneself something) itself is an oath; for after it Allah made

obligatory the expiation of the oath in connection with the prohibition. Farther on he writes again: Our companions (i.e. the Hanafis) regard *tahrim* as an oath in case it is not accompanied by the intention of divorce. If a person forbade upon himself his wife, he in fact said: By God, I will not come near you, thus, he committed *ila* (act of temporary separation). And if he forbade himself an article of food, etc, he in a way said: By God, I will not use that article. For Allah first said: Why do you forbid that which Allah has made lawful. And then said: Allah has appointed a way to absolve you from your oaths. Thus, Allah has regarded *tahrim* as an oath, and the word *tahrim* in its meaning and legal effect becomes synonymous with an oath.

Here, for the benefit of the common man, it would be useful to tell what the legal command is, according to the jurists, in respect of someone forbidding upon himself his wife and the other things besides the wife.

The Hanafis say that if without the intention of divorce somebody forbade upon himself his wife, or swore an oath that he would not have conjugal relations with her, this would be *ila* (temporary separation), and in this case he would have to expiate his oath before having the sexual relation. But if with the intention of divorce he said: You are unlawful to me, it will have to be ascertained what was his real intention. If his intention was of three divorces, the three divorces will take place, and if the intention was of a lesser number, of one or two divorces, only one divorce will take place in either case. And if somebody says: I have

forbidden myself whatever was lawful for me, this would not apply to the wife unless he said these words with the intention of forbidding himself the wife. Apart from the wife, one cannot use the thing he has forbidden upon himself until he has expiated the oath. (Badai as-Sanai: Hedayah; Fath Al-Qadir, al-Jassas, Ahkam al-Quran).

The Shafeis say that if one forbids upon himself the wife with the intention of divorce or *zihar*, the intended thing would become effective, whether it is a revocable divorce or an irrevocable divorce or *zihar*. And if a person used the words of *tahrim* with the intention of both divorce and *zihar*, he would be asked to choose one, or the other, for both divorce and *zihar* cannot be established at one and the same time. Divorce dissolves marriage but in case of *zihar* it continues and if without any intention the wife is forbidden, she would not become forbidden, but expiation of the oath would become necessary. And if another thing, apart from the wife, is forbidden, it would be meaningless; there is no expiation for it. (Mughni al-Muhtaj).

The Malikis say that if a person forbids upon himself anything other than the wife, it neither becomes forbidden nor entails an expiation. But if he says to the wife: You are unlawful, or unlawful for me, or I am unlawful for you, this would amount to a triple divorce in any case whether this was said to a wife with whom marriage has been consummated, or to one with whom it has not yet been consummated, unless his intention was of less than three divorces. Asbagh says: If a person says: whatever was lawful for me, is unlawful, the wife also becomes forbidden

unless he makes an exception of the wife. In al-Mudawwanah, distinction has been made between the wife with whom marriage has been consummated and the wife with whom it has not been consummated. If one forbids upon himself the former, a threefold divorce will take place irrespective of the intention, but in case of the latter the same number of divorces would take effect as was intended, and if there was no intention of any particular number, it would be considered a triple divorce. (Hashiyah ad-Dusuqi). Qadi Ibn al-Arabi in his Ahkam al-Quran has cited three statements of Imam Malik:

(1) That forbidding oneself the wife amounts to an irrevocable divorce.

(2) That it amounts to three divorces.

(3) That in case of the wife with whom marriage has been consummated it amounts to three divorces, but in case of the one with whom it has not been consummated, to only one divorce if one was intended. Then he says: The correct thing is that forbidding oneself the wife amounts to one divorce only. For if the man uses the word divorce instead of calling her unlawful without specifying the number, only one divorce will take place.

Three different views in this regard have been reported from Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal:

(1) That to forbid oneself the wife, or to make a lawful thing absolutely unlawful for oneself, is *zihar*, whether *zihar* was intended or not.

(2) That this is an express allusion to divorce, and it amounts to pronouncing a triple divorce whether only one

divorce was intended.

(3) That it is an oath, unless the man had the intention of divorce or *zihar* and in this case the same would take effect as was intended. Of these only the first one is the best known view among the Hanbalis. (Al-Insaf).

*5 That is, Allah is your Master and Guardian of your affairs. He knows best in what lies your own good, and whatever commands He has given, they are all based on wisdom. The first thing means: You are not independent in this world, but you are servant of Allah and He is your Master; therefore, none of you possesses any power to alter or change the ways and methods prescribed by Him; the best thing for you is to entrust your affairs to Him and continue to obey Him.

The second thing means that all the methods and laws that Allah has enjoined, are based on knowledge and wisdom. Whatever He has made lawful, has been made lawful on the basis of knowledge and wisdom and whatever He has made unlawful also has been made unlawful on the basis of knowledge and wisdom. Nothing has been made lawful or unlawful at random. Therefore, those who believe in Allah should understand that it is Allah Who is All-Knowing and All-Wise and not they. And their well-being lies only in carrying out duly the commands given by Him.

3. And when the Prophet had confided a matter to one of his wives. Then, when she disclosed it (to other), and Allah informed him (of the

وَإِذْ أَسْرَأَ النَّبِيُّ إِلَىٰ بَعْضِ أَزْوَاجِهِ
حَدِيثًا فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَتْ بِهِ وَأَظْهَرَهُ

disclosure). He made known (to the wife) part of it and overlooked part of it. So when he told her about it (disclosure), she said: “Who informed you of this.” He said: “I was informed by the All Knower, the All Aware.”*6

اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَرَّفَ بَعْضَهُ وَأَعْرَضَ
عَنْ بَعْضٍ فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَهَا بِهِ قَالَتْ
مَنْ أَنْبَأَكَ هَذَا قَالَ نَبَّأَنِيَ الْعَلِيمُ
الْخَبِيرُ



*6 Different things have been reported in different traditions, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had told such and such a thing to one of his wives in confidence, which she disclosed to another wife. But for us, in the first place, it is not right to investigate it, for it is on the disclosure of a secret that Allah is taking a wife to task, it cannot therefore be right for us to inquire into it and try to uncover it. Secondly, in view of the object for which this verse was sent down, it is not at all important to know what the secret was. Had it any connection with the object of the discourse, Allah would Himself have mentioned it. The real object for which this incident has been related in the Quran is to warn the Prophet's (peace be upon him) wives and through them, the wives of the responsible people among the Muslims not to be careless in the matter of guarding secrets. Had it been only a private and personal affair, as is generally the case between the husband and the wife in the world, there was no need that Allah should have directly informed the Prophet (peace be upon him) of it through revelation, and then did not rest content only with giving

the information, but should also have recorded it in the Book which the whole world has to recite forever. The reason why it was given such importance was that this wife was not the wife of an ordinary husband but of that illustrious husband, whom Allah had appointed to the office of the highest responsibility, who was locked in an incessant battle with the disbelievers, polytheists and hypocrites at all times and under whose leadership a fierce conflict was going on for establishing Islam in place of paganism. In the house of such an illustrious man there could be countless things which if not kept secret but disclosed before time, could harm the great mission which he was performing. Therefore, when a lady of the house happened to show this weakness for the first time in that she disclosed a secret that had been told her in confidence, to another (a member of her own household), the weakness was immediately pointed out to her, not secretly but openly in the Quran, so as to impart training in the guarding of secrets not only to the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) but also to the wives of all responsible people of the Muslim community. In the verse the question whether the secret disclosed pertained to a matter of any consequence or not, and whether its disclosure could cause any harm to the mission or not, has been altogether ignored. What has been disapproved and pointed out in particular is that the secret was disclosed to another. The higher the position of responsibility a person holds the more dangerous would be the leakage of secrets from his house. No matter whether a thing is of any consequence or not, once a person becomes

careless in the matter of guarding secrets, he may reveal important things as well as trivial matters.

4. If you both (wives) repent to Allah, for your hearts have deviated.*⁷ And if you supported each other against him,*⁸ then indeed Allah is his Protector, and Gabriel, and the righteous believers, and furthermore the angels are his helpers.*⁹

إِنْ تَتُوبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا وَإِنْ تَظَاهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ مَوْلَاهُ وَجِبْرِيلُ وَصَلِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ ظَهِيرٌ



*⁷ The word *saghat* in the original is from *saghy* which means to swerve and to become crooked. Shah Waliyullah and Shah Rafiuddin have translated this sentence thus: Crooked have become your hearts. Abdullah bin Masud, Abdullah bin Abbas, Sufyan Thauri and Dahhak have given this meaning of it: Your hearts have swerved from the right path. Imam Razi explains it thus: Your hearts have swerved from what is right, and the right implies the right of the Prophet (peace be upon him). And Allama Alusis commentary is although it is incumbent on you that you should approve what the Messenger (peace be upon him) approves and disapprove what he disapproves, yet in this matter your hearts have swerved from conformity with him and turned in opposition to him.

*⁸ The word *tazahur* means to cooperate mutually in opposition to another person, or to be united against another person. Shah Waliyullah has translated this

sentence, thus: If you mutually join together to cause distress to the Prophet. Shah Abdul Qadir's translation is: If you both overwhelm him. Ashraf Ali Thanwi's translation says: And if you both continued to work thus against the Prophet. And Shabbir Ahmad Uthmami has explained it thus: If you two continued to work and behave thus (against the Prophet, peace be upon him).

The verse is clearly addressed to two ladies and the context shows that these ladies are from among the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) for in verses 1-5 of this Surah the affairs concerning the Prophet's (peace be upon him) wives only have been discussed continuously, and this becomes obvious from the style of the Quran itself. As for the question who were the wives, and what was the matter which caused Allah's displeasure, the details are found in the Hadith. In Musnad Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Nasai, a detailed tradition of Abdullah bin Abbas has been related, which describes the incident with some variation in wording. Ibn Abbas says: I had been thinking for long time to ask Umar as to who were the two of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) wives, who had joined each other against him, and about whom Allah sent down this verse: *In tatuba.....*; but I could not muster courage because of his awe-inspiring personality until he left for Hajj and I accompanied him. On our way back while helping him to perform ablutions for the Prayer at one place I had an opportunity to ask him this question. He replied: they were Aishah and Hafsah. Then he began to relate the background, saying: We, the people of Quraish, were used

to keeping our women folk under strict control. Then, when we came to Al-Madinah, we found that the people here were under the control of their wives, and the women of Quraish too started learning the same thing from them. One day when I became angry with my wife, I was amazed to see that she argued with me. I felt badly about her conduct. She said: Why should you feel so angry at my behavior. By God, the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) answer him back face to face, (the word in the original is *li yuraji nahu*) and some one of them remains angrily apart from him for the whole day. (According to Bukhari: the Prophet, peace be upon him, remains angry and apart from her the whole day). Hearing this I came out of my house and went to Hafsah (who was Umar's daughter and the Prophet's, peace be upon him, wife). I asked her: Do you answer back to the Prophet (peace be upon him) face to face? She said: Yes. I asked: And does one of you remain apart from him for the whole day, (according to Bukhari: the Holy Prophet remains angry and apart from her for the entire day). She said: Yes. I said: Wretched is the one from among you, who behaves thus. Has one of you become so fearless of this that Allah should afflict her with His wrath because of the wrath of His Prophet (peace be upon him) and she should perish, So, do not be rude to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Here also the words are: *la turaji-i*, nor demand of him anything, but demand of me whatever you desire. Do not be misled by this that your neighbor (i.e. Aishah) is more beautiful and dearer to the Prophet (peace be upon him). After this I left her house and went to the

house of Umm Salamah, who was related to me, and talked to her on this subject. She said: Son of Khattab, you are a strange man: you have meddled in every matter until you are now interfering in the affair between Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) and his wives. She discouraged me. Then it so happened that an Ansari neighbor came to my house at night and he called out to me. We used to sit in the Prophet's (peace be upon him) assembly by turns and each used to pass on to the other the news of the day of his turn. It was the time when we were apprehending an attack by the Ghassanids any time. On his call when I came out of my house, he said that something of grave significance had happened. I said: Have the Ghassanids launched an attack? He said: No, but something even more serious. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has divorced his wives. I said: Doomed is Hafsah (the words in Bukhari are: Raghima anfu Hafsah wa Aishah). I already had a premonition of this.

We have left out what happened after this, how next morning Umar went before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and tried to appease his anger. We have described this incident by combining the traditions of Musnad Ahmad and Bukhari. In this the word *murajat* which Umar has used cannot be taken in its literal sense, but the context shows that the word has been used in the sense of answering back face to face and Umar's saying to his daughter: *La turaji-i Rasul Allah* clearly has the meaning: Do not be impudent to the Messenger of Allah. Some people say that this is a wrong translation, and their objection is:

Although it is correct to translate *murajaat* as answering back, or answering back face to face, yet it is not correct to translate it as being impudent. These objectors do not understand that if a person of a lower rank or position answers back or retorts to a person of a higher rank and position, or answers him back face to face this very thing is described as impudence. For example, if a father rebukes his son for something or feels angry at his behavior, and the son instead of keeping quiet or offering an excuse, answers back promptly, this could only be described as impudence. Then, when the matter is not between a father and a son, but between the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah and an individual of his community, only a foolish person could say that it was not impudence.

Some other people regard this translation of ours as disrespectful, whereas it could be disrespectful in case we had had the boldness to use such words in respect of Hafsah from ourselves. We have only given the correct meaning of the words of Umar, and these words he had used while scolding and reproving his daughter for her error. Describing it as disrespectful would mean that either the father should treat his daughter with due respect and reverence even when scolding and rebuking her or else the translator should render his rebuke and reproof in a way as to make it sound respectful and reverent.

Here, what needs to be considered carefully is that if it was such an ordinary and trivial matter that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) said something to his wives they would retort to Him, why was it given so much importance that in

the Quran Allah administered a severe warning directly to the wives themselves? And why did Umar take it as such a grave matter that first he reproved his own daughter, then visited the house of the other wives and asked them to fear the wrath of Allah? And, above all, was the Prophet (peace be upon him) also so sensitive that he would take offense at minor things and become annoyed with his wives, and was he, God forbid, so irritable that once having been annoyed at such things he had severed his connections with all his wives and retired to his private apartment in seclusion? If a person considers these questions deeply, he will inevitably have to adopt one of the two views in the explanation of these verses. Either on account of his excessive concern for reverence for the wives he should not at all mind if a fault is imputed to Allah and His Messenger, or else he should admit in a straightforward way that at that time the attitude and behavior of these wives has actually become so objectionable that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was justified in becoming annoyed over it, and more than that, Allah Himself was justified that He should administer a severe warning to the wives on their unseemly behavior and attitude.

*9 That is, you would only harm yourselves if you upheld and supported each other against the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), for none could succeed against him whose Protector is Allah and who had Gabriel and the angels and all the righteous believers on his side.

5. It may be if he divorces you, that his Lord will

عَسَىٰ رَبُّهُ إِنْ طَلَّقَنَّ أَنْ يُبَدِّلَهُ

give him instead, wives
 better than you,^{*10}
 submissive, believing,^{*11}
 obedient,^{*12} repentant,^{*13}
 worshipping,^{*14} inclined to
 fasting,^{*15} widows and
 virgins.

أَزْوَاجًا خَيْرًا مِّنْكَنَّ مُسَلِّمَاتٍ
 مُّؤْمِنَاتٍ قَانِتَاتٍ تَتَّبِعْنَ عِبَادَاتٍ
 سَابِحَاتٍ تَتَّبِعْنَ وَأَبْكَارًا

***10** This shows that the fault did not lie only with Aisha and Hafsa but the other wives also had some share in it. That is why, after them, all the other wives too, have been warned in this verse. No light has been thrown on the nature of the error in the Quran. However, some details are found in the Hadith, which we shall relate below.

In Bukhari, a tradition has been reported from Anas, saying that Umar said: The Prophet's (peace be upon him) wives because of their mutual envies and rivalries had utterly displeased him. At this I said to them: It may well be that if the Prophet (peace be upon him) divorced you, Allah would give him in your place better wives than you. Ibn Abi Hatim has, on the authority of Anas, reported the statement of Umar in these words: I was informed that a discord had been created between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his wives. At this I went to each of them and asked them to refrain from vexing the Prophet (peace be upon him); otherwise Allah would give him in their stead better wives than themselves. So much so that when I went to the last of them (and according to a tradition of Bukhari, to Umm Salamah), she said to me: O Umar, is not the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself enough to admonish

his wives? Then why should you come out to counsel them. This made me quiet, and after this Allah sent down this verse.

In Muslim, Abdullah bin Abbas has related that Umar said to him: When the Prophet (peace be upon him) separated himself from his wives, I went to the mosque and found the people worried and upset and playing with pebbles and saying to one another: The Prophet (peace be upon him) has divorced his wives. After this Umar related his visiting the apartments of Aishah and Hafsa and admonishing them. Then he said: I went before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: Why do you feel upset with regard to your wives? If you divorce them, Allah is with you, all the angels and Gabriel and Michael are with you, and I and Abu Bakr and all the believers are with you. I thank Allah that seldom has it so happened that I said a thing and did not have hope from Allah that He would testify to what I said. So, after this these verses of Surah At-Tahrim were sent down. Then I asked the Prophet (peace be upon him): Have you divorced your wives? He said: No. Thereupon I stood at the entrance of the Mosque and announced in a loud voice: The Prophet has not divorced his wives.

The traditions related in Bukhari from Anas and in Musnad Ahmad from Abdullah bin Abbas, Aishah and Abu Hurairah say that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had pledged to remain away from his wives for a month and he retired in seclusion to his apartment. When 29 days passed, Gabriel came and said: You have fulfilled your oath: a month has come to completion.

Hafiz Badruddin Aini in Umdat al-Qari has related this on the authority of Aishah: The wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) had become divided into two parties. One party consisted of Aishah herself and Hafsa, Saudah and Safiyyah, and the other of Zainab, Umm Salamah and the rest of the wives.

These traditions indicate to some extent the conditions that existed in the Prophet's (peace be upon him) domestic life at that time, which made it necessary that Allah Almighty should intervene and reform the attitude of the wives. Although the wives were the best ladies of society, yet they were human beings and were not free from human weaknesses. Sometimes, when it became difficult for them to lead a life of continuous poverty and hardship, they would become restive, impatient and would start pressing the Prophet (peace be upon him) for better maintenance. At this Allah sent down verses 28-29 of Surah Al-Ahzab and admonished them to the effect: If you seek the world and its adornments, our Messenger will give you of these and send you of in a good way. But if you seek Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter, you should bear up against the hardships with patience, which you might have to face when living with the Messenger. (For details, see E.N. 41 of Surah Al-Ahzab and the introduction to it). Then on account of the feminine nature they sometimes happened to behave in a way, which though not unusual in everyday human life, did not go well with the unique dignity and great responsibilities of the house to which Allah had given them the honor to belong. So, when it was apprehended

that those things might embitter the Prophet's domestic life and might even adversely affect the great mission that Allah had entrusted to him, He sent down this verse in the Quran, and reformed them so that the wives may realize the responsibilities of the position and rank which they had attained as the life-companions of the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, and should not regard themselves as ordinary women and their household as a common household. The very first sentence of this verse was such as might have caused their hearts to shudder. There could be no severer warning for them than this: It may well be that if the Prophet (peace be upon him) divorces all of you, Allah will give him in your place better wives than yourselves. In the first place, even the thought of being divorced by the Prophet (peace be upon him) was unbearable for them: more than that, this would deprive them of the honor of being mothers of the believers, and the other women whom Allah would give as wives to the Prophet (peace be upon him) would be better than them, After this it was no longer possible for the wives to behave in a way as would have occasioned a reproof from Allah. That is why we find only two places in the Quran where these selected and distinguished ladies have been administered a warning, in Surah Al-Ahzab and here in Surah At-Tahrim.

***11** In the places where the words Muslim and momin have been used together, Muslim means the one who carries out Ddivine commands practically, and momin the one who believes sincerely and truly. Thus, the foremost quality of

the best Muslim wives is that they should be believing in Allah and His Messenger and His religion (*deen*) sincerely and also practically following Allah's religion in their morals, habits, customs and conduct.

***12** Obedient has two meanings and both are implied here.

(1) They are obedient to Allah and His Messenger.

(2) They are obedient to their husbands.

***13** The word when used as attribute of a man does not imply the one who offers repentance only once but the one who continues to implore Allah again and again for the forgiveness of his mistakes, whose conscience is alive and active, who is always aware of his weaknesses and errors and is penitent for them. Such a person never feels proud, arrogant and conceited, but is gentle and clement by nature.

***14** A worshiper can never be so heedless of God as a non-worshiper. This also helps much in making a woman a good wife. Being devout she adheres to the bounds set by Allah, recognizes and discharges the rights of others and keeps her faith fresh and alive at all times. Because of these qualities she can better be expected that she would not reject obedience to divine commands.

***15** The word *saihat* in the original has been interpreted by several companions and large number of their successors to mean the same as *saimat* (those given to fasting). The reason why the word *siyahat* journeying has been used for fasting is that in the ancient times journeys were mostly undertaken by the monks and ascetics, who had no provisions and had to go without food till they got

something to eat from somewhere. On that account fasting also is a kind of asceticism, for a faster has to remain hungry until the time of breaking the fast. Ibn Jarir in his commentary of Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 12 has cited a saying of Aishah, saying: The journeying (i.e. asceticism) of the Ummah is fasting. Here, making mention of fasting as an attribute of the pious wives does not mean that they observe the obligatory fasting month of Ramadan only but that they observe voluntary fasts also besides the obligatory fasts.

Addressing the wives Allah's saying: If the Messenger (peace be upon him) divorces all of you, Allah will give him in your place better wives who will have this quality does not mean that the wives were not virtuous, but it means; Give up your wrong conduct which is causing so much distress to the Prophet (peace be upon him); instead, pay attention to developing in yourselves these noble qualities to the highest degree.

6. O you who believe, save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel shall be people and stones,^{*16} over which shall be angels, fierce, stern, they do not disobey Allah in what he commanded them and do as they are commanded.^{*17}

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ
وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ
وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاطٌ
شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ
وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

*16 This verse tells that a person's responsibility is not

confined to making effort to save himself from the punishment of God but it is also his responsibility that he should so educate and also train to the best of his ability members of his family to become Allah's favorite servants, who have been entrusted to his care in the natural process of life; and if they might be following a path to Hell, he should try, as much as he can, to correct them. His concern should not only be that his children should lead a happy and prosperous life in the world but, more than that, he should be anxious to see that they do not become fuel of Hell in the Hereafter. According to a tradition reported in Bukhari by Abdullah bin Umar, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Each one of you is a herdsman and is accountable with regard to his herd. The ruler is a herdsman and is accountable with regard to his subjects. The man is a herdsman of his family and is accountable with regard to them. And the woman is a herdsman of her husband's house and his children and is accountable with regard to them.

“Whose fuel...stone’ probably implies coal. Ibn Masud, Ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir and Suddi say that this will be brimstone.

*17 That is, they will enforce on every culprit precisely the same punishment which they will be commanded to enforce on him without making any alteration in it, or showing any pity for him.

7. O you who disbelieve, do not make excuses this day. You are only being

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا

recompensed for what you used to do.*18

الْيَوْمَ إِنَّمَا تَجْزُونَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ



*18 The style of both these verses contains a severe warning for the Muslims. In the first verse the Muslims have been addressed and told that they should save themselves and their households from the dreadful punishment. In the second that this will be said to the disbelievers while subjecting them to punishment in Hell. This by itself gives the meaning that the Muslims in the world should avoid adopting that conduct and behavior in consequence of which they may have to meet with the fate as the disbelievers in the Hereafter.

8. O you who believe, repent to Allah with sincere repentance.*19 It may be that your Lord will remove from you your evils deeds, and admit you into Gardens underneath which rivers will be flowing.*20 On the Day when Allah will not humiliate the Prophet and those who have believed with him.*21 Their light shall be running before them and on their right, they will say: "O our Lord, perfect for us

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا تَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يُكَفِّرَ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُم جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِي اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَىٰ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَتْمِمْ لَنَا

our light and forgive us.
Indeed, You have power
over all things.”*22

نُورَنَا وَأَغْفِرَ لَنَا إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ

شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

*19 Literally, *taubat an-nasuh-an* may either mean that one should offer such true repentance as may have no tinge of pretense and hypocrisy in it, or that one should wish his own self well and repenting of sin should save oneself from the evil end, or that one should so adorn and improve his life after repentance as to become a cause of admonition for others, and seeing his example others also reform themselves accordingly. These are the meanings of *taubat an-nasuh* which are indicated by its literal sense. As for its religious meaning, its explanation is found in the Hadith which Ibn Abi Hatim has related on the authority of Zirr bin Hubaish. He says: When I asked Ubayy bin Kaab the meaning of *taubat an-nasuh*, he said that he had asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) the same question, and he had replied: It implies that when you happen to commit an error, you should feel penitent for it, then should implore Allah for forgiveness remorsefully, and then should refrain from committing the same error again. This same meaning has been reported from Umar, Abdullah bin Masud and Abdullah bin Abbas also, and in a tradition Umar has defined *taubat an-nasuh*, thus: After offering repentance one should not even think of committing the sin, not to speak of repeating it. (Ibn Jarir). Ali once heard a desert Arab chanting the words of repentance and forgiveness quickly and mechanically and remarked: This is the

repentance of the liars. The man asked: What is true repentance? Ali replied: It should be accompanied by six things

- (1) You should feel penitent for the wrong you have done.
- (2) You should carry out the duties that you have ignored.
- (3) Restore the rights that you have usurped.
- (4) Ask forgiveness of him whom you have wronged.
- (5) Make a resolve not to repeat the sin again.
- (6) Consume yourself in obedience to Allah as you have so far been consuming it in wrongdoing, and cause it to taste the bitterness of obedience as you have so far been causing it to enjoy the sweet taste of disobedience and sin. (Al-Kashshaf).

In connection with repentance there are also some other points which should be well understood.

- (1) That repentance, in fact, is to show remorse for an act of disobedience only because it is a disobedience of Allah. Otherwise to make a resolve to refrain from a sin because it is harmful for health, for instance, or it is likely to cause defamation or financial loss, is no repentance.
- (2) That man should offer repentance as soon as he realizes that he has committed disobedience of Allah and should compensate for it without delay in whatever form possible and should not defer it in any way.
- (3) That violating one's repentance again and making a jest of repentance and repeating the sin again and again of which one has repented, is a proof of the falsity of one's repentance. For the essence of repentance is penitence, and breaking his repentance repeatedly is a sign that it has not

been motivated by penitence.

(4) that if the person who has repented sincerely and resolved not to repeat the sin again, happens to repeat it once again because of human weakness, it will not revive his past sin. However, he should offer a fresh repentance for the latter sin and should resolve more firmly that he would not commit the sin in future.

(5) That it is not necessary to renew one's repentance again every time one remembers the disobedience committed in the past, but if one's self derives pleasure from the remembrance of the past, sinful life, one should offer repentance again and again until the remembrance of the sins causes remorse instead of pleasure and enjoyment. For the person who has actually repented of disobedience because of fear of God cannot derive pleasure from the thought that he has been disobeying God. His deriving pleasure from it is a sign that fear of God has not taken root in his heart.

***20** The words of the verse deserve deep consideration. It has not been said that if you repeat, you will surely be forgiven and will certainly be admitted to Paradise, but that: If you offer true repentance, it may well be that Allah will treat you kindly. It means that it is not incumbent upon Allah to accept the repentance of the sinner and to grant him Paradise instead of subjecting him to punishment but it will be His kindness and compassion that He may forgive well as reward His servant. One should have hope of His forgiveness, but one should not commit a sin with the confidence that he will achieve forgiveness by repentance.

***21** That is, He will not allow the reward of their good deeds to go to waste. He will not let the disbelievers and the hypocrites taunt the believers that they had gained nothing in spite of their worship. Humiliation will be the fate of the rebels and the disobedient and not of the faithful and obedient.

***22** When this verse is read along with verses 12-13 of Surah Al-Hadid, it becomes clear that the running of the light before the believers will take place when they will be proceeding towards Paradise from the Plain of Resurrection. There it will be pitch dark all around and those who will have been condemned to Hell, will be groping about in it. The light will only be with the believers by which they will be traveling on their way. On this critical occasion, hearing the wailings and groaning of those groping in the dark the believers will be feeling terror stricken. In view of their past errors and shortcomings they will be afraid lest they too should be deprived of their light and made to grope about like those wretched people. Therefore, they will pray: O our Lord, forgive us our sins and let our light remain with us until we reach Paradise. Ibn Jarir has cited Abdullah bin Abbas as explaining the meaning of *Rabbana-atimim lava nurana* thus: They will implore Allah Almighty that their light be allowed to remain with them and kept from going out until they have crossed the bridge across Hell. The commentary given by Hasan Basri, Mujahid and Dahhak is also almost the same. Ibn Kathir has cited theirs this saying: When the believers see that the hypocrites have been deprived of the light, they

will pray to Allah for the perfection of their light. (For further explanation, see E.N. 17 of Surah Al-Hadid).

9. O Prophet, strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be stern against them.*23 And their abode is Hell, and an evil destination it is.

يَأَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ
وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَأَغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَمَا أُولَئِهِمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ



*23 For explanation see E. N. 82 of Surah At-Taubah.

10. Allah sets forth an example for those who disbelieve, the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. They were under two of Our righteous servants, but they betrayed them (husbands),*24 so they could not avail them anything against Allah. And it was said: “Enter the Fire along with those who enter.”

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
أُمَّرَاتِ نُوحٍ وَأُمَّرَاتِ لُوطٍ
كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا
صَالِحِينَ فَخَانَتَاهُمَا فَلَمْ يُغْنِيَا
عَنَّهُمَا مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَقِيلَ
ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّٰخِلِينَ



*24 This betrayal was not in the sense that they had committed an indecency but in the sense that they did not follow the Prophets Noah and Lot (peace be upon them) on the way of faith but sided with their enemies against them. Ibn Abbas say: No Prophet's wife has ever been wicked and immoral. The betrayal of these two women in fact was in

the matter of faith and religion. They did not acknowledge the religion of the Prophets Noah and Lot (peace be upon them). The Prophet Noah's wife used to convey news about the believers to the wicked of her people, and the Prophet Lot's wife used to inform the immoral people about those who visited him in his house. (Ibn Jarir).

11. And Allah sets forth an example for those who believe, the wife of Pharaoh, when she said: "My Lord, build for me, in Your presence, a house in Paradise, and save me from Pharaoh and his deeds^{*25} and save me from the wrongdoing folks."

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا امْرَأَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ
رَبِّ اٰبْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ
وَجِنِّي مِّنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ
وَجِنِّي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِيْنَ



***25** From Pharaoh and his work: from the evil end that Pharaoh would meet in consequence of his evil deeds.

12. And Mary, the daughter of Imran^{*26} who had guarded her chastity.^{*27} So We breathed into her (body) of Our Spirit,^{*28} and she testified to the words of her Lord and His scriptures, and she was of the obedient.^{*29}

وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي
اٰحْصَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيْهِ
مِّنْ رُّوْحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ
رَبِّهَا وَكُتِبَ لَهَا مِنَ الْقَنِيْتِيْنَ

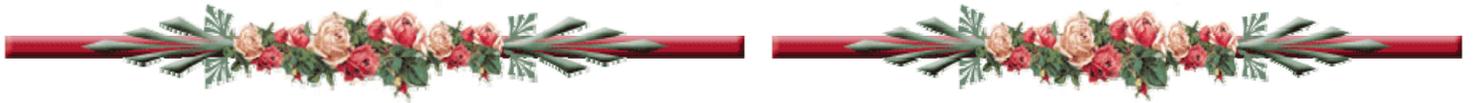


***26** It may be that the name of Mary's father was Imran, or she may have been called daughter of Imran because she belonged to the family of Imran.

***27** This is a refutation of the accusation by the Jews that the birth of Jesus was, God forbid, the result of a sin of his mother. Their same accusation has been called a monstrous calumny in Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 156. (For explanation, see E.N. 190 of Surah An-Nisa).

***28** That is, without her having any connection with a man, Allah breathed into her womb a Spirit from Himself. (For explanation, see E.Ns 212, 213 of Surah An-Nisa and E.N. 89 of Surah Al-Anbiya).

***29** For the explanation of the object for which these three kinds of women have been cited as an example, see the Introduction to the Surah.



اَلْمُلْكِ Al-Mulk

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name *al-Mulk* from the very first sentence.

Period of Revelation

It could not be known from any authentic tradition when this Surah was revealed, but the subject matter and the style indicate that it is one of the earliest Surahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

In this surah, on the one hand, the teachings of Islam have been introduced briefly, and, on the other, the people living in heedlessness have been aroused from their slumber in a most effective way. A characteristic of the earliest Surahs of the Makkan period is that they present the entire teachings of Islam and the object of the Holy Prophet's mission, not in detail, but briefly, so that they are assimilated by the people easily. Moreover, they are particularly directed to make the people shun heedlessness, to make them think, and to arouse their dormant conscience.

In the first five verses man has been made to realize that

the universe in which he lives is a most well organized and fortified kingdom in which he cannot detect any fault, any weakness or flaw, however hard he may try to probe. This kingdom has been brought from nothing into existence by Allah Almighty Himself and all the powers of controlling, administering and ruling it are also entirely in Allah's hand and His power is infinite. Besides, man has also been told that in this wise system he has not been created without a purpose, but he has been sent here for a test and in this test he can succeed only by his righteous deeds and conduct.

In verses 6-11, dreadful consequences of disbelief which will appear in the Hereafter have been mentioned, and the people have been told that Allah, by sending His Prophets, has warned them of these consequences in this very world, as if to say: Now, if you do not believe in what the Prophets say and correct your attitude and behavior accordingly, in the Hereafter you will yourself have to admit that you really deserved the punishment that was being meted out to you.

In verses 12-14, the truth that has been impressed on the minds is that the Creator cannot be unaware of His creation, as if to say: He is aware of each open and hidden secret of yours, even of the innermost ideas of your hearts. Hence, the right basis of morality is that man should avoid evil, fearing the accountability of the unseen God, whether in the world there is a power to take him to task for this or not, and whether in the world there is a possibility of being harmed by such a power or not. Those who adopt such a conduct in the world alone will deserve forgiveness and a

rich reward in the Hereafter.

In verses 15-23, making allusions, one after the other to those common truths of daily occurrence, which man does not regard as worthy of much attention, he has been invited to consider them seriously. It has been said: Look: the earth on which you move about with full satisfaction and peace of mind, and from which you obtain your sustenance has been subdued for you by Allah; otherwise this earth might at any time start shaking suddenly so as to cause your destruction, or a typhoon might occur, which may annihilate you completely. Look at the birds that fly above you; it is only Allah Who is sustaining them in the air. Look at your own means and resources, if Allah wills to inflict you with a scourge, none can save you from it. And if Allah wills to close the doors of sustenance on you, none can open them for you. These things are there to make you aware of the truth, but you see them like animals, which are unable to draw conclusions from observations, and you do not use your sight, hearing and minds which Allah has bestowed on you as men. That is why you do not see the right way.

In verses 24-27, it has been said: You have to ultimately appear before your God in any case. It is not for the Prophet to tell you the exact time and date of the event. His only duty is to warn you beforehand of its inevitable occurrence. Today you do not listen to him and demand that he should cause the event to occur and appear prematurely before you; but when it does occur, and you see it with your own eyes, you will then be astounded. Then, it will be said to you: This is the very thing you were calling

to be hastened.

In verses 28-29, replies have been given to what the disbelievers of Makkah said against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions. They cursed the Prophet (peace be upon him) and prayed for his and the believers' destruction. To this it has been said: Whether those who call you to the right way are destroyed or shown mercy by Allah, how will their fate change your destiny? You should look after yourselves and consider who would save you if you were overtaken by the scourge of God. You regard those who believe in God and put their trust in Him as the misguided. A time will come when it will become evident as to who was misguided.

In conclusion, the people have been asked this question and left to ponder over it: If the water which has come out from the earth at some place in the desert or hill country of Arabia and upon which depends your whole life activity, should sink and vanish underground, who beside Allah can restore to you this life giving water.

1. Blessed^{*1} is He in Whose hand is the dominion,^{*2} and He has power over everything.^{*3}

تَبْرَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ
عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

*1 *Tabaraka* is a superlative from *barkat*. *Barkat* comprehends the meanings of exaltation and greatness, abundance and plentiful, permanence and multiplicity of virtues and excellences. When the superlative *tabaraka* is formed from it, it gives the meaning that Allah is infinitely noble and great. He is superior to everything beside

Himself in His essence and attributes and works. His beneficence is infinite, and His excellences are permanent and everlasting. (For further explanation, see E.N. 43 of Surah Al-Aaraf; E.N. 1-4 of Surah Al-Muminoon; E.Ns 1 and 19 of Surah Al-Furqan).

*2 As the word *al-Mulk* has been used, it cannot be taken in any limited meaning. Inevitably, it would imply sovereignty over everything that exists in the universe. In Whose hand is the dominion does not mean that He has physical hands, but that He is possessor of all power and authority and no one else has any share in it.

*3 That is, He can do whatever He wills, nothing can frustrate or hinder Him from doing what He pleases.

2. Who created death and life that He may test you which of you is best in deed,^{*4} and He is All Mighty, All Forgiving.^{*5}

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ
لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

*4 That is, the object of giving life to man in the world and causing his death is to test him to see which of them is best in deeds. Allusion has been made in this brief sentence to a number of truths:

(1) That life and death are given by Allah, no one else can grant life nor cause death.

(2) That neither the life nor the death of a creation like man, which has been given the power to do both good and evil, is purposeless. The Creator has created him in the world for the test. Life is for him the period of the test and

death means that the time allotted for the test has come to an end.

(3) That for the sake of this very test the Creator has given every man an opportunity for action, so that he may do good or evil in the world and practically show what kind of a man he is.

(4) That the Creator alone will decide who has done good or evil. It is not for us to propose a criterion for the good and the evil deeds but for Almighty Allah. Therefore, whoever desires to get through the test, will have to find out what is the criterion of a good deed in His sight. Every person will be recompensed according to his deeds, for if there was no reward or punishment the test would be meaningless.

*5 This has two meanings and both are implied here:

(1) That He is Almighty, in spite of being dominant over all His creatures, He is Merciful and Forgiving for them, not tyrannous and cruel.

(2) That He has full power to punish the evildoers. No one can escape His punishment. But He is forgiving for him who feels penitent, refrains from evil and asks for His forgiveness.

3. Who created seven heavens one above the other.*⁶ You will not see any fault in the creation of the Beneficent.*⁷ Then turn up your eyes, do you see any flaw.*⁸

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا
مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن
تَفَوُّتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى
مِن فُطُورٍ



*6 For explanation, see E.N. 34 of Surah Al-Baqarah; E.N. 2 of Surah Ar-Raad; E.N. 8 of Surah Al-Hijr; E.N. 113 of Surah Al-Hajj; E.N. 15 of Surah Al-Muminoon; E.N. 5 of Surah As-Saaffat; E.N. 90 of Surah Al-Mumin.

*7 Literally, *tafawut* is disproportion: two things being out of accord and in disagreement with each other. So, the divine words mean: You will not see any indiscipline, any disorder and discordance anywhere in the universe, there is nothing disjointed and out of proportion in this world created by Allah: all its parts are well connected and in perfect harmony and coordination.

*8 The word *futoor* means a crack, rift, fissure, or a thing's being split and broken. The verse means to say that the whole universe is so closely well-knit and everything in it, from a particle on the earth to the huge galaxies, so well connected and coherent that the continuity of the system of the universe seems to break nowhere, however hard one may try to probe and investigate. (For further explanation, see E.N. 8 of Surah Qaf).

4. Then look again and yet again, (your) sight will return to you humbled, and worn out.

ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ
إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ



5. And indeed, We have adorned the world's heaven*9 with lamps (stars),*10 and We have made them a means

وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا
بِمَصْبِيحٍ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا

of driving away devils.*¹¹ And We have prepared for them the punishment of the blazing Fire.

لِّلشَّيْطِينِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ
السَّعِيرِ

*9 The world's heaven: the heaven the stars and planets of which can be seen with the naked eye; the objects beyond that which can be seen only through telescopes are the distant heaven; and the heavens still farther away are those which have not yet been seen even with telescopes.

*10 The word *masabih* in the original has been used as a common noun, and therefore, automatically gives the meaning of the lamp's being splendid and glorious. It means: We have not created this universe dark, dismal and desolate, but have beautified and decorated it with stars, the glory and grandeur of which at night strike man with amazement.

*11 This does not mean that the stars themselves are pelted at the Satans, nor that the meteorites shoot out only to drive away the Satans, but it means that the countless meteorites which originate from the stars and wander in space at tremendous speeds and which also fall to the earth in a continuous shower prevent the Satans of the earth from ascending to the heavens. Even if they try to ascend heavenward these meteorites drive them away. This thing has been mentioned here because the Arabs believed about the soothsayers, and this also was the claim made by the soothsayers themselves, that the Satans were under their control, or that they had a close contact with them, and through them they received news of the unseen, and thus,

could foretell the destinies of the people. That is why at several places in the Quran, it has been stated that there is absolutely no possibility for the Satans ascending to the heavens and bringing news of the unseen. (For explanation, see E.Ns 9-12 of Surah Al-Hijr, E.Ns 6, 7 of Surah As-Saaffat).

As for the truth about meteorites, man's information in this regard is still without a scientific basis. However, the theory which seems best to account for all the facts known today and the information gathered from the examination of the meteorites fallen on the earth, is that meteorites originate from the disintegration of one or more planets and wander in space and sometimes fall to the earth under its gravitational pull. (See Encyclopedia Britannica, vol. XV, under Meteorites).

6. And for those who disbelieve in their Lord^{*12} is the punishment of Hell, and an evil abode.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ
جَهَنَّمَ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

*12 That is, the fate of all those, whether men or Satans, who disbelieve in their Lord. (For the explanation of the meaning of disbelieving in the Lord (*Rabb*), see E.N 161 of Surah Al-Baqarah; E.N. 178 of Surah An-Nisa; E.N. 39 of Surah Al-Kahf; E.N. 3 of Surah Al-Momin.

7. When they are cast into it, they will hear its roaring,^{*13} and it will be boiling up.

إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيهَا سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهيقًا
وَهِيَ تَفورُ

*13 The word *shahiq* is used for producing a cry like the

donkey's braying. The sentence may also mean that it could be the sound of Hell itself, as well as that it would be the sound coming from Hell, where the people already flung into it would be screaming and crying. This second meaning is supported by Surah Houd, Ayat 106, where it has been said: Therein they will pant and hiss (because of thirst), and the first meaning is confirmed by Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 12, which says: When the Hell will see them from afar, they will hear the sounds of its raging and roaring. On this basis, the correct meaning is that it would be the noise made both by Hell and by the dwellers of Hell.

8. It almost bursts with rage. Every time a group is cast into it, its keepers will ask them: "Did there not come to you a warner."^{*14}

تَكَادُ تَمَيِّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ ط كَلَّمَا أَلْقَى
 فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ
 نَذِيرٌ



*14 The real nature of this question will not be of a question that the keepers of Hell would like to ask them whether a warner from Allah had come to them or not, but the object would be to make them realize that no injustice had been done to them by casting them into Hell. They would try to make them confess that Allah had not kept them uninformed and unwarned. He had sent the Prophets to them. He had informed them of the truth and of the right way. He had warned them that if they followed a way other than the right way, it would lead them to Hell, in which they had been cast. But they had not listened to the Prophets. Hence, they rightly deserved the punishment

which was being meted out to them at that time. This thing has been pointed out over and over again in the Quran that the test for which Allah has sent man in the world is not being conducted by keeping man absolutely unaware and uninformed of the requirements of the test only to see whether he found the right way by himself or not; but Allah has made the most appropriate arrangements that could possibly be made of guiding him to the right way, and it is that He has raised the Prophets and sent down the Books. Now the test of man lies in this whether he accepts the Prophets and the Books brought by them and adopts the straight way, or turns away from them to follow his own desires, wishes and speculations. Thus, the Prophethood, in fact, is Allah's argument which He has established against man and his entire future life depends on its acceptance or rejection. No one, after the appointment of the Prophets, can present the excuse that he remained unaware of the truth, or that he has been caught and put to the hard test unawares, or that he is being punished while he was innocent. This theme has been presented in many different ways in the Quran; for instance, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 213, and E.N. 230; Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 41-42, 165 and E.Ns 64 and 208; Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 130-131 and E.Ns 98-100; Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 15 and E.N. 17; Surah Ta Ha, Ayat 134; Surah Al-Qasas, Ayats 47, 59, 65 and E.Ns 66, 83; Surah Fatir, Ayat 37; Surah Al-Momin, Ayat 50 and E.N. 66.

9. They will say: "Yes indeed, a warner did come

قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَاءَنَا نَذِيرٌ فَكَذَّبْنَا

to us, but we denied and said, Allah has not sent down anything. You are not but in great error.”^{*15}

وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ كَبِيرٍ ﴿١٥﴾

***15** That is, not only you but the people who have believed in and followed you also are misguided and lost in grave error.

10. And they will say: “If we had listened or understood,^{*16} we would not be among the dwellers of the blazing Fire.”

وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿١٠﴾

***16** If we had listened or understood: If we had listened to the Prophets with attention as seekers after truth or used our intellect to understand what actually was the message they were presenting before us. Here listening has been given priority over understanding, the reason being that the pre-requisite of obtaining guidance is to listen to what the Prophet teaches, or to read if it is in the written form, like a seeker after truth. To ponder over it in an attempt to understand the truth is secondary. Without the Prophet’s guidance man cannot by himself reach the truth directly by using his intellect and common sense.

11. Then will they confess of their sin.^{*17} So, far removal (the mercy) for the dwellers of Hell.

فَاعْتَرَفُوا بِذَنبِهِمْ فَسُحْقًا لِأَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿١١﴾

***17** The word *dhanb* (sin) has been used in the singular. It means that the real sin because of which they became

worthy of Hell was to belie the Messengers and refuse to obey them. All other sins are its consequences.

12. Indeed, those who fear their Lord unseen,^{*18} for them is forgiveness and a great reward.^{*19}

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ
لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ

***18** This is the real basis of morality in religion. A person's refraining from an evil because it is an evil in his personal opinion, or because the world regards it as an evil, or because its commission is likely to bring loss in the world, or because it may entail a punishment by a worldly power, is a very flimsy basis for morality. A man's personal opinion may be wrong, he may regard a good thing as bad and a bad thing as good because of some philosophy of his own. In the first place, the worldly standards of good and evil have never been the same, they have been changing from time to time. No universal and eternal standard in the moral philosophies is found today, nor has it ever been found before. The fear of worldly loss also does not provide a firm foundation for morality. The person who avoids an evil because he fears the loss that may result from it for himself cannot keep himself from committing it when there is no fear of incurring such a loss. Likewise, the danger of the punishment by a worldly power also is not something which can turn a person into a gentleman. Everybody knows that no worldly power is knower of both the seen and the unseen. Many crimes can be committed unseen and unobserved. Then, there are many possible devices by which one can escape the punishment of every worldly

power; and the laws made by a worldly power also do not cover all evils. Most evils are such as they do not come within the purview of the mundane laws, whereas they are even worse than the evils which they regard as punishable. That is why, the religion of truth has raised the edifice of morality on the basis that one should refrain from an evil in fear of the unseen God Who sees man under all conditions, from Whose grasp man cannot escape in any way, Who has given man an all-pervading, universal and everlasting criterion of good and evil. To forsake evil and adopt good only out of fear of Him is the real good which is commendable in religion. Apart from this, if a man refrains from committing evil for any other reason or adopts acts which in view of their external form are regarded as good acts, his these moral acts will not be worth any merit and value in the Hereafter, for they are like a building which has been built on sand.

***19** That is, there are two inevitable results of fearing God unseen.

(1) That whatever errors and sins one will have committed because of human weaknesses, will be forgiven provided these were not committed because of fearlessness of God.

(2) That whatever good acts a man performs on the basis of this belief, he will be rewarded richly for them.

13. And conceal your talk, or proclaim it. He certainly is Knower of what is in the breasts. ^{*20}

وَأَسِرُّوا قَوْلَكُمْ أَوْ أَجْهَرُوا بِهِ
إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

***20** The address is to all human beings, whether they are

believers or unbelievers. For the believer, it contains the admonition that while living his life in the world he should always remember that not only his open and hidden deeds but even his secret intentions and innermost thoughts are not hidden from Allah. And for the unbeliever, the warning that he may do whatever he may please fearless of God, but nothing that he does can remain un-noticed and unseen by Him.

14. Would He not know, who has created.*²¹ And He is the Subtle,*²² the All Aware.

أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ

الْخَبِيرُ

*²¹ Another translation can be: Would He not know His own creatures? In the original text *khalaga* has been used, which may mean: Who has created as well as whom He has created, In both cases the meaning remains the same. This is the argument for what has been said in the preceding sentence. That is, how is it possible that the Creator should be unaware of His creation? The creation may remain unaware of itself, but the Creator cannot be unaware of it. He has made every vein of your body, every fiber of your heart and brain. You breathe because He enables you to breathe, your limbs function because He enables them to function, How then can anything of yours remain hidden from Him.

*²² The word *Latif* as used in the original means the One Who works in imperceptible ways as well as the One Who knows the hidden truths and realities.

15. It is He who has made the earth subservient to you, so walk about in the paths thereof, and eat of His provisions.*²³ And to Him is the resurrection.*²⁴

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ
ذُلُولًا فَأَمْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا
مِنْ رِزْقِهِ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ

*²³ That is, this earth has not become subdued for you of its own accord, and the provisions also that you are eating have not become available here by themselves, but Allah has so arranged it by His wisdom and power that your life became possible here and this splendid globe became so peaceful that you are moving about on it with full peace of mind, and it has become such a vast table spread with food that it contains endless and limitless provisions for your sustenance. If you are not lost in heedlessness and look about yourself intelligently, you will find how much wisdom underlies in the making of this earth habitable for you and arranging in it immeasurable stores of provisions for you. (For explanation, see E.Ns 73, 74, 81 of Surah An-Naml; E.Ns 29, 32 of Surah YaSeen; E.Ns 90, 91 of Al-Momin, E.N. 7 of Surah Az-Zukhruf, E.N. 7 of Surah Al-Jathiyah, E.N. 18 of Surah Qaf).

*²⁴ That is, while you move about on the earth and eat of what Allah has provided for you here, you should not forget that ultimately you have to appear before God one day.

16. Have you taken security from Him Who is in the heaven*²⁵ that He will not

ءَأَمِنْتُمْ مِّنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ تَخْسِفَ

cause the earth to swallow you when it shakes (as in an earthquake).

بِكُمْ الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ



***25** This does not mean that Allah lives in the heavens, but it has been so said because man naturally looks up to the heaven whenever he wants to turn to Allah, raises his hands heavenward in prayer and implores Allah turning his eyes up to heaven whenever he finds himself helpless in an affliction. Then whenever a calamity befalls him suddenly, he says it has descended from heaven; whenever something unusual happens, he says it has come from heaven; and he calls the Books revealed by Allah as heavenly Books. Accordingly to a tradition in Abu Daud, a person came before the Prophet (peace be upon him) with a black slave-girl and said: It has become obligatory on me to set a slave free; can I set this slave-girl free? Prophet (peace be upon him) asked the slave-girl: Where is Allah? She pointed heavenward with her finger. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked: Who am I? She first pointed towards him and then towards the heaven, by which she obviously meant to say: You have come from Allah. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Set her free; she is a believer. (A story closely resembling this has been narrated in Muwatta, Muslim and Nasai also). About Khawla bint Thaibah, Umar once said to the people: She is the lady whose complaint was heard above the seven heavens. (In E.N. 2 of Surah al-Mujadalah, we have given full details concerning this). All this clearly shows that it is natural with man that

whenever he thinks of God, his mind turns to the heaven above and not to the earth below. In view of this very thing the words *man fis-samaa* (He Who is in the heaven) have been used about Allah. There is no room here for any doubt that the Quran regards Allah Almighty as living in the heaven. In fact, there cannot be any basis for this doubt, for in the very beginning of this Surah Al-Mulk, it has been stated: He Who created seven heavens, one above the other, and in Surah Al-Baqarah it has been said: You will face Allah in whatever direction you turn your face. (verse 115).

17. Or have you taken security from Him Who is in the heaven that He will not send upon you a hurricane.*26 Then you shall know how was My warning.*27

أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مِّنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ
عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ۗ فَسَتَعْمُونَ كَيْفَ
نَذِيرٍ



*26 The object is to impress this: Your very survival and well-being on the earth are at all times dependent upon Allah Almighty's grace and bounty: you are not strutting about on this earth at will by your own power: you are under obligation only to Allah's protection for each moment of your life that you are passing here, otherwise Allah at any moment may cause such an earthquake to occur as may make this very earth to become your grave instead of the cradle that it is, or may cause a windstorm to blow razing all your towns and settlements to the ground.

*27 My warning: the warning that was being given through the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Quran to the disbelievers of Makkah to the effect: If you do not refrain

from your disbelief and polytheism and do not accept the message of Tauhid being given to you, you will be overtaken by the scourge of God.

18. And indeed, those before them denied, then how (terrible) was My reproach.*28

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ
فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ

***28** The allusion is to the communities who had belied the Messengers, who had come to them previously and consequently been afflicted with divine punishment.

19. Do they not see at the birds above them, spreading their wings, and closing them in. None is upholding them but the Beneficent.*29 Indeed, He is Seer over all things.*30

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ
صَفَّتْ وَيَقْبِضْنَ مَا يُمَسِّكُهُنَّ
إِلَّا الرَّحْمَنُ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ بَصِيرٌ

***29** That is, each bird that flies in the air, does so in the protection of the All-Merciful God. He it is Who has given to each bird the form and structure by which it became able to fly. He it is Who has taught each bird the method to fly. He it is Who has made the air obey the laws by which it became possible for the heavier than air bodies to fly in it, and He it is Who upholds every bird in the air, otherwise the moment Allah withdraws His protection from it, it drops to the ground.

***30** That is, this is not confined only to birds, but whatever exists in the world, exists because of Allah's keeping and

guardianship. He alone provides the means necessary for the existence of everything, and He alone keeps watch that everything created by Him is provided with the necessities of life.

20. Or who is it that could be an army for you to help you other than the Beneficent.*31 The disbelievers are not but in delusion.

أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَّكُمْ
يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ ۚ إِنَّ
الْكَافِرُونَ إِلَّا فِي غُرُورٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

*31 Another translation can be: Who is there beside the Merciful, who comes to your rescue as your army? The translation that we have adopted in the text above has relevance to the following sentence, and this second to the preceding discourse.

21. Or who is it that could provide for you if He should withhold His provision. But, they persist in rebellion and aversion.

أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ
أَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهُ ۚ بَلْ لَّجُّوا فِي عُتُوٍّ
وَنُفُورٍ ﴿٢١﴾

22. Then is he who is walking fallen on his face*32 better guided, or he who is walking upright on a straight path.

أَفَمَنْ يَمْشِي مُكِبًّا عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ ۚ
أَهْدَىٰ أَمَّنْ يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ
صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

*32 Walking fallen on his face: walking with face turned down like the cattle on the same track on which someone

put him.

23. Say: “It is He who has created you, and made for you hearing, and sight, and hearts. Little thanks is that you give.”*33

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ
الْأَسْمَاعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ
قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

***33** That is, Allah had made you men, not cattle. You were not meant to follow blindly whatever error and deviation you found prevailing in the world, without considering for a moment whether the way you had adopted was right or wrong. You have not been given these ears that you may refuse to listen to the one who tries to distinguish the right from the wrong for you, and may persist in whatever false notions you already had in your mind. You have not been given these eyes that you may follow others like the blind and may not bother to see whether the signs scattered around you in the world testified to the unity of God, which the Messenger (peace be upon him) of God is preaching, or whether the system of the universe is Godless, or is being run by many gods simultaneously. Likewise, you have also not been given this knowledge and intelligence that you may give up thinking and understanding to others and may adopt every crooked way that was enforced by somebody in the world, and may not use your own intellect to see whether it was right or wrong. Allah has blessed you with knowledge and intelligence, sight and hearing, so that you may recognize the truth, but you are being ungrateful to Him in that you are employing these faculties for every

other object than the one for which these had been granted. (For further explanation, see E.Ns 72, 73 of Surah An-Naml; E.Ns 75, 76 of Surah Al-Mominoon; E.Ns 17, 18 of Surah As-Sajdah; E.N. 31 of Surah Al-Ahqaf).

24. Say: "It is He who has dispersed you in the earth, and to Him you shall be gathered."*34

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

*34 That is, after being resurrected from death, you will be gathered together from every corner of the earth and presented before Allah.

25. And they say: "When will this promise be (fulfilled) if you are truthful."*35

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

*35 They did not ask this question in order to know the time and date of Resurrection so that if they were told the year, the month, the day and time of its occurrence, they would accept it. But, in fact, they thought that Resurrection was impossible, and its occurrence remote from reason, and they asked this question in order to have an excuse for denying it. They meant to say: When will this strange story of Resurrection and gathering together, that you are telling us, materialize? What for has it been put off? Why don't you make it appear forthwith so that we are assured of it? In this connection, one should understand that one can be certain of Resurrection only by rational arguments, and these have been elaborated at many places in the Quran. As for the date of its occurrence only an ignorant person could

raise such a question about it, for even if it is told, it does not make any difference. The unbeliever would say: Well, when it does occur on the date you tell, I shall then believe in it; how can I believe today that it will actually occur on that very day? (For further explanation, see E.N. 63 of Surah Luqman; E.N. 116 of Surah Al-Ahzab; E.Ns 5, 48 of Surah Saba E.N. 45 of YaSeen).

26. Say: "The knowledge is only with Allah, and I am only a clear warner."^{*36}

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَلْعَلُّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا
نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

*36 That is, this I know that it will certainly come, and knowing this much only is enough for warning the people before its actual occurrence. As for the question when it will actually come, the knowledge of it is with Allah, not with me, and there is no need of this knowledge for administering the warning. This can be better understood by an example. As to the exact time when a person will die, it is only known to Allah; however, all know that everyone has to die one day. Our this knowledge is enough that we may warn a heedless friend of ours that he should look after himself and his interests before death. For this warning it is not necessary to know the exact day on which he will die.

27. Then, when they will see it approaching, the faces of those who disbelieve, shall be distressed,^{*37} and it will be said: "This is that which

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ زُلْفَةً سِيئَتْ وُجُوهُ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقِيلَ هَذَا الَّذِي

you used to call.”

كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَدْعُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

***37** That is, they will be in the same agony as is suffered by the criminal who is being taken to the gallows.

28. Say: “Have you ever considered, if Allah should destroy me and those with me, or should bestow mercy upon us, who then will save the disbelievers from the painful punishment.”^{*38}

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكَنِیَ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ مَعِيَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا فَمَنْ یُجِیرُ الْکَافِرِینَ مِنْ عَذَابِ أَلِیمٍ ﴿٢٨﴾

***38** When the Prophet (peace be upon him) started his mission in Makkah and the members of the different clans of Quraish began to embrace Islam, the people of every house started cursing him and his companions. They started practicing magic and charms on him to cause his death, even devising plots to kill him. At this, it was said: Say to them: what will it profit you whether we perish or we live by the grace of God? You should worry for yourselves as to how you will save yourselves from the punishment of Allah?

29. Say: “He is the Beneficent, we have believed in Him, and upon Him have we put our trust.”^{*39} So you will come to know who is it in clear error.”

قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ ءَامَنَّا بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا فَسْتَعْمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِینٍ ﴿٢٩﴾

***39** That is, we have believed in God, and you are denying Him; we have put our trust in Him, and you have put your

trust in yourself, your own resources and false deities besides Allah; therefore, only we deserve to be shown mercy by Allah, not you.

30. Say: “Have you considered if the water (of) your (wells) should sink down (into the earth), then who would bring you the flowing (spring) water.”*40

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا
فَمَنْ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَاءٍ مَّعِينٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

*40 That is, does anyone else another beside Allah have the power to restore these springs of water to you? If none else has this power, and you know well that none has it, then who is worthy of worship: God or your false deities, who do not have the power to restore them? Then ask your own selves as to who is misled and misguided, those who believe in One God or those who believe in many gods.



اَلْقَلَمِ Al-Qalam

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah is called *Noon* as well as *Al-Qalam*, the words with which it begins.

Period of Revelation

This is one of the earliest Surahs to be revealed at Makkah, but its subject matter shows that it was sent down at the time when opposition to the Prophet (peace be upon him) had grown very harsh and tyrannical.

Theme and Subject Matter

It consists of three themes: Replies to the opponents' objections, administration of warning and admonition to them, and exhortation to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to patience and constancy.

At the outset, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been addressed, to the effect: The disbelievers call you a madman whereas the Book that you are presenting and the sublime conduct that you practice are by themselves sufficient to refute their false accusations. Soon they will see as to who was mad and who was sane. Therefore, do not at all yield to the din of opposition being kicked up against

you, for all this is actually meant to make you resort to a compromise with them.

Then, in order to enlighten the common people the character of a prominent man from among the opponents, whom the people of Makkah recognized well, has been presented without naming him. At that time, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) pure and sublime conduct was before them, and every discerning eye could also see what sort of character and morals were possessed by the chiefs of Makkah, who were leading the opposition against him.

Then, in verses 17-33, the parable of the owners of a garden has been presented, who after having been blessed by Allah turned ungrateful to Him, and did not heed the admonition of the best man among them when it was given to them. Consequently, they were deprived of the blessing and they realized this when all they had lay devastated. With this parable the people of Makkah have been warned to the effect: With the appointment of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to Prophethood, you, O people of Makkah, too, have been put to a test similar to the one to which the owners of the garden had been put. If you do not listen to him, you too will be afflicted with a punishment in the world, and the punishment of the Hereafter is far greater.

Then, in verses 34-47 continuously, the disbelievers have been admonished, in which the address sometimes turns to them directly and sometimes they are warned through the Prophet (peace be upon him). A summary of what has been said in this regard is this: Well being in the Hereafter inevitably belongs to those who spend their lives in the

world in full consciousness of God. It is utterly against reason that the obedient servants should meet in the Hereafter the same fate as the guilty. There is absolutely no basis of the disbelievers' misunderstanding that God will treat them in the manner they choose for themselves, whereas they have no guarantee for this. Those who are being called upon to bow before God in the world and they refuse to do so, would be unable to prostrate themselves on the Day of Resurrection even if they wanted to do so, and thus would stand disgraced and condemned. Having denied the Quran, they cannot escape divine punishment. The rein they are being given, has deluded them. They think that since they are not being punished in spite of their denial, they must be on the right path, whereas they are following the path of ruin. They have no reasonable ground for opposing the Messenger (peace be upon him), for he is a preacher without any vested interest. He is not asking any reward from them for himself, and they cannot either make the claim that they know with certainty that he is not a true Messenger (peace be upon him), nor that what he says is false.

In conclusion, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been exhorted to the effect: Bear with patience the hardships that you may have to face in the way of preaching the faith till Allah's judgment arrives, and avoid the impatience which caused suffering and affliction to the Prophet Jonah (peace be on him).

1. Nun. By the Pen, and that which they ascribe.*¹

ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ

*1 The great commentator Mujahid says that by pen here is meant the pen with which the Quran was being written down. From this it automatically follows that that which was being written implies the Quran itself.

2. You are not, by the favor of your Lord a madman.*2

مَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَةٍ رَبِّكَ بِمَجْنُونٍ



*2 That is, for which an oath has been sworn by the pen and by the Book. It means that this Quran which is being inscribed by the hands of the writers of revelation, is by itself enough to refute the slander of the disbelievers who say that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is, God forbid, a madman, Before his claim to the Prophethood, the people of Makkah looked upon him as the best of their men and trusted his honesty, intelligence and sagacity. But when he started reciting the Quran before them, they began to call him a madman. This meant that the Quran itself in their sight was the cause because of which they accused him of madness; Therefore, it was said: The Quran by itself is a sufficient proof for the refutation of this slander. The presentation of this highly eloquent revelation which consists of sublime themes, is an argument which proves that Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been especially favored by Allah, and nor an argument which might be used to prove that he has, God forbid, gone mad. Here, one should remember that although the address apparently is directed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), yet the real object is to nail the calumny of the disbelievers. Therefore,

no one should have the doubt that this verse was sent down only to assure the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he was not mad. Obviously, the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself had no such doubt for removing which he might have stood in need of such an assurance. The object was to tell the disbelievers, as if to say: The Quran because of which you are calling the one presenting it a madman, is by itself an argument that your accusation is false. (For further explanation see E.N. 22 of Surah At-Toor).

3. And indeed, for you is a reward that shall never end.*3

وَإِنَّ لَكَ لَأَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُونٍ ﴿٣﴾

*3 That is, you will get an unlimited and continuous reward, for although you have to hear discouraging and disturbing things in response to the efforts that you are making for the instruction and guidance of the people, yet you are steadfastly performing your mission of calling them to the right way.

4. And indeed, you are exalted to a great character.*4

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

*4 Here, this sentence gives two meanings:

(1) That you stand exalted to a high and noble character; that is why you are enduring all these hardships in your mission of guiding the people to the right way, otherwise a man of weak character could not have done so.

(2) That besides the Quran, your high and noble character is also a clear proof that the accusation of madness that the disbelievers bring against you is absolutely false, for high morals and madness cannot co-exist in one and the same person.

A madman is he whose balance of mind is upset, who has lost his temperamental equilibrium. Contrary to this, the high morals of a person testify that he is a right-minded and sound-natured person, who possesses perfect temperamental equilibrium. The people of Makkah were not unaware of the morals and character possessed by the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah. Therefore, it was enough just to make a reference to them so that every reasonable man of Makkah was made to think how shameless were those people who were calling a man of such sublime morals and character a madman. Their absurd conduct was not at all harmful for the Prophet (peace be upon him) but for themselves, for maddened in their craze for opposition they were saying such a thing about him which could not be regarded as credible by any man of understanding. The same is also the case with those men of knowledge and scholarship, who in the modern time are accusing the prophet (peace be upon him) of having fits of madness and epilepsy. The Quran is available everywhere in the world and the Holy Prophet's life also exists in the written form in entire detail. Every person can see it for himself what a foolish and meaningless thing is being uttered in their blind enmity by those who regard this man, who brought this unique and matchless Book and who possessed such sublime morals and character, as a mentally deranged person.

The best description of the Holy Prophet's character has been given by Aishah in her statement: *Kana khuluqu-hul-Quran*: the Quran was his character. Imam Ahmad,

Muslim, Abu Daud. Nasai, Ibn Majah, Darimi and Ibn Jarir have cited, with a little variation in wording, this saying with several chains of transmitters. This means that the Prophet had not merely presented the teaching of the Quran before the world but also given its practical demonstration by his personal example. Whatever was enjoined in the Quran was acted upon practically by himself in the first instance. Whatever was forbidden in it was shunned and avoided by himself most of all. His own self was characterized most of all by the moral qualities which were declared as sublime by it, and his own self was most free from those qualities which were declared as abhorrent and reprehensible by it. In another tradition Aishah has stated: The Prophet (peace be upon him) never hit a servant, never raised his hand on a woman, never used his hand to kill a person outside the battlefield, never avenged himself on anyone for an injury caused unless someone violated a sanctity enjoined by Allah and he avenged it for the sake of Allah. His practice was that whenever he had to choose between two things, he would choose the easier one unless it was a sin, and if it was a sin he would keep away from it most of all (Musnad Ahmad). Anas says: I served the Prophet (peace be upon him) for ten years. He never did so much as express even a slight disgust over what I did or said. He never asked why I had done what I had done, and never inquired why I had not done what I had not done. (Bukhari, Muslim).

5. So soon you will see
and they will see.

فَسْتَبْصِرُونَ وَيُبْصِرُونَ

6. Which of you is afflicted with madness.

بَأْيَيْكُمْ الْمَفْتُونُ ﴿٦﴾

7. Indeed, your Lord knows best of him who has strayed from His Way. And He knows best of those who are rightly guided.

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

8. So do not obey the deniers.

فَلَا تَطِعِ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٨﴾

9. They wish if you would compromise so they would compromise.*5

وَدُّوا لَوْ تُدْهِنُ فَيُدْهِنُونَ ﴿٩﴾

*5 That is, if you slackened a little in your propagation of Islam, they also would slacken in their opposition to you. Or, if you became inclined to effect some changes in your faith to suit these people, they too would effect a compromise with you.

10. And do not obey to every mean habitual swearer.*6

وَلَا تَطِعْ كُلَّ حَلَّافٍ مَّهِينٍ ﴿١٠﴾

*6 The word *mahin* is used for a contemptible, degraded and mean person. This is indeed a necessary quality of a person who swears many oaths. He swears an oath for every minor thing because he himself has the feeling that the people take him for a liar and would not believe him until he swore an oath. For this reason he is not only degraded in his own eyes but commands no respect in

society either.

11. Scorner, a slanderer, a backbiter.

هَمَّازٍ مَّشَاءٍ بِنَمِيمٍ ﴿١١﴾

12. A hinderer of good,^{*7} a transgressor, sinful.

مَنَاعٍ لِلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿١٢﴾

***7** *Khayr* in Arabic is used both for wealth and for good. If it is taken in the meaning of wealth, the meaning would be that he is miserly and stingy; he would not even spend a farthing on anyone. And if *khayr* is taken in the meaning of goodness and virtue, it would mean that he creates a hindrance in every good work as well as that he is very active in hindering the people from accepting Islam.

13. Violent,^{*8} after all that, ignoble by birth.^{*9}

عُتْلٌ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ زَنِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾

***8** The word *utul* is used for a person who is stout and strong and greedy in eating and drinking and is also ill-mannered, quarrelsome and cruel at the same time.

***9** The word *zanim* is used to describe a person of illegitimate birth, who does not, in fact, belong to a family but has joined it. Saeed bin Jubair and Shabi say that this word is used for a person who is notorious among the people for his evildoing.

The views of the commentators with regard to the person who has been described in these verses are different. Some one says it was Walid bin Mughirah; another one says it was Aswad bin Abdi Yaghuth, and still another has applied this description to Akhnas bin Shurayq, and some other people have pointed to some other persons. But the Quran

has only described his attributes without naming him. This shows that in Makkah the man concerned was so notorious for his such qualities that there was no need to name him definitely. Hearing his description every person could understand who was being referred to.

14. Because he is possessor of wealth and children.*10

أَنْ كَانَ ذَا مَالٍ وَبَنِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

*10 This sentence may be connected with the preceding theme as well as with the following sentence. In the first case, it would mean: Do not yield to the influence of such a person just because he has plenty of wealth and children. In the second: He has become proud because he possesses abundance of wealth and children; so when Our revelations are recited to him, he says: These are tales of ancient times.

15. When Our verses are recited to him, he says: "Tales of the ancient people."

إِذَا تُلِيٰ عَلَيْهِ ءَايَاتُنَا قَالَ
أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

16. Soon shall We brand him on the snout.*11

سَنَسِمُهُ عَلَى الْخُرْطُومِ ﴿١٦﴾

*11 Because he thought he was a man of high prestige, his nose has been called a snout, and branding him on the snout means disgracing him. That is, We shall so disgrace him in the world and in the Hereafter that his mark of disgrace will become indelible.

17. Indeed, We have tried them, same as We tried the people of the garden,*12

إِنَّا بَلَوْنَهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَا أَصْحَابَ
الْجَنَّةِ إِذْ أَقْسَمُوا لَيَصْرِمُنَّهَا

when they swore that they would surely pluck its fruit in the morning.

مُصْبِحِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

***12** Here, one should also keep Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 32-44 in view, in which the parable of the owners of two gardens has been cited for teaching a lesson.

18. And they did not make any exception (also by saying Inshallah - If Allah wills).^{*13}

وَلَا يَسْتَتْنُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

***13** That is, they were so sure and confident of their power and authority that they swore they would surely pluck the fruit of their garden next morning, without feeling any need to say: We shall do so if Allah so willed.

19. Then there came upon it a calamity from your Lord while they were asleep.

فَطَافَ عَلَيْهَا طَآئِفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ وَهُمْ نَآئِمُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

20. And it became as though it had been reaped.

فَأَصْبَحَتْ كَالصَّرِيمِ ﴿٢٠﴾

21. Then they called out to one another in the morning.

فَتَنَادَوْا مُصْبِحِينَ ﴿٢١﴾

22. (Saying): “Go forth to your tilth^{*14} if you would pluck the fruit.”

أَنْ أَغْدُوا عَلَىٰ حَرْثِكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَرْمِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

***14** The word tilth probably has been used because in the garden there were also fields of crops in between the trees.

23. So they departed, and they were whispering.

فَانْطَلَقُوا وَهُمْ يَتَخَفَتُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. (Saying): “Let no needy man approach you in it today.”

أَنْ لَا يَدْخُلَهَا الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَسْكِينٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. And they went early with the resolve (not to give),^{*15} (assuming) they had the power.

وَعَدُوا عَلَىٰ حَرْدٍ قَدِيرِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

***15** The word *hurd* in Arabic is used for hindering and withholding for a purpose and resolution and for making haste. Hence, the composite rendering adopted by us.

26. But when they saw it (garden) they said: “We surely have lost our way.”

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهَا قَالُوا إِنَّا لَضَالُّونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

27. “Nay, but we have been deprived.”^{*16}

بَلْ لَنْحُنَّ مَحْرُومُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

***16** That is, on seeing the garden they didn't believe it was their own garden, and they said: Perhaps we have lost our way and come to another place. But, when they considered it seriously and found it was their own garden, they cried out: Alas we are deprived.

28. The moderate of them said: “Did I not say to you, why do you not glorify (Allah).”^{*17}

قَالَ أَوْسَطُهُمْ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ لَوْلَا تُسَبِّحُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

***17** This means that when they were saying on oath: We

shall surely pluck the fruit of our garden tomorrow, this person had warned them at that time, saying: Have you forgotten God? Why don't you say: If Allah so wills? But they did not listen to him. Then, while they were making up their mind not to give away anything to the needy, he again advised them to remember Allah and to desist from their evil intention, but they persisted in what they had resolved.

29. They said: "Glorified is our Lord, we were indeed wrong doers."

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

30. Then they turned, one against another, blaming.*18

فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ يَتَلَاَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

*18 That is, each reproached and blamed the other that because of his wrong counsel they had forgotten God and resolved upon an evil course.

31. They said: "Alas for us, indeed we were rebellious."

قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا طَٰغِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

32. Perhaps our Lord will give us in exchange better than this. Indeed, we turn to our Lord.

عَسَىٰ رَبُّنَا أَنْ يُبَدِّلَنَا خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا رَاغِبُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

33. Such is the punishment, and the punishment of the Hereafter is far greater. If they (only) knew.

كَذَٰلِكَ الْعَذَابُ ۗ وَالْعَذَابُ ۗ الْآخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

34. Indeed,^{*19} for the righteous, with their Lord there are Gardens of Delight.

إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٍ
النَّعِيمِ

*19 This is, a rejoinder to the chiefs of Makkah, who argued with the Muslims, thus: The blessings that we are enjoying in the world are a sign that we are favorites of Allah, and the miserable lives that you are living are a proof that you are under the wrath of Allah. Therefore, even if there was any life after death, as you say, we shall have good time there too, and the torment would be imposed on you, not on us.

35. Shall We then treat the obedient ones like the criminals.

أَفَنَجْعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ كَالْجَرِمِينَ

36. What is (the matter) with you, how do you judge.^{*20}

مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ

*20 That is, it is against reason that God should not differentiate between the obedient servant and the guilty. How do you regard this as reasonable that the Creator of the universe should, like a blind ruler, not judge which people in the world obeyed His commands and refrained from evildoing, and which people committed every sin and crime and perpetrated every cruelty fearless of His punishment? You have seen the adversity of the believers and your own prosperity, but you have not appreciated the distinction between their good morals and your own

evildoing, and have given your judgment without the thought that these obedient people will be treated like culprits by God and the guilty like you will be granted Paradise.

37. Or do you have a book in which you study.*21

أَمْ لَكُمْ كِتَابٌ فِيهِ تَدْرُسُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

*21 That is, the Book sent down by Allah.

38. That indeed, is for you through it whatever you choose.

إِنَّ لَكُمْ فِيهِ لَمَا تَخَيَّرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. Or do you have covenants (binding) upon Us, reaching until the Resurrection Day, that indeed yours is whatever you judge.

أَمْ لَكُمْ أَيْمَانٌ عَلَيْنَا بَلِغَةٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ
الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ لَكُمْ لِمَا تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

40. Ask them which of them will guarantee for that.*22

سَلِّمُوا بِهِمْ بِذَلِكَ زَعِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

*22 *Zaeem* in Arabic is used for a person who stands a surety on behalf of another, or is a spokesman of others. Thus, the verse means to ask: Which of you will come forward and say that he has made such and such a covenant with Allah on your behalf.

41. Or do they have partners (to Allah). Then let them bring their partners if they are truthful.*23

أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ فَلْيَأْتُوا بِشُرَكَائِهِمْ إِنْ
كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

*23 That is, the judgment you are passing concerning yourselves has no basis whatever. It is against reason and

you cannot show any such thing written in any divine Book either. No one can make the claim that he has made Allah promise some such thing, and you cannot make any of your deities vouch that they would take the responsibility of securing Paradise for you from God. How then have you been involved in such a misunderstanding.

42. The Day when the Shin shall be laid bare,^{*24} and they shall be called upon to prostrate (to Allah), but they shall not be able to do so.

يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَن سَاقٍ وَيُدْعَوْنَ
إِلَى السُّجُودِ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ

***24** Literally: The Day the Shin shall be uncovered. A section of the companions and their successors says that these words have been used idiomatically, for according to Arabic idiom, *kashf-i-saq* implies befalling of an affliction. Abdullah bin Abbas has also given this same meaning of this and has supported it by evidence from Arabic poetry. According to another saying that has been cited from Ibn Abbas and Rabi bin Anas, *kashf-i-saq* implies uncovering the facts and truths. In view of this interpretation, the meaning would be: The Day when all truths shall be bared and the people's deeds shall become open and manifest.

43. Their eyes downcast, humiliation covering them. And indeed, they used to be called upon to prostrate while they were sound.^{*25}

خَشِيعَةً أَبْصَرُهُمْ تَرَهِقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ
وَقَدْ كَانُوا يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ
وَهُمْ سَالِمُونَ

***25** It means: On the Resurrection Day it will be openly

and publicly demonstrated as to who in the world had actually worshiped Allah and who was disinclined to do so. For this purpose the people will be called upon to prostrate themselves before Allah. Then, those who had been sincerely worshiping Allah in the world would prostrate themselves, and those who had declined to bow before Him in the world would be unable to do so. It will become impossible for them to put up a false show of being worshipers. Therefore, they will remain standing, degraded and downcast with shame.

44. So, leave Me and those who deny this Revelation.^{*26}
We shall lead them to ruin by degrees from where they will not know.^{*27}

فَذَرْنِي وَمَنْ يُكَذِّبُ بِهَذَا
الْحَدِيثِ سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِّنْ
حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ



^{*26} That is, do not worry yourself as to how to deal with them, it is for Me to see how to chastise them.

^{*27} A form of leading somebody to ruin in imperceptible ways is that an enemy of the truth and wicked person may be blessed in the world, and be granted health, wealth, children and worldly successes, by which he may be deluded into believing that whatever he is doing, he is doing well and right. There is nothing wrong with his acts and deeds. Thus, he may go on getting more and more deeply involved in enmity of the truth and wickedness and rebellious conduct and may not realize that the blessings he is being favored with are not a reward but, in fact, a means of his own ruin.

45. And I will give them respite. Indeed, My scheme is strong.*28

وَأْمَلِي لَهُمْ إِنْ كَيْدِي مَتِينٌ ﴿٤٥﴾

*28 The word *kayd* in the original means to devise a secret scheme against another. It is an evil only in case it is devised to harm somebody unjustly, otherwise there is nothing wrong with it, especially when such a scheme is adopted against a person who has made himself worthy of it.

46. Or do you ask of them a reward, so they are burdened with debt.*29

أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِنْ مَّغْرَمٍ مُثْقَلُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

*29 The question apparently is being asked of the Prophet (peace be upon him), but its real audience are the people, who were crossing all limits in their opposition to him. They are being asked: Is Our Messenger asking you for a reward which makes you feel so upset. You know that he is absolutely selfless in his invitation and is exerting himself only for your own benefit and well-being. If you do not want to believe in what he says, you may not, but why are you feeling so enraged at his this invitation to you. (For further explanation, see E.N. 31 of Surah At-Toor).

47. Or do they have (knowledge of) the unseen, so they write (it) down.*30

أَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

*30 This second question also appears to be directed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), but, in fact, its audience are

his opponents. It means: Have you, O people, peered behind the unseen and found that the Messenger, in fact, is not a Messenger sent by God, and the truth that he is presenting before you is also false. That is why you are being so stubborn in belying what he says (For explanation, see E.N. 32 of Surah At-Toor).

48. Then be patient for the decision of your Lord,^{*31} and do not be like the companion of the fish (Jonah)^{*32} when he called out, while he was distressed.^{*33}

فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُنْ
كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوتِ إِذْ نَادَىٰ وَهُوَ
مَكْظُومٌ



***31** That is, the time when Allah will issue His decree about your success and victory and your opponents' defeat, is yet far off. Till then you should go on enduring with patience whatever hardships and afflictions you may have to face in the way of preaching the faith.

***32** That is, do not behave impatiently as did the Prophet Jonah (peace be on him), who an account of his impatience was driven into the fish's belly. Immediately after exhorting the Prophet (peace be upon him) to have patience until Allah issued forth His decree, to tell him not to behave like the Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) by itself gives the meaning that the latter had shown some kind of impatience before Allah gave His decision and thus had incurred His wrath. (For explanation, see Surah Yunus, Ayat 98, and E.N, 99; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 87-88 and E.Ns 82 to 85; Surah As-Saaffat, Ayat 139-148 and E.Ns 78 to 85).

***33** In Surah Al-Anbiya it has been explained thus: From inside the fish's belly and the darkness of the sea, the Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) invoked Allah, saying: *La ilaha illa anta subhanaka inni kuntu min-az-zalimin:* There is no god but You; glory be to You: I had indeed committed a wrong. Thereupon Allah heard his prayer and delivered him from this affliction. (verses 87-88).

49. If the favor of his Lord had not reached him, he would have been cast off on the barren ground, while he was condemned. ^{*34}

لَوْلَا أَنْ تَدَارَكَهُر نِعْمَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ
لَنُبِذَ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ مَذْمُومٌ

***34** When this verse is read with Surah As-Saaffat, Ayats 142-146, one learns that at the time the Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) was caused to be swallowed by the fish, he was blameworthy. But when he glorified Allah and confessed his fault, although he was thrown out from the belly of the fish on a bare beach in a state of sickness, he was not blameworthy at that time. Allah by His mercy caused a creeper to grow over him so that its leaves should provide him shade and its fruit food and drink.

50. Thus, his Lord chose him and made him among the righteous.

فَأَجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَجَعَلَهُر مِّن
الصَّالِحِينَ

51. And indeed, those who disbelieve would almost make you slip with their eyes ^{*35} when they hear the

وَإِن يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَيُزْلِقُونَكَ
بِأَبْصَرِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ

reminder, and they say:
“Indeed, he is a madman.”

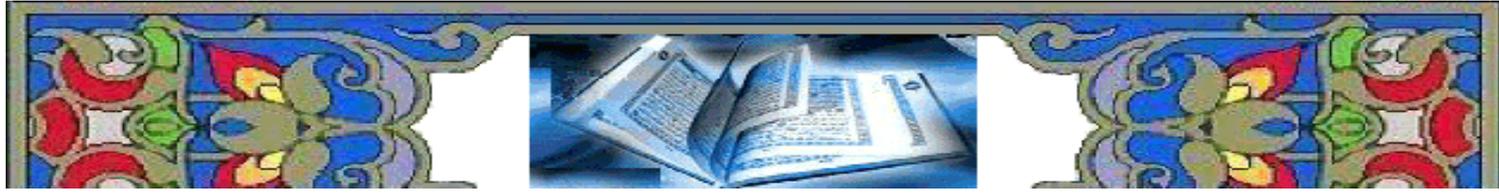
وَيَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُ لَمَجْنُونٌ ﴿٥١﴾

***35** Would make you slip: Would eat you up with their eyes. For a similar expression of the Makkan disbelievers' rage and fury against the Prophet (peace be upon him), see also Surah Bani Israil, Ayats 73-77.

52. But it is not except a reminder to the worlds.

وَمَا هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾





الْحَاقَّةُ Al-Haaqqa

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word *al-Haaqqah* with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

This is one of the earliest Surahs to be revealed at Makkah. Its subject matter shows that it was sent down at the time when opposition to the Prophet (peace upon be him) had started but had not yet become tyrannical. Musnad Ahmad contains a tradition from Umar, saying: Before embracing Islam one day I came out of my house with a view to causing trouble to the Prophet (peace upon be him), but he had entered the Masjid al-Haram before me. When I arrived, I found that he was reciting Surah *Al-Haaqqah* in the Prayer. I stood behind him and listened. As he recited the Quran, I wondered at its literary charm and beauty. Then suddenly an idea came to my mind that he must be a poet as the Quraish alleged. Just at that moment he recited the words: This is the Word of an honorable Messenger: it is not the word of a poet. I said to myself: Then, he must be a soothsayer, if not a poet. Thereupon he recited the words:

Nor is it the word of a soothsayer: little it is that you reflect. It is a Revelation from the Lord and Sustainer of the worlds. On hearing this Islam entered deep into my heart. This tradition of Umar shows that this Surah had been sent down long before his acceptance of Islam, for even after this event he did not believe for a long time, and he continued to be influenced in favor of Islam by different incidents from time to time, till at last in the house of his own sister he came by the experience that made him surrender and submit to the faith completely. (For details, see introduction to Aurah Maryam and Introduction to Surah Al-Waqiah).

Theme and Subject Matter

The first section (verses 1-37) is about the Hereafter and the second (verses 38-52) about the Quran's being a revelation from Allah and the Prophet's being a true Messenger (peace upon be him) of Allah.

The first section opens with the assertion that the coming of the Resurrection and the occurrence of the Hereafter is a truth which has to take place inevitably. Then in verses 4-12, it has been stated that the communities that denied the Hereafter in the past became worthy of Allah's scourge ultimately. In verses 13-17 the occurrence of Resurrection has been depicted. In verses 18-37 the real object for which Allah has destined a second life for mankind after the present worldly life has been enunciated. In it we are told that on that Day all men shall appear in the court of their Lord, where no secret of theirs shall remain hidden, each man's record will be placed in his hand. Those who had

spent lives in the world with the realization that one day they would have to render an account of their deeds before their Lord, and who had worked righteously in the world and provided beforehand for their well being in the Hereafter, will rejoice when they see that they have been acquitted and blessed with the eternal bliss of Paradise. On the contrary, those who neither recognized the rights of Allah, nor discharged the rights of people, will have no one to save them from the punishment of Allah, and they will be cast into Hell.

In the second section (verses 38-52) the disbelievers of Makkah have been addressed and told: You think this Quran is the word of a poet or soothsayer, whereas it is a Revelation sent down by Allah, which is being presented by the noble Messenger (peace upon be him). The Messenger (peace upon be him) by himself had no power to increase or decrease a word in it. If he forges something of his own composition into it, We will cut off his neck-vein (or heart-vein). For this is the truth absolute and pure and those who give it a lie, will have ultimately to regret and repent.

1. The Inevitable Reality.*¹



*¹ The word *al-Haaqqah* as used in the text means an event which has inevitably to take place and the occurrence of which in the future is so certain as to admit of no doubt or suspicion. To use this word for Resurrection and to begin the discourse with it by itself shows that the people were denying its occurrence. They are being told: That which you are denying is inevitable: your denial will not prevent

its occurrence.

2. What is the Inevitable Reality.

مَا الْحَاقَّةُ

3. And what do you know what the Inevitable Reality is.*2

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحَاقَّةُ

*2 These two questions, one after the other, have been put to arouse the listeners, to make them understand the importance of the theme and listen to what follows with full attention.

4. Thamud^{*3} and Aad denied the striking calamity.*4

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ وَعَادٌ بِالْقَارِعَةِ

*3 As the disbelievers of Makkah denied Resurrection and took the news of its coming lightly, they have been warned at the outset, as if to say: Resurrection is inevitable: whether you believe in it or not, it will in any case take place. Then, they are told: It is not a simple and ordinary thing that a person accepts the news of the coming of an event or not, but it has a deep relationship with the morals of the nations and with their future. The history of the nations, which lived before you, testifies that the nation which refused to believe in the Hereafter and thought this worldly life only to be the real life and denied that man would have ultimately to render an account of his deeds before God, corrupted itself morally until the punishment of God overtook it and eliminated it from the world.

*4 The word *al-qariah* is derived from *qar*, which means to hammer, to beat, to knock and to strike one thing upon the

other. This other word for Resurrection has been used to give an idea of its terror and dread.

5. So as for Thamud, they were destroyed by a violent catastrophe.*5

فَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَأَهْلِكُوا بِالطَّاغِيَةِ



*5 In Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 78, it has been called *ar-rajfah* (a terrible earthquake); in Surah Houd, Ayat 67 *as-sayhah* (a violent blast); in Surah HaMim As-Sajdah, Ayat 17, it has been said: They were overtaken by *saiqa-tul-adhab* (a humiliating scourge); and here the same punishment has been described as *at-taghiyah* (a violent catastrophe). These words describe different aspects of the same calamity.

6. And as for Aad, they were destroyed by a furious windstorm.

وَأَمَّا عَادُ فَأَهْلِكُوا بَرِيحٍ

صَرَصِرٍ عَاتِيَةٍ

7. Which He imposed on them for seven nights and eight days continuously. (Had you been there) you would have seen them lying prostrate as though they were hollow trunks of palm trees.

سَخَّرَهَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ

وَتَمَنِيَةَ أَيَّامٍ حُسُومًا فَتَرَى

الْقَوْمَ فِيهَا صَرَعى كَانْتَهُمْ أَعْجَازُ

نَخْلٍ خَاوِيَةٍ

8. Then do you see any remnants of them.

فَهَلْ تَرَى لَهُم مِّنْ بَاقِيَةٍ

9. And there came Pharaoh, and those before him, and the overturned towns with sins.*6.

وَجَاءَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَنْ قَبْلَهُ
وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةُ بِالْخَاطِئَةِ ﴿٦﴾

*6 The reference is to the towns and settlements of the people of the Prophet Lot (peace upon be him), about which it has been said in Surah Houd, Ayat 82 and Surah Al-Hijr, Ayat 74, We turned them upside down.

10. So they disobeyed the Messenger of their Lord, then He seized them with a terrible grip.

فَعَصَوْا رَسُولَ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَهُمْ
أَخْذَةً رَابِيَةً ﴿١٠﴾

11. Indeed, when the flood water rose abnormally high,*7 We boarded you in the Ark.*8

إِنَّا لَمَّا طَغَا الْمَاءُ حَمَلْنَاكُمْ فِي
الْجَارِيَةِ ﴿١١﴾

*7 The illusion is to the deluge of the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him), in which a whole nation was drowned because of this very crime, and only those people were saved, who had listened to and obeyed the Messenger of Allah.

*8 We boarded you: Because the whole human race that exists today has descended from the people who were boarded in the Ark thousands of years ago and thus saved from the deluge. It means: You exist in the world today because in that deluge Allah had caused only the infidels to be drowned and had saved the believers.

12. That We might make it for you a reminder, and (that) the conscious ear would be conscious of it.*9

لِنَجْعَلَهَا لَكُمْ تَذْكِرَةً وَتَعِيَهَا أُذُنٌ
وَاعِيَةٌ

*9 The conscious ears: the ears which may hear it consciously and take it in. Although the word ear has been used, it implies the hearers who may hear the event and always remember it, take heed from it, and may never forget what dreadful fate the deniers of the Hereafter and the disbelievers of the Messenger of God would ultimately suffer.

13. Then,*10 when the Trumpet is blown with one blast.

فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ نَفْخَةٌ
وَاحِدَةٌ

*10 While reading the following verses one should keep in mind that at some places in the Quran the three stages of Resurrection which will occur one after the other at different times have been mentioned separately, and at others all the three have been combined and mentioned as a single event. For example, in Surah An-Naml, Ayat 87 the first blowing of the Trumpet has been mentioned, when everyone will be suddenly struck with terror. At that time they will witness the general confusion and the upsetting of the order of the universe, as described in Surah Al-Hajj, Ayats 1-2; Surah YaSeen, Ayats 49-50 and Surah At-Takweer, Ayats 1-6. In Surah Az-Zumar, Ayats 67-70, mention has been made of the second and third blowing of the Trumpet. On the second blowing of it everyone will fall

down dead, and when it is blown for the third time, all dead men will rise back to life and present themselves before Allah. In Surah TaHa, Ayats 102-112; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 101-103; Surah YaSeen, Ayats 51-53 and Surah Qaf, Ayats 20-22, only the third sounding of the Trumpet has been mentioned. (For explanation, see E.N. 78 of Surah TaHa; E.N. 1 of Surah Al-Hajj; E.Ns 46, 47 of Surah YaSeen). But here and at many other places in the Quran all the events of Resurrection, from the blowing of the first Trumpet till the people's entry into Heaven and Hell have been described as a single event.

14. And the earth and the mountains are raised, then crushed into pieces with a single stroke.

وَحُمِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ فَدُكَّتَا
دَكَّةً وَاحِدَةً ﴿١٤﴾

15. Then, on that Day shall the Event happen.

فِيَوْمَئِذٍ وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ﴿١٥﴾

16. And the heaven will split asunder, for that day it will be frail.

وَأَنْشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَهِيَ يَوْمَئِذٍ
وَاهِيَةٌ ﴿١٦﴾

17. And the angels will be on the sides thereof, and eight (of them), will uphold the Throne of your Lord that day, above them.^{*11}

وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ عَلَىٰ أَرْجَائِهَا وَيَحْمِلُ
عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَنِيَةٌ ﴿١٧﴾

***11** This is an ambiguous verse the meaning of which is difficult to determine. We can neither know what the

Throne is nor can understand what will be the nature of the eight angels upholding it on the Day of Resurrection. It is, however inconceivable that Allah Almighty would be sitting on the Throne and the eight angels would be upholding it along with Him. The verse also does not say that Allah at that time would be sitting on the Throne. Besides, the conception of God that the Quran gives also prevents one from imagining that the Being Who is free from physical existence as to body, direction and place, should be residing somewhere and His creatures should sustain Him. Therefore, pursuing any research to determine its meaning would be tantamount to disbelief. However, one should understand that in order to give an idea of Allah Almighty's rule and sovereignty, and of the matters associated with it, the same scene has been depicted by the Quran as of worldly kingship and the same terms have been used for it as are common for kingship and its accompaniments in order to enable us to understand matters pertaining to sovereignty of the universe to some extent only by means of this very scene and terms. All this is meant to bring the real Truth within human understanding; it is not, therefore, right to take it literally.

18. That Day you will be brought (to judgment). No secret of yours will be hidden.

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُونَ لَا تَخْفَىٰ مِنْكُمْ
خَافِيَةٌ

19. Then as for him who is given his record in his right hand,^{*12} he will say: "Take,

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ

read my record.”*13

فَيَقُولُ هَآؤُمُ أَقْرَأُوا كِتَابِيَهٗ

*12 The record's being given in the right hand will by itself show that the concerned person's account is clear and settled and he is appearing in the divine court as a righteous man and not as a culprit. It is probable that at the time the records are distributed the righteous man himself will extend his right hand forward to receive his record. For on account of the good treatment that he would have received right from the moment of death till his appearance in the Plain of Assembly at Resurrection would have given him the satisfaction that he was there to be blessed and not to be punished. At many a place in the Quran it has been explicitly stated that right at death itself it becomes clear to every man whether he is entering the next world in a blessed or wretched state. Then from the moment of death till Resurrection the righteous man is treated like a guest and the evil man as a culprit under custody. After this, from the time the second life starts on the Day of Resurrection, the condition and state of the righteous is entirely different from the condition and state of the disbelievers, hypocrites and culprits. (For details, see Surah Al-Anfaal, Ayat 50; Surah An-Nahl, Ayats 28-32; Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 97; Surah TaHa, Ayats 102, 103, 124-126; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 1-3; Surah Al-Furgan, Ayat 24; Surah An-Naml, Ayat 89; Surah Saba, Ayat 51; Surah YaSeen, Ayats 26-27; Surah Al-Momin, Ayats 45-46; Surah Muhammad, Ayat 27; Surah Qaf, Ayats 19-23 and the corresponding Notes.

***13** That is, he will be overjoyed as soon as he receives his record and will show it to his companions. In Surah Al-Inshiqaq, Ayat 9, it has been said: He will return to his kinsfolk rejoicing.

20. “Indeed, I knew that I would meet my reckoning.”^{*14}

إِنِّي ظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي مُلْقٍ حِسَابِيَهٗ ﴿٢٠﴾

***14** That is, he was fortunate because he had been conscious of the Hereafter in the world and had lived his life with the belief that he would have to appear before God one day and render his account to Him.

21. So he will be in a state of bliss.

فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ ﴿٢١﴾

22. In a high garden.

فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

23. Its clusters of fruits shall be hanging within easy reach.

قُطُوفُهَا دَانِيَةٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. Eat and drink at ease for that which you have sent before in the days past.

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا أَسْلَفْتُمْ فِي الْأَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. And as for him who is given his record in his left hand,^{*15} he will say: “Would that I had not been given my record.”^{*16}

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ فَيَقُولُ يَلَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُوتَ كِتَابِيَهٗ

*15 In Surah Al-Inshiqaq it has been said: And the one whose record is given him behind his back. Probably it will be like this: As the culprit would already be knowing that he was a culprit, and would be aware of what his record contained, he would dejectedly extend his left hand forward to receive it, and then would immediately hide it behind his back so that no one else saw what he had received.

*16 That is, I should not have been given this record in the Plain of Assembly and thus publicly disgraced before all mankind, but should have been awarded secretly whatever punishment I deserved.

26. “And had never known what my account was.”*17

وَلَمْ أَدْرِ مَا حِسَابِيَّةٌ ﴿٢٦﴾

*17 That is, I should not have been told what I had done in the world. Another meaning of this verse can also be: I never knew what an account was: I never had imagined that one day I would also have to render my account and that all my deeds would be presented before me."

27. “Would that, it had been the decisive (death).”*18

يَلِيَّتَهَا كَانَتْ الْقَاضِيَةَ ﴿٢٧﴾

*18 That is, I should have become extinct after death in the world and should have experienced no other life after death.

28. “My wealth has not availed me.”

مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنِّي مَالِيَّةٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

29. “Gone from me is my authority.”*19

هَلَكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيَّةٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

*19 The word *sultan* of the text is used both for an

argument and for power and authority. If it is taken in the sense of an argument, the meaning would be: The arguments that I used to give would not work here. Here, I have no argument which I can present in self-defense. And if it is taken in the sense of power, it would imply: The power of which I was so proud in the world is no more. I have no army here and there is none to obey me. I stand as a miserable helpless creature, who can do nothing to defend himself.

30. (It will be said) seize him and shackle him.

خُذُوهُ فَغُلُّوهُ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. And then expose him to hell-fire.

ثُمَّ أَلْجِئِمِ صَلْوَهُ ﴿٣١﴾

32. Then fasten him in a chain whereof the length is seventy cubits.

ثُمَّ فِي سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوهُ ﴿٣٢﴾

33. Indeed, he used not to believe in Allah, the Most High.

إِنَّهُ كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٣٣﴾

34. Nor did he encourage for the feeding of the poor.*20

وَلَا يَحْضُرُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ ﴿٣٤﴾

*20 That is, not to speak of feeding a poor man himself, he did not even like to say to others that they should feed the hungry.

35. So for him here this day,
(there is) no true friend.

فَلَيْسَ لَهُ الْيَوْمَ هَاهُنَا حَمِيمٌ ﴿٣٥﴾

36. Nor any food except from
the discharge of wounds.

وَلَا طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ غِسْلِينٍ ﴿٣٦﴾

37. None will eat it
except the sinners.

لَا يَأْكُلُهُ إِلَّا الْخَاطِئُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

38. Not so, ^{*21} I swear by that
which you see.

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

***21** That is, the truth is not as you think it to be.

39. And that which you do
not see.

وَمَا لَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

40. Indeed, this is the word
of a noble Messenger. ^{*22}

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿٤٠﴾

***22** Here, “a noble Messenger” implies the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and in Surah At-Takweer, Ayat 19. the angel Gabriel, the argument being that after describing the Quran as the word of an honorable Messenger, it has been said: It is not the word of a poet nor of a soothsayer, and obviously the disbelievers of Makkah branded the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and not Gabriel as a poet and soothsayer. On the contrary, in Surah At-Takweer, after describing the Quran as the word of “a noble messenger” it has been said: That Messenger has great power, and has high ranks with the Owner of the Throne: there he is obeyed and held as trustworthy. And Muhammad (peace be upon him) has seen him on the bright horizon. (verses 20-23). Almost the same thing has been stated in Surah An-Najm, Ayats 5-10

about Gabriel. Here, the question arises; In what sense has the Quran been described as the word of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and of Gabriel. The answer is: the people were hearing it being recited by the tongue of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Prophet (peace be upon him) by the tongue of Gabriel. Thereupon, in one way it was the word of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and in another way of Gabriel, but a little below it has been explicitly stated: It is indeed a Revelation from the Lord of the worlds, which is being presented before Muhammad (peace be upon him) by the tongue of Gabriel and before the people by the tongue of Muhammad (peace be upon him). The word Messenger itself points to the truth that the word belongs to neither of them but they have presented it as Messengers of the One Who has sent it down.

41. And it is not the word of a poet. Little it is that you believe.*23

وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَاعِرٍ قَلِيلًا مَّا
تُؤْمِنُونَ

*23 One meaning of “little it is that you believe”, according to Arabic idiom, can be: You do not believe it at all. Another meaning also can be: Hearing the Quran your heart sometimes itself cries out: This cannot be mortal word. Yet you behave stubbornly and refuse to believe in it.

42. Nor the word of a soothsayer. Little it is that you remember.

وَلَا بِقَوْلِ كَاهِنٍ قَلِيلًا مَّا
تَذَكَّرُونَ

43. (It is) a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.*24

تَنْزِيلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

*24 In short: I swear by whatever you see and by whatever you do not see that this Quran is not the word of a poet or a soothsayer, but it is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds, which is being presented by the Messenger (peace be upon him) who is noble and gentle. Let us now consider in what sense this oath has been sworn. That which was visible to the people was.

(1) This Word was being presented by a person who being noble and gentle was not hidden from anybody in the society of Makkah. Everyone knew that he was the best man of their nation in conduct. It could not be expected of such a man that he would forge a lie and attribute it to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

(2) They also saw clearly that he had no selfish motive in presenting that word before the people, but had rather sacrificed all His personal interests to it. He had ruined his business, he had abandoned every ease and comfort, he was being cursed and abused by the same people who had shown him the highest veneration and esteem and had caused even his family and children to be subjected to these agonies besides himself. A person having selfish motives could not have submitted himself to such tribulations.

(3) They could also see that the lives of the people in their own society, who believed in him, underwent a sudden transformation. The word of no poet or soothsayer has been known to have brought about such a wonderful moral change in the people that his follower should become ready

to face every hardship and bear up against every persecution for his sake.

(4) They were also not unaware of the language of poetry and the diction of the soothsayers. Apart from stubborn disbelievers, no one could say that the language of the Quran was the language of poetry or sorcery. (For a detailed discussion of this, see E.N. 7 of Surah Al-Anbiya, E.Ns 142-145 of Surah Ash-Shuara, E.N. 22 of Surah At-Toor).

(5) This also was before their eyes that no one in entire Arabia was so eloquent of speech that his word could be brought to match with the Quran. Not to speak of equaling it, not even the greatest poet's eloquence could even approach anywhere near that of Quran.

(6) This was also not hidden from them that the language used by Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself was very different in its literary beauty and merit from the language of the Quran. No Arabic speaking person could, after hearing the Prophet's (peace be upon him) own speech, and the Quran, say that both emanated from one and the same person.

(7) The people of Makkah had never heard, even until a day before Muhammad (peace be upon him) made the claim to Prophethood, anything relating to the themes that the Quran consisted of, nor they knew that he had any means of obtaining that knowledge and information. That is why even if his opponents alleged that he obtained that information secretly from somewhere, no one in Makkah was prepared to believe it. (For explanation, see E.N. 107 of

Surah An-Nahl and E.N. 12 of Surah Al-Furqan).

(8) They could also see the wonderful workshop of existence, from the earth to the heavens, which was functioning before their eyes, and in which they could see a supreme, wise law and an all-pervading order and system at work. In it they could see no sign and evidence of the polytheism and denial of the Hereafter, which the Arabs had adopted as their creed, but there were signs and proofs of the existence of One God and of the truth of the Hereafter which the Quran was presenting.

All this they could see, and what they did not see was: Allah Almighty alone is the Creator and Master and Ruler of this universe: all others are only creatures: none beside Him is God. Resurrection has to take place inevitably; Muhammad (peace be upon him) has really been appointed a Messenger by Allah Himself Who is sending down the Quran to him. An oath has been sworn by both truths to affirm that which has been stated in the preceding verses.

44. And if he (Muhammad) had forged some saying about Us.

وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقَاوِيلِ



45. We would have seized him by the right hand.

لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ



46. Then We would have severed his life-artery.

ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ



47. Then no one of you could have withheld (Us) from this.*²⁵

فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ عَنْهُ

حَاجِزِينَ



***25** The object is to impress the point that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has no authority whatsoever to make any change in the revelation. If he did so, he would be severely punished. The style depicts the prompt and quick action of a king who strikes off the head of an official, holding him by the hand, if he commits a forgery in his name. Some people have misconstrued this verse to mean that if the heart-vein or neck-vein of an impostor is not immediately severed by Allah, it would be a proof that he was a true prophet, whereas in this verse what has been said is about a true prophet and not about the impostors. Some impostors have even claimed to be God and have thrived and lived long lives in the world, so it could not be a proof of the truth of their claim. For a full discussion of this question, see E.N. 23 of Surah Yunus.

48. And indeed, it (the Quran) is a reminder for the righteous. ^{*26}

وَأِنَّهُ لَتَذَكْرَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

***26** That is, the Quran is an admonition for those who wish to avoid wrongdoing and its evil consequences. (For explanation, see E.N. 3 of Surah Al-Baqarah).

49. And indeed, We know that among you are those who deny.

وَإِنَّا لَنَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مِنكُم مَّكَذِبِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

50. And indeed, it will be an anguish for the disbelievers. ^{*27}

وَأِنَّهُ لَحَسْرَةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾

***27** That is, they will ultimately have to despair and regret

as to why they had rejected this Quran.

51. And indeed, this is the truth with certainty.

وَإِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٥١﴾

52. So, glorify the name of your Lord, the Great.

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٥٢﴾



Al-Maarij الْمَعَارِج

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word *dhil-Maarij* in verse 3.

Period of Revelation

The subject matter bears evidence that this Surah was revealed in conditions closely resembling those under which Surah Al-Haaqqah was revealed.

Theme and Subject Matter

It admonishes and gives warning to the disbelievers who made fun of the news about Resurrection and the Hereafter, and Hell and Heaven and challenged the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) to cause Resurrection with which he threatened them to take place if what he said was true and they had become worthy of the punishment in Hell by denying it. The whole Surah is meant to answer this denial.

The Surah opens with words to the effect: A demander has demanded a torment, the torment which must befall the deniers. And when it takes place, there will be none to prevent it, but it will take place at its own appointed time.

Allah has His own way of doing things, but He is not unjust. Therefore, have patience, O Prophet, at what they say. They think it is far off, but We see it as near at hand.

Then it is said: Resurrection, which they desire to be hastened out of jest and fun, is terrible, and when it comes, it will cause great distress to the culprits. At that time they will even be prepared to give away their wives and children and their nearest kinsfolk in ransom to escape the punishment, but they will not be able to escape it.

Then the people have been warned to the effect: On that Day the destinies of men will be decided strictly on the basis of their belief and their conduct. Those who turn away from the truth in the world and amass wealth and withhold it from the needy, will be doomed to Hell. And those who fear the punishment of God here, believe in the Hereafter, keep up the Prayer, discharge the rights of the needy out of their wealth, strictly avoid immoral and wicked deeds, practice honesty in all their dealings, fulfill their pledges and trust and bear true witness, will have a place of honor in Paradise.

In conclusion, the disbelievers of Makkah who rushed in upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) from every side as soon as they saw him, in order to make fun of him, have been warned to the effect: If you do not believe, Allah will replace you by other people who will be better than you. And the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been consoled, so as to say: Do not take to heart their mockery and jesting; leave them to indulge in their idle talk and foolish conduct if they are bent upon experiencing the disgrace and

humiliation of the Resurrection; they will themselves see their evil end.

1. A questioner asked for a punishment about to befall.*¹

سَأَلَ سَائِلٌ بِعَذَابٍ وَاقِعٍ

*¹ Some commentators have taken the verb *saala* in the text in the meaning of asking, and have interpreted the verse to mean: The asker has asked: whom will the torment with which we are being threatened befall. And Allah has answered it, saying: It will befall the disbelievers. But most of the commentators have taken *saala* here in the meaning of demanding. Nasai and other traditionists have related a tradition from Ibn Abbas, and Hakim hold it as authentic, that Nadr bin al-Harith Kaladah had said: O God, if it is really the truth sent down by You, then rain down stones on us from the heavens, or send down any other painful torment on us. (Surah Al-Anfaal, Ayat 32). Apart from this, at several places in the Quran the disbelievers' this challenge has been related: Why don't you bring down on us the torment that you threaten us with? For instance, see Surah Yunus, Ayats 46-48; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayats 36-41; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 67-72; Surah Saba, Ayats 26-30; Surah YaSeen, Ayats 45-52; Surah Al-Mulk, Ayats 24-27.

2. Upon the disbelievers, which none can avert.

لِّلْكَافِرِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَافِعٌ

3. From Allah, the Owner of the ways of ascent.*²

مِّنَ اللَّهِ ذِي الْمَعَارِجِ

*² *Maarij* is plural of *Miraj*, which means a stairway, or a ladder, or something by which one may go up. To call Allah

dhil-Maaij (Owner of the ways of ascent) means that He is Most High and in order to go up into His Presence the angels have to ascend many heights, one above the other, as has been stated in the following verses.

4. The angels and the Spirit^{*3} ascend to Him^{*4} in a Day whose measure is fifty thousand years.^{*5}

تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ
فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ
أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ

^{*3} “The Spirit”: the Angel Gabriel, who has been mentioned separately from the angels in order to impress his unique glory and greatness. In Surah Ash-Shuara it has been said: The trustworthy Spirit has come down with this Quran upon your heart, (verse 193), and in Surah Al-Baqarah, say to them: Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel, should understand that he has, by Allah’s command, revealed upon your heart this Quran. (verse 97). These verses when read together show that Ar-Rooh (the Spirit) implies the Angel Gabriel.

^{*4} This is an ambiguous theme the meaning of which cannot be determined precisely. We neither have any knowledge of the reality of the angels, nor can understand the nature of their ascent, nor can conceive the stairways on which they ascend. Besides, about Allah also it cannot be imagined that He lives in a particular place, for He is exalted and free from the restrictions of space and time.

^{*5} In Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 47, it has been said: These people are demanding of you to hasten the torment. Allah

will never fail to fulfill His threat, but a day with your Lord is equal to a thousand years as you reckon. In Surah As-Sajdah, Ayat 5, it has been said: He administers the affairs of the world from the heavens to the earth, and the report of this administration ascends (to be presented) before Him in a Day whose length, according to your reckoning, is a thousand years. And here, in response to the demand for the torment, the measure of Allah's one day has been stated to be fifty thousand years. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been consoled, saying: Have patience at the demand for the torment which the people make out of jest and fun, and then it is said: They think it is far off, but We see it as near at hand. When all these verses are read together, what becomes obvious is: The people, because of their narrow and restricted outlook, measure the time of Allah's decrees by their own scales of time and, therefore, consider a hundred years or so to be a very lengthy period, whereas in the divine conduct of affairs there are schemes spreading over a thousand years each, or fifty thousand years each, as you reckon, and this measure also is only by way of example; otherwise schemes in the universe may extend over millions and billions of years as well. Of these one is the scheme under which mankind has been created on the earth, and a time limit has been set during which it has been allowed to function here. No man can know when this scheme began, what time-limit has been decreed for its completion, what hour has been appointed for bringing it to an end, when Resurrection will take place, and what time has been fixed for raising all men, born since the beginning

of creation till Resurrection, from death simultaneously and calling them to account for their deeds. We only know to some extent that part of the scheme which is passing before us, or a partial history of the past ages which exists with us. As for its beginning and end, to say nothing of knowing it, we do not even have the power to understand it, not to speak of understanding the wisdom which works behind and underlies it. Now the people who demand that the scheme be cut short and its conclusion be brought immediately before them, and if this is not done, they use it for an argument to prove that the universe has no end and conclusion. They, in fact, present a proof of their own ignorance and folly. (For further explanation, see E.Ns 92, 93 of Surah Al-Hajj; E.N. 9 of Surah As-Sajdah).

5. So be patient, a gracious patience.*6

فَأَصْبِرْ صَبْرًا جَمِيلًا

*6 A gracious patience: A kind of patience that behooves a magnanimous person like you.

6. Indeed, they see it far off.

إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا

7. And We see*7 it near.*8

وَنَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا

*7 This can have two meanings:

(1) That these people think it cannot possibly take place, and in Our view it is going to take place very soon.

(2) That these people think Resurrection is yet remote and far off, and in Our sight it is close at hand and may occur any moment.

***8** A section of the commentators regard this sentence as related to “a day whose measure is fifty thousand years”; they say that the day whose measure has been stated to be fifty thousand years is the Day of Resurrection. In Musnad Ahmad and in the Tafsir by Ibn Jarir, a tradition has been related on the authority of Abu Saeed Khudri, saying: When wonder and amusement was expressed before the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the length of this Day with reference to this verse, he replied: By Him in Whose hand is my life, the believer will find the Day even lighter (of shorter duration) than the time he takes in performing an obligatory Prayer in the world. Had this tradition been reported through authentic channels, this verse could not be interpreted in any other way, but two of its transmitters, Darraj and his teacher Abul Haytham, are both weak and untrustworthy.

8. The Day when the sky will be like murky oil. ^{*9}

يَوْمَ تَكُونُ السَّمَاءُ كَالْمُهْلِ

***9** That is, it will change its color over and over again.

9. And the mountains will be like carded wool. ^{*10}

وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ

***10** As the colors of the mountains are different, when they are uprooted and they drift about weightless, they will appear like flakes of carded wool of different colors.

10. And no friend will ask of a friend.

وَلَا يَسْأَلُ حَمِيمٌ حَمِيمًا

11. Though they will be shown to each other. ^{*11} The

يُبْصَرُونَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ يَوْمَ الْمُجْرَمِ

criminal will wish that he could be ransomed from the punishment of that Day by his children.

يَفْتَدِي مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِئِذٍ بِبَنِيهِ



*11 Not so that they will not see each other, therefore they will not ask after each other's welfare, but each will be seeing the other in agony and distress, yet will ignore him, being wholly preoccupied with his own torment.

12. And his wife, and his brother.

وَصَحْبَتِهِ وَأَخِيهِ

13. And his kinsfolk who gave him shelter.

وَفَصِيلَتِهِ الَّتِي تُؤْوِيهِ

14. And whoever is on the earth, all, then it might save him.

وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يُنْجِيهِ



15. Nay, indeed, it is the flame of the blazing Fire.

كَلَّا إِنَّهَا لَنَظْيُ

16. That will eat up the very flesh.

نَزَّاعَةً لِّلشَّوَى

17. Calling him who drew away and turned his back.

تَدْعُوا مَنْ أَدْبَرَ وَتَوَلَّى

18. And collected (wealth) and guarded it.*12

وَجَمَعَ فَأَوْعَى

*12 Here also, as in Surah Al-Haqqah, Ayats 33-34, two causes have been mentioned of a person's evil end in the Hereafter:

- (1) His repudiation of the truth and refusal to affirm faith.
- (2) His worship of the world and stinginess because of which he amasses wealth and refuses to spend it on any good cause.

19. Indeed, man has been created impatient.*13

﴿١٩﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا

***13** “Man has been created impatient”: It is man’s nature or his natural weakness to be impatient. Here, one should keep in view that at many places in the Quran, after making mention of mankind’s common moral weaknesses, those who believe and adopted righteousness have been made an exception; the same theme is being expressed in the following verses. This by itself explains the truth that these hereditary weaknesses are not unalterable. If man accepts the guidance sent down by God and tries to reform himself practically, he can remove them, and if he gives a free rope to his self, these become ingrained in him deeply. (For further explanation, see E.N. 41 of Surah Al-Anbiya, E.Ns 23-28 of Surah Az-Zumar; E.N. 75 of Surah Ash-Shura).

20. When affliction befalls him, (he is) discontented.

﴿٢٠﴾ إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا

21. And when good touches him, (he is) stingy.

﴿٢١﴾ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا

22. Except those who are the performers of prayer.*14

﴿٢٢﴾ إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ

***14** A person’s performing the *salat* necessarily implies that he believes in Allah, His Messenger (peace be upon him),

His Book and the Hereafter as well as tries to act according to his belief.

23. Those who are steadfast in their prayer.*15

الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ



*15 That is, no laziness or love of ease and comfort, no occupation or interest hinders them from being punctual and regular at the prayer. When the Prayer time comes, they abandon every occupation and activity and stand up to perform worship of their God. Another meaning which Uqbah bin Amir has given of *ala salat-i-him daaimun* is that they perform the Prayer with full peace of mind, tranquility and humility; they do not try to offer the Prayer in a hurry in order to get rid of it somehow, nor think irrelevant things during the Prayer.

24. And those in whose wealth there is a known right.

وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ



25. For the beggar and the deprived.*16

لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ

*16 In Surah Adh-Dhariyat, Ayat 19, it has been said: In their wealth there is a right of the beggar and the needy, and here: In their wealth there is a due share of the beggar and the needy. Some people have understood this to mean that the due share implies the obligatory zakat, for in the zakat both the exemption limit and the rate have been fixed. But this commentary cannot be accepted on the

ground that the Surah Al-Maarij is unanimously a Makkan Revelation, and the zakat with its specific exemption limit and rate was enjoined at Al-Madinah. Therefore, the correct meaning of the due share is that they have of their own accord set aside a share in their possessions of the beggar and needy, which they discharge regularly and honestly. This same meaning of this verse has been given by Abdullah bin Abbas, Abdullah bin Umar, Mujahid, Shabi and Ibrahim Nakhai. Here, *saail* does not imply a beggar but a needy person, who asks someone for help, and *mahroom* implies a person who is jobless, or the one who tries to earn a living but does not earn enough to meet his needs, or the one who has become disabled because of an accident or calamity, and is unable to make a living. About such people when it becomes known that they are destitute, a God-worshipper does not wait that they should ask for help, but helps them of his own accord as soon as he comes to know that they are needy and stand in need of help. (For further explanation, see E.N. 17 of Surah Adh-Dhariyat).

26. And those who believe in the Day of Recompense.*17

وَالَّذِينَ يُصَدِّقُونَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ



*17 “Who believe in the Day of Recompense”: Who do not think they are irresponsible but believe that one Day they will have to appear before their God and render to Him an account of their deeds.

27. And those who are fearful of the punishment of

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ

their Lord.*18

مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

*18 In other words, they are not like the disbelievers, who do not fear God even after they have committed every heinous sin and crime and perpetrated every cruelty in the world, but they, in spite of having adopted a righteous attitude in morals and deeds as best as they could, fear God and continue to remain in constant awe lest their shortcomings should exceed their good works before Him and they should be declared as worthy of punishment. (For further explanation, see E.N. 54 of Surah Al-Mominoon, E.N. 19 of Surah Adh-Dhariyat).

28. Indeed, the punishment of their Lord, none can feel secure.

إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّهِمْ غَيْرُ مَا مُونٍ ﴿٢٨﴾

29. And those who guard their private parts (chastity).*19

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَفْوَاجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

*19 “Who guard their private parts”: Who abstain from adultery as well as from nudity and exposing their private parts before others. (For explanation, see E.N. 6 of Surah Al-Mominoon, E.Ns 30, 32 of Surah An-Noor and E.N. 62 of Surah Al-Ahzab).

30. Except from their wives or those whom their right hands possess, then indeed (in their case) they are not blameworthy.

إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. But whoever seeks beyond that, then those are they who are the transgressors.*20

فَمَنْ أَتَّبَعِي وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ

*20 For explanation, see E.N. 7 of Surah Al-Mominoon.

32. And those who keep their trusts, and their promises.*21

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ

*21 “Trusts” imply those trusts which Allah has entrusted to men as well as those which one man entrusts to another because of faith and confidence. Likewise, “promises” imply those promises which man makes with his God as well as those which one man makes with another. Keeping and fulfilling both these kinds of trusts and promises is a necessary characteristic of a believer. In a Hadith Anas has reported that whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) addressed his companions, he would always give them the instruction: Beware, the one who does not keep his trust has no faith, and one who does not fulfill his pledges, has no religion. (Baihaqi, Ash-Shuab al-Imam).

33. And those who stand firm in their testimonies.*22

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَتِهِمْ قَائِمُونَ

*22 That is, they neither conceal evidence nor change it in any way for selfish motives.

34. And those who guard their prayer.*23

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ

***23** This gives an idea of the importance of the Prayer (*salat*). The description of the merits of the high and sublime character of those who have been declared as worthy of Paradise, began with the Prayer and has been concluded with it. To be a performer of the Prayer is their first characteristic, to be steadfast and ever constant with regard to the Prayer is their second characteristic, and to guard their Prayer is their last characteristic. Guarding the Prayer implies many things: to perform the Prayer at its right time, to make sure before the Prayer that one's body and clothes are clean and pure, to have performed the ablutions and to have washed the limbs well, to perform the basic elements of the Prayer with its obligatory and desirable parts with due care and attention, to observe the requisite rites of the Prayer carefully, to avoid disobedience of God, which is destructive of the Prayer. All these are included in the guarding of the Prayer.

35. Such shall be in the Gardens, honored.

أُولَئِكَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ مُّكْرَمُونَ

36. So, what is (the matter) with those who disbelieve, hastening (from) before you.

فَمَا لَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قِبَلَكَ
مُهْطِعِينَ

37. From the right and from the left, in groups.*24

عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ عِزِينَ

***24** This refers to those disbelievers who would rush in towards the Prophet (peace be upon him) from every side to mock and ridicule him when they heard him preach Islam and recite the Quran.

38. Does everyone of them desire that he will be admitted into the garden of delight.*25

أَيَطْمَعُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ
يَدْخَلَ جَنَّةَ نَعِيمٍ

***25** It means that God's Paradise is only for those righteous people whose characteristics have just been described above, Now, can these people who are not at all inclined to listen to the truth and who are rushing in towards the Prophet (peace be upon him) in order to suppress every invitation to the truth, be the candidates for Paradise? Has God prepared His Paradise only for such people as these. Here, one should also keep in view verses 34-41 of Surah Al-Qalam in which an answer has been given to this saying of the disbelievers of Makkah: Even if there is any life after death, we shall have good time there too, as we are having in the world, and the torment would befall Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his followers and not us.

39. Nay, indeed, We have created them from that which they know.*26

كَلَّا إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِمَّا يَعْلَمُونَ

***26** Here, this sentence can have two meanings:
(1) If it is taken to be related to the preceding theme, it will mean: As for the substance these people have been created from, all men are equal. For if the substance itself be the

cause of man's entry into Paradise, then the good and the bad, the wicked and the just, the guilty and the innocent, all should go to Paradise. But a little common sense is enough to decide that man's qualifications for Paradise are created not on the basis of the substance of his creation but only on the basis of his merit and excellence.

(2) If this sentence is regarded as an introduction to the following theme, it would mean: These people think they are secure from Our torment and mock the one who warns them of Our punishment, whereas We can punish them even in this world as and when We please, as well as resurrect them after death as and when We like. They themselves know that We began their creation from an insignificant sperm-drop and developed them into a living man. If they had only considered this mode of their creation, they would never have been involved in the misunderstanding that they now have escaped Our grasp, or that We have no power to create them over again.

40. Not so,^{*27} I swear by the Lord of the easts and the wests,^{*28} We indeed have the power.

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِرَبِّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ
إِنَّا لَقَادِرُونَ

*27 That is, the truth is not that which these people think it is.

*28 Here, Allah has sworn an oath by Himself. The words Easts and Wests have been used because the sun rises and sets at a new angle every day during the year, and goes on rising and setting successively at different times around the globe. Thus considered the Easts and the Wests are not one

but many. From another point of view as against the north and the south there is a direction of east and a direction of west. On this basis in Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayat 28 and Surah Al-Muzzammi1, Ayat 19 the words *Rabb-ul-rnashriqi wal-maghrrib* have been used. From still another view-point the earth has two easts and two wests, for when the sun sets on one hemisphere, it rises on the other. On this basis the words *Rabb-ul-mashriqayn wa Rabb-ul-maghrabayn* (Lord of two easts and two wests) have been used in Surah Ar-Rahman, Ayat 17. (For further explanation, see E.N. 17 of Surah Ar-Rahman).

41. That We can replace (them) with better than them, and We are not to be outdone.*29

عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُبَدِّلَ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَمَا نَحْنُ
بِمَسْبُوقِينَ

*29 This is that for which Allah Almighty has sworn an oath of His being Lord of the Easts and Wests. It means: As We are Owners of the Easts and Wests, the whole earth is under Our control and power, and you have no power to escape Our punishment: We can destroy you as and when We like and can create another people that may be better than you.

42. So leave them to converse vainly, and amuse themselves, until they meet the Day of theirs which they are being promised.

فَذَرَهُمْ تَخَوْضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ
يَلْقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ

43. The Day when they emerge from the graves in haste as if they are racing towards a goal.^{*30}

يَوْمَ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ
سِرَاعًا كَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ نُصُبٍ يُوفِضُونَ



*30 There is a difference of opinion among the commentators about the meaning of the word *nusub*. Some have interpreted it to mean idols, according to which the meaning would be: They would be racing towards the place appointed by the Lord of Resurrection as they race today towards the shrines of their idols; and some others have taken *nusub* to mean the goal signs which are set for the competitors in a race, so that each tries to reach and touch the appointed post before the other.

44. Their eyes downcast, humiliation covering them. That is the Day which they had been promised.

خَشِعَةً أَبْصَرُهُمْ تَرَهِقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ
ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ



نُوح Noah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful
Name

Nooh is the name of this Surah as well as the title of its subject matter, for in it, from beginning to the end, the story of the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) has been related.

Period of Revelation

This is one of the earliest Surahs to be revealed at Makkah, but the internal evidence of its subject matter shows that it was sent down in the period when opposition to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) message of Islam by the disbelievers of Makkah had grown very strong and active.

Theme and Subject

In this surah the story of the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) has not been related only for the sake of story telling, but its object is to warn the disbelievers of Makkah, so as to say: You, O people of Makkah, are adopting towards Muhammad (peace be upon him) the same attitude as the people of the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) had adopted towards him; if you do not change this attitude, you too would meet with the same end. This had not been said in so many words anywhere in the Surah, but in the

background of the conditions under which this story was narrated to the people of Makkah, this subject itself became obvious.

Verses 2-4 briefly explain how he began his mission and what he preached.

Then after suffering hardships and troubles in the way of preaching his mission for ages the report that he made to his Lord has been given in verses 5-20. In it he states how he had been trying to bring his people to the right path and how his people had stubbornly opposed him.

After this, the Prophet Noah's (peace be upon him) final submission has been recorded in verses 21-24, in which he prays to his Lord, saying: These people have rejected my invitation: they are blindly following their chiefs, who have devised a tremendous plot of deceit and cunning. Time now has come when these people should be deprived of every grace to accept guidance. This was not an expression of impatience by the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him), but when after having preached his message under extremely trying circumstances for centuries he became utterly disappointed with his people, he formed the opinion that no chance whatever was left of their coming to the right path. His this opinion fully conformed to Allah's own decision. Thus, in the next verse 25, it has been said: The torment of Allah descended on those people because of their misdeeds. In the concluding verse, the Prophet Noah's (peace be upon him) supplication that he made to his Lord, right at the time the torment descended, has been recorded. In it he prays for his own and for all the believers' forgiveness, and

makes a submission to Allah to the effect: Do not leave any of the disbelievers alive on the earth, for they have become utterly devoid of every good; they will not beget any but disbelieving and wicked descendants.

While studying this Surah one should keep in view the details of the Prophet Noah's story (peace be upon him) which have been given in the Quran above. For this see Surah Al-Araaf, Ayats 59-64; Surah Younus, Ayats 71,73; Surah Houd, Ayats 25-49; Surah Al-Mominoon, Ayats 23-31; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 105-122; Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayats 14,15; Surah As-Saaffat, Ayats 75-82; Surah Al-Qamar, Ayats 9-16.

1. Indeed, We sent Noah to his people, (saying): "Warn your people before that there comes upon them a painful punishment." *1

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ أَنْ
أَنْذِرْ قَوْمَكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

*1 "Warn your people": Warn them that the errors and moral evils that they were involved in would only earn them Allah's punishment if they did not desist from them, and tell them what way they should adopt in order to ward off that punishment.

2. He (Noah) said: "O my people, indeed I am to you a clear warner."

قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

3. "That worship Allah, and fear Him, and obey me." *2

أَنْ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَطِيعُوا

*2 The three things which the Prophet Noah presented before his people at the outset of his mission of Prophethood were:

- (1) Worship of Allah.
- (2) Adoption of piety (taqwa).
- (3) Obedience of the Messenger.

Worship of Allah meant that they should give up worship and service of all others and should acknowledge Allah alone as their Deity and should worship and carry out His commands alone. Taqwa (piety) meant that they should refrain from all those works which caused Allah's anger and displeasure, and should instead adopt such attitude in their lives as the God fearing people should adopt. As for "obey me", it meant that they should obey the commands that he gave them as Allah's Messenger.

4. "He will forgive you of your sins,^{*3} and respite you until a term appointed.^{*4} Indeed, the term of Allah when it comes, cannot be delayed.^{*5} If you (only) knew."^{*6}

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُؤَخِّرْكُمْ
إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ إِذَا
جَاءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ ۗ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ
تَعْلَمُونَ

*3 The sentence *yaghfir la-kum min dhunub-i-kum* in the original does not mean that Allah will forgive some of their sins, but its correct meaning is: If you accept and acknowledge the three things which are being presented before you, He will forgive all the sins that you have committed in the past.

*4 That is, if you accepted these three things, you would be given respite to live in the world until the time that Allah has appointed for your natural death.

*5 “A term appointed”: The time fixed by Allah for sending down a torment on a people. In this regard the Quran has at several places stated explicitly that when Allah’s torment has been decreed for a certain people, they are not pardoned even if they affirm the faith after it.

*6 That is, if you come to know that the time which is now passing after you have received Allah’s message through me is, in fact, a period of respite that has been granted to you for affirming the faith and there is no chance of escape from Allah’s torment after the term of respite has elapsed, you would testify to the faith without delay and would not like to postpone it until the torment actually started descending on you.

5. He said:^{*7} “My Lord, indeed, I called my people night and day.”

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِي لَيْلًا
وَنَهَارًا



*7 Omitting the history of a long period of preaching, now the Prophet Noah’s petition that he made to Allah in the last stage of his worldly mission is being related.

6. “But my calling increased them not except in flight.”^{*8}

فَلَمْ يَزِدْهُمْ دُعَائِي إِلَّا فِرَارًا



*8 That is, as I went on calling them towards You, they went on fleeing farther and farther away from You.

7. “And indeed, whenever I called them that You may forgive them,^{*9} they thrust their fingers into their ears, and covered themselves with their garments,^{*10} and persisted, and became arrogant with greater arrogance.”^{*11}

وَإِنِّي كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ
جَعَلُوا أَصْبِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ
وَاسْتَغْشَوْا ثِيَابَهُمْ وَأَصْرُوا
وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا اسْتِكْبَارًا



***9** “That you may forgive them”: That they might give up their attitude of disobedience and beg forgiveness of Allah, for in that way alone they could be forgiven by Allah.

***10** They covered their faces either because they did not even like to have a look at Prophet Noah’s (peace be upon him) face, not to speak of listening to what he said, or they did so in order to hide their own faces from him as they passed by him so that he could not recognize and address them. This precisely was the attitude and conduct which the disbelievers of Makkah were adopting towards the Prophet (peace be upon him). In Surah Houd, Ayat 5, their attitude has been described thus: Behold, they turn aside their chests in order to hide themselves from him: Beware, even when they cover themselves up with their garments, Allah knows alike what they hide and what they show. He indeed knows even the secrets they conceal in their breasts. (For explanation, see E.Ns 5, 6 of Surah Houd).

***11** Arrogance implies that they thought it was below their dignity to bow before the truth and accept the admonition of Allah’s Messenger. As for example, if a gentleman

admonishes a perverted person and he, in response, shakes his head and walks away haughtily, this would amount to rejecting the admonition with arrogance.

8. “Then indeed, I called them openly.”

ثُمَّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُهُمْ جِهَارًا ﴿٨﴾

9. “Then indeed, I proclaimed to them in public, and I have appealed to them in private.”

ثُمَّ إِنِّي أَعْلَنْتُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرْتُ لَهُمْ إِسْرَارًا ﴿٩﴾

10. And I said: “Seek forgiveness from your Lord. Indeed, He is All Forgiving.”

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ﴿١٠﴾

11. “He will send abundant rains upon you from heaven.”

يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا ﴿١١﴾

12. “And He will give you increase in wealth and children, and will provide for you gardens, and will provide for you rivers.”*12

وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا ﴿١٢﴾

*12 This theme has been expressed at several places in the Quran that the rebellious attitude against God causes man to lead a wretched life not only in the Hereafter but also in this world, Contrary to this, if a nation adopts the way of faith and piety and obedience to divine commands, instead of disobedience, it benefits it not only in the Hereafter but also in the world; it is favored with every kind of blessing. In Surah TaHa it has been said: And whoever turns away

from My admonition, will have a wretched life in the world, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection. (verse 124). In Surah Al-Maidah it has been said: Had the people of the Book observed the Torah and the Gospel and the other Books which had been sent down by their Lord, abundance of provisions would have been given to them from above and from beneath. (verse 66). In Surah Al-Aaraf: Had the people of the settlements believed and adopted the way of piety, We would have opened on them doors of blessings from the heavens and the earth. (verse 96). In Surah Houd, the Prophet Houd (peace be upon him) addressed his people, saying: And O my people, beg forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him in penitence, and He will open the gates of heavens for you and add more strength to your present strength. (verse 52). Through the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself in this very Surah Houd, the people of Makkah have been admonished to the effect: And you should beg forgiveness of your Lord, then return to Him, and He will provide you with good provisions of life till an appointed term. (verse 3). According to the Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to the Quraish: There is a word which if you accept, would enable you to rule over the Arab as well as the non-Arab world. (For explanation, see E.N. 96 of Surah Al-Maidah; E.Ns 3, 57 of Surah Houd; E.N. 105 of TaHa; Introduction to Surah Suad), Acting on this same instruction from the Quran, once during a famine Umar came out to invoke Allah for the rain and begged only forgiveness of Him. The people said: O commander of the

faithful, you have not prayed for the rain. He replied: I have knocked at the doors of heaven wherefrom the rain is sent down, and then he recited these verses of Surah Nooh to them. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir). Likewise, when in the assembly of Hasan Basri, a person complained of drought, he said to him “Beg forgiveness of Allah.” Another person complained of poverty, a third one said that he was not being blessed with children, a fourth one said that his harvest had failed, and he continued to remind everyone to beg forgiveness of Allah. The people asked: How is it that you have suggested to all the people one and the same cure for the different complaints? He in response recited these verses of Surah Nooh to them. (Al-Kashshaf).

13. “What is (the matter) with you that you hope not toward Allah for dignity.”*13

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا

*13 It means: as for the petty chiefs of the world, you think it would be dangerous to do anything against their dignity, but as for the Creator and Lord of the universe, you do not expect that He would also be a Being endowed with dignity. You rebel against Him, associate others in His Divinity, disobey His commands, and yet you are not at all afraid that He would punish you for your misconduct.

14. “Although He has created you in successive stages.”*14

وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا

*14 That is, He has brought you to the present stage after passing you through different stages of creation and phases of development. In the beginning you lay in the form of

sperm and ovum separately in the loins of your father and mother. Then the two were combined by the power of Allah and you were conceived. Then for nine months in the womb of the mother you were gradually formed into a perfect human form and were endowed with all those capabilities which you needed to function as a man in the world. Then you came out as a child from the mother's womb, and you were developed from one state to another constantly until you attained to full youth and then old age. While passing through all these stages you lay wholly in the power of Allah at all times. Had He so willed, He would not have allowed you to be conceived but allowed another person to be conceived in your place. Had He so pleased, He would have made you blind, deaf, dumb, or a cripple in the mother's womb itself, or made you mentally deficient. Had He so liked, you would not have been born as a living child. Even after your birth He could have destroyed you any time by causing you to fall a victim to one or other accident suddenly. About that God under Whose power you are so powerless, how could you have taken it into your head that you could commit any insolence against Him, could regard Him with every treachery and ingratitude, could rebel against Him as and when you pleased, and could do all this with impunity?

15. "Do you not see how Allah has created seven heavens, one above the other."

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ
سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا



16. “And made the moon a light in them, and made the sun a lamp.”

وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ
الشَّمْسَ سِرَاجًا ﴿١٦﴾

17. “And Allah has caused you to grow from the earth as a growth.”*15

وَاللَّهُ أَنْبَتَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ نَبَاتًا
﴿١٧﴾

*15 Here, the creation of man out of the substances of the earth has been compared to the growth of vegetation. Just as at one time there was no vegetation on the earth, then Allah caused it to grow, so at one time man did not exist, then Allah created him.

18. “Then He will return you into it, and He will bring you forth, (a new) forth bringing.”

ثُمَّ يُعِيدُكُمْ فِيهَا وَيُخْرِجُكُمْ
إِخْرَاجًا ﴿١٨﴾

19. “And Allah has made for you the earth wide spread.”

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ بِسَاطًا
﴿١٩﴾

20. “That you may walk therein, in open paths.”

لِتَسْلُكُوا مِنْهَا سُبُلًا فِجَا جًا ﴿٢٠﴾

21. Noah said: “My Lord, they indeed have disobeyed me and have followed those whose wealth and whose children will not increase him except in loss.”

قَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ إِنَّهُمْ عَصَوْنِي
وَاتَّبَعُوا مَنْ لَمْ يَزِدْهُ مَالَهُ وَوَلَدَهُ
إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٢١﴾

22. “And they have plotted a mighty plot.”*16

وَمَكْرُوا مَكْرًا كُبْرًا

*16 “Mighty plot”: All those deceits, deceptions and frauds which the chiefs and religious guides were employing in an attempt to mislead the common people against the teachings of the Prophet Noah. For example, they said: Noah is no more than a mere man like yourselves. How can one believe that Allah sends down Revelations to him? (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 63; Surah Houd, Ayat 27). We also see that only the meanest of us have become his followers without due thought. Had there been some weight in what he says, the elders of the people would have believed in him. (Surah Houd, Ayat 27). Had Allah willed, He would have sent down angels. (Surah Al-Mominoon, Ayat 24). Had he been sent by Allah, he would possess treasures, he would know the unseen, and he would be free from all human needs, like the angels (Surah Houd, Ayat 31). We find nothing in him that might give him superiority over us. (Surah Houd, Ayat 27). He merely intends to obtain superiority over you. (Surah Al-Mominoon, Ayat 24). Obviously, this man is possessed. (Surah Al-Mominoon, Ayat 25). Similar were the things that the Quraish chiefs said to mislead the people against the Prophet (peace be upon him).

23. And they said: “Do not abandon your gods, and do not abandon Wadd, nor Suwa, nor Yaghuth, and Yauq, and Nasr.”*17

وَقَالُوا لَا تَذَرُنَّ ءَالِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا وَلَا سُوَاعًا وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا

*17 Of the gods of the Prophet Noah's people only those gods have been mentioned whom later the people of Arabia had also started worshipping and whose shrines were found all over the country at the advent of Islam. It is not impossible that the later generations heard the names of the ancient gods of Noah's people from the people who were saved from the flood, and when ignorance once again spread among their children, they made idols of the same gods and started worshipping them again. Wadd was the god of the Bani Kalb bin Wabash, a branch of the Qudaah tribe, whose shrine had been built at Daumat al-Jandal. In the ancient Arabian inscriptions he has been named as Waddam ibam (father Wadd). Kalbi has stated that the image built to him was of a man of enormous size. The Quraish also acknowledged him as god and called him Wudd. It is after him that a person has been named Abd-i Wudd (slave of Wudd) in history. Suwa was the goddess of the Hudhayl tribe and her idol was a female figure. Her temple was situated at Ruhat near Yanbu. Yaghuth was the god of Anum, a branch of the Tay tribe, and of some branches of the Madhjih tribe. The people of Madhjih had installed its idol, the image of a lion, at Jurash, a place between Yaman and Hijaz. Among the Quraish also some people had been named Abd-i Yaghuth. Yauq was the god of Khaywan, a branch of the Hamdan tribe, in the territory of Hamdan in Yaman; its idol was of the horse's figure. Nasr was the god of Al-i dhul-Kula, a branch of the Himyar tribe, in the territory of Himyar; it had its idol installed at Balkha and had the image of the vulture. In the ancient

inscriptions of Saba its name has been written as Nador. Its temple was called bayt Nador (house of Nador) and its devotees ahl Nador (people of Nador). The ruins of the ancient temples that are found in Arabia and in the adjoining lands have the image of the vulture made on the doors of most of them.

24. And indeed they have led many astray. And increase not the wrongdoers except in error.*18

وَقَدْ أَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَلَا تَزِدِ
الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا ضَلَالًا



*18 As we have explained in the introduction to this Surah, the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) did not invoke this curse out of impatience but he invoked it when, after doing full justice to the preaching of his mission for many centuries, he became totally despaired of any success with his people. Similar were the conditions under which the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had also cursed Pharaoh and his people, thus: Lord, destroy their wealth and harden their hearts in a manner so that they do not believe until they see the painful torment. And Allah, in response, had said: The prayer of you both has been granted Surah Yunus, Ayats 88-89). Like the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), the Prophet Noah's (peace be upon him) curse was also in complete conformity with divine will. Thus, in Surah Houd, it has been said: And it was revealed to Noah (peace be upon him): No more of your people will believe in you now than those who have already believed. So, do not grieve at their misdeeds. (verse 36).

25. Because of their sins they were drowned, then made to enter into Fire.*19 Then they found none as helper to them besides Allah.*20

مِمَّا خَطِيئَتِهِمْ أُغْرِقُوا فَأَدْخِلُوا
نَارًا فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
أَنْصَارًا



***19** That is, drowning was not their end, but after death their souls were immediately subjected to the punishment of the Fire. This precisely was the treatment that was meted out to Pharaoh and his people, as has been stated in Surah Al-Momin, Ayats 45-46. (For explanation, see E.N. 63 of Surah Al-Momin). This verse also is of those verses which prove the punishment of *barzakh* (intermediary stage between death and Resurrection).

***20** That is, none of the gods whom they looked upon as their supporters and helpers came to their rescue. This, in fact, was a warning to the people of Makkah, as if to say: If you too are subjected to the torment of Allah, these gods on whom you have placed all your reliance, will avail you absolutely nothing.

26. And Noah said: “My Lord, leave not on the earth from among the disbelievers any dweller.”

وَقَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَيَّ
الْأَرْضَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ دَيَّارًا



27. “Indeed, if you leave them, they would lead Your servants astray, and would beget none except sinners, disbelievers.”

إِنَّكَ إِنْ تَذَرَهُمْ يُضِلُّوا عِبَادَكَ
وَلَا يَلِدُوا إِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا



28. “My Lord, forgive me and my parents and whoever has entered my house as a believer, and all believing men and all believing women, and increase not the wrongdoers in anything except in ruin.”

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِمَن
دَخَلَ بَيْتِي مُؤْمِنًا وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَلَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا

تَبَارًا



Al-Jinn

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

Al-Jinn is the name of this Surah as well as the title of its subject matter, for in it the event of the Jinn's hearing of the Quran and returning to their people to preach Islam to them, has been related in detail.

Period of Revelation

According to a tradition related in Bukhari and Muslim, on the authority of Abdullah bin Abbas, once the Prophet (peace be upon him) was going to visit the Fair of Ukaz with some of his companions, On the way he led the Fajr Prayer at Nakhlah. At that time a company of the jinn happened to pass that way. When they heard the Quran being recited, they tarried and listened to it attentively. This very event has been described in this Surah.

Most of the commentators, on the basis of this tradition, believe that this relates to the Prophet's well known journey to Taif, which had taken place three years before the Hijrah in the 10th year of the Prophethood. But this is not correct for several reasons. The jinn's hearing the Quran during the journey to Taif has been related in Surah

Al-Ahqaf, Ayats 29-32. A cursory reading of those verses shows that the jinn who had believed after hearing the Quran on that occasion were already believers in the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and the previous scriptures. On the contrary, verses 2-7 of this Surah clearly show that the jinn who heard the Quran on this occasion were polytheists and deniers of the Hereafter and Prophethood. Then, it is confirmed historically that in his journey to Taif none accompanied the Prophet (peace be upon him) except Zaid bin Harithah. On the contrary, concerning this journey Ibn Abbas says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was accompanied by some of his companions. Furthermore, the traditions also agree that in that journey the jinn heard the Quran when the Prophet (peace be upon him) had stopped at Nakhlah on his return journey from Taif to Makkah, and in this journey, according to the traditions of Ibn Abbas, the event of the jinn's hearing the Quran occurred when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was going to Ukaz from Makkah. Therefore, in view of these reasons what seems to be correct is that in Surah Al-Ahqaf and Surah Al-Jinn, one and the same event has not been narrated, but these were two separate events, which took place during two separate journeys.

As far as Surah Al-Ahqaf is concerned, it is agreed that the event mentioned in it occurred on the return journey from Taif in the 10th year of Prophethood. As for the question, when this second event took place, its answer is not given by the tradition of Ibn Abbas, nor any other historical tradition shows as to when the Prophet (peace be upon him)

had gone to the Fair of Ukaz along with some of his companions. However, a little consideration of verses 8-10 of this Surah shows that this could only be an event of the earliest stage of Prophethood. In these verses it has been stated that before the appointment of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to divine mission the jinn used to have one or another opportunity to eavesdrop in the heavens in order to hear news of the unseen, but after it they suddenly found that angels had been set as guards and meteorites were being shot on every side so that they could find no place of safety from where they could hear the secret news. Thereupon they had set about searching for the unusual thing that had occurred on the earth, or was going to occur, because of which the security measures had been tightened up. Probably since then many companies of the jinn must have been moving about in search of the unusual occurrence and one of them after having heard the Quran from the Prophet (peace be upon him) must have formed the opinion that that was the very thing for the sake of which all the gates of the heavens had been shut against the jinn.

Reality of Jinn

Before one starts the study of this Surah one must clearly know, what is the reality of the jinn so as to avoid any possible confusion. Many people of the modern times are involved in the misunderstanding that the jinn are not real, but only a figment of the ancient superstition and myths. They have not formed this opinion on the basis that they have known all the realities and truth about the universe

and have thus discovered that the jinn do not exist. They cannot claim to possess any such knowledge either. But they have assumed without reason and proof that nothing exists in the universe except what they can see, whereas the sphere of human perceptions as against the vastness of this great universe is not even comparable to a drop of water as against the ocean. Here, the person who thinks that what he does not perceive does not exist, and what exists must necessarily be perceived, in fact, provides a proof of the narrowness of his own mind. With this mode of thought, not to speak of the jinn, man cannot even accept and acknowledge any reality, which he cannot directly experience and observe, and he cannot even admit the existence of God, to say nothing of admitting any other unseen reality.

Those of the Muslims who have been influenced by modernism, but cannot deny the Quran either, have given strange interpretations of the clear statements of the Quran about the jinn, Iblis and Satan. They say that this does not refer to any hidden creation, which may have its own independent existence, but it sometimes implies man's own animal forces, which have been called Satan, and sometimes it implies savage and wild mountain tribes, and sometimes the people who used to listen to the Quran secretly. But the statements of the Quran in this regard are so clear and explicit that these interpretations bear no relevance to them whatsoever.

The Quran frequently mentions the jinn and the men in a manner as to indicate that they are two separate creations.

For this, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 38; Surah Houd, Ayat 119; Surah HaMim As-Sajdah, Ayats 25, 29; Surah Al-Ahqaf, Ayat 18; Surah Adh-Dhariyat, Ayat 56, and the entire Surah Ar-Rahman, which bears such clear evidence as to leave no room to regard the jinn as a human species.

In Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 12; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 26, 27 and Surah Ar-Rahman, Ayats 14-19, it has been expressly stated that man was created out of clay and jinn out of fire.

In Surah Al-Hijr, Ayat 27, it has been said that the jinn had been created before man. The same thing is testified by the story of Adam and Iblis, which has been told at seven different places in the Quran, and at every place it confirms that Iblis was already there at the creation of man. Moreover, in Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 50, it has been stated that Iblis belonged to the jinn.

In Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 27, it has been stated in clear words that the jinn see the human beings but the human beings do not see them.

In Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 16-18; Surah As-Saaffat, Ayats 6-10 and Surah Al-Mulk, Ayat 5, it has been said that although the jinn can ascend to the heavens, they cannot exceed a certain limit. If they try to ascend beyond that limit and try to hear what goes on in the heavens, they are not allowed to do so. And if they try to eavesdrop, they are driven away by meteorites. By this the belief of the polytheistic Arabs that the jinn possess the knowledge of the unseen or have access to divine secrets has been refuted. The same error has also been refuted in Surah Saba, Ayat 14.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 30-34 and Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat

50 show that Allah has entrusted man with the vicegerency of the earth and the men are superior to the jinn. Although, the jinn have also been given certain extraordinary powers and abilities an example of which is found in Surah An-Naml, Ayat 39, yet likewise some animals have been given some powers greater than man, but these are no arguments that the animals are superior to man.

The Quran also explains that the jinn, like men, are a creation possessed of power and authority, and they, just like them, can choose between obedience and disobedience, faith and disbelief. This is confirmed by the story of Satan and the event of the jinn affirming the faith as found in Surahs Al-Ahqaf and Al-Jinn.

At scores of places in the Quran, it has also been stated that Iblis at the very creation of Adam had resolved to misguide mankind, and since then the Satanic jinn have been persistently trying to mislead man, but they do not have the power to overwhelm him and make him do something forcibly. However, they inspire him with evil suggestions, beguile him and make evil seem good to him. For this, see Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 117-120; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 11-17; Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 22; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 30-42; Surah An-Nahl, Ayats 98-100; Surah Bani-Israil, Ayats 61-65.

The Quran also tells us that in the pre-Islamic ignorance, the polytheistic Arabs regarded the jinn as associates of God, worshiped them and thought they were descended from God. For this, see Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 100; Surah Saba, Ayats 40-41; Surah As-Saffat, Ayat 158.

From these details, it becomes abundantly clear that the jinn have their own objective existence and are a hidden creation of an entirely different species from man. Because of their mysterious qualities, ignorant people have formed exaggerated notions and concepts about them and their powers, and have even worshiped them, but the Quran has explained the whole truth about them which shows what they are and what they are not.

Theme and Topics

In this Surah in verses 1-15 it has been told, what was the impact of the Quran on the company of the jinn when they heard it, and what they said to their fellow jinn when they returned to them. Allah, in this connection, has not cited their whole conversation but only those particular things which were worthy of mention. That is why the style is not that of a continuous speech but sentences have been cited so as to indicate that they said this and this. If one studies these sentences spoken by the jinn carefully, one can easily understand the real object of the narration of this event of their affirming the faith and or mentioning this conversation of theirs with their people in the Quran. The explanations that we have given of their statements in our notes will be of further help in understanding this object.

After this, in verses 16-18, the people have been admonished to the effect: If you refrain from polytheism and follow the way of righteousness firmly, you will be blessed; otherwise if you turn away from the admonition sent down by Allah, you will meet with a severe punishment. Then, in verses 19-23, the disbelievers of Makkah have been reproached, as if

to say: When the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah calls you towards Allah, you surround and mob him from every side, whereas the only duty of the Messenger (peace be upon him) is to convey the messages of Allah. He does not claim to have any power to bring any gain or cause any harm to the people. Then, in verses 24-25 the disbelievers have been warned to the effect: Today you are trying to overpower and suppress the Messenger (peace be upon him) seeing that he is helpless and friendless, but a time will come when you will know who in fact is helpless and friendless. Whether that time is yet far off, or near at hand, the Messenger (peace be upon him) has no knowledge thereof, but it will come to pass in any case. In conclusion, the people have been told: The Knower of the unseen is Allah alone. The Messenger (peace be upon him) receives only that knowledge which Allah is pleased to give him. This knowledge pertains to matters connected with the performance of the duties of Prophethood and it is delivered to him in such security which does not admit of any external interference whatsoever.

1. Say: "It has been revealed to me that a group of the jinn listened."^{*1} Then they said: "We have indeed heard a wonderful Quran."^{*2}

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ
الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْءَانَ عَجَبًا



^{*1} This shows that the jinn at that time were not visible to the Prophet (peace be upon him), nor he knew that they were hearing the Quran being recited, but Allah informed

him of the incident afterwards by revelation. Abdullah bin Abbas has also, in connection with this incident, stated: The Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah had not recited the Quran before the jinn, nor did he see them. (Muslim, Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarir).

*2 The words in the original are: Quran-un-ajaba, which means “something which is read again and again”, and the jinn probably used this word in this very meaning, for they were introduced to this divine revelation for the first time, and they did not perhaps know then that what they were hearing, was the Quran itself. Ajab is a superlative, which is used in Arabic for a wonderful thing. So, what the jinn said means: We have heard such a wonderful recital which is unique both in its language and in its subject-matter. This also shows that the jinn not only hear what human beings say but also understand their language, although it is not necessary that all the jinn might know all the human languages. It is possible that those of them who live in a particular region of the earth might know the language of the people of that region. But in any case this statement of the Quran clearly shows that the jinn who listened to the Quran at that time were so conversant with the Arabic language that they not only appreciated the matchless eloquence of the divine word but also understood its sublime subject-matter.

2. “It guides to the right way, so we have believed in it. And we shall never associate with our Lord anyone.”*3

يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا



***3 This throws light on several things:**

(1) That the jinn do not deny Allah's existence and His being Lord and Sustainer.

(2) That among them there are polytheists also, who like polytheistic human beings ascribe divinity to others than Allah: thus, the community of the jinn whose members heard the Quran was polytheistic.

(3) That the Prophethood and revelation of divine scriptures does not exist among the jinn, but whoever of them believe, they believe in the Prophets raised among human beings and in the Books brought by them. This same thing is confirmed by Surah Al-Ahqaf, Ayats 29-30, where it has been stated that the jinn who had then heard the Quran, were from among the followers of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), and they after having heard the Quran, had invited their people to believe in the revelation that had been sent down by God confirming the previous scriptures. Surah Ar-Rahman also points to the same, for its whole subject-matter shows that the audience of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) invitation are both the men and the jinn.

3. "And that our Lord's majesty is exalted. He has not taken a wife, nor a son."*4

وَأَنَّهُ تَعَالَىٰ جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ

صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا



***4 From this we know two things:**

(1) That these jinn were either from among the Christian jinn, or they were followers of a different religion in which Allah was regarded as having children and families.

(2) That at that time the Prophet (peace be upon him) was reciting some such part of the Quran hearing which they realized the error of their creed and knew that it was sheer ignorance and impudence to ascribe wife and children to the High and Exalted Being of Allah.

4. “And that our foolish one^{*5} has been saying an atrocious lie against Allah.”

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ يَقُولُ سَفِيهُنَا عَلَى
اللَّهِ شَطَطًا

*5 The word *safihuna* as used in the text can be spoken for an individual as well as for a group. If it is taken for a foolish individual, it would imply Iblis and if for a group, it would imply a group of foolish jinn who said such things.

5. “And that we thought that the mankind and the jinn would never utter a lie against Allah.”^{*6}

وَأَنَّا ظَنَنَّا أَن لَّن تَقُولَ الْإِنسُ
وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا

*6 That is, we were misled by those falsehoods because we could never think that the men or the jinn could ever dare forge a lie about Allah, but having heard this Quran we now know that they were, in fact, liars.

6. “And that there were people among the mankind who used to seek refuge with people among the jinn, so they increased them in revolt.”^{*7}

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنسِ
يَعُودُونَ بَرِّجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ
فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقًا

*7 Ibn Abbas says that in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance

when the Arabs had to spend a night in some uninhabited, desolate valley, they would shout out: We seek refuge of the jinn, who is owner of this valley. In other traditions of the pre-Islamic ignorance also the same thing has been reported frequently. For example, if in a place they ran short of water and fodder, the wandering Bedouins would send one of their men to some other place to see if water and fodder were available; and when they reached the new site under his direction, they would shout out before they halted to pitch the camp: We seek refuge of the sustainer of this valley so that we may live here in peace from every calamity. They believed that every un-inhabited place was under the control of one or another jinn and if someone stayed there without seeking his refuge, the jinn would either himself trouble the settlers, or would let others trouble them. These believing jinn are referring to this very thing. They meant that when man, the vicegerent of the earth, started fearing them without any reason, and started seeking their refuge instead of God's, it caused their people to become even more arrogant, haughty and wicked, and they became even more fearless and bold in adopting error and disbelief.

7. “And that they had thought, as you thought, that Allah would never send anyone (as a messenger).”^{*8}

وَأَنَّهُمْ ظَنُّوا كَمَا ظَنَنْتُمْ أَن لَّنْ
يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ أَحَدًا

*8 Another meaning of this sentence can be: Allah will not resurrect anyone after death. As the words are comprehensive, they can be taken to mean that, as among

human beings, so among the jinn were those who denied both the Prophethood and the Hereafter. However, in view of the theme that follows, the meaning that we have given in the text above is preferable, for according to it these believing jinn tell the people of their community: Your view is proved wrong that Allah will not appoint anyone as a Messenger. In fact, the gates of heavens have been closed on us only because Allah has already appointed a Messenger.

8. “And that we have sought (to reach) the heaven, but found it filled with stern guards and burning flames.”

وَأَنَا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَهَا
مُلَعَّتْ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهَبًا

9. “And that we used to sit there in stations for hearing (eavesdropping), but whoever listens now, he finds for him a burning flam lying in ambush.”*9

وَأَنَا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقْعِدًا
لِلسَّمْعِ فَمَنْ يَسْتَمِعِ الْآنَ يَجِدْ
لَهُ شِهَابًا رَّصَدًا

*9 This is the reason why these jinn were now out searching as to what particularly had happened or was going to happen on the earth, which had necessitated strict security measures against eavesdropping so that they were driven away from wherever they tried to eavesdrop in any way.

10. “And that we do not know whether evil is intended for those on earth, or their Lord intends for them the right way.”*10

وَأَنَا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرٌّ أُرِيدُ بِمَنْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا

***10** This shows that such extraordinary measures were adopted in the heavens only on two kinds of occasions. First, when Allah might decide to inflict the dwellers of the earth with a torment, and the divine will might be that before it was actually inflicted the jinn might not know and convey its news to warn their friendly human beings of the impending disaster. Second, that Allah might appoint a Messenger on the earth, and strict security measures might be adopted so that neither the messages being conveyed to him be interfered with by the satans nor should they be able to know beforehand what instructions were being given to the Messenger. Thus, the saying of the jinn means: When we noticed that strict security measures had been adopted in the heavens for the safeguard of the news, and the meteorites were being showered profusely, we wanted to know which of the two things had happened: Whether Allah had caused a torment to descend suddenly on some people of the earth, or a Messenger had been raised somewhere on the earth. We were on the lookout for the same when we heard the wonderful revelation, which guides to the right path, and we came to know that Allah had not sent down a torment but had raised a Messenger to show the right way to the people. For further explanation, see E.Ns 8 to 12 of Surah Al-Hijr; E.N. 7 of Surah As-Saaffat and E.N. 11 of Surah Al-Mulk).

11. “And that among us are righteous, and among us are otherwise. We are sects having divided ways.”*11

وَأَنَا مِنَّا الصَّالِحُونَ وَمِنَّا دُونَ
ذَلِكَ كُنَّا طَرَائِقَ قَدَدًا



***11** That is, morally there are also good and bad jinn among us, and from the viewpoint of creed as well, all do not follow one and the same religion, but we are divided into different groups. With these words the believing jinn want to convince the other jinn of their community that they certainly stood in need of finding out the right way and could not dispense with this need.

12. “And that we think that we can neither escape Allah in the earth, nor can we escape Him by flight.”*12

وَأَنَا ظَنْنَا أَنْ لَنْ نُعْجِزَ اللَّهَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَلَنْ نُعْجِزَهُ هَرَبًا

***12** That is, we were led by this very idea to the way of success. As we were not fearless of Allah and we believed that we would not be able to avoid His punishment if we disobeyed Him. So when we heard the divine revelation that had been sent to show the right way, we could not have the courage and boldness to persist in the beliefs that our foolish people had spread among us after we have known the truth.

13. “And that when we heard the guidance (the Quran), we believed in it. So whoever believes in his Lord, will not fear deprivation, nor injustice.”*13

وَأَنَا لَمَّا سَمِعْنَا الْهُدَىٰ ءَامَنَّا
بِهِ فَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِرَبِّهِ فَلَا يَخَافُ
مَخْسًا وَلَا رَهَقًا

***13** Fear of deprivation: Fear of being given a lesser reward than what one actually deserves for one's good deeds. Injustice: That one may be deprived of the reward for the good deeds done but duly punished for the errors

committed or punished innocent; no believer has any fear of such an injustice from Allah.

14. “And that among us are those who have surrendered (to Allah), and among us are unjust. So whoever has surrendered, then such have sought the right way.”

وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَمِنَا
الْقَاسِطُونَ فَمَنْ أَسْلَمَ فَأُولَئِكَ
تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا



15. “And as for the unjust, they will be firewood for Hell.”*14

وَأَمَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ فَكَانُوا لِجَهَنَّمَ
حَطَبًا



*14 Here, one may ask: When, according to the Quran, the jinn have been created from the fire, what harm can the fire of Hell do them? The answer is: Even according to the Quran, man has been created out of the earth; why does then man feel hurt when a clod of earth is thrown at him? The truth is that although the whole body of man has been made from the earthly substances, when a living man of flesh and blood is molded from them he becomes an entirely different thing from those substances; then other things made from the same substances become a means of causing harm to him. Likewise, although the jinn have also been created from the fire, when a living and sentient creation has been made from it, the same fire becomes a means of causing harm and hurt for it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 15 of Surah Ar-Rahman).

16. And^{*15} that If they had been steadfast on the right way, We would have given them to drink abundant water.^{*16}

وَأَلَوْ اسْتَقَمُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ
لَأَسْقَيْنَهُمْ مَاءً غَدَقًا

*15 The conversation of the jinn having come to an end, with this begins the speech of Allah.

*16 This is the same thing as has been said in Surah Nooh, Ayats 10-11. Seek forgiveness of Allah. He will send abundant rains for you from heaven. (For explanation, see E.N. 12 of Surah Nooh). Abundance of water has been used for abundance of blessings metaphorically for human life, and habitations also depend on water. Without water there can be no human settlement, nor can man's basic needs be fulfilled, nor his industries work and prosper.

17. That We might try them by that (blessing).^{*17} And whoever turns away from the remembrance of his Lord,^{*18} He shall cause him to enter in a severe punishment.

لِنَفْتِنُهُمْ فِيهِ^ج وَمَنْ يُعْرِضْ عَن ذِكْرِ
رَبِّهِ، يَسْلُكْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا

*17 We might try them by that blessing: We might see whether they remain grateful after having received the blessing or not, and whether they put Our blessing to right use or not.

*18 Turns away from the remembrance of his Lord, means that one may reject the advice and admonition sent down by Allah, or one may disdain giving ear to Allah's remembrance, or one may turn away from His worship.

18. And that the mosques are for Allah, so do not call upon along with Allah anyone.*19

وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ
اللَّهِ أَحَدًا



*19 The commentators generally have taken mosques to mean the places of worship. Accordingly, the verse means: None should be associated in the worship of Allah in the places of worship. Hasan Basri says: The entire earth is a place of worship, and the verse means to say: Polytheism ought not to be committed anywhere on God's earth, He has reasoned out this meaning from the Prophet's (peace be upon him) Hadith: For me the entire earth has been made a place of worship and a means of obtaining purity. Saeed bin Jubair has interpreted masajid to imply the parts of the body on which one prostrates oneself, i.e. the hands, the knees, toes and forehead. According to this explanation, the verse means: These limbs have been made by Allah; no one should prostrate oneself on these before anyone other than Allah.

19. And that when the servant of Allah*20 stood up supplicating Him, they crowded on him, almost stifling.

وَأَنَّهُ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يَدْعُوهُ
كَادُوا يُكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَدًا



*20 Servant of Allah: the Prophet (peace be upon him).

20. Say: "I only call upon my Lord, and I do not associate anyone with Him."*21

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَدْعُوا رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ
أَحَدًا



***21** That is, to call upon Allah is no objectionable thing, which may so provoke the people. The evil thing, however, is that one should associate another with Allah in His divinity, and this I never do; this is done by those who mob and surround me when they hear God mentioned by me.

21. Say: “Indeed, I have no power to cause any harm for you, nor any good.”

قُلْ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا رَشَدًا ﴿٢١﴾

22. Say: “Indeed, none can protect me from Allah, nor can I find other than Him any refuge.”

قُلْ إِنِّي لَنْ يُجِيرَنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ أَحَدٌ وَلَنْ أَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا ﴿٢٢﴾

23. “(Mine is) but to convey from Allah and His messages.^{*22} And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, then indeed, for him is the fire of Hell, they shall abide therein forever.”^{*23}

إِلَّا بَلَاغًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِسَالَاتِهِ^ج وَمَنْ يَعَصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ^ج فَإِنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا أَبَدًا ﴿٢٣﴾

***22** That is, I do not claim to have any share or role in the Godhead of Allah, nor that I possess any power in making or marring the people’s destinies. I am only a Messenger and the mission that has been entrusted to me is no more than that I should convey the messages of Allah to you. As for the powers of Godhead, they wholly belong to Allah. Not to speak of benefiting or harming others, I do not have the power to cause good or harm even to myself. If I

disobey Allah, I cannot seek and have refuge anywhere from His punishment, and I have no helper and protector beside Allah. (For further explanation, see E.N. 7 of Surah Ash-Shura).

***23** This does not mean that every sin and act of disobedience will cause one to live in Hell forever, but in view of the context in which this thing has been said, the verse means: the one who does not accept the invitation to Tauhid given by Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and does not refrain from polytheism will suffer in Hell forever.

24. Until when they see that which they are promised, then they shall know who is weaker in helpers and fewer in number. ^{*24}

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ
فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ أَضْعَفُ نَاصِرًا
وَأَقْلُّ عَدَدًا

***24** The background of this verse is that those of the Quraish who used to mob and surround the Prophet (peace be upon him) as soon as they heard his invitation calling to Allah were under the delusion that they had a strong band at their back and that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had only a handful of men with him, and therefore, they would easily overwhelm him. At this it is being said: Today these people find the Messenger (peace be upon him) helpless and friendless and they themselves supported and strengthened by great hosts and, therefore, feel encouraged and emboldened to suppress the invitation to the truth. But when the evil time with which they are being threatened

comes, they will know who in fact is helpless and friendless.

25. Say: "I do not know if that which you are promised is near, or if my Lord appoints a lengthy term for it."*25

قُلْ إِن أَدْرِي أَقْرِبُ مَا
تُوعَدُونَ أَمْ يَجْعَلُ لَهُ رَبِّي أَمَدًا



*25 The style itself shows that this is an answer which has been given without citing the question. Probably, hearing what has been said above, the opponents might have asked mockingly and tauntingly: When will the time come with which you are threatening us. In response, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was commanded to say: The time will certainly come, but I have not been told the date of its coming. Allah alone knows whether it will come soon or whether a distant term has been set for it.

26. The Knower of the unseen, and He does not reveal His unseen (secrets) to anyone.*26

عَلِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى
غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا



*26 That is, the knowledge of the unseen entirely rests with Allah: He does not give the whole of this knowledge to anyone.

27. Except to a messenger whom He has chosen.*27 Then indeed, He appoints before him and behind him guards.*28

إِلَّا مَنْ أَرْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ
يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ
رَصَدًا



***27** That is, the Messenger (peace be upon him) by himself is no knower of the unseen, but when Allah chooses him to perform the mission of Prophethood, He grants him the knowledge of those of the unseen truths which He is pleased to grant.

***28** Guards: Angels, that is, when Allah sends down the knowledge of the unseen realities to the Messenger (peace be upon him) by revelation, He appoints angels on every side to safeguard it so that the knowledge reaches the Messenger in a safe condition, free from any kind of adulteration. This is the same thing which has been expressed in verses 8-9 above, saying: After the appointment of the Messenger (peace be upon him) the jinn found that all the doors to the heavens had been closed, and they noticed that strict security measures had been adopted because of which no room had been left for them to eavesdrop.

28. That He may know that indeed they have conveyed the messages of their Lord,^{*29} and He encompasses whatever is with them, and He keeps count of all things.^{*30}

لَيَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رَسُولَ رَبِّهِمْ
وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَى كُلَّ
شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا



***29** This can have three meanings:

(1) That the Messenger (peace be upon him) may know that the angels have delivered the messages of Allah to him precisely and accurately.

(2) That Allah may know that the angels have conveyed the

messages of their Lord to His Messenger (peace be upon him) precisely and accurately.

(3) That Allah may know that the Messenger (peace be upon him) has conveyed the messages of his Lord to His servants precisely and accurately.

The words of the verse are comprehensive and may possibly imply all the three meanings. Besides, the verse also points out two other things. First, that the Messenger (peace be upon him) is given that knowledge of the unseen which is necessary for him to perform his mission of Prophethood. Second, that the angels keep watch that the revelation reaches the Messenger (peace be upon him) safely and also that the Messenger (peace be upon him) conveys the messages of his Lord to His servants precisely and accurately.

***30** That is, Allah's power so encompasses the Messenger (peace be upon him) as well as the angels that if they swerve even a little from His will, they can be detected immediately. Moreover, a complete record has been kept of each letter of the messages sent down by Allah. The Messengers (peace be upon him) and the angels cannot dare add or subtract even a letter from them.





Al-Muzzammil

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah has been so designated after the word *al-muzzammil* occurring in the very first verse. This is only a name and not a title of its subject matter.

Period of Revelation

The two sections of this Surah were revealed in two separate periods.

The first section (verses 1-19) is unanimously a Makki revelation, and this is supported both by its subject matter and by the traditions of the Hadith. As for the question, in which specific period of the life at Makkah it was revealed, it is not answered by the tradition, but the internal evidence of the subject matter of this section helps to determine the period of its revelation.

First, in it the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been instructed to the effect: Arise during the night and worship Allah so that you may develop the capability to shoulder the heavy burden of Prophethood and to discharge its responsibilities. This shows that this command must have been given in the earliest period of the Prophethood when

training was being imparted to the Prophet (peace be upon him) by Allah for this office.

Secondly, a command has been given in it that the Quran be recited in, the *tahajjud* Prayer for half the night, or thereabout. This command by itself points out that by that time at least so much of the Quran had been revealed as could be recited for that long.

Thirdly, in this section the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been exhorted to have patience at the excesses being committed by his opponents, and the disbelievers of Makkah have been threatened with the torment. This shows that this section was revealed at a time when the Prophet (peace be upon him) had openly started preaching Islam and the opposition to him at Makkah had grown active and strong.

About the second section (verse 20) although many of the commentators have expressed the opinion that this too was sent down at Makkah, yet some other commentators regard it as a Madani revelation, and this same opinion is confirmed by the subject matter of this section. For it mentions fighting in the way of Allah, and obviously, there could be no question of it at Makkah; it also contains the command to pay the obligatory zakat, and it is fully confirmed that the zakat at a specific rate and with an exemption limit (*nisab*) was enjoined at Al-Madinah.

Theme and Subject Matter

In the first seven verses the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been commanded to the effect: Prepare yourself to shoulder the responsibilities of the great mission that has

been entrusted to you. Its practical form is that you should rise during the hours of night and stand up in Prayer for half the night, or for a little more or less of it.

In verses 8-14, he has been exhorted to the effect: Devote yourself exclusively to that God Who is the Owner of the whole universe. Entrust all your affairs to Him with full satisfaction of the heart. Bear with patience whatever your opponents may utter against you. Do not be intimate with them. Leave their affair to God. He Himself will deal with them.

Then, in verses 15-19, those of the people of Makkah, who were opposing the Prophet (peace be upon him) have been warned, so as to say: We have sent a Messenger to you just as We sent a Messenger to the Pharaoh. Just consider what fate the Pharaoh met when he did not accept the invitation of the Messenger of Allah. Supposing that you are not punished by a torment in this world, how will you save yourselves from the punishment for disbelief on the Day of Resurrection.

This is the subject matter of the first section. The second section, according to a tradition from Saaid bin Jubair, was sent down ten years later, and in it the initial command given in connection with the *tahajjud* Prayer, in the beginning of the first section, was curtailed. The new command enjoined: Offer as much of the Tahajjud Prayer as you easily can, but what the Muslims should particularly mind and attend to is the five times obligatory Prayer a day; they should establish it regularly and punctually; they should discharge their zakat dues accurately; and they

should spend their wealth with sincere intentions for the sake of Allah. In conclusion, the Muslims have been exhorted, saying: Whatever good works you do in the world, will not go waste, but they are like the provision which a traveler sends up in advance to his permanent place of residence. Whatever good you send up from the world, you will find it with Allah, and the provision thus sent up is much better than what you will have to leave behind in the world, and with Allah you will also get a much better and richer reward than what you have actually sent up before.

1. O you wrapped up in garments.*¹

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُرْمَلُ

*1 To address the Prophet (peace be upon him) with these words and then to command him to rise and keep standing in the Prayer at night, shows that at the time he either lay asleep, or had wrapped himself up in a sheet in order to go to sleep. Here, to address him with: O you who sleeps wrapped up instead of with: O Prophet, or O Messenger, is a fine way of address, which by itself gives the meaning: Gone is the time when you used to enjoy peaceful sleep at will; now you lie under the burden of a great mission, whose demands and duties are different as well as onerous.

2. Stand (in prayer) at night except a little.*²

قُمْ آيِلًا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

*2 This can have two meanings:

- (1) Pass the night standing up in the Prayer and spend only a little of it in sleep.
- (2) There is no demand from you to pass the whole night in

the Prayer, but have rest as well and spend a little part of the night in worship too. But in view of the theme that follows the first meaning seems to be more relevant, and the same is supported by Surah Ad-Dahr, Ayat 26, in which it has been said: Prostrate yourself before Him in the night and glorify Him during the long hours of night.

3. Half of it, or lessen from it a little.

نِصْفَهُ رَأَوْ أَنْقَصَ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا

4. Or add to it,^{*3} and recite the Quran with measured recitation.^{*4}

أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا

***3** This is an explanation of the duration of time commanded to be spent in worship. In it the Prophet (peace be upon him) was given the option to spend half of the night in the Prayer, or a little less than that, or a little more than that. But the style shows that half the night has been regarded as preferable, for the measure is the same, which may be decreased or increased, as the people may like and choose.

***4** Recite the Quran: Do not recite it quickly and in haste, but slowly and distinctly: pause at every verse so that the mind understands the meaning and purport of divine revelation well and takes effect from it. If it contains the mention of Allah's Being and Attributes, it may awe-inspire the heart with His glory and majesty. If it expresses His mercy, the heart may be filled with feelings of gratitude to Him. If it mentions His wrath and His punishment, the heart may be overwhelmed by fear of Him. If it enjoins

something or forbids something, one may understand what has been enjoined and what has been forbidden. In short, the recital does not only consist in uttering the words with the tongue, but it should involve thoughtful consideration of the meaning. When Anas was asked about the Prophet's (peace be upon him) method of reciting the Quran, he replied: The Messenger (peace be upon him) stretched the words when reciting them. For example, when he recited *Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim*, he would stretch and prolong the sound of Allah, Rahman and Rahim (Bukhari). When Umm Salamah was asked the same question, she replied that the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited every verse separately and distinctly and observed a pause at the end of every verse. For instance, he recited *Al-hamdu-lillahi Rabbil-amin*, and paused, then recited *ar-Rahmanir-Rahim*, and paused, and then recited *Maliki-yaumid-din*. (Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi). In another tradition, Umm Salamah has stated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited each word distinctly and clearly. (Tirmidhi, Nasai). Hudhaifah bin Yaman says: Once I stood beside the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the night Prayer to see how he recited the Quran. I noticed that he glorified Allah where He should be glorified, invoked and supplicated Allah where He should be invoked and supplicated, and sought refuge of Allah where His refuge should be sought. (Muslim, Nasai). Abu Dharr has stated that once during the night Prayer when the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to the sentence: *in-to-adhdhib-hum ...* (If You punish them, then they are Your servants; and if You

forgive them, then You are Almighty, All-Wise), he went on repeating it over and over again until it became dawn. (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhari).

5. Indeed, We shall send down upon you a heavy word.*5

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا



*5 That is, you are being commanded to stand up in the night Prayer because We are going to send down on you a weighty word, to bear the burden of which you must develop necessary power in yourself, and you can develop this power only by abandoning your ease and comfort of the night and by standing up in the Prayer and passing half the night or thereabout in the worship of your Lord. The Quran has also been called a weighty word for the reason that acting on its commands, demonstrating its teaching practically, extending its invitation in the face of the whole world, and bringing about a revolution in the entire system of belief and thought, morals and manners, civilization and social life, according to it, is indeed the weightiest task any human being ever has been charged with. It has also been called a weighty word because bearing the burden of its revelation was a difficult and heavy duty. Zaid bin Thabit says: Once revelation came down upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a state when he was resting his head upon my knee. I felt such a pressure of the weight on my knee that I thought it would break. Aishah says: I have seen the state of the Prophet's receiving revelation during intense cold, drops of perspiration started falling from his

forehead. (Bukhari, Muslim, Malik, Tirmidhi, Nasai). In another tradition Aishah has stated: Whenever revelation came down on the Prophet (peace be upon him) while he was riding on his she-camel, the she-camel would be forced to rest her chest on the ground and could not move until the revelation was over. (Musnad Ahmad. Hakim, Ibn Jarir).

6. Indeed, the rising by night^{*6} is more effective for controlling the self,^{*7} and more suitable for words.^{*8}

إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْأًا
وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلاً



*6 About the meaning of the word *nashiat allail*, as used in the original, the commentators and lexicographers have expressed four different viewpoints:

- (1) That *nashiat* implies the person himself who rises at night.
- (2) That it implies the hours of night.
- (3) That it means the rising by night.
- (4) That it does not only apply to the rising in the night but rising after having had some sleep, Aishah and Mujahid have adopted this fourth viewpoint.

*7 The word *ashaddu wat-an* as used in the text is so vast in meaning that it cannot be explained in any one sentence. Its one meaning is: As the rising for worship by night and standing up for a long time in the Prayer is against human nature and the self of man seeks ease and comfort at that time, this act is an exercise which is most effective in controlling and disciplining the self. The person who governs himself by this method and gains dominance over his body and mind becomes able to use his power in the

way of God, can work more efficiently and firmly to make the message of true faith prevail in the world. The second meaning is: This is a very effective means of producing harmony and concord between the heart and the tongue, for during these hours of the night none else intervenes between the servant and his God, and whatever man utters with his tongue in this state, is the very voice of his heart. The third meaning is: This is a very efficacious means of bringing about conformity between the exterior and the interior of man, for the person who in the solitude of the night would abandon his comfort and ease and arise for worship, would do so only out of sincerity: there can be no tinge of display and hypocrisy in this. The fourth meaning is: As this worship is harder on man than the worship of the daytime, it develops steadfastness in him: he is enabled to walk in the path of God more firmly and can face and endure the hardships of that way with greater constancy and determination.

*8 Literally, Makes the speech most upright and sound. But the purport is to say that at that time man can read the Quran with greater peace of mind, attention and understanding. Ibn Abbas has explained it thus: That it is the most suitable time for man to ponder over the Quran well. (Abu Daud).

7. Indeed, for you in the day there is prolonged occupation.

إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيلًا

8. And remember the name of your Lord,^{*9} and devote

وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ

yourself to Him with
complete devotion.



***9** After making mention of the occupation of the daytime, the exhortation to remember the name of your Lord by itself gives the meaning: Never be heedless of the remembrance of your Lord even when you are deeply involved in your worldly occupations, and continue to commemorate His name in one way or another at all times. (For explanation, see E.N. 63 of Surah Al-Ahzab).

9. The Lord of the east and the west, there is no god except Him, so take Him as a Defender.^{*10}

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا
هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلاً

***10** Wakil is a person in whom one has complete faith; so much so that one can entrust all his affairs to him with full satisfaction of the heart. Thus, the verse means: Do not feel distressed at the hardships that you are experiencing at the storm of opposition that has been provoked by your invitation to the faith. Your Lord is He Who is the Owner of the East and the West, (i.e. of the whole universe) besides Whom no one else possesses the powers of Godhead. Entrust your affair to Him and be satisfied that He will fight your case, He will deal with your opponents, and He will look after all your interests well.

10. And be patient over what they say, and depart from them, a noble departure.^{*11}

وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ
وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيلاً

***11** Depart from them does not mean break off all ties with

them and stop preaching to them, but it means: Do not have intimate and friendly relations with them, disregard their foolish behavior and their nonsense. However, you should do so without showing any grief, anger or temper but gracefully like a noble person, who would disregard the abusive remarks of a mean person without minding them at all. This should not create the misunderstanding that the Prophet's (peace be upon him) conduct was any different from it, therefore, Allah gave him this instruction. As a matter of fact, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was already following this very mode of conduct. This instruction was given in the Quran so as to tell the disbelievers: It is not due to any weakness on the part of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he is not responding to what you are saying against him, but Allah Himself has taught His Messenger (peace be upon him) to adopt this noble way of conduct in response to your foolish behavior.

11. And leave Me and those who deny,^{*12} the prosperous ones, and give them respite a little.

وَذَرْنِي وَالْمُكَذِّبِينَ أُولِيَ النَّعْمَةِ
وَمَهْلُمْ قَلِيلًا

***12** These words clearly contain the sense that the people, who were actually denying the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Makkah and were inciting the common people to oppose and resist him by stirring up prejudices and by deceit and fraud, were the well-to-do, prosperous and affluent people, for it was their interests, which were being hit by the reforming message of Islam. The Quran tells us that this was not peculiar only to the Prophet's case but in

every age this very class of the people have been the main obstacle to every movement of reform. For example, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 60, 66, 75, 88; Surah Al-Mominoon, Ayat 33; Surah Saba, Ayats 34 35; Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayat 23.

12. Indeed, With us are heavy shackles,^{*13} and a blazing Fire.

إِنَّ لَدَيْنَا أَنْكَالًا وَحَجِيمًا

***13** Heavy shackles in Hell will not be put on the criminals' feet to stop them from escape but in order that they are not able to stand up and move; these will not be used to prevent their escape but as an instrument of their torment.

13. And food that chokes and a painful punishment.

وَطَعَامًا ذَا غُصَّةٍ وَعَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

14. On the Day, the earth and the mountains will be in violent shake, and the mountains will become a heap of pouring sand.^{*14}

يَوْمَ تَرُجُّفُ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ
وَكَانَتِ الْجِبَالُ كَثِيبًا مَّهِيلًا

***14** Since at that time the cohesive force to bind the parts of the mountains together will cease to work, first they will become like crumbling dunes of fine sand, then because of the earthquake which will be shaking the earth; the sand will scatter and shift and the whole earth will turn into an empty level plain. This last state has been described in Surah TaHa, Ayats 105-107, thus: They ask you, where will the mountains go on that Day. Say: My Lord will reduce

them to fine dust and scatter it away. He will turn the earth into an empty level plain, wherein you will neither see any curve no crease.

15. Indeed, We have sent to you ^{*15} a messenger (Muhammad) as a witness over you, ^{*16} just as We sent to Pharaoh a messenger.

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولًا شَهِدًا
عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ
رَسُولًا

***15** The address now turns to the disbelievers of Makkah, who were denying the Prophet (peace be upon him) and persecuting him relentlessly.

***16** Sending the Prophet (peace be upon him) to be a witness over the people also means that he should testify to the truth by his word and deed before them in the world and also that in the Hereafter when Allah's court is established, he will testify that he had presented the whole truth before the people in the world. (For further explanation, see E.N. 144 of Surah Al-Baqarah; E.N. 64 of Surah An-Nisa; Surah An-Nahl, Ayats 84, 89; E.N. 82 of Surah Al-Azab; E.N. 14 of Surah Al-Fath).

16. But Pharaoh disobeyed the messenger. So, We seized him with a firm seizure.

فَعَصَىٰ فِرْعَوْنُ الرَّسُولَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُ
أَخْذًا وَبِيلًا

17. Then how will you protect yourselves, if you disbelieve, on the Day that will make the children white

فَكَيْفَ تَتَّقُونَ إِن كَفَرْتُمْ يَوْمًا
يَجْعَلُ الْوِلْدَانَ شِيبًا

haired (old).^{*17}

***17** That is, in the first place, you should be afraid that if you do not accept the invitation of the Messenger (peace be upon him) sent by Us, you will have to meet the same evil end in this world, which the Pharaoh has already met in consequence of this very crime. But even if no torment is sent on you in the world, how will you save yourselves from the punishment of the Day of Resurrection.

18. The heaven will break apart there from. His promise has to be fulfilled.

السَّمَاءُ مُنْفَطِرٌ بِهِ ^ج كَانَ وَعَدُهُ
مَفْعُولًا

19. Indeed, this is an admonition. So whoever wills, let him take a path to his Lord.

إِنَّ هَذِهِ تَذْكَرَةٌ ^ص فَمَنْ شَاءَ
أَتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا

20. Indeed,^{*18} your Lord knows that you stand (in prayer) nearly two thirds of the night, and half of it, and one third of it,^{*19} and (so do) a group of those with you.^{*20}

✽ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ تَقُومُ أَدْنَىٰ
مِن ثُلثِي اللَّيْلِ وَنِصْفَهُ وَثُلُثَهُ
وَطَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ مَعَكَ ^ج وَاللَّهُ
يُقَدِّرُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ^ج عَلِمَ أَن لَّنْ
نُحْصِيهِ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ ^ط فَاقْرَءُوا
مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ ^ج عَلِمَ أَن
سَيَكُونُ مِنْكُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ ^ل

And Allah measures the night and the day. He knows that you will not be able to do it (pray the whole night), so He has turned to you in forgiveness. So recite what is easy for you of the Quran.^{*21}

He knows that there will be sick among you, and others traveling in the land seeking Allah's bounty,^{*22} and others fighting in the cause of Allah.^{*23} So recite what is easy from it. And establish the prayer and give the poor due,^{*24} and loan Allah a goodly loan.^{*25} And whatever good you may send forward for yourselves, you shall find it with Allah. That is better and greater in reward.^{*26} And seek forgiveness from Allah. Indeed Allah is All Forgiving, All Merciful.

وَأَآخَرُونَ يَصْرِبُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
يَبْتَغُونَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ
وَأَآخَرُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
فَاقْرَأُوا مَا تيسَّرَ مِنْهُ وَأَقِيمُوا
الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَقْرِضُوا
اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا
لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ
اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا وَأَعْظَمَ أَجْرًا
وَأَسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ

رَحِيمٌ

***18** About this verse in which reduction has been made in the injunction concerning the *tahajjud* Prayer, there are different traditions. Musnad Ahmad, Muslim and Abu Daud have related a tradition, on the authority of Aishah, saying that this second command was sent down one year after the first command, and the standing up in the Prayer at night was made voluntary instead of obligatory. Another tradition which Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatim have related, again on the authority of Aishah, says that this command came down eight months after the first command, and a

third tradition which Ibn Abi Hatim has related again from her, says that it came down sixteen months later. Abu Daud, Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatim have cited the period of one year from Abdullah bin Abbas. But Saeed bin Jubair has stated that it was sent down ten years later. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim). In our opinion this last view is most sound, for the subject matter of the first section clearly shows that it was sent down in Makkah and that too in the earliest stage when at the most four years might have passed since the advent of Prophethood. Contrary to this, this second section, in view of the express evidence of its subject matter, seems to have been revealed at Al-Madinah when fighting had started with the disbelievers and the zakat also had been enjoined as an obligatory duty. On this basis inevitably the two sections should have been sent down at an interval of at least ten years between them.

***19** Although the initial command to the Prophet (peace be upon him) was to keep standing up in the Prayer for half the night, or thereabout, it was difficult to compute the time precisely in the absorption of the Prayer, especially when there were no watches either to measure time accurately; therefore, sometimes two thirds of the night passed in the prayer and sometimes only one-third of it.

***20** In the initial command only the Prophet (peace be upon him) was addressed and only he was instructed to stand up in the Prayer by night. But since the Muslims at that time were ardently desirous of following him in everything he did and of earning more and more good and virtues, many of the companions also performed this night Prayer

regularly.

***21** As the Prayer is prolonged due mainly to a lengthy recital of the Quran, it is said: You may recite as much of the Quran as you easily can in the *tahajjud* Prayer. This would automatically cause the Prayer to be shortened. Although the words here are apparently in the imperative mood, it is agreed by all that *tahajjud* is not an obligatory but a voluntary Prayer. In the Hadith, it has also been explained that on an enquiry by a person the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Five times Prayer in the day and night is obligatory on you. He asked: Is anything besides this is also binding on me. The Prophet said: No, unless you may like to offer something of your own accord. (Bukhari, Muslim). This verse also shows another thing. Just as the bowing (*ruku*) and prostration (*sajdah*) are obligatory in the Prayer, so is the recital of the Quran. For just as Allah at other places has used the words *ruku* and *sajdah* for the prayer, so here He has mentioned recital of the Quran, which implies its recital in the Prayer. If somebody objects to this conclusion, saying: When the *tahajjud* Prayer itself is voluntary, how can recital of the Quran in it be obligatory? The answer is: Even in case of the voluntary Prayer it is incumbent on one to fulfill all the pre-requisites of the Prayer and to perform all its basic elements and obligatory parts. No one can say that in case of the voluntary Prayer, purity of the garments and body, ablutions and concealment of the *satar* (minimal part of the body to be covered) are not obligatory, and the standing up and sitting and performance of *ruku* and *sajdah* in it are

also only voluntary.

***22** Travelling to earn one's living by lawful and permissible methods has been described in many places in the Quran as the seeking of Allah's bounty.

***23** Here, the way Allah has made mention of seeking pure livelihood and fighting in the way of Allah together and declared these two, besides the compulsion on account of illness, as reasons for exemption from the *tahajjud* Prayer, or concession in it, shows how meritorious it is in Islam to earn one's livelihood by lawful methods. In the Hadith, Abdullah bin Masud has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The person who came to a city of the Muslims with food grains and sold it at the rate of the day, will attain to a place nearest to Allah, and then the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited this very verse. (Ibn Marduyah). Umar once said: Except for fighting in the way of Allah, the state in which I would love to be overtaken by death, is the state when I am overtaken by it while passing through a mountain pass in search of livelihood and then he recited this very verse. (Baihaqi, Shuab al-Iman).

***24** Commentators agree that this implies observance of the obligatory Prayer five times a day and giving away of the obligatory zakat.

***25** Ibn Zaid says this implies spending one's wealth in the cause of Allah besides the zakat, whether it is in the cause of fighting in the way of Allah, or for helping the needy, or for public utilities, or other good works. The meaning of giving to Allah a good loan has been explained at several places above. See E.N. 267 of Surah Al-Baqarah; E.N. 33 of

Surah Al-Maidah; E.N. 16 of Surah Al-Hadid).

***26** It means: Whatever you have sent forward for the good of your Hereafter is more beneficial for you than what you withheld in the world and did not spend in any good cause for the pleasure of Allah. According to a Hadith reported by Abdullah bin Masud the Prophet (peace be upon him) once asked: Which of you has a greater love for his own wealth than for the wealth of his heir. The people said: There is none among us, O Messenger of Allah, who would not have greater love for his own wealth than for the wealth of his heir. He said: Consider well what you are saying. The people submitted: This indeed is our considered opinion, O Messenger of Allah. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Your own property is only that which you have sent forward (for the good of your Hereafter), and whatever you held back, indeed belongs to the heir. (Bukhari. Nasai, Musnad Abu Yala).





Al-Muddaththir الْمُدَّثِّر

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word *al-muddaththir* in the first verse. This is also only a name, not a title of its subject matter.

Period of Revelation

The first seven verses of this Surah belong to the earliest period at Makkah. Even according to some traditions which have been related in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, etc. on the authority of Jabir bin Abdullah, these are the very early verses of the Quran to be revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him). But the Muslim ummah almost unanimously agreed that the earliest revelation to the Prophet (peace be upon him) consisted of the first five verses of Surah Al-Alaq. However, what is established by authentic traditions is that after this first revelation, no revelation came down to the Prophet (peace be upon him) for quite some time. Then, when it was resumed, it started with these verses of Surah Al-Muddaththir. Imam Zuhri has given the following details of it: Revelation to the Prophet (peace be upon him)

remained suspended for quite some time, and it was such a period of deep grief and distress for him that he started going early to the tops of the mountains to throw himself down from them. But whenever he stood on the edge of a peak, the Angel Gabriel would appear and tell him that he was Allah's Prophet. This would console him and restore to him full peace of mind. (Ibn Jarir).

After this Imam Zuhri relates the following tradition on the authority of Jabir bin Abdullah: The Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah describing the period of *fatrat al-wahi* (break in revelation) said: One day when I was passing on the way, I suddenly heard a call from heaven. I raised my head and saw that the same Angel who had visited me in the cave of Hira was sitting on a throne between heaven and earth. This struck terror in my heart, and reaching home quickly, I said: Cover me up, cover me up. So the people of the house covered me up with a quilt (or blanket). At that time Allah sent down the revelation: *Ya ayyuhal-Muddaththiru...* From then on revelation became intense and continuous. (Bukhari, Muslim Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarir).

The rest of the Surah (verses 8-56) was revealed when the first Hajj season came after public preaching of Islam had begun in Makkah. This has been fully described in the Sirah by Ibn Hisham and we shall cite it below.

Theme and Subject Matter

As has been explained above, the earliest revelation to the Prophet (peace be upon him) consisted of the first five verses of Surah Al-Alaq, in which it had been said: Read (O

Prophet) in the name of your Lord, Who created: Created man from a clot of congealed blood. Read: And your Lord is Most Generous, Who taught knowledge by the pen, taught man what he did not know.

This was the first experience of revelation met with suddenly by the Prophet (upon whom be peace). In this message it was not told what great mission he had been entrusted with and what duties he will have to perform in future. He was only initiated into it and then left alone for a time so that the great strain this experience had caused should pass away and he should mentally become prepared to receive the revelation and perform the prophetic mission in the future. After this intermission when revelation was resumed, the first seven verses of this Surah were revealed. In these he was for the first time commanded to arise and warn the people of the consequences of the way of life they were following and to proclaim the greatness of God in the world where others were being magnified without any right. Along with that he was given this instruction: The demand of the unique mission that you have to perform now is that your life should be pure in every respect and you should carry out the duty of reforming your people sincerely irrespective of any worldly gain. Then, in the last sentence, he was exhorted to endure with patience, for the sake of his Lord, all the hardships and troubles that he might have to face while performing his mission.

In the implementation of this divine command when the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah began to preach Islam and recite the Quranic Surahs revealed successively,

the people of Makkah felt alarmed, and it provoked a great storm of opposition and hostility. A few months passed in this state until the Hajj season approached. The people of Makkah feared that if Muhammad (peace be upon him) started visiting the caravans of the pilgrims coming from all over Arabia at their halting places and reciting the spell binding and unique revelations of the Quran in their assemblies on the occasion of Hajj, his message would reach every part of Arabia and influence countless people. Therefore, the Quraish chiefs held a conference and settled that they would start a propaganda campaign against the Prophet (peace be upon him) among the pilgrims as soon as they arrived.

After they had agreed on this, Walid bin alMughirah said to the assembled people: If you said contradictory things about Muhammad (peace be upon him), we all would lose our trust among the people. Therefore, let us agree upon one opinion, which we should all say without dispute.

Some people said that they would call Muhammad (peace be upon him) a soothsayer. Walid said: No, by God, he is not a soothsayer. We have seen the soothsayers: what they murmur and what they utter has no remote resemblance with the Quran.

Some other people said: Then we say he is possessed. Walid said: He is not a possessed one: We have seen mad and insane people; the way one talks disjointedly and behaves foolishly in that state is known to all: Who would believe that what Muhammad (peace be upon him) presented was the incoherent speech of a madman.

The people said: Then we say he is a poet. Walid said: No, he is not a poet, for we know poetry in all its forms, and what he presents conforms to no form of it.

The people said: Then he is a sorcerer. Walid said: He is no sorcerer either: We have seen sorcerers and we also know what methods they adopt for their sorcery. This also does not apply to Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Then he said: Whichever of these things you said about Muhammad (peace be upon him), it would be known to be a false accusation. By God, his speech is sweet, his root is deep and his branches are fruitful. At this Abu Jahl urging on Walid said: Your people will never be pleased with you unless you say something about Muhammad (peace be upon him). He said: Let me think over it awhile.

Then, after prolonged thought and consideration, he said: The nearest thing to the truth is that you tell the Arabs that he is a sorcerer, who has brought a message by which he separates a man from his father, and from his brother, and from his wife and children, and from his family. They all agreed on what Walid had proposed.

Then, according to a scheme the men of Quraish spread among the pilgrims in the Hajj season and they warned everyone about the sorcery of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and of his stirring up divisions in the families by it. But the result was that by their this plan the Quraish chiefs themselves made the name of the Messenger (peace be upon him) known throughout Arabia. (Ibn Hisham, pp. 288-289, what Walid had made this proposal on the insistence of Abu Jahl has been related by Ibn Jarir in his Tafsir on the

authority of Ikrimah).

This same event has been reviewed and commented upon in the second section of this Surah. The sequence of its contents is as follows:

In verses 8-10 the deniers of truth have been warned, saying: You will see the evil result of what you are doing today on the Resurrection Day.

In verses 11-26, without naming Walid bin alMughirah, it has been told how Allah had blessed him and how inimical he proved to be to true faith. In this connection, his mental conflict has been portrayed, telling that, on the one hand, he was fully convinced of the truth of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Quran, but, on the other hand, he did not want to risk his leadership and position among his people. Therefore, not only he did not believe himself but after a long-drawn-out conflict with his conscience he also came out with the proposal that in order to restrain the people from believing the Quran should be branded as magic. After exposing his evil nature, it has been said: Notwithstanding such evil inclinations and misdeeds, this person desires that he should be further blessed, whereas he has now become worthy of Hell, and never of further blessings.

In verses 27-48, the dreadfulness of Hell has been depicted and it has been explained as to people of what character and morals really deserve it.

In verses 49-53, the root cause of the disbelievers' aversion has been pointed out, saying: Since they are fearless of the Hereafter, and look upon this worldly life as an end in

itself, they flee from the Quran as though they were wild donkeys fleeing away from the lion. Therefore, they propose unreasonable conditions for believing, whereas even if each and every condition of theirs was fulfilled, they could not advance even an inch on the way of faith with their denial of the Hereafter.

In conclusion, it has been explicitly stated: Allah does not stand in need of anybody's faith that He may fulfill his conditions. The Quran is an admonition that has been presented before the people openly; now whoever wills may accept it. Allah has a right that the people should fear His disobedience and He alone has the power to forgive the one who adopts piety and an attitude of God consciousness even though he may have committed many acts of disobedience in the past.

1. O you (Muhammad) enveloped (in garments).^{*1}

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ

^{*1} A study of the background of the revelation of these verses given in the introduction above can help one understand why the Prophet (peace be upon him) on this occasion has been addressed with *Ya ayyuhal-Muddaththiru* instead of *Ya ayyuhar-Rasulu* (O Messenger), or *Ya ayyuhan-Nabiyyu* (O Prophet). As the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been terrified when he had suddenly seen the Angel Gabriel, sitting on a throne between heaven and earth, and had returned hastily home and asked the people of the house to cover him up, so Allah addressed him with *Ya ayyuhal-Muddaththiru*. From this fine way of address the meaning which automatically follows is: O My dear

servant, why have you lain down thus enwrapped? You have been put under the burden of a great mission: you must now arise from your solitude to perform this mission with resolution and courage.

2. Arise and warn.*²

قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ

*² A command of this very nature had been given to the prophet Noah (peace be upon him) while appointing him to the office of Prophethood: Warn the people of your nation before they are overtaken by a painful torment. (Surah Nooh, Ayat 1) The verse means: O you who lays enwrapped, stand up and arouse the people who live in heedlessness around you. Warn them of the fate which would certainly overtake them if they remained involved in the same heedlessness. Warn them that they are not living in a lawless kingdom where they are free to conduct themselves as they like and where they can do wherever they please without any fear or being called to account for it.

3. And proclaim the greatness of your Lord.*³

وَرَبِّكَ فَكْبِّرْ

*³ This is the primary duty of a Prophet (peace be upon him), which he has to perform in this world. His foremost duty is to refute the greatness of all those whom the ignorant people might be holding as great, and publicly proclaim that the greatness in this universe belongs to none but Allah alone. For this very reason the phrase *Allahu Akbar* has been held as of supreme importance in Islam. The *adhan* (call to prayer) begins with the proclamation of

Allahu Akbar. The Muslim enters the Prayer itself with *Allahu Akbar* and repeats *Allahu Akbar* every time he sits or stands, He also pronounces *Bismillahi Allahu Akbar* when slaughtering an animal. The slogan of *Allahu Akbar* has become a most distinctive and prominent emblem of Muslims throughout the world today, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) of this ummah himself had embarked on his mission with the magnification and glorification of Almighty Allah. Here, there is another fine point, which must be understood well. As we have learned from the background of the revelation of these verses, this was the first occasion when the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been commanded to arise for performing the duties of the great mission of Prophethood, and it was obvious that the city and society in which he was commanded to perform this mission, was the centre of polytheism. Not only were the people around him polytheistic like the common Arabs but, more than that, the city of Makkah had become the most sacred place of pilgrimage for the polytheistic Arabs, and the Quraish were its attendants. Arising of a person in such a place all by himself and proclaiming the Oneness of God in the face of polytheism was full of risks. That is why the exhortation to proclaim the greatness of your Lord just after arise and warn contains this meaning also: Do not at all mind the terrifying and dreadful forces that seem to be obstructing and impeding your work and proclaim publicly that your Lord is the greatest of all those who can hinder and resist you from giving your message. This is indeed the greatest encouragement for a person who embarks on a

divine mission. The one who has Allah's greatness and majesty deeply embedded in his heart will feel no hesitation at all in facing and fighting the entire world by himself for the sake of Allah.

4. And keep your garments pure.*4

وَتِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ

*4 These are very comprehensive words, which are full of meaning. They mean this: Keep your garments free from every filth and impurity, for the purity of the body and garments and the purity of the spirit are inter-linked and inter-dependent. A pure spirit and an impure body with impure garments cannot live together. The society in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had arisen with the invitation to Islam, was not only steeped in the evils of unbelief and immorality, but was also devoid of even the most elementary concepts of purity and cleanliness, and the Prophet's (peace be upon him) task was to teach its members cleanliness in every way of life. Therefore he was instructed to establish and present a high standard of purity in his external life as well. Thus, it is the result of the same instruction that the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave mankind such detailed teaching about the cleanliness of the body and garments as is not possessed even by the most civilized nations of today, not to speak of the Arabs of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance. So much so that in most of the languages of the world there is no word synonymous with *taharat*. On the contrary, in Islam every book of the Hadith and Fiqh begins with injunctions and instructions on *taharat* (purity), which distinguishes between purity and

impurity and gives minute details about the methods and means of obtaining purity. The second meaning of these words is: Keep your garments neat and clean. The criterion of religiosity given to the world by the monastic concepts was that a man was holy to the extent he was unclean. If a person happened to put on neat clothes, he was looked upon as a worldly man, whereas the fact is that human nature abhors filth and uncleanness and even a person of ordinary fine taste loves to be associated only with a neat and clean person. On this very basis, for the one calling the people to Allah it was made imperative that externally he should also look so neat and clean that the people should regard him with esteem and his personality should not be stained in any way so as to repel others. The third meaning of this divine command is: Keep your garments free from moral evils: your dress should be neat and clean but it should bear no tinge of vanity and pride, display and exhibition, pomp and show. The dress is the first thing that introduces the personality of a person to others. The kind of dress a person wears makes the people judge at first sight what kind of a man he is. The dresses of the rulers and princes, the dresses of the religious functionaries, the dresses of the vain and conceited people, the dresses of the mean and shallow people, the dresses of the evil-natured and characterless people, all represent the tastes and tempers of those who wear them. The temper of the one calling to Allah is naturally different from all such people. Therefore, his dress should also necessarily be different from all of them. He should wear such a dress as should

make everyone else feel that he is a noble and refined person, who is not involved in any evil of the self. Its fourth meaning is: Keep away from moral evils. Ibn Abbas, Ibrahim Nakhai, Shabi, Ata, Mujahid. Qatadah, Saeed bin Jubair, Hasan Basri and other major commentators have given this very meaning to this verse: keep yourself morally pure and avoid all that is blameworthy. Also in Arabic usage when it is said: So and so is clean in his garments, it implies that he is morally good and pure; on the contrary, when it is said: He is filthy in his garments, it means that he is dishonest and fraudulent in his dealings: he is unreliable.

5. And avoid un-
cleanliness.*5

وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ

*5 Un-cleanliness implies every kind of filth, whether of belief and thought, of morals and deeds, of the body, dress or mode of life. The verse means: Keep yourself free from the filth of evils which are prevalent in society around you: no one should ever impute to you the blame that your own life itself is stained in some degree with the evils that you tell others to avoid.

6. And do not confer favor
(expecting) to get more.*6

وَلَا تَمُنَّ بِمَا تَسْتَكَثِرُونَ

*6 The words *wala tamnun tastakthir* in the original are so vast in meaning that no one sentence can convey their full sense in translation. Their one meaning is: Whomever you favor, you should favor him without any selfish motive. Your bestowal of an endowment and donation, your generosity and good treatment should be only for the sake of Allah: there should be no trace in it of the desire that you

should receive any worldly gains in return for the favor done. In other words, do good to others for the sake of Allah, not for seeking any benefits. The second meaning is: Although the mission of Prophethood that you are performing is a great favor in itself, for the people are obtaining true guidance because of it, do not remind the people of this favor, nor try to obtain any personal benefits from it. The third meaning is: Although you are performing a great service, you should never gloat over it, nor should ever have the idea that by performing your prophetic duties, at the risk of life, you are doing any favor to your Lord.

7. And be patient for (the sake of) your Lord.*7

وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ

*7 That is, the task that is being entrusted to you is full of hazards: you will meet with great hardships and difficulties and troubles on this way: even your own people will turn hostile against you and the whole of Arabia will become your enemy. Yet you should endure with patience, for the sake of your Lord, whatever you may have to face in this way, and carry out all your duties firmly and resolutely. Fear, greed, friendship, enmity, love, all these will hinder your way, but you should stand your ground firmly and steadfastly. These were the very preliminary instructions which Allah gave His Messenger (peace be upon him) at the time when He commanded him to arise and start the work of Prophethood. If a person ponders over these brief sentences and their meaning his heart will testify that no better instructions could be given to a Prophet at the

commencement of his prophetic mission. In these he was told what he was required to do, what kind of life, morals and dealings he should adopt, and taught with what intention, mentality and mode of thought he should go about his mission and also forewarned what kind of conditions he would meet with in the performance of his mission and how he would have to face and overcome them. Today the people who, blinded by their prejudices, say that these words were, God forbid, uttered by the Prophet (peace be upon him) during epileptic fits, should study these sentences carefully and judge for themselves whether these are the product of any epileptic fits, or the instructions of a God, which He gave to His servant while appointing him to the mission of Apostleship.

8. Then, when the Trumpet is blown.

فَإِذَا نُقِرَ فِي النَّاقُورِ

9. That day shall be a hard Day.*8

فَذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ مِّدْيَوْمٍ عَسِيرٌ

*8 As already explained in the introduction, this part of the Surah was sent down a few months after the initial verses when at the beginning of the first ever Hajj season, after the advent of Islam, the Quraish chiefs decided in a conference to start a powerful propaganda campaign to dissuade the outsiders, who came to visit the Kabah, from the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In these verses, this very scheming of the Quraish has been reviewed, and the review has begun with the words, as if to say: You may act as you please, but even if you succeed in achieving your object by these devices in the world, how

will you save yourselves from your evil end on the Day when the Trumpet will be sounded and Resurrection will be established. (For explanation of the Trumpet, see E.N. 47 of Surah Al-Anaam; E.N. 57 of Surah Ibrahim; E.N. 78 of Surah TaHa; E.N. 1 of Surah Al-Hajj; E.Ns 46, 47 of Surah YaSin, E.N. 79 of Surah Az-Zumar; E.N. 52 of Surah Qaf).

10. For the disbelievers, not easy. ^{*9}

عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ غَيْرُ يَسِيرٍ

***9** These words by themselves support the conclusion that that Day will be light for the believers, and its hardships will be specially intended only for the deniers of the truth. Moreover, these words also contain the meaning that the severity of that Day will be of an enduring and permanent nature for disbelievers, it will not be a severity which might be expected to become mild with the passage of time.

11. Leave Me and the whom ^{*10} I created alone: ^{*11}

ذَرْنِي وَمَنْ خَلَقْتُ وَحِيدًا

***10** The address is directed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and it means: O Prophet, leave the case of the person (Walid bin al-Mughirah) to Me, who in the disbelievers' conference proposed that you should be branded as a sorcerer among the pilgrims coming from different parts of Arabia; it is now for Me to deal with him; you need not bother yourself about it at all.

***11** This sentence can have two meanings and both are correct:

(1) That when I created him, he was not at that time born with any wealth and children and position of authority and

chieftainship.

(2) That I alone was his Creator: those other gods whose godhead he is so ardently trying to keep established and is opposing your invitation to One God for the same object, were not My associates in creating him.

12. And to whom I granted wealth in abundance.

وَجَعَلْتُ لَهُ مَالًا مَّمْدُودًا

13. And sons present (with him).^{*12}

وَبَنِينَ شُهُودًا

^{*12} Walid bin al-Mughirah had ten or twelve sons of whom Khalid bin Walid became most famous. For these sons the word *shuhud* has been used, which can have several meanings:

(1) That they do not have to run about and go abroad in search of their livelihood: they have enough provisions at home; therefore, they can always remain at the beck and call of their father.

(2) That all his sons are prominent and influential people: they sit in assemblies and conferences with him.

(3) That they are the people of high rank and position and their testimony is accepted in all matters of life.

14. And made for him (life) smooth (easy).

وَمَهَّدْتُ لَهُ تَمْهِيدًا

15. Yet he desires that I should give him more.^{*13}

ثُمَّ يَطْمَعُ أَنْ أَزِيدَ

^{*13} Its one meaning is that there is still no end to his greed. In spite of having all this he still desires that he should be granted every good thing of the world. Another meaning

which Hasan Basri, and some other scholars have given is: He used to say: If what Muhammad (peace be upon him) says is really true that there is another life after death, and there will be a Paradise also in it, then that Paradise too has been prepared for me.

16. Nay, indeed, he has been stubborn to Our verses.

كَلَّا إِنَّهُ كَانَ لِآيَاتِنَا عَنِيدًا ﴿١٦﴾

17. I shall soon impose on him a hard ascent (severe torment).

سَأَرْهِقُهُ صَعُودًا ﴿١٧﴾

18. Indeed, he pondered and devised a plan.

إِنَّهُ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ ﴿١٨﴾

19. So may he be destroyed, how he devised a plan.

فَقِيلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ﴿١٩﴾

20. Then, may he be destroyed, how he devised a plan.

ثُمَّ قِيلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ﴿٢٠﴾

21. Then he looked around.

ثُمَّ نَظَرَ ﴿٢١﴾

22. Then he frowned and scowled.

ثُمَّ عَبَسَ وَسَرَ ﴿٢٢﴾

23. Then he turned his back and showed arrogance.

ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ وَأَسْتَكْبَرَ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. Then he said: "This is nothing but magic, (handed down) from the past."

فَقَالَ إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُورَثُ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. This is nothing but the word of a mortal. *14

إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ ﴿٢٥﴾

***14** The reference is to what happened in the conference of the disbelievers of Makkah. From the details of it that we have given in the introduction, it becomes obvious that this man in his heart had become fully convinced of the Quran's being divine word, but in order to save his position as a chief of his people, he was not prepared to affirm faith. When in the conference he himself turned down all the accusations that the Quraish chiefs were proposing against the Prophet (peace be upon him), he was compelled to devise an accusation from himself, which could be spread among the Arabs in order to bring a bad name to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Then, the way he struggled against his conscience, and the way he devised an accusation at last after a prolonged mental conflict, has been vividly depicted here.

<p>26. I shall cast him into Hell.</p>	<p>سَأُصَلِّيهِ سَقَرَ ﴿٢٦﴾</p>
<p>27. And what do you know what Hell is.</p>	<p>وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سَقَرٌ ﴿٢٧﴾</p>
<p>28. It leaves nothing and it spares none. ^{*15}</p>	<p>لَا تُقِي وَلَا تَذَرُ ﴿٢٨﴾</p>

***15** This can have two meanings: first, that it will burn to ashes whoever is cast into it, but even after death he will not escape from punishment: he will be given life once again and burnt once again, This very subject has been treated at another place thus: He will neither die in it nor live. (Surah Al-Aala, Ayat 13). Another meaning can also be: It will leave none who has deserved the punishment and it will spare none from being punished.

29. It scorches the man.*16

لَوَّاحَةٌ لِلْبَشَرِ

*16 After saying that it will leave nothing of the body unconsumed, making mention of scorching of the skin separately seems to be somewhat unnecessary. But this form of the punishment has been mentioned separately in particular because it is the skin of a man's face and body which actually makes his personality prominent, and it is its ugliness which makes him feel most ill at ease. He is not so grieved at the internal troubles of his body as, for instance, at his face being ugly, or that there should be spots on the skin of the exposed parts of his body, abhorrent to others. That is why it has been said: If the people who feel proud of their personalities in the world because of having handsome faces and splendid bodies, treat the revelations of Allah mockingly, as did Walid bin al-Mughirah, their faces will be scorched and their skins will be burned black.

30. Over it are nineteen (angels).

عَلَيْهَا تِسْعَةَ عَشَرَ

31. And We have not appointed*17 the keepers of the Fire except angels.*18 And We have not made their number except as a trial for those who disbelieve.*19 That those who were given the Scripture are convinced,*20 and those who have believed

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ
إِلَّا مَلَائِكَةً وَمَا جَعَلْنَا
عِدَّتَهُمُ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا لِيَسْتَيَقِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
الْكِتَابَ وَيَزِدَّادَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا

are increased in (their) faith.*21 And will not doubt those who were given the Scripture, and the believers. And that those in whose heart is a disease,*22 and the disbelievers may say: “What does Allah intend by this as a parable.”*23 Thus does Allah lead astray whom He wills,*24 and guides whom He wills. And none knows the hosts of your Lord except Him.*25

And this is not but a reminder to mankind.*26

إِيْمَانًا وَلَا يَرْتَابَ الَّذِينَ
 أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ
 وَلَيَقُولَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
 مَرَضٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ
 اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا ۗ كَذَلِكَ
 يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي
 مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ
 رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۗ وَمَا هِيَ إِلَّا
 ذِكْرٌ لِلْبَشَرِ



*17 The whole passage from here to “none knows the hosts of your Lord but He Himself”, is a parenthetical sentence, which has been inserted here to answer an objection of the disbelievers, who had started mocking it when they heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say that 19 keepers had been appointed over Hell. Their objection was: How strange that, on the one hand, we are told that all human beings, from the time of the Prophet Adam till Resurrection, who disbelieved and committed evil, will be cast into Hell, and, on the other hand, that there will be only 19 keepers, who will administer punishment to the countless numbers of men in such a huge Hell. This caused

a huge laughter among the chiefs of Quraish. Abu Jahl said: Brothers, are you so powerless that even as many as ten of you at a time will not be able to overpower a single policeman of Hell. At this a wrestler of the Bani Jumha said: Well I will deal with and overpower at least 17 of them by myself; as for the remaining two, you all together can tackle them. In response these sentences have been inserted as a parenthetical clause.

***18** That is, it is foolish on your part to compare the angelic powers to human powers. They will be angels, not men, and you cannot imagine what tremendous powers Allah has granted to the angels He has created.

***19** That is, although apparently there was no need to mention the number of the keepers of Hell, yet We have mentioned it so that it becomes a trial for every such person who may be concealing any kind of unbelief in his heart. Such a man may be making a great display of his faith but if he conceals even a tinge of the doubt about the Godhead and supreme powers of God, or about revelation and Prophethood, anywhere in his heart, his disbelief would immediately be exposed as soon as he would hear that only 19 policemen would control countless numbers of the culprits from among the jinn and men in such a huge jail and would also administer punishment to each of them individually.

***20** Some commentators have explained it thus: As in the scriptures of the Jews and Christians, the same number of the angels has also been mentioned as keepers of Hell, they would be convinced of this thing's being truly from Allah as

soon as they heard it. But in our opinion this commentary is not correct for two reasons. First, we have not been able to see anywhere in the existing scriptures of the Jews and Christians in spite of search that the number of the angels appointed over Hell is 19. Second, there are many things in the Quran, which have also been mentioned in the scriptures of the Jews and Christians, yet they explain them away, saying that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has plagiarized these from their books. For these reasons the correct meaning of this statement in our opinion is: The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) knew that he would be ridiculed as soon as the disbelievers heard that 19 angels had been appointed over Hell, but in spite of this, he presented without the least hesitation and fear publicly before the people what had been revealed to him from Allah, and did not at all mind the jesting and mocking by the people. The pagans of Arabia were unaware of the unique distinction of the Prophets, but the followers of the earlier scriptures were fully aware that the Prophets in every age used to convey to their people intact whatever they received from God, whether it pleased them or displeased them. On this very basis it was to be expected of the Jews and the Christians that they would be convinced of the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) truth for only a Prophet could present an apparently strange thing without any hesitation before the people in an environment charged with antagonism and hostility. This is also evident that such a thing was shown by the Prophet (peace be upon him) on many other occasions. Its most

prominent example is the event of the *miraj* (ascension) which he related openly before a general assembly of the disbelievers and did not at all care how his opponents would behave and react after they had heard the story of the wonderful event.

***21** It has been explained at several places in the Quran that on the occasion of every trial when a believer remains steadfast to his faith, and forsaking the way of doubt and denial, disobedience or disloyalty to the faith, adopts the way of faith, obedience and loyalty to it, it increases and strengthens him all the more in faith and resignation (For explanation, see Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 173; Surah Al-Anfal, Ayat 2; Surah At-Taubah, Ayats 124-125; Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 22; Surah Al-Fath, Ayat 4 and the corresponding E.Ns).

***22** As sickness of the heart in the Quran is generally understood to imply hypocrisy, seeing this word here some commentators have expressed the view that this verse was revealed at Al-Madinah, for the hypocrites appeared at Al-Madinah. But this view is not correct for several reasons. In the first place, the assertion itself that there were no hypocrites at Makkah is false, and its falsehood has been exposed in the Introduction to the Surah Al-Ankabut and in its verses 10-11. Secondly, in our opinion it is not a correct way of writing commentary that in respect of a certain sentence occurring in a particular discourse which was revealed on a particular occasion, under particular circumstances, one should declare that it had been sent down on another occasion but has been inserted here

without any relevance. The historical background of this part of Surah Al-Muddaththir is well known to us from authentic traditions. This was revealed in connection with a particular event of the early period of the life at Makkah. The whole context bears full relevance to the event. What could, therefore, be the occasion in this context that this one sentence, if it was revealed many years later at Al-Madinah, should have been inserted here? As for the question what is implied by the disease of the heart here, its answer is that it implies the disease of doubt. Not only in Makkah but in the entire world there have been, and are, very few such people, who might deny God, Hereafter, Revelation, Prophethood, Heaven, Hell, etc. absolutely. In every age the greater majority by far has been of those people, who have been involved in the doubt whether there is God, or no God, Hereafter or no Hereafter, whether Heaven and Hell really exist, or are mere figments of the imagination, and whether the Messengers did really come and receive revelation or not. This same doubt has led most people to unbelief, otherwise the number of such people in the world who denied these truths absolutely has never been great. For a person who has any common sense knows that there is no rational ground whatever for denying the possibility of the existence of these things, or of declaring them absolutely impossible.

***23** This does not mean that they accepted it as divine word but wondered why Allah had said such a thing. But what they actually meant was: A discourse which contained such an irrational and impossible thing could not be a revelation

from Allah.

***24** That is, Allah in this very way sometimes sends down in the course of His revelations and commandments such things as become a means of test and trial for the people. It is one and the same thing which a truth-loving, good-natured and right-minded person hears and understanding its right meaning in the right way and adopts the straight path. But when heard by an obstinate, perverse and willful wrongdoer, makes him to misconstrue it and make it a new excuse for fleeing from the truth. Since the first man is himself a lover of the truth, Allah grants him guidance, for it is not the way of Allah to lead the seekers after truth forcibly astray. And since the second man himself does not want guidance, but chooses only error for himself, Allah also pushes him on to the way of error and deviation, for it is also not the way of Allah to forcibly pull to the way of the truth him who has an aversion to the truth. (The question of Allah's granting guidance and misguidance has been fully explained at many places for example, see E.Ns 10, 16, 19, 20 of Surah Al-Baqarah; E.N. 173 of Surah An-Nisa; E.Ns 17, 28, 90 of Surah Al-Anaam; E.N. 13 of Surah Yunus; E.N. 54 of Surah Al-Kahf; E.N. 71 of Surah Al-Qasas).

***25** That is, none knows but Allah what different kinds and how many of the creatures He has created in the universe, what powers He has granted them, and what services He is taking from them. If the man clinging to the tiny globe of the earth seeing the tiny world around himself with his limited sight, is involved in the misunderstanding that the

universe of God contains nothing but what he can perceive by his senses or by his instruments, this would only be his own shortsightedness, otherwise this universe is so vast and limitless that it is not in the power of man to obtain full knowledge about any of the things here, not to speak of comprehending mentally the concept of all its vastnesses.

***26** The people may take heed: the people may recover their senses and wake up before they make themselves worthy of Hell and suffer its punishment, and should think of saving themselves from it.

32. No, never!^{*27} By the moon.

كَلَّا وَالْقَمَرَ

***27** That is, it is not a hollow thing which may be mocked like that.

33. And the night when it withdraws.

وَالَّيْلِ إِذَا دَبَّرَ

34. And by the morning when it dawns.

وَالصُّبْحِ إِذَا اسْفَرَّ

35. Indeed, this is one of the mighty (things).^{*28}

إِنهَا لِأَحَدَى الْكُبَرِ

***28** That is, just as the moon and the night and the day are the great signs of the powers of Allah, so also is Hell a great sign of His powers. If the existence of the moon and the alternation of the night and day so regularly were not impossible, why should the existence of Hell be impossible as you think it is. You see these phenomena day and night; therefore, they do not surprise you: otherwise these things in themselves also are great marvels of the powers of Allah.

If you had not observed them and somebody were to tell you that there is also such a thing as the moon in the world, or, there is a sun which leaves the world dark when it hides and makes the world shine forth with light when it appears, then the people like you would have made jests of it too as you make jests of Hell.

36. A warning to mankind.

نَذِيرًا لِلْبَشَرِ ﴿٣٦﴾

37. Unto whoever of you who desires to go forward or to stay behind.^{*29}

لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَتَقَدَّمَ أَوْ يَتَأَخَّرَ ﴿٣٧﴾

*29 That is, the people have been warned to this effect. Now, let him who heeds the warning go forward on the right way, and let him who wills still lag behind.

38. Every person is a pledge what it has earned.^{*30}

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ ﴿٣٨﴾

*30 For explanation, see E.N. 16 of Surah At-Toor.

39. Except the people of the right hand.

إِلَّا أَصْحَابَ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٣٩﴾

40. In Gardens, they will ask one another.^{*31}

فِي جَنَّاتٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

*31 In other words, the people of the left hand will be seized in consequence of their misdeeds, but the people of the right hand will have their debts settled. (For explanation of the people of the right hand and the left hand, see E.Ns 5, 6 of Surah Al-Waqiah).

41. About the criminals.^{*32}

عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

***32** At several places in the Quran, it has been stated that the dwellers of Paradise and the dwellers of Hell will be able to see and communicate with each other directly without the agency of any instrument whenever they will so desire, although they will be living hundreds of thousands of miles away from each other. For instance, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 44-50 and E.N. 35; Surah As-Saaffat, Ayats 50-57 and E.N. 32 on it.

42. "What has brought you into Hell?"

مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ ﴿٤٢﴾

43. They will reply, "We were not of those who offered the salat."^{*33}

قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ

﴿٤٣﴾

***33** That is, we were not of those who after having believed in Allah and His Messenger and His Book, performed the foremost duty imposed by Allah, i.e. the Prayer. Here, it should be understood well that unless a person has believed he cannot offer the Prayer at all. Therefore, one's being of those who performed the Prayer, by itself implies that one is a believer. But by attributing one's going to Hell to his not being of those who performed their Prayer, it has been made explicit that one cannot escape Hell even after having believed if he does not perform his Prayers regularly.

44. "Nor were we of those who fed the poor."^{*34}

وَلَمْ نَكُ نَطْعِمُ الْمَسْكِينِ ﴿٤٤﴾

***34** This shows how grave a sin it is in Islam to see a hungry man and fail to feed him even if one can, for this has been particularly mentioned as one of the causes of

going to Hell.

45. “And we used to talk vain with those who indulged in vain talk.”

وَكَُنَّا نَخُوضُ مَعَ الْخَائِضِينَ



46. And we used to deny the Day of Recompense.

وَكَُنَّا نَكْذِبُ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ



47. “Until there came to us (the death) the certainty.”^{*35}

حَتَّىٰ أَتَانَا الْيَقِينُ



***35** Until the inevitable certainty overtakes: Until death came upon us. Here, the inevitable implies death as well as the Hereafter.

48. So shall not benefit them intercession of the intercessors.^{*36}

فَمَا تَنْفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةُ الشَّافِعِينَ



***36** That is, even if an intercessor interceded for a person who persisted in this way of life till death, he would not be forgiven. The question of intercession has been fully explained at many places in the Quran that no one can have any difficulty in knowing and understanding as to who can intercede and who cannot, when one can intercede and when one cannot, for whom one can intercede and for whom one cannot, and for whom intercession is beneficial and for whom it is not. As one of the major causes of the people's deviation in the world is their false concept about intercession, it has been explained at such length in the Quran as to leave no room for any doubt and ambiguity.

For example, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 255; Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 94; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 53; Surah Younus, Ayats 3-18; Surah Maryam, Ayat 87; Surah TaHa, Ayat 109; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 28; Surah Saba, Ayat 23; Surah Az-Zumar, Ayats 43-44; Surah Al-Momin, Ayat 18; Surah Ad-Dukhan, Ayat 86; Surah An-Najm, Ayat 26; Surah An-Naba, Ayat 37-38.

49. Then what is (the matter) with them that from the reminder they turn away.

فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذْكَرَةِ مُعْرِضِينَ



50. As if they were wild donkeys.

كَأَنَّهُمْ حُمُرٌ مُسْتَنْفِرَةٌ

51. Fleeing away from a lion.*37

فَرَّتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ

*37 This is an idiomatic expression in Arabic which depicts the character of wild donkeys who flee stupefied and stunned as soon as they smell a lion or hear a hunter.

52. But, each one of them desires that he should be given pages spread out.*38

بَلْ يُرِيدُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يُؤْتَى

صُحُفًا مُنشَرَّةً

*38 That is, they desire that if Allah really has appointed Muhammad (peace be upon him) as His Prophet, He should send a letter to each one of the chiefs and elders of Makkah telling him that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is Allah's Prophet; therefore he should obey and follow him. And these letters should be such as may convince them that they have been written by Allah Himself. At another place in the

Quran, this saying of the disbelievers of Makkah has been cited: We will not believe in it unless we are given the like of what has been given to the Messengers of Allah. (Al-Anaam, Ayat 124). At still another place their this demand has been cited: Or you ascend the sky ... and bring down to us a writing that we may read. (Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 93).

53. Nay, but they do not fear the Hereafter.*³⁹

كَلَّا بَلْ لَا يَتَخَفُونَ الْآخِرَةَ



*³⁹ That is, the real cause of their failure to affirm the faith is not that their demands are not fulfilled, but the real cause is that they are fearless of the Hereafter. They think that this world is an end in itself and they do not have any idea that there is another life after this worldly life in which they will have to render an account of their deeds. This very thing has made them careless and irresponsible in the world. They regard the question of truth and falsehood as utterly meaningless, for they do not see any truth following which may have necessarily led to a good result in the world, nor do they see any falsehood which might have always led to an evil result in the world. Therefore, they think it is useless merely to consider as to what is really true and what is false. This question can be worthy of serious consideration only for the person who regards the present life of the world as transitory and admits that the real and everlasting life is the life hereafter, where the truth will necessarily lead to a good result and falsehood necessarily to an evil result. Such a person will certainly

believe when he sees the rational arguments and the pure teachings presented in the Quran and will use his common sense to understand what is actually wrong with the beliefs and deeds which the Quran calls wrong. But the denier of the Hereafter who is not at all serious in his search for the truth, will present ever new demands every day for not believing, and will present a new excuse for his denial even if all his demands are fulfilled. This same thing has been expressed in Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 7 thus: O Prophet, even if We had sent down to you a Book written on paper, and even if they had touched it with their own hands, the disbelievers would have said: This is nothing but manifest sorcery.

54. Nay,^{*40} This indeed is an Admonition.

كَلَّا إِنَّهُ تَذَكُّرٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

*40 That is, no such demand of theirs will ever be fulfilled.

55. So let him, who wills take admonition.

فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرْهُ ﴿٥٥﴾

56. And they will never take admonition except that Allah wills.^{*41} He is worthy to be feared,^{*42} and worthy to forgive.^{*43}

وَمَا يَذْكُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ هُوَ أَهْلُ التَّقْوَى وَأَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ ﴿٥٦﴾

*41 That is, a person's taking heed does not wholly depend upon his own will, but he takes heed only when Allah also wills to grant him the grace to take heed. In other words, the truth that has been expressed here is that no act of man takes a concrete shape solely by his own will, but each act is implemented only when the will of God combines with the

will of the man. This is a very delicate question, failure to understand which has often made human thought falter. Briefly it can be understood thus: If in this world every man had the power to accomplish whatever he wanted to accomplish, the system of the world would be disturbed. This system continues to hold only because the will of Allah is dominant over all other wills. Man can accomplish whatever he wants to accomplish only when Allah also wills that he be allowed to accomplish it. The same is also the case with guidance and error. Only man's own desiring to have guidance is not enough for him to have guidance; he receives guidance only when Allah also takes a decision to fulfill his desire. Likewise, only man's desiring to go astray by itself is also not enough, but when Allah in view of his desire decides that he be allowed to wander into evil ways, then he wanders into the evil ways in which Allah allows him to wander. As for example, if a person wants to become a thief, only his desire is not enough that he may enter into any house he likes and walk away with whatever he likes, but he can fulfill his desire only at the time and to the extent and in the form that Allah allows him to fulfill it, according to His supreme wisdom and expedience.

***42** That is, the admonition being given to you to avoid Allah's displeasure is not for the reason that Allah needs it, and if you did not take it, Allah would be harmed, but you are being so admonished because it is Allah's right that His servants should seek His pleasure and good will and should avoid doing anything against His will.

***43** That is, it behoves only Allah that He should receive

into His mercy whoever desists from evil no matter how many acts of disobedience he might have committed in the past. Allah is not vengeful to His servants so that He may refuse to forgive their errors and be bent upon punishing them in any case.





Al-Qiyamah أَلْقِيَمَة

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah has been so named after the word *al-Qiyamah* in the first verse. This is not only the name but also the title of this Surah, for it is devoted to Resurrection itself.

Period of Revelation

Although there is no tradition to indicate its period of revelation, yet there is in the subject matter of this Surah an internal evidence, which shows that it is one of the earliest Surahs to be sent down at Makkah. After verse 15 the discourse is suddenly interrupted and the Prophet (peace be upon him) is told: Do not move your tongue to remember this revelation hastily. It is Our responsibility to have it remembered and read. Therefore, when We are reciting it, listen to its recital carefully. Again, it is Our responsibility to explain its meaning. Then, from verse 20 onward the same theme which was interrupted at verse 16, is resumed. This parenthetical passage, according to both the context and the traditions, has been interposed here for the reason that when the Angel Gabriel was reciting this Surah to the Prophet (peace be upon him), the Prophet (peace be upon him), lest he should forget its words later,

was repeating them at the same moment. This in fact happened at the time when the coming down and receipt of revelation was yet a new experience for him and he was not yet fully used to receiving it calmly. There are two other instances also of this in the Quran. First, in Surah TaHa the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been told: And see that you do not hasten to recite the Quran before its revelation is completed to you. (verse 114). Then, in Surah Al-Aala, it has been said: We shall enable you to recite, then you shall never forget. (verse 6). Later, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) became fully used to receiving the revelation well, there remained no need to give him any such instruction. That is why except for these three places, there is no other instance of this in the Quran.

Theme and Subject Matter

After the first seven verses of Surah Al-Muddaththir, most of the Surahs, from here till the end of the Quran, in view of their content and style, seem to have been sent down like a shower of rain. Thus, in the successively revealed Surahs, Islam and its fundamental concepts and moral teachings were presented forcefully and effectively in brief sentences. And the people of Makkah were warned so vehemently on their errors and deviations that the chiefs Quraish were utterly confounded. Therefore, before the next Hajj season came, they held the conference for devising schemes to defeat the Prophet (peace be upon him) as has been mentioned in the introduction to the Surah Al-Muddaththir.

In this Surah, addressing thee deniers of the Hereafter,

replies have been given to each of their doubts and objections, strong arguments have been given to prove the possibility, occurrence and necessity of the Resurrection and Hereafter, and it has also been pointed out clearly that the actual reason of the people's denying the Hereafter is not that they regard it as impossible rationally but because their selfish motives do not allow them to affirm it. At the same time, the people have been warned, as if to say: The event, the occurrence of which you deny, will inevitably come. All your deeds will be brought and placed before you. As a matter of fact, even before any of you sees his record, he will be knowing fully what he has done in the world, for no man is unaware of himself, no matter what excuses and pretenses he may offer to deceive the world and deceive himself in respect of his misdeeds.

1. Nay,^{*1} I swear by the Day of Resurrection.

لَا أَقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

*1 To begin the discourse with 'Nay' by itself indicates that the Surah was sent down to refute some argument which was already in progress. The theme that follows shows that the argument was about Resurrection and life after death, which the people of Makkah were denying and also mocking at it at the same time. This can be understood by an example. If a person only wants to affirm the truth of the Messenger, he will say: By God, the Messenger has come with the truth. But if some people might be denying the truth of the Messenger, he in response would rejoin, thus: Nay, by God, the Messenger has come with the truth. It would mean: That which you say is not true. I swear that

the truth is this and this.

2. And nay, I swear by the reproaching self.*2

وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ ﴿٢﴾

*2 The Quran has mentioned three kinds of human self:

(1) Ammarah: the self that urges man to evil.

(2) Lawwamah: the self that feels repentant at doing wrong, thinking wrong and willing wrong and reproaches man for this; and the same is called conscience in modern terminology.

(3) Mumtmainnah: the self that feels full satisfaction at following the right path and abandoning the wrong path. Here the thing for which Allah has sworn an oath by the Resurrection (*al-Qiyamah*) and the self-reproaching self, has not been mentioned, for the following sentence itself points it out. The oath has been sworn to stress the truth that Allah will certainly resurrect man after death and He has full power to do so. Now, the question arises: What is the relevance of swearing an oath by these two truths to this thing? As for the Day of Resurrection, the reason of swearing by it is certainty. The whole system of the universe testifies that it is neither eternal nor everlasting. Its own nature tells that it has neither existed since eternity nor can last till eternity. Human intellect has never had any strong argument to support the baseless view that this ever changing world could have existed since ever and would last for ever. But as the knowledge of man about this world goes on increasing, it goes on becoming more and more certain for man himself that this workhouse of life had a beginning in time before which it was not, and necessarily it

has also an end in time after which it will not be. For this reason, Allah has sworn an oath by Resurrection itself on the occurrence of Resurrection, and this is an oath of the kind that we might swear addressing a skeptical person, who may be skeptical about his own existence, saying: By you yourself, you exist, i.e. your own being itself testifies that you exist. But an oath by the Day of Resurrection is only an argument for the truth that this system will one day be upset. As for the truth that after that man shall be resurrected and called upon to account for his deeds and made to see the good or evil results thereof, another oath has been sworn by the self reproaching soul. No man exists in the world who may not have a faculty called conscience in him. This conscience is necessarily conscious of the good and evil, and no matter how perverted and degraded a man might be, his conscience always checks him on doing evil and for not doing good irrespective of the fact whether the criterion of good and evil that he had set for himself might in itself be right or wrong. This is an express pointer that man is not merely an animal but a moral being. He naturally can distinguish good from evil; he regards himself as responsible for the good or the evil he does; and even if he might feel pleased suppressing the reproaches of his conscience over the evil he has done to another, he, on the contrary, feels and demands from within that the other one who has done the same evil to him, must deserve punishment. Now, if the existence of a self-reproaching soul of this kind in man himself is an undeniable truth, then this truth too is undeniable that the same self-reproaching soul

is an evidence of the life hereafter, which exists in man's own nature itself. For this demand of nature that man must be rewarded or punished for his good or evil deeds for which he himself is responsible, cannot be met in any other way than in the life hereafter. No sensible man can deny that if man becomes non existent after death, he will certainly be deprived of the rewards of his good deeds and escape the just and lawful punishment of many of his evil deeds. Therefore, unless one comes to believe in the absurd idea that a rational being like man has stumbled into an irrational system of the universe and a moral being like man has happened to be born in a world which basically has nothing to do with morality, he cannot deny the life hereafter. Likewise, the philosophy of the transmigration of souls also is no reply to this demand of nature, for if man goes on being born and reborn in this very world for the sake of being rewarded and punished for his moral acts, in every cycle of life he will perform some additional moral acts, which again will need to be rewarded and punished, thus making his account more and more lengthy and complicated in an endless way instead of being settled finally and for good. Therefore, this demand of nature is fulfilled only in case man in this world should have only one life and then, after the whole human race has been brought to an end, there should be another life in which all acts of man should be judged and assessed rightly and justly and he should be fully rewarded or punished in consequence thereof. (For further explanation, see E.N. 30 of Surah Al-Aaraf).

3. Does man think that We shall not assemble his bones.*3

أَتَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ نَجْمَعُ عِظَامَهُ



*3 The above two arguments, which have been presented in the form of the oaths, only prove two things. First, that the end of the world (i.e. the first stage of Resurrection) is a certainty; and second, that another life after death is necessary, for without it the logical and natural demands of man's being a moral being cannot be fulfilled; and this will certainly happen, for the existence of the conscience in man testifies to it. Now, this third argument has been given to prove that life after death is possible. The people of Makkah who denied it, said again and again: How can it be that the people who died hundreds of thousands of years ago, whose bodies have disintegrated into particles and mixed in the dust, whose bones decayed and were scattered away by the winds, some of whom were burnt to ashes, others devoured by the beasts of prey, still others drowned in the seas and swallowed by fish, the material constituents of their bodies should re-assemble and every man should rise up as the same person that he once was ten or twenty thousand years before? Allah has given its very rational and highly forceful reply in the form of this brief question: Does man think that We shall not be able to put his bones together? That is, If you had been told that the scattered particles of your body would reunite of their own accord some time in the future, and you would come back to life by yourself with this very body, you would no doubt have been justified in regarding it as impossible. But what you have

actually been told is that such a thing will not happen by itself, but Allah Almighty will do this. Now, do you really think that the Creator of the universe, Whom you yourself also regard as the Creator, would be powerless to do so? This was such a question in answer to which nobody who believed in God to be the Creator of the universe; could say, neither then nor today, that even God Himself could not do this even if He so willed. And if a disbeliever says such a thing, he can be asked: How did God in the first instance make the body in which you at present exist, by gathering its countless particles together from the air, water and earth and many other places you do not know. How, then, can you say that the same God cannot gather its constituent parts together once again.

4. Yes, We have the power on putting together his fingertips.*4

بَلَىٰ قَدِيرِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُسَوِّيَ بَنَانَهُ



*4 That is, not to speak of building up your skeleton once again by gathering together the major bones? We are able to make whole the most delicate parts of your body, even your finger tips, as they used to be before.

5. But man desires that he may continue committing sins.*5

بَلْ يُرِيدُ إِلَّا نَسْنُ لِيَفْجُرَ أَمَامَهُ



*5 In this brief sentence the real disease of the deniers of the Hereafter has been clearly diagnosed. What makes them deny the Hereafter is not, in fact, their regarding the

Resurrection and Hereafter as impossible but they deny it because acceptance of the Hereafter inevitably imposes certain moral restrictions on them, which they detest. They desire that they should continue roaming in the world at will as they have been roaming before. They should have full freedom to go on committing whatever injustice, dishonesty, sin and wickedness that they have been committing before, and there should be no deterrent to obstruct their freedom and to warn them that one day they will have to appear and render an account of their deeds before their God. Therefore, it is not their intellect which is hindering them from believing in the Hereafter but their desires of the self.

6. He asks: “When is the Day of Resurrection.”*6

يَسْأَلُ أَيَّانَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

*6 This question was not put as a question but derisively and to deny Resurrection, That is, they did not want to ask when Resurrection would take place but asked mockingly: What has happened to the day with which you are threatening us. When will it come.

7. So when vision is dazzled.*7

فَإِذَا بَرِقَ الْبَصَرُ

*7 Literally, the words *bariq al-basar* mean dazzling of the eyes by lightning, but in the Arabic idiom these words do not specifically carry this meaning only but are also used for man’s being terror-stricken and amazed, or his being confounded on meeting with an accident suddenly and his eyes being dazed at some distressing sight before him. This subject has been expressed at another place in the Quran,

thus: Allah is only deferring their case to the Day when the eyes shall stare with consternation. (Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 42).

8. And the moon is eclipsed.

وَخَسَفَ الْقَمَرُ ﴿٨﴾

9. And the sun and the moon are brought together.*8

وَجُمِعَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ ﴿٩﴾

*8 This is a brief description of the chaotic condition of the system of the universe that will prevail in the first stage of Resurrection. The darkening of the moon and the joining of the moon and the sun together can also mean that not only will the moon lose its light, which is borrowed from the sun, but the sun itself will become dark and both will become devoid of light similarly. Another meaning can be that the earth will suddenly start rotating in the reverse order and on that day both the moon and the sun will rise simultaneously in the west. And a third meaning can be that the moon will suddenly shoot out of the earth's sphere of influence and will fall into the sun. There may possibly be some other meaning also of this which we cannot understand today.

10. Man will say on that day: "Where is the escape."

يَقُولُ الْإِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَيْنَ الْمَفْرُ

﴿١٠﴾

11. Nay, there is no refuge.

كَلَّا لَا وَزَرَ ﴿١١﴾

12. Unto your Lord that Day shall be the place of rest.

إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمُسْتَقَرُّ ﴿١٢﴾

13. That Day man shall be informed of what he sent before and left behind.*9

يُنَبِّئُوا الْإِنْسَانَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ
وَأَخَّرَ

*9 *Bima qaddama wa akhkhara* is a very comprehensive sentence, which can have several meanings and probably all are implied:

(1) That man on that Day will be told what good or evil he had earned in his worldly life before death and sent forward for his hereafter, and also informed what effects of his good or evil acts he had left behind in the world, which continued to work and to influence the coming generations for ages after him.

(2) That he will be told everything he ought to have done but which he did not do, and did what he ought not to have done.

(3) That the full date wise account of what he did before and what he did afterwards will be placed before him.

(4) That he will be told whatever good or evil he had done as well as informed of the good or the evil that he had left undone.

14. But, man will be a witness against himself.

بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ

15. Even if he offers his excuses.*10

وَلَوْ أَلْقَىٰ مَعَاذِيرَهُ

*10 That is, the object of placing man's record before him will not be to inform the culprit of his crimes, but this will

be done because the demands of justice are not fulfilled unless the proof of the crime is produced before the court; otherwise everyman fully knows what he actually is. For the sake of self-knowledge he does not need that another one should tell him what he is. A liar can deceive the whole world but he himself knows that he lies. A thief can devise a thousand devices to conceal his crime but he himself is aware that he is a thief. A person involved in error can present a thousand arguments to assure the people that he is honestly convinced of the disbelief, atheism or polytheism, which he professes and follows, but his own conscience is never unaware of why he persists in that creed and what, in fact, prevents him from understanding and admitting its error and falsity. An unjust, wicked, dishonest, unmoral and corrupt person can even suppress the voice of his own conscience by inventing one or another excuse so that it may stop reproaching him and should be satisfied that he is doing whatever he is doing only because of certain compulsions, expediencies and genuine needs, but despite this he has in any case the knowledge of what wrong he has committed against a certain person, how he has deprived another of his rights, how he deceived still another and that unlawful methods he used to gain what he has gained. Therefore, at the time when one appears in the court of the Hereafter, every disbeliever, every hypocrite, every wicked person and culprit will himself be knowing what he has done in the world and for what crime he stands before his God.

16. (O Prophet),^{*11} do not move your tongue concerning it (the Quran) to make haste therewith.

لَا تُحْرِكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ



***11** The whole passage from here to “Then, indeed, it is upon Us its clarification” is a parenthesis, which has been interposed here as an address to the Prophet (peace be upon him). As we have explained in the introduction above, in the initial stages of the Prophethood when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was not yet fully used to receiving the revelation, he was afraid when revelation came down to him whether he would be able to remember exactly what the Angel Gabriel was reciting to him or not. Therefore, he would try to commit to memory rapidly what he heard from the Angel simultaneously. The same thing happened when Gabriel was reciting these verses of Surah Al-Qiyamah. Therefore, interrupting what was being revealed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was instructed to the effect: Do not try to memorize the words of the revelation, but listen to it attentively and carefully. It is Our responsibility to enable you to remember it by heart and then to recite it accurately. Rest assured that you will not forget even a word of this revelation, nor ever commit a mistake in reciting it.

After this instruction the original theme is resumed with: Nay, but you love the worldly life. The people who are not aware of this background regard these sentences as entirely unconnected with the context when they see them interposed here. But one does not see any irrelevance when

he has understood their background. This can be understood by an example. A teacher seeing the inattentiveness of a student in the course of the lesson might interrupt the lesson to tell him: Listen to me carefully, and then resume his speech, This sentence will certainly seem to be irrelevant to those who might be unaware of the incident and might read the lesson when it is printed and published word for word, But the one who is aware of the incident because of which this sentence was interposed, will feel satisfied that the lesson has been reproduced verbatim and nothing has been increased or decreased in it in the process of reproduction.

The explanation that we have given above of the interpolation of the parenthesis in the present context is not merely based on conjecture, but it has been explained likewise in the authentic traditions. Imam Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai, Tirmidhi Ibn Jarir, Tabarani, Baihaqi and other traditionists have related with authentic chains of transmitters a tradition from Abdullah bin Abbas, saying that when the Quran was revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), he would start repeating the words of the revelation rapidly as the Angel Gabriel recited them, fearing lest he should forget some part of it later. Thereupon, he was instructed: Do not move your tongue to remember this revelation hastily. The same thing has been related from Shabi, Ibn Zaid, Dahhak, Hasan Basri, Qatadah, Mujahid and other early commentators.

17. Indeed, upon Us is its collection, and its recitation.

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْءَانَهُ



18. So, when We have recited it,^{*12} then follow its recitation.

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْءَانَهُ ﴿١٨﴾

*12 Although it was Angel Gabriel who recited the Quran to the Prophet (peace be upon him), since he recited it on behalf of Allah and not on his own behalf, Allah said: When We have recited it.

19. Then, indeed, it is upon Us its clarification.^{*13}

ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ ﴿١٩﴾

*13 This gives the feeling, and some early commentators have also given expression to the same, that probably in the beginning the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah used to ask of the Angel Gabriel the meaning of a verse or a word or a command of the Quran even in the very midst of the revelation itself. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was not only given the instruction that he should listen quietly to revelation when it came down to him, and assured that its each word would be preserved in his memory precisely, and he would be enabled to recite the Quran exactly as it was revealed, but at the same time it was also promised that he would be made to understand the meaning and intention of each command and each instruction of divine revelation.

This is a very important verse, which proves certain fundamental concepts which, if understood well, can protect one against the errors which some people have been spreading before as they are spreading them today. First, it clearly proves that the Prophet ((peace be upon him) did not receive only the revelation which is recorded

in the Quran but besides that he was also given such knowledge by revelation as is not recorded in it. For, if the meaning and intention of the commandments of the Quran, its allusions, its words and its specific terms, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was made to understand had been recorded in the Quran, there was no need to say that it was also Allah's own responsibility to explain its meaning, for it should then be there in the Quran itself. Hence, one will have to admit that the explanations which were given by Allah of the meanings of the contents of the Qur'an, were in any case in addition to the words of the Quran. This is another proof of the secret revelation to the Prophet (peace be upon him) which the Quran provides. (For further proofs of this from the Quran, see our book *Sunnat ki Aaini Haithiyat* pp. 94-95 and pp. 118-125).

Secondly, the explanation of the meaning and intention of the Quran and of its commandments that was given by Allah to the Prophet (peace be upon him), was given for the purpose that he should make the people understand the Quran by his word and deed according to it and teach them to act on its commands. If this was not the object, and the explanation was only given so that he may restrict its knowledge to himself, it was then an exercise in futility, for it could not help in any way in the performance of the prophetic duties. Therefore, only a foolish person could say that this explanatory work had no legal value at all. Allah Himself has said in Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 44: And O Prophet, We have sent down this admonition to you so that you may make plain and explain to the people the teaching

which has been sent for them. (For explanation, see E.N. 40 of Surah An-Nahl). And at four places in the Quran Allah has stated that the Prophet's task was not only to recite the verses of the Book of Allah but also to teach the Book. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 129, 151; Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 164; Surah Al-Jumuah, Ayat 2. We have fully explained all these verses at pp. 74-77 of *Sunnat ki Aaini Haithiyat*. After this, how can a believer of the Quran deny that the Quran's correct and authoritative, as a matter of fact official, explanation is only that which the Prophet (peace be upon him) has given by his word and deed, for it is not his personal explanation but the explanation given by the God Who sent down the Quran to him. Apart from this, or leaving this aside any person who explains a verse, or a word, of the Quran according to his personal whim and desire, commits a boldness which no true believer could ever commit.

Thirdly, even if a person has read the Quran only cursorily, he cannot help feeling that there are many things in it whose actual meaning and intention cannot be understood by a reader of Arabic only from the words of the Quran, nor can he know how to act on the commands enjoined in them. Take the word *salat* for instance. The act which has been most stressed by the Quran after the affirmation of faith is the act of *salat*. But no man only with the help of the dictionary can determine its actual meaning. At the most what one can understand from the way it has been repeatedly mentioned in the Quran is that this Arabic word has been used in some special terminological sense, and it

probably implies some special act which the believers are required to perform. But merely by reading the Quran no reader of Arabic can determine what particular act it is, and how it is to be performed. The question: If the Sender of the Quran had not appointed a teacher from Himself and explained to him the precise and exact meaning of this term and taught him the method in full detail of implementing the command of *salat*, could there be even two Muslims in the world who would have agreed on one method of acting on the command of *salat* just by reading the Quran. The reason why Muslims have been performing *salat* in one and the same way, generation after generation, for more than 1500 years, and the way millions and millions of Muslims are carrying out the command of *salat* similarly in every part of the world, is that Allah had not only revealed the words of the Quran to His Messenger (peace be upon him) but had also explained to him fully the meaning of those words and the same meaning he taught to the people who accepted the Quran as the Book of Allah and him as the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah.

Fourthly, the means of knowing the explanation of the words of the Quran that Allah taught His Messenger (peace be upon him) and the Messenger (peace be upon him) his ummah by word and deed, is none but the Hadith and the sunnah, The Hadith implies the traditions which the earliest followers passed on to the later generations about the sayings and acts of the Messenger (peace be upon him) on sound authority, and the sunnah implies the way of life which became prevalent in the individual and collective life

of the Muslims by the Messenger's (peace be upon him) oral and practical teaching, the details of which have been bequeathed by the former to the latter generations by reliable traditions as well as seen by them practically in the life of the earliest followers. The person who refuses to acknowledge this means of knowledge, in fact, says that Allah after taking the responsibility of explaining the meaning of the Quran to His Messenger (peace be upon him) had, God forbid, failed to fulfill His promise. For this responsibility had not been taken to explain the meaning only to the Messenger in his personal capacity but for the purpose that the ummah also be made to understand the meaning of the divine Book through the agency of the Messenger (peace be upon him). And as soon as the Hadith and the sunnah are denied to be a source of law, it virtually amounts to saying that Allah has failed to carry out His responsibility. May Allah protect us froth such blasphemy. To the one who argues that many people had also fabricated Hadith, we would say that fabrication of Hadith itself is a major proof of the fact that in the beginning the entire ummah gave the sayings and acts of the Messenger (peace be upon him) the status of law, otherwise why should the people who wanted to spread error have fabricated false Hadith. For only those coins are counterfeited which are current in the bazaar; nobody would print paper currency which had no value in the bazaar. Then, those who say such a thing perhaps do not know that this ummah had seen to it from the very beginning that no falsehood was ascribed to the holy man

whose sayings and acts had the status of law, and as the danger of ascribing false things to him increased, the well-wishers of the ummah made greater efforts to distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit. The science of distinguishing the genuine from the false traditions is a unique science invented and developed only by the Muslims. Unfortunate indeed are those who without acquiring this science are being misled by the western orientalist to look upon the Hadith and the sunnah as unauthentic and unreliable and do not realize how grievously they are harming Islam by their foolhardiness.

20. Nay,^{*14} but you love the worldly life.

كَلَّا بَلْ تُحِبُّونَ الْعَاثِلَةَ ﴿٢٠﴾

*14 The theme is again resumed from where it was interrupted by the parenthesis. Nay implies: You deny the Hereafter not because you regard the Creator of the universe as helpless to bring about Resurrection and raise the dead, but because of this and this other reason.

21. And leave the Hereafter.^{*15}

وَتَذَرُونَ الْآخِرَةَ ﴿٢١﴾

*15 This is the second reason for denying the Hereafter, the first being the one mentioned in verse 5 above, saying: Since man wants to avoid the moral restrictions which are inevitably imposed by the belief in the Hereafter, his selfish motives, in fact, urge him to deny the Hereafter, and then he tries to present arguments in order to rationalize his denial. Now, the second reason being presented is that the deniers of the Hereafter are narrow-minded and shortsighted; for them only those results are all important,

which appear in this world, and they do not give any importance to those effects which will appear in the Hereafter. They think that they should spend all their labor and effort in attaining whatever benefits, pleasures or joys they can attain here, for if one attained this, one attained everything, no matter what evil end this might lead to in the Hereafter. Likewise, they think that the loss or trouble or grief that can afflict one here is a thing that one must avoid, no matter how great a reward it might earn one in the Hereafter if one endured it here. They are only interested in the cash bargain. For the sake of as remote a thing as the Hereafter they can neither abandon a profit nor suffer a loss today. With this mode of thought when they discuss the question of the Hereafter rationally, it is not true rationalism but a mode of thinking because of which they are resolved not to acknowledge the Hereafter in any case even if their conscience might be crying froth within that the arguments for the possible occurrence and necessity of the Hereafter given in the Quran are highly rational and their own reasoning against it is very weak.

22. (Some) faces that
Day shall be radiant.*16

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاصِرَةٌ

*16 Some faces shall be radiant; will be beaming with joy and delight, for the Hereafter which they had believed in, will be before them precisely accordingly to their belief. Thus, when they see the Hereafter for the sake of which they had given up the unlawful benefits of the world and suffered the lawful losses, actually established before their very eyes, they will have the satisfaction that they had made

the correct decision about their way of life, and the time had come when they would enjoy its best and plentiful fruits.

23. Looking at their Lord.^{*17}

إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ

***17** Some commentators have understood this allegorically. They say that the words looking towards someone are used idiomatically for having expectations from some one, awaiting his decision and hoping for his mercy and kindness: so much so that even a blind person also says that he is looking towards some one in the hope to see how he helps him. But in a large number of the Ahadith the commentary that has been reported of it from the Prophet (peace be upon him) is that in the Hereafter the illustrious servants of Allah will be blessed with the vision of their Lord. According to a tradition in Bukhari: You will openly see your Lord. Muslim and Tirmidhi have related on the authority of Suhaib that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: When the righteous people enter Paradise, Allah will ask them: Do you want that I should bless you with something more? They will answer: Have You not made our faces bright: Have You not admitted us into Paradise and saved us from Hell? Thereupon, Allah will remove the curtain and none of the blessings that they had been blessed with until then will be dearer to them than that they should be blessed with the vision of their Lord. And this very reward is the additional reward about which the Quran says: Those who have done excellent works, will get excellent rewards, and even something in addition to that.

(Surah Yunus, Ayat 26). Bukhari and Muslim have related, on the authority of Abu Saeed Khudri and Abu Hurairah: The people asked: O Messenger of Allah, shall we see our Lord on the Day of Resurrection. The Messenger (peace be upon him) replied: Do you find any difficulty in seeing the sun and the moon when there is no cloud in between? They said that they did not. The Messenger (peace be upon him) said: Likewise, you will see you Lord. Another tradition bearing almost on the same subject has been reported in Bukhari and Muslim from Jarir bin Abdullah, Imam Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Daraqutni, Ibn Jarir, Ibn AlMundhir, Tabarani, Baihaqi, Ibn Abi Shaibah and some other traditionists have related, with a little variation in wordings a tradition from Abdullah bin Umar, saying: The man of the lowest rank among the dwellers of Paradise will see the vastness of his kingdom up to a distance covered in two thousand years, and the people of the highest rank among them will see their Lord twice daily. Then, the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited this verse: On that Day some faces shall be radiant, looking towards their Lord. A tradition in Ibn Majah from Jabir bin Abdullah is to the effect: Allah will look towards them, and they will look towards Allah. Then, until Allah hides Himself from them, they will not pay attention to any other blessing of Paradise, and will continue to look towards Him. On the basis of this and many other traditions, the followers of the sunnah almost unanimously understand this verse in the meaning that in the Hereafter the dwellers of Paradise will be blessed with the vision of Allah, and this

is supported by this verse of the Quran too: Nay, surely on that Day they (the sinners) shall be kept away from their Lord's vision. (Surah Al-Mutaffifin, Ayat 15). From this one can automatically conclude that this deprivation will be the lot of the sinners, not of the righteous.

Here, the question arises how can man ever see God? A thing is seen when it is there in a particular direction, place, form and color, and the rays of light are reflected from it to the eye of man and its image is conveyed from the eye to the sight area in the brain. Is it ever conceivable with regard to the Being of Allah, Lord of the Universe, that man would be able to see Him in this way? But this question, in fact, springs from a grave misunderstanding. It does not take into account the distinction between two things: the essence of seeing and the specific form of the occurrence of the act of seeing with which we are familiar in the world. The essence of seeing is that the seer should be characterized by the power of sight: he should not be blind, and the thing to be seen should be manifest to him, not hidden from him. But in the world what we experience and observe is only the specific form of seeing in which a man or an animal practically sees something, and for this it is necessary that the seer should have an organ called the eye in his body, the eye should have the power of sight, it should have a physically bounded, colored object before it, which should reflect rays of light to the eye, and the eye should be able to receive its image. Now, if a person thinks that the practical demonstration of the essence of seeing can take place only in the form with which we are familiar in the world, he

would be only showing the narrowness of his own mental outlook; otherwise there can be in the Kingdom of God countless ways of seeing, which we cannot even imagine. The one who disputes this should tell us whether his God is seeing or blind. If He is seeing and sees His whole Universe and everything in it, does He see all this with an organ called the eye with which men and animals see things in the world, and does the act of seeing issue forth from Him as it issues forth from us? Obviously, the answer to this is in the negative, and when it is so, why should a sensible man find it difficult to understand that in the Hereafter the dwellers of Paradise will not see Allah in the specific form in which man sees something in the world, but their nature of seeing will be different, which we cannot comprehend here. The fact is that it is even more difficult for us to understand the nature of the Hereafter precisely and accurately than it is for a two-year-old child to understand what matrimonial life is, whereas he himself will experience it when he grows up.

24. And (some) faces that Day shall be gloomy.

وَوُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَاسِرَةٌ ۚ

25. Thinking that a calamity is about to befall on them.

تَظُنُّنَ أَنْ يُفَعَّلَ بِهَا فَاقِرَةٌ ۚ

26. Nay,^{*18} when it (the soul) reaches the throat.

كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَاقِي ۚ

*18 The word Nay relates to the context, and means: You are wrong in thinking that you will be annihilated after death and you will not return to your Lord.

27. And it is said: “who is an enchanter (to cure).”^{*19}

وَقِيلَ مَنْ رَاقٍ

***19** The word *raqin* in the original may be derived from *ruqayyah*, which means resort to charming, enchanting and exercising, and also from *raqi*, which means ascending. In the first case, the meaning would be: At last, when the attendants of the patient are disappointed with every remedy and cure, they will say: Let us at least call in an enchanter, who may save him. In the second case, the meaning would be: At that time the angels will say: which angels are to take his soul: the angels of punishment or the angels of mercy? In other words, at that very time the question will be decided in what capacity the dying one is entering the Hereafter; if he is a righteous person, the angels of mercy will take him, and if he is wicked, the angels of punishment will keep away and the angels of punishment will seize him and take him away.

28. And he (dying man) thinks that it is (time of) separation.

وَوَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ

29. And the leg is joined to the leg.^{*20}

وَأَلْتَفَّتِ السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ

***20** Some commentators have taken the word *saq* (leg, shank) in its literal meaning, thereby implying that at death one lean leg will join the other lean leg; some others have taken it metaphorically in the sense of difficulty, vehemence and hardship so as to mean: At that time one affliction will be joined with another affliction, one of being separated from the world and all its enjoyments, and the other of

being seized and taken to the Hereafter as a culprit, and this will be experienced by every disbeliever, hypocrite and sinner.

30. To your Lord, that Day, will be the drive.

إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. So he neither affirmed, nor prayed.

فَلَا صَدَّقَ وَلَا صَلَّىٰ ﴿٣١﴾

32. But he denied and turned away.

وَلٰكِن كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ ﴿٣٢﴾

33. Then he went to his kinsfolk, arrogantly.*21

ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِۦ يَتَمَطَّىٰ ﴿٣٣﴾

*21 It means that the one who was not prepared to believe in the Hereafter, heard all that has been described in the above verses; yet he persisted in his denial, and hearing these verses went back to his household, arrogantly. Mujahid, Qatadah and Ibn Zaid say that this person was Abu Jahl. The words of the verse also indicate that it was some particular person, who adopted such a conduct after having heard the above-mentioned verse of Surah Al-Qiyamah. The words, He neither affirmed the truth nor offered the Prayer, are particularly noteworthy. They clearly show that the first and necessary demand of acknowledging the truth about Allah and His Messenger and Book is that one should perform the Prayer, The occasion and time to carry out the other injunctions of the divine Shariah come later but the Prayer time approaches soon after one has affirmed the faith, and then it becomes known whether what one has affirmed with the tongue was really the voice of his heart, or it was only a puff of the

wind which one sent out from his mouth in the form of words.

34. Woe to you, (and) then (again) woe.

أَوَّلَىٰ لَكَ فَأَوَّلَىٰ

35. Then (again), woe to you (and) then (again) woe.^{*22}

ثُمَّ أَوَّلَىٰ لَكَ فَأَوَّلَىٰ

***22** The commentators have given several meanings of the word *aula laka*: shame on you, may you perish, woe to you, may you hasten to your doom. But in our opinion, in view of the context, the most appropriate meaning is that which Hafiz Ibn Kathir has given in his commentary: When you have had the boldness to disown your Creator, then it only behoves a person like you to persist in the sort of conduct you display. This is the same sort of sarcastic remark as occurred in Surah Ad-Dukhan, Ayat 49. While meting out punishment to the culprit in Hell, it will be said: Taste this, a mighty and honorable man that you are.

36. Does man^{*23} think that he will be left neglected.^{*24}

أَتَحْسَبُ إِلَّا نَسْنُنُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى



***23** Now, in conclusion, the same theme is being repeated with which the discourse began life-after-death is necessary as well as possible.

***24** The word *suda* when used with regard to a camel implies a camel who is wandering aimlessly, grazing at will, without there being anybody to look after him. Thus, the verse means: Does man think that he has been left to himself to wander at will as if his Creator had laid no

responsibility on him, had imposed no duty on him, had forbidden nothing to him, that at no time in future he would be required to account for his deeds. This same theme has been expressed in Surah Al-Mominoon, Ayat 115 thus: On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will ask the disbelievers: Did you think that We had created you without any purpose, and that you would never be brought back to Us. At both these places the argument for the necessity of the life hereafter has been presented as a question. The question means: Do you really think that you are no more than mere animals? Don't you see the manifest difference between yourself and the animal. The animal has been created without the power of choice and authority, but you have been blessed with the power of choice and authority; there is no question of morality about what the animal does, but your acts are necessarily characterized by good and evil. Then, how did you take it into your head that you had been created irresponsible and unanswerable as the animal has been? Why the animal will not be resurrected, is quite understandable. The animal only fulfilled the fixed demands of its instinct, it did not use its intellect to propound a philosophy; it did not invent a religion; it did not take anyone its god nor became a god for others; it did nothing that could be called good or bad; it did not enforce a good or bad way of life, which would influence others, generation after generation, so that it should deserve a reward or punishment for it. Hence, if it perished to annihilation, it would be understandable, for it could not be held responsible for any of its acts to account

for which it might need to be resurrected. But how could you be excused from life-after-death when right till the time of your death you continued to perform moral acts, which your own intellect judged as good or bad and worthy of reward or punishment? Should a man who killed an innocent person, and then fell a victim to a sudden accident immediately after it, go off free and should never be punished for the crime of murder he committed? Do you really feel satisfied that a man, who sowed corruption and iniquity in the world, which entailed evil consequences for mankind for centuries after him, should himself perish like an insect; or a grasshopper, and should never be resurrected to account for his misdeeds, which corrupted the lives of hundreds of thousands of human beings after him? Do you think that the man, who struggled throughout his life for the cause of truth and justice, goodness and peace, and suffered hardships for their sake, was a creation of the kind of an insect, and had no right to be rewarded for his good acts.

37. Was he not a sperm from semen, which is emitted.

أَلَمْ يَكْ نُطْفَةٌ مِّن مَّنِيِّ يُمْنِيَّ

38. Then he was a blood clot, then He formed (him) and proportioned.

ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقَ فَسَوَّى

39. Then He made from it two kinds, the male and the female.

فَجَعَلَ مِنْهُ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَى

40. Is not that (Creator)
Able to give life to the
dead. *25

أَلَيْسَ ذَٰلِكَ بِقَدِيرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يُحْيِيَ
الْمَوْتَىٰ



*25 This is an argument for the possibility of life-after-death. As for the people who believe that the whole act of creation, starting from the emission of a sperm-drop till its development into a perfect man, is only a manifestation of the power and wisdom of Allah, they cannot in fact refute this argument in any way, for their intellect however shamelessly and stubbornly they might behave, cannot refuse to admit that the God Who thus brings about man in the world, also has the power to bring the same man into being once again. As for those who regard this expressly wise act only as a result of accident, do not in fact have any explanation to offer, unless they are bent upon stubbornness, how in every part and in every nation of the world, from the beginning of creation till today, the birth of boys and girls has continuously been taking place in such proportion that at no time it has so happened that in some human population only males or only females might have been born and there might be no possibility of the continuation of the human race. Has this also been happening just accidentally. To make such an absurd claim one should at least be so shameless as to come out one day with the claim that London and New York, Moscow and Peking, have come into existence just accidentally. (For further explanation, see E.Ns 27 to 30 of Surah Ar-Room; E.N. 77 of Surah Ash-Shura).

There are several traditions to show that whenever the

Prophet (peace be upon him) recited this verse, he would sometimes respond with *bala* (why not), sometimes with *Subhanaka Allahumma fa-bala* (Glorified are You, O Allah, why not) and sometimes with *Subhanaka fa-bala* or *Subhanaka wa-bala*. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Abu Daud). Abu Daud contains a tradition from Abu Hurairah, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: When in Surah At-Teen, you read the verse; *Alais-Allahu bi-ahkamil-Hakimin* (Is not Allah the greatest Ruler of all), you should respond to it, saying: *Bala waana ala dhalika min-ash-shahidin* (Why not? I am of those who bear witness to this). And when you read this verse of Surah Al-Qiyamah, say: *Bala*; and when you read verse: *Fabi ayyi hadith-in ba da hu yu minun* (Now, what message is there after this, Quran, in which they will believe) of Surah Al-Mursalat, say: *Amanna billah* (We believed in Allah). Traditions on this subject have also been related by Imam Ahmad Tirmidhi, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah, Baihaqi and Hakim.



الدَّهْر Ad-Dahr

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

This Surah is called *Ad-Dahr* as well as *Al-Insan* after the words occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Most of the commentators, including Allama Zamakhshari, Imam Razi, Qadi, Baidawi, Allama Nizam ad-Din Nisaburi, Hafiz Ibn Kathir and many others, regard it as a Makki Surah, and, according to Allama Alusi, the same is the opinion of the majority of scholars. However, some commentators hold the view that the Surah was revealed at Madinah, and some others say that it was revealed at Makkah but Ayats 8-10 of it were sent down at Madinah.

As far as the subject matter and the style of the Surah are concerned, these are very different from those of the Madani Surahs. A little study of it rather shows that it is not only a Makki Surah but it was revealed during the earliest period at Makkah, which began just after the revelation of the first seven verses of Surah Al-Muddaththir. As for Ayats 8-10, they are so naturally set in the theme of the Surah that if they are read in their

proper context, no one can say that the theme preceding and following them had been sent down 15 to 16 years earlier but these three verses which were revealed many years later were inserted here unnaturally.

In fact, the basis of the idea that this Surah; or some verses of it were revealed at Madinah, is a tradition which has been related from Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him). He says that once Hasan and Husain (may Allah be pleased with them) fell ill. The Prophet (peace be upon him) and some of his companions visited them. They wished Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) to make a vow to Allah for the recovery of the two children. Thereupon, Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), Fatimah (may Allah be pleased with her) and Fiddah, their maid servant, vowed a fast of three days if Allah restored the children to health. The children recovered by the grace of Allah and the three of them began to fast as avowed. As there was nothing to eat in the house, Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) borrowed three measures (saa) of barley from somebody (according to another tradition, earned through labor). When on the first day they sat down to eat after breaking the fast, a poor man came and begged for food. They gave all their food to him, drank water and retired to bed. The next day when they again sat down to eat after breaking the fast, an orphan came and begged for something. They again gave away the whole food to him, drank water and went to bed. On the third day when they were just going to eat after breaking the fast, a captive came up and begged for food likewise. Again the whole food was given away to him. On

the fourth day Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) took both the children with him and went before the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) seeing the weak condition of the three, returned with them to the house of Fatimah (may Allah be pleased with her) and found her lying in a corner half dead with hunger. This moved him visibly. In the meantime the Angel Gabriel came and said; "Look, Allah has congratulated you on the virtues of the people of your house!" When the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked what it was, he recited this whole Surah in response. (According to Ibn Mahran's tradition, he recited it from verse 5 till the end. But the tradition which Ibn Marduyah has related from Ibn Abbas only says that the verse *Wa yut'imun-at ta'am..* was sent down concerning Ali and Fatimah (may Allah be pleased with them); This whole story has been narrated by Ali bin Ahmad al-Wahidi in his commentary of the Quran, entitled *Al Basit*, and probably from the same it has been taken by Zamakhshari, Razi, Nisaburi and others.

In the first place, this tradition is very weak as regards its chain of transmission. Then, from the point of view of its subject matter also, it is strange that when a poor man, or an orphan, or a captive, comes to beg for food, he is given all the food. He could be given one member's food and the five of them could share the rest of it among themselves. Then this also is incredible that illustrious persons like Ali and Fatimah (may Allah be pleased with them), who possessed perfect knowledge of Islam, should have regarded it as an act of virtue to keep the two children, who

had just recovered their health and were still weak, hungry for three consecutive days. Moreover, in respect of the captives also, it has never been a practice under the Islamic government that they should be left to beg for food for themselves. For if they were prisoners of the government, the government itself was responsible to arrange food and clothing for them, and if they were in an individual's custody, he was made responsible to feed and clothe them. Therefore, it was not possible that in Al-Madinah a captive should have gone about begging food from door to door. However, overlooking the weaknesses of transmission and the probability of subject matter, even if the narrative is accepted as it goes, at the most what it shows is that when the people of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) house acted righteously as they did, Gabriel came and gave him the good news that Allah had much appreciated their act of virtue, for they had acted precisely in the righteous way that Allah had commanded in these verses of Surah *Ad-Dahr*. This does not necessitate that these verses too were sent down on that very occasion. The same is the case with many traditions concerning the occasion of revelation. When about a certain verse it is said that it was sent down on a particular occasion, it in fact does not mean that the verse was sent down on the very occasion the incident took place. But it means that the verse applies precisely and exactly to the incident. Imam Suyuti in *Al-Itqan* has quoted this from Hafiz Ibn Taimiyyah: "When the reporters say that a verse was sent down concerning a particular incident, it sometimes implies that the same incident (or

matter) occasioned its revelation, and sometimes that the verse applies to the matter although it may not have occasioned its revelation.” Further on he quotes Imam Badr ad-Din Zarkashi’s view from his *Al-Burhan fi Ulum al-Quran*: “It is well known in respect of the companions and their immediate successors that when one of them says that a verse was sent down concerning a particular matter, it means that the ruling contained in it applied to that matter and not that the matter itself occasioned the revelation of the verse. Thus, it only uses the ruling of the verse for the purpose of reasoning and not for stating a fact.”

Theme and Subject Matter

The theme of this Surah is to inform man of his true position in the world and to tell him that if he understood his true position rightly and adopted the attitude of gratefulness, he would meet with such and such good end, and if he adopted the way of disbelief, he would meet with such and such evil end. In the longer Surahs of the Quran this same theme has been presented at length, but a special characteristic of the style of the earliest Surahs revealed at Makkah is that the subjects dealt with at length in the later period, have been presented in a brief but highly effective way in this period in such concise, elegant sentences as may automatically be preserved in the memory of the hearers.

In this Surah, first of all man has been reminded that there was a time when he was nothing; then a humble beginning of him was made with a mixed drop of sperm and ovum of which even his mother was not aware; even she did not

know that he had been conceived nor anyone else seeing the microscopic cell could say that it was a man, who in future would become the best of creation on the earth. After this, man has been warned, so as to say: "Beginning your creation in this way We have developed and shaped you into what you are today in order to test and try you in the world. That is why, unlike other creatures, you were made intelligent and sensible and were shown both the way of gratitude and the way of ingratitude clearly so that you may show, in the interval that you have been granted here for work, whether you have emerged as a grateful servant from the test or an unbelieving, un-grateful wretch!"

Then, just in one sentence, it has been stated decisively what will be the fate to be met with in the Hereafter by those who emerged as unbelievers from this test.

After this, in Ayats 5-22 continuously, the blessings with which those who do full justice to servitude in the world, will be favored, have been mentioned in full detail. In these verses, not only have their best rewards been mentioned but they have also been told briefly what are the acts on the basis of which they would become worthy of those rewards. Another special characteristic of the earliest Surahs revealed at Makkah is that besides introducing in them briefly the fundamental beliefs and concepts of Islam, here and there, those moral qualities and virtuous acts have been mentioned, which are praiseworthy according to Islam, and also those evils of deed and morality of which Islam strives to cleanse human life. And these two things have not been mentioned with a view to show what good or

evil result is entailed by them in the transitory life of the world, but they have been mentioned only to point out what enduring results they will produce in the eternal and everlasting life of the Hereafter, irrespective of whether an evil quality may prove useful or a good quality may prove harmful in the world.

This is the subject matter of the first section (Ayats 1-22). In the second section, addressing the Prophet (peace be upon him), three things have been stated: first, that it is in fact We Who are revealing this Quran piecemeal to you, and this is intended to inform the disbelievers, not you, that the Quran is not being fabricated by Muhammad (peace be upon him). It is We Who are revealing it, and it is Our Own wisdom which requires that We should reveal it piece by piece and not all at once. Second, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been told: No matter how long it may take for the decree of your Lord to be enforced and no matter what afflictions may befall you in the meantime, in any case, you should continue to perform your mission of Apostleship patiently, and not to yield to the pressure tactics of any of these wicked and unbelieving people. The third thing he has been told is: Remember Allah day and night, perform the prayer and spend your nights in the worship of Allah, for it is these things which sustain and strengthen those who call to Allah in the face of iniquity and disbelief.

Then in one single sentence, the actual cause of the disbelievers' wrong attitude has been stated: They have forgotten the Hereafter and are enamored of the world. In

the second sentence, they have been warned to the effect: You have not come into being by yourself: We have created you. You have not made these broad chests, and strong sturdy hands and feet for yourselves, it is We Who made these for you; and it so lies in Our power to treat you as We please. We can distort your figures, We can destroy you and replace you by some other nation. We can cause you to die and can recreate you in whatever form We like.

In conclusion, it has been said: This is an Admonition: whoever wills, may accept it and take a path to his Lord. But man's own will and desire is not everything in the world. Nobody's will and desire can be fulfilled unless Allah (also) so wills. And Allah's willing is not haphazard: Whatever He wills, He wills it on the basis of His knowledge and wisdom. He admits into His mercy whomever He regards as worthy of His mercy on the basis of His knowledge and wisdom, and He has prepared a painful torment for those whom He finds unjust and wicked.

1. Has there (not) passed upon man a period of time when he was not a thing (even) to be mentioned.*1

هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ
الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُن شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا

*1 Most of the commentators and translators have taken *hal* in the first sentence *hal ata alal-insan-i*, in the meaning of *qad*. Accordingly, they interpret this sentence to mean; "No doubt, there has indeed passed on man a time." But, in fact, the word *hal* in Arabic is used only as an interrogative particle, and its object is not to ask a question in every case, but this apparently interrogative particle is used in

different meanings on different occasions. For example, sometimes, in order to find out whether a certain incident has taken place or not, we ask: "Has this thing happened?" Sometimes, we do not mean to ask a question but to deny something and we express the denial, thus: "Can any other also do this?" Sometimes, we want somebody to affirm something and so ask him: "Have I paid what was due to you?" And sometimes, we do not intend to have something just affirmed but we put a question in order to make the addressee pay particular attention to something which follows his affirmation as a sequel. For example, we ask someone: "Have I harmed you in any way?" The object is not only to make him affirm that one has not done him any harm, but also to make him think how far one is justified to harm somebody who has not harmed him in any way. The interrogative sentence in the verse before us illustrates this last meaning. The object is not only to make man affirm that there has indeed passed on him such a time but also to make him think that the God Who developed and shaped him into a perfect man from an insignificant, humble beginning, would not be helpless to create him once again. In the second sentence, *hin um-min ad-dahr* the word *dahr* implies the endless time, the beginning and end of which are unknown to man and this is the particular period of time which might at some time have passed during this endless period. What is meant to be said is that in this immensely long span of time there has passed a long period when human race was altogether non-existent. Then a time came in it when a species called man was created, and in

the same period a time has passed on every person when a beginning was made to bring him into existence from nothingness.

The third sentence, “When he was not a thing (even) to be mentioned” implies that a part of him existed in the form of a microscopic gene in the sperm drop of the father and a part in the form of a microscopic ovum in the mother. For long ages man did not even know that he comes into being when the sperm gene and the ovum combined. Now both have been observed by means of powerful microscopes but even now no one can say how much of man exists in the father’s sperm and how much in the mother’s ovum. Then, the initial cell that comes into being by the combination of the two at the time of conception is such an insignificant thing that it can be seen only through highly powerful microscopes, and seeing it also no one at first sight can claim that it is a man taking shape, nor that even if a man emerges from this humble beginning, what will be his size and stature, what will be his form and figure, and what will be his capabilities and personality like. This is the meaning of the sentence that at that time he was not yet a thing worthy of any mention although a beginning of his being as a man had been made.

2. Indeed, We created man from a mixed sperm drop,^{*2} that We may try him,^{*3} then We made him hearing, seeing.^{*4}

إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ
أَمْشَاجٍ نَّبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا
بَصِيرًا



***2 “From a mixed sperm drop”:** From the intermingling of the male sperm with the female ovum and not separately from the sperm or the ovum. During sexual intercourse normally 200-500 million sperms are deposited into the female birth canal. The sperms swim and reach site of mixing with ovum in 4-6 hours on an average time. Most of the sperms are lost in this journey. Chemical changes occur during this travel and sperms remove their protective covering from their heads while getting ready to release special chemicals from the heads in their attempts and preparation to penetrate into the ovum. Usually, only one sperm is allowed to fuse and mix with the ovum. (Ref. Maternity and Gynecology Care, Mosby Year Book Publishing Inc. St Louis Missouri USA Chapter 7, Page 162).

***3** This shows man’s real position in the world and the position of the world for man. He is not like the trees and animals that the object of his creation be fulfilled on the earth itself, and he should die and perish here after he has played his appointed role over a period of time according to the law of nature. Furthermore, this world is neither a place of punishment for him, as the monks think, nor a place of rewards as the believers of the law of transmigration think, nor a place of entertainment and enjoyment, as the materialists think, nor a battlefield, as the followers of atheists think, but in fact it is a place of test and trial for him. That which he regards as his age, is in fact the time given to him for the test. Whatever powers and capabilities he has been given in the world, the things

that have been placed under his control and authority, the various positions and capacities in which he functions, and the relationships that he enjoys with other people, all these are the countless manners of the test and this test continues till the last breath of his life. The result is not to be announced in this world but in the Hereafter when all his answer books will have been assessed, decision will be given whether he has come out successful or failed. And his success or failure wholly depends on what he thought of himself while he functioned here and how he answered the questions that were given to him here. If he believed that he had no God, or that he was the slave of many gods, and while answering the questions he thought that he was not to be held accountable before his Creator in the Hereafter, his whole lifework went wrong. And if he regarded himself as the slave of One God and worked in the way approved by God, with the accountability of the Hereafter always in view, he stood successful in the test. This theme has occurred at many places in the Quran.

*4 The words *sami* (hearing) and *baseer* (seeing) in the original text actually imply being “sensible and intelligent”. These words of the Arabic language are never used in respect of the animal although it also hears and sees. Thus, hearing and seeing here do not imply the powers of hearing and seeing which have been given to the animals too, but those means through which man obtains knowledge and then draws conclusions from it. Besides, since hearing and seeing are among the most important means of knowledge for man, only these two have been mentioned briefly;

otherwise it actually implies giving man all those senses of the body by which he gathers information. Then the senses given to man are quite different in their nature from those given to animals, for at the back of every sense he has a thinking brain, which collects information gained through the senses; arranges it, draws conclusions from it, forms opinions, and then takes some decisions which become the basis of his attitude and conduct in life. Hence, after saying, “We created man in order to try him,” to say, “therefore, We made him capable of hearing and seeing” actually contains the meaning that Allah gave him the faculties of knowledge and reason to enable him to take the test. Obviously, if this were not the meaning and the meaning of making man hearing and seeing just implied the one who could hear and see, then a blind and deaf person would stand exempted from the test, whereas unless a person is utterly devoid of knowledge and reason, there can be no question of his being exempted from the test.

3. Indeed, We guided him to the way, whether be he grateful or be he ungrateful.*5

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا
وَأِمَّا كَفُورًا



*5 That is, We did not just leave him to himself after giving him the powers of knowledge and reason, but We also guided him so that he knows which is the path of gratefulness and which of ungratefulness, so that whichever path he chooses in his later life, he himself is responsible for it. In Surah Al-Balad, the same subject has been expressed, thus “And We showed him both the conspicuous ways (of

good and evil).” And in Surah Ash-Shams, thus: “By the human self, and by Him Who balanced it (with all the external and internal powers), then inspired it with its wickedness and its piety.” When all these explanations are kept in view, and also those detailed statements of the Quran in which it has been stated what arrangements Allah has made for man’s guidance in the world, it becomes evident that in this verse “We guided him to the way” does not imply any one form of guidance but many forms of it which are limitless and countless. For example:

(1) Along with the faculties of knowledge and reason, man has also been endowed with a moral sense by which he discerns between good and evil, regards some acts and qualities as evil even if he himself is involved in them, and regards some other acts and qualities as good even if he himself is avoiding them. So much so that even those people who for the satisfaction of their selfish motives and desires have invented philosophies by which they have justified many evils for themselves, protest loudly when they are themselves treated with the same evils by others, and then it becomes known that in spite of their false philosophies they actually regard them as evil. Likewise, when a man himself is benefited by a good treatment from another person, he is from within forced to commend and appreciate it even though he might be looking upon good acts and qualities as ignorance folly and antiquated things,

(2) In every man Allah has placed the faculty of conscience (*the lawwamah*), which checks and pricks him every time he is about to commit an evil, or is in the process of

committing it, or has already committed it. However hard man may try to silence his conscience or make it insensitive, he does not have the power to destroy it completely. He may become shameless and prove himself to be absolutely devoid of the conscience, he may also try to deceive the world by argumentation, he may even invent a thousand excuses to justify his acts in order to deceive himself, but despite all this the censor, that Allah has placed in his nature, is so active and powerful that it does not let remain hidden from an evil person what he actually is. This same thing has been stated in Surah Al-Qiyamah, thus: “Man knows his own self best even though he may offer many excuses.” (Ayat 15).

(3) In man’s own self and outside of him, from the earth to the heavens, there lie scattered in the universe countless such signs which clearly show that all this could not happen without a God, nor could there be many gods to create this life and control and administer it. Likewise, these very signs, inside man and outside him, clearly point also to the Resurrection and Hereafter. If man shuts down his eyes on them, or refuses to ponder over them intelligently, or avoids to admit the truths which they point out, he himself would be to blame. For Allah has shown no negligence in laying out every possible sign of the truth for the guidance of man.

(4) Man does come across in his own life, and in the contemporary world and in the experiences of past history, countless such incidents which prove that a supreme power is ruling over him and the entire universe, before Whom he

is absolutely powerless, whose Will is dominant over everything and whose help he needs at every moment. These experiences and observations which point to the truth do not exist only outside him but in man's own nature as well there exists the evidence of the existence of the supreme power on the basis of which even the most confirmed atheist spreads out his hands in prayer before God when in distress, and the most hardened polytheist abandons all false gods and starts invoking One God only for help.

(5) Man's intellect and his nature assert positively that crime ought to be punished and good deeds ought to be rewarded. On this very basis in every society of the world a system of the courts is established in one form or another. The services and works, which are regarded as commendable are also rewarded in one way or another. This is a clear proof of the fact that there is a necessary relationship between morality and the law of retribution, which man cannot possibly deny. Now, if it is admitted that in this world there are countless such crimes which cannot be punished at all to say nothing of punishing them fully and adequately, and there are also countless such virtues, which cannot be rewarded at all, to say nothing of rewarding them fully and adequately, there is no alternative but to acknowledge the Hereafter. Unless, of course, a foolish person may assume, or a stubborn person may insist on having the opinion, that man who has been endowed with the concept of justice, has taken birth in a world which in itself is devoid of the concept of justice; and

then it remains for him to answer the question as to how and wherefrom this man, who was born in such a world, obtained this concept of justice. To reinforce these means of guidance Allah sent Messengers and revealed Books in the world for the purpose of giving clear and definite guidance to man. In these Books it was clearly explained what is the way of gratefulness and what is the way of ungratefulness and unbelief and what will be the consequences of following either way. The teaching brought by the Prophets and the Books has spread throughout the world in countless perceptible, and imperceptible ways, on such a large scale that no section of human population has remained unaware of the concept of God and the Hereafter, of the distinction between good and evil, and of the moral principles and legal rulings presented by them, whether it knows or does not know that it has obtained this knowledge only through the teachings of the Prophets and the Books they brought. Even those who disbelieve in the Prophets and the Books today, or are unaware of them, also are following many of those things which have reached to them actually through their teachings while they do not know what is the real source of these teachings.

4. Indeed, We have prepared for the disbelievers chains, and collars, and a blazing Fire.

إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَلَاسِلًا
وَأَغْلَالًا وَسَعِيرًا ﴿٤﴾

5. Indeed, the righteous*6 shall drink from a cup whose mixture is of camphor.

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِنْ كَأْسٍ
كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُورًا ﴿٥﴾

*6 The word *abrar* as used in the original implies the people who have done full justice to their Lord's obedience, have carried out the duties enjoined by Him and abstained from the things forbidden by Him.

6. A spring^{*7} of which the slaves of Allah^{*8} shall drink, making it gush forth abundantly.^{*9}

عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ
يُفَجِّرُونَهَا تَفْجِيرًا

*7 That is, it will not be camphor-mixed water but a natural fountain, the purity, coolness and agreeable odor of its water will resemble camphor.

*8 Although the words *ibad Allah* (servants of Allah), or *ibad ar-Rehman* (servants of ar-Rehman), can be used for all men literally, for every human being is God's servant, yet wherever these words occur in the Quran they only imply the righteous men. In other words, the wicked ones who have excused themselves from Allah's servitude do not deserve that Allah should honor them with the honorable title of *ibad-Allah* or *ibad ar-Rehman*, attributing them to His own Holy Name.

*9 It does not mean that they will use spades and picks to dig out its channels and will take out its branches whithersoever they please, but that their one single command and desire will be enough to cause a fountain to gush forth from wherever they please in Paradise.

7. (Those) who fulfill (their) vows,^{*10} and they fear a Day whose evil shall be wide spread.

يُوفُونَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ
شَرُّهُ مُسْتَطِيرًا

***10** One meaning of fulfilling the vow is that one should fulfill. The second, that one should fulfill what one has pledged oneself to do. The third, that one should fulfill what one has been enjoined; what is obligatory for one to do, whether one has been enjoined it, or is self imposed. Of these three the second meaning is the best known and generally the same is implied by fulfilling the vow. In any case, these righteous people have been regarded as praiseworthy either because they carry out the duties enjoined by Allah, or because if they vow to Allah to perform certain good deeds which Allah has not enjoined on them, they fulfill even those self imposed vows, not to speak of showing any negligence in carrying out the duties which Allah has actually enjoined on them. As for the commandments concerning the vow, it would be useful to explain at length here so as to enable the people to avoid the errors and rid themselves of the misunderstandings with regard to fulfilling the vow and learn the correct rules pertaining to it.

(1) The jurists have mentioned four kinds of the vow: (a) that one should pledge to Allah that he would perform such and such a good act to earn His good pleasure; (b) that one should make a vow that he would perform such and such a good act in gratitude to Allah if He fulfilled his such and such wish and desire or need. Both these kinds of the vow have been termed *nadhr tabarrur* (i.e. vows for a good cause) by the jurists, and it is agreed by all that it is obligatory to fulfill them; (c) That one should pledge to do an unlawful thing or to refrain from an obligatory thing;

(d) that one should bind oneself to do a permissible thing, or to refrain from an obligatory thing, or pledge to do an unworthy thing. These two kinds of the vow have been termed *nadhr lajaj* (i.e. vow of ignorance, disputation and stubbornness) by the jurists. About the third kind of the vow (c), it is agreed that it does not take place at all; and about the fourth kind of the vow (d), the juristic opinion is divided. Some jurists say that it should be fulfilled; some others say that one should expiate the breaking of the oath, and still others that one has the option to fulfill the vow or to expiate it. According to the Shafeis and the Malikis this vow does not take place at all, and according to the Hanafis both these kinds of the vow entail expiation.

(2) Several *Ahadith* show that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has forbidden making a vow with a view to changing the destiny, or with a view to making an offer to Allah that if He fulfilled his such and such wish, he would perform such and such good act, not in gratitude to Allah, but in exchange for His help. Abdullah bin Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) has reported that once the Prophet (peace be upon him), while he forbade the making of a vow, said; "It cannot avert anything which is about to befall, but through it something is extracted from the miserly person." The last sentence of the *Hadith* means: The miserly person is not prone to spend anything in the cause of Allah; because of the vow he gives away something in charity in the greed that Allah would accept his offer and change his destiny for him. Another tradition from Abdullah bin Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) is to the effect; The

Prophet (peace be upon him) said: the vow can neither hasten anything nor defer anything, but through it something is extracted from the miserly person. In another tradition he says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade making of the vow and said: "It does not bring any good, but it is a means whereby something is extracted from the miserly person." Several traditions on the same subject have been related by Muslim from Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), and in one tradition which both Bukhari and Muslim have related, he reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "As a matter of fact, the vow cannot bring the son of Adam anything which Allah has not ordained for him, but the vow sometimes coincides with the destiny itself and through it the divine will takes out from the possession of the miserly person that which he was not inclined to give away willingly." This same theme is further explained by the tradition of Abdullah bin Amr bin Aas according to which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "True vow is that whereby Allah's goodwill and approval may be sought."

(3) Another rule that the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave concerning the vow is that only that vow should be fulfilled, which is in obedience to Allah; the vow made in disobedience to Allah should never be fulfilled. Likewise, there can be no vow concerning a thing which is not in his power to perform. Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "The one who made a vow that he would obey Allah, should obey Him, and the one who made a vow that he would

disobey Allah, should not disobey.” Thabit bin Dahhak says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “There can be no question of fulfilling a vow made in the disobedience of Allah, nor in something which is not in his possession.” Muslim has related a tradition on the same subject from Imran bin Husain; and in *Abu Daud* a tradition has been reported in greater detail from Abdullah bin Amr bin Aas, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “No vow and no oath is of any use in an act which is not in the power of man to perform, or which involves disobedience of Allah, or severance of relations with kindred.”

(4) One should not fulfill a vow which is made to perform an act which is of no good in itself, which is useless, or involves unbearable hardship or self torture, and might have been self imposed as an act of virtue. In this connection, the sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) are very clear and definite. Abdullah bin Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) says that once when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was giving a sermon, he saw a man who was standing in the sun. He asked who he was and why he was standing in the sun. The people said that he was Abu Israil: he had vowed that he would keep standing and would not sit, nor take shade, nor speak to anybody, and would keep fasting. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “Tell him to speak, to come in the shade and sit, but to observe the fast.” Uqbah bin Amir Juhani says: “My sister vowed that she would go for Hajj barefoot and also vowed that she would not cover her head with a garment during the journey. The Prophet said: Tell her to

go by a conveyance and to cover her head.” Muslim has related several traditions on this subject with a little variation in wordings. Abdullah bin Abbas reporting the incident concerning Uqbah bin Amir's sister, has reported the Prophet's (peace be upon him) words to the effect: “Allah has no need of her vow: tell her to use a conveyance.” In another tradition Ibn Abbas says, “A man said: My sister has vowed to go and perform Hajj on foot. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: “Allah has no need that your sister should undergo hardship. She should go for Hajj by a conveyance.” Anas bin Malik has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw, probably during the Hajj journey, an old man being supported between his two sons. When he asked what was the matter with him, it was said that the old man had vowed to go on foot. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “Allah is free from this that the man should place himself in agony. Then he commanded him to ride.”

(5) If it is not practically possible to fulfill a vow, it may be fulfilled in some other way. Jabir bin Abdullah says: “On the day of the conquest of Makkah, a man stood up and said: O Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, I had vowed that if Allah made Makkah fall at your hand, I would pray two rakahs in Bait al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, say the prayer here. He again asked the same thing and the Prophet (peace be upon him) again gave the same reply. When he asked it again, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: All right, as you please.” According to another tradition, the Prophet

(peace be upon him) said: “By Him Who has sent Muhammad with the truth, if you pray here it will suffice for you instead of your praying at *Bait al Maqdis*.”

(6) The opinion among the jurists is divided concerning the person who vows to give away all his possessions for the cause of Allah. Imam Malik says that he should give away one third of his possessions, and Sahnun from among the Malikis has expressed the opinion that he should give away so much of his possessions as does not subject him to hardship later. Imam Shafei says that if the vow is of the nature of *tabarrur* (i.e. for a good cause), he should give away all his possessions, and if it is of the nature of *lajaj* (i.e. a vow of ignorance), he has the option to fulfill the vow or to expiate the oath. Imam Abu Hanifah says that he should give away all such possessions as are subject to zakat, but the vow will not apply to those possessions which are exempt from zakat, e.g. house, or other such properties. Imam Zufar from among the Hanafis is of the opinion that he should give away everything in charity after he has taken out two months’ maintenance for his family. Hadrat Kaab bin Malik says: “When I was granted forgiveness for incurring Allah’s displeasure for staying behind on the occasion of the Battle of Tabuk, I went before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and submitted: My repentance also included that I would give away all my possessions in charity for the sake of Allah and His Messenger. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: No, do not do that. I said, then half of the possessions? He said: No. I said, then one third of the possessions? He replied: Yes. According to

another tradition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: “Withhold some of your possessions for yourself: this would be better for you.” Imam Zuhri says: “Information has reached to me that Abu Lubabah (who had similarly incurred displeasure in connection with the battle of Tabuk) said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): “I shall give away all my possessions for the sake of Allah and His Messenger in charity.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: “For you it would be enough to give away only one third of it.”

(7) Should a person who vowed to perform a good act before embracing Islam, fulfill it after he has embraced Islam? The Prophet’s (peace be upon him) ruling in this connection is that he should fulfill it. According to a tradition in *Abu Daud* and *Tahavi*, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) is reported to have vowed in the pre Islamic days that he would observe *itikaf* (devotional seclusion) in the *Masjid al-Haram* (for one night, or according to others, one day). After embracing Islam when he asked for the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) ruling, he replied: “Fulfill your vow.” Some jurists have taken this ruling of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to mean that it is obligatory to do so, and some others that it is commendable.

(8) About the question whether the heirs are under obligation to fulfill a vow made by the deceased person or not, the juristic opinion is divided. Imam Ahmad, Ishaq bin Rahawaih, Abu Thaur and the Zahiris say that if the deceased person had vowed to observe the fasting or

perform the prayer but could not fulfill the vow, the heirs have to fulfill it. The Hanafis say that if the vow pertained to a bodily worship (e.g. the prayer or the fasting), the heirs are under no obligation to fulfill it, and if it pertained to monetary worship and the deceased did not leave any will for his heirs to fulfill it, they are again under no obligation to fulfill it, but if he left a will, it will be obligatory for the heirs to fulfill it from his inheritance up to one third of its extent. The Maliki viewpoint also is somewhat the same. The Shafeis say that if the vow pertains to a non monetary worship, or if it pertains to a monetary worship and the deceased person did not leave any inheritance, the heirs are under no obligation to fulfill it; and if the deceased left some inheritance, the heirs would be bound to fulfill the vow pertaining to a monetary worship, no matter whether the dying person left a will or not. In the *Hadith* there is a tradition from Abdullah bin Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) on this subject to the effect: Saad bin Ubadah asked for the Prophet's (peace be upon him) verdict, saying: My mother has died and she had made a vow which she could not fulfill. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Fulfill the vow on her behalf. Another tradition from Ibn Abbas is to the effect: A woman went on a sea journey and vowed that if she returned home safe and sound, she would observe fast for a month. On her return home she died. Her sister or her daughter came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to ask for his decision. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: "Observe the fast on her behalf." Abu Daud has related another tradition with the same content

from Buraidah, saying: “A woman asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) a similar thing and he gave the same reply as mentioned above.” Since these traditions are not explicit as to whether the rulings the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave pertained to its being obligatory or commendable, and since about the vow made by Saad bin Ubadah’s mother also it is not clear whether it pertained to a monetary worship, or a bodily worship, there have arisen differences among the jurists on this question.

(9) As for an unlawful vow it is clear that it should not be fulfilled. However, there is a difference of opinion as to whether it entails expiation or not. On this point, since the traditions differ, the juristic opinion is also divided. According to one kind of the traditions the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded the person concerned to make the expiation. Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: There is no vow in the disobedience of Allah, and its expiation is the expiation of breaking the oath. In the case of Uqbah bin Amir Juhani’s sister (mentioned above), the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded that she should break her vow and fast for three days. In the case of another woman also who had vowed to go for Hajj on foot, he commanded that she should go by a conveyance and should make expiation for the oath. Ibn Abbas has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The one who made a vow but did not specify what the vow was about, should expiate for the oath, and the one who made a vow to perform a sinful act, should expiate for the oath, and the one who made a vow to

perform something which he does not have the power to perform, should expiate for the oath, and the one who made a vow to do something which he can do, should fulfill it. On the other hand, there are the traditions which show that there is no expiation in this case. The person who had vowed that he would stand in the sun and would not speak to anyone. Making a reference to him in *Muwatta*, Imam Malik writes: “I could not know by any means whether the Prophet (peace be upon him) besides commanding him to break the vow might also have told him to make the expiation. Abdullah bin Amr bin Aas has reported that the Prophet said: “If one swearing an oath for something later finds that another thing was better than that, he should abandon it and should adopt the better course and the abandonment itself is the expiation.” Baihaqi says that this *Hadith* and Abu Hurairah’s this tradition: “He should adopt the better course and this is its expiation” are not established. Imam Nawawi discussing these traditions of the *Hadith* in his commentary of Sahih Muslim writes: “Imam Malik, Shafei, Abu Hanifah, Daud, Zahiri and other scholars say that the vow made to do a sinful thing is void and ineffectual and it does not entail any expiation if not fulfilled, but Imam Ahmad says that it entails expiation.”

8. And who feed with food, for the love of Him,^{*11} the poor, and the orphan, and the captive.^{*12}

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ
مَسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا

*11 Most of the commentators hold the view that the

pronoun in *hubbi-hi* refers to food. Accordingly, they interpret the sentence to mean: “In spite of the food’s being agreeable and tasty and that they need it, they give it away to others.” Ibn Abbas and Mujahid say: They do so because of their fondness for feeding the poor (*ala hubb-il-it am*); and Fudail bin Iyad and Abu Suleman ad-Darani say: They do so out of love for Allah. In our opinion the sentence in the next Ayat “We feed you only for the sake of Allah” supports the last meaning.

*12 The custom in the ancient days was that the prisoners were put in fetters and shackles and taken out daily to go about the streets begging food. Later the Islamic government abolished this custom. In this verse, the captive implies every such person who is in bondage, whether he is an unbeliever, a Muslim, a war prisoner, or imprisoned in consequence of a crime, and whether he is provided food in that state, or made to beg for it. In any case, to feed a helpless person who cannot do anything to earn a living is an act of great virtue.

9. (Saying)^{*13} “We feed you only for the sake of Allah, we neither seek from you any reward, nor thanks.”^{*14}

إِنَّمَا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لِرُؤْحِهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ
مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا

*13 Although feeding a poor man is in itself a great virtue, yet fulfilling the other needs of an indigent person is no less virtuous. For example, to clothe a poor man, to arrange treatment for a sick person, or to help a debtor who is harassed by his creditor, is an act of equally great virtue. Here, a particular kind of virtue in view of its importance

has been presented only as an example, but the real object is to stress giving help to the needy.

*14 It is not necessary that this may be said in so many words while feeding the poor man. It may be said in the heart; in the sight of Allah this is as meritorious as saying it with the tongue. But saying these words with the tongue has been particularly mentioned so as to set the person being helped at ease that no thanks or recompense is due from him, so that he eats with full satisfaction and peace of mind.

10. “Indeed, we fear from our Lord a Day, frowning, distressful.”

إِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ رَبِّنَا يَوْمًا عَبُوسًا
قَمْطَرِيرًا ﴿١٠﴾

11. So Allah shall save them from the evil of that Day and give them radiance and joy.*15

فَوَقَّاهُمُ اللَّهُ شَرَّ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ
وَلَقَّاهُمْ نَضْرَةً وَسُرُورًا ﴿١١﴾

*15 Radiance and joy: radiance of the face and joy of the heart. In other words, all the severities and terrors of the Day of Resurrection will be meant only for the disbelievers and the culprits. The righteous will on that Day remain immune from every hardship and will be well pleased with their lot. The same theme has been expressed in Surah AlAnbiya: Ayat 103, thus: The time of great fright will not trouble them at all; the angels will rush forth to receive them, saying: this is the Day that you were promised; and in Surah An-Naml: Ayat 89 thus: He who brings good deeds, will have a reward better than that, and such people shall be secure from the terror of that Day.

12. And We shall reward them, for their patience, Paradise and (garments of) silk. *16

وَجَزَّاهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرُوا جَنَّةً وَحَرِيرًا



*16 Here the word *sabr* (patience) has been used in a very comprehensive sense. The whole worldly life of the righteous believers in fact has been described as a life of patience. From the time a man attains discretion, or believes, till death; his suppressing of unlawful desires, adhering to the bounds set by Allah, carrying out the duties enjoined by Him, sacrificing his time, his wealth, his effort, powers and abilities, even his life if so required, ignoring every greed and temptation, which might turn him away from Allah's way, meeting every danger and enduring every hardship faced on the way of the truth, giving up every gain and pleasure accruing from unlawful ways and means, bearing every loss and suffering and affliction incurred on account of his love for truth, and doing all this with full faith in the promise of Allah that He will bless the doer with the fruits of this righteous conduct not in this world but in the second life after death, turns the whole life of a believer into a life of patience, eternal and perpetual patience, all pervasive and life long patience.

13. Reclining therein upon high couches, they will not see therein (burning) sun, nor (freezing) cold.

مُتَّكِنِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ لَا يَرَوْنَ فِيهَا شَمْسًا وَلَا زَمْهَرِيرًا

14. And the shades thereof shall cover upon them, and

وَدَانِيَةً عَلَيْهِمْ ظِلُّهَا وَذُلِّلَتْ

its fruits shall hang low
within their reach.

قُطُوفُهَا تَدْلِيلاً

15. And there shall be passed
round among them, vessels of
silver,^{*17} and goblets of
crystal.^{*18}

وَيُطَافُ عَلَيْهِم بِعَانِيَةٍ مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ
وَأَكْوَابٍ كَانَتْ قَوَارِيرًا

***17** According to Surah Az-Zukhruf: Ayat 71, vessels of gold shall be passed round to them, but here of silver. This shows that vessels of gold as well as of silver shall be passed round to them as required by the occasion.

***18** That is, though silver, it will be as transparent as glass, vessels of this kind of transparent, crystal like silver will be the special characteristic of the vessels in which drinks will be served to the people of Paradise.

16. Crystal (clear glass made)
from silver, which will have
been filled in due measure.^{*19}

قَوَارِيرًا مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ قَدَّرُوهَا تَقْدِيرًا

***19** “In due measure”: filled accurately according to the desire of every person, neither over-filled nor under-filled. In other words, the attendants of the dwellers of Paradise will be so judicious and discerning that they will have accurate judgment about everybody whom they serve wine as to how much of it he wishes to drink. (For the characteristics of the wine of Paradise, see Surah As-Saaffat: Ayats 45-47 and the E.Ns 24-27, Surah Muhammad: Ayat 15 and E.N. 22, Surah At-Tur: Ayat 23 and E.N. 18, Surah Al-Waqiah: Ayat 19 and E.N. 10).

17. And they will be given therein to drink a cup whose mixture is of ginger.

وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا
زَنْجَبِيلًا



18. A fountain therein (Paradise) named Salsabil.*20

عَيْنًا فِيهَا تُسَمَّى سَلْسَبِيلًا



*20 This is to suit the taste of the Arabs who liked the wine flavored with ginger mixed water. But this flavoring will not be achieved by adding ginger mixed water to it: it will be a natural fountain which will have the flavor of ginger but without its bitterness; Therefore, it will be called *Salsabil*, which implies such water as flows gently and pleasantly down the throat on account of its being sweet, light and palatable. Most commentators think that the word *salsabil* has been used here as an adjective of the fountain and not as a name for it.

19. And round about them will (serve) boys of everlasting youth. When you see them, you would think them scattered pearls.*21

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ فَسَبَّحْتَ لَهُمُ
لُؤْلُؤًا مَّنْثُورًا



*21 For explanation, see Surah As-Saaffat: E.N. 26, Surah At-Tur: E.N. 19, Surah Al-Waqiah: E.N. 9.

20. And when you look there, you would see delight, and a great kingdom.*22

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ ثَمَّ رَأَيْتَ نَعِيمًا وَمُلْكًا
كَبِيرًا



*22 Even if a person might have lived a pauper in the

world, in the Hereafter when he is admitted to Paradise, on the basis of his good deeds, he will live as though he were the owner of a splendid kingdom.

21. Upon them shall be the garments of fine green silk, and rich brocade.*²³ And they shall be adorned with bracelets of silver.*²⁴ And their Lord shall give them a pure wine to drink.*²⁵

عَلَيْهِمْ ثِيَابٌ سُنْدُسٍ خُضْرٌ
وَإِسْتَبْرَقٌ وَحُلُوعٌ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ
وَسَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُورًا

***23** The same theme has been expressed in Surah Al-Kahf: Ayat 31, thus: “They (the dwellers of Paradise) will wear colored robes of silk and rich brocade and will be reclining upon raised thrones.” On this basis, the opinion of the commentators who have expressed the view that this implies the sheets of cloth which will be hanging over their thrones or bedsteads or that this would be the dress of the boys who would be moving about serving them does not seem to be correct.

***24** In Surah Al-Kahf: Ayat 31, it has been said: “They will be adorned with bracelets of gold.” This same theme has also occurred in Surah Al-Hajj: Ayat 23 and Surah Fatir: Ayat 33 above. When all these verses are read together, three possibilities become obvious. (1) That sometimes they would like to wear bracelets of gold and sometimes bracelets of silver, both kinds of the ornaments being available for use as and when required; (2) that they will wear bracelets of both gold and silver at the same time, for the combination of the two enhances the personal charms

of the wearer; (3) that whosoever desires will wear bracelets of gold and whosoever desires will wear bracelets of silver. As for the question, why will the men be adorned with the ornaments when these are usually worn by the women? The answer is that in the ancient times the custom was that the kings and their nobles used to adorn their hands and necks and the crowns of their heads with different kinds of ornaments. In Surah Az-Zukhruf: Ayat 53, it has been said that when the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) arrived in the Pharaoh's court in his simple dress, with only a staff in hand, and told him that he was a Messenger sent by Allah, Lord of the worlds, the Pharaoh said to his courtiers: "What kind of a messenger is he, who has appeared before me in this state? If he was sent by the King of the universe, why were not bracelets of gold sent down on him, or a company of angels as attendants?"

*25 Two kinds of the wine have been mentioned above, first that to which water will be added from the fountain of camphor; second that to which water will be added from the fountain of ginger, After these, making mention of another wine, with the remark that their Lord shall give them a pure wine to drink, gives the meaning that this will be some superior kind of wine, which they will be given to drink as a special favor from Allah.

22. Indeed, this is for you a reward, and your endeavors have been appreciated.*26

إِنَّ هَذَا كَانَ لَكُمْ جَزَاءً وَكَانَ سَعْيُكُمْ مَشْكُورًا



*26 In the original, *kana sayu kum mashkura*: "your

endeavors have been accepted and recognized.” *Saii* implies the entire lifework that a person accomplished in the world, the works and objectives to which he applied his energies and abilities; and its being *mashkur* means that Allah has appreciated it. *Shukr* when expressed by the servant to God implies his gratefulness to Him for His blessings, and when it is expressed by God for the servant, it means that He has appreciated his services. It is indeed the kindness of the Master that He should appreciate the endeavors of the servant when the servant has only carried out his duties according to the Master’s will.

23. Indeed, it is We who have sent down to you (O Muhammad) the Quran in stages.*27

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ
تَنْزِيلًا



*27 Though the addressee here apparently is the Prophet (peace be upon him), the discourse is directed to the disbelievers who said, “Muhammad (peace be upon him) composes the Quran deliberately by himself piece by piece; had it been from Allah, it would be revealed all at once. At some places on the Quran this objection has been cited and answered (see E.Ns 102, 104, 105, 106 of Surah An-Nahl and E.N. 119 of Surah Bani Israil), but here Allah has answered it without citing it, saying emphatically: “It is We Who are sending it down, it is not the composition of Muhammad, and it is We Who are sending it gradually. That is, it is the requirement of Our wisdom that We should not send down Our message all together in a book form, but should send it piece by piece.”

24. So be patient for the command of your Lord,^{*28} and do not obey from among them, sinner or disbeliever.^{*29}

فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تُطِعْ مِنْهُمْ
ءَاثِمًا أَوْ كُفُورًا



***28** “Be patient”: Face patiently the hardships and difficulties of the great Mission your Lord has entrusted to upon you; endure firmly and steadfastly whatever comes to pass, without showing any weakness in this regard.

***29** “Do not obey”: Do not yield to any one of them so as to give up preaching of the true faith; do not be inclined to make even the least change in the religious beliefs for the sake of any denier of the truth, or in the moral teachings for the sake of a wicked person. Proclaim whatever is unlawful and forbidden to be so openly even if an immoral person might press you hard to show some lenience in this condemnation, and proclaim whatever is false as false and whatever is true as true publicly even if the disbelievers might use all their influence to silence you, or to make you adopt a little lenience in this regard.

25. And remember the name of your Lord, morning and evening.

وَاذْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا



26. And during the night, prostrate before Him, and glorify Him a long (part of the) night.^{*30}

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَاسْجُدْ لَهُ
وَسَبِّحْهُ لَيْلًا طَوِيلًا



***30** The rule followed in the Quran is that wherever the

Muslims have been exhorted to show patience against the disbelievers, immediately after it they have been commanded to remember Allah much and to observe the Prayer, which automatically implies that the power needed to meet the resistance of the enemies of the truth in the way of true faith can be obtained only by this means. To remember Allah morning and evening may also imply remembering Allah always but when the command to remember Allah at specific times is given, it implies the *salat* (Prayer). In this verse, *bukrah* means the morning and *asil* the time from the sun's decline till sunset, which obviously covers the *Zuhr* and the *Asr* times. Night starts after sunset; therefore, the command "to prostrate yourself in the night" would apply to both the *Maghrib* and the *Isha* Prayers. Then, the command "to glorify Allah in the long hours of night", clearly points to the time of the *Tahajjud* Prayer. (see E.Ns 92-97 of Surah Bani Israil, E.N. 2 of Surah Al-Muzzammil). This also shows that these have been the Prayer times in Islam from the beginning. However, the command making the Prayer obligatory five times a day with fixed times and number of *rakahs* was given on the occasion of *miraj* (ascension).

27. Indeed, these (disbelievers) love the quickly attainable (world), and leave behind them a heavy Day.*³¹

إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ يُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ
وَيَذَرُونَ وَرَاءَهُمْ يَوْمًا ثَقِيلًا

*³¹ That is, the reason why the disbelieving Quraish still persist in the errors and deviations of belief and morality

and why they turn a deaf ear to your invitation to the truth is, in fact, their worship of the world and their heedlessness of the Hereafter. Therefore, the way being followed by a true God-worshipper is so different from and opposed to their way that there can be no question of any compromise between them.

28. It is We who have created them, and We have strengthened their forms. And when We will, We can replace with others like them with a complete replacement.*32

لَخَنَّ خَلْقَنَّهُمْ وَشَدَدْنَا أَسْرَهُمْ
وَإِذَا شِئْنَا بَدَّلْنَا أَمْثَلَهُمْ تَبْدِيلًا



*32 The sentence, “And when We will, We can replace with others like them with a complete replacement” can have several meanings:

- (1) That whenever We please We can destroy them and replace them by other people of their own kind, who will be different from them in conduct;
- (2) That whenever We please We can change their forms; that is, just as We can make someone healthy and sound in body, so also We have the power to make somebody a paralytic, cause someone to be struck with facial paralysis and other to fall a victim to some disease or accident and become a cripple permanently;
- (3) That whenever We will We can recreate them in some other form after death.

29. Indeed, this is a reminder. So whoever wills,

إِنَّ هَذِهِ تَذِكْرَةٌ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ

let him take the way to his Lord,

إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا ﴿٢٦﴾

30. And you cannot will except that Allah wills.*33
Indeed, Allah is All-knowing, All-Wise.

وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٣٠﴾

***33** Three things have been said in these verses:
(1) That whoever wills may adopt the way to his Lord;
(2) that one's willing to do a thing is not enough unless Allah so wills;
(3) That Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

If one considers these three things deeply one can fully understand the relationship between man's freedom of choice and Allah's Will, and it helps to remove all the confusions from the people's minds about the question of destiny.

The first verse shows that in this world the authority granted to man is only to the extent that he may decide to adopt any one of the different courses available for passing life here. This is the freedom of choice that Allah has given to him. For example, when a man confronts the question of earning a living for himself, he finds many ways before him of which some are lawful, as for example lawful kinds of labor, service, trade and business, industry, or agriculture, and some are unlawful as thievery, robbery, picking pockets, prostitution, trading in money (on interest), gambling, bribery and unlawful kinds of services and business, etc. The decision to adopt any one of these ways has been left to man's own free choice as to how he would

like to earn his living. Likewise, there are different modes of morality. On the one side, there are the good qualities, like honesty, nobility, decency, justice, pity, sympathy and chastity, and on the other, the evil traits like wickedness, meanness, tyranny, dishonesty, and frivolity. Man has full freedom to adopt any mode of morality he likes. The same is the case with religion; man has many ways open before him in this regard also; atheism and denial of God, polytheism and idol worship, different combinations of monotheism and polytheism, and the unalloyed creed of God worship which is taught by the Quran. In these also, the decision to choose has been left to man as to which of them he wants to adopt. Allah does not impose on him any decision of His own. If man may like to choose a lawful means of earning his living, Allah will not force him to adopt an unlawful means for it. Or that, man may like to follow the Quran, Allah will not force him to become an atheist, polytheist or disbeliever. Or that, man may like to become a good man, Allah will not force him to become an evil man.

But after man has exercised this freedom of choice whether can he practically also do the same which he wants to do, depends on Allah's Will, His leave and His grace. If the Will of Allah be to let the man do what he has willed or decided to do, then alone can he do it; otherwise he cannot do anything without Allah's Will and His leave, however hard and seriously he may try to do it. This same thing has been said in the second verse. This can be explained by an example. If man had been delegated all the powers in the

world and permitted to do whatever he pleased, the system of the world would have been disrupted. One murderer was enough to murder all the people in the world if he were given the freedom to kill anybody he liked. One pickpocket could pick the pocket of everyone if he were given the option to pick anyone's pocket he pleased. One thief was enough to steal whatever he liked; one adulterer to commit rape on every woman, one robber to plunder every house, if each one of these had full powers to act as he desired. Therefore, Allah has kept this in His own power whether He may allow or disallow the man to follow the right or the wrong path that he chooses to follow or not. The person who, giving up error, wants to adopt the right way is also granted righteousness only by Allah's leave and will. However, the condition is that the decision to give up error and choose guidance should have been taken by the man himself; otherwise just as Allah does not make anybody a thief or murderer or atheist or polytheist forcibly, so also He does not make anybody a believer forcibly.

After this, the third verse removes the misunderstanding whether Allah's willing may not be arbitrary. That is why it has been said that "Allah is All-Knowing, Al-Wise." That is whatever He does, He does it on the basis of knowledge and wisdom; therefore, there can be no possibility of any error in His decisions. He decided with full knowledge and wisdom as to who should be given a particular kind of help and who should not be given it, who should be allowed to do a particular work and who should not be allowed to do it. To the extent that Allah provides opportunities to man

and makes the conditions favorable for him, he can work according to his desire, whether it be good or evil. The question of guidance also is no exception to it. Allah alone knows on the basis of His knowledge and He alone determines on the basis of His wisdom as to who deserves to be guided and who does not. (see E.N. 41 of Surah *Al-Muddaththir*.)

31. He admits whom He wills into His mercy. And the wrongdoers, He has prepared for them a painful punishment.*34

يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ
وَالظَّالِمِينَ أَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا



***34** In this verse “wrongdoers” imply the people whom the revelations of Allah and the teachings of His Prophet (peace be upon him) may reach, yet they deliberately and consciously decide that they would not obey and follow them. This also includes those unjust people who may plainly say that they do not accept the revelation as God’s revelation and the Prophet as God’s Prophet, or that they do not believe in God at all, and also those wicked people who may not refuse to believe in God and the Prophet and the Quran, but they are resolved not to obey and follow them. As a matter of fact, both these groups are unjust and wicked. As regards the first group, their case is clear and obvious; but the second group is no less wicked; it is also hypocritical and treacherous. Verbally, they say that they believe in God and the Messenger and the Quran, but in their hearts and minds they are resolved not to follow them,

and their practical conduct of life is also opposed to it. About both Allah has declared that He has prepared for them a painful torment. They might strut about in the world, enjoy life as they like, boast and brag of their superiority, but ultimately they will be subjected to a disgraceful punishment; they cannot enter and enjoy Allah's mercy in any way.





Al-Mursalat الْمُرْسَلَات

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word *wal-mursalat* in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Its subject matter bears full evidence that it was revealed in the earliest period at Makkah. If this Surah is read together with the two Surahs preceding it, namely Al-Qiyamah and Ad-Dahr, and the two Surahs following it, namely An-Naba and An-Naziat, it becomes obvious that all these Surahs are the revelations of the same period, and they deal with one and the same theme, which has been impressed on the people of Makkah in different ways.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is to affirm the Resurrection and Hereafter and to warn the people of the consequences which will ultimately follow the denial and the affirmation of these truths.

In the first seven verses, the system of winds has been presented as an evidence of the truth that the Resurrection which is being foretold by the Quran and the Prophet

Muhammad (peace be upon him) must come to pass. The reasoning is that the power of All-Mighty Allah Who established this wonderful system on the earth, cannot be helpless in bringing about the Resurrection, and the express wisdom which underlies this system bears full evidence that the Hereafter must appear, for no act of an All-Wise Creator can be vain and purposeless, and if there was no Hereafter, it would mean that the whole of one's life was useless and absurd.

The people of Makkah repeatedly asked: Bring about the Resurrection with which you threaten us; only then shall we believe in it. In verses 8-15, their demand has been answered, saying: Resurrection is no sport or fun so that whenever a jester should ask for it, it should be brought forth immediately. It is indeed the Day of Judgment to settle the account of all mankind and of all its individuals. For it Allah has fixed a specific time: it will take place at its own time, and when it takes place with all its dreads and horrors, it will confound those who are demanding it for fun today. Then their cases will be decided only on the evidence of those Messengers whom these deniers of the truth are repudiating with impunity. Then they will themselves realize how they have been responsible for their dooms.

In verses 16-28 arguments have been given continuously for the occurrence and necessity of the Resurrection and Hereafter. In these it has been stated that man's own history, his own birth, and the structure of the earth on which he lives, bear the testimony that the coming of

Resurrection and the establishment of the Hereafter are possible as well as the demand of Allah Almighty's wisdom. History tells us that the nations which denied the Hereafter ultimately became corrupted and met with destruction. This means that the Hereafter is a truth which if denied and contradicted by a nation by its conduct and attitude, will cause it to meet the same doom, which is met by a blind man who rushes headlong into an approaching train. And it also means that in the kingdom of the universe only physical laws are not at work but a moral law is also working in it, under which in this very world the process of retribution is operating. But since in the present life of the world retribution is not taking place in its complete and perfect form, the moral law of the universe necessarily demands that there should come a time when it should take its full course and all those good works and evil deeds, which could not be rewarded here or which escaped their due punishment should be fully rewarded and punished. For this, it is inevitable that there should be a second life after death. If man only considers how he takes his birth in the world, his intellect, provided it is sound intellect, cannot deny that for the God Who began his creation from an insignificant sperm drop and developed him into a perfect man, it is certainly possible to create the same man once again. After death the particles of man's body do not disappear but continue to exist on the same earth on which he lived his whole life. It is from the resources and treasures of this very earth that he is made and nourished and then into the same treasures of the earth he is

deposited. The God who caused him to emerge from the treasures of the earth, in the first instance, can also cause him to re-emerge from the same treasures after he has been restored to them at death. If one only considers the powers of Allah, he cannot deny that He can do this; and if one considers the wisdom of Allah, he also cannot deny that it is certainly the very demand of His wisdom to call man to account for the right and wrong use of the powers that He has granted him on the earth; it would rather be against wisdom to let him off without rendering an account.

Then, in verses 28-40, the fate of the deniers of the Hereafter has been depicted, and in verses 41-45 of those who affirming faith in it in their worldly life, endeavored to improve their Hereafter, and abstained from the evils of disbelief and thought, morality and deed, conduct and character which might be helpful in man's worldly life, but are certainly ruinous for his life hereafter.

In the end, the deniers of the Hereafter and those who turn away from God-worship, have been warned as if to say: Enjoy your short-lived worldly pleasure as you may, but your end will ultimately be disastrous. The discourse concludes with the assertion that he who fails to obtain guidance from a Book like the Quran, can have no other source in the world to afford him guidance.

1. By those (winds) which are sent in succession.

وَالْمُرْسَلَاتِ عُرْفًا

2. Which then blow violently.

فَالْعاصِفَاتِ عَصْفًا

3. And lift up (the clouds and) scatter them.

وَالنَّشِيرَاتِ نَشْرًا ﴿٣﴾

4. Then split (them) asunder.

فَالْفَرِيقَاتِ فَرَقًا ﴿٤﴾

5. Then infuse (the hearts) with the remembrance (of Allah).

فَالْمُلْقِيَاتِ ذِكْرًا ﴿٥﴾

6. (As) an excuse or (as) a warning.^{*1}

عُذْرًا أَوْ نَذْرًا ﴿٦﴾

***1** That is, sometimes the failure of winds causes the people to be alarmed at the prospect of a famine, and they turn to Allah to repent of their sins. Sometimes they bring a lot of rain and the people turn to Allah in gratitude, and sometimes their blowing violently causes dread in the hearts and the people turn to Allah from fear of destruction.

In these verses initially the order of rain-bringing winds has been stated, which is thus: first, winds start blowing in succession; then they assume the proportions of a storm; then they raise the clouds and spread them; then they split and separate them. After this, instead of making mention of the rainfall, it is said that the winds infuse the hearts with the remembrance of Allah, as an excuse or as a warning. That is, it is an occasion when either because of fear man is compelled to remember Allah, or else he confesses his errors and invokes Allah to protect and save him from ruin and bless him with rain. If it has not rained for a long time, and the people are thirsty for rain, even the most hardened disbeliever sometimes begins to remember God when he

sees the winds blowing and the clouds advancing. The drought's being mild and severe makes the difference. In case the drought is mild, the common man who is not far from Allah, will remember Him, but others will offer scientific explanations, saying that there was no cause for anxiety: it did not rain because of such and such a cause and it would be weak-mindedness to start praying to God on such an ordinary thing. However, if the drought is unusually prolonged, and the whole country is faced with a calamitous situation, even the confirmed disbelievers begin to remember God. If they feel shy to use their tongue, in their hearts they feel penitent on their wrongdoing and ingratitude and pray to God to cause rain throughout the country from the winds which are raising the clouds. This is infusion of God's remembrance in the hearts as an excuse. As for its infusion as a warning, it happens when the wind develops into a cyclone and destroys settlement after settlement or it rains so heavily as to cause a deluge. In such a state even a confirmed atheist starts imploring God out of awe for Him, and then all scientific explanations of the cyclone or deluge evaporate from his mind. Thus, after describing the blowing of winds in their succession to say that they infuse the hearts with Allah's remembrance as an excuse or as a warning, is meant to impress the truth that the system working in the world keeps on reminding man that everything on the earth has not been placed under his control but there is a Supreme Power above him, which rules his destiny. That Power is so supreme and mighty that it can use the elements for the sustenance and nourishment

of man when it so wills and can use the same elements for his destruction when it so wills.

After this the same system of winds has been proffered as an argument to prove that the Resurrection which is being promised to man, must come to pass. Now, let us see how this system testifies to this truth.

Man generally is perplexed in the case of Resurrection and the Hereafter at two questions. First: is the occurrence of Resurrection possible? Second: what is its need and necessity? And then being perplexed at these questions, he starts entertaining doubts whether it will at all occur or not, or whether it was only a figment of the imagination. In this connection, the Quran has at some places reasoned out and proved its possibility, its necessity and occurrence from the system of the universe, and at others adopted another mode of reasoning: oaths have been sworn by some of the countless signs of God's kingdom and it has been asserted that it shall surely come to pass. This mode of reasoning contains arguments for its possibility as well as arguments for its necessity and arguments for its occurrence. Here, adopting the same mode of reasoning only the system of the circulation of winds and rainfall has been presented as a sign of the truth that it is a regular system, which has been established by the design of an All-Wise, All-Mighty Sovereign; it is not a chance occurrence, as a result of which a system might have been generated in the atmosphere of the earth that vapors should arise from the seas, winds should carry them and gather them into clouds, then split and separate them into pieces and transport them

to different parts of the earth and then should cause them to fall as rain. This system has not been devised accidentally by some blind and deaf nature, but it is a well-considered and well-designed plan, which is functioning regularly according to a law. That is why it never so happens that the heat of the sun should produce ice on the surface of the sea instead of vapors, but the sun always raises only vapors from the sea. It never so happens that the monsoons should blow in the reverse order and suppress vapors into the sea but they always raise them up into the atmosphere. It never so happens that the formation of clouds should cease, or the winds should stop to carry them to dry lands or the falling of rain on the earth should discontinue. The same law has been at work since millions and millions of years under which this system is functioning. Had it not been so our coming into existence on the earth and survival here would not be possible.

In this system one finds a clear purpose and the working of a regular law. One can clearly see that on the earth the life of man, animal and vegetation deeply relates to the winds and rainfall, and this arrangement testifies that water has been provided to bring animate life into existence and keep it alive precisely according to their requirements and a law. This purpose and regularity is not found only in this aspect but in the entire system of the universe, and man's whole scientific progress is based on it. About every thing man tries to find out what is its purpose and on what principle it works. Then as he goes on gaining insight into the purposes of the creation of different things and the principles on

which they work, he goes on devising new and ever new methods of their use and making new inventions for the progress of his civilization. Had there been no such concept in the mind of man naturally that the world is a meaningful world and everything in it is working on a principle, he would never have entertained the question about anything as to what was its purpose and how it could be put to use.

Now, when this world and everything in it has meaning, and if there is a law working in this world and in everything it contains, and if it has been functioning with the same purpose and regularity since millions and millions of years, then a stubborn person only could refuse to accept that an All-Knowing, All-Mighty God has made it, and about that God it would be foolish to assume that although He could make and cause it to function but cannot break it, and after breaking it, cannot reconstruct it in any other form if He so wills. The concept about matter that it is imperishable was the chief support of the ignorant atheist of the past, but the progress of knowledge has proved it also false. Now it is an acknowledged scientific fact that matter can change into energy and energy into matter. Therefore, it is perfectly according to knowledge and reason that this material world will last only as long as the Living and Eternal God sustains it. As soon as He wills to change it into energy, He can change it by a simple command and His one command is enough to re-create it into any other material form and shape He wills.

This much then about the possibility of the Resurrection, which cannot now be rejected by any scientific and rational

argument. As for the question that it must take place so that man is rewarded for his good works and punished for his evil deeds, the person who acknowledges man's moral responsibility and also believes that rewarding the good services and punishing the crimes is the necessary demand of this moral responsibility, cannot but admit that there must be the Hereafter. There is no law or government in the world, which can punish every crime and reward every good act. To say that the prick of the conscience is a sufficient punishment for the culprit and the satisfaction of the conscience is sufficient reward for the doer of good is no more than meaningless philosophizing. The question is: How and when did the conscience of the person who killed an innocent man and then himself died in an accident immediately after it helped him? And when did the conscience of the man who went to fight for the sake of truth and justice and fell a victim to a bomb blast suddenly, have the satisfaction that he had laid down his life for a good cause? Thus, the truth is that the pretences invented to avoid the belief in the Hereafter are all meaningless. Man's intellect wants, his nature requires, that there should be justice, but in the present life of the world it is not possible to have full and perfect justice. Justice can be had only in the Hereafter and only under the judgment and command of the All-Knowing, Omnipotent God. Denial of the necessity of the Hereafter is, in fact, denial of the necessity of justice.

Intellect can go only so far as to convince man that the Hereafter is possible and it should come about. As for the

truth that it will surely come about, the knowledge of it can be obtained only through revelation, and revelation has given us the news that that which you are being promised must happen. We cannot attain this knowledge by intellectual reasoning; however, we can attain the certainty of its being true on the basis that the thing of which we are being informed by revelation is both possible and necessary.

7. Indeed, that which you are being promised,^{*2} must happen.^{*3}

إِنَّمَا تُوْعَدُونَ لَوَاقِعٌ

^{*2} Another meaning can be: That which you are being threatened with, i.e. the Resurrection and Hereafter.

^{*3} Here an oath has been sworn by five things on the inevitability of the Resurrection:

- (1) Those which are sent forth in succession, or for a good cause.
- (2) Those which blow violently and tempestuously.
- (3) Those which disperse and scatter.
- (4) "those which split and separate;" and
- (5) Those which inspire the remembrance. As these words only describe the characteristics and it has not been specified what thing or things they qualify, this has given rise to a difference of opinion among the commentators as to whether these are the qualities of one particular thing or of different things and what the thing or things are? One group of them says that all the five are qualify the winds; the second group says that all the five imply the angels; the third group says that the first three imply the winds and

the remaining two the angels; the fourth says that the first two imply the winds and the other three the angels; another group has opined that the first quality implies the angels of mercy, the second the angels of punishment and the remaining three imply the verses of the Quran.

In our opinion, the first thing worthy of consideration is that when five characteristic have been mentioned continuously in one and the same context and there is no indication to show as to what has been qualified up to a certain point and wherefrom has the qualification of another thing begun, it cannot be correct, on the basis of a baseless conjecture, to understand that in these verses oaths have been sworn by two or three different things. Rather in this case the continuity of the subject by itself requires that the whole passage be regarded as related to the characteristics of one and the same thing. Secondly, wherever in the Quran an oath has been sworn by a certain thing or things in order to convince the doubters or deniers of an unseen truth, there the oath stands for an argument or reasoning which is meant to tell that the thing or things point to the truth's being right and correct. For this purpose obviously it cannot be correct to present one imperceptible thing as an argument for another imperceptible thing; for, only a perceptible thing can be presented as an argument for an imperceptible thing. Hence in our opinion the correct explanation is that it implies the winds and the explanation of the people who interpret the five things to mean the angels cannot be acceptable, for the angels are as imperceptible as is the

occurrence of the Resurrection.

Now, let us consider as to how these different states of winds point to the occurrence of the Resurrection. One of the most important factor which has made animal and vegetable life possible on the earth is the air. The relationship its qualities bear with every kind of life testify that there is an All-Powerful, All-Wise Creator, Who willed to create life on this earth and for this purpose created here a thing whose qualities exactly and precisely correspond to the requirements of the existence of living beings. Then, He did not only wrap up the earth in the air and left it alone, but by His power and wisdom characterized this air with countless different states, which are being regulated since millions and millions of years in such a way that they cause the change of seasons and weather: sometimes it is close and sometimes a soft breeze blows; sometimes it is hot and sometimes cold; sometimes it brings clouds and sometimes it drives away clouds; sometimes it causes pleasant gusts to blow and sometimes disastrous windstorms; sometimes it brings beneficial rains and sometimes there is drought; in short, there are different kinds of winds which blow in their own time, and every kind serves one or the other purpose. This arrangement is the proof of a dominant Power, for which neither it can be impossible to bring life into existence, nor to obliterate it, nor to re-create it after having annihilated it. Likewise, this arrangement is also a proof of a supreme wisdom about which only a foolish man could think that all this was being done for fun, without any higher object in view. As against this wonderful system

man is so helpless that he can neither cause a favorable wind to blow for himself, nor can prevent a disastrous cyclone from blowing on himself. However shameless, obstinate and stubborn he may be, the wind does at one time or another remind him that a Mighty Sovereign is ruling over him, Who can turn this principal means of his life into a cause of blessing for him or into a cause of ruin for him whenever He so likes, and man does not have the power to prevent or avert any of His decisions. (For further explanation, see E.N. 7 of Surah Al-Jathiyah; E.Ns 1 to 4 of Surah Adh-Dhariyat).

8. Then, when the stars lose their lights.*4

فَإِذَا النُّجُومُ طُمِسَتْ ﴿٨﴾

*4 That is, when they lose their light and luster.

9. And when the heaven is cleft asunder.*5

وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ فُرِجَتْ ﴿٩﴾

*5 When the heaven is rent asunder: when the system and discipline of the heavens under which every star and planet is established and moving in its orbit and everything in the universe is adhering to the bounds set for it, is broken.

10. And when the mountains are blown away.

وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ نُسِفَتْ ﴿١٠﴾

11. And when the messengers' time of appointment has come.*6

وَإِذَا الرُّسُلُ أُقْتَتَتْ ﴿١١﴾

*6 At several places in the Quran it has been stated that when the case of mankind will be presented before Allah on the Day of Resurrection, the Messenger of every nation will

appearing here regarding them as the criterion of good and evil, ultimately went to their doom without exception. This is a proof of the fact that the Hereafter is a reality overlooking and ignoring which causes the same kind of harm to a person which is caused when he chooses to close his eyes to the hard facts of life.” (For further explanation, see E.N. 12 of Yunus, E.N. 86 of An-Naml, E.N. 8 of Ar-Rum, E.N. 25 of Saba).

17. Then We shall follow them up with those of latter (day).^{*9}

ثُمَّ نَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْآخِرِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

^{*9} That is, this is a permanent law with Us. Just as denial of the Hereafter has proved disastrous for the nations of the past so it will always prove disastrous also for the nations of the future. No nation has been an exception to it before nor will any be so in the future.

18. Thus do We deal with the criminals.

كَذَلِكَ نَفْعَلُ بِالْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

19. Woe that Day to the deniers.^{*10}

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

^{*10} This sentence in the present context means: The fate they have met or will meet in the world, is not their real punishment; their real doom will descend on them on the Day of Decision. The punishment here is only in the nature of a person's being arrested when he commits one crime after the other fearlessly and is not inclined to mend and change his ways. The court where his case is to be decided and he is to be punished for all his misdeeds, will not be established in this world but in the Hereafter, and that

indeed will be the real day of his ruin and disaster. (For further explanation, see E.Ns 5, 6 of Surah Al-Aaraf; E.N. 105 of Surah Houd).

20. Did We not create you from a worthless fluid.

أَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُمْ مِنْ مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

21. Then We kept it in a secure place (womb).^{*11}

فَجَعَلْنَاهُ فِي قَرَارٍ مَكِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾

***11** A secure place: The mother's womb in which the child is so firmly lodged as soon as it has been conceived and where such arrangements are made for its security and nourishment that abortion cannot take place unless there is a disaster, and even for artificial abortion extraordinary devices have to be adopted, which are both risky and harmful in spite of modern developments in medical science.

22. For an appointed term.^{*12}

إِلَىٰ قَدَرٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

***12** The words *qadar im-malum* do not only mean that the term is appointed and fixed but they also contain the sense that it is known to Allah alone. About child, no one knows by any means how many months, days, hours, minutes and seconds it will remain in the mothers womb and what will be its exact and precise time of birth. Allah alone has fixed a specific term for every child and He alone knows it.

23. So We did measure, and We are the Best to measure.^{*13}

فَقَدَرْنَا فَنِعْمَ الْقَادِرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

***13** This is an express argument for the possibility of the

life-after-death What is meant to be said is: When We had the power to shape and develop you into a perfect and complete man from an insignificant sperm-drop, how shall We be helpless to re-create you in some other way? Our this creation in consequence of which you exist as a living being, is a proof that We are excellent Possessors of power; We cannot be so helpless as to be unable to re-create you after having created you in the first instance.

24. Woe that Day to the deniers.*14

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

*14 This sentence here gives the meaning that in spite of the express argument for the possibility of life-after-death, the people who are denying it, may mock it as they may and look down upon its believers as people of antiquated ideas and whims, but when the Day comes which they are denying today, they will themselves know that it is a day of their own ruin and disaster.

25. Have We not made the earth a receptacle.

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ كِفَاتًا ﴿٢٥﴾

26. (Both) for the living and the dead.

أَحْيَاءَ وَأَمْوَاتًا ﴿٢٦﴾

27. And We placed therein firm mountains, and have given you sweet water to drink.*15

وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ شَامِخَاتٍ
وَأَسْقَيْنَكُم مَّاءً فُرَاتًا ﴿٢٧﴾

*15 This is yet another argument for the possibility and reasonableness of the Hereafter. It is this very earth which since millions and millions of years has been sustaining and

providing for countless different kinds of creatures. Every kind of vegetation and every kind of animal and man are living on it. To meet the requirements of all un-measurable treasures of provisions of different kinds are coming out of its belly. Then it is on this very earth that countless members of all kinds of creatures die every day, but there exists a wonderful arrangement in that the dead bodies of all creatures are deposited in the same earth, and it again becomes ready for sustaining life and providing home to the new members of every species. This earth has not been shaped like a smooth-surfaced ball either, but here and there on it there have been set high mountains and mountain-ranges, which play an important role in causing the change of seasons and rainfall, the birth of rivers, creation of fertile valleys, growth of trees which supply timber, and provisions of a variety of minerals and stones. Then in the interior of this very earth, sweet water has been stored and on its surface rivers of sweet water have been arranged and also from the saline waters of the sea vapors of pure water are raised and caused to fall as rain from the sky. Is not all this an argument to prove that an All-Powerful Sovereign has created all this and He is not only All-Powerful but All-Knowing and All-Wise as well? Now, if this earth has been thus equipped and provisioned only by His power and wisdom, why should an intelligent man find it difficult to understand that the same Sovereign by His power can wind up this world and create another world on a new pattern, and the demand of His wisdom is that he should create another world after it so that He may call

man to account for the deeds he has done in this world?

28. Woe that Day to the deniers.*16

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

*16 Here, this sentence signifies that the people who deny the coming of the Hereafter and regard it as impossible and irrational in spite of seeing these manifest signs of Allah's power and wisdom, may remain lost in their vain imaginations if they so like. But the day when all this takes place against their expectations, they will realize that they have earned ruin on account of their own folly.

29. (It will be said) go off*17 to that which you used to deny.

أَنْطَلِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهِ
تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

*17 After giving proofs of the coming of the Hereafter, now it is being stated how the deniers will be dealt with when it has actually taken place.

30. Go off to the shadow which has three columns.*18

أَنْطَلِقُوا إِلَىٰ ظِلٍّ ذِي ثَلَاثِ شُعَبٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

*18 Shadow: Shadow of smoke; three columns: Because when a big smoke arises, it is divided into several parts at the top.

31. Neither cool shade, nor of use against the flame of Fire.

لَا ظِلِّيلٍ وَلَا يَغْنِي مِنَ الْهَبِّ ﴿٣١﴾

32. Indeed, it throws off sparks (as huge) as castles.

إِنَّهَا تَرْمِي بِشَرَرٍ كَالْقَصْرِ ﴿٣٢﴾

33. As if they were yellow camels.*19

كَأَنَّهُ رَجُمَلَتْ صُفْرًا

*19 That is, each spark will be like a castle, and when these huge sparks will rise and burst and fly about in all directions it will seem as though they were yellow camels running and jumping about ceaselessly.

34. Woe that Day to the deniers.

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

35. This is the Day they shall not speak.

هَذَا يَوْمٌ لَا يَنْطِقُونَ

36. And it will not be permitted for them to offer any excuses.*20

وَلَا يُؤْذَنُ لَهُمْ فَيَعْتَذِرُونَ

*20 This will be their ultimate state at the time they will be entering Hell. Before this in the plain of Resurrection they will be offering all sorts of excuses, blaming others for their errors and proving their own selves to be innocent, abusing their leaders and guides who led them astray; so much so that some of them will even disown their crimes shamelessly, as has been stated at several places in the Quran. But when their being criminals will have been established by every kind of evidence, and when their own hands and feet and limbs will have borne witness against them to prove their guilt fully, and when after fulfilling all requirements of justice rightly and truly, the sentence will be passed on them, they will be dumbfounded and no room will be left for them to offer any excuse. To refuse an opportunity or permission to offer an excuse, does not mean that judgment will be passed against them without

giving them a chance for self defense, but it means that their guilt and crime will be proved to the fullest and they will not be able to offer any excuse after it.

37. Woe that Day to the deniers.

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

38. This is the Day of Decision. We have gathered you, and those who had gone before.

هَذَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ ^ص جَمَعْنَاكُمْ
وَالْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. So, if you have a plan, then plan it against Me. ^{*21}

فَإِن كَانَ لَكُمْ كَيْدٌ فَكِيدُونِ ﴿٣٩﴾

^{*21} That is, in the world you used every kind of deception and trick in self-interest. Now, if you have any trick to escape My punishment, you may use it to defeat Me and My plan.

40. Woe that Day to the deniers.

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

41. Indeed, the righteous ^{*22} shall be amidst shades and springs.

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي ظِلِّ وَعُيُونِ ﴿٤١﴾

^{*22} As this world has been used here in contrast to the deniers; the righteous here implies the people who refrained from denying the Hereafter and accepted it and passed their life in the world with the belief that in the Hereafter they would have to render an account of their word and deed and their conduct and character.

42. And fruits from whatever they desire.

وَفَوَاكِهَ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

43. Eat and drink with satisfaction for what you used to do.

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

44. Indeed, We thus reward the doers of good.

إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

45. Woe that Day to the deniers.^{*23}

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

***23** Here this sentence means that one of their afflictions. as mentioned above, will be that they will be standing as culprits in the plain of Resurrection. Their crimes will have been proved and established openly and they will not be in a position even to open their mouths to put forward a plea in self defense, and shall ultimately become fuel of Hell. Their other affliction, and by far the worse will be that they will see the same believers enjoying themselves in Paradise, whom they had been opposing and resisting and mocking throughout their lives as foolish, narrow-minded, mean and old fashioned people.

46. Eat^{*24} and enjoy for a while,^{*25} indeed, you are criminals.

كُلُوا وَتَمَتَّعُوا قَلِيلًا إِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ جَرِيمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

***24** In conclusion, these words are being addressed not only to the disbelievers of Makkah but to all disbelievers of the world.

***25 For a while: In their brief life of the world.**

47. Woe that Day to the deniers.

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

48. And when it is said to them, Bow down (before Allah) they do not bow down.*26

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ارْكَعُوا لَا يَرْكَعُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

***26 Bowing before Allah: does not only imply worshipping Him but also means believing in the Messenger (peace be upon him) sent by Allah and in the Book revealed by Him and following and obeying His commands.**

49. Woe that Day to the deniers.

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

50. Then in what message after this (Quran) will they believe.*27

فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

***27 That is, the greatest message that could distinguish the truth from falsehood for man and show him right guidance, has been sent down in the shape of the Quran. If a person does not believe even after reading it or hearing it read, what else after this can show him the correct guidance?**



النَّبَا An-Naba

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah derives its name from the word *an-Naba* in the second verse. This is not only a name but also a title of its subject matter, for *naba* implies the news of Resurrection and Hereafter and the whole Surah is devoted to the same theme.

Period of Revelation

As we have explained in the introduction to Surah Al-Mursalat, the theme of all the Surahs, from Al-Qiyamah to An-Naziat, closely resembles to one another, and all these seem to have been revealed in the earlier period at Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is also same as of Surah Al-Mursalat, i.e. to affirm the Resurrection and Hereafter, and to warn the people of the consequences of acknowledging or not acknowledging it.

When the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) first started to preach Islam in Makkah, his message consisted of three elements:

(1) That none be held as an associate with Allah in Godhead.

(2) That Allah had appointed him as His Messenger.

(3) That this world will come to an end one day and then another world will be established when all the former and the latter generations will be resurrected with the same bodies in which they lived and worked in the world; then they will be called to account for their beliefs and deeds and those who emerge as believing and righteous in this accountability will go to Paradise and those who are proved to be disbelieving and wicked will live in Hell forever.

Of these although the first thing was highly unpleasant for the people of Makkah, yet in any case they were not disbelievers in the existence of Allah. They believed in His Being the Supreme Sustainer, Creator and Provider and also admitted that all those beings whom they regarded as their deities, were themselves Allah's creatures. Therefore, in this regard the only thing they disputed was whether they had any share in the attributes and powers of divinity and in the divine Being itself or not.

As for the second thing, the people of Makkah were not prepared to accept it. However, what they could not possibly deny was that during the 40 years of life that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had lived among them before his claim to Prophethood, they had never found him a lying deceitful person or the one who would adopt unlawful methods for selfish ends. They themselves admitted that he was a man possessed of wisdom, righteousness and moral superiority. Therefore, in spite of charging him with a

thousand false accusations, nothing to say of making others believe, they were finding it difficult even for themselves to believe that although he was an honest and upright man in every other affair and dealing of life, yet, God forbid, a liar only in his claim to be a Prophet.

Thus, the first two things were not in fact so perplexing for the people of Makkah as the third thing. When this was presented before them, they mocked it most of all, expressed unusual wonder at it, and regarding it as remote from reason and impossible, started talking against it as incredible, even inconceivable, in their assemblies. But in order to bring them to the way of Islam it was absolutely essential that the doctrine of the Hereafter should be instilled into their minds, for without belief in this doctrine, it was not at all possible that they could adopt a serious attitude with regard to the truth and falsehood, could change their standard of values in respect of good and evil, and giving up worship of the world, could be inclined to follow the way that Islam urged them to follow. That is why in the earlier Surahs revealed at Makkah the doctrine of the Hereafter has been impressed and stressed more than anything else. However, the arguments for it have been given in such a way that the doctrine of the Oneness of God (*Tauhid*) is also impressed on the minds automatically. This also contains brief arguments, here and there, to confirm the truth of the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah and the Quran.

After understanding well why the theme of the Hereafter has been so frequently repeated in the Surahs of this

period, let us now have a look at the subject matter of this Surah. In it first of all, allusion has been made to the common talk and the doubts that were being expressed in every street of Makkah and in every assembly of the people of Makkah on hearing the news about Resurrection. Then, the deniers have been asked: Don't you see this earth which We have spread as a carpet for you. Don't you see the high mountains which we have so firmly placed on the earth. Don't you consider your own selves how have We created you as pairs of men and women. Don't you consider your sleep by which We make you seek a few hours rest after every few hours labor and toil so as to keep you fit for work in the world. Don't you see the alternation of the night and day which We are so regularly perpetuating precisely according to your needs and requirements. Don't you see the strongly fortified system of the heavens above you. Don't you see the sun by means of which you are receiving your light and heat. Don't you see the rains which fall from the clouds and help produce corns and vegetables and luxuriant gardens. Do these things only tell you that the power of the Almighty Being Who has created them, will be unable to bring about Resurrection and establish the next world? Then, from the supreme wisdom which is clearly working in this world around you, do you only understand this that although each part of it and each function of it is purposive, yet life is meaningless. Nothing could be more absurd and meaningless that after appointing man to the office of foreman and granting him vast powers of appropriation, in this workhouse, when he leaves the world

after fulfilling his role, he should be let off without any accountability. He should neither be rewarded and granted pension on satisfactory work, nor subjected to any accountability and punishment on unsatisfactory performance of duty.

After giving these arguments, it has been emphatically stated that the Day of Judgment shall certainly come to pass on its appointed time. No sooner is the Trumpet sounded than whatever is being foretold shall appear before the eyes, and whether you believe in it today, or not, at that time you will come out in your multitudes from wherever you would be lying dead and buried to render your account. Your denial cannot in any way avert this inevitable event.

Then, in verses 21-30; it has been stated that every single misdeed of those who do not expect any accountability to take place and have thus belied Our revelations, lies reckoned and recorded with Us, and Hell is ever lying in an ambush to punish them and punish them fully for all their doings. Then, in verses 31-36, the best rewards of those who lived as responsible people in the world and have provided for their Hereafter beforehand have been mentioned. They have been reassured that they will not only be rewarded richly for their services but in addition they will also be given sufficient gifts.

In conclusion, the divine court in the Hereafter has been depicted, making it plain that there will be no question of somebody's being adamant in the matter of getting his followers and associates forgiven, none will speak without

leave, and leave will be granted on the condition that intercession be made only for the one to whom leave of intercession will have been given, and the intercessor will say only what is right. Moreover, leave for intercession will be given only for those who had acknowledged the truth in the world but were sinners; rebels of God and rejectors of the truth will deserve no intercession at all.

The discourse has been concluded with this warning: The Day the coming of which is being foretold, shall certainly come to pass. Do not think it is yet far off, it is close at hand. Now, whoever wills, let him believe in it and take the way towards his Lord. But he who disbelieves, in spite of the warning, will have all his deeds placed before him, and he will exclaim regretfully, Oh, would that I were not born in the world.

1. About what are they inquiring.	عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿١﴾
2. About the great news.	عَنِ النَّبِإِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢﴾
3. That over which they are in disagreement.*1	الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٣﴾

*1 The great news: the news of the Resurrection and Hereafter, which the people of Makkah heard with amazement, then raised questions and doubts about it in their assemblies. When they met each other they would ask: Did you ever hear that the dead will be resurrected to life? Is it credible that life will be infused once again into the bones which have decayed and become rotten? Does it stand to reason that the former and the latter generations

will rise up and gather together at one place? Is it possible that these huge mountains which are so firmly set in the earth will fly about like flakes of wool? Can it so happen that the sun and the moon and the stars should be extinguished and the order and system of the world be overturned and upset? What has happened to him who was until yesterday a sane and wise man among us? Today he is giving us strange, impossible news. Where were this Hell and Heaven of which we had never heard from him before? Wherefrom have they appeared suddenly so that he has started depicting them so vividly before us? Another meaning of *fi-hi mukhtalifun* also can be: As these people themselves have not agreed on any one view about the end of the world, they hold varying views about it. Some one has been influenced by the Christian belief and believes in the life after death but thinks that the second life would not be a physical but only a spiritual life. Another does not deny the Hereafter absolutely but doubts whether it was possible or not. The Quran relates the view of these very people when it says: We do only guess: we are not certain. (Surah Al-Jathiyah, Ayat 32). And another plainly said: There is no other life than this present life, and we shall never be raised back to life after our death. (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 29). Then, there were some atheists, who said: Life is only this worldly life of ours. Here we shall die and live and nothing but the change of time destroys us. (Surah Al-Jathiyah, Ayat 24). There were some others who were not atheistic but they regarded the second life as impossible. According to them it was beyond the power of

God to raise the dead back to life. They said: Who will give life to these bones when they are rotten. (Surah YaSeen, Ayat 78). Their different views by themselves were a proof that they had no knowledge in this regard; they were only conjecturing and guessing. Had they any knowledge, they would have agreed on one view. (For further explanation, see E.N. 6 of Surah Adh-Dharyyat).

4. Nay,^{*2} they shall soon know.

كَلَّا سَيَعْمُونَ ﴿٤﴾

*2 That is, whatever they say about the Hereafter is false, and all their concepts about it are wrong.

5. Then nay, they shall soon know.^{*3}

ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْمُونَ ﴿٥﴾

*3 That is, the time is not far off when the same thing about which they are expressing all sorts of meaningless doubts and misgivings, will appear before them as a reality. Then they will realize that what the Messenger (peace be upon him) had foretold was absolutely true and what they were saying on the basis of conjecture and speculation had no truth in it.

6. Have We not made the earth a resting place.^{*4}

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهْدًا ﴿٦﴾

*4 Enough light has been thrown at several places in the meaning of the Quran on the supreme wisdom and power of Allah that underlies His making the earth a carpet, i.e. an abode of perfect peace and rest. For explanation, see E.Ns 73, 74, 81 of Surah An-Naml; E.N. 29 of Surah YaSeen; E.Ns 90, 91 of Surah Al-Momin; E.N. 7 of Surah

Az-Zukhruf; E.N. 7 of Surah Al-Jathiyah; E.N. 18 of Surah Qaaf.

7. And the mountains as stakes.*5

وَالْجِبَالِ أَوْتَادًا ﴿٧﴾

***5 For the wisdom of creating mountains on the earth, see E.N. 12 of Surah An-Nahl; E.N. 74 of Surah An-Naml; E.N. 15 of Surah Al-Mursalat.**

8. And We have created you as pairs.*6

وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ﴿٨﴾

***6 For explanation of the supreme wisdom that underlies the creation of men and women into pairs, see E.N. 69 of Surah Al-Furqan; E. Ns 28 to 30 of Surah Ar-Room, E.N. 31 of Surah YaSeen; E.N. 77 of Surah Ash-Shura; E N. 12 of Surah Az-Zukhruf; E.N. 25 of Surah Al-Qiyamah.**

9. And We have made your sleep (a means) for rest.*7

وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا ﴿٩﴾

***7 The explanation of the wisdom for which Allah Almighty has placed a desire for sleep in man's nature in order to make him fit for work in the world, and which impels him to a few hours' sleep after every few hours of work, has been given in E.N. 33 of Surah Ar-Room.**

10. And We have made the night as a covering.

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا ﴿١٠﴾

11. And We have made the day for livelihood.*8

وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا ﴿١١﴾

***8 That is, the night has been made dark so that protected from light, you could enjoy a peaceful sleep more easily and made the day bright for the reason that you could work for**

your livelihood with greater ease and facility. Reference has been made to only one benefit out of countless benefits of the continuous alternation of night and day regularly on the earth to tell that all this is not happening without a purpose or accidentally, but there is supreme wisdom underlying it, which has a deep connection with your own immediate interests. The darkness that was needed for the peace and rest of your body in view of its structure has been provided in the night and the light that was needed for earning livelihood has been provided in the day. This arrangement that has been made precisely in accordance with your needs by itself testifies that it could not be possible without the wisdom of a Wise Being. (For further explanation, see E.N. 65 of Surah Yunus; E.N. 32 of Surah YaSeen; E.N. 85 of Surah Al-Momin; E.N. 4 of Surah Az-Zukhruf).

12. And We have built above you seven strong (heavens).^{*9}

وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا



***9** Strong, in the sense that their boundaries are so strongly fortified that no change whatever occurs in them, nor does any of the countless stars and planets in the heavens, violating these boundaries, collide with the other, nor falls down to the earth. (For further explanation, see E.N. 34 of Surah Al-Baqarah; E.N. 2 of Surah Ar-Raad; E.Ns 8, 12 of Surah Al-Hijr; E.N. 15 of Surah Al-Mominoon; E.N. 13 of Surah Luqman; E.N. 37 of Surah YaSeen; E.Ns 5, 6 of Surah As-Saaffat; E.N. 90 of Surah Al-Momin; E.Ns 7, 8 of Surah Qaaf).

13. And We have made a bright, blazing lamp.*10

وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا

*10 A bright, blazing lamp: the sun. The word *wahhaj* used for the sun means both intensely hot and intensely bright. Hence our rendering. In this brief sentence, allusion has been made to a most wonderful and glorious sign of Allah Almighty's power and wisdom which the sun is. Its diameter is 109 times that of the earth's and its size more than 333,000 times that of the earth's. Its temperature is 14,000,000°C. In spite of shining 93,000,000 miles away from the earth, its light and brightness is dazzling, and man can look at it with the naked eye only at the risk of losing his eye-sight. As for its heat, temperature in some parts of the earth reaches 140°F because of its radiation. It is only Allah Who by His wisdom has placed the earth at the right distance from it, neither it is too hot for being close to it, nor too cold for being very far away from it. For this very reason life of man, animal and vegetable became possible on it. Measureless treasures of energy from it are reaching the earth and sustaining life. It helps ripen our crops to provide sustenance to every creature; its heat causes vapors to rise from the seas, which spread to different parts of the earth by means of the winds and fall as rain. In the sun Allah has kindled such a mighty furnace that has been constantly radiating light, heat and different kinds of rays throughout the entire solar system since millions and millions of years.

14. And We have sent down from the rain clouds

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً

abundant water.

ثُمَّ جَاءَ
١٤

15. That We may produce
thereby grain and
vegetation.

لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا
١٥

16. And gardens of thick
growth.*11

وَجَنَّاتٍ أَلْفَافًا
١٦

*11 For the details of the wonderful manifestations of Allah Almighty's power and wisdom in making arrangements for the rain and the growth of vegetation thereby, see E.N. 53 (a) of Surah An-Nahl; E.N. 17 of Surah Al-Mominoon; E.N. 5 of Surah Ash-Shuara; E.N. 35 of Surah Ar-Room; E.N. 19 of Surah Fatir; E.N. 29 of Surah YaSeen; E.N. 20 of Al-Momin; E.Ns 10, 11 of Surah Az-Zukhruf; E.Ns 28 to 30 of Surah Al-Waqiah. After presenting a number of the signs and testimonies, one after the other, in these verses, the deniers of the Resurrection and Hereafter have been exhorted, so as to say: If you consider the earth and the mountains and your own creation, your sleep and wakefulness, and the system of the day and night intelligently, and consider the well-fortified system of the universe and the shining sun in the heavens, the rain falling from the clouds and the vegetables growing thereby, you will see two things very clearly: first, that all this could neither come into existence without a mighty power, nor continue to exist and function so regularly; second, that in each of these great wisdom is working and nothing that happens here is purposeless. Now, only a foolish person could say that the Being Who by His power has brought

these things into existence, does not have the power to destroy them and create them once again in some other form, and this also could be said only by an unreasonable person that the Wise Being Who has not done anything without purpose in this universe, has given to man in His world understanding and intelligence, discrimination between good and evil, freedom to obey or disobey, and powers of appropriation over countless of His creatures, without any purpose and design: whether man uses and employs the things granted by Him in the right way or the wrong way, it does not make any difference; whether man continues to do good throughout life till death, he will end up in the dust, or continues to do evil till death, he will likewise end up in the dust. Neither the virtuous man will receive any reward for the good deeds nor the bad man will be held accountable for his evil deeds. These very arguments for life after death and Resurrection and Hereafter have been given here and there in the Quran, e.g. see E.N. 7 of Surah Ar-Raad; E.N. 9 of Surah Al-Hajj; E.N. 6 of Surah Ar-Room; E.Ns 10, 12 of Surah Saba; E.Ns 8, 9 of Surah As-Saaffat.

17. Indeed, the Day of Decision is an appointed time.

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا ﴿١٧﴾

18. The day when the Trumpet is blown, and you shall come forth in multitudes. *12

يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَتَأْتُونَ أَفْوَاجًا ﴿١٨﴾

*12 This implies the final sounding of the Trumpet at which

all dead men will rise back to life forthwith. You implies not only those who were the addressees at that time but all those humans who will have been born from the beginning of creation till Resurrection. (For explanation, see E.N. 57 of Surah Ibrahim; E.N. 1 of Surah Al-Hajj; E.Ns 46, 47 of Surah YaSeen; E.N. 79 of Surah Az-Zumar).

19. And the heaven will be opened, so will be as gates.

وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا



20. And the mountains are moved, so will be as a mirage.^{*13}

وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا



***13** One should bear in mind the fact that here also, as at many other places in the Quran, the different states of Resurrection have been mentioned all together. In the first verse, mention has been made of what will happen at the final sounding of the Trumpet and in the following two verses of the state which will appear at the second sounding of the Trumpet. This we have already explained in E.N. 10 of Surah Al-Haaqqah above. The heavens shall be opened means: All obstacles in the heavens will be removed and every heavenly calamity from every side will befall freely as though all doors for it were open and no door had remained closed to obstruct its happening. The mountains will be set in motion till they become as a mirage means: In no time will the mountains be uprooted from their places and then will be scattered away in particles leaving nothing but vast, empty sand plains behind. This same state has

been described in Surah TaHa, thus: They ask you, well, where will the mountains go on that Day? Say to them: My Lord will reduce them to fine dust and scatter it away. He will turn the earth into an empty level plain, wherein you will neither see any curve nor crease. (verses 105-107 and the corresponding E. N . 83).

21. Indeed, Hell is a place of ambush.*¹⁴

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا

***14** An ambush: a place contrived to entrap game by surprise. Hell has been described as an ambush, because the rebels of God are fearless of it and are enjoying life thinking that the world is a haven of bliss for them. They do not know that Hell is lying in ambush for them, which will trap them suddenly and keep them trapped.

22. For the rebellious, a dwelling place.

لِلطَّٰغِيْنَ مَعَابَاً

23. They shall remain lodged therein for ages.*¹⁵

لَيَبِثْنَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا

***15** The word *ahqab* as used in the original means successive periods of long time appearing continuously one after the other. From this word some people have tried to argue that there will be eternity in the life of Paradise but no eternity in the life of Hell. For however long these ages may be, they will not be endless but will come to an end at some time. But this argument is wrong for two reasons. First, that lexically, the word *haqab* (sing. of *ahqab*) itself contains the meaning that one *haqab* should be closely followed by another *haqab*; therefore, *ahqab* will necessarily be used only for such periods of time as

continue to appear successively one after the other and there should be no period which is not followed by another period. Second, that as a rule it is wrong to put a meaning on a verse of the Quran pertaining to a particular theme which clashes with other statements of the Quran pertaining to the same theme. At 34 places in the Quran the word *khulud* (eternity) has been used concerning the dwellers of Hell. At three places not only the word *khulud* has been used but the word *abadan* (for ever and ever) also has been added to it; and at one place it has been clearly stated: They will wish to get out of Hell but shall not be able to come out of it and theirs shall be an everlasting torment. (Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 37). At another place it has been said: Therein they shall abide forever, as long as the earth and the heavens shall last, unless your Lord ordains otherwise. And the same thing has been said about the dwellers of Paradise too: They shall dwell in Paradise forever, as long as the earth and the heavens shall last, unless your Lord wills something else. (Houd, Ayats 107-108). After these explanations, how can one argue, on the basis of the word *ahqab*, that the stay of the rebels of God in Hell will not be eternal, but it will come to an end at some stage in time?

24. They shall not taste therein any coolness, nor drink.

لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا



25. Except boiling water and the discharge from

إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَّاقًا



wounds.*16

*16 The word *ghassaq* as used in the original applies to pus, blood, pus-blood and all those fluids that flow out from the eyes and skins as a result of a grievous penalty. Besides, this word is also used for a thing which stinks and gives out horrid, offensive smell.

26. An appropriate recompense.

جَزَاءٌ وَّفَاقًا

27. Indeed, they were not expecting any reckoning.

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا

28. And they had denied Our verses as utterly false.*17

وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَابًا

*17 This is the reason for which they will deserve this dreadful penalty of Hell. Firstly, they lived in the world thinking that the time will never come when they will have to appear before God and render an account of their deeds; second, that they utterly refused to accept and acknowledge the revelations that Allah had sent through His Prophets for their instruction and treated them as falsehood.

29. And all things have We recorded in a Book.*18

وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ كِتَابًا

*18 That is, We were continuously preparing a complete record of their sayings and doings, their movements and occupations, even of their intentions, thoughts and aims in life and nothing was being left un-recorded, whereas the

foolish people in their heedlessness thought that they were living in a lawless kingdom where they were free to do whatever they pleased and desired, and there was no power to call them to account.

30. So taste, for We shall never increase you except in torment.

فَذُوقُوا فَلَنْ نَزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا عَذَابًا



31. Indeed, for the righteous^{*19} (there is) an abode of success.

إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا



*19 Here, the word righteous has been used in contrast to those who did not expect any accountability and who had belied Allah's revelations. Therefore, this word inevitably implies those people who believed in Allah's revelations and lived in the world with the understanding that they had to render an account of their deeds ultimately.

32. Gardens and grapevines.

حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا



33. And maidens of equal age.^{*20}

وَكَوَاعِبَ أُنثَرَابًا



*20 This may mean that they will be of equal age among themselves as well as that they will be of equal age with their husbands. This same theme has already occurred in Surah Suad, Ayat 52 and Surah Al-Waqiah, Ayat 37.

34. And a full cup.

وَكَأْسًا دِهَاقًا



35. They shall not hear therein idle talk, nor

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا كِدَابًا

falsehood.*21



*21 At several places in the Quran this has been counted as among the major blessings of Paradise. Human ears there will remain secure against idle, false and indecent talk. There will be no nonsensical, meaningless gossiping in Paradise; no one will tell lies nor belie others; nor will there be any use of abusive language, slandering; calumnies and false accusations which are so common in the world. (For further explanations, see E.N. 28 of Surah Maryam, E.Ns 13, 14 of Surah Al-Waqiah).

36. A reward from your Lord, a generous gift*22 (due by) account.

جَزَاءٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءٌ حِسَابًا

*22 A reward and generous gift: that is, they will not only be given their due rewards which they will deserve for their good deeds, but over and above these they will be given additional and generous gifts and prizes as well. Contrary to this, in respect of the dwellers of Hell it has been said: They will be recompensed fully for their misdeeds. That is, they will neither be punished less than what they will deserve for their crimes nor more. This theme has been explained at length at many places in the Quran, for example, see Surah Yunus, Ayats 26-27; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 89-90; Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 84; Surah Saba, Ayats 33-38; Surah Al-Momin, Ayat 40.

37. Lord of the heavens and the earth, and whatever is between them, the Beneficent,

رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا

none can have the power before Him to speak. *23

بَيْنَهُمَا الرَّحْمَنُ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُ
خِطَابًا



*23 That is, the court of Allah Almighty will be so awe-inspiring that no one, whether belonging to the earth or to the heavens, will dare open his mouth of his own will before Allah, nor interfere in the court's work and proceedings.

38. The Day when the Spirit *24 and the angels shall stand in ranks. They shall not speak except the one whom the Merciful permits, and who speaks what is right. *25

يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا
لَّا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ
الرَّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا



*24 According to most commentators, the Spirit implies the Angel Gabriel, who has been mentioned separately from the angels because of his high rank and position with Allah. (For further explanation, see E.N. 3 of Surah Al-Maarij).

*25 To speak: to intercede, and intercession has been made conditional upon two things:

(1) That the person who is granted permission by Allah to intercede for a sinner will alone be allowed to intercede and for the particular sinner only.

(2) That the intercessor will say only what is right and proper, and nothing derogatory, and the one for whom he is interceding should have at least acknowledged the truth in the world. That is, he should only be a sinner, not an unbeliever. (For further explanation, see E.N. 281 of Surah Al-Baqarah; E.N. 5 of Surah Yunus; E.N. 106 of Surah

Houd; E.N. 52 of Surah Maryam; E.Ns 85, 86 of Surah TaHa; E.N. 27 of Surah Al-Anbiya; E.Ns 40, 41 of Surah Saba; E.N. 32 of Surah Al-Momin; E.N 63 of Surah Az-Zukhruf; E N. 21 of Surah An-Najm; E.N. 36 of Surah Al-Muddaththir).

39. That is the True Day. So whoever wills, let him take the path to his Lord.

ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ
إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَعَابًا ﴿٣٩﴾

40. Indeed, We have warned you of the torment near (at hand),*²⁶ the Day when man will see all that his hands have sent forward, and the disbeliever will say: “Would that I were mere dust.”*²⁷

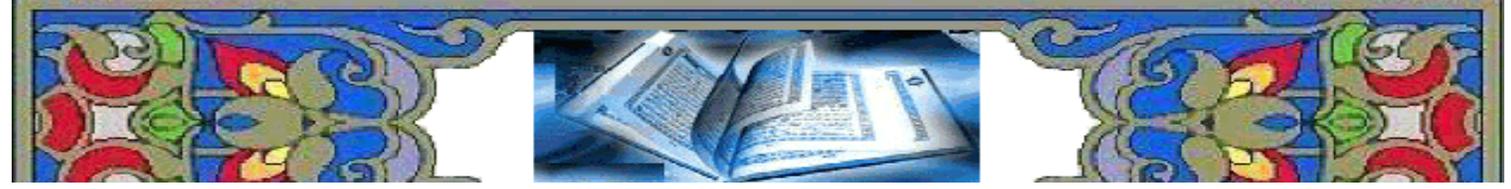
إِنَّا أَنْذَرْنَاكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا يَوْمَ
يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ
وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَلَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ تُرَابًا ﴿٤٠﴾

*²⁶ Apparently, one might think that the people who were the audience of this verse died fourteen centuries ago, and even now it cannot be said how many hundreds or thousands or millions of years Resurrection will take to come. Then, in what sense has it been said: The torment of which you have been warned, has approached near at hand? And what is the meaning of saying in the beginning of the Surah: Soon they shall know? The answer is that man can have the feeling of time only until he is passing a physical life in the world within the bounds of space and time. After death when only the soul will survive, he will lose every feeling and consciousness of time, and on the Day of Resurrection when man will rise back to life, he will feel

as though some one had aroused him from sleep suddenly. He will not at all be conscious that he has been resurrected after thousands of years. (For further explanation, see E.N. 26 of Surah An-Nahl; E.N. 56 of Surah Bani Israil; E.N. 80 of Surah TaHa; E.N. 48 of Surah YaSeen).

*27 Would that I were mere dust: "Would that I had not been born in the world, or had become mere dust after death, and thus reduced to nothingness.





النَّزِعَات An-Naziat

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

It is derived from the word *wan-naziat* with which the Surah opens.

Period of Revelation

According to Abdullah bin Abbas, this Surah was revealed after Surah An-Naba. Its subject matter also testifies that it belongs to the earlier period at Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is affirmation of Resurrection and the life Hereafter; It also warns of the consequences of belying the Messenger (peace be upon him) of God.

The Surah opens with oaths sworn by the angels who take the souls at death and those who hasten to carry out Allah's commands, and those who conduct the affairs of the universe according to divine will, to assure that the Resurrection will certainly come to pass and the second life after death will certainly take place. For the angels who are employed to pluck out the soul today can also be employed to restore the soul tomorrow, and the angels who promptly execute Allah's commands and conduct the affairs of the

universe today can also upset the order of the universe tomorrow by orders of the same God and can also bring about a new order.

After this the people have been told, so as to say: This work which you regard as absolutely impossible is not any difficult for Allah, for which He may have to make lengthy preparations. Just a single jolt will upset this system of the world and a second jolt will be enough to cause you to appear as living beings in the new world. At that time the same people who were wont to deny it, would be trembling with fear and seeing with awe struck eyes all that they thought was impossible.

Then, relating the story of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and Pharaoh briefly, the people have been warned to the effect: You know well what fate the Pharaoh met in consequence of belying the Messenger and rejecting the guidance brought by him and endeavoring to defeat his mission by trickery and deceit. If you do not learn any lesson from it and do not change your ways and attitude accordingly, you will also have to meet the same fate.

Then, in verses 27-33, arguments have been given for the Hereafter and life after death. In this regard, the deniers have been asked the question: Is your resurrection a more difficult task or the creation of the huge universe which spreads around you to infinite distances with myriads of its stars and planets? Your re-creation cannot be difficult for the God for Whom this was an easy task. Thus, after presenting in a single sentence, a decisive argument for the possibility of the Hereafter, attention has been drawn to the

earth and its provisions that have been arranged in it for the sustenance of man and animal and of which everything testifies that it has been created with great wisdom for fulfilling some special purpose. Pointing to this the question has been left for the intellect of man to ponder for itself and form the opinion whether calling man to account after having delegated authority and responsibilities to a creature like him in this wise system would be more in keeping with the demands of wisdom, or that he should die after committing all sorts of misdeeds in the world and should perish and mix in the dust forever and should never be called to account as to how he employed the authority and fulfilled the responsibilities entrusted to him. Instead of discussing this question, in verses 34-41, it has been said: When the Hereafter is established, men's eternal future will be determined on the criterion as to which of them rebelled against his God transgressing the bounds of service and made the material benefits and pleasures his objective of life and which of them feared standing before his Lord and refrained from fulfilling the unlawful desires of the self. This by itself provides the right answer to the above question to every such person who considers it honestly and free from stubbornness. For the only rational, logical and moral demand of giving authority and entrusting responsibilities to man in the world is that he should be called to account on this very basis ultimately and rewarded or punished accordingly.

In conclusion, the question of the disbelievers of Makkah as to when Resurrection will take place has been answered.

They asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) this question over and over again. In reply to, it has been said that the knowledge of the time of its occurrence rests with Allah alone. The Messenger is there only to give the warning that it will certainly come. Now whoever wishes may mend his ways, fearing its coming, and whoever wishes may behave and conduct himself as he likes, fearless of its coming. When the appointed time comes, those very people who loved the life of this world and regarded its pleasures as the only object of life would feel that they had stayed in the world only for an hour or so. Then they will realize how utterly they had ruined their future forever for the sake of the short lived pleasures of the world.

1. By those (angels) who pull out with violence.

وَالنَّزَعَتِ غَرْقًا ﴿١﴾

2. And those who draw out gently.

وَالنَّشِطَتِ نَشْطًا ﴿٢﴾

3. And those who glide about swiftly.

وَالسَّيِّحَتِ سَبْحًا ﴿٣﴾

4. Then hasten out as in race (to carry out commands).

فَالسَّيِّقَتِ سَبْقًا ﴿٤﴾

5. Then conduct the affairs.^{*1}

فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا ﴿٥﴾

*1 Here, the object for which an oath has been sworn by beings having five qualities has not been mentioned; but the theme that follows by itself leads to the conclusion that the oath has been sworn to affirm that the Resurrection is a certainty, which must come to pass, when all dead men shall be resurrected. Nor is there any mention as to what

are the beings possessed of the qualities. However, a large number of the companions and their immediate successors and most of the commentators have expressed the opinion that they are the angels. Abdullah bin Masud, Abdullah bin Abbas, Masruq, Saeed bin Jubair, Abu salih Abud-Duha and Suddi say that “those who pull out with violence and those who draw out gently” imply the angels, who wrench out the soul of man at death from the very depths of his body, from its every fiber. “Those who glide about swiftly”, according to Ibn Masud, Mujahid, Saeed bin Jubair and Abu Salih, also imply the angels, who hurry about swiftly in execution of divine commands as though they were gliding through space. The same meaning of “those who hasten out as in a race” has been taken by Ali, Mujahid, Masruq, Abu Salih and Hasan Bari, and hastening out implies that each one of them hurries on his errand as soon as he receives the first indication of divine will. “Those who conduct the affairs” also imply the angels as has been reported from Ali, Mujahid, Ata Abu Salih, Hasan Bari, Qatadah, Rabi bin Anas and Suddi. In other words, these are the workers of the kingdom of the universe, who are conducting all the affairs of the world in accordance with Allah’s command and will. Though this meaning of these verses has not been reported in any authentic Hadith from the Prophet (peace be upon him), while this meaning has been given by some major companions and their immediate successors and pupils, one is led to form the view that they must have obtained this knowledge from the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself.

Now the question arises: On what basis has the oath been sworn by these angels for the occurrence of the Resurrection and life after death when they themselves are as imperceptible as the thing for the occurrence of which they have been presented as an evidence and as an argument. In our opinion the reason is (and Allah has the best knowledge) that the Arabs were not deniers of the existence of the angels. They themselves admitted that at the death the soul was taken out by the angels; they also believed that the angels moved at tremendous speeds; they could reach any place between the earth and the heavens instantly and promptly execute any errand that was entrusted to them. They also acknowledged that the angels are subordinate to divine will and they conduct the affairs of the universe strictly and precisely in accordance with divine will; they are not independent and masters of their will. They regarded them as daughters of Allah out of ignorance and worshipped them as deities, but they did not believe that they possessed the real authority as well. Therefore, the basis of the reasoning from the above mentioned attributes for the occurrence of the Resurrection and life after death is that the angels who took the soul by the order of God, could also restore the soul by the order of the same God; and the angels who conducted the affairs of the universe by the order of God could also upset this universe by the order of the same God whenever He so ordered them and could also bring about a new world order. They would not show any negligence or delay in the execution of His command.

6. The Day when the quake shall cause a violent jolt.

يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الرَّاجِفَةُ ﴿٦﴾

7. Which is followed by another jolt.*²

تَتَّبِعُهَا الرَّادِفَةُ ﴿٧﴾

*² The first jolt implies the jolt which will destroy the earth and everything on it, and the second jolt at which all dead men will rise up from death and from their graves. This same state has been described in Surah Az-Zumar, thus: And when the Trumpet shall be blown on that Day, all those who are in the heavens and the earth shall fall down dead except those whom Allah may allow (to live). Then the Trumpet shall be blown again and they will all stand up, looking around. (verse 68).

8. Hearts on that Day shall tremble with fear.*³

قُلُوبٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاجِفَةٌ ﴿٨﴾

*³ Hearts shall tremble: because, according to the Quran, only the disbelievers, the wicked people and the hypocrites will be terror-stricken on the Resurrection Day, the righteous believers will remain secure from this terror. About them in Surah Al-Anbiya (verse 103) it has been said: The time of great fright will not trouble them at all; the angels will rush forth to receive them, saying: This is the very day which you were promised.

9. Their eyes humbled.

أَبْصَرُهَا خَاشِعَةً ﴿٩﴾

10. They say: "Shall we really be restored to our former state."

يَقُولُونَ أَإِنَّا لَمَرْدُودُونَ فِي
الْحَافِرَةِ ﴿١٠﴾

11. “What, when we shall have become hollow, rotten bones.”

أَإِذَا كُنَّا عِظْمًا نَّخِرَةً ﴿١١﴾

12. They say: “It would then be a return with sheer loss.”*4

قَالُوا تِلْكَ إِذَا كَرَّةٌ خَاسِرَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾

*4 That is, when they were told that they would surely be raised back to life after death, they started mocking it, saying to one another: Well, if we have really to be restored to our former state of life, then we would certainly be doomed.

13. Then, it would only be a single shout.

فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ ﴿١٣﴾

14. Then they will be suddenly upon the earth alive.*5

فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ ﴿١٤﴾

*5 That is, they are mocking it as an impossibility, whereas it is not at all a difficult task for Allah for the performance of which He may have to make lengthy preparations. For it only a single shout or cry is enough at which your dust of ash will gather together from wherever it lay, and you will suddenly find yourself alive on the back of the earth. Thinking this return to be a return to loss, you may try to escape from it however hard you may, but it will inevitably take place; it cannot be averted by your denial, escape or mockery.

15. Has*6 there reached you the story of Moses.

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى ﴿١٥﴾

*6 As the denial of the Resurrection and Hereafter by the disbelievers of Makkah and their mockery of it was not, in fact, rejection of a philosophy but belying Allah’s

Messengers, and the tricks that they were employing against the Prophet (peace be upon him) were not against an ordinary man but were meant to frustrate the mission of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him), the story of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and the Pharaoh is being related before giving additional arguments for the occurrence of the Hereafter so that they are warned of the consequences of fighting with the Messenger and resisting the God Who sent him.

16. When his Lord called out to him in the sacred valley of Tuwa.*7

إِذْ نَادَاهُ رَبُّهُ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ
طُوًى



*7 According to general opinion among the commentators the sacred valley of Tuwa means the sacred valley which was named Tuwa. But, besides this, two other meanings of it also have been given:

(1) The valley that was blessed and made sacred twice, for it was first made sacred when Allah spoke to Moses (peace be upon him) in it for the first time, and it was blessed and made sacred for the second time when the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) led the children of Israel out of Egypt and brought them into it.

(2) Called out to him in the sacred valley in the night, and this is according to the meaning of tuwa in the Arabic idiom.

17. Go to Pharaoh, indeed he has become rebellious.

أَذْهَبْ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَىٰ



18. Then say: “Would you purity yourself.”

فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَىٰ أَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ

19. “And I may guide you to your Lord, so you may have fear (Him).”^{*8}

وَأَهْدِيكَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَىٰ

***8** Here, one should understand a few things well: (1) The dialogue that took place between the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and Allah Almighty at the time of appointing him to the office of Prophethood has been related at some places briefly and at others in full detail in the Quran as the occasion demanded. Here, brevity was the need, therefore, only a resume has been given. Full details are found in Surah TaHa, Ayats 9-48; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 10-17; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 7-12, Surah Al-Qasas, Ayats: 29-35.

(2) The rebellion of the Pharaoh referred to here relates to his transgressing the bounds of service and rebelling both against the Creator and against His creatures. As for his rebellion against the Creator, it is being mentioned a little below when he gathered his people together and proclaimed: I am your lord, the supreme. As against the creatures his rebellion was that he had divided his subjects into classes; he treated the weak classes tyrannically and had reduced his entire nation to slavery as has been mentioned in Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 4 and Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayat 54.

(3) The instruction given to Moses (peace be upon him) was: Go, you and your brother Aaron, to Pharaoh for he has transgressed all bounds. Talk to him gently; maybe that

he is convinced by admonition or is imbued with fear. (Surah TaHa, Ayat 44). One model of the gentle speech has been given in these verses, which shows what right method a preacher should adopt when preaching to a perverted man. Other models are given in Surah TaHa, Ayats 49-52; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 23-28 and Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 37. These verses are of those in which Allah has taught the correct methods of preaching Islam in the Quran.

(4) The Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had not been sent to Pharaoh only for the deliverance of the children of Israel as some people seem to think but the primary object of his appointment was to show Pharaoh and his people the right way, and the second object was that if he did not accept the right way, the children of Israel (who in fact were a Muslim people) should be taken out of his slavery and from Egypt. This thing becomes plain from these verses too, for there is no mention whatsoever in these of the deliverance of the children of Israel, but the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) has been commanded to present the message of the truth before Pharaoh, and this is confirmed by those verses also in which the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) has preached Islam as well as demanded freedom of the children of Israel, e.g. see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 104-105, Surah TaHa, Ayats 47-52; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 16-17, 23-28. (For further explanation, see E.N. 74 of Yunus).

(5) Here, to adopt purity means to adopt purity of belief, morals and deeds, or, in other words, to accept Islam. Ibn Zaid says: Wherever in the Quran the word *tazakka*

(purity) has been use, it implies acceptance of Islam. As an example of this he has cited the following three verses: And this is the reward of him who adopts purity, i.e. accepts Islam; and what would make you know that he might adopt purity, i.e. becomes a Muslim (Surah Abasa, Ayat 3); And you would not be responsible if he did not adapt purity, i.e. did not become a Muslim (Surah Abasa, Ayat 7). (Ibn Jarir).

(6) That I may guide you to your Lord so that you may have fear (of Him) means: When you recognize your Lord and come to know that you are His slave, and not a free man, you will inevitably have fear of Him in your heart, for fear of God is the thing on which depends the right attitude of man in the world. Without the knowledge and fear of God no purity of the self can be possible.

20. Then he (Moses) showed him the great sign.*9

فَأَرَاهُ الْآيَةَ الْكُبْرَى

*9 The great sign: The turning of the staff into a serpent, as has been mentioned at several places in the Quran. Obviously there could be no greater sign than that a lifeless staff should turn into a living serpent right in front of the eyes of the people, that it should devour the artificial serpents produced by the magicians out of their staffs and cords, and when the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) should pick it up, it should become a walking stick again. This was proof that it was Allah, Lord of the worlds, Who had sent Moses (peace be upon him) as a Prophet.

21. But he (Pharaoh) denied and disobeyed.

فَكَذَّبَ وَعَصَى

22. Then, he turned back
striving hard.*10

ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ يَسْعَىٰ
۲۲

*10 According to the details given at other places in the Quran, he summoned skilful magicians from all over Egypt and made them produce serpents out of sticks and cords in front of the assembled people so that they were convinced that Moses (peace be upon him) was not a Prophet but a magician, and that the miracle worked by him of turning a staff into a serpent, could also be worked by other magicians. But this device of his recoiled upon himself and the defeated magicians themselves admitted that what Moses (peace be upon him) had displayed was no magic but a miracle.

23. Then gathered he and
summoned.*11

فَحَشَرَ فَنَادَىٰ
۲۳

*11 This proclamation of Pharaoh has been mentioned at several places in the Quran. On one occasion he said to the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him): If you took another one as a deity beside me, I would cast you in the prison. (Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayat 29). On another occasion he had addressed his courtiers, saying: O chiefs, I do not know of any god of yours other than myself. (Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 38). By this Pharaoh did not mean, nor could he ever mean, that he himself was the creator of the universe and he had made the world, nor that he denied the existence of Allah and claimed to be lord of the universe, nor that he regarded only himself as a deity of the people in the religious sense. In the Quran itself there is a clear testimony that as regards to religion he himself worshipped other gods. Once his

courtiers said to him: Will you leave Moses (peace be upon him) and his people free to spread chaos in the land, and let them discard you and your deities? (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 127). And in the Quran itself this saying of the Pharaoh has also been cited: Had Moses (peace be upon him) been sent by Allah, why were not bracelets of gold sent down to him, or a company of angels as attendants? (Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayat 53). Thus, in fact, he called himself a god and supreme deity not in the religious but in the political sense. What he meant was that he possessed the sovereign rights: no one beside him had the right to rule in his kingdom and there was no superior power whose orders could be enforced in the land. (For further explanation. see E.N. 85 of Surah Al-Aaraf; E.N. 21 of Surah TaHa; E.Ns 24, 26 of Surah Ash-Shuara; E-Ns 52, 53 of Surah Al-Qasas; E.N. 49 of Surah Az-Zukhruf).

24. Then he proclaimed: “I am your Lord, the highest.”

فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَى ﴿٢٤﴾

25. So Allah seized him (and made him) an example for the after (life) and the former.

فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى ﴿٢٥﴾

26. Indeed, in this is a lesson for him who fears.^{*12}

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّمَنْ يَخْشَى ﴿٢٦﴾

*12 Who fears: who fears the consequences of denying God’s Messenger, which the Pharaoh experienced in the past.

27. Are ^{*13} you harder to create, or is the heaven, ^{*14} He built it.

ءَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمِ السَّمَاءُ
بَنَّاها



***13** Now arguments are being given for the possibility of Resurrection and life after death and their being the very demand and requirement of wisdom.

***14** Here, creation implies the recreation of men, and the heaven the entire firmament which contains countless stars and planets, and innumerable solar systems and galaxies, means to say: You think that your resurrection after death is something extremely improbable and you express wonder saying: How is it possible that when our very bones will have decayed and become rotten the scattered particles of our bodies will be reassembled and made living once again. But have you ever also considered whether the great universe is harder to create or your own re-creation in the form in which you were created in the first instance. The God Who created you in the first instance cannot be powerless to create you once again. This same argument for life after death has been given at several places in the Quran. For example, in Surah YaSeen it has been said: Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like of them (again). Why not, when He is the skillful Creator. (verse 81). And in Surah Al-Momin it has been said: Surely the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater task than the creation of man, but most people do not know. (verse 57).

28. He raised its vault high, then proportioned it.

رَفَعَ سَمَكَهَا فَسَوَّيْنَهَا



29. And He covered its night (with darkness), and He brought forth its day (with light).^{*15}

وَأَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ ضُحَاهَا



*15 The night and the day have been attributed to the heaven, for the night falls when the sun of the heavens sets and the day dawns when it rises. The word cover has been used for the night in the sense that after the sun has set the darkness of the night so spreads over the earth as though it has covered it from above by a curtain.

30. And after that He spread out the earth.^{*16}

وَالْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ دَحَاهَا



*16 After that He spread out the earth, does not mean that Allah created the earth after the creation of the heavens, but it is a style of expression just like our saying after making mention of something: Then this is noteworthy. The object is not to express the sequence of occurrence between the two things but to draw attention from the first to the second thing although both may exist together. Several instances of this style are found in the Quran, e.g. in Surah Al-Qalam it is said: (He is) oppressive, and after that, ignoble by birth. This does not mean that first he became oppressive and then he turned ignoble by birth, but it means: He is oppressive, and above all, ignoble by birth. Likewise, in Surah Al-Balad it is said: Should free a slave, then be of those who believe. This also does not mean that first he should act righteously and then believe, but that

along with doing righteous deeds he should also be characterized by belief. Here, one should also understand that at some places in the Quran the creation of the earth has been mentioned first and then the creation of the heavens, as in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 29, and at others the creation of the heavens has been mentioned first and then of the earth, as in these verses. There is, in fact, no contradiction in this. At no place the object is to tell what was created first and what afterwards, but wherever the context requires that the excellences of the power of Allah be made prominent, the heavens have been mentioned first and then the earth, and where the context requires that the people be made to appreciate and acknowledge the blessings that they are benefiting by on the earth, the mention of the earth has been made before that of the heavens. (For further explanation, see E.Ns 13,14 of Surah HaMim As-Sajdah).

31. He brought out, from within it, its water and its pasture.^{*17}

أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَاءَهَا وَمَرْعَهَا

***17** Pasture, here does not only imply pasture and fodder for the animals but all kinds of herbal produce suitable for consumption both by man and by animal. An example of the use of *raat*, which is generally used in Arabic for the grazing animals, is found in Surah Yusuf, Ayat 12, signifying that this word is sometimes used for man also. The brothers of Joseph said to their father: Send Joseph with us tomorrow that he may freely graze and enjoy sport. Here, the word grace (*raat*) for the child has been used in

the meaning that he may move about freely in the jungle and pluck and eat fruit.

32. And the mountains, He fixed firmly.

وَالْجِبَالِ أَرْسَاهَا

33. A sustenance for you and for your cattle.*18

مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ

*18 In these verses arguments have been given for the Resurrection and life after death from two aspects: First, that it is not at all difficult to establish these for the power of that God Who has made this vast and huge universe with such wonderful balance and this earth with such provisions. Second, that the pointers to the perfect wisdom of Allah which are clearly visible in the universe and the earth, point out that nothing is happening here purposelessly. The balance that exists between countless stars and planets and galaxies in the heavens, testifies that all this has not happened haphazardly, but there is a well thought-out plan working behind it. The regular alternation of the night and day is an evidence that this system has been established with supreme wisdom and knowledge for making the earth a home and place of settlement. On this very earth are found regions where the alternation of the night and day takes place within 24 hours and also those regions where there are longer days and longer nights. A very large part of the earth's population lives in the first kind of the regions. Then as the days and nights go on becoming longer and longer, life goes on becoming harder and harder and population thinner and thinner. So much so that the regions where there are six-month-long days and six-month-long

nights, are not at all fit for human settlement. Arranging both these types of the land on this very earth Allah has provided the evidence that this regular order of the alternation of night and day has not come about accidentally but has been brought about with great wisdom precisely in accordance with a scheme to make the earth a place fit for human settlement. Likewise, spreading out the earth so that it becomes a fit place to live in, providing in it that water which should be palatable for man and animal and a cause of growth for vegetation, setting in it mountains and creating all those things which may become a means of life for both man and animal. All these are a manifest sign that they are not chance happenings of the purposeless works of a care-free person but each one of these has been arranged purposefully by a Supreme, Wise Being. Now every sensible and intelligent man can consider for himself whether the necessity and occurrence of the Hereafter is the requirement of wisdom or its negation. The person who in spite of seeing all this says that there is no Hereafter, in fact, says that everything in the universe is happening wisely and purposefully, but only the creation of man on the earth as a being endowed with sense and power is meaningless and foolish. For there could be nothing more purposeless than delegating to man vast powers of appropriation in the earth and providing him an opportunity to do good as well as evil deeds but then failing to ever subject him to accountability.

34. Then, when there comes the greatest catastrophe.^{*19}

فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الطَّامَةُ الْكُبْرَى

***19** This implies the Resurrection for which the words *at-Taammat alkubra* have been used. *Taammah* by itself is a grievous calamity which afflicts everybody. Then it has been further qualified by the word *kubra* (great), which shows that the mere word *taammah* is not enough to describe fully its intensity and severity.

35. The Day when man shall remember what he strove for.^{*20}

يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا سَعَى

***20** That is, when man will see that the same Day of accountability of which he was being foretold in the world, has come, he will start remembering each one of his misdeeds done in the world even before his records are handed over to him. Some people experience this even in the world. If at some time they come across a dangerous situation suddenly when death seems to be staring them in the face, their whole life-film flashes across their mind's eye all at once.

36. And Hell shall be laid open for (every) one who sees.

وَبُرْزَتِ الْجَحِيمِ لِمَنْ يَرَى

37. Then as for him who had rebelled.

فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَى

38. And preferred the life of the world.

وَأَثَرَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

39. Then indeed, Hell shall be his abode.

فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى

40. And as for him who had feared to stand before his Lord and restrained himself from evil desires.

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى
النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ

41. Then indeed, Paradise shall be his abode.^{*21}

فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ

***21** Here, in a few words, it has been told briefly what shall be the criterion of the final judgment in the Hereafter. One kind of the conduct of life in the world is that transgressing all bounds of service man should rebel against his God and should make up his mind that he would seek only the benefits and pleasures of this world in whatever way they could be sought and achieved. The other kind of conduct is that while man passes life in the world he should constantly keep in view the truth that ultimately one day he has to stand before his Lord, and should refrain from fulfilling the evil desires of the self only for the fear that if he earned an unlawful benefit in obedience to his self, or enjoyed an evil pleasure, what answer he would give to his Lord. The criterion of the judgment in the Hereafter will be which of the two kinds of conduct he adopted in the world. If he had adopted the first kind of conduct, his permanent abode would be Hell, and if he had adopted the second kind of conduct, his permanent home would be Paradise.

42. They ask you (O Muhammad), about the Hour. When is its appointed time.^{*22}

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ
مُرْسَلُهَا

***22** The disbelievers of Makkah asked this question of the

Prophet (peace be upon him) over and over again. By this they did not mean to know the time and date of the coming of Resurrection but to mock it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 35 of Surah Al-Mulk).

43. In what (position) are you to mention of it.

فِيمَ أَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرِهَا ٤٣

44. With your Lord is the (knowledge) term thereof.

إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ مُنْتَهَاهَا ٤٤

45. You are only a warner (to him) who fears it. *23

إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ مَّن تَخْشَاهَا

٤٥

*23 This we also have explained in E.N. 36 of Surah Al-Mulk. As for the words “you are only a Warner to him who fears it”, they do not mean that it is not your duty to warn those who do not fear, but it means: Your warning will benefit only him who fears the coming of that Day.

46. On the day when they see it, it will be as if they had not stayed except for an evening or the morning thereof. *24

كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَهَا لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحًى ٤٦

*24 This theme has occurred at several places in the Quran and been explained in the following notes. For it, see E.N. 53 of Surah Yunus; E.N. 56 of Surah Bani Israil; E.N. 80 of Surah TaHa; E.N. 101 of Surah Al-Mominoon; E.Ns 81, 82 of Surah Ar-Room; E.N. 48 of Surah YaSeen. Besides, this theme has also occurred in Surah Al-Ahqaf, Ayat 35.





عَبَسَ Abasa

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah is so designated after the word *abasa* with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

The commentators and traditionists are unanimous about the occasion of the revelation of this Surah. According to them, once some big chiefs of Makkah were sitting in the Prophet's (peace be upon him) assembly and he was earnestly engaged in trying to persuade them to accept Islam. At that very point, a blind man, named Ibn Umm Maktum, approached him to seek explanation of some point concerning Islam. The Prophet (peace be upon him) disliked his interruption and ignored him. Thereupon Allah sent down this Surah. From this historical incident the period of the revelation of this Surah can be precisely determined.

In the first place, it is confirmed that Ibn Umm Maktum was one of the earliest converts to Islam. Hafiz Ibn Hajar and Hafiz Ibn Kathir have stated that he was one of those who had accepted Islam at a very early stage at Makkah.

Secondly, some of the traditions of the Hadith which relate this incident show that he had already accepted Islam and some others show that he was inclined to accept it and had approached the Prophet (peace be upon him) in search of the truth. Aishah states that coming to the Prophet (peace be upon him) he had said: O Messenger of Allah, guide me to the straight path. (Tirmidhi, Hakim, Ibn Hibban, Ibn Jarir, Abu Yala. According to Abdullah bin Abbas, he had asked the meaning of a verse of the Quran and said to the Prophet: O Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, teach me the knowledge that Allah has taught you. Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abu Hatim). These statements show that he had acknowledged the Prophet (peace be upon him) as a Messenger of Allah and the Quran as a Book of Allah. Contrary to this, Ibn Zaid has interpreted the words *la allahu yazzakka* of verse 3 to mean: *la allahu yuslim*: maybe that he accepts Islam. (Ibn Jarir). And Allah's own words: What would make you know that he might reform, or heed the admonition, and admonishing might profit him? And The one who comes to you running of his own will and fears, from him you turn away, point out that by that time he had developed in himself a deep desire to learn the truth: he had come to the Prophet (peace be upon him) with the belief that he was the only source of guidance and his desire would be satisfied only through him; his apparent state also reflected that if he was given instruction, he would benefit by it.

Thirdly, the names of the people who were sitting in the Prophet's (peace be upon him) assembly at that time, have

been given in different traditions. In this list we find the names of Utbah, Shaibah, Abu Jahl, Umayyah bin Khalaf, Ubayy bin Khalaf, who were the bitterest enemies of Islam. This shows that the incident took place in the period when these chiefs were still on meeting terms with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and their antagonism to Islam had not yet grown so strong as to have stopped their paying visits to him and having dialogues with him off and on. All these arguments indicate that this is one of the very earliest Surahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

In view of the apparent style with which the discourse opens, one feels that in this Surah Allah has expressed His displeasure against the Prophet (peace be upon him) for his treating the blind man with indifference and attending to the big chiefs exclusively. But when the whole Surah is considered objectively, one finds that the displeasure, in fact, has been expressed against the disbelieving Quraish, who because of their arrogant attitude and indifference to the truth, were rejecting with contempt the message of truth being conveyed by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Then, besides teaching him the correct method of preaching, the error of the method that he was adopting at the start of his mission has also been pointed out. His treating the blind man with neglect and disregard and devoting all his attention to the Quraish chiefs was not for the reason that he regarded the rich as noble and a poor blind man as contemptible, and, God forbid, there was some rudeness in his manner for which Allah reproved

him. But, as a matter of fact, when a caller to truth embarks on his mission of conveying his message to the people, he naturally wants the most influential people of society to accept his message so that his task becomes easy, for even if his invitation spreads among the poor and weak people, it cannot make much difference. Almost the same attitude had the Prophet (peace be upon him) also adopted in the beginning, his motive being only sincerity and a desire to promote his mission and not any idea of respect for the big people and hatred for the small people. But Allah made him realize that that was not the correct method of extending invitation to Islam, but from his mission's point of view, every man, who was a seeker after truth, was important, even if he was weak, or poor, and every man, who was heedless to the truth, was unimportant, even if he occupied a high position in society. Therefore, he should openly proclaim and convey the teachings of Islam to all and sundry, but the people who were really worthy of his attention, were those who were inclined to accept the truth, and his sublime and noble message was too high to be presented before those haughty people who in their arrogance and vanity thought that they did not stand in need of him but rather he stood in need of them.

This is the theme of verses 1-16. From verse 17 onward the rebuke directly turns to the disbelievers, who were repudiating the invitation of the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah. In this, first they have been reprovved for their attitude which they had adopted against their

Creator, Provider and Sustainer. In the end, they have been warned of the dreadful fate that they would meet in consequence of their conduct on the Day of Resurrection.

1. He frowned and turned away.

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى

2. Because there came to him the blind man.*¹

أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى

*¹ The style of this first sentence is elegant and subtle. Although in the following sentences the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been directly addressed, which by itself shows that the act of frowning and turning aside had issued forth from him, the discourse has been opened in a manner as though it was not him but someone else who had so acted. By this style the Prophet (peace be upon him), by a subtle method, has been made to realize that it was an act unseemly for him. Had somebody familiar with his high morals witnessed it, he would have thought that it was not him but some other person who had behaved in that manner. The blind man referred to here implies, as we have explained in the Introduction, the well-known companion, Ibn Umm Maktum. Hafiz Ibn Abdul Barr in Al-Istiab and Hafiz Ibn Hajar in Al-Isbah have stated that he was a first cousin of the Prophet's wife, Khadijah. His mother, Umm Maktum, and Khadijah's father, Khuwailid, were sister and brother to each other. After one knows his relationship with the Prophet (peace be upon him), there remains no room for the doubt that he had turned away from him regarding him as a poor man having a low station in life, and attended to the high-placed people, for

he was the Prophet's (peace be upon him) brother-in-law and a man of noble birth. The reason why the Prophet (peace be upon him) had shown disregard for him is indicated by the word *aama* (blind man), which Allah Himself has used as the cause of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) inattention. That is, the Prophet (peace be upon him) thought that even if a single man from among the people whom he was trying to bring to the right path, listened to him and was rightly guided, he could become a powerful means of strengthening Islam. On the contrary, Ibn Umm Maktum was a blind man, who could not prove to be so useful for Islam because of his disability as could one of the Quraish elders on becoming a Muslim. Therefore, he should not interrupt the conversation at that time; whatever he wanted to ask or learn, he could ask or learn at some later time.

3. And what would make you know that he might be purified.

وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَكَّى

4. Or be reminded, then might benefit him the reminding.

أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى

5. As for him who thinks himself self-sufficient.

أَمَّا مَنْ أَسْتَغْنَى

6. Then to him you give attention.

فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّى

7. And no (blame) upon you if he is not purified.

وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَزَكَّى

8. And as for him who came to you striving (for knowledge).

وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَىٰ

9. And he fears (Allah).

وَهُوَ تَخَشْيُ

10. So from him you are distracted.*2

فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّىٰ

*2 This is the real point which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had overlooked in the preaching of Islam on that occasion, and for teaching him the same Allah first reproved him on his treatment of Ibn Umm Maktum, and then told him what really deserved to occupy his attention as preacher of the truth and what did not. There is a man whose apparent state clearly shows that he is a seeker after truth: he fears lest he should follow falsehood and invite Allah's wrath; therefore, he comes all the way in search of the knowledge of the true faith. There is another man, whose attitude clearly reflects that he has no desire for the truth; rather on the contrary, he regards himself as self-sufficient, having no desire to be guided to the right way. Between these two kinds of men one should not see whose becoming a Muslim would be of greater use for Islam and whose becoming a believer could not be of any use in its propagation. But one should see as to who was inclined to accept the guidance and reform himself, and who was least interested in this precious bargain. The first kind of man, whether he is blind, lame, crippled or an indigent mendicant, who might apparently seem incapable of rendering any useful service in the propagation of Islam, is

in any case a valuable man for the preacher to the truth. To him therefore he should attend, for the real object of this invitation is to reform the people, and the apparent state of the person shows that if he was instructed he would accept guidance. As for the other kind of man, the preacher has no need to pursue him, no matter how influential he is in society. For his attitude and conduct openly proclaim that he has no desire for reform; therefore, any effort made to reform him would be mere waste of time. If he has no desire to reform himself, he may not, the loss would be his, the preacher would not at all be accountable for it.

11. Nay,^{*3} indeed, they
(verses of Quran) are a
reminder.^{*4}

كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذِكْرَةٌ

*3 That is, you should never do so: do not give undue importance to those who have forgotten God and become proud of their high worldly position. The teaching of Islam is not such that it should be presented solicitously before him who spurns it, nor should a man like you try to invite these arrogant people to Islam in a way as may cause them the misunderstanding that you have a selfish motive connected with them, and that your mission would succeed only if they believed, otherwise not, whereas the fact is that the truth is as self-sufficient of them as they are of the truth.

*4 The allusion is to the Quran.

12. So whoever wills, let him
remember it.

فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرْهُ

13. (Recorded) in honored scrolls.

فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكْرَمَةٍ ﴿١٣﴾

14. Exalted, purified.^{*5}

مَرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ ﴿١٤﴾

***5 Purified:** free from all kinds of mixtures of false ideas and thoughts, and presenting nothing but the pure truth. There is no tinge whatever in these scrolls of the impurities with which the other religious books of the world have been polluted. They have been kept pure and secure from all kinds of human speculation and evil suggestions.

15. In the hands of scribes (angels).

بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾

16. Noble,^{*6} virtuous.^{*7}

كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾

***6** This refers to the angels who were writing the scrolls of the Quran under the direct guidance of Allah, were guarding them and conveying them intact to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Two words have been used to qualify them: *karim*, i.e. noble, and *barara*, i.e. virtuous. The first word is meant to say that they are so honored and noble that it is not possible that such exalted beings would commit even the slightest dishonesty in the trust reposed in them. The second word has been used to tell that they carry out the responsibility entrusted to them of writing down the scrolls, guarding them and conveying them to the Messenger with perfect honesty and integrity.

***7** If the context in which these verses occur, is considered deeply, it becomes obvious that here the Quran has not been praised for the sake of its greatness and glory but to

tell the arrogant people, who were repudiating its message with contempt, plainly: The glorious Quran is too holy and exalted a Book to be presented before you humbly with the request that you may kindly accept it if you so please. For it does not stand in need of you as you stand in need of it. If you really seek your well-being, you should clear your head of the evil thoughts and submit to its message humbly; otherwise you are not so self-sufficient of this Book as this Book is self-sufficient of you. Your treating it with scorn and contempt will not affect its glory and greatness at all, rather your own pride and arrogance will be ruined on account of it.

17. Be destroyed^{*8} man,^{*9}
how ungrateful he is.^{*10}

قُتِلَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ ﴿١٧﴾

*8 From here the rebuke turns directly against the disbelievers, who were treating the message of the truth with scant attention. Before this, from the beginning of the Surah to verse 16, the address though apparently directed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), was actually meant to reprimand the disbelievers, as if to say: O Prophet (peace be upon him), why are you ignoring a seeker after truth and paying all your attention to those who are worthless from your mission's point of view? They do not deserve that a great Prophet like you should present a sublime thing like the Quran before them.

*9 At all such places in the Quran, man does not imply every individual of the human race but the people whose evil traits of character are intended to be censured. At some places the word man is used because the evil traits are

found in most of human beings, and at others for the reason that if the particular people are pin-pointed for censure, it engenders stubbornness. Therefore, admonition is given in general terms so as to be more effective. (For further explanation, see E.N. 65 of Surah HaMim As-Sajdah; E.N. 75 of Surah Ash-Shura).

***10** Another meaning can also be: What caused him to be inclined to kufr? Or, in other words: On what strength does he commit kufr. Kufr here means denial of the truth as well as ingratitude for the favors of one's benefactor and also rebellious attitude against one's Creator, Provider and Master.

18. From what did He create him.

مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ

19. From a sperm drop.^{*11}
He created him, then set him his destiny.^{*12}

مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ خَلَقَهُ فَقَدَّرَهُ

***11** That is, let him first consider out of what he was created, where he was nourished and developed, by what way he came into the world, and from what helpless state he began his life in the world. Why does he forget his such beginning and becomes involved in conceit and haughtiness and why does he feel so puffed up as to resist his Creator and stand before Him as an adversary? (The same theme has been expressed in Surah YaSeen, Ayats 77-78).

***12** That is, he was yet developing and taking shape in his mother's womb when his destiny was set for him. It was determined what would be his sex, his color, his size; the extent and volume of his body, the extent to which his limbs

would be sound or unsound, his appearance and voice, the degree of physical strength and mental endowments, what would be the land, the family, the conditions and environments in which he would take birth, develop and be molded into a specific person, what would be the hereditary influences and effects of the surroundings and the role and impact of his own self in the make-up of his personality, the part he would play in his life of the world, and how long he would be allowed to function on the earth. He cannot swerve even a hair-breadth from his destiny, nor can effect the slightest alteration in it. Then, how strange is his daring and stubbornness! He commits disbelief of the Creator before Whose destiny he is so helpless and powerless.

20. Then He made the way easy for him.*13

ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسْرَهُ

*13 That is, He created all those means and provisions in the world, which he could utilize, otherwise all the capabilities of his body and mind would have remained useless, had not the Creator provided the means and created the possibilities on the earth to employ them. Furthermore, the Creator also gave him the opportunity to choose and adopt for himself whichever of the ways, good or evil, of gratitude or ingratitude, of obedience or disobedience that he pleased. He opened up both the ways before him and made each way smooth and easy so that he could follow any way that he liked.

21. Then He caused him to die, and brought him to the grave.*14

ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ ﴿٢١﴾

*14 That is, not only in the matter of birth and destiny but also in the matter of death he is absolutely helpless before his Creator. Neither can he take birth by his choice nor die by his choice, nor can defer his death even by a moment. He dies precisely at the appointed time, in the appointed place, under the appointed circumstances that have been decreed for his death, and he is deposited in the type of grave destined for him whether it is the belly of the earth, the depths of the sea, a bonfire or the stomach of a beast. Nothing to say of the man. The whole world together cannot change the Creator's decree in respect of any person.

22. Then when He wills. He will resurrect him.*15

ثُمَّ إِذَا شَاءَ أَنْشَرَهُ ﴿٢٢﴾

*15 That is, he does not either have the power to refuse to rise up when the Creator may will to resurrect him after death. When he was first created, he was not consulted: he was not asked whether he wanted to be created or not. Even if he had refused, he would have been created. Likewise, his resurrection is also not dependent upon his will and assent that he may rise from death if he so likes, or refuse to rise if he does not like. In this matter, he is also absolutely helpless before the Creator's will. Whenever He wills, He will resurrect him, and he will have to rise whether he likes it or not.

23. Nay, he (man) has not done what He commanded him.*16

كَلَّا لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَا أَمَرَهُ

*16 He commanded him: Implies the duty that Allah has enjoined on every man in the form of natural guidance as well as the duty to which man's own existence and every particle of the universe, from the earth to the heavens, and every manifestation of divine power are pointing, and also that duty which Allah has conveyed in every age through His Prophets and Books and disseminated through the righteous people of every period. (For explanation, see E.N. 5 of Surah Ad-Dahr). In the present context the object is to express the meaning that on the basis of the truths stated in the above verses, it was man's duty to have obeyed his Creator, but, contrary to this, he adopted the way of disobedience and did not fulfill the demand of his being His creature.

24. Then let man look at his food.*17

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ

*17 That is, let him consider the food, which he regards as an ordinary thing, how it is created. Had God not provided the means for it, it was not in the power of man himself to have created the food on the earth in any way.

25. That We poured down water in abundance.*18

أَنَا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا

*18 This refers to rainwater. Water vapors are raised in vast quantities from the oceans by the heat of the sun, then

they are turned into thick clouds, then the winds blow and spread them over different parts of the earth, then because of the coolness in the upper atmosphere the vapors turn back to water and fall as rain in every area in a particular measure. The water not only falls as rain directly on the earth but also collects underground in the shape of wells and fountains, flows in the form of rivers and streams, freezes on the mountains as snow and melts and flows into rivers in other seasons as well than the rainy season. Has man himself made all these arrangements? Had his Creator not arranged this for his sustenance, could man survive on the earth.

26. Then We split the earth in clefts.^{*19}

ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا

***19** Then We split the earth in clefts: Implies cleaving it in a way that the seeds, or seed-stones, or vegetable seedlings that man sows or plants in it, or which are deposited in it by winds or birds, or by some other means, should sprout up. Man can do nothing more than to dig the soil, or plough it, and bury in it the seeds that God has already created. Beyond this everything is done by God. It is He Who has created the seeds of countless species of vegetable; it is He Who has endowed these seeds with the quality that when they are sown in the soil, they should sprout up and from every seed, vegetable of its own particular species should grow. Again it is He Who has created in the earth the capability that in combination with water it should break open the seeds and develop and nourish every species of vegetable with the kind of food suitable for it. Had God

not created the seeds with these qualities and the upper layers of the earth with these capabilities, man could not by himself have arranged any kind of food on the earth.

27. Then caused to grow within it grain.

فَأُنْبِتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا ﴿٢٧﴾

28. And grapes and vegetables.

وَعِنَبًا وَقَضْبًا ﴿٢٨﴾

29. And olives and dates.

وَزَيْتُونًا وَنَخْلًا ﴿٢٩﴾

30. And lush gardens.

وَحَدَائِقَ غُلْبًا ﴿٣٠﴾

31. And fruits and fodder.

وَفِيكِهَاتٍ وَأَبْيَاتًا ﴿٣١﴾

32. A sustenance for you and your cattle. *20

مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ ﴿٣٢﴾

*20 That is, a means of sustenance not only for you but also for those animals from which you obtain items of food like meat, fat, milk, butter, etc. and which also perform countless other services for your living. You benefit by all this and yet you disbelieve in God Whose provisions sustain you.

33. Then when the deafening blast comes. *21

فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الصَّاحَّةُ ﴿٣٣﴾

*21 The final terrible sounding of the Trumpet at which all dead men shall be resurrected to life.

34. That Day shall man flee from his brother.

يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. And his mother and his father.

وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ

36. And his wife and his children.*22

وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ

*22 A theme closely resembling to this has already occurred in Surah Al-Maarij, Ayats 10-14. Fleeing may also mean that when he sees those nearest and dearest to him in the world, involved in distress, instead of rushing forth to help them, he will run away from them lest they should call out to him for help. And it may also mean that when they see the evil consequences of committing sin for the sake of one another and misleading one another, fearless of God and heedless of the Hereafter, in the world, each one would flee from the other lest the other should hold him responsible for his deviation and sin. Brother will fear brother, children their parents, husband his wife, and parents their children lest they should become witnesses in the case against them.

37. Each one of them, on that Day, shall have enough to make him heedless of others.*23

لِكُلِّ أَمْرٍ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ

*23 A tradition has been reported in the Hadith by different methods and through different channels, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: On the Day of Resurrection all men will rise up naked. One of his wives (according to some reporters, Aishah, according to others, Saudah, or a woman) asked in bewilderment: O Messenger of Allah, shall we (women) appear naked on that Day

before the people. The prophet (peace be upon him) recited this very verse and explained that on that Day each one will have enough of his own troubles to occupy him, and will be wholly unmindful of others. (Nasai, Tirmidhi, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Jarir, Tabarani, Ibn Marduyah, Baihaqi, Hakim).

38. (Some) faces, that Day, shall be bright.

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ ۝
٣٨

39. Rejoicing and joyful.

ضَاحِكَةٌ مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ ۝
٣٩

40. And (other) faces, that Day, shall have dust upon them.

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ غَافِرَةٌ ۝
٤٠

41. Darkness covering them.

تَرَهَقَهَا قَتْرَةٌ ۝
٤١

42. Such are the disbelievers, the sinners.

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكٰفِرَةُ الْفَجْرَةُ ۝
٤٢





التَّكْوِيرِ At-Takwir

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

It is derived from the word *kuwwirat* in the first verse. *Kuwwirat* is passive voice from *takwir* in the past tense, and means “that which is folded up”, thereby implying that it is a Surah in which the folding up has been mentioned:

Period of Revelation

The subject matter and the style clearly show that it is one of the earliest Surahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

It has two themes: the Hereafter and the institution of Prophethood.

In the first six verses the first stage of the Resurrection has been mentioned when the sun will lose its light, the stars will scatter, the mountains will be uprooted and will disperse, the people will become heedless of their dearest possessions, the beasts of the jungle will be stupefied and will gather together, and the seas will boil up. Then in the next seven verses the second stage has been described when the souls will be reunited with the bodies, the records will be laid open, the people will be called to account for their

crimes, the heavens will be unveiled, and Hell and Heaven will be brought into full view. After depicting the Hereafter thus, man has been left to ponder his own self and deeds, saying: Then each man shall himself know what he has brought with him.

After this the theme of Prophethood has been taken up. In this the people of Makkah have been addressed, as if to say: Whatever Muhammad (peace be upon him) is presenting before you, is not the bragging of a madman, nor an evil suggestion inspired by Satan, but the word of a noble, exalted and trustworthy messenger sent by God, whom Muhammad (peace be upon him) has seen with his own eyes in the bright horizon of the clear sky in broad day light. Whither then are you going having turned away from this teaching.

1. When the sun is folded up.*1

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ

*1 This is a matchless metaphor for causing the sun to lose its light. *Takwir* means to fold up; hence *takwir al-amamah* is used for folding up the turban on the head. Here, the light which radiates from the sun and spreads throughout the solar system has been likened to the turban and it has been said that on the Resurrection Day the turban will be folded up about the sun and its radiation will fade.

2. And when the stars scatter.*2

وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ

*2 That is, when the force which is keeping them in their orbits and positions is loosened and all the stars and planets will scatter in the universe. The word *inkidar* also indicates

that they will not only scatter away but will also grow dark.

3. And when the mountains
are set in motion.*3

وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ ﴿٣﴾

*3 In other words, the earth will also lose its force of gravity because of which the mountains have weight and are firmly set in the earth. Thus, when there is no more gravity the mountains will be uprooted from their places and becoming weightless will start moving and flying as the clouds move in the atmosphere.

4. And when the full term
pregnant she-camels are left
untended.*4

وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ ﴿٤﴾

*4 This was by far the best way of giving an idea of the severities and horrors of Resurrection to the Arabs. Before the buses and trucks of the present day there was nothing more precious for the Arabs than the she-camel just about to give birth to her young. In this state she was most sedulously looked after and cared for, so that she is not lost, stolen, or harmed in any way. The people's becoming heedless of such she-camels, in fact, meant that at that time they would be so stunned as to become unmindful of their most precious possessions.

5. And when the beasts are
gathered together.*5

وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ ﴿٥﴾

*5 When a general calamity befalls the world, all kinds of beasts and animals gather together in one place, then neither the snake bites, nor the tiger kills and devours.

6. And when the oceans are set ablaze.*6

وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ ﴿٦﴾

*6 The word *sujjirat* as used in the original in passive voice from *tasjir* in the past tense. *Tasjir* means to kindle fire in the oven. Apparently it seems strange that on the Resurrection Day fire would blaze up in the oceans. But if the truth about water is kept in view, nothing would seem strange. It is a miracle of God that He combined oxygen and hydrogen, one of which helps kindle the fire and the other gets kindled of itself and by the combination of both He created a substance like water which is used to put out fire. A simple manifestation of Allah's power is enough to change this composition of water so that the two gases are separated and begin to burn and help cause a blaze, which is their basic characteristic.

7. And when*7 the souls are re-united (with the bodies).*8

وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ ﴿٧﴾

*7 From here begins mention of the second stage of Resurrection.

*8 That is, men will be resurrected precisely in the state as they lived in the world before death with body and soul together.

8. And when the infant girl, buried alive, is asked.

وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ ﴿٨﴾

9. For what sin she was slain.*9

بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ ﴿٩﴾

*9 The style of this verse reflects an intensity of rage and fury inconceivable in common life. The parents who buried their daughters alive, would be so contemptible in the sight

of Allah that they would not be asked: Why did you kill the innocent infant? But disregarding them the innocent girl will be asked: For what crime were you slain? And she will tell her story how cruelly she had been treated by her barbarous parents and buried alive. Besides, two vast themes have been compressed into this brief verse, which though not expressed in words, are reflected by its style and tenor. First that in it the Arabs have been made to realize what depths of moral depravity they have touched because of their ignorance in that they buried their own children alive; yet they insist that they would persist in the same ignorance and would not accept the reform that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was trying to bring about in their corrupted society. Second, that an express argument has been given in it of the necessity and inevitability of the Hereafter. The case of the infant girl who was buried alive, should be decided and settled justly at some time, and there should necessarily be a time when the cruel people who committed this heinous crime, should be called to account for it, for there was none in the world to hear the cries of complaint raised by the poor soul. This act was looked upon with approval by the depraved society; neither the parents felt any remorse for it, nor anybody in the family censured them, nor the society took any notice of it. Then, should this monstrosity remain wholly unpunished in the Kingdom of God?

This barbaric custom of burying the female infants alive had become widespread in ancient Arabia for different reasons. One reason was economic hardship because of

which the people wanted to have fewer dependents so that they should not have to bear the burden of bringing up many children. Male offspring were brought up in the hope that they would later help in earning a living, but the female offspring were killed for the fear that they would have to be raised till they matured and then given away in marriage. Second, the widespread chaos because of which the male children were brought up in order to have more and more helpers and supporters; but daughters were killed because in tribal wars they had to be protected instead of being useful in any way for defense. Third, another aspect of the common chaos also was that when the hostile tribes raided each other and captured girls they would either keep them as slave-girls or sell them to others. For these reasons the practice that had become common in Arabia was that at childbirth a pit was kept dug out ready for use by the woman so that if a girl was born, she was immediately cast into it and buried alive. And if sometimes the mother was not inclined to act thus, or the people of the family disapproved of it, the father would raise her for some time half-heartedly, and then finding time would take her to the desert to be buried alive. This tyranny and hard-heartedness was once described by a person before the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. According to a Hadith related in the first chapter of Sunan Darimi, a man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and related this incident of his pre-Islamic days of ignorance: I had a daughter who was much attached to me. When I called her, she would come running to me. One day I called her and

took her out with me. On the way we came across a well. Holding her by the hand I pushed her into the well. Her last words that I heard were: Oh father, oh father! Hearing this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) wept and tears started falling from his eyes. One of those present on the occasion said: O man, you have grieved the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Do not stop him, let him question about what he feels so strongly now. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him to narrate his story once again. When he narrated it again the Prophet (peace be upon him) wept so much that his beard became wet with tears. Then he said to the man: Allah has forgiven what you did in the days of ignorance: now turn to Him in repentance.

It is not correct to think that the people of Arabia had no feeling of the harshness of this hideous, inhuman act. Obviously, no society, however corrupted it may be, can be utterly devoid of the feeling that such tyrannical acts are evil. That is why the Quran has not dwelt upon the vileness of this act, but has only referred to it in awe-inspiring words to the effect: A time will come when the girl who was buried alive, will be asked for what crime she was slain? The history of Arabia also shows that many people in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance had a feeling that the practice was vile and wicked. According to Tabarani, Sasaah bin Najiyah al-Mujashii, grandfather of the poet, Farazdaq, said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): O Messenger of Allah, during the days of ignorance I have also done some good works, among which one is that I

saved 360 girls from being buried alive: I gave two camels each as ransom to save their lives. Shall I get any reward for this? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Yes, there is a reward for you, and it is this that Allah has blessed you with Islam.

As a matter of fact, a great blessing of the blessings of Islam is that it not only did put an end to this inhuman practice in Arabia but even wiped out the concept that the birth of a daughter was in any way a calamity, which should be endured unwillingly. On the contrary, Islam taught that bringing up daughters, giving them good education and enabling them to become good housewives, is an act of great merit and virtue. The way the Prophet (peace be upon him) changed the common concept of the people in respect of girls can be judged from his many sayings which have been reported in the Hadith. As for example, we reproduce some of these below:

The person who is put to a test because of the birth of the daughters and then he treats them generously, they will become a means of rescue for him from Hell. (Bukhari, Muslim).

The one who brought up two girls till they attained their maturity, will appear along with me on the Resurrection Day. Saying this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) joined and raised his fingers. (Muslim).

The one who brought up three daughters, or sisters, taught them good manners and treated them with kindness until they became self-sufficient, Allah will make Paradise obligatory for him. A man asked: what about two, O

Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: the same for two. Ibn Abbas, the reporter of the Hadith, says: Had the people at that time asked in respect of one daughter, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would have also given the same reply about her. (Sharh as-Sunnah).

The one who has a daughter born to him and he does not bury her alive, nor keeps her in disgrace, nor prefers his son to her, Allah will admit him to Paradise. (Abu Daud).

The one who has three daughters born to him, and he is patient over them, and clothes them well according to his means, they will become a means of rescue for him from Hell. (Bukhari, Al-Adab al-Mufrad, Ibn Majah).

The Muslim who has two daughters and he looks after them well, they will lead him to Paradise. (Bukhari: Al-Adab al-Mufrad).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Suraqah bin Jusham: Should I tell you what is the greatest charity (or said: one of the greatest charities)? He said: Kindly do tell, O Messenger of Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Your daughter who (after being divorced or widowed) returns to you and should have no other bread-winner. (Ibn Majah, Bukhari Al-Adab al-Mufrad).

This is the teaching which completely changed the viewpoint of the people about girls not only in Arabia but among all the nations of the world, which later become blessed with Islam.

10. And when the records are unfolded.

وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ نُشِرَتْ

11. And when the veil of heaven is removed.^{*10}

وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ

***10** That is, everything which is hidden from view now will become visible. Now one can only see empty space, or the clouds, hanging dust, the moon, the sun or stars, but at that time the Kingdom of God will appear in full view before the people, without any veil in between, in its true reality.

12. And when Hell is set ablaze.

وَإِذَا الْجَحِيمُ سُعِرَتْ

13. And when Paradise is brought near.^{*11}

وَإِذَا الْجَنَّةُ أُزْلِفَتْ

***11** That is, in the Plain of Resurrection, when the hearing of the cases of the people will be in progress, the blazing fire of Hell will also be in full view, and Paradise with all its blessings will also be visible to all, so that the wicked would know what they are being deprived of and where they are going to be cast, and the righteous as well would know what they are being saved from and with what being blessed and honored.

14. A soul shall know what he has brought with him.

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا أَحْضَرَتْ

15. But not so,^{*12} I swear by the retreating stars.

فَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِالْخُنُوسِ

***12** That is, you are not correct that what is being presented in the Quran is the bragging of an insane person, or the evil suggestion of a devil.

16. (The stars which) move swiftly and disappear.

الْجَوَارِ الْكُنُوسِ

17. And the night when it
departs.

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا عَسْعَسَ ﴿١٧﴾

18. And the dawn when it
breathed up. *13

وَالصُّبْحِ إِذَا تَنَفَّسَ ﴿١٨﴾

*13 That for which the oath has been sworn, has been stated in the following verses. The oath means: Muhammad (peace be upon him) has not seen a vision in darkness, but when the stars had disappeared, the night had departed and the bright morning had appeared, he had seen the Angel of God in the open sky. Therefore, what he tells you is based on his own personal observation and on the experience that he had in full senses in the full light of day.

19. Indeed, this is the word
(brought) by a noble
messenger. *14

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿١٩﴾

*14 A noble messenger: the Angel who brought down revelation, as becomes explicit from the following verses. The word of a noble messenger does not mean that the Quran is the word of the Angel himself, but, as the context shows, of Him Who appointed him a messenger. In Surah Al-Haaqqah, Ayat 40, likewise, the Quran has been called the word of Muhammad (peace be upon him), and there too it does not mean that it is the Prophet's (peace be upon him) own composition, but describing it as the word of an honorable messenger, it has been made clear that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is presenting it in his capacity as the Messenger of God and not as Muhammad bin Abdullah (peace be upon him). At both places, the word has been attributed to the Angel and to Muhammad (peace be

upon him) on the ground that the message of Allah was being delivered to Muhammad (peace be upon him) by the Angel and to the people by Muhammad (peace be upon him). (For further explanation, see E.N. 22 of Surah Al-Haaqqah).

20. Owner of power,^{*15}
secure with the Owner of the
Throne.

ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ



*15 Surah An-Najm, Ayat 45 deals with the same theme, thus “It is but a revelation which is sent down to him. One, mighty in power, has taught him.” As to what is implied by the mighty powers of the Angel Gabriel is ambiguous. In any case it at least shows that he is distinguished even among the angels because of his extraordinary powers. In Muslim (kitab-al-iman) Aishah has reported the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) saying to the effect: I have twice seen Gabriel in his real shape and form: his glorious being was encompassing the whole space between the earth and the heavens. According to the tradition reported from Abdullah bin Masud in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Musnad Ahmad, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had seen Gabriel with his six hundred wings. From this one can have an idea of his mighty powers.

21. There he is obeyed^{*16}
and held as trustworthy.^{*17}

مُطَاعٍ ثَمَّ أَمِينٍ

*16 That is, he is the chief of the angels and all angels work under his command.

*17 That is, he is not one who would tamper with divine

revelation, but is so trustworthy that he conveys intact whatever he receives from God.

22. And your Companion^{*18} (Muhammad) is not a madman.

وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِمَجْنُونٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

***18** Your Companion: the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). Here, making mention of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as the companion of the people of Makkah, they have been made to realize that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was no stranger for them. He was not an outsider but a man of their own clan and tribe; he had lived his whole life among them; even their children knew that he was a very wise man. They should not be so shameless as to call such a man a mad man. (For further explanation, see E.Ns 2, 3 of Surah An-Najm).

23. And indeed, he has seen him on the clear horizon.^{*19}

وَلَقَدْ رَءَاهُ بِالْأَفُقِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿٢٣﴾

***19** In Surah An-Najm, Ayats 7-9, this observation of the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been described in greater detail, (For explanation, see E.Ns 7. 8 of Surah An-Najm).

24. And he is not a withholder (of knowledge) of the unseen.^{*20}

وَمَا هُوَ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ بِضَنِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

***20** That is, the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah does not conceal anything from you. Whatever of the unseen realities are made known to him by Allah, whether they relate to the essence and attributes of Allah, the angels, life-after death and Resurrection, or to the Hereafter,

Heaven and Hell, he conveys everything to you without change.

25. And this is not the word of an accursed satan. ^{*21}

وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَيْطَانٍ رَّجِيمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

***21** That is, you are wrong in thinking that some Satan comes and whispers these words into the ear of Muhammad (peace be upon him). It does not suit Satan that he should divert man from polytheism, idol worship, atheism and sin and turn him to God-worship and Tauhid, make man realize that he should live a life of responsibility and accountability to God instead of living an irresponsible, care-free life, should forbid man to adopt practices of ignorance, injustice, immorality and wickedness and lead him to a clean life of justice, piety and high morals. (For further explanation, see Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 210-212 along with E.Ns 130 to 133, and Ayats 221-223 along with E.Ns 140, 141).

26. Where then are you going.

فَأَيْنَ تَذْهَبُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

27. This is not else than a reminder to the worlds.

إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

28. For whoever wills among you to take a straight path. ^{*22}

لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٢٨﴾

***22** In other words, although this is an admonition for all mankind, only such a person can benefit by it, who is himself desirous of adopting piety and righteousness. Man's being a seeker after truth and a lover of right is the foremost condition of his gaining any benefit from it.

29. And you do not will,
except that Allah wills, Lord
of the worlds. ^{*23}

وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ
الْعَالَمِينَ



***23** This theme has already occurred in Surah Al-Muddaththir, Ayat 56 and Surah Ad-Dahr, Ayat 20. For explanation, see E.N. 41 of Surah Al-Muddaththir.



الْأَنْفِطَارِ Al-Infitar

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

It is derived from the word *infatarat* in the first verse. *Infitar* is an infinitive which means to cleave or split asunder, thereby implying that it is the Surah in which the splitting asunder of the sky has been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

This Surah and the Surah At-Takwir closely resemble each other in their subject matter. This shows that both were sent down in about the same period.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is the Hereafter. According to a tradition related in Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn al-Mundhir, Tabarani, Hakim and Ibn Marduyah, on the authority of Abdullah bin Umar, the Messenger (peace be upon him) said: The one who wants that he should see the Resurrection Day as one would see it with his eyes, should read Surah At-Takwir, Surah Al-Infitar and Surah Al-Inshiqaq.

In this Surah, first the Resurrection Day has been described and it is said that when it occurs, every person will see whatever he has done in the world. After this, man

has been asked to ponder the question: O man, what has deluded you into thinking that the God, Who brought you into being and by Whose favor and bounty you possess the finest body, limbs and features among all creatures, is only bountiful and not just? His being bountiful and generous does not mean that you should become fearless of His justice. Then, man has been warned, so as to say: Do not remain involved in any misunderstanding. Your complete record is being prepared. There are trustworthy writers who are writing down whatever you do. In conclusion, it has been forcefully stated that the Day of Resurrection will surely take place when the righteous shall enjoy every kind of bliss in Paradise and the wicked shall be punished in Hell. On that day no one shall avail anyone anything. All powers of judgment shall be with Allah.

<p>1. When the heaven splits asunder.</p>	<p>إِذَا السَّمَاءُ أَنْفَطَرَتْ ﴿١﴾</p>
<p>2. And when the stars scatter.</p>	<p>وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انْتَثَرَتْ ﴿٢﴾</p>
<p>3. And when the seas are erupted.*¹</p>	<p>وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِّرَتْ ﴿٣﴾</p>

*¹ In Surah At-Takwir it has been said: When the oceans are set ablaze, and here: When the oceans are torn apart. When the two verses are read together, and this fact is also kept in view that even according to the Quran a terrible earthquake will occur on the Resurrection Day, which will shake up the entire earth all at once, the state of the splitting of the oceans and their being set ablaze, seems to be as follows: first, because of the terrible convulsion, the

bottom of the oceans will split asunder and their water will start sinking into the interior of the earth where an intensely hot lava is constantly boiling up. Coming into contact with the lava, water will dissolve into its two constituent parts, oxygen which helps combustion, and hydrogen, which is itself combustible. Thus, in the process of dissolution and combustion, a chain reaction will start, which will set all the oceans of the world ablaze. This is our conjecture, the correct knowledge is only with Allah.

4. And when the graves are turned upside down.*2

وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعِثَتْ

*2 In the first three verses, the first stage of the Resurrection has been mentioned and in this verse the second stage is being described. Opening of the graves implies resurrection of the dead.

5. A soul shall know what it has sent forward and (what it has) left behind.*3

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ

*3 The words *ma qaddamat wa akhkharat* can have several meanings and all are implied here:

(1) *Ma qaddamat* is the good or evil act which man has sent forward, and *ma akhkharat* is what he refrained from doing. Thus, these Arabic words correspond to the acts of commission and omission in one's life.

(2) *Ma qaddamat* is what one did earlier and *ma akhkharat* what one did later; i.e. the whole life-work of man will appear before him date-wise and in proper sequence.

(3) Whatever good and evil deeds a man did in his life is *ma*

qaddamat and whatever effects and influences of his acts he left behind for human society is *ma akhkharat*.

6. O mankind, what has deceived you concerning your Lord, the Gracious.

يَأَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ
الْكَرِيمِ

7. He who created you, then He fashioned you, then He proportioned you.

الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ فَعَدَلَكَ

8. In whatever form He willed, He put you together. *4

فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ

*4 That is, in the first place, the bounty and favor of your Beneficent Sustainer required that you should have acknowledged his bounties and become an obedient servant and should have felt shy of disobeying Him, but you were deluded into thinking that you have become whatever you are by your own effort, and you never thought that you should acknowledge that favor of Him Who gave you life. Secondly, it is your Lord's bounty and kindness that you can freely do whatever you like in the world and it never so happens that whenever you happen to commit an error, He should punish you with paralysis, or blind your eyes, or cause lightning to strike you. But you took His bountifulness for weakness and were beguiled into thinking that the kingdom of your God was devoid of justice

9. Nay, *5 But you deny Day of rewards and punishments. *6

كَلَّا بَلْ تُكَذِّبُونَ بِالذِّينِ

*5 That is, there is no reasonable ground for you to be

deluded. Your own physical existence itself tells that you did not come into being by yourself; your parents also did not make you. Man also did not come about as a result of the elements combining together by themselves accidentally; but a Wise and Powerful God has composed you into this perfect human shape and form. There are other kinds of animals in the world compared with which your excellent form and structure and your superior powers and faculties stand out in sharp contrast. Reason demanded that in view of all this you should have submitted gratefully and should never have dared commit disobedience of your beneficent Sustainer. You also know that your Lord and Sustainer is not only Compassionate and Bountiful but Almighty and Omnipotent as well. When an earthquake, cyclone or flood occurs by His command, all your devices and measures fail to be effective. You also know that your Lord and Sustainer is not ignorant and foolish but Wise and Knowing, and the necessary demand of wisdom and knowledge is that whoever is given intellect should also be held responsible for his acts; whoever is given powers should also be held accountable as to how he used those powers; and whoever is given the choice to do good or evil on his own responsibility, should also be rewarded for his good act and punished for his evil act. All these truths are clearly and plainly known to you; therefore, you cannot say that there exists a reasonable ground for you to be deluded concerning your Lord. Your own nature is sufficient evidence that the beneficence of the Master should never cause the servant to be fearless of

Him, and be involved in the misunderstanding that he may do whatever he pleases, no one can harm him in any way. *6 That is, you have not been deluded and beguiled by any good reason but by your foolish concept that there is going to be no meting out of rewards and punishments after the life of this world. It is this wrong and baseless concept which has made you heedless of God, fearless of His justice and irresponsible in your moral attitude.

10. And indeed, there are above you guardians.

وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ

11. Honorable scribes.

كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ

12. Who know whatever you do.*7

يَعْمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ

*7 That is, whether you deny the meting out of rewards and punishments, belie it, or mock it, the reality cannot change. The reality is: that your Lord has not left you to your self in the world, but has appointed over each one of you honest and upright guardians, who are recording objectively and faithfully all your good and evil acts, and none of your acts is hidden from them, whether you commit it in darkness, or in private, or in far off jungles, or in secret when you are fully satisfied that whatever you have done has remained hidden from human eye. For these guardian angels Allah has used the words *kiram-an katibin*, i.e. writers who are honorable and noble They are neither attached in personal love with somebody, nor are inimical to anybody, so that they would prepare a fictitious record on the basis of their favoring one man and un-favoring another unduly. They

are neither dishonest that without being present on duty they would make wrong entries by themselves; nor are they bribable so that they would take bribes and make false reports in favor of or against somebody. They are far above these moral weaknesses. Therefore, both the good and the bad people should be fully satisfied that each man's good acts will be recorded without any omission, and no one will have an evil act recorded in his account which he has not done. Then the second quality that has been mentioned of these angels is: They know whatever you do. That is, they are not like the secret, intelligence agencies of the world, from which, despite all their search and scrutiny, many things remain hidden. They are fully aware of everyone's deeds. They accompany every person, at all places, under all conditions, in such a way that he himself does not know that someone is watching him, and they also know with what intention has somebody done a certain thing. Therefore the record prepared by them is a complete record in which nothing has been left un-recorded. About this very thing it has been said in Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 49: Woe to us! What sort of a book it is, it has left nothing unrecorded of our doings, small or great. They will see before them everything, whatever they had done.

13. Surely, the righteous shall be in bliss.

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾

14. And indeed, the wicked shall be in Hellfire.

وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ ﴿١٤﴾

15. They shall enter it on the Day of Recompense.

يَصَلُّونَهَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٥﴾

16. And shall never be able to be absent from it.

وَمَا هُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

17. And what do you know what the Day of Recompense is.

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ﴿١٧﴾

18. Then, what do you know what the Day of Recompense is.

ثُمَّ مَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ

﴿١٨﴾

19. A Day when no soul shall have the power to do anything for another soul.*⁸ And the command that Day is with Allah.

يَوْمَ لَا تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِّنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا
وَالأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ ﴿١٩﴾

*⁸ That is, no one there will have the power to save anyone from suffering the consequences of his deeds; no one there will be so influential, strong, or such a favorite with Allah that he should behave stubbornly in the divine court and say: Such and such a one is a close relative or associate of mine; he will have to be forgiven, no matter what evils He might have committed in the world.





Al-Mutaffifin

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

It is derived from the very first verse; *Wayl-ul-lil mutaffifin*.

Period of Revelation

The style of the Surah and its subject matter clearly show that it was revealed in the earlier stage at Makkah, when Surah after Surah was being revealed to impress the doctrine of the Hereafter on the people's minds. This Surah was revealed when they had started ridiculing the Muslims and disgracing them publicly in the streets and in their assemblies, but persecution and manhandling of the Muslims had not yet started. Some commentators regard this as a Madani Surah. This misunderstanding has been caused by a tradition from Ibn Abbas according to which when the Prophet (peace be upon him) arrived in Al-Madinah, the evil of giving short weight and measure was widespread among the people there. Then Allah sent down *Wayl-ul-lil mutaffifin* and the people began to give full weight and measure. (Nasai, Ibn Majah, Ibn Marduyah, Ibn Jarir, Baihaqi: Shuab-il-Iman) But, as we have explained in the introduction to Surah Ad-Dahr, the common practice with the companions and their successors

was that when they found that a verse applied to a certain matter of life, they would say that it had been sent down concerning that particular matter. Therefore, what is proved by the tradition of Ibn Abbas is that when after his emigration to Al-Madinah the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw that the evil was widespread among the people there, he recited this Surah before them by Allah's command and this helped them mend their ways.

Theme and Subject Matter

The theme of this Surah too is the Hereafter. In the first six verses the people have been taken to task for the prevalent evil practice in their commercial dealings. When they had to receive their due from others, they demanded that it be given in full, but when they had to measure or weigh for others, they would give less than what was due. Taking this one evil as an example out of countless evils prevalent in society, it has been said that it is an inevitable result of the heedlessness of the Hereafter. Unless the people realized that one day they would have to appear before God and account for each single act they performed in the world, it was not possible that they would adopt piety and righteousness in their daily affairs. Even if a person might practice honesty in some of his less important dealings in view of "honesty is the best policy", he would never practice honesty on occasions when dishonesty would seem to be "the best policy". Man can develop true and enduring honesty only when he fears God and sincerely believes in the Hereafter, for then he would regard honesty not merely as a policy but as a duty and obligation, and his being

constant in it, or otherwise, would not be dependent on its being useful or useless in the world.

Thus, after making explicit the relation between morality and the doctrine of the Hereafter in an effective and impressive way, in verses 7-17, it has been said: The deeds of the wicked are already being recorded in the black list of the culprits, and in the Hereafter they will meet with utter ruin. Then in verses 18-28, the best end of the virtuous has been described and it has been said that their deeds are being recorded in the list of the exalted people, on which are appointed the angels nearest to Allah.

In conclusion, the believers have been consoled, and the disbelievers warned, as if to say: The people who are disgracing and humiliating the believers today are culprits, who, on the Resurrection Day, will meet with a most evil end in consequence of their conduct, and these very believers will feel comforted when they see their fate.

1. Woe to those who give less
in weight.*¹

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ

*¹ In the original the word *mutaffifin* has been used, which is derived from *tatfif*, a word used for an inferior and base thing in Arabic. Terminologically, *tatfif* is used for giving short weight and short measure fraudulently, for the person who acts thus while measuring or weighing, does not defraud another by any substantial amount, but skimps small amounts from what is due to every customer cleverly, and the poor customer does not know of what and of how much he is being deprived by the seller.

2. Those who, when they take by measure from people, take in full.

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ
يَسْتَوْفُونَ

3. And when they give by measure or weigh for them, they cause loss.*2

وَإِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ

*2 At several places in the Quran, giving of short measure and weight has been condemned and measuring fully and weighing rightly has been stressed. In Surah Al-Anaam, it has been enjoined: You should use a full measure and a just balance. We charge one only with that much responsibility that one can bear. (verse 152). In Surah Bani Israil, it has been said: Give full measure when you measure and weigh with even scales. (verse 35). In Surah Ar-Rehman, it has been stressed: Do not upset the balance: weigh with equity and do not give short weight. (verses 8-9). The people of the Prophet Shuaib (peace be upon him) were punished for the reason that the evil of giving short measure and weight had become widespread among them and in spite of his counsel and advice they did not refrain from it.

4. Do such (people) not think that they will be raised again.

أَلَا يَظُنُّ أُولَئِكَ أَنَّهُمْ مَبْعُوثُونَ

5. On a Great Day*3

لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

*3 A Great Day: the Day of Resurrection when all men and jinn will be called to account together in the divine court

and decisions of vital importance will be made pertaining to rewards and punishments.

6. The Day when all mankind shall stand before the Lord of the worlds.

يَوْمَ يَقُومُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ



7. Nay, indeed, ^{*4} the record of the wicked is in sijjeen. ^{*5}

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَارِ لَفِي سِجِّينٍ



^{*4} That is, these people are wrong in thinking that they will be let off without being called to account when they have committed such and such crimes in the world.

^{*5} The word *sijjin* in the original is derived from *sijn* (a prison) and the explanation of it that follows shows that it implies the general register in which the actions and deeds of the people worthy of punishment are being recorded.

8. And what do you know what sijjeen is.

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سِجِّينٌ



9. (It is) a written record.

كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ



10. Woe that Day to the deniers.

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ



11. Those who deny the Day of Recompense.

الَّذِينَ يُكَذِّبُونَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ



12. And none denies it except every sinful transgressor.

وَمَا يُكَذِّبُ بِهِ إِلَّا كُلُّ مُعْتَدٍ أَثِيمٍ



13. When Our verses are recited to him,^{*6} he says: “Tales of the ancient peoples.”

إِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ
الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

***6** Our verses: Those verses in which news of the Day of Recompense has been given.

14. Nay, but upon their hearts is rust of that which they have earned.^{*7}

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا
يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

***7** That is, they have no good reason for regarding the meting out of rewards and punishments as unreal. What has made them say is this: Is it that their hearts have become rusty because of their sins; therefore, a thing which is thoroughly reasonable appears unreal and unreasonable to them. The explanation of this rust as given by the Prophet (peace be upon him) is as follows: When a servant commits a sin, it marks a black stain on his heart. If he offers repentance, the stain is washed off, but if he persists in wrongdoing, it spreads over the entire heart. (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Ibn Jarir, Hakim, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Hibban and others).

15. Nay, indeed, they shall be debarred, on that Day, from (the mercy of) their Lord.^{*8}

كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ
لَّحَجُوبُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

***8** That is, these people will remain deprived of the vision of Allah with which the righteous will be blessed. (For further explanation, see E.N. 17 of Surah Al-Qiyamah).

16. Then surely they shall (enter to) burn in Hellfire.

ثُمَّ إِنَّهُمْ لَصَالُوا الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٦﴾

17. Then it will be said: “This is what you used to deny.”*9

ثُمَّ يُقَالُ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَكذِبُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

*9 That is, they are wrong in thinking that there is going to be no meting out of rewards and punishments.

18. Nay, indeed the record of the righteous is in illiyeen.

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَبْرَارِ لَفِي عِلِّيِّينَ ﴿١٨﴾

19. And what do you know what illiyuun is.

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا عِلِّيُّونَ ﴿١٩﴾

20. (It is) a written record.

كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

21. It is witnessed by those brought near (to Allah).

يَشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

22. Indeed, the righteous shall be in delight.

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

23. On high couches they shall be looking.

عَلَى الْأَرْوَاقِ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. You shall recognize in their faces the radiance of delight.

تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. They shall be given to drink of a pure wine, sealed.

يُسْقَوْنَ مِنْ رَحِيقٍ مَخْتُومٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. Whose seal shall be musk.^{*10} And for this let them strive, those who want to strive.

خِتْمُهُ مِسْكٌ وَفِي ذَلِكَ
فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَفِسُونَ

***10** One meaning of the words *khtamu-hu-misk* is that the vessels containing the wine will carry the seal of musk instead of clay or wax. Accordingly the verse means: This will be the choicest kind of wine, which will be superior to the wine flowing in the canals, and it will be served by the attendants of Paradise in vessels sealed with musk to the dwellers of Paradise. Another meaning can also be: When that wine will pass down the throat, its final effect will be of the flavor of musk. This state is contrary to the wines of the world which give out an offensive smell as soon as the bottle opens and one feels its horrid smell even while drinking and also when it passes down the throat.

27. And that (wine) shall have the mixture of Tasneem.^{*11}

وَمِنْ رَاجِهِ مِنْ تَسْنِيمٍ

***11** *Tasneem* means height. Thus, *Tasnim* will be a fountain flowing down from a height.

28. A spring from which those near (to Allah) shall drink.

عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا الْمُقَرَّبُونَ

29. Indeed, those who committed crimes used to laugh at those who believed.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا كَانُوا مِنَ
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ

30. And when they passed by them, they would wink at one another.

وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامَزُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. And when they returned to their own folk, they would return jesting.*12

وَإِذَا أُنْقَلَبُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمُ أَنْقَلَبُوا فَكِهِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

***12** That is, they returned home rejoicing, thinking that they had made fun of such and such a Muslim, had passed evil remarks against him and subjected him to ridicule among the people.

32. And when they saw them, they would say: “Surely, these are (the people) gone astray.”*13

وَإِذَا رَأَوْهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ لَضَالُّونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

***13** That is, they have lost their reason. They have deprived themselves of the gains and enjoyments of the world and have experienced dangers and undergone hardships only for the reason that Muhammad (peace be upon him) has deluded them with the Hereafter, Heaven and Hell. They are giving up whatever is present here on the false hope that the promise of some Paradise has been held out to them after death, and they are enduring the hardships in the present life only for the reason that they have been threatened with some Hell in the next world.

33. And they had not been sent to be guardians over them.*14

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حَافِظِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

***14** In this brief sentence the mockers and jesters have been

given an instructive warning to the effect: Even if what the Muslims have believed in, is false, they are not harming you at all. They regard something as true, and are accordingly adopting a certain moral attitude for themselves, for their own good. Allah has not appointed you to be keepers over them so that you may be free to criticize and persecute those who are not harming you in any way.

34. So today those who believed are laughing at the disbelievers.

فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ
يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. On high couches they shall be looking.

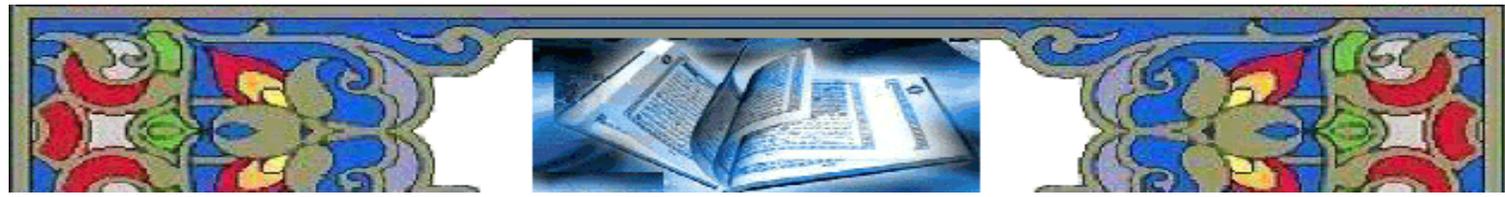
عَلَى الْأَرْوَاحِ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

36. Have the disbelievers (not) been duly rewarded for what they used to do.^{*15}

هَلْ ثَوَّبَ لِمَا كَانُوا
يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

*15 There is a subtle satire in this sentence. In the world, the disbelievers used to persecute the believers, thinking it was an act of virtue. In the Hereafter, the believers will be enjoying life in Paradise, and watching the disbelievers being punished in Hell. They will say to themselves: What a reward they have earned for their acts of virtue.





الْإِنْشِقَاقِ Al-Inshiqaq

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

It is derived from the word *inshiqaq* in the first verse. *Inshiqaq* is infinitive which means to split asunder, thereby implying that it is the Surah in which mention has been made of the splitting asunder of the heavens.

Period of Revelation

This is one of the earlier Surahs to be revealed at Makkah. The internal evidence of its subject matter indicates that persecution of the Muslims had not yet started; however, the message of the Quran was being openly repudiated at Makkah and the people were refusing to acknowledge that Resurrection would ever take place when they would have to appear before their God to render an account of their deeds.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is the Resurrection and Hereafter.

In the first five verses, not only have the state of Resurrection been described vividly but an argument of its being true and certain has also been given. It has been stated that the heavens on that Day will split asunder, the earth will be spread out plain and smooth, and it will throw

out whatever lies inside it of the dead bodies of men and evidences of their deeds so as to become completely empty from within. The argument given for it is that such will be the command of their Lord for the heavens and the earth; since both are His creation, they cannot dare disobey His command. For them the only right and proper course is that they should obey the command of their Lord.

Then, in verses 6-19 it has been said that whether man is conscious of this fact or not, he in any case is moving to the destination when he will appear and stand before his Lord. At that time all human beings will divide into two parts. First, those whose records will be given in their right hands, they will be forgiven without any severe reckoning. Second, those whose records will be given to them from behind their backs. They will wish that they should die somehow, but they will not die; instead they will be cast into Hell. They will meet with this fate because in the world they remained lost in the misunderstanding that they would never have to appear before God to render an account of their deeds, whereas their Lord was watching whatever they were doing, and there was no reason why they should escape the accountability for their deeds. Their moving gradually from the life of the world to the meting out of rewards and punishments in the Hereafter was as certain as the appearance of twilight after sunset, the coming of the night after the day, the returning of men and animals to their respective abodes at night, and the growing of the crescent into full moon.

In conclusion, the disbelievers who repudiate the Quran

instead of bowing down to God when they hear it, have been forewarned of a grievous punishment and the good news of limitless rewards has been given to the believers and the righteous.

1. When the heaven splits asunder.

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ أَنْشَقَّتْ ﴿١﴾

2. And listens (obeys) to its Lord,^{*1} and it must do so.

وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ ﴿٢﴾

*1 Literally: And listens its Lord's command. However, according to Arabic usage *adhina lahu* does not only mean: He heard the command but it means: Hearing the command he carried it out promptly like an obedient servant.

3. And when the earth is stretched out.^{*2}

وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ ﴿٣﴾

*2 When the earth is stretched out: when the oceans and rivers are filled up, the mountains are crushed to pieces and scattered away, and the earth is leveled and turned into a smooth plain. In Surah TaHa, the same thing has been expressed, thus: He will turn the earth into an empty level plain, wherein you will neither see any curve nor crease. (verses 106-107). Hakim in Mustadrak has related through authentic channels on the authority of Jabir bin Abdullah a saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the effect: On the Resurrection Day the earth will be flattened out and spread out like the table-cloth; then there will hardly be room on it for men to place their feet. To understand this saying one should keep in mind the fact that on that Day all men who will have been born from the first day of creation

till Resurrection, will be resurrected simultaneously and produced in the divine court. For gathering together such a great multitude of the people it is inevitable that the oceans, rivers, mountains, jungles, ravines and all high and low areas be leveled and the entire globe of the earth be turned into a vast plain so that all individuals of human race may have room on it to stand on their feet.

4. And has cast out what was within it, and became empty.*³

وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ

*³ That is, it will throw out all dead bodies of men and also the traces and evidences of their deeds lying within it, so that nothing remains hidden and buried in it.

5. And listens (obeys) to its Lord, and it must do so.*⁴

وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ

*⁴ Here, it has not been expressly told what will happen when such and such an event takes place, for the subsequent theme by itself explains this, as if to say: O man, you are moving towards your Lord and are about to meet Him; you will be given your conduct book; and rewarded or punished according to your deeds."

6. O mankin, indeed you are returning towards your Lord,*⁵ a sure returning, so you will meet Him.

يَأْتِيهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدًّا فَامْلِكِيهِ

*⁵ That is, "You may if you so like think that all your efforts and endeavors in the world are confined to worldly life and motivated by worldly desires, yet the truth is that you are moving, consciously or unconsciously, towards

your Lord and you have ultimately to appear before Him in any case.

7. Then as for him who is given his record in his right hand.

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ



8. He shall then be judged with an easy reckoning.*6

فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا



*6 That is, his reckoning will be less severe. He will not be asked why he had done such and such a thing and what excuses he had to offer for it. Though his evil deeds will also be there along with his good deeds in his records, his errors will be overlooked and pardoned in view of his outweighing good deeds. In the Quran, for the severe reckoning of the wicked people the words *su-al-hisab* (heavy reckoning) have been used (Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 181), and concerning the righteous it has been said: From such people, We accept the best of their deeds and overlook their evils. (Surah Al-Ahqaf, Ayat 16). The explanation of it given by the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been related in different words by Imam Ahmad Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Abu Daud, Hakim, Ibn Jarir, Abd bin Humaid, and Ibn Marduyah on the authority of Aishah. According to one of these traditions the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Doomed will be he who is called to account for his deeds. Aishah said: O Messenger of Allah, has not Allah said: He whose record is given in his right hand shall have an easy reckoning? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: That

is only about the presentation of the deeds, but the one who is questioned would be doomed. In another tradition Aishah has related: I once heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) supplicate during the prayer, thus: O God, call me to a light reckoning. When he brought his Prayer to conclusion, I asked what he meant by that supplication. He replied: Light reckoning means that one's conduct book will be seen and one's errors will be overlooked. O Aishah, the one who is called to account for his deeds on that Day, would be doomed.

9. And he shall return to his kinsfolk rejoicing.*7

وَيَنْقَلِبُ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا

*7 His kinsfolk: his family and relatives and companions who will have been pardoned even like himself.

10. And as for him whose record is given to him behind his back.*8

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ

*8 In Surah Al-Haaqqah, Ayat 25, it was said that his record will be given to him in his left hand but here behind his back. This will probably be for the reason that he would already have lost all hopes that he would be given his record in his right hand, for he would be well aware of his misdeeds and sure to receive his record in his left hand. However, in order to avoid the humiliation of receiving it in the left hand, in front of all mankind, he will withdraw his hand behind and so would receive it behind his back.

11. He shall call for death.

فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُو ثُبُورًا

12. And shall enter a blazing Fire.

وَيَصَلَّى سَعِيرًا ﴿١٢﴾

13. Indeed, He had been among his family in joy.*9

إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا ﴿١٣﴾

*9 That is, his way of life was different from that of God's righteous men, about whom in Surah At-Toor, Ayat 26, it has been said that they lived among their kinsfolk in fear and dread of God, i.e. they fear lest they should ruin their own Hereafter on account of their absorption in the love of children and endeavors for the sake of their well-being and prosperity in the world. On the contrary, this man lived a life free from every care and worry and also helped his children and kinsfolk to enjoy life fully, no matter what wicked and immoral methods he had to use to procure the means of enjoyment, how he had to usurp the rights of others and transgress the bounds set by Allah for the sake of the worldly pleasures.

14. Indeed, he thought that he would never return (to Allah).

إِنَّهُ ظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ يَحُورَ ﴿١٤﴾

15. But yes, indeed, His Lord was ever watching him.*10

بَلَىٰ إِنَّ رَبَّهُ كَانَ بِهِ بَصِيرًا ﴿١٥﴾

*10 That is, it was against God's justice and His wisdom that He should overlook the misdeeds that he was committing and should not summon him before Himself to render his account of the deeds.

16. So no, I swear by the twilight.

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ ﴿١٦﴾

17. And the night and what it gathers.

وَاللَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ ﴿١٧﴾

18. And the moon when it becomes full.

وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ ﴿١٨﴾

19. That you will surely embark upon state after state. *11

لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَن طَبَقٍ ﴿١٩﴾

*11 That is, you will not remain in one and the same state, but will have to pass through countless stages gradually, from youth to old age, from old age to death, from death to *barzakh* (the intermediary state between death and Resurrection), from *barzakh* to Resurrection, from Resurrection to the Plain of Assembly, then to the Reckoning, and then to the meting out of rewards and punishments. An oath has been sworn by three things to confine this:

(1) By the twilight.

(2) By the darkness of night and the gathering together in it of all those human beings and animals who remain scattered in the day time.

(3) By the moon's passing through different phases to become full. These are some of those things which testify that rest and stillness is unknown in the universe in which man lives. There is a continuous and gradual change taking place everywhere. Therefore, the disbelievers are wrong in thinking that life comes to an end after man has breathed his last.

20. Then, what is (the matter) with them, they do

فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

not believe.

21. And when the Quran is recited before them, they do not fall prostrate? ^{*12} **AsSajda**

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْآنُ لَا
يَسْجُدُونَ

***12** They do not fall prostrate: they do not bow down to God out of fear of Him. To perform a *sajdah* (prostration) here is confirmed by the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Imam Malik, Muslim and Nasai have related a tradition concerning Abu Huraira saying that he recited this Surah in the Prayer and performing a *sajdah* here and said: The Prophet (peace be upon him) performed a *sajdah* at this point. Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud and Nasai have cited this statement of Abu Rafi: Abu Huraira recited this Surah in the Isha Prayer and performed a *sajdah*. When I asked why he had done so, he replied: I prayed under the leadership of Abul Qasim (peace be upon him) and he performed a *sajdah* here. Therefore, I will continue to perform this *sajdah* likewise as long as I live. Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Majah and others have related another tradition saying that Abu Huraira said: We performed *sajdah* behind the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah in this Surah and in *Iqra bi-ismi Rabbik-alladhi khalaq*.

22. But those who disbelieve, they deny.

بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُكَذِّبُونَ

23. Although Allah knows best what they are collecting (in their record). ^{*13}

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُوعُونَ

***13** Another meaning can also be: Allah knows best what disbelief, malice, hostility to the truth and evil intentions and designs they keep in their breasts.

24. So, give them the tidings of a painful punishment.

فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them is a reward uninterrupted.

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ﴿٢٥﴾



الْبُرُوجِ Al-Burooj

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah is so designated after the word *alburooj* appearing in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

The subject matter itself indicates that this Surah was sent down at Makkah in the period when persecution of the Muslims was at its climax and the disbelievers of Makkah were trying their utmost by tyranny and coercion to turn away the new converts from Islam.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is to warn the disbelievers of the evil consequences of the persecution and tyranny that they were perpetrating on the converts to Islam, and to console the believers, so as to say: If you remain firm and steadfast against tyranny and coercion, you will be rewarded richly for it, and Allah will certainly avenge Himself on your persecutors on your behalf.

In this connection, first of all the story of the people of the ditch (*ashab-al-ukhdud*) had been related, who had burnt the believers to death by casting them into pits full of fire.

By means of this story the believers and the disbelievers have been taught a few lessons. First, that just as the people of the ditch became worthy of Allah's curse and punishment, so are the chiefs of Makkah also becoming worthy of it. Second, that just as the believers at that time had willingly accepted to sacrifice their lives by being burnt to death in the pits of fire instead of turning away from the faith, so also the believers now should endure every persecution but should never give up the faith. Third, that acknowledging God by the believers, displeases the disbelievers. He is Dominant and Master of the Kingdom of the earth and heavens. He is self-praiseworthy and is watching what the two groups are striving for. Therefore, it is certain that the disbelievers will not only be punished in Hell for their disbelief but, more than that, they will also suffer punishment of fire as a fit recompense for their tyranny and cruelties. Likewise, this is also certain that those who believe, and follow up their belief with good deeds, should go to Paradise and this indeed is the supreme success. Then the disbelievers have been warned, so as to say: God's grip is very severe. If you are proud of the strength of your hosts, you should know that the hosts of Pharaoh and Thamud were even stronger and more numerous. Therefore, you should learn a lesson from the fate they met. God's power has so encompassed you that you cannot escape His encirclement, and the Quran that you are bent upon belying, is unchangeable: it is inscribed in the Preserved Tablet, which cannot be corrupted in any way.

1. By the heaven with its mansions of stars.*1

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ ﴿١﴾

*1 Literally: By the heaven having constellations. Some of the commentators have interpreted it to mean the twelve signs of the zodiac in the heavens according to ancient astronomy, However, according to Ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah, Hasan Basri, Dahhak and Suddi it implies the glorious stars and planets of the sky.

2. And the promised Day.*2

وَالْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُودِ ﴿٢﴾

*2 That is, the Day of Resurrection.

3. And the witness and that which is witnessed.*3

وَشَاهِدٍ وَمَشْهُودٍ ﴿٣﴾

*3 The commentators have expressed many different views about “the witness” and “that which is witnessed”. In our opinion what fits in well with the context is that it is every such person who will witness the Day of Resurrection, and that which is witnessed is the Resurrection itself, the dreadful scenes of which will be seen by all. This is the view of Mujahid. Ikrimah, Dahhak, Ibn Nujaih and some other commentators.

4. Destroyed were the people of the ditch.

قُتِلَ أَصْحَابُ الْأُخْدُودِ ﴿٤﴾

5. Of the fire fed by the blazing fuel.

النَّارِ ذَاتِ الْوَقُودِ ﴿٥﴾

6. When they were sitting by it.

إِذْ هُمْ عَلَيْهَا قُعُودٌ ﴿٦﴾

7. And they, to what they were doing with the believers, were themselves witnesses.*4

وَهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَفْعَلُونَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ



*4 The people of the ditch were those who had burnt the believers at stake and witnessed their burning themselves. Destroyed were: Cursed were they by God and they became worthy of Hell torment. On this an oath has been sworn by three things:

(1) By the heaven having constellations.

(2) By the Day of Resurrection which has been promised.

(3) By the dreadful scenes of the Day of Resurrection and all those creatures who will witness those scenes. The first of these testifies to the truth that the Sovereign, Absolute Being Who is ruling over the glorious stars and planets of the universe, cannot allow this contemptible, insignificant creature called man to escape His grip. The second thing has been sworn by on the basis that the wicked people committed whatever tyranny they wanted to commit, but the Day of which men have been fore-warned is sure to come when the grievances of every wronged person will be redressed and every wrongdoer will be brought to book and punished. The third thing has been sworn by for the reason that just as these wicked people enjoyed witnessing the burning of the helpless believers, so will all human beings on the Day of Resurrection witness how they are taken to task and burnt in Hell.

Several events have been mentioned in the traditions of the believers having been thrown into pits of blazing fire, which

show that such tyrannies have been inflicted many a time in history.

One of the events has been reported by Suhaib Rumi from the Prophet (peace be upon him), saying that a king had a magician at his court who on becoming old requested the king to appoint a boy who should learn magic from him. Accordingly, the king appointed a boy. But the boy while going to the magician's place and coming back home also started visiting on the way a monk, who was probably a follower of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), and being influenced by his teaching turned to a believer. So much so that by his training he acquired miraculous powers. He would heal the blind and cure the lepers. When the king came to know that the boy had believed in the Unity of God, he first put the monk to the sword; then wanted to kill the boy, but no instrument and no device had any effect on him. At last, the boy said to the king: If you are bent upon killing me, shoot an arrow at me with the word: *Bi-ismi Rabbil-ghulam* (in the name of this boy's Lord) in front of the assembled people, and I shall die. The king did as he was told and the boy died. There upon the people cried out that they affirmed faith in the Lord of the boy. The courtiers told the king that the same precisely had happened which he wanted to avoid: the people had forsaken his religion and adopted the boy's religion. At this the king was filled with rage. Consequently, he got pits dug out along the roads, got them filled with fire and ordered all those who refused to renounce the new faith to be thrown into the fire. (Ahmad, Muslim. Nasai, Tirmidhi, Ibn

Jarir. Abdur Razzaq. Ibn Abi Shaibah, Tabarani. Abd bin Humaid).

The second event has been reported from Ali. He says that a king of Iran drank wine and committed adultery with his sister resulting in illicit relations between the two. When the secret became known, the king got the announcement made that God had permitted marriage with the sister. When the people refused to believe in it, he started coercing them into accepting by different kinds of punishment; so much so that he began to cast into the pits of fire every such person who refused to concede it. According to Ali, marriage with the prohibited relations among the fire-worshippers has begun since then. (Ibn Jarir).

The third event has been related by Ibn Abbas, probably on the basis of the Israelite traditions, saying that the people of Babylon had compelled the children of Israel to give up the religion of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), so much so that they cast into pits of fire all those who refused to obey. (Ibn Jarir, Abd bin Humaid).

The best known event, however, relates to Najran, which has been related by Ibn Hisham, Tabari, Ibn Khaldun, the author of Mujam al-Buldan and other Islamic historians. Its resume is as follows: Tuban Asad Abu Karib, king of Himyar (Yaman), went to Yathrib once, where he embraced Judaism under the influence of the Jews, and brought two of the Jewish scholars of Bani Quraizah with him to Yaman. There he propagated Judaism widely. His son Dhu Nuwas succeeded him and he attacked Najran which was a stronghold of the Christians in southern

Arabia so as to eliminate Christianity and make the people accept Judaism. Ibn Hisham says that these people were true followers of the Gospel of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). In Najran, he invited the people to accept Judaism but they refused to obey. Thereupon he caused a large number of the people to be burnt in the ditches of fire and slew many others with the sword until he had killed nearly twenty thousand of them. Daus Dhu Thalaban an inhabitant of Najran escaped and went, according to one tradition, to the Byzantine emperor, and according to another to the Negus, king of Abyssinia, and told him what had happened.

According to the first tradition, the emperor wrote to the king of Abyssinia, and according to the second, the Negus requested the emperor to provide him with a naval force. In any case; an Abyssinian army consisting of seventy thousand soldiers under a general called Aryat, attacked Yaman, Dhu Nuwas was killed, the Jewish rule came to an end, and Yaman become a part of the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia.

The statements of the Islamic historians are not only confirmed by other historical means but they also give many more details. Yaman first came under the Christian Abyssinian domination in 340 A.D. and this domination continued till 378 A.D. The Christian missionaries started entering Yaman in that period. About the same time, a man named Faymiyun (Phemion), who was a righteous, earnest, ascetic man and possessed miraculous powers, arrived in Yaman and by his preaching against idol-worship

converted the people of Najran to Christianity. These people were ruled by three chiefs: Sayyid, who was the principal chief like the tribal elders and responsible for external affairs, political agreements and command of the forces, Aqib, who looked after the internal affairs and Usquf (Bishop), the religious guide. In southern Arabia Najran commanded great importance, being a major trade and industrial center with tussore, leather and the armament industries. The well-known Yamanite wrapper and cloak (hulla Yamani) was also manufactured here. On this very basis, Dhu Nuwas attacked this important place not only for religious but also for political and economic reasons. Dhu Nuwas put to death Harithah (called Arethas by the Syrian historians), killed Sayyid of Najrain and also killed his two daughters in front of their mother Romah and compelled her to drink their blood and then put even her to death. He took out the bones of Bishop Paul from the grave and burnt them, and ordered women, men, children, aged people, priests and monks, all to be thrown into the pits of fire. The total number of the people thus killed has been estimated between twenty and forty thousand. This happened in October, 523 A.D. At last, in 525 A.D. the Abyssinians attacked Yaman and put an end to Dhu Nuwas and his Himyarite kingdom. This is confirmed by the Hisn Ghurab inscription which the modern archaeologists have unearthed in Yaman.

In several Christian writings of the 6th century A.D. details of the event relating to the “people of the ditch” have been given, some of which are contemporary and reported from

eye-witnesses. Authors of three of these books were contemporaries with the event. They were Procopeus, Cosmos Indicopleustis, who was translating Greek book of Ptolemy under command of the Negus Elesboan at that time and resided at Adolis, a city on the sea-coast of Abyssinia, and Johannes Malala from whom several of the later historians have related this event. After this, Johannes of Ephesus (dated 585 A.D) has related the story of the persecution of the Christians of Najran in his history of the Church from a letter of Bishop Mar Simeon who was a contemporary reporter of this event. Mar Simeon wrote this letter to Abbot von Gabula; in it Simeon has reported this event with reference to the statements of the Yamanite eye-witnesses present on the occasion. This letter was published in 1881 A.D. from Rome and in 1890 A.D. in the memoirs of the martyrs of Christianity Jacobian Patriarch. Dionysius and Zacharia of Mitylene have in their Syriac histories also related this event. Yaqub Saruji also in his book about the Christians of Najran has made mention of it. Bishop Pulus of Edessa's elegy on those who perished in Najran, is still extant. An English translation of the Syriac kitab al-Himyarin (Book of the Himyarites) was published in 1924 from London, which confirms the statements of the Muslim historians. In the British Museum there are some Abyssinian manuscripts relating to that period or a period close to it, which support this story. Philby in his travelogue entitled Arabian Highlands, writes: Among the people of Najran the place is still well known where the event of the people of the ditch (*ashab al-ukhdud*) had taken place.

Close by Umm Kharaq there can still be seen some pictures carved in the rocks, and the present day people of Najran also know the place where the cathedral of Najran stood. The Abyssinian Christians after capturing Najran had built a church here resembling the Kabah, by which they wanted to divert pilgrimage from the Kabah at Makkah to it. Its priests and keepers wore turbans and regarded it as a sacred sanctuary. The Roman empire also sent monetary aid for this “kabah”. The priests of this very “kabah” of Najran had visited the Prophet (peace be upon him) under the leadership of their Sayyid, Aqib and Bishop for a discussion with him and the famous event of the *mubahala* (trial through prayer) took place as referred to in Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 61. (For details. see E.Ns 29 and 55 of Surah Aal-Imran).

8. And they resented them not except that they had believed in Allah, the All Mighty, the Self Praiseworthy.

وَمَا نَقَمُوا مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا
بِاللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ

9. Who, to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is Witness over everything.*5

الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
شَهِيدٌ

*5 In these verses those of Allah Almighty’s attributes have been mentioned on account of which He alone deserves that one should believe in Him, and the people who feel

displeased at one's believing in Him, are wicked and unjust.

10. Indeed, those who put into trial the believing men and the believing women, and then did not repent (of it), for them is the punishment of Hell, and for them is the punishment of burning.*6

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا فَلَهُمْ
عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَهُمْ فِيهَا
يُحْرَقُونَ

*6 Punishment of burning has been mentioned separately from the torment of Hell because they had burnt the oppressed people to death by casting them into the pits of fire. Probably this will be a different and severer kind of fire from the fire of Hell in which those people will be burnt.

11. Indeed, those who believed and did righteous deeds, for them are Gardens beneath which rivers flow. This is the supreme success.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
الْكَبِيرُ

12. Indeed, the grip of your Lord is very severe.

إِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيدٌ

13. Indeed, it is He Who originates, and will repeat (create again).

إِنَّهُ هُوَ يُبْدِئُ وَيُعِيدُ

14. And He is the All Forgiving, the All Loving.

وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الْوَدُودُ ﴿١٤﴾

15. Owner of the Throne, the Exalted.

ذُو الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدُ ﴿١٥﴾

16. Doer of whatever He intends.*7

فَعَّالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيدُ ﴿١٦﴾

*7 He is the All-Forgiving: If a person repents and reforms himself, he can hope to be received by Allah in His mercy. All-Loving: He has no enmity with His creatures that He would subject them to torment without any reason, but He loves the creatures He has created and punishes them only when they do not give up the attitude of rebellion against Him. Owner of the Throne, means that He alone is the Ruler of the kingdom of the universe: no one who is a rebel can escape His grip and punishment. The mention of His being Exalted is meant to warn man for his meanness when he adopts an attitude of arrogance against such a Being. Last of all, "He is Doer of whatever He intends: no one in the entire universe has the power to obstruct and resist what Allah wills to do.

17. Has there reached you the story of the hosts.

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْجُنُودِ ﴿١٧﴾

18. Pharaoh and Thamud.*8

فِرْعَوْنَ وَثَمُودَ ﴿١٨﴾

*8 The address is directed to the people who in their false pride of having powerful hosts, are breaking the law of God on His earth. They are being warned, as if to say: Do you know what evil fate was met before by those who broke the

bounds set by Allah on the strength of the power of their hosts.

19. But those who disbelieve, persist in denying.

بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي تَكْذِيبٍ ﴿١٩﴾

20. While Allah has encircled them from behind.

وَاللَّهُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ مُحِيطٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

21. Nay, but this is a glorious Quran.

بَلْ هُوَ قُرْءَانٌ مَجِيدٌ ﴿٢١﴾

22. In the guarded tablet.*9

فِي لَوْحٍ مَحْفُوظٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

*9 That is, the writ of the Quran is unchangeable and imperishable. It is inscribed in the guarded tablet of God, which cannot be corrupted in any way. Whatever is written in it has to be fulfilled: even the whole world together cannot avert its fulfillment.





الطَّارِق At-Tariq

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word *at-Tariq* in its first verse.

Period of Revelation

The style of its subject matter resembles that of the earliest Surahs revealed at Makkah, but this Surah was sent down at a stage when the disbelievers of Makkah were employing all sorts of devices and plans to defeat and frustrate the message of the Quran and Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Theme and Subject Matter

It discusses two themes: first that man has to appear before God after death; second, that the Quran is a decisive word which no plan or device of the disbelievers can defeat or frustrate.

First of all, the stars of the heavens have been cited as an evidence that there is nothing in the universe which may continue to exist and survive without guardian over it. Then man has been asked to consider his own self as to how he has been brought into existence from a mere sperm drop

and shaped into a living human being. Then it has been said that the God, who has so brought him into existence, has certainly the power to create him once again, and this resurrection will be for the purpose to subject to scrutiny all the secrets of man which remained hidden in the world. At that time, man will neither be able to escape the consequences of his deeds by his own power, nor will anyone else come to his rescue.

In conclusion, it has been pointed out that just as the falling of rain from the sky and the sprouting of plants and crops from the earth is no child's play but a serious task, so also the truths expressed in the Quran are no jest but a firm and unchangeable reality. The disbelievers are involved in the misunderstanding that their plans and devices will defeat the invitation of the Quran, but they do not know that Allah too is devising a plan which will bring to naught all their scheming and planning. Than in one sentence the discourse has been summed up, with a word of consolation to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and a tacit warning to the disbelievers, saying: Have patience for a while: let the disbelievers do their worst. Before long they will themselves realize whether they have been able to defeat the Quran by their scheming or the Quran has dominated them in the very place where they are exerting their utmost to defeat it.

1. By the heaven and the morning star.

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ ﴿١﴾

2. And what do you know what the morning star is.

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ ﴿٢﴾

3. A piercing star.

النَّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ ﴿٣﴾

4. Indeed, each soul has a guardian over it.*1

إِنَّ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ ﴿٤﴾

*1 A Guardian: Allah Almighty Himself, who is looking after and watching over every creature, big or small, in the earth and heavens. He it is who has brought everything into existence, who is maintaining and sustaining everything in its place and position, and who has taken the responsibility to provide for every creature and to protect it from calamities till an appointed time. On this, an oath has been sworn by the heaven and by every star and planet which appears in the darkness of the night. (Although lexically, *an-najm ath-thaqib* is singular, it does not imply any one star but the star in the generic sense). The oath signifies that the existence of each star (among the countless stars and planets that shine in the sky at night) testifies to the fact that there is a Being who has created it, illuminated it, suspended it in space, and thus is watching over it in a manner that neither it falls from its place nor collides with any other of the countless stars in their movements, nor does any other star collide with it.

5. Then let man see from what he is created.*2

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ ﴿٥﴾

*2 After inviting man to ponder over the heavens, he is now being invited to consider his own self and see how he has been created, who is it who selects one spermatozoon from among billions of spermatozoa emitted by the father and combines it at some time with one ovum out of a large

number of the ova produced by the mother, and thus causes a particular human being to be conceived? Then, who is it who after conception develops it gradually in the mother's womb until it is delivered in the form of a living child? Then, who is it who in the mother's womb itself brings about a certain proportion and harmony between its bodily structure and its physical and mental capabilities? Then, who is it who watches over it continuously from birth till death, protects it from disease, accidents and calamities and provides him with countless means of life and opportunities for survival in the world of which he is not even conscious, not to speak of having the power to provide these for himself. Is all this happening without the planning and supervision of One God?

6. He is created from a fluid gushing forth. ^{*3}

خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّاءٍ دَافِقٍ

***3** “A fluid gushing forth” means ejaculation of semen (maain) carrying the sperm (*nutfa*), one of the minute, usually actively motile gametes—a mature male reproductive cell in semen, which serves to fertilize the female ovum. Sperms are produced by testes. Each testes has 800 small tubules and each tube about 2 feet long, semeniferous tubules which produce sperms about 200-300 million every day. There are 2 valves around urethra. Both are tightly closed to hold and store semen before its expulsion. The inner valve stays tightly closed to prevent backward ejaculation into the urinary bladder and the outer valve intermittently contracts and relaxes 3-7 times along with surrounding muscles contraction to generate force for

propelling the semen out (*dafiqin*). (Ref. Spinal Cord Medicine, Demos Medical Publishing Inc. New York USA, Chapter 26, Page 354).

7. Emerging from between the back bone and the ribs.*4

يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ



*4 *Sulb* is the backbone (vertebral column) and *taraib* the ribs. There are 12 pairs of ribs. Of them, 7 pairs are called true ribs as each of them is attached between the vertebra (backbone) and the sternum (breast bone), and the remaining 5 are called false ribs as they are also attached to the vertebral column but not to sternum. Ejaculation is a highly complex process which requires smooth coordination of multiple sections of the nervous system. Mechanism of emission and propulsions is caused by 2 spinal cord centers. The spinal cord is 43-45 cm long and is continuation of brain tissue and occupies its place in the center of upper spinal bony vertebral column. It is the proper functioning, integrity and continuity of these 2 spinal cord centers located between vertebrae (*sulb*) and ribs (*taraib*) connecting spinal cord and sex organs along with the valves around urethra by the nerves which are responsible for ejaculation. (Ref. Spinal Cord Medicine, Demos Medical Publishing Inc. New York USA, Chapter 2, Page 16).

8. Surely, He (Allah) is Able to return him (to life).*5

إِنَّهُ عَلَى رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ

*5 That is, His bringing man into existence and watching

over him from the time conception takes place until death, is a clear proof that He can create him once again after death. If He had the power to create him in the first instance and man stays alive in the world by His power alone, what rational arguments can be presented for the conjecture that He does not have the power to do the same thing a second time? To deny this power man will even have to deny that God has brought him into existence, and the one who denies this may well come out one day with the claim that all books in the world have been printed accidentally, all cities of the world have been built accidentally, and there has occurred on the earth an explosion by chance which made all the factories start functioning automatically. The fact is that the creation of man, the structure of his body, the existence of the powers and capabilities working within him, and his survival as a living being all this is a much more complex process than all those works that have come to be accomplished through man, or are still in the process of being accomplished. If such a complex work with such wisdom, proportion and order could be accomplished just through a chance accident, what else could not be regarded as accidental by a mentally deranged person?

9. The Day when the hidden secrets will be brought to scrutiny.*⁶

يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ

***⁶ The hidden secrets: the acts of every person which remained a secret to the world as well as those affairs which came before the world only in their apparent form,**

but the intentions, aims and secret motives working behind them remained hidden from the people. On the Resurrection Day all this will be laid bare and not only will the acts and deeds of every person be examined but it will also be seen what was his motive and intention and object of so acting. Likewise, it also remained hidden from the world, even from the doer of the act himself, what effects and influences of his act appeared in the world, to what extent they spread and for how long they continued to work. This secret will also be revealed on the Resurrection Day and it will be fully examined as to what were the consequences of the seed that a person sowed in the world, what fruit it bore and for how long it affected the later generations for better or for worse.

10. Then he (man) will have no power, nor helper.

فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَلَا نَاصِرٍ ﴿١٠﴾

11. By the sky that sends down rain.*7

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ ﴿١١﴾

*7 The words *dhat ar-raje* have been used for the sky. Literally *raje* means to return, but metaphorically this word is used for the rain in Arabic, for rain does not fall just once, but returns over and over again in the season and sometimes out of season as well. Another reason for calling the rain *raje* is that water rises as vapor from the oceans of the earth and then falls back as rain on the same earth.

12. And the earth that splits (at the sprouting of vegetation).

وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ الصَّدْعِ ﴿١٢﴾

13. Indeed, it (the Quran) is a decisive Word.

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلٌ فَصْلٌ ﴿١٣﴾

14. And it is no amusement.^{*8}

وَمَا هُوَ بِأَهْزَلٍ ﴿١٤﴾

***8** That is, just as the falling of rain from the sky and the splitting of the earth to put out shoots is no jest but a serious reality, so also the news which the Quran gives that man has to return to his God is no jest but a definite and decisive reality and an unchangeable truth which has to be fulfilled.

15. Indeed, they are plotting a plot.^{*9}

إِنَّهُمْ يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا ﴿١٥﴾

***9** That is, these disbelievers are devising every kind of plan to defeat the invitation of the Quran; they wish to blow out this candle; they are creating all sorts of doubts in the people's minds; they are inventing false accusations against the Prophet (peace be upon him) who has brought it, so as to frustrate his mission in the world and perpetuate the darkness of ignorance and unbelief which he is struggling so hard to remove.

16. And I am devising a plan.^{*10}

وَأَكِيدُ كَيْدًا ﴿١٦﴾

***10** That is, I am planning that none of their devices should succeed so that they are utterly defeated in their designs, and the light which they are trying their utmost to put out, spreads far and wide.

17. So give a respite to the disbelievers, leave them to

فَمَهْلٍ الْكَافِرِينَ أَمْهَلُهُمْ رُوَيْدًا

themselves for a while.^{*11}



***11 That is, leave them for a while to have their will. Before long the result will be before them and they will realize how far their scheming has become successful against my plan.**



Al-Aala الأَعْلَى

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word *al-Aala* in the very first verse.

Period of Revelation

The subject matter shows that this is one of the earlier Surahs to be revealed, and the words: We shall enable you to recite, then you shall never forget of verse 6 also indicate that it was sent down in the period when the Messenger (peace be upon him) was not yet fully accustomed to receive revelation and at the time revelation came down he feared lest he should forget its words. If this verse is read along with verse 114 of Surah TaHa and verses 16-19 of Surah Al-Qiyamah and the three verses are also considered with regard to their styles and contexts, the sequence of events seems to be that first in this Surah the Prophet (peace be upon him) was reassured to the effect: Do not at all worry: We shall enable you to recite this word, then you shall not forget it. Then after a lapse of time, on another occasion, when the Surah Al-Qiyamah was being revealed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) involuntarily began to

rehearse the words of the revelation. Thereupon it was said: O Prophet do not move your tongue to remember this revelation hastily. It is for Us to have it remembered and read. Therefore when We are reciting it, listen to its recital carefully. Again, it is for Us to explain its meaning. Last of all, on the occasion of the revelation of Surah TaHa, the Prophet (peace be upon him) on account of human weakness, again became afraid lest his memory should fail to preserve some portion of the 113 verses which were continuously revealed at that time, and therefore, he began to memorize them. Thereupon, it was said: And see that you do not hasten to recite the Quran before its revelation is completed to you. After this, it never so happened that he felt any such danger. For, apart from these three places, there is no other place in the Quran where there might be a reference to this matter.

Theme and Subject Matter

This short Surah contains three themes: Tauhid, instructions to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Hereafter.

In the first verse, the doctrine of Tauhid has been compressed into a single sentence, saying that Allah's name should be glorified and exalted, i.e. He should not be remembered by any name which might reflect a deficiency, fault, weakness, or an aspect of likeness, with created beings, for the root of all false creeds in the world are wrong concepts about Allah, which assumed the form of an erroneous name for His glorious and exalted Being. Therefore, for the correction of the creed, the primary

thing is that Allah Almighty should be remembered only by the beautiful names which suit and befit Him.

In the next three verses, it has been said: Your Lord, glorification of Whose name is being enjoined, is He Who created everything in the universe, proportioned it, set it a destiny, taught it to perform the function for which it is created, and you witness this manifestation of His power day and night that He creates vegetation on the earth as well as reduces it to mere rubbish. No other being has the power to bring about spring, nor the power to prevent autumn.

Then, in the following two verses, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been consoled, as if to say: Do not worry as to how you will remember word for word the Quran that is being revealed to you. It is for Us to preserve it in your memory, and its preservation is not in any way the result of any excellence in you but the result of Our bounty and favor, otherwise if We so will, We can cause you to forget it. Then, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been told: You have not been made responsible to bring everyone on to the right path; your only duty is to convey the truth, and the simplest way of conveying the truth is that admonition be given to him who is inclined to listen to the admonition and accept it, and the one who is not inclined to it, should not be pursued. The one who fears the evil consequences of deviation and falsehood, will listen to the truth and accept it, and the wretched one who avoids listening to and accepting it, will himself see his evil end.

The discourse has been summed up, saying: Success is only

for those who adopt purity of belief, morals and deed, and remember the name of their Lord and perform the Prayer. But, on the contrary, the people are wholly lost in seeking the ease, benefits and pleasures of the world, whereas they should actually endeavor for their well being in the Hereafter, for the world is transitory and the Hereafter everlasting and the blessings of the Hereafter are far better than the blessings of the world. This truth has not been expressed only in the Quran but in the books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses (peace be upon them) too, it had been brought to the notice of man.

1. Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High.*¹

سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى

*¹ Literally: “Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High.” This can have several meanings and all are implied: (1) Allah should be remembered by the names which fit Him, and no such name should be used for His exalted Being which, with regard to its meaning and sense, does not fit Him, or which reflects some aspect of deficiency, lack of reverence, polytheism about Him, or which refers to some wrong belief in respect of His Being, attributes, or works. For this purpose, the safest way is that only such names be used for Allah, which He himself has mentioned in the Quran, or which are a correct translation of these names in other languages.

(2) Allah should not be remembered by the names as are used generally for the created beings, or the created beings should not be called by names as are specifically meant for Allah. And if there are some attributive names which are

not specifically meant for Allah, but may also be used for the created beings, such as Rauf (Kind), Rahim (Compassionate), Karim (Generous), Sami (Hearing), Basir (Seeing), etc. one should exercise due care not to use them for man as they are used for Allah.

(3) Allah should not be mentioned in a way or in a state which reflects lack of respect for Him; for example, to mention His name when engaged in mockery or jest, or when in the lavatory, or while committing a sinful act, or before the people who might behave insolently in response, or in assemblies where the people are engaged in absurd things and might laugh off His mention, or on an occasion when it is feared that the hearer will hear it disdainfully. About Imam Malik, it is related that when a beggar begged him for something and he did not have anything to give, he would not turn away the beggar, saying that Allah would help him, as is commonly done by the people, but he would excuse himself in some other way. When asked why he did so, he replied: When the beggar is not given anything and one makes an excuse, it inevitably displeases him. On such an occasion, I do not like to mention Allah's name, for I do not like that somebody should hear His name in a state of annoyance and displeasure.

In the Hadith, it has been reported from Uqbah bin Amir Juhani that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had enjoined recitation of *Subhana Rabbi yal-Aala* in sajdah on the basis of this very verse, and the recitation of *Subhana Rabbi yal-Adheem* in ruku on the basis of the last verse of Surah Al-Waqiah, viz. *Fa-sabih bismi-Rabbi-kal-Adeem*. (Musnad

Ahmad, Abu Daud, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibban, Hakim, Ibn al-Mundhir).

2. He Who created and proportioned.*²

الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى

*² That is, He created everything, from the earth to the heavens, in the universe, and gave whatever he created the right proportion and balance and gave every creature the best conceivable form and shape. The same thing has been expressed in Surah As-Sajdah, thus: Who gave everything He created the best form (verse 7) Thus, the creation of everything in the world giving it due order and proportion, is an express sign of the truth that some Wise Designer is its Creator. Had the creation of the countless things in the universe been the result of a chance accident, or the work of many creators, there could be no order and balance, no beauty and inner coherence among the many things existing in the world.

3. And He Who set a destiny*³ and guided.*⁴

وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى

*³ Set a destiny: Determined beforehand what would be the function of a certain thing in the world, and for that purpose what would be its size, its form and shape, its qualities, its place of location, and what opportunities and means should be provided for its survival, existence and functioning, when it should come into being, and when and how it should cease to be after completing its part of the work. Such a scheme for a thing is its destiny (*taqdir*). And this destiny Allah has set for everything in the universe and for the entire universe as a whole. This means that the

creation has not come about without a pre-conceived plan, haphazardly, but for it the Creator had a full plan before Him, and everything is happening according to that plan. (For further explanation, see E.Ns 13, 14 of Surah Al-Hijr; E.N. 8 of Surah Al-Furqan; E.N. 25 of Surah Al-Qamar. E.N. 12 of Surah Abasa).

*4 That is, nothing was just created and left to itself, but whatever was created to perform a certain function, it was also taught the method of performing that function. In other words, He is not merely the Creator but Guide too. He has taken the responsibility to give guidance to whatever He has created in a particular capacity to fit its nature and to guide it in the way suitable for it. One kind of guidance is for the earth, the moon, the sun, and the stars and planets, which they are following in performing their role. Another kind of guidance is for water, air, light and the solid and mineral elements, and they are performing the same services for which they have been created accordingly. Still another kind of guidance is for vegetables, according to which they take root and spread in the earth, sprout up from its layers, obtain food from wherever Allah has created it for them, produce stem, branches, leaves, blossom and fruit, and fulfill the function which has been appointed for each of them. Still another kind of guidance is for the countless species of animals of the land, and water, and for each member of the species, the wonderful manifestations of which are clearly visible in the life of the animals and in their works, so much so that even an atheist is compelled to concede that different kinds of animals

possess some sort of inspirational knowledge which man cannot obtain even through his instruments, not to speak of his senses. Then, there are two different kinds of guidance for man, which correspond to his two different capacities. One kind of guidance is for his animal life, by which each child learns to suck milk spontaneously on birth, by which the eyes of man, his nose, ear, heart, brain, lungs, kidney, liver, stomach, intestines, nerves, veins and arteries, all are performing their respective functions, without man's being conscious of it, or his will's having anything to do with the functions of these organs. This is the guidance under which all physical and mental changes pertaining to childhood, maturity, youth and old age go on taking place in man, independent of his will, choice, even his consciousness. The second kind of guidance is for his intellectual and conscious life, the nature of which is absolutely different from the guidance for unconscious life, for in this sphere of life a kind of freedom has been transferred to man, for which the mode of guidance meant for voluntary life is not suitable. For turning away from this last kind of guidance, man may offer whatever arguments and excuses he may like, it is not credible that the Creator Who has arranged guidance for everything in this universe according to its capacity, might have set for man the destiny that he may appropriate numerous things in His world freely, but might not have made any arrangement to show what is the right way of using his choice and what is the wrong way. (For further explanation, see E.Ns 9, 10, 14, 56 of Surah An-Nahl; E.N. 23 of Surah TaHa, E.Ns 2, 3 of Surah Ar-Rahman; E.N. 5

of Surah Ad-Dahr).

4. And He Who brings out the pasture.*5

وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَىٰ

*5 The word maraa as used in the text means the fodder for animals but the context shows that here it does not imply mere fodder but every kind of vegetation that grows out of the soil.

5. Then makes it dark stubble.*6

فَجَعَلَهُ رُغَاءً أَحْوَىٰ

*6 That is, He does not only bring about spring but autumn as well. You witness both the manifestations of this power. On the one side, He causes lush green vegetation to grow, the freshness of which pleases the hearts and, on the other, He renders the same vegetation pale, dry and black rubbish, which is blown about by winds and swept away by floods. Therefore, no one here should be involved in the misunderstanding that he will only experience spring and will never see autumn. This same theme has been expressed at several other places in the Quran in other ways. For example see Surah Yunus, Ayat 24; Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 45; Surah Al-Hadid, Ayat 20.

6. We shall make you to recite, then you shall not forget.*7

سُنُقِرُّكَ فَلَا تَنْسَىٰ

*7 Hakim has related from Saad bin Abi Waqqas and Ibn Marduyah from Abdullah bin Abbas that the Prophet (peace be upon him) repeated the words of the Quran for fear lest he should forget them. Mujahid and Kalbi say that

even before Gabriel finished recitation of the revelation the Prophet (peace be upon him) would start repeating the initial verses lest he should forget them. On this very basis Allah assured him that he should listen quietly when the revelation was coming down, for, We shall enable you to recite it; then you will remember it forever. You should have no fear that you will forget any word of it. This is the third occasion where the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been taught the method of receiving the revelation. The first two occasions have been referred to in Surah TaHa, Ayat 114 and Surah Al-Qiyamah, Ayats 16-19. This verse proves that just as the Quran was sent down to the Prophet (peace be upon him) as a miracle, so also its each word was preserved in his memory as a miracle and no possibility was allowed to remain that he should forget anything of it, or that he should utter another synonymous word for any word of it.

7. Except what Allah wills.*8
Surely, He knows what is
apparent and what is
hidden.*9

إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ
وَمَا يَخْفَى

*8 This sentence can have two meanings: First, that the preservation of the entire Quran word for word in your memory is not a manifestation of your own power but the result of Allah Almighty's bounty and grace; otherwise if Allah so willed, He could cause it to be forgotten. This same theme has been expressed at another place in the Quran, thus: O Muhammad! We may, if We so will, take back from you all of what We have revealed to you. (Surah Bani

Israil, Ayat 86). Another meaning can also be: Your forgetting something temporarily, or your forgetting a verse or a word occasionally is an exception from this promise. What has been promised is: You will not forget any word of the Quran permanently. This meaning is confirmed by the following tradition of Bukhari: Once while leading the Fajr Prayer the Prophet (peace be upon him) happened to omit a verse during the recitation. After the Prayer Ubayy bin Kaab asked if the verse had been abrogated. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied that he had forgotten to recite it.

*9 Although the words are general, and they mean that Allah knows everything, whether it is open or hidden, yet in the context in which they occur, they seem to mean: O Prophet, your reciting the Quran along with Gabriel is known to Allah and your fear for which you do so is also in Allah's knowledge. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is being assured that he will not forget it.

8. And We shall make easy for you the easy way.

وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ

9. Therefore, admonish them if admonition be profitable.*10

فَذَكِّرْ إِنْ نَفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَىٰ

*10 Generally, the commentators take these as two separate sentences. They interpret the first sentence to mean: We are giving you a simple code of law, which is easy to practice and act upon, and the second sentence to mean: Admonish the people if admonishing be useful. but in our opinion, the word *fa-dhakkir* connects the two sentences in meaning, and the theme of the second sentence bears upon

the theme of the first sentence. Therefore, we interpret these sentences to mean: O Prophet, We do not want to put you to any hardship concerning the preaching of Islam by demanding that you should make the deaf to hear and the blind to see the way, but We have appointed an easy way for you, which is this: Give admonition when you feel that the people are inclined to benefit by it. As to who is inclined to benefit by the admonition and who is not, this you can only know through general preaching. Therefore, you should continue your general preaching, but your object should be to search out those from among the people who will benefit by it and adopt the right way. Such people alone are worthy of your attention and you should pay full attention only to their instruction and training. You need not abandon them and pursue those about whom you find by experience that they are not inclined to accept any admonition. Almost this very theme has been expressed in Surah Abasa in another way, thus: As for him who is indifferent, to him you attend, though you would not be responsible if he does not reform. And the one who comes to you running, of his own will and fears, from him you turn away. By no means: This is but an Admonition. Let him who wills, accept it. (verses 5-12).

10. The Admonition will be received by him who fears.*11

سَيَذَكَّرُ مَن تَخَشَىٰ

*11 That is, only the one who has fear of God and of evil consequences, will consider whether or not he is following a wrong way, and he only will heed the admonition of the Servant of Allah, who is distinguishing guidance from

misguidance for him and guiding him to true successes and piety.

11. And it will be shunned by the most wretched one.

وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْأَشْقَى

12. He who shall enter the Great Fire.

الَّذِي يَصَلِّي النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى

13. Then neither dying therein, nor living.*12

ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَى

*12 That is, he will neither die so as to escape the punishment nor live as one truly lives so as to enjoy the pleasures of life. This punishment is for those who do not at all accept the admonition of Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and persist in disbelief, polytheism and atheism till death. As for those who believe in their hearts but are cast into Hell because of their evil deeds, it has been said in the Hadith that when they will have undergone their punishment, Allah will give them death; then intercession on their behalf will be accepted, and their scorched bodies will be brought to the canals of Paradise, and the dwellers of Paradise will be asked to sprinkle water on them; then by that water they will come to life even as vegetation grows up when water is sprinkled on the earth. This theme has been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Muslim on the authority of Abu Saeed Khudri and in Bazzar on the authority of Abu Hurairah.

14. Truly successful is he who purified himself.*13

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى

*13 Who purified himself: Who affirmed the faith giving

up disbelief and polytheism, adopted good morals giving up evil morals, and performed good deeds giving up evil deeds. Success does not imply worldly prosperity, but true and real success whether worldly prosperity accompanies it or not. (For explanation, see E.N. 23 of Surah Yunus, E.Ns 1, 11-50 of Surah Al-Mominoon; E.N. 4 of Surah Luqman).

15. And remembered the name of his Lord,^{*14} then prayed.^{*15}

وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى

***14** To remember Allah signifies His remembrance in the heart as well as with the tongue.

***15** That is, he did not remain content only with remembering Allah but proved by performing the Prayer that he is also practically prepared to obey God in Whom he has affirmed the faith, and will remember His name as long as he lives. In this verse mention has been made of two things respectively: First, to remember Allah, then to perform the Prayer. Accordingly, the method enjoined is that the Prayer be begun with *Allahu Akbar*. This is an evidence to prove that all the elements of the procedure that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has taught of performing the Prayer, are based on the allusions in the Quran. But, no one else, apart from the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, could by combining these injunctions and allusions give the Prayer the form that it has.

16. But you (O men) prefer the life of this world.^{*16}

بَلْ تُوْثِرُونَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا

***16** That is, O man, all your thoughts and endeavors are

only for the world, its ease and comforts, its benefits and enjoyments. You regard whatever you gain here as the real gain and whatever you lose here as your real loss.

17. Although the Hereafter is better and more lasting.^{*17}

وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى ﴿١٧﴾

***17** That is, the Hereafter is preferable to the world for two reasons: First, that its comforts and pleasures are far superior to all the blessings of the world; second, that the world is transitory and the Hereafter everlasting.

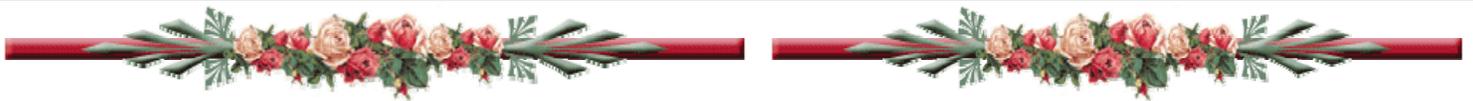
18. Indeed, this is in the former scriptures.

إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى ﴿١٨﴾

19. The scriptures of Abraham and Moses.^{*18}

صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى ﴿١٩﴾

***18** This is the second place in the Quran where reference has been made to the teachings of the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses (peace be upon them). The first reference was made in section 3 of Surah An-Najm.



الْغَشِيَّة Al-Ghashiah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word *al-ghashiah* in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

The whole subject matter of the Surah indicates that this is one of the earliest Surahs to be revealed; but this was the period when the Prophet (peace be upon him) had started preaching his message publicly, and the people of Makkah were hearing it and ignoring it carelessly and thoughtlessly.

Theme and Subject Matter

To understand the subject matter well one should keep in view the fact that in the initial stage the preaching of the Prophet (peace be upon him) mostly centered around two points which he wanted to instill in the people's minds: Tauhid and the Hereafter: and the people of Makkah were repudiating both. Let us now consider the subject matter and the style of this Surah.

At the outset, in order to arouse the people from their heedlessness, they have been plainly asked: Do you have any knowledge of the time when an overwhelming calamity

will descend? Immediately after this details of the impending calamity are given as to how the people will be divided into two separate groups and will meet separate ends. One group of the people will go to Hell and they will suffer punishment; the second group will go to the sublime Paradise and will be provided with blessings.

After thus arousing the people the theme suddenly changes and the question is asked: Do not these people, who frown and scorn the teaching of Tauhid and the news of the Hereafter being given by the Quran, observe the common things which they experience daily in their lives? Do they never consider how the camels, on whom their whole life activity in the Arabian desert depends, came into being, endowed precisely with the same characteristics as were required for the beast needed in their desert life? When they go on their journeys, they see the sky, the mountains, or the earth. Let them ponder over these three phenomena and consider as to how the sky was stretched above them, how the mountains were erected and how the earth was spread beneath them? Has all this come about without the skill and craftsmanship of an All-Powerful, All-Wise Designer? If they acknowledge that a Creator has created all this with great wisdom and power and that no one else is an associate with Him in their creation, why then do they refuse to accept Him alone as their Lord and Sustainer? And if they acknowledge that that God had the power to create all this, then on what rational ground do they hesitate to acknowledge that that God also has the power to bring about Resurrection, to recreate man, and to make

Hell and Heaven.

After making the truth plain by this concise and rational argument, the address turns from the disbelievers to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and he is told: If these people do not acknowledge the truth, they may not; you have not been empowered to act with authority over them, so that you should coerce them into believing: your only task is to exhort, so exhort them. Ultimately they have to return to Us; then We shall call them to full account and shall inflict a heavy punishment on those who do not believe.

1. Has there reached you the news of the overwhelming.*¹

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْغَاشِيَةِ ﴿١﴾

*¹ The overwhelming: the Resurrection which will overshadow the whole world. One should know that here the Hereafter as a whole is being depicted, which comprehends all the stages from the upsetting of the present system to the resurrection of all human beings and the dispensation of rewards and punishments from the divine court.

2. (Some) faces*² on that Day shall be downcast.

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ ﴿٢﴾

*² Some faces: some persons, for the face is the most conspicuous part of the human body by which man's personality is judged and which reflects the good or bad states through which man passes.

3. Laboring, weary.

عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ ﴿٣﴾

4. They will (enter to) burn in the hot blazing Fire.

تَصَلَّى نَارًا حَامِيَةً ﴿٤﴾

5. They will be given to drink from a boiling fountain.

تُسْقَى مِنْ عَيْنٍ ءَانِيَةٍ ﴿٥﴾

6. No food for them except thorny dry grass.^{*3}

لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيعٍ ﴿٦﴾

***3** At some places in the Quran, it has been stated that the dwellers of Hell will be given *zaqqum* to eat; at another place it has been said that they will have no other food but *ghislin* (washing from wounds), and here that their only food will be thorny dry grass. There is, in fact, no contradiction between these statements. This may as well mean that Hell will have many different compartments in which different categories of the criminals will be lodged according to their crimes, and subjected to different punishments. This may also mean that if they try to avoid *zaqqum* they will be given *ghislin*, and if they try to avoid even that, they will only get thorny grass. In short, they would get nothing to suit their taste.

7. Which will neither nourish nor satisfy hunger.

لَا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنْ جُوعٍ ﴿٧﴾

8. (Other) faces on that Day shall be joyful.

وُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَاعِمَةٌ ﴿٨﴾

9. With their efforts, well pleased.^{*4}

لِسَعْيِهَا رَاضِيَةٌ ﴿٩﴾

***4** That is: they will be overjoyed to see the best results in the Hereafter of their endeavors and deeds in the world; they will be satisfied to see that they had, in fact, made a

profitable bargain in that they had adopted a life of faith, virtue and piety, by sacrificing the desires of the flesh, undergone hardships in carrying out their obligations, endured afflictions in obeying the divine commands, incurred losses and suffered deprivation of benefits and pleasures while trying to avoid sins and acts of disobedience.

10. In elevated Garden.

فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ﴿١٠﴾

11. They shall not hear therein idle talk.^{*5}

لَا تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا لَغِيَةً ﴿١١﴾

*5 This thing has been mentioned at several places in the Quran as a major blessing of Paradise. (For explanation, see E.N. 38 of Surah Maryam; E.N. 18 of Surah At-Toor; E.N. 13 of Surah Al-Waqiah; E.N. 21 of Surah An-Naba).

12. In it will be running spring.

فِيهَا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾

13. In it there will be raised couches.

فِيهَا سُرُرٌ مَّرْفُوعَةٌ ﴿١٣﴾

14. And goblets set in place.^{*6}

وَأَكْوَابٌ مَّوْضُوعَةٌ ﴿١٤﴾

*6 That is, filled goblets already supplied so that they do not have to ask for them.

15. And cushions ranged in rows.

وَنَمَارِقُ مَصْفُوفَةٌ ﴿١٥﴾

16. And fine carpets spread out.

وَزَرَابِيٌّ مَبْثُوثَةٌ ﴿١٦﴾

17. Then do they not look at the camels, how they are created.

أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ ﴿١٧﴾

18. And at the sky, how it is raised high.

وَإِلَى السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ ﴿١٨﴾

19. And at the mountains, how they are firmly set.

وَإِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ ﴿١٩﴾

20. And at the earth, how it is spread out.*7

وَإِلَى الْأَرْضِ كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ ﴿٢٠﴾

*7 That is, if they deny the possibility of the Hereafter, have they never looked around themselves and considered how the camels were created, how the heaven was raised high, how the mountains were firmly set and how the earth was spread out? When all these things could be created, and exist before them in their finished form, why can the Resurrection not take place? Why cannot a new world come about, and why cannot Hell and Heaven be possible? Only a foolish and thoughtless person would think that the coming into existence of only those things which he has found existing, on opening his eyes in the world, is possible, because they already exist. As for the things, which he has not yet observed and experienced, he should thoughtlessly pass the judgment that their coming into being is impossible. If he has any common sense, he should think as to how the things, which already exist, came into being? How did the camel possessing precisely the same characteristics as needed for the beast required by the desert dwellers of Arabia come into being? How did the sky

whose atmosphere is filled with air to breathe in, whose clouds bring rain, whose sun provides light and warmth in the day, whose moon and stars shine at night, come into being? How did the earth spread out on which man lives and passes his life, whose products fulfill all his needs and requirements on whose springs and wells his life depends? How did the mountains rise up from the surface of the earth, which stand fixed with earth and stones of different colors and a variety of minerals in them? Has all this happened without the artistic skill of an All-Powerful, All-Wise Designer. No thinking and intelligent mind can answer this question in the negative. Unless it is stubborn and obstinate, it will have to acknowledge that each one of these things was impossible, had not an Omnipotent, Wise Being made it possible. And when an All-Powerful, Wise Being created these things, there is no reason why the Hereafter should be regarded as remote from reason and impossible.

21. So remind (O Muhammad), you are only an admonisher.

فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ

22. You are not over them a controller.*8

لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ

*8 That is, if a person does not listen to reason, he may not. You have not been appointed to force the will of the deniers: your only task is to distinguish the right from the wrong for the people and warn them of the consequences of following the wrong way; so this is the task you should continue to perform.

23. But him who turns away and disbelieves.

إِلَّا مَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ وَكَفَرَ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. Then Allah will punish him with the greatest punishment.

فَيُعَذِّبُهُ اللَّهُ الْعَذَابَ الْأَكْبَرَ ﴿٢٤﴾

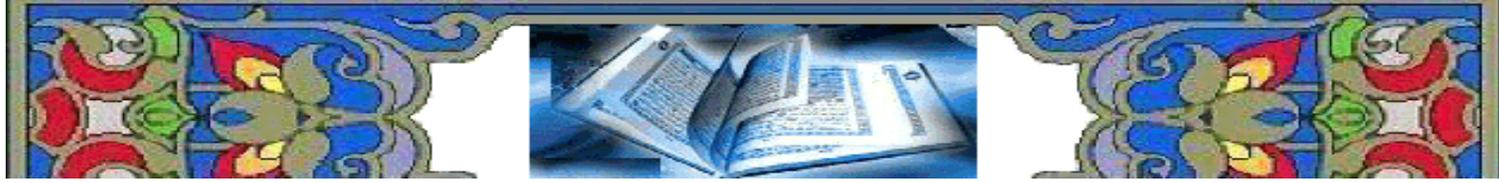
25. Indeed, to Us is their return.

إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. Then indeed, upon Us is their account.

ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ ﴿٢٦﴾





Al-Fajr

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah is so designated after the word *wal-fajr* with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

Its contents show that it was revealed at the stage when persecution of the new converts to Islam had begun in Makkah. On that very basis the people of Makkah have been warned of the evil end of the tribes of Aad and Thamud and of Pharaoh.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is to affirm the meting out of rewards and punishments in the Hereafter, which the people of Makkah were not prepared to acknowledge. Let us consider the reasoning in the order in which it has been presented.

First of all, swearing oaths by the dawn, the ten nights, the even and the odd, and the departing night, the listeners have been asked: Are these things not enough to testify to the truth of that which you are refusing to acknowledge? From the explanation that we have given of these four things in the corresponding notes, it will become clear that these things are a symbol of the regularity that exists in the

night and day, and swearing oaths by these the question has been asked in the sense: Even after witnessing this wise system established by God, do you still need any other evidence to show that it is not beyond the power of that God Who has brought about this system to establish the Hereafter, and that it is the very requirement of His wisdom that He should call man to account for his deeds?

Then, reasoning from man's own history, the evil end of the Aad and the Thamud and Pharaoh has been cited as an example to show that when they transgressed all limits and multiplied corruption in the earth, Allah laid upon them the scourge of His chastisement. This is a proof of the fact that the system of the universe is not being run by deaf and blind forces, nor is the world a lawless kingdom of a corrupt ruler, but a Wise Ruler is ruling over it. The demand of Whose wisdom and justice is continuously visible in the world itself in man's own history that He should call to account, and reward and punish accordingly, the being whom He has blessed with reason and moral sense and given the right of appropriation in the world.

After this, an appraisal has been made of the general moral state of human society of which Arab paganism was a conspicuous example; two aspects of it in particular have been criticized: first the materialistic attitude of the people on account of which overlooking the moral good and evil, they regarded only the achievement of worldly wealth, rank and position, or the absence of it, as the criterion of honor or disgrace, and had forgotten that neither riches was a reward nor poverty a punishment, but that Allah is trying

man in both conditions to see what attitude he adopts when blessed with wealth and how he behaves when afflicted by poverty. Second, the people's attitude under which the orphan child in their society was left destitute on the death of the father. Nobody asked after the poor. Whoever could, usurped the whole heritage left by the deceased parent, and drove away the weak heirs fraudulently. The people were so afflicted with an insatiable greed for wealth that they were never satisfied however much they might hoard and amass. This criticism is meant to make them realize as to why the people with such an attitude and conduct in the life of the world should not be called to account for their misdeeds.

The discourse has been concluded with the assertion that accountability shall certainly be held and it will be held on the Day when the divine court will be established. At that time the deniers of the judgment will understand that which they are not understanding now in spite of instruction and admonition, but understanding then will be of no avail. The denier will regret and say: Would that I had provided for this Day beforehand while I lived in the world. But his regrets will not save him from Allah's punishment. However, as for the people who would have accepted the truth, which the heavenly books and the Prophets of God were presenting, with full satisfaction of the heart in the world. Allah will be pleased with them and they will be well pleased with the rewards bestowed by Allah. They will be called upon to join the righteous and enter Paradise.

1. By the Dawn.

وَالْفَجْرِ ﴿١﴾

2. And the ten nights.

وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ ﴿٢﴾

3. And the Even and the Odd.

وَالشَّفَعِ وَالْوَتْرِ ﴿٣﴾

4. And the night when it departs.

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسِرٌ ﴿٤﴾

5. Is there in it an oath for a man of sense?^{*1}

هَلْ فِي ذَلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِّذِي حِجْرٍ ﴿٥﴾

***1** Much difference of opinion has been expressed by the commentators in the commentary of these verses, so much so that in respect of “the even and the odd” there are as many as 36 different views. In some traditions the commentary of these verses has also been attributed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), but the fact is that no commentary is confirmed from him, otherwise it was not possible that anyone from among the companions, their immediate successors, and later commentators would have dared to determine the meaning of these verses by themselves after the commentary by the Prophet (peace be upon him).

After a study of the style one clearly feels that there was an argument already in progress in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was presenting something and the disbelievers were denying it. At this, affirming what the Prophet (peace be upon him) presented, it was said: By such and such a thing, so as to say: By these things, what Muhammad (peace be upon him) says is wholly based on

the truth. Then, the argument is concluded with the question: Is there an oath in it for a man of understanding. That is, is there a need for yet another oath to testify to the truth of this matter. Is this oath not enough to persuade a sensible man to accept that which Muhammad (peace be upon him) is presenting.

Now the question arises: what was the argument for the sake of which an oath was sworn by these four things? For this we shall have to consider the whole theme which, in the following verses, commences with: Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the Aad, and continues till the end of the Surah. It shows that the argument concerned the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter, which the people of Makkah were refusing to acknowledge and the Messenger (peace be upon him) was trying to convince them of this by constant preaching and instruction. At this oaths were sworn by the dawn, the ten nights, the even and the odd, and the departing night to assert: Are these four things not enough to convince a sensible man of the truth of this matter so that he may need yet another evidence for it? After having determined the significance of these oaths in the context, we would inevitably have to take each of these in the meaning relevant to the subsequent theme. First of all, it is said: By Fajr. Fajr is the breaking of day, i.e. the time when the first rays of the light of day appear in the midst of the darkness of night as a white streak from the east. Then, it is said: By the ten nights. If the context is kept in view, it will become plain that it implies each group of the ten nights among the thirty nights of the month, the

first ten nights being those during which the crescent moon starting as a thin nail, goes on waxing every night until its major portion becomes bright. The second group of the ten nights being those during which the greater part of the night remains illumined by the moon. And the last ten nights being those during which the moon goes on waning and the nights becoming more and more dark until by the end of the month the whole night becomes absolutely dark. Then, it is said: By the even and the odd. Even is the number which is divisible into two equal parts, as 2, 4, 6, 8, and the odd the number which is not so divisible, as 1, 3, 5, 7. Generally, it may imply everything in the universe, for things in the universe either exist in pairs or as singles. But since the context here concerns the day and the night, the even and the odd mean the alternation of day and night in the sense that the dates of the month go on changing from the first to the second, and from second to the third, and every change brings with it a new state. Last of all, it is said: By the night when it is departing, i.e. when the darkness which had covered the world since sunset may be at the verge of disappearing and the day be dawning. Now let us consider as a whole the four things an oath by which has been sworn to assert that the news which Muhammad (peace be upon him) is giving of the meting out of rewards and punishments is wholly based on the truth. All these things point to the reality that an all-Powerful Sustainer is ruling over this universe and nothing of what He is doing is absurd, purposeless, or lacking wisdom. On the contrary, a wise plan clearly underlies whatever He

does. In His world one will never see that while it is night, the midday sun should suddenly appear overhead, or that the moon should appear one evening in the shape of the crescent and be followed next evening by the full moon, or that the night, when it falls, should never come to an end, but should become perpetual, or that there should be no system in the alternation of the day and night so that one could keep a record of the dates and know what month was passing, what was the date, on what date a particular work is to begin, and when it is to finish, what are the dates of the summer season and what of the rainy or winter season. Apart from countless other things of the universe if man only considers this regularity of the day and night intelligently and seriously, he will find evidence of the truth that this relentless discipline and order has been established by an Omnipotent Sovereign God; with it are connected countless of the advantages of the creatures whom He has created on the earth. Now, if a person living in the world of such a Wise, Omnipotent and All-Mighty Creator denies the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter, he inevitably commits one of the two errors: either he is a denier of His powers and thinks that though He has the power to create the universe with such matchless order and discipline, He is powerless to recreate man and mete out rewards and punishments to him or he denies His wisdom and knowledge and thinks that although He has created man with intellect and powers in the world, yet He will neither ever call him to account as to how he used his intellect and his powers, nor will reward him for his good

deeds, nor punish him for his evil deeds. The one who believes in either is foolish in the extreme.

6. Have you^{*2} not seen how your Lord dealt with Aad.

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ ﴿١﴾

*2 After reasoning out the judgment from the system of day and night, now an argument is being given from man's own history for its being a certainty. The mention of the conduct of a few well known tribes of history and their ultimate end is meant to point out that the universe is not working under some deaf and blind law of nature, but a Wise God is ruling over it, and in the Kingdom of that God only one law, which man describes as the law of nature is not working, but a moral law also is operative, which necessarily calls for retribution and rewards and punishments. The results of the working of the law have been appearing over and over again even in this world, which point out to the people of understanding as to what is the nature of the kingdom of the universe. Any nation which carved out a system of life for itself, heedless of the Hereafter and of the rewards and punishments of God, was ultimately corrupted and depraved, and whichever nation followed this way, was eventually visited with the scourge of punishment by the Lord of the universe. This continuous experience of man's own history testifies to two things clearly:

(1) That denial of the Hereafter has been instrumental in corrupting every nation and sending it ultimately to its doom; therefore, the Hereafter indeed is a reality clashing with which leads, as it has always led, to the same inevitable results.

(2) That retribution for deeds will at some time in the future take place in its full and complete form also, for the people who touched the extreme limits of corruption and depravity and were visited with punishment had been preceded by many others who had sown seeds of corruption for centuries and left the world without being visited by any scourge. The justice of God demands that all those people also should be called to account at some time and they too should suffer for their misdeeds. Argument from history and morals for the Hereafter has been given at many places in the Quran and we have explained it everywhere accordingly. For example, see E.Ns 5, 6 of Surah Al-Aaraf; E.N. 12 of Surah Yunus; E.Ns 57, 105, 115 of Surah Houd; E.N. 9 of Surah Ibrahim; E.Ns 66, 86 of Surah An-Naml; E.N. 8 of Surah Ar-Room; E.N. 25 of Surah Saba; E.Ns 29, 30 of Surah Suad; E.N. 80 of Surah Al-Momin; E.Ns 33, 34 of Surah Ad-Dukhan; E.Ns 27, 28 of Surah Al-Jathiah; E.N. 17 of Surah Qaf; E.N. 21 of Surah Adh-Dhariyat.

7. Iram of lofty pillars.*³

إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ

*³ Aad Iram implies the ancient tribe of Aad, who have been called Aad-ula in the Quran and Arabian history. In Surah An-Najm, it has been said: And that We destroyed the ancient people of Aad (verse 50), i.e. the Aad to whom the Prophet Houd (peace be upon him) had been sent, and who were punished with a scourge. As against them the people of Aad who remained safe and flourished afterwards are remembered as Aad-ukhra in Arabian history. The ancient Aad are called Aad-Iram for the reason that they

belonged to that branch of the Semetic race which descended from Iram, son of Shem, son of Noah (peace be upon him). Several other sub-branches of this main branch are well known in history. One of which were the Thamud, who have been mentioned in the Quran; another are the Aramaeans, who in the beginning inhabited the northern parts of Syria and whose language Aramaic occupies an important place among the Semetic languages. The words *dhat-ul-imad* (of lofty pillars) have been used for the Aad because they built high buildings and the pattern of architecture of erecting edifices on lofty pillars was introduced by them in the world. At another place in the Quran this characteristic has been mentioned in connection with the Prophet Houd (peace be upon him), who said to them: What, you erect for mere pleasure a monument on every high spot, and build huge castles as if you were immortal. (Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 128-129).

8. The like of whom, no nation was created in the lands of the world?^{*4}

الَّتِي لَمْ يَخْلَقْ مِثْلَهَا فِي الْبَلَدِ

^{*4} That is, they were a matchless people of their time; no other nation in the world compares with them in strength, glory and grandeur. At other places in the Quran, it has been said about them: Your Lord made you very robust. (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 69). As for the Aad, they became arrogant with pride in the land, without any right, and said: Who is stronger than us in might. (Surah HaMim As-Sajdah, Ayat 15). When you seized somebody, you seized him like a tyrant. (Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayat 130).

9. And the Thamud who had carved out the rocks in the valley?^{*5}

وَتَمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُوا الصَّخْرَ
بِالْوَادِ

***5** The valley: Wad-il-Qura, where the Thamud carved out dwellings in the mountains, and probably in history they were the first people who started cutting out such buildings into the rocks. (For details, see E.Ns 57, 59 of Surah Al-Aaraf; E.N. 45 of Surah Al-Hijr; E.Ns 95, 99 of Surah Ash-Shuara).

10. And Pharaoh of the stakes.^{*6}

وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ

***6** The words *dhul-autad* (of the stakes) for Pharaoh have also been used in Surah Suad, Ayat 12. This can have several meanings. Possibly his forces have been compared to the stakes, and “of the stakes” means “of great forces”, for it was by their power and might that he ruled a firmly established kingdom; it might also imply multiplicity of forces, and the meaning may be that wherever his large armies camped, pegs of the tents were seen driven into the ground on every side; it may also imply the stakes at which he punished the people, and it is also possible that the pyramids of Egypt have been compared to the stakes, for they are the remnants of the grandeur and glory of the Pharaohs, and seem to have been driven into the ground like stakes for centuries.

11. These were those who had committed great excesses in the lands of the world.

الَّذِينَ طَغَوْا فِي الْبِلَادِ

12. And spread great corruption in them.

فَاكْثُرُوا فِيهَا الْفَسَادَ

13. So your Lord poured on them a scourge of punishment.

فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ

14. Indeed, your Lord is ever watchful in ambush.*7

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ

*7 The words “ever watchful in ambush” have been used metaphorically for keeping watch on the movements and activities of the wicked and mischievous people. An ambush is a place where a person lies hiding in wait to attack somebody by surprise. The victim, thoughtless of his fate, comes and falls a prey. The same is the case against Allah of those wicked people who spread mischief in the world and have no sense and fear that there is God above them, Who is watching all their misdeeds. Therefore, they go on committing everyday more and more evils fearlessly until they reach the limit which Allah does not permit them to transgress. At that very moment His scourge descends upon them suddenly.

15. And as for man,*8 when his Lord tries him, so He honors him and blesses him, then he says, "My Lord has honored me."

فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ
فَاكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي
أَكْرَمَنِي

*8 Now, criticizing the general moral state of the people, it is being said: After all, why shouldn't the men who have adopted such an attitude in the life of the world, be ever

called to account, and how can it be regarded as a demand of reason and justice that when man has left the world, after doing all he could, he should never receive any reward or suffer any punishment for his deeds.

16. But when He tries him and restricts his provisions for him, then he says, "My Lord has disgraced me."^{*9}

وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ
رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ ﴿١٦﴾

***9** This then is man's materialistic view of life. He regards the wealth and position and power of this world alone as everything. When he has it, he is filled with pride and says God has honored me; and when he fails to obtain it, he says: God has humiliated me. Thus, the criterion of honor and humiliation in his sight is the possession of wealth and position and power, or the absence of it, whereas the truth which he does not understand is that whatever Allah has given anybody in the world has been given for the sake of a trial. If he has given him wealth and power, it has been given for a trial to see whether he becomes grateful for it, or commits ingratitude. If he has made him poor, in this too there is a trial for him to see whether he remains content and patient in the will of God and faces his hardships bravely within permissible bounds, or becomes ready to transgress every limit of morality and honesty and starts cursing his God.

17. Indeed not!^{*10} But you do not treat the orphan with respect.^{*11}

كَلَّا بَلْ لَا تَكْرُمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ ﴿١٧﴾

***10** That is, this is not all the criterion of honor and

disgrace, for the real criterion is the moral good and evil.
*11 That is, as long as his father is alive, your treatment of him is attentive and when his father dies, even the paternal and maternal uncles and the elder brothers, to say nothing of the neighbors and distant relatives, neglect him.

18. And you do not urge one another to feed the needy.*12

وَلَا تَحْضُرُونَ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ

*12 That is, nobody in your society feels any urge to feed the poor. Neither a man himself feels inclined to feed a hungry person, nor is there among the people any urge to do something to satisfy the hunger of the hungry, nor do they exhort one another to do so.

19. And you devour the inheritance greedily.*13

وَتَأْكُلُونَ الْوَرَثَاتِ أَكْلًا لَّمًّا

*13 In Arabia, the women and children were as a rule deprived of inheritance and the people's idea in this regard was that the right to inheritance belonged only to those male members who were fit to fight and safeguard the family. Besides, the one who was more powerful and influential among the heirs of the deceased, would annex the whole inheritance without qualms, and usurp the shares of all those who did not have the power to secure their shares. They did not give any importance to the right and duty so that they should honestly render the right to whom it was due as a duty whether he had the power to secure it

or not.

20. And you love the wealth with immense love. ^{*14}

وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا

*14 That is, you have no regard for the permissible or the forbidden, the lawful or the unlawful. You feel no qualms about acquiring wealth in any way or by any means, fair or foul, and your greed is never satisfied however much you may have acquired and amassed.

21. Indeed not! ^{*15} When the earth is incessantly pounded to become a sand-desert.

كَلَّا إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا

*15 That is, you are wrong in thinking that you may do whatever you like in your life of the world, but you will never be called to account for it. The meting out of rewards and punishment denying which you have adopted this mode of life, is not anything impossible and fictitious, but it has to come to pass and it will certainly come to pass at the time being mentioned below.

22. And your Lord comes ^{*16} while the angels shall be standing rank upon rank.

وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا

*16 Although literally the words *jaa Rabbuka* mean your Lord will come, obviously there cannot be any question of Allah Almighty's moving from one place to another; therefore, this will inevitably have to be understood as an allegoric expression, which is meant to give an idea that at that time the manifestations of Allah Almighty's power and

His majesty and sovereignty will appear fully, as, for example, in the world the arrival of a king in person in the court is more awe-inspiring than the mere array of his forces and chiefs and nobles.

23. And Hell on that Day is brought. That Day man shall remember, but what (good) to him will be the remembrance.*17

وَجِآءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَجْمٌ يَوْمِئِذٍ
يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ
الذِّكْرَى

*17 The words in the original can have two meanings:
(1) That on that Day man will remember whatever he had done in the world and will regret, but what will remembrance and regretting avail him then.
(2) That on that Day man will take heed and accept admonition: he will realize that whatever he had been told by the Prophets was true and he committed a folly when he did not listen to them; but what will taking heed and accepting the admonition and realizing one's errors avail then.

24. He will say, "Would that I had provided in advance for this life of mine."

يَقُولُ يَلَيْتَنِي قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِي

25. Then none can punish as He shall punish on that Day.

فِيَوْمِئِذٍ لَا يُعَذِّبُ عَذَابَهُ أَحَدٌ

26. And none can bind as He shall bind.

وَلَا يُوثِقُ وَثَاقَهُ أَحَدٌ

27. (To the righteous it will be said) "O peaceful and fully satisfied soul."^{*18}

يَأْتِيهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ



***18 Peaceful and fully satisfied soul:** The man who believed in Allah, the One, as his Lord and Sustainer, and adopted the way of life brought by the Prophets as his way of life, with full satisfaction of the heart, and without the least doubt about it, who acknowledged as absolute truth whatever creed and command he received from Allah and His Messenger, who withheld himself from whatever he was forbidden by Allah's religion, not unwillingly but with perfect conviction that it was really an evil thing, who offered without sacrifice whatever sacrifice was required to be offered for the sake of the truth, who endured with full peace of mind whatever difficulties, troubles and hardships he met on this way and who felt no remorse on being deprived of the gains and benefits and pleasures in the world which seemed to accrue to those who followed other ways but remained fully satisfied that adherence to true faith had safeguarded him against those errors. This very state has been described at another place in the Quran as *sharh sadr*. (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 125).

28. Return to your Lord:^{*19} you are well-pleased (with your good end) and well-pleasing (in the sight of your Lord).

أَرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَةً



***19** This he will be told at the time of his death as well as on the Day of Resurrection when he will rise from the dead

and move towards the Plain of Assembly and also on the occasion when he will be presented in the divine court. At every stage he will be assured that he is moving towards the Mercy of Allah Almighty.

29. So enter among (righteous) servants.

فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي ﴿٢٩﴾

30. And enter My Paradise.

وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي ﴿٣٠﴾





أَلْبَدَ Al-Balad

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah has been so named after the word *al-balad* in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Its subject matter and style resemble those of the earlier Surahs revealed at Makkah, but it contains a pointer which indicates that it was sent down in the period when the disbelievers of Makkah had resolved to oppose the Prophet (peace be upon him), and made it lawful for themselves to commit tyranny and excess against him.

Theme and Subject Matter

In this Surah a vast subject has been compressed into a few brief sentences, and it is a miracle of the Quran that a complete ideology of life which could hardly be explained in a thick volume has been abridged most effectively in brief sentences of this short Surah. Its theme is to explain the true position of man in the world and of the world in relation to man and to tell that God has shown to man both the highways of good and evil, has also provided for him the means to judge and see and follow them, and now it

rests upon man's own effort and judgment whether he chooses the path of virtue and reaches felicity or adopts the path of vice and meets with doom.

First, the city of Makkah and the hardships being faced therein by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the state of the children of Adam have been cited as a witness to the truth that this world is not a place of rest and ease for man, where he might have been born to enjoy life, but here he has been created into toil and struggle. If this theme is read with verse 39 of Surah An-Najm (*Laisa lil insani illa ma saa*: there is nothing for man but what he has striven for), it becomes plain that in this world the future of man depends on his toil and struggle, effort and striving.

After this, man's misunderstanding that he is all in all in this world and that there is no superior power to watch what he does and to call him to account, has been refuted.

Then, taking one of the many moral concepts of ignorance held by man, as an example, it has been pointed out what wrong criteria of merit and greatness he has proposed for himself in the world. The person who for ostentation and display squanders heaps of wealth, not only himself prides upon his extravagances but the people also admire him for it enthusiastically, whereas the Being Who is watching over his deeds, sees by what methods he obtained the wealth and in what ways and with what motives and intention he spent it.

Then Allah says: We have given man the means of knowledge and the faculties of thinking and understanding and opened up before him both the highways of virtue and

vice. One way leads down to moral depravity, and it is an easy way pleasing for the self; the other way leads up to moral heights, which is steep like an uphill road, for scaling which man has to exercise self-restraint. It is man's weakness that he prefers slipping down into the abyss to scaling the cliff.

Then, Allah has explained what the steep road is by following which man can ascend to the heights. It is that he should give up spending for ostentation, display and pride and should spend his wealth to help the orphans and the needy, should believe in Allah and His religion and joining the company of believers, should participate in the construction of a society which should fulfill the demands of virtue and righteousness patiently and should be compassionate to the people. The end of those who follow this way is that they would become worthy of Allah's mercies. On the contrary, the end of those who follow the wrong way is the fire of Hell from which there is no escape.

1. Nay!^{*1} I swear by this City.^{*2}

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ

^{*1} As we have explained in E.N.1 of Surah AI-Qiyamah, to begin a discourse with a Nay and resume it with an oath means that the people were asserting a wrong thing to refute which it was said: Nay, the truth is not that which you seem to assert, but I swear by such and such a thing that the truth is this and this. As for the question what it was to refute which this discourse was sent down, it is indicated by the theme that follows. The disbelievers of Makkah said that there was nothing wrong with the way of

life that they were following, as if to say: Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die in the natural process of time. Muhammad (peace be upon him), without any reason, is finding fault with this way of life and warning us that we would at some time in the future be called to account for it and rewarded and punished accordingly.

*2 This City: the city of Makkah. There was no need here to explain why an oath was being sworn by this City. The people of Makkah were well aware of the background and importance of their city and knew how in the midst of desolate mountains, in an un-cultivated, barren valley, the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had brought his wife and suckling child and left them there without any support; how he had built a House there and proclaimed to the people to visit it as pilgrims when there was no soul for miles around to hear the proclamation, and then how this city had eventually become the commercial and religious centre of Arabia and was blessed with such sacredness that there was no other place of security beside it in that lawless land for centuries.

2. And you (O Muhammad) are free of restriction in this city. *3

وَأَنْتَ حِلٌّ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ

*3 Three meanings of the words in the text have been given by the commentators:

(1) That you are a resident of this city and your residence here has further enhanced the glory of this city.

(2) That although this city is a sanctuary; a time will come when for some time it will become lawful for you to fight

and kill the enemies of the true faith here.

(3) That in this city where even killing of animals and cutting of trees is forbidden for the people of Arabia, and where everyone is living in perfect peace, you, O Prophet, have no peace, and persecuting you and devising plans to kill you has been made lawful. Although the words are comprehensive enough to cover all the three meanings, yet when the theme that follows is considered, one feels that the first two meanings bear no relevance to it, and only the third meaning seems to be correct.

3. And (I swear by) the father and the children he begot.*4

وَوَالِدٍ وَمَا وَلَدَ

*4 As the words “father and children he begot” have been used indefinitely, and this is followed by the mention of man, father could only imply Adam (peace be upon him) and children the human beings who existed in the world, exist today and will exist in the future.

4. We have indeed created man in hardship.*5

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ

*5 This is that for which the oaths as mentioned above have been sworn. Man’s being created in toil means that man in this world has not been created to enjoy himself and live a life of ease and comfort, but the world for him is a place of enduring and undergoing toil, labor and hardship, and no man can be immune from this. The city of Makkah is a witness that a servant of Allah toiled and struggled hard, then only did it become a city and the centre of Arabia. In this city of Makkah the condition of Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a witness that he is enduring every kind of

hardship for the sake of a mission; so much so that there is full peace here for the wild animals but no peace for him. Then, every man's survival, from the time he is conceived in the mother's womb till the last breath of life, is a witness that he has to pass through trouble, toil, labor, dangers and hardships at every step. The most fortunate of us is also exposed to grave dangers of death before birth or of elimination by abortion while in the mother's womb. At birth he is only a hair-breadth away from death. After birth he is so helpless that had there not been somebody to look after him, he would perish uncared for and unnoticed. When he became able to walk he stumbled at every step. From childhood to youth and old age he had to pass through such physical changes that if any change had taken a wrong turn, his very life would have been at stake. Even if he is a king or a dictator, at no time he enjoys internal peace from the fear that a rebellion might arise against him somewhere. Even if he is a conqueror he is never at peace from the danger that one of his generals might rise in revolt against him. Even if he is a Korah of his time, he is ever anxious to increase his wealth and to safeguard it. Thus, there is no one who may be enjoying perfect peace freely and without hesitation, for man indeed has been created into a life of toil and trouble.

5. Does he think that no one will have power over him?^{*6}

أَتَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَنْ يَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ



*6 That is, is man, who is ever exposed to such hazards,

involved in the delusion that he can do what he likes, and there is no superior power to seize and suppress him? The fact, however, is that even before the occurrence of the Hereafter in this world itself, he sees that his destiny every moment is being ruled by some other Being against Whose decrees all his plans and designs prove ineffective. A single jolt of the earthquake, a blast of wind, a flood in the river and a sea-storm are enough to show how weak and feeble man is against the divine forces. A sudden accident can reduce a strong and robust person to a cripple; one turn of the fortune deposes a mighty sovereign from the position of authority. When the fortunes of the nations, which have climbed to the very apex of glory and prosperity, change, they are humiliated and disgraced even in the world where no one could dare look at them in the face. How has then this man been deluded into thinking that no one else can have power over him.

6. He says, "I have squandered heaps of wealth."^{*7}

يَقُولُ أَهْلَكْتُ مَالًا لُبَدًا

^{*7} Literally: I have destroyed heaps of wealth, i.e. squandered and wasted it. These words show how proud the speaker was of his wealth. The heaps of wealth, that he spent was so insignificant as against his total wealth that he did not mind squandering it carelessly. And to what purpose did he squander it? Not for a genuine, good cause as becomes evident from the following verses, but for display of his wealth and expression of his pride and glory. Bestowing rich awards on poetic admirers, inviting and

feeding hundreds of thousands of people on marriage and death ceremonies, gambling away heaps of wealth, attending festivals with large entourages, trying to excel others in display of glory and grandeur, having heaps of food cooked on ceremonial occasions and throwing invitations to all and sundry to come and eat, or arranging and supplying running meals at the residence so as to impress the people around with one's generosity and large heartedness; such were the expenditures of ostentation, which in the days of ignorance were regarded as a symbol of man's munificence and magnanimity, and a sign of his greatness. For these they were praised and admired; on these their praises were sung; and on account of these they prided themselves against the less fortunate.

7. Does he think that no one has seen him.*8

أَتَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَمْ يَرَهُ أَحَدٌ

*8 That is, doesn't this boaster understand that there is also a God above him, Who sees by what means he obtained this wealth, in what ways he spent it, and with what intention, motive, and purpose he did all this? Does he think that God will put any value on his extravagance, his fame-mongering and his boasting. Does he think that like the world, God too will be deluded by it.

8. Have We not made for him two eyes.

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ

9. And a tongue and two lips.*9

وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ

*9 That is, have We not given him the means of obtaining

knowledge and wisdom? Two eyes does not imply the eyes of the cow and buffalo, but human eyes, which if used intelligently can help man see all around himself those signs which lead to the reality and distinguish the right from the wrong. The tongue and lips do not merely imply the instruments of speech but the rational mind behind these instruments which performs the functions of thinking and understanding and then uses them for expressing its ideas, motives and designs.

10. And We have shown him the two ways (good and evil).^{*10}

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ﴿١٠﴾

***10** That is, We have not left him alone after granting him the faculties of thinking and reasoning so that he may have to search out his own way, but We have also guided him and opened up before him both the highways of good and evil, virtue and vice, so that he may consider them seriously and choose and adopt one or the other way on his own responsibility. This same subject has been expressed in Surah Ad-Dahr, Ayat 2-3, thus: Indeed We created man from a mixed sperm-drop, to try him, and so We made him capable of hearing and seeing. We showed him the way, whether to be grateful or disbelieving. For explanation, see E.Ns 3 to 5 of Surah Ad-Dahr.

11. Yet he has not attempted the steep pass.^{*11}

فَلَا أَقْتَحَمَ الْعُقْبَةَ ﴿١١﴾

***11** The words in the original are: *fa-laqtaham-al-aqabah*. *Iqtiham* means to apply oneself to a hard and toilsome task, and *aqabah* is the steep path that passes through mountains

for ascending heights. Thus, the verse means: One of the two paths that We have shown him, leads to heights but is toilsome and steep; man has to tread it against the desires of his self and the temptations of Satan. The other path is easy which descends into chasms, but does not require any toil from man; one only needs to give free reins to himself, then he automatically goes on rolling down the abyss. Now, the man to whom We had shown both the paths, adopted the easy down-hill path and abandoned the toilsome path, which leads to the heights.

12. And what do you know what the steep pass is.

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعُقْبَةُ ﴿١٢﴾

13. It is the freeing of a neck from bondage.

فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ ﴿١٣﴾

14. Or the feeding on a day of hunger.

أَوْ إِطْعَمٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ ﴿١٤﴾

15. An orphan nearly related.

يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾

16. Or a needy lying in the dust.^{*12}

أَوْ مِسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾

*12 Since in the foregoing verses the extravagances of man which he indulges in for ostentation and expression of superiority to others, have been mentioned, now here it is being stated as to what expenditure of wealth it is which leads man up to moral heights instead of causing him to sink into moral depravity and perversion. But in this there is no enjoyment for the self; on the contrary, man has to exercise self-restraints and make sacrifices. The

expenditure is that one should set a slave free, or should render a slave monetary help so as to enable him to win his freedom by paying the ransom, or free a debtor from his debt, or secure release of a helpless person without means from penalties. Likewise, the expenditure is that one should feed a nearly related orphan (i.e. an orphan who is either a relative or a neighbor) who is hungry, and a needy, helpless person who might have been reduced to extreme poverty and might have none to support and help him. Helping such people does not win a person fame and reputation, nor feeding them brings him the admiration for being wealthy and generous which one usually wins by holding banquets to thousands of well-to-do people. But the path to moral and spiritual heights passes on steep uphill roads only. Great merits of the acts of virtue mentioned in these verses have been described by the Prophet (peace be upon him). For instance, about *fakku raqabah* (freeing a neck from bondage) many ahadith have been related in the traditions, one of which is a tradition from Abu Hurairah, to the effect, The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The person who set a believing slave free, Allah will save from fire of Hell every limb of his body in lieu of every limb of the slave's body, the hand in lieu of the hand, the foot in lieu of the foot, the private parts in lieu of the private parts. (Musnad, Ahmad, Bukhari. Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nasai). Ali bin Husain (Zain al-Abedin) asked Saad bin Marjanah, the reporter of this Hadith: Did you hear it yourself from Abu Hurairah? When he replied in the affirmative, Zain al-Abedin called out his most valuable slave and set him free

there and then. According to Muslim, he had an offer of ten thousand dirhams for the slave. On the basis of this verse, Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Shafi have ruled: Setting a slave free is superior to giving away charity, for Allah has mentioned it before the mention of charity.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has mentioned the merits of rendering help to the needy in many ahadith, one of which is this Hadith from Abu Hurairah: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The one who strives in the cause of rendering help to the widow and the needy is like the one who endeavors and strives in the cause of jihad for the sake of Allah. And Abu Hurairah says, I think that the Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: He is even like him who keeps standing up in the Prayer constantly, without ever taking rest, and like him who observes the fast continuously without ever breaking it: (Bukhari, Muslim).

As for the orphans, there are numerous sayings reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Sahl bin Saad has reported, The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: I and the one who supports a nearly related of un-related orphan, shall stand in Paradise like this, saying this he raised his index finger and the middle finger, keeping them a little apart. (Bukhari). Abu Hurairah has reported this saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): The best among the Muslim homes is the home wherein an orphan is treated well and the worst the one wherein an orphan is mistreated. (Ibn Majah, Bukhari in Al-Adab al-Mufrad). Abu Umamah says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The one who passed his hand on the head of an orphan,

only for the sake of Allah, will have as many acts of virtue recorded in his favor as the number of the hair on which his hand passed, and the one who treated an orphan boy or girl well, will stand in Paradise with me like this, saying this the Prophet (peace be upon him) joined his two fingers together. (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi). Ibn Abbas says, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The one who made an orphan join him in eating and drinking, Allah will make Paradise obligatory for him unless he commits a sin which cannot be forgiven. (Sharh as-Sunnah). Abu Hurairah says: A man complained before the Prophet (peace be upon him), saying: I am hard-hearted. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: Treat the orphan with kindness and love and feed the needy one. (Musnad Ahmad).

17. Then being among those who have believed,^{*13} and advised one another to patience, and advised one another to mercy.^{*14}

ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا
بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ



*13 That is, in addition to these qualities it is essential that one should be a believer, for without faith no act is an act of virtue, nor acceptable in the sight of Allah. At numerous places in the Quran it has been stated that only such an act of virtue is appreciable and becomes a means of salvation as is accompanied by faith. In Surah An-Nisa, for example, it has been said: The one who does good deeds, whether man or woman, provided that the one is a believer, will enter Paradise (verse 124). In Surah An-Nahl: Whosoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, provided

that he is a believer, We shall surely grant him to live a pure life in this world, and We will reward such people (in the Hereafter) according to their best deeds (verse 97). In Surah Al-Momin: Whoever does good, whether man or woman, provided that he is a believer, all such people shall enter Paradise wherein they shall be provided without measure. (verse 4). Whoever studies the Quran, will see that in this Book wherever the good reward of a righteous act has been mentioned, it has always been made conditional upon the faith, a good act without faith has nowhere been regarded as acceptable to God, nor has any hope been given for a reward for it.

Here, the following important point should also not remain hidden from view: In this verse it has not been said: Then he believed, but: Then being among those who have believed. This means that mere believing as an individual and remaining content with it is not what is desired; what is desired is that every new believer should join those who have already believed so as to form a party of the believers, to bring about a believing society, which should work for establishing the virtues and wiping out the vices as demanded by the faith.

***14** These are two of the important characteristics of the believing society, which have been expressed in two brief sentences. The first characteristic is that its members should exhort one another to patience, and the second that they should exhort one another to compassion and mercy. As for patience, we have explained at many places that in view of the extensive meaning in which the Quran has used

this word, the entire life of a believer is a life of patience. As soon as a man steps on to the path of the faith, test of his patience starts. Patience is required to be exercised in performing the acts of worship enjoined by Allah; patience is needed in carrying out the commands of Allah; abstention from the things forbidden by Allah is not possible without patience; patience is needed in abandoning the moral evils and in adopting the pure morals. Temptations to sin faced at every step can be resisted only by recourse to patience. On countless occasions in life obedience to God's law entails losses, troubles, hardships and deprivations, and disobedience to the law seems to bring benefits and pleasures. Without patience no believer can fare well on such occasions. Then, as soon as a believer has adopted the way of the faith, he has to meet with resistance not only from his own self and personal desires but also from his children, family, society, country and nation, so much so that he is even required to abandon his country and undertake Jihad in the cause of God. Under all these conditions only the quality of patience can cause a man to remain steadfast to principles. Now, obviously, if every believer individually was put to such a hard test, he would be faced with the danger of defeat at every step and would hardly be able to pass through the test successfully. On the contrary, if there existed a believing society, every member of which was not only himself possessed of patience but all its members also were supporting one another mutually in the test of patience, successes would fall to its lot, a tremendous power would be generated to

face the evil, a mighty force of good individuals would be ready to help bring the entire society on to the path of virtue and righteousness.

As for mercy and compassion, it is the distinctive feature of the society of believers that they are not a merciless and unjust people but a society whose members are merciful and compassionate to humanity at large and sympathetic and friendly among themselves. A believer as an individual is an embodiment of Allah's quality of mercy and the group of the believers as a party also is a representative of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him), who has been described thus: O Muhammad (peace be upon him), We have sent you to be a real blessing for the people of the world. (Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 107). The highest moral quality which the Messenger (peace be upon him) tried his utmost to inculcate among his followers was this very quality of mercy. Consider the following of his sayings, which show what importance he attached to it.

Jarir bin Abdullah says that the Messenger (peace be upon him) said: Allah does not show mercy to him who does not show mercy to others. (Bukhari, Muslim).

Abdullah bin Amr bin al-aas says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The Rahman (Merciful) shows mercy to those who show mercy (to others). Show mercy to those who live on the earth, the One who is in heaven will show mercy to you. (Abu Daud, Tirmidhi).

Abu Saeed Khudri has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The one who does not show mercy, is not shown mercy. (Bukhari in Al-Adab al-Mufrad).

Ibn Abbas says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The one who does not treat our young ones mercifully and does not treat our elderly ones respectfully, does not belong to us.(Tirmidhi).

Abu Daud has related this same saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the authority of Abdullah bin Amr, thus: The one who did not feel pity on our young and did not respect our elderly does not belong to us.

Abu Hurairah says: I have heard Abul-Qasim, the truthful (peace be upon him), say: The heart of the wretched one is deprived of the quality of mercy altogether. (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi).

Iyad bin Himad relates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Three kinds of men belong to Paradise, one of whom is the person who is kind and compassionate to every relative and every Muslim. (Muslim).

Numan bin Bashir has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: You will find the believers like a body in the matter of mutual kindness, love and sympathy, so that if one part of the body suffers the whole body suffers and becomes restless because of it. (Bukhari, Muslim).

Abu Musa al-ashari says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The believer is for the other believer like a wall each part of which supports and strengthens the other part. (Bukhari, Muslim).

Abdullah bin Umar has reported that the Prophet said: A Muslim is a brother of the other Muslim: neither treats him unjustly, nor withholds his help from him. The person who works to fulfill a need of his brother, Allah will seek to

fulfill his need; and the one who rescues a Muslim from an affliction, Allah will rescue him from an affliction of the afflictions of the Resurrection Day; and the one who conceals the fault of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his fault on the Resurrection Day. (Bukhari, Muslim). These traditions indicate what kind of a society is envisaged by the Quranic instruction given in this verse, which exhorts the righteous people to join the group of the believers after they have affirmed the faith.

18. Those are the people of the right hand.

أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينَةِ ﴿١٨﴾

19. And those who disbelieved in Our revelations, they are the people of the left hand. ^{*15}

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا هُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ ﴿١٩﴾

***15** For an explanation of the people of the right hand and of the left hand, see E.Ns 5, 6 of Surah Al-Waqiah.

20. They shall have a Fire enveloping them. ^{*16}

عَلَيْهِمْ نَارٌ مُّؤَصَّدَةٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

***16** That is, fire will be so covering them from every side that they will find no way of escape from it.





أَلشَّمْسِ Ash-Shams

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah has been so designated after the word *ash-shams* with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

The subject matter and the style show that this Surah was revealed in the earliest period at Makkah at a stage when opposition to the Prophet (peace be upon him) had grown very strong and intense.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is to distinguish the good from the evil and to warn the people, who were refusing to understand this distinction and insisting on following the evil way of the evil end.

In view of the subject matter this Surah consists of two parts. The first part consists of verses 1-10, and the second of verses 11-15. The first part deals with three things:

1. That just as the sun and the moon, the day and the night, the earth and the sky, are different from each other and contradictory in their effects and results, so are the good and the evil different from each other and contradictory in their effects and results; they are neither

alike in their outward appearance nor can they be alike in their results.

2. That Allah after giving the human self powers of the body, sense and mind has not left it uninformed in the world, but has instilled into his unconscious by means of a natural inspiration the distinction between good and evil, right and wrong, and the sense of the good to be good and of the evil to be evil.

3. That the future of man depends on how by using the powers of discrimination, will and judgment that Allah has endowed him with, he develops the good and suppresses the evil tendencies of the self. If he develops the good inclination and frees his self of the evil inclinations, he will attain to eternal success, and if, on the contrary, he suppresses the good and promotes the evil, he will meet with disappointment and failure.

In the second part citing the historical precedent of the people of Thamud the significance of Prophethood has been brought out. A Messenger is raised in the world, because the inspirational knowledge of good and evil that Allah has placed in human nature, is by itself not enough for the guidance of man, but on account of his failure to understand it fully man has been proposing wrong criteria and theories of good and evil and thus going astray. That is why Allah sent down clear and definite revelation to the Prophets (peace be upon them) to augment man's natural inspiration so that they may expound to the people as to what is good and what is evil. Likewise, the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) was sent to the people of Thamud, but

the people overwhelmed by the evil of their self, had become so rebellious that they rejected him. And when he presented before them the miracle of the she camel, as demanded by themselves, the most wretched one of them, in spite of his warning, hamstrung it, in accordance with the will and desire of the people. Consequently, the entire tribe was overtaken by a disaster.

While narrating this story of the Thamud nowhere in the Surah has it been said: O people of Quraish, if you rejected your Prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him), as the Thamud had rejected theirs, you too would meet with the same fate as they met. The conditions at that time in Makkah were similar to those that had been created by the wicked among the people of Thamud against the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him). Therefore, the narration of this story in those conditions was by itself enough to suggest to the people of Makkah how precisely this historical precedent applied to them.

1. By the sun and its brightness.*¹

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا

*¹ The word *duha* as used in the original applies both to the light of the sun and to its heat. Although in Arabic its well known meaning is the time between sunrise and meridian when the sun has risen high, at that height it does not only give light but heat too. Therefore, when the word *duha* is attributed to the sun, its full meaning can be expressed more appropriately by its radiant brightness than by its light, or by the time of the day that it indicates.

2. And the moon when it follows it (the sun).

وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّهَا

3. And the day when it shows up its (sun's) brightness.

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّتْهَا

4. And the night when it covers up (the sun).^{*2}

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا

***2** That is, when the night comes, the sun hides and its light remains hidden throughout the night. This state has been described, saying that the night covers up the sun, for the night actually signifies the sun's hiding behind the horizon because of which its light cannot reach that part of the earth where the night has fallen.

5. And the heaven and Him Who established it.^{*3}

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا

***3** Who established it: Who established it like a vault over the earth. In this verse and in the two succeeding verses, the word *ma* has been used. A section of the commentators has taken this *ma* as an infinitive, and interpreted these verses to mean: By the heaven and its being established, by the earth and its being spread out, and by the human self and its being balanced. But this meaning is not correct for the reason that the following sentence: Then inspired it with its wickedness and its piety, does not fit in with the context. Other commentators have taken *ma* here in the meaning of *mun* or *alladhi* and they interpret the sentence to mean: Who established the heaven, who spread out the earth, and who balanced the human self. This second meaning is correct in our view, and no one can object that *ma* in

Arabic is used of lifeless things and irrational creatures, For in the Quran itself there are numerous instances that *ma* has been used in the meaning of *mun*, e.g. *wala antum abiduna ma aabud* (nor are you the worshippers of Him Whom I worship), *fankihu ma taba lakun-mia-an-nisa* (so, marry from among the women those whom you like), *wala tankihu ma nakaha abaaukum min-nisa* (do not marry those women whom your fathers had married).

6. And the earth and Him Who spread it.

وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَّهَا

7. And the human self and Him Who proportioned it.*4

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا

*4 Proportioned it: Gave man such a body which by virtue of its erect stature, its hands and feet, and its brain was most appropriate for him to live as man in the world. He blessed him with the senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell which on account of their combination and their characteristics could become the best means of obtaining knowledge for him. He endowed him with the faculties of thinking, reasoning, imagination, memory, discrimination, judgment, will-power and such other mental powers by virtue of which he is able to perform the functions fit for man in the world. In addition, proportioning also means that man was not created a sinner by birth and a criminal by instinct but on right and sound nature, and was not characterized with any inborn crookedness because of which he may be unable to adopt the right path even if he wanted to do so. This same thing has been expressed in Surah Ar-Room, saying: Be steadfast on the nature

whereupon Allah has created mankind, (verse 30), and the same has been explained by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a Hadith, saying: Every new-born child is born on true human nature; it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian afterwards. Its example is of an animal giving birth to complete and sound young one. Do you find any one with a torn or slit ear? (Bukhari, Muslim). That is, it is the polytheistic people who on account of their superstitions of ignorance tear and slit the ears of animals afterwards; otherwise God does not cause an animal to be born with torn ears from its mother's belly. In another Hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: My Lord says: I had created all My servants on true faith (i.e. on sound nature); then the satans came and led them astray from their faith (i.e.. the true natural faith) and made unlawful what I had made lawful for them, and commanded them to associate with Me those for whom I had sent down no authority. (Musnad Ahmad; Muslim also has related a saying from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in similar words).

8. Then inspired it with its wickedness and its piety.*5

فَأَلَّهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

*5 The word *ilham* is derived from *lahm* which means to swallow. According to this very basic meaning, the word *ilham* is used terminologically for Allah's inspiring a man with a concept or idea unconsciously. Inspiring the human self with its wickedness and its piety and virtue has two meanings:

(1) That the Creator has placed in it tendencies to both

good and evil, and this is the thing that every man feels in himself.

(2) That Allah has endowed every man's unconscious mind with the concept that there is a moral good and there is a moral evil, that good morals and acts and evil morals and acts are not equal and alike. *Fujur* (immorality) is an evil thing and *taqva* (abstention from evils) a good thing. These concepts are not new to man; he is conscious of these by nature, and the Creator has endowed him with the ability to distinguish between good and evil naturally. This same thing has been said in Surah Al-Balad: And We showed him both the highways of good and evil. (verse 10); and in Surah Ad-Dahr, thus: We showed him the way, whether to be grateful or disbelieving (verse 3); and the same has been expressed in Surah Al-Qiyamah, saying: In man there is the reproaching self (conscience) which reproaches him when he commits evil (verse 2), and man knows his own self best, even though he may offer many excuses. (verses 14-15).

Here, one should also understand well that Allah has blessed every creature with natural inspiration according to its position and nature, as has been pointed out in Surah TaHa: Who has given a distinctive form to everything and then guided it aright. (verse 50). For example, every species of animals has been given inspirational knowledge according to its needs by virtue of which the fish learns to swim, the bird to fly, the bee to make the beehive and the weaver-bird to build the nest instinctively. Man also in view of his different capacities has been granted separate kinds of inspirational knowledge. His one capacity is that he is an

animal being; as such the most significant instance of the inspirational knowledge that he has been given is that the human child starts sucking the mother's milk soon on birth, which no one could teach it, had it, not been taught of it instinctively by God. Another position of man is that he is a rational being. As such God has been blessing him with inspirational guidance continuously since the time of his creation, by virtue of which he has been discovering things and making inventions to develop his civilization. Anyone who studies the history of these discoveries and inventions will realize that there was hardly any which might be the result of man's own effort or thought, but mostly it so happened that suddenly an idea struck a person and he discovered or invented something. Besides these two, another position of man is that he is a moral being. In this position too Allah has blessed him by inspiration with discrimination between good and evil and of the realization of the good to be good and of the evil to be evil. This sense of discrimination and realization is a universal truth on account of which no human society in the world has ever been without the concepts of good and evil; there has never been in history, nor is there now, a society which may not be having some kind of a system of rewarding the good and punishing the evil. This fact being prevalent in every age, at every place, and at every stage of civilization is a clear proof of its being natural and innate. Furthermore, this is also proof that a Wise Creator possessed of knowledge has endued man's nature with it, for in the elements of which man is made up and the laws which govern the material

system of the world, no human origin of morals can be traced out.

9. Truly successful is he who purified it.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

10. And truly a failure is he who corrupted it.*⁶

وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

*⁶ This is for which an oath has been sworn by the things mentioned in the above verses. Let us now consider how those things bear upon it. The rule that Allah has followed in the Quran is that to bear testimony to the truth that He wants to impress on the human mind, he cites some of the most conspicuous, common-place things which every man sees in his surroundings, or in his own self. Accordingly here, pairs of contradictory things have been cited, each unlike the other in its effects and results, rather opposite and reverse. The first pair is of the sun and the moon. The light of the sun is intensely bright and also hot. As against it the moon has no light of its own. Even if it is there in the sky when the sun shines, it is without light. It shines when the sun hides, and even then its light is neither so bright that it may change the night into day nor is there any heat in it that it may have the same effect as the sun's light. Nevertheless, it has its own effects which are quite different from the effects of the sun. Likewise, there is the pair of the day and the night. Each is the reverse of the other. The effects and results of each are so different from the other that no one can say they are alike; so much so that even a most foolish person cannot possibly say that the day's being the day or the night's being the night does not make any

difference. Likewise, there is the pair of the sky and the earth; the former has been raised high by the Creator and the latter spread like a carpet beneath it. Although both are serving the same universe, its system and expediencies, yet there is a world of difference between their functions and their effects and results. After citing these universal evidences, man's own self has been considered, and it has been said that after balancing it with suitable combination of the limbs, senses and mental powers and faculties the Creator has placed in it tendencies, inclinations and motives to both good and evil, which are contradictory to each other, and made him understand by inspiration the distinction between the two: that one is *fujur*, which is evil, and the other is *taqva*, which is good. Now, if the sun and the moon, the day and the night, the earth and the heaven, are not alike but necessarily different from each other in their effects and results, how can *fujur* and *taqva* of the self be alike in spite of being reverse of each other? Man himself in this world does not regard and acknowledge the good and the evil as equal, no matter what criteria of good and evil he might have devised for himself according to his self-propounded philosophies. In any case, about whatever he regards as good, he holds the opinion that it is appreciable and worthy of praise, reward and recompense. On the contrary, about whatever he regards as evil, it is his own objective opinion that it is worthy of condemnation and punishment. But the real judgment does not lie with man; it lies with the Creator, Who has inspired man with his *fujur* and *taqva*. The *fujur* is that which is *fujur* in the

sight of the Creator and the *taqva* is that which is *taqva* in His sight. And both have separate results in the sight of the Creator. The result of the one is that he who purifies his self, should attain to eternal success, and the result of the other is that he who suppresses his self, should be a failure. *Tazkiyah* means to purify, develop and cultivate. In the context it clearly means: The one who purifies his self of *fujur* and develops it to the level of *taqva* and cultivates in it the good, will attain to eternal success. As against this, the word *dassaha* has been used, the infinitive of which is *tadsiyah*, which means to suppress, conceal, seduce and lead astray. The meaning of this also becomes clear from the context; i.e. the one who suppresses the tendency in his self towards good instead of developing and cultivating it, who seduces it into doing evil, and makes *fujur* dominate over *taqva* so as to cover it up completely, like the dead body which is buried and covered with earth, will be a failure. Some commentators have interpreted this verse to mean: Truly successful was he whom (whose self) Allah purified, and a failure he whom (whose self) Allah suppressed. But this commentary is, firstly, opposed to the style of the Quran in view of the language, for if Allah had meant to say this, He would have said: Truly successful was the self which Allah purified and a failure the self which Allah suppressed; secondly, this commentary clashes with the other statements of the Quran on this subject. In Surah Al-Aala, Allah says: Truly successful was he who adopted purity. (verse 14). In Surah Abasa, Allah has addressed His Messenger (peace be upon him), saying: And you would not

be responsible if he did not adopt purity. In both these verses, adoption of purity has been regarded as an act of man. Besides, the truth stated at many places in the Quran is that man in this world is being put to the test. For example, in Surah Ad-Dahr, it is said: We created man from a mixed sperm-drop to try him, and so We made him capable of hearing and seeing. (verse 2). In Surah Al-Mulk it is stated: Who created death and life that he may try you to see which of you is best in deeds. (verse 2). Now, obviously, if the examiner at the outset encourages one candidate and discourages the other, the test would be a farce. Therefore, the correct commentary is that which Qatadah, Ikrimah, Mujahid and Saeed bin Jubair have given, saying that the subject *zakkaha* and *dassaha* is man and not God. As for the Hadith which Ibn Abi Hatim has related on the authority of Juwaybir bin Saeed from Dahhak from Ibn Abbas, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself interpreted this verse to mean: Truly successful was the self whom the Almighty Allah purified. This saying is not confirmed to be from the Prophet (peace be upon him), for its one reporter Juwaybir, has been rejected as a narrator of Hadith, and Dahhak did not meet Ibn Abbas. However, the Hadith which Imam Ahmad, Muslim, Nasai and Ibn Abi Shaibah have related on the authority of Zaid bin Arqam, is correct which says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray: O Allah, grant my self its *taqva* and purify it; You alone are the best to purify it; You alone are its Guardian and Master. In almost similar words, this supplication of the Prophet

(peace be upon him) has been related by Tabarani, Ibn Marduyah and Ibn al-Mundhir from Abdullah bin Abbas and Imam Ahmad from Aishah. It actually means that man can only desire and seek *taqva* and *tazkiyah*; as for its attainment, it depends in any case on Allah's grace and favor alone. And the same is also true of *tadsiyah*: Allah does not suppress a self forcibly, but when a man is resolved on iniquity, Allah deprives him of the grace of *taqva* and *tazkiyah*, and leaves him alone to suppress and bury his self under any heap of filth he likes.

11. Thamud^{*7} denied (the truth) because of their transgression.^{*8}

كَذَبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَاهَا

*7 The things stated in principle in the above verses are now being explained by an historical precedent. Of what it is a precedent and how it relates to what has been stated above, one should consider well in the light of the other statements of the Quran the two basic truths which have been expressed in verses 7-10.

Firstly, in these it has been stated that after creating the human self on balanced and sound nature, Allah inspired it with its *fujur* and its *taqva*. The Quran along with stating this truth also makes explicit that this inspirational knowledge of *fujur* and *taqva* is not enough for every man that he may by himself obtain detailed guidance from it, but for this purpose Allah gave detailed guidance to the Prophets through revelation in which it was explained what is *fujur* and what it applies to, which one should avoid, and what is *taqva* which one should attain and develop. If man

does not accept and acknowledge this clear and definite guidance sent down through Revelation, he can neither avoid *fujur* nor find the way to *taqva*.

Secondly, in these verses it has been stated that, the rewards and punishments are the necessary results which accrue from adoption of either *fujur* or *taqva*. The result of cleansing the self of *fujur* and developing it with *taqva* is eternal success and the result of suppressing its good tendencies and causing it to be overwhelmed with *fujur* is failure, ruin and destruction.

To make man understand this truth a historical precedent is being cited and for this the tribe of Thamud has been taken as an illustration, for the various tribes destroyed in antiquity the territory of the Thamud was closest to Makkah. In northern Hijaz its historical ruins were extant, which the people of Makkah passed by during their trade journeys to Syria, and the way this tribe has been frequently referred to in the pre-Islamic poetry shows that its destruction was a common subject of talk among the Arabs.

***8 Denied the truth: belied the Prophethood of the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him), who was sent for their guidance. On account of their rebellious attitude they were not prepared to give up the *fujur* in which they were involved, and they were not inclined to accept the *taqva* to which the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) was calling them. For details, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 73-76; Surah Houd, Ayats 61-62; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 141-153; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 45-49; Surah Al-Qamar, Ayats 23-25.**

12. When the most wretched of them was sent forth.

إِذْ أَنْبَعَثَ أَشْقَاهَا ﴿١٢﴾

13. The Messenger of Allah warned them, saying, "(Do not molest) the she-camel of Allah, and (do not hinder her from) drinking water."*9

فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا ﴿١٣﴾

*9 At other places in the Quran the following details, are given: The people of Thamud challenged the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) to present a sign (a miracle) if he was truthful. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) presented a she-camel miraculously before them and warned them to the effect: This is Allah's she-camel. She will graze at will in the land. One day will be for her to drink and one day for you and your cattle. If you molest her, you will be punished with a scourge. This proved to be a deterrent for some time. Then they appealed to their most wicked and rebellious chief to put an end to the she-camel, and he took up the responsibility and hamstrung her. (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 73; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 134, 156; Surah Al-Qamar, Ayat 29).

14. Then they denied him, and they hamstrung her,*10 so their Lord let loose a scourge upon them for their sin, and leveled them down (all together in destruction).

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُم بِذُنُوبِهِمْ فَسَوَّاهَا ﴿١٤﴾

*10 According to Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 77, after they had

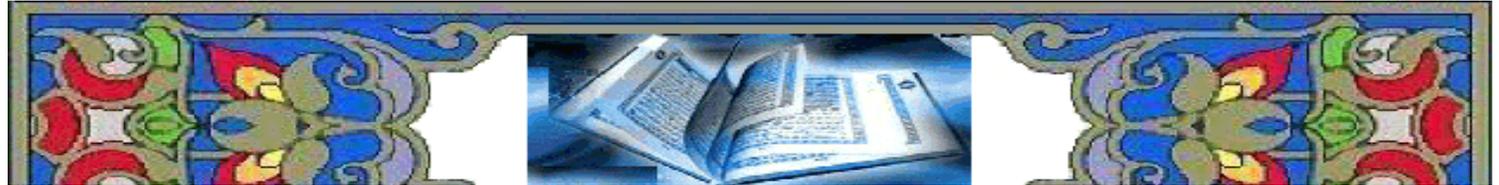
killed the she-camel, the people of Thamud said to the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him): Bring the scourge with which you threatened us. And according to Surah Houd, Ayat 65, the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) said to them: Well, you have only three more days to enjoy yourselves in your houses. This is a limit that will not prove false.

15. And He has no fear of any evil result (of his this action).^{*11}

وَلَا يَتَخَفُ عُقْبَاهَا

***11** That is, Allah is not like the kings of the world and the rulers of governments, who, when they want to take some action against a people, are compelled to consider what will be the consequences of their action. Allah's power is supreme. He had no apprehension that some supporting power of the Thamud would come out to avenge itself on Him.





أَلَيْل Al-Lail

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word *wal-lail* with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

Its subject matter so closely resembles that of Surah Ash-Shams that each Surah seems to be an explanation of the other. It is one and the same thing which has been explained in Surah Ash-Shams in one way and in this Surah in another. This indicates that both these Surahs were sent down in about the same period.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is to distinguish between the two different ways of life and to explain the contrast between their ultimate ends and results. In view of the subject matter this Surah consists of two parts, the first part consisting of verse 1-11 and the second of verses 12-21.

In the first part, at the outset it has been pointed out that the strivings and doings that the individuals, nations and groups of mankind are engaged in the world are in respect of their moral nature as divergent as the day is from the

night, and the male from the female. After this, according to the general style of the brief Surahs of the Quran, three moral characteristics of one kind and three moral characteristics of the other kind have been presented as an illustration from among a vast collection of the strivings and activities of man, from which every man can judge which style of life is represented by one kind of the characteristics and which style of life by the other kind. Both these styles have been described in such brief, elegant, and pithy sentences that they move the heart and go down into memory as soon as one hears them. Characteristics of the first kind are that one should spend his wealth, adopt God-consciousness and piety, and acknowledge the good as good. The second kind of the characteristics are that one should be miserly, should least care for God's pleasure and His displeasure, and should repudiate what is good and right. Then it has been stated that these two modes of action which are clearly divergent, cannot be equal and alike in respect of their results. But, just as they are divergent in their nature, so they are divergent in their results. The person (or group of persons) who adopts the first mode of action, Allah will make easy for him the correct way of life, so much so that doing good will become easy for him and doing evil difficult. On the contrary, he who adopts the second mode of life, Allah will make easy for him the difficult and hard way of life, so much so that doing evil will become easy for him and doing good difficult. This passage has been concluded with a most effective and touching sentence, saying: This worldly

wealth for the sake of which man is even prepared to risk his life will not go down with him into the grave; therefore, what will it avail him after death?

In the second part also three truths have been stated equally briefly. First, that Allah has not left man uninformed in the examination hall of the world, but He has taken on Himself the responsibility to tell him which one is the straight and right way out of the different ways of life. Here, there was no need to point out that by sending His Messenger (Peace be upon him) and His Book, He has fulfilled His responsibility, for both the Messenger and the Book were present to afford the guidance. Second, that the Master of both the world and the Hereafter is Allah alone. If you seek the world, it is He Who will give it, and if you seek the Hereafter, again it is He Who will give it. Now, it is for you to decide what you should seek from Him. The third truth that has been stated is that the wretched one who rejects the good, which is being presented through the Messenger and the Book, and turns away from it, will have a blazing fire ready for him. As for the God fearing person who spends his wealth in a good cause, without any selfish motive, only for the sake of winning his Lord's good pleasure, his Lord will be pleased with him and will bless him with so much that he will be well pleased with Him.

1. By the night when it covers.

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَىٰ

2. And the day when it appears in brightness.

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّىٰ

3. And Him Who created the male and the female.

وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ

4. Indeed, your efforts are diverse.*1

إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتَّىٰ

*1 This is that for which an oath has been sworn by the night and the day, and the creation of the male and the female. It means to say: Just as the night and the day, and the male and the female, are different from each other, and their effects and results are mutually contradictory, so are the aims and objects for which men are endeavoring and struggling; different in their nature and contradictory with regard to their results. In the following verses, it has been told that all these divided endeavors are divided into two main kinds.

5. So he who gives (in charity) and fears (Allah).

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَاتَّقَىٰ

6. And believes in goodness.*2

وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ

*2 This is the first kind of endeavors, which includes three things, and a little consideration shows that they comprehend all virtues:

(1) That man should refrain from wealth-worship, but should spend whatever Allah has given him generously in rendering Allah's and His servants' rights, for good works and for helping others.

(2) That he should fear God and refrain from things which cause His displeasure in his moral, social, economic and other dealings with the people.

(3) That he should believe in goodness. Goodness is a

comprehensive word, which includes goodness of belief, morals and acts. Goodness of belief means that one should give up polytheism, atheism, and disbelief, and affirm faith in Tauhid, the Hereafter and Prophethood. Affirming belief in goodness of morals and acts is that one should not be doing good and right merely unconsciously, outside a definite system, but one should acknowledge as right and sound the system of goodness which God has sent, which combines every kind of goodness in all its forms and aspects into a system comprehensively called the divine shariah.

7. So We shall make smooth
for him the path of ease.*³

فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى

*³ This is the result of the first kind of endeavoring and struggling. The easy way implies the way which is in accordance with human nature, which is in accordance with the will of the Creator, Who has created man and the whole universe. It is a way in which man has not to fight his conscience, in which he does not have to force his faculties of mind and energies of body into doing works for which they are not given but to do things for which they have actually been given him. It is a way in which man has not to experience war, resistance and conflict on every side, which he has to experience in a life full of sin, but a human society in which at every step he experiences peace and concord, appreciation and honor. Obviously, the person who spends his wealth for public welfare, treats every other person kindly and well, whose life is free from crime, sin and immorality, who is righteous and fair in his dealings, who neither cheats others nor proves false in his promises, from

whom no one apprehends dishonesty, injustice and excess, and with whose character no one finds any fault, will in any case be honored and respected in any society, however, corrupt and depraved it may be. Hearts will be attracted towards him in esteem and regard; his own heart and conscience will be satisfied, and he will attain to dignity in society which no immoral person can ever attain. This same thing has been expressed in Surah An-Nahl, thus: Whoever does righteous deeds whether male or female, provided that he is a believer, We will surely grant him to live a pure life in this world (verse 97), and in Surah Maryam, thus: The Merciful will fill with love the hearts of those who believe and do righteous deeds (verse 86). This then is the way in which there is nothing but joy and tranquility for man, for the world till the Hereafter. Its results are not transient and temporary but eternal and everlasting.

Concerning this Allah says: We shall facilitate for him the easy way. It means to say: When after affirming goodness he decides that this way alone suits him, and the evil way does not suit him, and when by making sacrifices and adopting the life of *taqva* practically he proves that he is true in his affirmation, Allah will make easy for him to walk this way. Then, to commit evil will become difficult for him, and to do good easy. When unlawful wealth comes before him, he will not regard it as a good bargain, but consider it a hot piece of burning coal, which he cannot hold in his hand. When opportunities for sin appear before him, he will not rush to seize them as opportunities for pleasure and enjoyment, but will look upon them as gates

to Hell and will flee from them. The Prayer will not be hard for him, but he will have no internal peace until he has performed it at its appointed time. He will not feel hurt when paying the Zakat, but will regard his wealth as impure until he has paid out the Zakat from it. In short, at every step, Allah will favor him with His grace and help him to follow this way; conditions will be made favorable for him and he will be helped out of every difficulty. Now, the question arises that in Surah Al-Balad, this very way has been called an uphill road, and here it has been described as an easy way. How can the two things be reconciled? The answer is that before a man has adopted this way, it appears to be a steep, uphill road, for ascending which he has to fight his desires, his materialistic members of the family, his relatives, his friends and those with whom he has social and other dealings, and above all Satan, for each one of them obstructs his way, and makes it seem dreadful. But after man has affirmed goodness and resolved to follow this way, and giving away his wealth in the cause of God and adopting the way of *taqva*, has practically strengthened his resolve, ascending the steep road becomes easy and slipping into the abyss of moral depravities becomes difficult for him.

8. And he who is miser, and thinks himself as self sufficient.

وَأَمَّا مَنْ يُحِجِّلْ وَأَسْتَغْنَىٰ

9. And belies goodness.*4

وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ

*4 This is the second kind of human endeavoring, which in

every part of it is different from the corresponding part of the first kind. Niggardliness (*bukhl*) is not merely the niggardliness because of which people generally regard a person as niggardly if he hoards money: neither spends it on himself nor on his children, but *bukhl* here implies to refrain from spending in the cause of Allah and public welfare. According to this, niggardly is every person who spends generously, rather squanders money, on his self, for his own ease and comfort, interests and enjoyments, but, as for a good cause, spends nothing, or, if at all, he spends anything, it is for display, or to win a reputation and name, or to have access to officers, or to obtain some benefit and gain. Independence of God implies that one should make worldly, material benefits only the object of all his endeavoring and strivings and being independent of God should least care to see what pleases Him and what displeases Him. As for belying goodness, it is in sharp contrast to believing in goodness in every detail, therefore, it need not be explained here as it has already been explained above.

10. So We shall make smooth for him the path of difficulty.*5

فَسَنِيِّرُهُ لِّلْعُسْرَىٰ

*5 This way has been called the hard way, for although the one who follows it, does so for the sake of material benefits, worldly enjoyments and superficial successes, yet while following it he is always at war with his nature, his conscience, the laws made by the Creator of the universe and the society in which he lives. When he transgresses all

moral limits of truth, honesty, nobility, purity and chastity, and endeavors to satisfy his interests and desires in every way, when the people feel harmed by him rather than benefiting from him, and when he encroaches upon the rights of others and violates people's honor, he feels disgraced in his own eyes and has to clash at every step with the society in which he lives. If he is weak, he has to suffer every kind of punishment on account of his conduct, and if he is wealthy, strong and influential, the world may lie low before him, but no one cherishes any good wishes, any feeling of honor and love for him; so much so that even his associates and companions regard him as a wicked man. And this thing is not only restricted to individuals, even when a strong and powerful nation transgresses the bounds of morality and adopts an immoral conduct, in arrogance of pride and wealth, it earns on the one hand, the enmity of the outside world: on the other, its own society falls a victim to all sorts of crime, prevalence of suicide, intoxication, venereal diseases, destruction of family life, waywardness of the new generation, class conflict and ever-increasing injustice and tyranny. So much so that when it falls from its position of prestige, it leaves nothing behind except curses and condemnation for itself in the history of the world.

As for saying that: So We shall make smooth for him the path of difficulty, it means: We shall facilitate for him the hard ways. He will be deprived of the grace to follow the way of good, gates of evil will be opened up for him, means and resources for the same will be provided for him, doing evil will become easy, and doing good will become toilsome

and risky for him. This same theme has been expressed at another place in the Quran, thus: So whomever Allah wills to guide aright, He makes his breast wide open to Islam, and whomever He wills to let go astray, he makes his breast narrow and squeezes it so tightly that (at the very idea of Islam) he begins to feel as though his soul were climbing up towards the sky. (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat125). At another place it has been said: No doubt, Salat is a hard task but not for the obedient servants. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 46). And about the hypocrites it has been said: When they come to offer the Salat, they come reluctantly and they spend in the way of Allah with unwilling hearts. (Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 54), and that: There are such among them who regard what they spend in the way of Allah as a penalty. (Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 98).

11. And what will his wealth avail him when he perishes?^{*6}

وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّى



^{*6} In other words it means that he has to die one day and leave behind in the world whatever he had amassed for his ease and enjoyment. If he did not earn and send forward something for the Hereafter, what would this wealth avail him? He will not take his palatial residence, his majestic conveyance, his property and wealth into the grave.

12. Indeed, it is for Us (to give) guidance.^{*7}

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَىٰ

^{*7} That is, Allah as the Creator of man has on the basis of His wisdom, His justice and His mercy, taken on Himself

the responsibility not to leave him uninformed in the world, but to tell him what is the right way and what are the wrong ways, what is good and what is evil, what is lawful and what is unlawful, what attitude and conduct will make him an obedient servant and what attitude and conduct will make him a disobedient servant. This same thing has been expressed in Surah An-Nahl, thus: Allah has taken upon Himself to show the right way, when there are also crooked ways. (verse 9). (Also see E.N. 9 of Surah An-Nahl).

13. And indeed, Ours are (both) the Hereafter and this present life.*8

وَإِنَّا لَنَّا لِلْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَىٰ

*8 This statement has several meanings and all are correct: (1) That from the world till the Hereafter, you are nowhere beyond Our grasp, for Ours are both this and the next world.

(2) That both this world and the Hereafter are in any case under Our sovereignty, whether you follow the way shown by Us or not. If you adopt error, you will not harm Us but only yourselves; and if you adopt the right way, you will not do any good to Us, but will do good only to yourselves. Your disobedience cannot cause any decrease in Our sovereignty and your obedience cannot cause any increase in it.

(3) That We alone are Master of both the worlds. If you seek the world, We alone can grant it; and if you seek the well being of the Hereafter, We alone have the power to bestow it too. This very theme has been expressed in Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 145: Whoso makes effort with the

intention of the reward of this world, We will reward him in this world, and whoso makes effort with the intention of the reward of the Hereafter, We shall grant him thereof. And the same has been expressed in Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayat 20, thus: Whoever seeks the harvest of the Hereafter, We do increase his harvest; and whoever seeks the harvest of this world, We do give him of it here, but in the Hereafter he will have no share at all. (For explanation, see E.N. 105 of Surah Aal-Imran; E.N. 37 of Surah Ash-Shura).

14. So, I have warned you of the blazing Fire.

فَأَنْذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظَّى ﴿١٤﴾

15. None shall (enter to) burn in it except the most wretched.

لَا يَصْلَاهَا إِلَّا الْأَشْقَى ﴿١٥﴾

16. He who belied and turned away.

الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى ﴿١٦﴾

17. And away from it shall be kept the righteous.

وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتْقَى ﴿١٧﴾

18. He who gives his wealth to purify (himself).^{*9}

الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى ﴿١٨﴾

***9** This does not mean that no one will enter the fire except the most wretched one, and no one will be saved from it except the most pious one but the object is to describe the extremely contradictory fate of the two extremely contradictory characters. One of them is the person who belies the teachings of Allah and His Messenger and turns away from obedience; the other one is the person, who not only believes but also spends his wealth in the cause of

Allah sincerely, without any desire for display and reputation, only in order to be regarded as a pure man in His eyes. Both these types of character were present in the Makkah society of that day. Therefore, without mentioning any name, the people have been told that the man of the first type of character only will burn in the fire of Hell and not the man of the second type of character. The man of the second type of character only will be kept away from it and not the man of the first type of character.

19. And not (giving) for anyone who has (done him) a favor to be rewarded.

وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ تُجْزَىٰ

20. Except as seeking the goodwill of his Lord, the Exalted.*10

إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَىٰ

*10 This is further explanation of the sincerity of the pious man. He was not indebted in any way to the people on whom he spends his wealth so that he may be doing so in order to repay for favors received, or may be giving gifts and holding banquets to them in order to further benefit from them, but he is helping such people only in order to seek the goodwill of his Lord, the Supreme. He was neither indebted to them before, nor he expects any favors from them in the future. Its best illustration is the act of Abu Bakr Siddiq, he would purchase and set free the poor slaves and slaves-girls who accepted Islam in Makkah and were cruelly treated by their masters on that account. Ibn Jarir and Ibn Asakir have related, on the authority of Amir bin

Abdullah bin Zubair, that when Abu Bakr's father saw him spending money to purchase the freedom of the poor slaves and slave-girls, he said to him: Son, I see that you are getting the weak people free; had you spent this money on the freedom of strong, young men, they would have become your helpers and supporters. Abu Bakr replied: Dear father, I only seek the reward that is with Allah.

21. And He will certainly be well-pleased (with him).^{*11}

وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَىٰ

***11** This verse can have two meanings and both are correct:

- (1) That Allah certainly will be well pleased with him.
- (2) That Allah soon will bless this man with so much that he will be happy.



الضُّحَى Ad-Duha

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name *Ad-Duha* from the very first word.

Period of Revelation

Its subject matter clearly indicates that it belongs to the early period at Makkah. Traditions also show that the revelations were suspended for a time, which caused the Prophet (peace be upon him) to be deeply distressed and grieved. On this account he felt very anxious that perhaps he had committed some error because of which his Lord had become angry with him and had forsaken him. Thereupon he was given the consolation that revelation had not been stopped because of some displeasure but this was necessitated by the same expediency as underlies the peace and stillness of the night after the bright day, as if to say: If you had continuously been exposed to the intensely bright light of revelation (*wahii*), your nerves could not have endured it. Therefore, an interval was given in order to afford you peace and tranquility. This state was experienced by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the initial stages of the Prophethood when he was not yet

accustomed to hear the intensity of revelation. On this basis, observance of a pause in between was necessary. This we have already explained in the introduction to Surah Al-Muddaththir and also in E.N. 5 of Surah Al-Muzzammil we have explained what great burden of the coming down of revelation he had to bear. Later, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) developed the power to bear this burden, there was no longer any need for long gaps.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is to console the Prophet (peace be upon him) and its object to remove his anxiety and distress, which he had been caused by the suspension of revelation. First of all, swearing an oath by the bright morning and the stillness of night, he has been reassured, so as to say: Your Lord has not at all forsaken you, nor is he displeased with you. Then, he has been given the good news that the hardships that he was experiencing in the initial stages of his mission, would not last long, for every later period of life for him would be better than the former period, and before long Allah would bless him so abundantly that he would be well pleased. This is one of the express prophecies of the Quran, which proved literally true, afterwards, whereas when this prophecy was made there seemed not to be the remotest chance that the helpless and powerless man who had come out to wage a war against the ignorance and paganism of the entire nation, would ever achieve such wonderful success.

Then, addressing His Prophet (peace be upon him) Allah says: O My dear Prophet, what has caused you the anxiety and distress and perception that your Lord has forsaken

you, and that We are displeased with you? Whereas the fact is that We have been good to you with kindness after kindness ever since the day of your birth. You were born an orphan, We made the best arrangement for your upbringing and care; you were unaware of the way, We showed you the way; you were indigent, We made you rich. All this shows that you have been favored by Us from the very beginning and Our grace and bounty has been constantly focused on you. Here, one should also keep in view verses 37-42 of Surah TaHa, where Allah, while sending the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) to confront a tyrant like Pharaoh, encouraged and consoled him, saying: We have been looking after you with kindness ever since your birth; therefore, you should be satisfied that you will not be left alone in this dreadful mission. Our bounty will constantly be with you.

In conclusion, Allah has instructed His Prophet (peace be upon him) telling him how he should treat the creatures of God to repay for the favors He has done him and how he should render thanks for the blessings He has bestowed on him.

1. By the morning
brightness.*1

وَالضُّحَىٰ

*1 Here, the word *duha* has been used in contrast to the night; therefore, it implies the bright hours of the day. A precedent of it are verses 97-98 of Surah Al-Aaraf, which say: Do the people of the settlements now feel secure that Our punishment will not come to them all of a sudden at night, while they might be fast asleep? Or, do they feel

secure that Our punishment will not smite them all of a sudden during the day while they might be engaged in pastimes?" In these verses also since the word *duha* has been used in contrast to the night, it implies the day and not just forenoon.

2. And the night when it covers with darkness.*²

وَالَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ

*² The word *saja* in the original does not only signify the spreading of darkness but it also contains the meaning of stillness and peace that prevails at night. This quality of night deeply relates to the theme that follows.

3. Your Lord has not forsaken you, (O Prophet), nor is He displeased.*³

مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ

*³ Traditions show that revelations to the Prophet (peace be upon him) had remained suspended for some period of time. Different traditions have mentioned different durations of this period. Ibn Juraij has mentioned it to be 12 days, Kalbi 15 days, Ibn Abbas 25 days, and Suddi and Muqatil have stated that it extended to 40 days. In any case the period was so long that it made the Prophet (peace be upon him) sorrowful, and the opponents also had the opportunity to taunt him. For whenever a new Surah came down, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would recite it before the people. Therefore, when he did not recite any new revelation to them for quite some days, the opponents thought that the fountainhead from where the revelation came, had dried up. Jundub bin Abdullah al-Bajali has related that when Angel Gabriel stopped coming, the

pagans started saying that Muhammad (peace be upon him) had been forsaken by his Lord. (Ibn Jarir, Tabarani, Abd bin Humaid, Saeed bin Mansur, Ibn Marduyah). Other traditions show that Umm Jamil, wife of Abu Lahab, who was an aunt of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and whose house adjoined his, said to him: It appears your satan has forsaken you. Afi and Ibn Jarir have related, on the authority of Ibn Abbas, that when Gabriel did not visit him for several days, the Prophet (peace be upon him) became anxious and distressed, and the pagans began to say that his Lord had become angry with him and had forsaken him. In the mursal traditions of Qatadah and Dahhak almost the same theme has been expressed. The Prophet's (peace be upon him) extreme grief and anguish in this condition has also been referred to in several traditions. And this was natural. The apparent indifference on the part of the beloved, the apparent deprivation of the contact with the source of power, which was his chief support, in the soul-destroying conflict between belief and unbelief, and above all, the taunts and jeers of the enemy, when all these things combined they must have caused great anguish to the Prophet (peace be upon him), and he must be thinking that because of some error that he might have committed, his Lord had become displeased with him and had forsaken and left him to fight the battle between truth and falsehood alone.

This was the state when this Surah was sent down to console the Prophet (peace be upon him). In it, swearing an oath by the light of the day and the peacefulness of the

night, he has been told: Your Lord has neither forsaken you, nor is He displeased with you. The relevance of the oath by these two things to the theme is: Just as brightening up of the day and spreading of the night with darkness and stillness is not for the reason that Allah is pleased with the people during the day and displeased with them during the night but both states are based on supreme wisdom and expedience, so sending down of revelation to you at one-time and suspending it at another time is also based on wisdom and expedience; it has nothing to do with Allah's being pleased with you when He sends down revelation and his being displeased with you when He suspends it. Besides, another relevance of the oath to the subject is that if man is constantly exposed to the light of days it wearies him; so, it is necessary that night should fall after the day has remained bright for a certain period so that man may have rest and peace in it. Likewise, if you are constantly exposed to the light of revelation, your nerves would not stand it. Therefore, *fatrah* (break or gap in the revelation) has also been provided by Allah on account of expedience so that the effects of the strain of revelation that you have to bear passes away and complete peace is restored to you. In other words, rising of the sun of revelation is analogous to the bright day and the period of the *fatrah* to the stillness and peace of the night.

4. And indeed the Hereafter is better for you than the present (life of this world).^{*4}

وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ

*4 This good news was given by Allah to the Prophet (peace

be upon him) in a state when he had only a handful of Muslims with him, the entire nation was hostile and there was not even a remote chance of success. The candle of Islam was flickering only in Makkah and storms were brewing all around to blow it out. At that juncture Allah said to His Prophet (peace be upon him): Do not at all grieve at the hardships of the initial stage, every later period of life will be better for you than the former period. Your power and glory, your honor and prestige will go on enhancing and your influence will go on spreading. This promise is not only confined to the world, but it also includes the promise that the rank and position you will be granted in the Hereafter will be far higher and nobler than the rank and position you attain in the world. Tabarani in Awsat and Baihaqi in Ad-Dalail have related on the authority of Ibn Abbas that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: All the victories which would be attained by my Ummah after me, were presented before me. This pleased me much. Then, Allah sent down this Word, saying: The Hereafter is far better for you than the world.

5. And soon your Lord shall give you (much) that you shall be well pleased.*5

وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ



*5 That is, although it will take some time, yet the time is not far when your Lord will bless you with so much that you will be well pleased. This promise was fulfilled during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and all Arabia, from the southern coasts to the Syrian frontiers of the Byzantine empire and the Iraqi frontiers of the Persian

empire in the north, and from the Persian Gulf in the east to the Red Sea in the west, came under his control. For the first time in the history of Arabia this land became subject to one law and rule. Whichever power clashed with it was doomed to destruction. The slogan *La-ilaha-illallah-u Muhammad-ur-Rasul-Allah* reverberated throughout the land where the polytheists and the followers of the earlier scriptures had tried their utmost to keep their false creeds and slogans aloft till the last. The people not only bowed their heads in obedience, their hearts were also conquered and their beliefs, morals and acts were revolutionized. There is no precedent in human history that nation sunk in paganism might have completely changed in only 23 years. Then the movement started by the Prophet (peace be upon him) gathered such power that it spread over a larger part of Asia, Africa and Europe and its influence reached every nook and corner of the world. This much Allah gave His Messenger (peace be upon him) in the world, the glory and extent of what He will give him in the Hereafter cannot be imagined. (Also see E.N. 112 of Surah TaHa).

6. Did He not find you an orphan and then He sheltered you?^{*6}

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ

^{*6} That is, there can be no question of forsaking you and being displeased with you. We have, in fact, been good to you ever since the time you were born as an orphan. The Prophet's (peace be upon him) father passed away three months before his birth; thus he was an orphan at birth. But Allah did not leave him without support even for a day.

Up to six years of age his mother nourished and looked after him. After her death, his grandfather took him and brought him up with great love. He would proudly tell the people: My this son has a great future. When he died, his uncle, Abu Talib, became his guardian and treated him with such rare love that no father could treat his son better. So much so that when after his proclamation to be a Prophet the entire nation turned hostile, Abu Talib alone stood firm as his chief supporter for as long as ten years.

7. And He found you unaware of the Way, then He guided (you).^{*7}

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ

^{*7} The word *daallan* as used in the original is derived from *dalalat*, which has several meanings in Arabic. Its one meaning is to be lost in error and deviation; another, to be unaware of the way and to be bewildered at the crossroads as to which way one should choose; still another meaning is of being lost and astray. The tree also is *daallah* which stands alone and lonely in the desert; the word *dalal* is also used for a thing which is wasting in unfavorable and uncongenial condition and climate, and also for heedlessness, of which there is an example in the Quran itself: *La yadillu Rabbi wa la yansa*, My Lord is neither heedless nor He forgets. (Surah TaHa, Ayat 52). Out of these different meanings. The first meaning does not apply here, for in the historical accounts of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life, from childhood till just before Prophethood, there is no trace that he ever might have been involved in idolatry, polytheism or atheism, or in any of the

acts, customs and practices of paganism prevalent among his people. Therefore, inevitably *wa-wa-jadaka-daallan* cannot mean that Allah had found him erring and astray in respect of creed or deed. The other meanings, however, can be applicable here in one or other aspect, and possibly all are applicable in their own particular aspect. Before Prophethood the Prophet (peace be upon him) was certainly a believer in the existence of Allah and His Unity, and his life was free from sin and reflected excellent morals, yet he was unaware of true faith, its principles and injunctions, as it has been pointed out in the Quran: You did not know at all what was the Book and what was the faith. (SURAH Ash-Shura, Ayat 52). This verse may also mean that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was lost in a society, engrossed in ignorance, and his personality as a guide and leader was not in anyway prominent before Prophethood. It may as well mean that in the desert of ignorance, he was standing like a lonely tree, which had the capability to bear fruit and turn the whole desert into a garden, but this capability was not being put to any use before Prophethood. It may also imply that the extraordinary powers, that Allah had blessed him with, were going waste in the unfavorable environment of ignorance. *Dalal* can also be taken in the meaning of heedlessness, so as to say: You were heedless of the truth and signs of which Allah made you aware after Prophethood. This thing also has been referred to in the Quran itself: Though before this you were utterly unaware of this truth. (Surah Yusuf, Ayat 3). (Also see Surah Al-

Baqarah, Ayat 282; Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayat 20).

8. And He found you poor, then He enriched you.*8

وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَى

*8 The Prophet's (peace be upon him) father had left only a she-camel and a slave-girl in heritage for him; so he started his life in a state of poverty. Then a time came when the wealthiest lady among the Quraish, Khadijah, first made him her partner in trade, then married him, and he took charge of all her trade and business. Thus, he not only became wealthy but his riches in no way were dependent on the resources of his wife; his own hard work and ability had gone a long way towards promoting her trade and commerce.

9. So as for the orphan, do not be harsh.*9

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ

*9 That is, as you yourself have been an orphan and Allah graced you with the bounty that he made the best possible arrangements to help you in that state, therefore, in gratitude you should see that no orphan is treated unjustly and harshly.

10. And as for the beggar, do not repel.*10

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ

*10 It has two meanings. If *saail* is taken in the sense of a needy person, who asks for help, it would mean that if you can, you should help him. If you cannot, you should excuse yourself politely, but should never scold him. In this sense the instruction corresponds to Allah's this favor: You were poor, then Allah enriched you. And if *saail* is taken in the

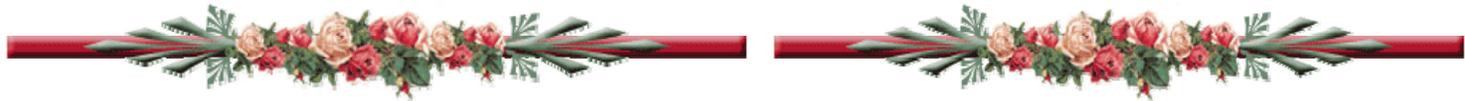
sense of the one who inquires, i.e. asks for enlightenment on a religious matter or injunction, it would mean that even if such a person be extremely ignorant and ill-mannered and might put the question, or present his problem, impolitely, you should in any case answer him politely and kindly, and should not turn him away like the rude people proud of their knowledge. In this meaning, the instruction corresponds to Allah's this favor: You were unaware of the way, then He guided you. Abu Darda, Hasan Basri, Sufyan Thauri and some other scholars have preferred this second meaning, for in view of the order and sequence this instruction corresponds to: *wa-wa-jadaka daallan fa hada*.

11. And as for the bounty of your lord, do proclaim.*¹¹

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ

*¹¹ The word *nimat* (bounty) is general, which also implies those bounties, which Allah had bestowed on His Messenger (peace be upon him) until the revelation of this Surah as well as those which He bestowed on him afterwards according to the promise made in this Surah, which He fulfilled completely. Then, it is enjoined: O Prophet, mention and proclaim every bounty that Allah has favored you with. Now, obviously, there can be different forms and ways of mentioning and proclaiming the bounties and every bounty, in view of its nature, requires a special form of its mention and proclamation. As a whole, the way of proclaiming the bounties is that Allah be thanked with the tongue and the truth be acknowledged that all the bounties received are only due to His grace and favor and none is the result of any personal excellence and

merit on his part. The blessing of Prophethood can be proclaimed by preaching and conveying its message in the best way possible. The blessing of the Quran can be proclaimed by publicizing it widely and impressing its teachings on the people's minds as far as one can. The blessing of Allah's guidance can be proclaimed by showing the right way to the people who are gone astray and by enduring patiently all the bitterness and hardship of the way. The favor that Allah has done of helping during orphan-hood, demands that the orphans be treated well. The favor that Allah did of enriching after poverty requires that Allah's needy servants be helped and supported. In short, this is a very comprehensive instruction which Allah gave to His Messenger (peace be upon him) in this brief sentence after having described His bounties and blessings.



أَلشَّرْحُ Ash-Sharah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah is so designated after the first sentence *Alum-Nashrah*.

Period of Revelation

Its subject matter so closely resembles that of Surah Ad-Duha that both these Surah seem to have been revealed in about the same period under similar conditions. According to Abdullah bin Abbas, it was sent down in Makkah just after Surah Ad-Duha.

Theme and Subject Matter

The aim and object of this Surah is to console and encourage the Messenger (peace be upon him). Before his call he never had to encounter the conditions which he suddenly had to encounter after it when he embarked on his mission of inviting the people to Islam. This was by itself a great revolution in his own life of which he had no idea in his life before Prophethood. No sooner had he started preaching the message of Islam than the same society which had esteemed him with unique honor, turned hostile to him. The same relatives and friends, the same clansmen and neighbors, who used to treat him with the highest respect,

began to shower him with abuse and invective. No one in Makkah was prepared to listen to him; he began to be ridiculed and mocked in the street and on the road and at every step he had to face new difficulties. Although gradually he became accustomed to the hardships, even much severer ones, yet the initial stage was very discouraging for him. That is why first Surah Ad-Duha was sent down to console him, and then this Surah.

In it, at the outset, Allah says: We have favored you, O Prophet (peace be upon him), with three great blessings; therefore you have no cause to be disheartened. The first is the blessing of *Sharh Sadr* (opening up of the breast), the second of removing from you the heavy burden that was weighing down your back before the call, and the third of exalting your renown the like of which has never been granted to any man before. Further below in the notes we have explained what is implied by each of these blessings and how great and unique these blessings indeed are.

After this, the Lord and Sustainer of the universe has reassured His servant and Messenger (peace be upon him) that the period of hardships which he is passing through, is not very long, but following close behind it there is also a period of ease. This same thing has been described in Surah Ad-Duha, saying: Every later period is better for you than the former period, and soon your Lord will give you so much that you will be well pleased.

In conclusion, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been instructed, so as to say: You can develop the power to bear and resist the hardship of the initial stages only by one

means, and it is this: When you are free from your occupations, you should devote yourself to the labor and toil of worship, and turn all your attention exclusively to your Lord. This same instruction has been given to him in much greater details in Surah Al-Muzzammil, Ayats 1-9.

1. (O Prophet), have We not opened up your breast for you.*¹

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ

*1 To begin the discourse with this question, and then the subsequent theme, shows that the Messenger (peace be upon him) at that time was very disturbed and distressed at the great hardships that he was passing through in the initial stage of his mission of calling the people to Islam. Under those conditions Allah addressed him and consoling him, said: O Prophet, have We not blessed you with such and such favor. Then, why do you feel so disturbed and distressed at these initial difficulties.

A little consideration of the context wherever the word *sharh-sadr* (opening up of the breast) has occurred in the Quran, shows that it has two meanings:

(1) In Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 125, it was said: So whomever Allah wills to guide aright, He makes his breast wide open to Islam (*yashrah sadrahu lil-Islam*); and in Surah Az-Zumar, Ayat 22: Can the person whose breast Allah has opened for Islam (*sharahullahu sadrahu lil-Islam*) and he is walking in the light shown by his Lord. At both these places *sharh-sadr* implies to free oneself from every kind of distraction and vacillation and to be satisfied with Islam as the only right way of life, and to regard the beliefs,

principles of morality and civilization, religious instructions and injunctions, which Islam has given to man, as right and true.

(2) In Surah Ash-Shuara, Ayats 12-13, it has been mentioned that when Allah appointed the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) to the great office of Prophethood and commanded him to go and confront the Pharaoh and his mighty empire, he submitted: My Lord, I fear that they will treat me as a liar, and my breast straitens. And in Surah Ta Ha, Ayats 25-26, it has been stated that on this very occasion the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) implored Allah, saying: Lord, open up my breast for me (*Rabbishrahli sadri*) and make my task easy for me. Here, straitening of the breast implies a person's finding it too hard for himself to shoulder the onerous responsibilities of Prophethood and going out to clash with a mighty and tyrannical power of disbelief all by himself, and *sharh-sadr* implies that his morale be boosted so that he is ready to undertake any campaign and any task however difficult and hard, without any hesitation, and he develops the nerve and courage to shoulder the great responsibilities of Prophethood. A little consideration will show that in this verse, "opening up of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) breast", contains both these meanings. According to the first meaning, it implied that before the Prophethood the Prophet (peace be upon him) looked upon the religion of the polytheistic Arabs, Christians, Jews and fire worshippers as false, and was not even satisfied with the *hanifiyyat* prevalent among some of the Arab monotheists, for it was an ambiguous

creed which contained no detail of the right way. (This we have explained in E.Ns of Surah As-Sajdah). But since he himself did not know what the right way was, he was mentally confused and distracted. With the blessing of Prophethood, Allah removed his mental agitation and opened up before him the way of right guidance, which brought him full peace of mind. According to the second meaning, it implies that along with the blessing of Prophethood Allah also blessed him with the courage, spirit of resolution and broad mindedness which were needed for shouldering the onerous responsibilities of the great office. He became bearer of the vast knowledge, which no other human mind could encompass and contain. He was blessed with the wisdom which could rectify any evil however grave and wide spread. He developed the capability to stand up without any equipment and the apparent help and support of a worldly power as the standard-bearer of Islam in a society sunk in ignorance and barbarism, to brave any storm of hostility without the least hesitation, to endure patiently all the difficulties and hardships of the way so that no power might cause him to abandon his position and standpoint. Thus, The verse means to impress the point: When Allah has blessed you, O Prophet, with this invaluable wealth of *sharh-sadr*, why do you feel distressed and depressed at the hardships you are experiencing in the initial stage of your mission.

Some commentators have taken *sharh-sadr* to mean *shaqq-Sadr* (splitting up of the breast) and have declared this verse to be a proof of the miracle of *sharh-sadr* as related in

the traditions of the Hadith. But the fact is that the proof of that miracle is dependent only on the traditions of the Hadith, it is not correct to prove it from the Quran. According to the Arabic language, *sharh-sadr* can in no way be taken to mean *shaqq-sadr*. Allama Alusi in the *Ruh al-Maani* says: In the sight of the research scholars it is a weak thing to regard *sharh-sadr* as *shaqq-sadr*.

2. And We removed from you your burden.

وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ

3. That was weighing down your back.*²

الَّذِي أَنْقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ

*² Some of the commentators have interpreted this to mean that before Prophethood, in the days of ignorance, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had happened to commit certain errors because of which he was feeling disturbed, and Allah by sending down this verse consoled and satisfied him, saying that He had forgiven him those errors. But in our opinion it is a grave mistake to interpret this verse thus. In the first place, the word *vizr* does not necessarily mean a sin, but it is also used for a heavy burden. Therefore, there is no reason why it should in every case be taken in the bad sense. Secondly, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life before Prophethood was also so clean and pure that it had been presented in the Quran as a challenge before the opponents. So much so that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was made to point out to the disbelievers: I have already lived a lifetime among you before the revelation of this Quran. (Surah Yunus, Ayat 16). And he was also not the type of a person who would commit a sin secretly. God

forbid, had he been such a man, Allah would not have been unaware of it, and would not have made him proclaim the thing before the people openly, which He made him proclaim in the above-mentioned verse of Surah Yunus, if his person carried the blot of a sin committed secretly. Thus, in fact, in this verse *vizr* means a heavy burden and it implies the burden of distress, anguish and anxiety that was difficult on his sensitive nature when he saw his nation deeply sunk in ignorance and barbarism. Idols were being worshipped, the community was engrossed in idolatry and polytheistic customs and practices, filth of immorality and indecency prevailed all around, wickedness and corrupt practices were rampant in society, the powerful were suppressing the powerless, girls were being buried alive, tribes were subjecting one another to surprise attacks, and sometimes the wars of vengeance continued for a hundred years at a stretch. No one's life, property and honor was safe unless he had a strong band at his back. This grieved the Prophet (peace be upon him) but he could find no way to cure the malady. This same anxiety was weighing down his back. Allah by showing him the way to guidance removed its burden from him. Then as soon as he was appointed to the office of Prophethood, he came to know that belief in the doctrine of *Tauhid*, the Hereafter and Prophethood was the master-key by which each corruption in human life could be eradicated and the way to reform opened in every aspect of life. This guidance from Allah relieved him of his burden and he felt re-assured that by means of it he would not only be able to cure the maladies

of Arabia but also of all mankind outside Arabia as well.

4. And We exalted your
renown for you.^{*3}

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ

^{*3} This was said at a time when no one could even conceive how the renown of the one unique individual, who had only a few followers confined only to the city of Makkah, would be exalted throughout the world and what high fame he would achieve. But Allah Almighty gave His Messenger (peace be upon him) this good news under those very conditions and then fulfilled it in a strange way. In the first place, he took from his enemies themselves the task of exalting his renown. One of the methods that the disbelievers of Makkah adopted to defeat his mission was that in the Hajj season when the pilgrims from every corner of Arabia were attracted to their city, they would visit them at their halting places and would warn them to beware of a dangerous man called Muhammad (peace be upon him), who they alleged, worked such magic on the people that father was separated from son, brother from brother, and husband from wife; therefore, they should keep away from him. The same thing they said to all other people, who visited Makkah on other than Hajj days in connection with pilgrimage or on other business. In this way although they were trying to defame the Prophet (peace be upon him), yet the result was that his name reached every nook and corner of Arabia and the enemies themselves took him out of his seclusion in Makkah and introduced him among all the tribes of the country. After this, it was but natural that the people should become

curious to know as to who this man was, what he preached, what was his character like and who were the people influenced by his magic and what sort of effect his magic had on them. As the propaganda of the Makkan disbelievers spread, the people's curiosity also grew. Then, when as a result of this curiosity the people came to know of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) morals, his character and conduct, when they heard the Quran and found what teachings it presented and when the people saw how different the lives of those who had been influenced by what was being described as magic had become from the lives of the common Arabs, the bad name started being changed into good name. So much so that by the time the *Hijrah* took place, there was perhaps no tribe left anywhere in Arabia from which one or another person, one or another clan had not accepted Islam and in which at least some people had not developed sympathy and interest in the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his message. This was the first stage of the exaltation of his renown. Then from the *Hijrah* started the second stage in which, on the one hand, the hypocrites, the Jews and the prominent polytheists of Arabia were actively engaged in defaming him, and, on the other, the Islamic State of Al-Madinah was presenting such a practical model of God-worship, God consciousness, piety and devotion, purity of morals and community life, justice and equity, equality of man and man, generosity of the rich, care of the poor, fulfillment of pledges and promises and righteousness in dealings, which was conquering the hearts. The enemies tried by resort to war to impede the growing

influence of the Prophet (peace be upon him), but the party of the believers, trained and developed under his own leadership, proved its superiority by their discipline, their bravery, their fearlessness of death, and their adherence to restrictions of morality even in the state of war, so convincingly that entire Arabia had to recognize it as a power to be reckoned with. Within ten years the Prophet's (peace be upon him) renown become so exalted that the same land in which the opponents had exerted their utmost to defame him, reverberated with the slogan of *Ash hadu anna Muhammad ar-Rasul Allah* from one end to the other. Then the third stage commenced with the establishment of the righteous Caliphate when his holy name started being mentioned and praised everywhere in the world. This process continues till today, and will continue till Resurrection if Allah so wills. Wherever in the world there exists a settlement of the Muslims, the apostleship of Muhammad (peace be upon him) is being proclaimed aloud in the call to the Prayer five times a day, blessings of Allah are being invoked on him in the Prayers, and his sacred remembrance is being made in the Friday Sermons. There is no moment in the 12 months of the year and in the 24 hours of the day when at one or another place in the world, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) name is not being mentioned. This is a clear proof of the truth of the Quran that when in the initial stage of the Prophethood Allah proclaimed *wa rafana laka dhikrak*, no one could estimate and imagine with what esteem and to what great extent the Prophet's (peace be upon him) renown would be exalted. In

a Hadith, Abu Saeed Khudri has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Gabriel came to me and said: My Lord and your Lord asks, in what ways have I exalted your renown. I submitted: Allah alone has the best knowledge. He said, Allah says: Whenever mention is made of Me, you too will be mentioned along with Me. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Musnad Abu Yala, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Hibban, Ibn Marduyah, Abu Nuaim). The whole later history stands witness that this prediction has proved literally true.

5. So, the fact is that along with hardship, there is ease.

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ٥

6. Indeed, along with hardship there is ease!^{*4}

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ٦

^{*4} This has been repeated twice so as to reassure the Prophet (peace be upon him) that the bad times he was passing through at that time would not last for ever, but were going to be replaced by good times in the near future. On the surface this appears to be a contradiction that hardship should be accompanied by ease, for these two things do not co-exist. But the words hardship with ease instead of ease after hardship have been used in the sense that the period of ease is so close to it as if it were a concomitant of it.

7. So when you have finished (your duties), then stand up (for worship).

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ ٧

8. And turn your attention to your Lord.^{*5}

وَالِىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ ٨

^{*5} So when you have finished (your duties): When you are

free from other occupations, whether occupations in connection with the preaching of divine message, or teaching and training of the new converts, or domestic occupations of mundane nature. The commandment means: When you are no more occupied, you should spend your time in the labor and toil of Allah's worship and turn all your attention exclusively to your Lord.





آلَتَيْن At-Teen

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah has been so named after the very first word *wat-teen*.

Period of Revelation

According to Qatadah, this Surah is Madani. Two different views have been reported from Ibn Abbas: first that it is a Makki Surah, and second that it is Madani. But the majority of scholars regard it as a Makki revelation, a manifest symbol of which is the use of the words *hadhal-baladil-amin* (this city of peace) for Makkah. Obviously, if it had been revealed at Al-Madinah, it would not be correct to use the words this city for Makkah. Besides, a study of the contents of the Surah shows that it belongs to the earlier period of Makkah, for in it there is no sign whatsoever to indicate that during the period of its revelation any conflict had started between Islam and unbelief. Moreover, it reflects the same style of the earlier revelations of Makkah period in which briefly and succinctly the people have been made to realize that the judgment of the Hereafter is necessary and absolutely rational.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter. For this purpose first swearing an oath by the habitats of some illustrious Prophets, it has been stated that Allah has created man in the most excellent of molds. Although at other places in the Quran, this truth has been expressed in different ways, for example, at some places it has been said: Allah appointed man His vicegerent on the earth and commanded the angels to bow down to him (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 30, 34; Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 165; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 11; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 28, 29; Surah An-Naml, Ayat 62; Surah Suad, Ayats 71- 73). At another place that: Man has become bearer of the divine trust, which the earth and the heavens and the mountains did not have the power to bear (Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 72). And at still another place that: We honored the children of Adam and exalted them above many of Our other creatures (Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 70). Yet here the statement made on oath in particular by the habitats of the Prophets that man has been created in the finest of molds, signifies that mankind has been blessed with such an excellent mold and nature that it gave birth to men capable of attaining to the highest position of Prophethood, a higher position than which has not been attained by any other creature of God. Then, it has been stated that there are two kinds of men. those who in spite of having been created in the finest of molds, become inclined to evil and their moral degeneration causes them to be reduced to the lowest of the low, and those who by adopting the way of faith and

righteousness remain secure from the degeneration and consistent with the noble position, which is the necessary demand of their having been created in the best of molds. The existence among mankind of both these kinds of men is such a factual thing which no one can deny, for it is being observed and experienced in society everywhere at all times.

In conclusion, this factual reality has been used as an argument to prove that when among the people there are these two separate and quite distinct kinds, how can one deny the judgment and retribution for deeds? If the morally degraded are not punished and the morally pure and exalted are not rewarded and both end in the dust alike, it would mean that there is no justice in the Kingdom of God; whereas human nature and common sense demand that a judge should do justice. How then can one conceive that Allah, Who is the most just of all judges, would not do justice.

1. By the fig and the olive.*¹

وَالَّتَيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُونَ

*¹ There has been much difference of opinion among the commentators about the explanation of this verse. Hasan Basri, Ikrimah, Ata bin Abi Rabah, Jabir bin Zaid, Mujahid and Ibrahim Nakhal say that the fig implies the same fig which the people eat, and the olive the same which produces oil. Ibn Abi Hatim and Hakim have also cited a statement from Abdullah bin Abbas in support of this. And the commentators who have accepted this explanation have, in view of the uses and virtues of the fig and the olive,

expressed the opinion that Allah has sworn by these two fruits because of these very qualities. There is no doubt that the Arabic reader would understand the words *teen* and *zaytun* in the same meaning as are their well known meanings in Arabic, yet there are two reasons for which these meanings cannot be accepted. First, that in the subsequent verses, oaths have been sworn by the Mount Sinai and the City of Makkah, and there seems to be no relevance between the oaths sworn by the two fruits and the oaths by the two places. Second, the theme that follows the oaths is borne out by the Mt. Sinai and the City of Makkah but not by the two fruits. Wherever in the Quran Allah has sworn by something, He has not sworn by it because of its glory or its uses and benefits but every oath has relevance to the theme that follows it. Therefore, the virtues and qualities of these two fruits cannot be regarded as the reason for swearing the oath by them.

Some other commentators have taken *teen* and *zaytun* to imply some places. Kaab Ahbar, Qatadah and Ibn Zaid say that *teen* implies Damascus and *zaytun* Bait al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). A view of Ibn Abbas has been cited by Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Marduyah to the effect that *teen* implies the mosque of the Prophet Noah, which he built on Mt. Judi, and *zaytun* implies Bait al-Maqdis, but hearing the words *wat-tin waz-zaytun*, no ordinary Arab could think of these meanings, nor was it well known among the Arabs, who were the first addressees of the Quran that *teen* and *zaytun* were names of the places. However, there was a practice among the people of Arabia

that they generally named a land where a certain fruit was produced in plenty after the name of the fruit itself. Accordingly, the meaning of *teen* and *zaytun* can be the land where these fruits are grown, and it is the land of Syria and Palestine, for among the Arabs of that period this very land was well known for the production of fig and olive. Ibn Taimiyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, Zamakhshari and Alusi have adopted this very explanation; and although Ibn Jarir has also preferred the first view, yet he has conceded that *teen* and *zaytun* may also imply the land where these fruits are grown. Hafiz Ibn Kathir has also regarded this explanation as worthy of consideration.

2. And the Mount Sina.*²

وَطُورِ سَيْنِينَ

*² The words in the original are *Tur-i-Sinin*. *Sinin* is another name for the Sinai Peninsula. It is called *Saina* or *Sina* as well as *Sinin*. In the Quran itself at one place the words *Tur-i-Sinin* have been used. Since the land in which Mt. Sinai is located is well known as *Sina*, we have adopted this well known name in the translation.

3. And this City of peace (Makkah).

وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ

4. We have indeed created man in the finest of molds.*³

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

*³ This is the truth for which the oath has been sworn by the lands of the fig and the olive (i.e. Syria and Palestine) and Mt. Sinai and Makkah, the city of peace. Man's having

been created in the most excellent of molds means that he has been given the finest body which no other living being has been given, and he has been blessed with the noblest faculties of thought, knowledge and intellect which no other creature has been blessed with. Then, since the most sublime model these excellencies and unique merits of mankind's are the Prophets and no creation can have a higher rank than them, so that Allah may choose it for appointment to the office of Prophethood, an oath has been sworn by the places associated with the Prophets of God to bear testimony to man's having been created in the finest of molds. The land of Syria and Palestine is the land where a large number of Prophets, from the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) to the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), were raised. Mt. Toor is the place where the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was blessed with Prophethood. As for Makkah, it was founded by the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them) themselves. It was on account of their association with it that it became the holiest central place of Arabia. It was the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) who had prayed: O my Lord, make this city a city of peace and security. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 126); and it was because of this prayer that in the midst of chaos and confusion prevailing everywhere in Arabia only this city continued to remain an island of peace for some 2500 years or more. Thus, the verse means to say: We created mankind in such an excellent mold that it produced men who attained to the most sublime rank of Prophethood.

5. Then We reversed him to the lowest of the low.*4

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ

*4 The commentators in general have given two meanings of this:

(1) That We reversed him to the miserable state of old age in which he was no longer able to think and understand and work.

(2) That We reversed him to the lowest stage of Hell. But these two meanings cannot be an argument for the object for the confirmation of which this Surah was revealed. The Surah is meant to reason out the truth of the judgment in the Hereafter. On this, neither has this fact any bearing that some human beings are caused to reach the most miserable state of old age, nor that a section of human beings will be cast into Hell. The first thing cannot be an argument for the judgment because old age comes upon both the good and the bad people, and a person's reaching this age is no punishment which he might suffer in consequence of his deeds. As for the second thing, it will occur in the Hereafter. It cannot be presented as an argument before the people who are being convinced of the meting out of rewards and punishments in the Hereafter itself. Therefore in our opinion the correct meaning of the verse is: After having been created in the finest of molds when man uses the powers of his body and mind in evil ways, Allah grants him the power to do only evil and causes him to reach the lowest ebb of degradation. This is a truth which one commonly observes in human society. People become so overwhelmed by greed, selfishness, lustfulness,

addiction to intoxicants, meanness, rage and fury and such other traits that morally they are actually reduced to the lowest of the low. Consider only one example: When a nation is blinded by its hostility to another country it surpasses all savage beasts in barbarity. A wild beast preys upon its victim only for the sake of food, it does not resort to a general massacre; but man resorts to massacre of his own kind. The beast only uses its claws and teeth but man who has been created in the best of molds invents the gun, rifle, tank, aircraft, atom and hydrogen bombs and countless other weapons by his intellect so that he can instantly destroy whole populations. The beast only kills or inflicts a wound but man invents such painful methods of torturing men like himself as cannot even be imagined by a beast. Then to wreak his vengeance and fury on his enemies he forces the women to march out in naked processions: they are subjected to rape by tens and twenties of men; they are dishonored before the eyes of their fathers, brothers and husbands; children are massacred in front of their parents; mothers are forced to drink their children's blood; human beings are burnt and buried alive. There is no wild species of animals in the world which may equal this human barbarity in any degree. The same is also the case with other evil traits, man proves himself to be the lowest of the low in whichever evil he indulges. So much so that he degrades even religion which is the most sacred thing for man: he worships the trees, animals and mountains, even the sex organs of man and woman; he keeps religious prostitutes in the places of worship to win

the goodwill of the gods and commits adultery with them as an act of virtue. In his mythology he attributes such filthy tales to his gods and goddesses which would make the most wretched beast to hang his head in shame.

6. Except those who believe and do good works. For them there is a reward unending.*5

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ



*5 The commentators who have taken *asfala-safilin* to imply the state of extreme old age when man loses his sense and reason, interpret this verse to mean: But the people who in the prime and strength of their age believed and did righteous deeds would have in this old age too the same righteous deeds credited for them and will be rewarded accordingly. No reduction will be made in their rewards on the ground that they could not perform those righteous deeds in that period of life. And the commentators who construe reversal to *safilin* to imply being cast into the lowest stage of Hell interpret this verse to mean: The people also believed and did righteous deeds are an exception: they will not be reversed to this stage but they will have a reward unending and unfailing. But, neither of these meanings is relevant to the reasoning made in this Surah to justify the judgment of the Hereafter. In our opinion the verse means: Just as it is a common observation in human society that the morally degraded are made the lowest of the low, so this is also an observation of every age that those who believed in God, the Hereafter and the Prophethood

and who molded their lives after righteousness and piety, remained secure from this degeneration and remained consistent with the best mold and nature that Allah had created them on. Therefore, they are worthy of the unending reward, i.e. the reward which will neither be less than what they deserve, nor will it ever be cut off.

7. Then what can deny you, after this, as to the judgment.*6

فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدُ بِالدِّينِ ﴿٧﴾

*6 Another translation of this verse can be: What can after this (O man) make you deny the judgment? In both cases the intention and purpose remains the same. That is when it is a common observation in human society that a section of mankind which has been created in the best of molds and nature, is rendered lowest of the low because of moral degradation, and the other section remains secure by adopting the path of constant faith and righteousness in view of its being created in the best of molds and nature how can judgment be denied after this? Does common sense require that the end of both these men be the same? Does justice demand that neither those who are reduced to the lowest of the low be punished nor those who strive to adopt a righteous life be rewarded? The same theme has been expressed at other places in the Quran thus: Shall We then treat the obedient as We treat the culprits? What has happened to you: how ill you judge? (Surah Al-Qalam, Auyat 35, 36). Do those who have committed evil think that We shall hold them and those who have believed and done righteous deeds as equal so that their life and their death

should be alike? Ill are the judgments they pass. (Surah Al-Jathiyah, Ayat 21).

8. Is not Allah the best of all judges? *7

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمِ الْحَاكِمِينَ

*7 That is, when you want and expect even the petty judges of the world to do justice, punish the culprits and reward the doers of good, what is your opinion about God? Is He not the greatest of all judges? If you think He is the greatest of all judges, do you think that He will not do any justice? Do you expect that He will treat the good and the evil alike? Will those who commit the vilest of deeds in the world and those who perform righteous deeds, both end in the dust: neither will any be punished for his evil deeds, nor any be rewarded for his good works.

Imam Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Abu Daud, Ibn al-Mundhir, Baihaqi, Hakim and Ibn Marduyah have related, on the authority of Abu Hurairah, that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: When one of you recites Surah *Wat-teen waz-zaytun* and reaches *Alais-Allah-u bi-ahkam-il-Hakimin* he should respond to it, saying: *Bala wa ana ala dhalika min-ash-shahidin* (Yes, and I am of those who bear witness to it). According to some other traditions, the Prophet (peace be upon him) responded with *Subhanaka fa-bala* when he recited this verse.



أَلْعَلَقَ Al-Alaq

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah is so entitled after the word *alaq* in the second verse.

Period of Revelation

This Surah has two parts: the first part consists of verses 1-5, and the second of verses 6-19. About the first part a great majority of the Islamic scholars agree that it forms the very first Revelation to be sent down to the Prophet (peace be upon him). In this regard, the *Hadith* from Aishah, which Imam Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, and other traditionists have related with several chains of authorities, is one of the most authentic *Ahadith* on the subject. In it Aishah has narrated the full story of the beginning of revelation as she herself heard it from the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah. Besides, Ibn Abbas, Abu Musa al-Ashari and a group of the companions are also reported to have stated that these were the very first verses of the Quran to be revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him). The second part was sent down afterwards when the Prophet (peace be upon him) began to perform the prescribed Prayer in the

precincts of the Kabah and Abu Jahl tried to prevent him from this with threats.

Beginning of Revelation

The traditionists have related on the strength of their respective authorities the story of the beginning of revelation from Imam Az-Zuhri, who had it from Urwah bin Zubair, who had it from Aishah, his aunt. She states that revelations to the Prophet (peace be upon him) began in the form of true (according to other traditions, good) visions. Whichever vision he saw it seemed as though he saw it in broad daylight. Afterwards solitude became dear to him and he would go to the Cave of Hira to engage in worship there for several days and nights (Aishah has used the word *tahannuth*, which Imam Zuhri has explained as *taabbud* meaning devotional exercises. This was some kind of worship which he performed, for until then he had not been taught the method of performing the Prayer by Allah). He would take provisions with him and stay there for several days, then he would return to Khadijah who would again provide for him for a few more days. One day when he was in the Cave of Hira, Revelation came down to him unexpectedly and the Angel said, to him: Read.

After this Aishah reports the words of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself, to the effect, I said: I cannot read! There upon the Angel took me and pressed me until I could bear it no more. Then he left me and said: Read. I said: I cannot read! He pressed me a second time until I could bear it no more. Then he left me and said: Read. I again said: I cannot read! He pressed me for the third time until I

could bear it no more. Then he left me and said: *Iqra bismi Rabbi kal-ladhi khalaqa*: (Read in the name of your Lord Who created) till he reached *ma lam ya lam* (what he did not know).

Then the Messenger (peace be upon him) returned home to Khadijah trembling with fear, and said to her: Cover me, cover me, and he was covered. When fear left him, he said: O Khadijah, what has happened to me? Then he narrated to her whatever had happened, and said: I fear for my life. She said: No never! Be of good cheer. By God, never will God debase you; you treat the kindred well, you speak the truth, (one tradition adds: you restore what is entrusted to you), you bear the burden of the helpless, you help the poor, you entertain the guests, and you cooperate in good works.

Then she took him to Waraqah bin Naufal, who was her cousin. He had become a Christian in pre-Islamic days and had translated the Gospel in Arabic and Hebrew, and had become very old and blind. Khadijah said: Brother, listen to the son of your brother. Waraqah said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): What have you seen, nephew? The Prophet (peace be upon him) described what he had seen. Waraqah said: This is the same Gabriel (the Angel of Revelation) which Allah had sent down to Moses (peace be upon him). Would that I were a young man during your Prophethood! Would that I were alive when your tribe would expel you! The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Will they expel me? Waraqah said: Yes, never has it so happened that a person brought what you have brought

and was not treated as an enemy. If I live till then I would help you with all the power at my command. But not very long after this Waraqah died.

This narrative is explicit that even until a moment before the coming of the Angel the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was without any expectation that he was going to be appointed a Prophet. Nothing to say of any such wish or expectation, he did not even have any idea that he would meet with such an experience. Coming down of the Revelation and appearing of the Angel face to face was an unexpected incident for him the first effect of which on him was precisely the same as could naturally be on a person meeting with such a tremendous experience, in the absence of any preparation. That is why when he proclaimed the message of Islam, the people of Makkah raised all sorts of objections, but no one said that they were already apprehending that he would make a claim, for he had been making preparations since long to become a Prophet.

From this narrative another thing which also becomes obvious is how pure was the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life and how sublime was his character before Prophethood. Khadijah was no young lady: she was 55 years old at the time this event took place and had been the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life companion for 15 years. No weakness of the husband can remain hidden from the wife. She had during this long period of married life found him to be such a generous and noble man that when he told her of his experience in the Cave of Hira, she admitted without the least hesitation that it was indeed Allah's own

Angel who had come to him with Revelation. Likewise, Waraqah bin Naufal was also an old inhabitant of Makkah, who had seen the Prophet (peace be upon him) grow up from childhood. Particularly, for the past 15 years because of the close relationship he was even more intimately aware of his life, his affairs and dealings. When he also heard of his experience, he did not regard it as an evil suggestion, but immediately said that it was the same Gabriel who had descended on Moses (peace be upon him). This meant that even according to him the Prophet (peace be upon him) was such a sublime person that there was nothing surprising in his being elevated to the office of Prophethood.

Occasion of Revelation of verses 6-19

This second part of the Surah was revealed when the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah began to perform the Prayer in the Islamic way in the Kabah and Abu Jahl threatened and tried to prevent him from this. It so happened that after his appointment to Prophethood even before he could start preaching Islam openly, he began to perform the Prayer in the precincts of the Kabah in the way Allah taught him; and from this the Quraish felt for the first time that he had adopted a new religion. The other people were watching it with curiosity, but Abu Jahl in his arrogance and pride threatened the Prophet (peace be upon him) and forbade him to worship in that way in the Kabah. In this connection, quite a number of the *Ahadith* have been related from Abdullah bin Abbas and Abu Huraira, which mention the foolish behavior of Abu Jahl.

Abu Huraira says that Abu Jahl asked the people of

Quraish: Does Muhammad (peace be upon him) set his face on the ground before you? When they replied in the affirmative, he said: By Lat and Uzza, if I ever catch him in that act of worship, I would set my foot on his neck and rub his face in the dust. Then it so happened that he saw the Messenger (peace be upon him) in that posture and came forward to set his foot on his neck, but suddenly turned back as if in a fright and being asked what was the matter, he said there was a ditch of fire and a terrible apparition between himself and Muhammad (peace be upon him) and some wings. On hearing this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) remarked: Had he come near me, the angels would have smitten and torn him to pieces. (Ahmad, Muslim, Nasai, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah, Abu Nuaim Isfahani, Baihaqi).

According to Ibn Abbas, Abu Jahl said: If I caught Muhammad (peace be upon him) performing his Prayer by the Kabah, I would trample his neck down. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) heard of it, he said: If he acted so, the angels would seize him there and then? (Bukhari, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Jarir, Abdur Razzaq, Abd bin Humaid, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah).

According to another tradition from Ibn Abbas, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was performing his Prayer at the *Maqam Ibrahim*. Abu Jahl passed that way and said: O Muhammad, did I not forbid you this, and then he started to threaten him. In reply the Prophet (peace be upon him) rebuked him severely. There upon he said: O Muhammad, on what strength do you rebuke me? By God, my followers

in this valley far exceed yours in number." (Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Ibn al-Mundhir, Tabarani, Ibn Marduyah).

Because of these very incidents the portion of this Surah beginning with *Kalla inn al-insana layatgha* was sent down. Naturally the place of this part should be the same as assigned to it in this Surah of the Quran, for after the coming down of the first Revelation the Prophet (peace be upon him) had given expression to Islam first of all by the act of Prayer, and his conflict with the pagans.

1. Read^{*1} (O Prophet), in the name of your Lord;^{*2} Who created.^{*3}

أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

*1 As we have explained in the Introduction, when the Angel said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): Read, the latter replied: I cannot read! This indicates that the Angel had presented these words of the revelation before him in the written form and had asked him to read them. For if the Angel had meant that he should repeat what he recited, he should not have replied, saying: I cannot read!

*2 Read in the name of your Lord: Say *Bismillah* and read. This shows that the Prophet (peace be upon him) even before the coming down of this revelation regarded and acknowledged Allah alone as his Lord. That is why there was no need to ask who his Lord was, but it was said: Read in the name of your Lord.

*3 Only the word *khalafa* (created) has been used absolutely, and the object of creation has not been mentioned. This automatically gives the meaning: Read in

the name of the Lord, Who is the Creator, Who created the whole universe and everything in it.

2. Created man from a clot of congealed blood.*4

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ

*4 After making mention generally of the creation of the universe, mention has been made of man in particular, saying how Allah made him a perfect man starting his creation from an insignificant and humble state. *Alaq* is plural of *alaqah*, which means congealed blood. This is the primary state of the embryo which appears a few days after conception. Then it assumes the form of a lump of flesh, then afterwards it gradually takes human shape. (For details, see Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 5 and the corresponding E.Ns 5 to 7).

3. Read, and your Lord is Most Generous.

أَقْرَأُ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ

4. Who taught (knowledge) by the pen.*5

الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ

*5 That is, it is a great favor of Allah that starting man's creation from a most insignificant state, He made him possessor of knowledge which is the noblest attribute of creation, and He made him not only possessor of knowledge but also taught him the art of writing by the use of pen, which became the means of propagation, progress, dissemination and preservation of knowledge on a large scale. Had He not given man the knowledge of the art of pen and writing (by inspiration) his intellectual faculty would have stagnated, and it would have had no opportunity to develop, expand and become a means of

transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next and make future progress.

5. Taught man what he did not know.*6

عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

*6 That is, man originally was absolutely illiterate. Whatever of knowledge he obtained, he obtained it as a gift from Allah. Whatever doors of knowledge at any stage did Allah will to open for man, they went on opening up before him. This same thing has been expressed in the verse of the Throne (*Ayat-ul-Kursi*), thus: And the people cannot comprehend anything of His knowledge save what He Himself may please to reveal. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 255). Whatever man looks upon as his own scientific discovery was, in fact, unknown to him before. Allah gave him its knowledge whenever He willed without his realizing that Allah by His grace had blessed him with the knowledge of it.

These verses were the very first to be revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), as is stated in the Hadith reported by Aishah. This first experience was so intense and tremendous that the Prophet (peace be upon him) could not bear it any more. Therefore, at that time he was only made aware that the Being Whom he already knew and acknowledged as his Lord and Sustainer was in direct communion with him, had started sending down revelations to him, and had appointed him as His Prophet (peace be upon him). Then after an intermission the opening verses of Surah al-Muddaththir were revealed in which he was told what mission he had to perform after his appointment to

Prophethood. (For explanation, see Introduction to Al-Muddaththir).

6. Nay, indeed,^{*7} man transgress rebelliously.

كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنَّاظٍ
كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنَّاظٍ

*7 That is, man should never adopt an attitude of ignorance and rebellion against the Bountiful God Who has been so generous to him

7. For he deems himself to be self-sufficient.^{*8}

أَنْ رَّءَاهُ اسْتَفْتَى
أَنْ رَّءَاهُ اسْتَفْتَى

*8 That is, when the man has attained wealth, honor and rank and whatever else he desired to attain in the world, he becomes rebellious instead of being grateful and transgresses the boundaries of servitude to Allah.

8. (Although), towards your Lord indeed is the return.^{*9}

إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ أَلُّجَعَىٰ
إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ أَلُّجَعَىٰ

*9 That is, whatever he might have attained in the world, which makes him behave arrogantly and rebelliously, in the end he has to return to your Lord. Then he will realize what fate awaits him in consequence of his such attitude and behavior.

9. Have you seen the one who forbids.

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَىٰ
أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَىٰ

10. A servant when he prays?^{*10}

عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّىٰ
عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّىٰ

*10 A servant: the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah himself. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has been mentioned by this epithet at several places in the Quran. For example, Glory be to Him Who transported His

servant one night from the *Masjid al-Haram* to the distant Temple. (Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 1); All praise is for Allah Who has sent down this Book to His servant. (Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 1); And that when the servant of Allah stood up to pray, the people got ready to assault him. (Surah Al-Jinn, Ayat 19). This shows that it is a special style of love by which Allah makes mention of His Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him) in His Book. Besides, it also shows that Allah after appointing His Messenger to Prophethood had taught him the method of performing the Prayer. There is no mention of this method anywhere in the Quran, saying: O Prophet, perform the Prayer in this and this way. Hence, this is another proof that the Revelation sent down to the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not only consist of what has been recorded in the Quran, but besides this, other things were also taught to him by revelation, which are not recorded in the Quran.

11. What do you think, if he (the Servant) be on the right path.

أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ أَلْهَادَىٰ ﴿١١﴾

12. Or enjoins righteousness.

أَوْ أَمَرَ بِالتَّقْوَىٰ ﴿١٢﴾

13. What do you think, if he denies and turns away.

أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ ﴿١٣﴾

14. Does he not know that Allah sees? *11

أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَىٰ ﴿١٤﴾

*11 The audience here apparently is every just man, who is being asked: Have you watched the act of the person who prevents a servant from God's worship? What do you

think: if the servant be rightly guided, or warning the people to fear God and refrain from evil, and this forbidden be denying the truth and turning away from it, what will his act be like? Could this man adopt such an attitude had he known that Allah is watching the man who is exhorting others to piety as well as him who is denying the truth and turning away from it? Allah's watching the oppressor and his wrongdoing and the oppressed and his misery by itself implies that He will punish the oppressor and redress the grievances of the wronged and down-trodden person.

15. Nay,^{*12} if he does not desist, We shall surely drag him by his forelock.

كَلَّا لَإِن لَّمْ يَنْتَه لَنَسْفَعًا
بِالنَّاصِيَةِ

*12 That is, the person who threatens that he would trample the neck of Muhammad (peace be upon him) down when he performed the Prayer, would never be able to do so.

16. The forelock that is lying and utterly sinful.^{*13}

نَاصِيَةٍ كَذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ

*13 The forelock here implies the person with the forelock.

17. So let him call his band of supporters.^{*14}

فَلْيَدْعُ نَادِيَهُ

*14 As we have explained in the Introduction, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) rebuked Abu Jahl on his foolish behavior, he had retorted: O Muhammad, on what strength do you threaten me? By God, my supporters in this valley far exceed yours in number. At this it is being

said: Let him call his band of supporters.

18. We, too, shall call the angels of torment.*15

سَدَّعُ الزَّبَانِيَةِ ﴿١٨﴾

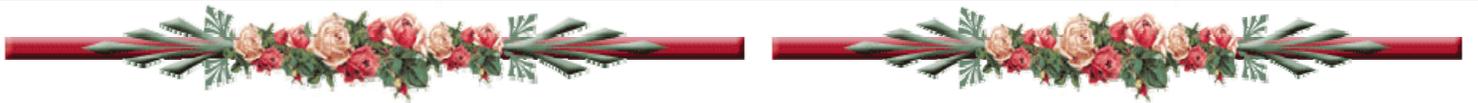
*15 According to the explanation given by Qatadah, the word *zabaniyah* in the original is used for the police in Arabic idiom, and *zaban* actually means to push away. The kings too kept armed attendants who would push out the one with whom the king was annoyed and angry. Therefore, what Allah means is: Let him call his supporters; We too shall summon Our Police, i.e. the angels of torment, to deal with him and his supporters.

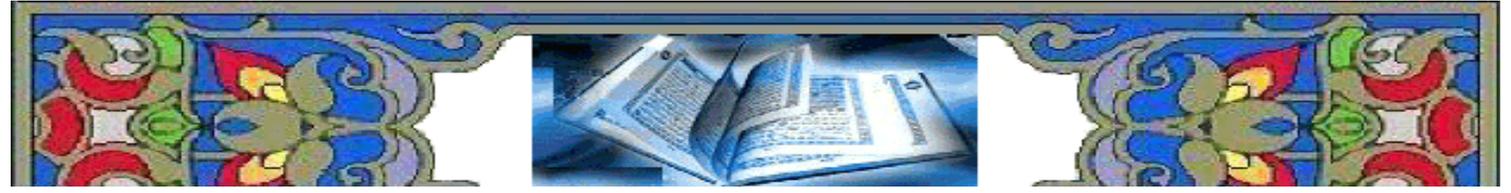
19. Nay, never! Do not obey him, and prostrate yourself and draw closer (to your Lord).*16 **AsSajda**

كَلَّا لَا تَطِعَهُ وَأَسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ ﴿١٩﴾

﴿١٩﴾

*16 *Sajdah* (prostration) here implies the Prayer, so as to say: O Prophet, continue to perform your Prayer fearlessly as you have been in the past, and seek your Lord's presence through it. In the *Sahih* of Muslim and other books of *Hadith* there is a tradition from Abu Huraira to the effect: The servant is nearest to his Lord when he is in the state of prostration, and in Muslim there is also a tradition from Abu Hurairah that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited this verse, he performed a *sajdah* of recital.





الْقَدْر Al-Qadr

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah has been so designated after the word *al-qadr* in the very first verse.

Period of Revelation

Whether it is a Makki or a Madani revelation is disputed. Abu Hayyan in *Al-Bahr al-Muhit* has made the claim that the majority of scholars regard it as a Madani Surah. Ali bin Ahmad al-Wahidi in his commentary says that this is the first Surah to be sent down in Al-Madinah. Contrary to this, AlMawardi says that according to the majority of scholars it is a Makki revelation, and the same view has Imam Suyuti expressed in *Al-Itqan*. Ibn Marduyah has cited Ibn Abbas, Ibn Az Zubair and Aishah as saying that this Surah was revealed at Makkah. A study of the contents also shows that it should have been revealed at Makkah as we shall explain below.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is to acquaint man with the value, worth and importance of the Quran. Its being placed just after Surah Al-Alaq in the arrangement of the Quran by itself explains

that the Book, the revelation of which began with the first five verses of Surah Al-Alaq, was sent down in a destiny making night. It is a glorious Book and its revelation for mankind is full of blessings.

At the outset, Allah says: We have sent it down. That is, it is not a composition of Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself, but We have revealed it.

Then, it is said that: We sent it down in the Night of Destiny. Night of Destiny has two meanings and both are implied here. First, that it is the night during which destinies are decided; or, in other words, it is not an ordinary night like the other nights, but a night in which destinies are made or marred. The revelation of this Book in this night is not merely the revelation of a book but an event which will change the destiny of not only the Quraish, or of Arabia, but of, the entire world. The same thing has been said in Surah Ad-Dukhan for which please see Introduction to that Surah and E. N. 3 thereof. The other meaning is that this is, a night of unique honor, dignity and glory; so much so that it is better than a thousand months. Thus, the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned, as if to say: You on account of your ignorance regard this Book, which Muhammad (peace be upon him) has presented, as a calamity for yourselves and complain that a disaster has befallen you, whereas the night in which it was decreed to be sent down was such a blessed night that a task was accomplished in it for the well being of mankind, which had never been accomplished even during a thousand months of history. This has also been said in verse 3 of Ad-Dukhan in

another way, which we have explained in the introduction to that Surah.

In conclusion, it has been stated that in this night the angels and Gabriel descend with every decree (which in verse 4 of Surah Ad-Dukhan has been described as *amr-hakim*: wise decree) by the leave of their Lord, and it is all peace from evening till morning; that is, there is no interference of evil in it, for all decrees of Allah are intended to promote good and not evil. So much so that even if a decision to destroy a nation is taken, it is taken for the sake of ultimate good, not evil.

1. Indeed, We sent it down (the Quran) in the Night of Destiny.*¹

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ

*¹ The words in the original are *anzalana hu*: We sent it down. But although there is no mention of the Quran before it, the Quran is implied, for sending down by itself points out that the Quran is meant. And there are numerous instances of this in the Quran that if from the context, or the style, the antecedent of a pronoun is apparent, the pronoun is used even if the antecedent has not been mentioned anywhere before or after it. (For explanation, see E.N. 9 of Surah An-Najm).

Here, it has been said: We sent it down (the Quran) in the Night of Destiny, and in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 185, Ramadan is the month in which the Quran was sent down. This shows that the night in which the Angel of God had brought down revelation for the first time to the Prophet

(peace be upon him) in the Cave of Hira, was a night of the month of Ramadan. This night has been described as *Lailat-ul-qadr* here and as *Lailat-im-mubarakah* in Surah Ad-Dukhan, Ayat 3.

There can be two meanings of sending down the Quran in this night: First, that in this night the entire Quran was entrusted to the bearers (angels) of revelation, and then Gabriel continued to reveal its verses and Surahs, from time to time, to the Prophet (peace be upon him) during 23 years as the occasion and conditions demanded. This meaning has been given by Ibn Abbas. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Hakim, Ibn Marduyah, Baihaqi). Second, that the revelation of the Quran began in this night. This is Imam Shabi's view, although from him too the other view is also related, which is the view of Ibn Abbas as cited above (Ibn Jarir). Anyhow, in both cases, the meaning is the same that the revelation of the Quran to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) began in this very night, and this was the night in which the five opening verses of Surah Al-Alaq were revealed. The fact, however, is that Allah did not compose the verses and the Surahs of the Quran right at the time guidance was needed by the Prophet (Peace be upon him) for his message of Islam in respect of an occasion or affair, but even before the creation of the universe, in the very beginning, Allah had a full plan of the creation of mankind on the earth, of raising the Prophets in it, of sending down the Books to the Prophets, of raising the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) at the end of the line of the Prophets and of

sending down the Quran to him. In the Night of Destiny only the execution of the final phase of the plan began. No wonder if at that very time the entire Quran was entrusted to the bearers of revelation.

Some commentators have interpreted *qadr* to mean destiny (*taqdir*), i.e. it is the night in which Allah entrusts the decrees of destiny to the angels to be enforced. This is supported by verse 3 of Surah Ad-Dukhan: This is a night in which every matter is decided wisely by Our command. On the contrary, Imam Zuhri says that *qadr* means glory and honor, there by implying that it is a Night of Destiny. This meaning is supported by the words *Lailat-ul-qadr* is better than a thousand months of this Surah itself.

As for the question as to which night it was, it is disputed and there are as many as 40 different views on this subject. However, a great majority of scholars hold the opinion that one of the odd nights of the last ten nights of the month of Ramadan is *Lailat-ul-qadr*, and among these also most scholars think that it is the 27th night. Below we give the authentic *Ahadith* which have been reported in this connection:

According to Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, in connection with *Lailat-ul qadr*, that it is the 27th night. (Abu Daud Tayalisi). According to another tradition from Abu Hurairah, it is the last night of Ramadan. (Musnad Ahmad).

When Zirr bin Hubaish asked Ubayy bin Kaab about *Lailat-ul-qadr*, he stated on oath, and did not make any exception, that it is the 27th night. (Ahmad, Muslim, Abu

Da'ud, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Hibban).

When Abu Zarr was asked about it, he said: Umar, Hudhaifah and many other companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) had no doubt that it is the 27th night. (Ibn Abi Shaibah).

Ubadah bin as-Samit says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *Lailat-al-qadr* is one of the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramadan: 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, 29th, or the last night. (Musnad Ahmad).

Abdullah bin Abbas says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Search for it among the last ten nights of Ramadan when there are still nine days in the month, or seven days, or five days. (Bukhari). Most of the scholars have understood it to mean that by this the Prophet (peace be upon him) meant the odd nights.

Abu Bakr said: When nine days remain in the month, or seven days, or five days, or three days, or the last night. What he meant was that *Lailat-ul-qadr* should be sought among these days. (Tirmidhi, Nasai).

According to Aishah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Search for *Lailat-ul-qadr* among the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramadan. (Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, Tirmidhi). Aishah and Abdullah bin Umar have also reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) observed *itikaf* (seclusion in the Mosque) during the last ten nights of Ramadan every year during his lifetime.

On the basis of the traditions related in this regard on the authority of a great companions like Muawiyah, Ibn Umar, Ibn Abbas and others, a large number of the earlier

scholars regard the 27th of Ramadan as *Lailat-ul-qadr*. Probably Allah and His Messenger have not specified any one night for the reason so that the people, in their zeal to benefit from the virtues of *Lailat-ul-qadr*, should spend more and more nights in worship and devotion and should not remain content with only one night. Here the question arises that when it is night at Makkah, it is daytime in a large part of the world; therefore, the people of those parts can never take advantage of *Lailat-ul-qadr*. The answer is that the word night in Arabic is mostly used for the combination of the day and night. Therefore, the night preceding the day on any one of these dates of Ramadan can be *Lailat ul-qadr* for that part of the world.

2. And what do you know what the Night of Power is.

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ

3. The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.*2

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ

*2 The commentators in general have understood this to mean that the good acts performed in this night are superior in value to the good acts of a thousand months in which *Lailat-ul-qadr* is not included. There is no doubt that this is in itself correct and the Prophet (peace be upon him) has described great excellences and virtues of the good acts and devotions of this night. According to a tradition related in Bukhari and Muslim, on the authority of Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The one who remained standing in worship in the state of belief and for the sake of rewards from Allah during *Lailat-ul-qadr*,

would have all his previous sins forgiven. And in Musnad Ahmad, there is a tradition from Ubadah bin as-Samit, saying that the Prophet said: *Lailat-ut-qadr* is among the last ten nights of Ramadan. The one who stood up in worship in order to take advantage of their rewards, Allah will forgive all his former and latter sins. But, the verse does not say: To act righteously in *Lailat-ul-qadr* is better than acting righteously in a thousand months, but it says: *Lailat-ul-qadr* is better than a thousand months. And a thousand months also does not imply 83 years and 4 months exactly, but a very long period of time as a thousand denoted among the Arabs. Therefore, the verse means that in this one night a task was accomplished for the welfare of mankind the like of which had not been accomplished even during an indefinitely long period of history.

4. The angels and the Spirit^{*3} descend in it with every decree, by the permission of their Lord.^{*4}

تَنْزَلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾

*3 The Spirit: Gabriel, who has been mentioned separately from the angels in view of his unique eminence, honor and merit.

*4 That is, they do not descend of their own accord but by leave of their Lord, and every decree implies *amr hakim* (a wise decree) as described in Surah Ad-Dukhan, Ayat 5.

5. That (Night) is peace, until the rising of the dawn.^{*5}

سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطَلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿٥﴾

*5 That is, the entire night, from evening till morning, is peace, free from every evil and mischief.



اَلْبَيِّنَةُ Al-Bayyinah

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah is so designated after the word *al-bayyinah* occurring at the end of the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Where was it revealed, at Makkah or Al-Madinah, is also disputed. Some commentators say, it is a Makki revelation; others say it is a Madani revelation. Ibn Az Zubair and Ata bin Yasar hold the view that it is Madani. Ibn Abbas and Qatadah are reported to have held two views, first that it is Makki, second that it is Madani. Aishah regards it as a Makki Surah. Abu Hayyan, author of *Bahr al-Muhit*, and Abdul Munim ibn al-Faras, author of *Ahkam al-Quran*, have also preferred to regard it as Makki. As for its contents, there is nothing in it to indicate whether it was revealed at Makkah or at Al-Madinah.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its having been placed after Surahs Al-Alaq and Al-Qadr in the arrangement of the Quran is very meaningful. Surah Al-Alaq contains the very first revelation, while Surah Al-Qadr shows as to when it was revealed, and in this Surah it

has been explained why it was necessary to send a Messenger along with this Book.

First of all the need of sending a Messenger has been explained, saying: The people of the world, be they from among the followers of the earlier scriptures or from among the idolaters, could not possibly be freed from their state of unbelief, until a Messenger was sent whose appearance by itself should be a clear proof of his apostleship, and he should present the Book of God before the people in its original, pristine form, which should be free from every mixture of falsehood corrupting the earlier divine Books; and which should comprise sound teachings.

Then, about the errors of the followers of the earlier Books it has been said that the cause of their straying into different creeds was not that Allah had not provided any guidance to them, but they strayed only after a clear statement of the right creed had come to them. From this it automatically follows that they themselves were responsible for their error and deviation. Now, even if after the coming of the clear statement through this Messenger (peace be upon him), they continued to stray, their responsibility of straying would lie upon them.

In this very connection, it has been stated that the Prophets who came from Allah and the Books sent down by Him, did not enjoin anything but that the way of sincere and true service to Allah be adopted, apart from all other ways, no one else's worship, service or obedience be mixed with His, the *salat* be established and the *zakat* be paid. This same has been the true religion ever since. From this it also

follows that the followers of the earlier scriptures, straying from this true religion, have added extraneous things to it, which are false, and Allah's last Messenger (peace be upon him) has come to invite them back to the same original faith.

In conclusion, it has been pointed out clearly that the followers of the earlier Books and the idolaters who would refuse to acknowledge this Messenger (peace be upon him) are the worst of creatures: their punishment is an everlasting Hell; and the people who would believe and act righteously, and would spend life in the world in awe of God, are the best of creatures: their reward is eternal Paradise wherein they will live for ever. Allah became well pleased with them and they became well pleased with Allah.

1. The disbelievers^{*1} from among the people of the Book, and those who associate (with Allah)^{*2} would not desist (from their disbelief) until the clear evidence should come to them.^{*3}

لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ
الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنْفَكِينَ
حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ

*1 Here the word *kufr* (unbelief) has been used in its widest sense, which includes different forms of the unbelieving attitude. For example, some were unbelievers in the sense that they did not acknowledge Allah at all; some did acknowledge Allah but did not regard Him as the One and only God, but worshipped others as well, thinking they were associates in divine Being or divine attributes and

powers in one way or the other; some acknowledged oneness of God but committed some kind of shirk as well; some acknowledged God but did not acknowledge His Prophets and the guidance brought by them; some acknowledged one particular Prophet and did not acknowledge another; others rejected the Hereafter. In short, there were different kinds of *kufr* in which the people were involved. And the statement: The disbelievers from among the people of the Book and those who associate, does not mean that some of them were not involved in *kufr*, but that those who were involved in *kufr* were of two kinds: the followers of the Book and the *mushriks*. Here, *min* (among) has not been used for division but for explanation, as for example, in Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 30, where it has been said *Fajtanib-ur rijsa min al-authan*, which means: Therefore, guard yourselves against the filth of idols, and not, guard yourselves against the filth which is in the idols. Likewise, *alladhina kafaru min ahl-il-Kitabi wal-mushrikin* means: the disbelievers from among the followers of the Book and the *mushriks*, and not, those who have disbelieved from these two groups.

*2 Despite the common factor of *kufr* between them the two groups have been mentioned by separate names. The followers of the Book imply the people who possessed any of the revealed Books, even if in corrupted form, sent to the former Prophets, and they believed in it. And the *mushriks* (idolaters) imply the people who did not follow any Prophet nor believed in any Book. Although in the Quran the *shirk*, (polytheism, idolatry) of the people of the Book has been

mentioned at many places, e.g. about the Christians it has been said: They say: God is one of the three (Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 73); The Messiah is son of God (Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 30); The Messiah, son of Mary, is God (Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 17). And about the Jews it has been said: They say: Ezra is son of God (Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 30), yet nowhere in the Quran has the term *mushrik* been used for them, but they have been mentioned as *alladhina ul-ul-Kitaba* (those who were given the Book), or by the words Jews and Christians. For they believed in the principle of *Tauhid* (Oneness of God) as the true religion, and then committed *shirk*. Contrary to this, for others than the followers of the Book, the word *mushrik* has been used as a term, for they acknowledged *shirk* (idolatry) as true religion and dis-acknowledged *Tauhid*. This distinction between the two groups holds good not only in the use of the term but also in the Shariah injunctions. Animal flesh duly slaughtered by the followers of the Book has been declared lawful for the Muslims if they slaughter a lawful animal in the name of Allah in the prescribed way, and permission to marry their women has also been given. On the contrary, neither the animal slaughtered by the *mushriks* is lawful for the Muslims nor is marriage with their women.

*3 That is, there was no means of their being freed from this state of unbelief except that a clear evidence (of the truth) should come and make them understand the falsity of every form of *kufr* and its being untrue, and should present the right way before them in a clear and rational

way. This does not mean that after the coming of the clear evidence they would give up *kufr* but that in the absence of the clear evidence it was not at all possible that they would be delivered from that state. However, if even after its coming, some of them still persisted in their *kufr*, then they themselves would be responsible for it; they could not complain that Allah had made no arrangement for their guidance. This same thing has been expressed in the Quran at different places in different ways, e.g. in Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 9, it is said: Allah has taken upon Himself to show the right way; in Surah Al-Lail, Ayat 12, it is said: It is for Us to show the way; in Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 163-165: O! Prophet, We have sent revelation to you just as We had sent it to Noah and other Prophets after him (peace be upon them all)... All these Messengers were sent as bearers of good news and warners so that, after their coming, the people should have no excuse left to plead before Allah; and in Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 19: O people of the Book, this Messenger of Ours has come to you and is making clear to you the teachings of the right way after a long interval during which there had come no Messengers, lest you should say: No bearer of good news nor warner came to us. Lo, now the bearer of good news and warner has come.

2. A Messenger from Allah, reciting purified pages (of Scripture).^{*5}

رَسُولٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ يَتْلُو صُحُفًا
مُّطَهَّرَةً

*4 Here, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been called the clear evidence, for his life before and after

Prophethood, his presenting a Book like the Quran in spite of being un-lettered, his bringing about an extraordinary revolution in the lives of the converts to Islam through education and training, his educating the people in rational beliefs, clean and pure forms of worship, excellent morals and the best principles and injunctions for human life, perfect harmony and agreement between his word and deed, and his constancy of purpose in respect of his message in spite of every kind of resistance and opposition, all these were clear signs of the truth that he was Allah's Messenger.

*5 Lexically, *suhuf* means written pages, but in the Quran this word has been used as a term for the Books revealed to the Prophets of Allah (peace be upon them); and by the scriptures are meant the scriptures which are free from every mixture of falsehood, every kind of error and moral filth. The full import of these words becomes evident when one studies the Bible (and the books of other religions as well) vis-a-vis the Quran, and finds written in them along with sound teachings such things as are not only opposed to truth and reason but are also morally contemptible. After reading them when one turns to the Quran, one realizes how pure and hallowed this Book is.

3. Within it are writings (decrees), straight.

فِيهَا كُتِبَ قِيمَةٌ

4. Nor did those who were given the Scripture (before this) divide until after what had come to them as clear

وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا
 مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ

evidence.*6

*6 That is, the reason why the people of the Book before this were divided into countless sects because of different kinds of errors and deviation, was not that Allah had failed to send a clear evidence from Himself for their guidance, but the fact that they adopted the wrong way after guidance had come from Allah. Therefore, they themselves were responsible for their deviation, for Allah had fulfilled His obligation towards them. Likewise, since their scriptures are no longer pure and their books no longer consist of original and correct teachings, Allah by sending a Messenger of His, as a clear evidence, with a hallowed Book, containing sound and pure teachings, has again fulfilled His obligation towards them, so that even if after that they remained divided, they themselves should be responsible for it and should have no excuse left to plead before Allah. This has been stated at many places in the Quran, e.g. see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 213, 253; Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 19; Surah Al-Maidah, Ayats 44-50; Surah Yunus, Ayat 93; Surah Ash-Shura, Ayats 13-15; Surah Al-Jathiyah, Ayats 16-18, along with the corresponding notes for full understanding.

5. And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, (being) sincere to Him in religion, true (in faith), and to establish the prayer, and to give the poor-due. And that is

وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ
مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ
وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ

the true (and right)
religion.*7

وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقِيَمَةِ

*7 That is, the message of the same religion, which now the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is preaching, had been given to the people of the Book by the Prophets who came to them and by the Books which were sent among them; they had not been enjoined any of the false belief and wicked deeds which they adopted afterwards and created different sects. Right and correct religion has always been the same: that Allah alone should be served and worshipped exclusively, none else be joined with Him in worship, man should become worshipper of One Allah alone and obedient to His command only, should establish the *salat* and pay the *zakat*. (For further explanation, see E. N. 19 of Surah Al-Aaraf; E.Ns 108, 109 of Surah Younus, E.Ns 43 to 47 of Surah Ar-Room; E.Ns 3, 4 of Surah Az-Zumar). Some commentators have taken the words *din al-qayyimah* in this verse in the meaning of *din al-millat al-qayyimah*: Religion of the righteous community. Some others have taken *qayyimah* in the superlative sense and understood it in the same meaning as we have adopted in our translation.

6. Indeed, those who disbelieved among the People of the Scripture, and those who associated (with Allah) shall be in the fire of Hell, abiding therein forever. Those are

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ
وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أُولَئِكَ هُمْ شَرُّ

the worst of creatures.*9

الْبَرِيَّةُ
٦

***8 Disbelieved:** Refused to acknowledge the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as Allah's Messenger. The meaning is that the end of those from among the mushriks and the followers of the Book, who have not acknowledged the Messenger whose emergence by itself is a clear evidence, and who is reciting to them hallowed pages containing sound and correct teachings, will be as is being described below.

***9** That is, they are worse than all creatures of God, even animals, for the animals do not possess reason and power, but these people reject the truth in spite of having reason and authority.

7. Indeed, those who believed and did righteous deeds, those are the best of creatures.*10

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ
الْبَرِيَّةِ
٧

***10** That is, they are superior to all creatures of God, even to the angels, for the angels do not have the power to disobey, and these people adopt Allah's obedience in spite of having the power to disobey Him.

8. Their reward with their Lord shall be Gardens of Eternity beneath which rivers flow, they shall abide therein forever. Allah being pleased with them and they being

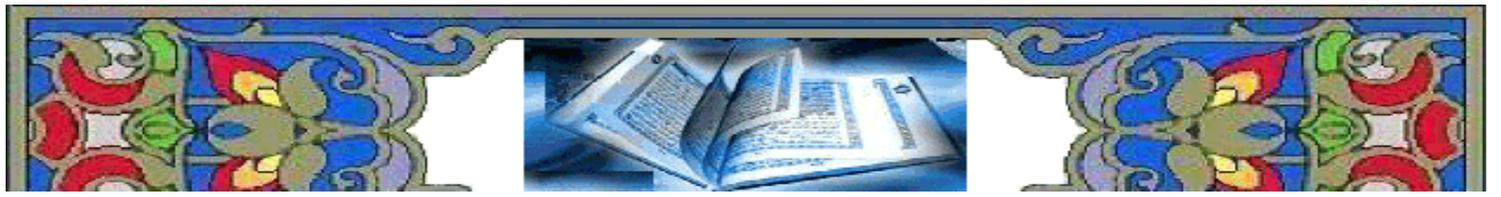
جَزَاؤُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ
فِيهَا أَبَدًا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا

pleased with Him. That is for
him who feared his Lord.*11

عَنْهُ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ

*11 In other words, the person who did not live in the world fearlessly and independent of God, but feared Him at every step lest he should do something which might entail His wrath and punishment, will have this reward reserved for him with Allah.





الزَّلْزَالَة AlZalzalah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The name of the Surah is derived from the word *zilzal* in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Whether or not it was revealed at Makkah or Al-Madinah, is disputed. Ibn Masud, Ata, Jabir, and Mujahid say that it is a Makki Surah and a statement of Ibn Abbas also supports this view. On the contrary, Qatadah and Muqatil say that it is Madani and another statement of Ibn Abbas has also been cited in support of this view. That it is a Madani Surah is reasoned from a tradition from Abu Saeed Khudri, which Ibn Abi Hatim has related from him. He says: When the verse *Fa-man yamal mithqala dharratin khairan yarah, wa man yamal mithqala dharratin sharran yarah*, was revealed, I said: O Messenger of Allah, shall I really see my deeds? The Messenger (peace be upon him) replied in the affirmative. I submitted: And every major sin? He replied yes. I said: And the minor sins too? He replied yes. Thereupon I exclaimed that I would then be ruined. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Rejoice, O

Abu Saeed, for each good act will be equal to ten good acts like it. The basis of the argument for this Surah's being Madani is that Abu Saeed Khudri was an inhabitant of Madinah and reached maturity after the Battle of Uhud. Therefore, if this Surah was revealed in his presence, as is apparent from his statement, it must be a Madani Surah. However, the practice that the companions and their immediate successors followed in respect of the occasion of the revelation of the verses and Surahs, has already been explained in the Introduction to Surah Ad-Dahr. Therefore, a companion's saying that a verse was sent down on this or that particular occasion is no proof that it was sent down on that very occasion. It may well be that after coming of age when Abu Saeed heard this Surah for the first time from the Prophet (peace be upon him), terrified by its last portion he might have asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) the questions which we have cited above, and he might have narrated the incident saying that when this verse was revealed he put this and this question to the Prophet (peace be upon him). In the absence of this tradition every reader who reads the Quran with understandings will feel that it is a Makki Surah. More than that, from its theme and style he would feel that it must have been sent down in the early stage at Makkah when the fundamental principles and beliefs of Islam were being presented before the people in a concise but highly effective way.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is the life after death and presentation in it before man of the full record of the deeds done by him in the

world. In the first three sentences it has been told briefly how the life after death will take place and how confounding it will be for man. In the next two sentences it has been said that this very earth on which man has lived and performed all kinds of deeds thoughtlessly, and about which he never could fancy that this lifeless thing would at some time in the future bear witness to his deeds, will speak out on that Day by Allah's command and will state in respect of each individual person what act he had committed at a particular time and place. Then, it has been said that men on that Day, rising from their graves, will come out in their varied groups from all corners of the earth, to be shown their deeds and works, and their presentation of the deeds will be so complete and detailed that not an atom's weight of any good or evil act will be left unnoticed or hidden from his eyes.

1. When the earth is shaken with its utmost earthquake.*¹

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا

*¹ *Zalzalah* means to shake violently over and over again. Thus, *zulzilat-il ardu* means that the earth will be shaken violently by convulsion after convulsion, and since shaking of the earth has been mentioned, it automatically gives the meaning that the entire earth will be shaken and not a limited territory of it. Then, in order to express the great intensity of the earthquake the word *zilzalaha* has been added, which literally means: its being shaken. It means: It will be so shaken as a huge sphere like it ought to be shaken, or shaken to its utmost intensity. Some commentators have taken it to imply the first earthquake

with which the first stage of Resurrection will begin, i.e. when all living beings will perish and the present order of the world will be upset. But, according to a large section of them, it implies the earthquake with which the second stage of Resurrection will begin, i.e. when all the former and the latter generations of mankind will rise back to life. This second commentary seems to be more correct, for the whole subsequent theme supports it.

2. And the earth casts out all the burdens from within it.*2

وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا

*2 This same has been expressed in Surah Al-Inshiqaq, Ayat 4, thus: And throws out whatever is within it, and becomes empty. It has several meanings:

(1) It will cast out bodies of the dead in whatever form and state and wherever they may be lying in the earth; and the following sentence indicates that at that time all the scattered parts of the bodies will reassemble and be resurrected once again in the same form and shape as they had been in their first life, for if it were not so, how will they say: What has happened to the earth? It will not only cast out the dead bodies of men but also all traces and evidences of the words, deeds and activities of their former life lying buried in it; the following sentence points out that the earth will narrate all that had happened on its back.

(2) A third meaning has also been given by some commentators, saying that it will cast out the treasures of gold, silver, jewels and every kind of wealth lying hidden in the earth's belly and man will see it and realize how he thirsted for these things in the world, how he committed

murders, thefts, robberies and piracies in the land and sea, usurped the rights of others, waged wars and devastated vast populations. On that Day all that will lie heaped up before him, yet of no avail, but will rather become a means of punishment for him.

3. And man says, "What is (the matter) with it."*3

وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا هَآءَا

*3 Man here may as well imply every man, for after resurrection and coming to senses the first impression of every man will be as to what was happening around him; afterwards he will realize that it was the Resurrection Day. Man may also imply the man who denies the Hereafter, for what he regarded as impossible would be happening in front of him and causing him confusion and bewilderment. As for the believers, they will not be bewildered and confused, for everything would be taking place according to their belief and conviction. To an extent, this second meaning is supported by verse 52 of Surah YaSeen, in which it has been said that the deniers of the Hereafter at that time will exclaim: Ah, who has roused us from our sleeping place? And the reply given would be: This is the same which the Merciful God had promised and the Messengers sent by God had spoken the truth. This verse does not expressly say that this answer to the disbelievers would actually be given by the believers, for there is no indication of it in the verse. The probability, however, is that the believers will give them this answer.

4. That Day it will report its news.*4

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا

*4 According to Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited this verse and asked: Do you know what annals it will relate? The people said: Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The annals are that the earth will testify to the deeds which every man and woman has done on its back. It will say: He or she had done such and such a thing on such and such a day. These will be the annals the earth will narrate. (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Jarir, Abd bin Humaid, Ibn al-Mundhir, Hakim, Ibn Marduyah, Baihaqi in *Ash-Shuab*). According to Rabiah Kharashi, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Beware of the earth, for it is your root and basis, and there is nothing which a person does on it, and it will not report, whether it is good or bad. (*Mujam at-Tabarani*). Anas reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The earth on the Day of Resurrection will bring out every act that would have been done on its back. Then he recited these verses. (Ibn Marduyah, Baihaqi). About Ali it is related that when he distributed the money of the *Bait al-Mal* (public treasury) among the needy ones and thus emptied it, he would perform two rakahs of the Prayer in it and say: You will have to bear witness that I filled you with justice and emptied you with justice.

It might have been difficult for a man of ancient times to understand how the earth will speak and narrate the annals and events happening on it on the Resurrection Day, but in the present age of scientific discoveries and the inventions of cinema, loudspeaker, radio, television, tape-recorder,

electronic equipment, etc., it is no longer difficult to understand how the earth will narrate its annals. The impression of whatever man speaks is preserved in the air, in the radio waves, on the particles of the walls and floors and ceilings of the houses, and on the environments of the road, plain or field if he spoke outside the house. If Allah so wills He can make these things repeat all these voices precisely in the way these were uttered in the first instance by man. Man at that time will hear with his ears and know that it was his own voice, and all his acquaintances will also testify that whatever they were hearing was the person's own voice and his own accent. Then whatever man has done anywhere on the earth, and in whatever state, has had its impression on everything of the environment and its image inscribed on it. Even if he did something in pitch dark, there are such rays in the Kingdom of God for which darkness and light make no difference; they can preserve his image in any case. All these images will pass before man on the Resurrection Day like a motion picture, and will show him when and where he had done something during his life on the earth.

The fact is that although Allah directly knows whatever a man does, yet in the Hereafter when He will establish His court, He will punish every culprit only after fulfilling all the demands of justice. Any case which is brought before His court against a criminal will be proved with such perfect evidence that no room will be left to doubt his being a criminal. The first and foremost evidence against him is the record in which the two recording angels are recording

his each word and deed. (Surah Qaaf, Ayats 17-18; Surah Al-Infitar, Ayats 10-12). This record will be handed over to him and he will be asked to read it, for “you yourself suffice as reckoner against yourself.” (Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 14). Reading it man will be bewildered, for “it has left nothing un-recorded of our deeds, small or great.” (Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 49). Then there is man’s own body which he had used in the world. In Allah’s court his own tongue will bear witness as to what he had been speaking through it in the world, his own hands and feet will bear witness as to what deeds he had committed through them (Surah An-Noor, Ayat 24). His eyes and his ears will bear witness as to what he saw and heard by their means. Even the skin of his body will bear witness to his deeds. Bewildered, he will ask his limbs: Why have you borne witness against me? They will reply: The same God Who has given speech to everything has given us speech. (Surah HaMim As-Sajdah, Ayats 20-22). On top of these, there will be the witnesses which will be presented from the earth and all its environments, in which man will hear his own voice by his own ears and see the exact pictures of his own deeds by his eyes. Furthermore, the ideas, motives and aims hidden in the heart of man and the intentions with which he had performed every deed will be brought out and placed before him as is stated in Surah Al-Adiyat. That is why with the production of such absolute, clear and undeniable proofs, man will be confounded and he will be left with no chance to say anything in self-defense to excuse himself. (Surah Al-Mursalat, Ayats 35-36).

5. For your Lord shall have commanded her (to do so).

بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا ﴿٥﴾

6. On that day mankind shall proceed in scattered groups,^{*5} to be shown their deeds.^{*6}

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِّيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٦﴾

***5 This can have two meanings:**

(1) That each man will present himself in his own individual capacity. Families, groups, parties, nations, all will scatter away. This thing has also been said at other places in the Quran, for e.g. according to Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 94, Allah on that Day will say to the people: So, you have come before Us all alone, as We created you the first time, and in Surah Maryam: He will appear before Us all alone (verse 80); and Everyone of them will be presented before Him individually on the Resurrection Day. (verse 95).

(2) That the people who during thousands and thousands of years had died at different places; will be rising from different corners of the earth and proceeding in groups, as has been said in Surah An-Naba: The day the Trumpet is blown, you will come out in crowds. (verse 18). Apart from these, there is no room in the word *ashtatan* for the meanings, which different commentators have given, and are, therefore, outside the literal bounds of this word, although they are correct by themselves and in accordance with the conditions depicted of the Resurrection Day in Quran and the *Hadith*.

***6 This can have two meanings:**

(1) That they are shown their deeds, i.e. each one will be told what he did in the world.

(2) That they are shown the rewards of their deeds. Although this second meaning can also be taken of the words *li yurau jazaa a malahum* (so as to be shown the rewards of their deeds) but *li yurau a malahum* (so as to be shown their deeds). Therefore, the first meaning is preferable, especially when at several places in the Quran it has been stated clearly that the disbeliever and the believer, the righteous and the wicked, the obedient and the disobedient, all will be given their records. (see Surah Al-Haqqah, Ayats 19, 25; Surah Al-Inshiqaq, Ayats 7, 10). Evidently, there is no difference between showing somebody his deeds and handing over to him his record. Furthermore, when the earth will narrate whatever had happened on it, the whole picture of the conflict between the truth and the falsehood that has been raging since the beginning of time and will continue to rage till the end, will also appear before the people and they will see what part the truth loving people played in it and what vile deeds did the supporters of falsehood commit against them. It may well be that the people will hear with their own ears all the speeches and dialogues of the callers to right guidance and of the publicists of error and evil; the whole record of the writings and literature produced by the two sides will be placed intact before them, and the people gathered together in the Plain of Assembly will see with their own eyes the persecution of the lovers of truth by the worshippers of falsehood and all the scenes of the bitter conflict that raged

between the two parties.

7. Then, whoever has done an atom's weight of good, shall see it.

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ



8. And whoever has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it.*7

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ



*7 A simple and straightforward meaning of this statement, and it is right and correct, is that not an atom's weight of good or evil done by a person, will have been left unrecorded in his conduct book, and he will see it in any case. But if seeing is taken to imply seeing its reward and punishment, it will be wrong to take it in the meaning that in the Hereafter every person will be rewarded for his most minor offence, and no one will be left un-rewarded for a good and unpunished for an evil done by him. For in the first place, it would mean that each evil act will be punished and each good act rewarded separately; secondly, it also means that no believer, however righteous and virtuous, will remain safe from being punished for a most ordinary error, and no disbeliever, however wicked and iniquitous, will be left unrewarded for a most ordinary good act. Both these meanings are opposed not only to the explanations given in the Quran and the *Hadith*, but also to reason. From the point of view of reason, it is not understandable that a master would refuse to pardon a most loyal and dutiful servant for a minor error, and along with rewarding for each act of service and obedience, would also punish

him for each and every error. Likewise, this also is not understandable from the viewpoint of reason that a person brought up and favored by you should prove disloyal and treacherous and ungrateful in spite of your favors, and you, over-looking his collective attitude, should punish him for each act of treachery separately and reward him for each, even if most insignificant, act of service separately. As for the Quran and the *Hadith*, they have laid down a detailed law of rewards and punishments for the different categories of the people, be they believers, hypocrites, disbelievers, righteous believers, erring believers, wicked and sinful believers, common disbelievers, or wicked and mischievous disbelievers, and these rewards and punishments pervade the entire life of man, from here to the Hereafter.

In this connection, the Quran has stated, in principle, certain things explicitly:

First, that the deeds of the disbelievers, idolaters and hypocrites (i.e. the deeds regarded as virtuous) have been rendered vain; they will receive no reward for them in the Hereafter. If at all they deserve a reward for them, they will receive it here in the world. For this, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 147; Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 17, 67-69; Surah Houd, Ayats 15-16; Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 18; Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 104, 105; Surah An-Noor, Ayat 39; Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 23; Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 19; Surah Az-Zumar, Ayat 65; Surah Al-Ahqaf, Ayat 20.

Second, that evil will be punished to the extent that evil has been committed, but the good deeds will be rewarded much more generously than what they will actually deserve. At

some places it has been explicitly stated that a good act will have a ten-fold reward for it, and at others that Allah will increase the reward of the good act as much as He will please. For this, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 261; Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 160; Surah Yunus, Ayats 26-27; Surah An-Noor, Ayat 38, Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 84; Surah Saba, Ayat 37, Surah Al-Mumin, Ayat 40.

Third, that if the believers abstained from major sins, their ordinary offences will be forgiven. (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 31; Surah Ash-Shura, Ayat 37; Surah An-Najm, Ayat 32).

Fourth, that the righteous believer shall have an easy reckoning, his evils will be overlooked and he will be rewarded according to his best deeds. (Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayat 7; Surah Az-Zumar, Ayat 35; Surah Al-Ahqaf, Ayat 16; Surah Al-Inshiqaq, Ayat 8).

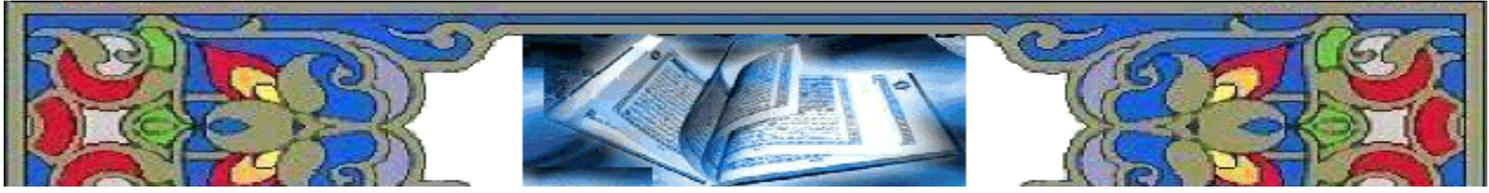
The Hadith is also very explicit in this regard. In the commentary of Surah Al-Inshiqaq above, we have cited the *Ahadith* which have been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in connection with the explanation of easy reckoning and severe accountability. (See E.N. 6 of Surah Al-Inshiqaq). Anas says that once Abu Bakr Siddiq was having his meals with the Prophet (peace be upon him). In the meantime this verse was revealed. Abu Bakr withdrew his hand from food and said: O Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, shall I see the result of every little evil that I have happened to commit? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: O Abu Bakr, whatever unpleasant and troublesome things you experience in the world, will compensate for the little evils that you happened to commit,

and Allah is reserving every little good that you do for your Hereafter, (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Tabarani in *Al-Ausat*, Baihaqi in *Ash-Shuab*. Ibn al-Mundhir, Hakim, Ibn Marduyah, Abd bin Humaid). The Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah had also explained this verse to Abu Ayyub Ansari, saying: Whoever from among you does good will have his reward in the Hereafter, and whoever commits an evil will suffer punishment for it in this very world in the form of misery and disease. (Ibn Marduyah). Qatadah has related this saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the authority of Anas: Allah does not wrong a believer in the world. He provides him sustenance in lieu of his good deeds, in the Hereafter He will reward him for these. As for the disbeliever, he is recompensed for his good deeds in the world itself; then when Resurrection takes place, he, will have no good work left to his credit. (Ibn Jarir). Masruq has related from Aishah that she asked the Prophet (peace be upon him): In the pre-Islamic days of ignorance Abdullah bin Judan treated his kindred kindly, fed the poor, received his guests well, earned freedom for the captives. Will this be of any use to him in the Hereafter? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: No, he never said until death: *Rabbighfir-li khatiati yaum ad-din*. My Lord, forgive me my errors on the Judgement Day. (Ibn Jarir). The Prophet (peace be upon him) also gave similar replies in respect of the other people, who did good deeds in the pre-Islamic days, but died as pagans. But there are certain other sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which show that although the good done by a disbeliever cannot

save him from the fire of Hell, yet in Hell he will not be subjected to the severe punishment which will be the lot of the wicked, sinful and villainous disbelievers, e.g. according to a *Hadith*, Hatim Tai in view of his generosity will be subjected to a light punishment in Hell (*Ruh al-Maani*). However, this verse warns man of a truth of vital importance which is this: Even a most ordinary good has its own weight and its own value, and the same is also true of evil: even a most ordinary evil will also be considered and taken into account; it will not just be overlooked. Therefore, no good act, however small and insignificant, should be left, undone, for many such good acts can collect and be regarded as a major good act in the reckoning with Allah. Likewise, even a most ordinary evil also should not be committed, for a large number of such ordinary errors can become serious sins. The same thing has been described by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in several *Ahadith*. According to a tradition related in Bukhari and Muslim, on the authority of Adi bin Hatim, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Save yourselves from the fire of Hell even if it be by giving away a pit of a date, or by uttering a good word. Again from Adi, in an authentic tradition, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying has been reported: Do not look upon any good work as insignificant, even if it be emptying a bucket into the vessel of one asking for water, or receiving a brother of yours with a pleasant face. According to a tradition reported in Bukhari from Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (peace be upon him), addressing the women, said: O Muslim women, no woman should look upon sending a

gift to her neighbor as mean, even if it be the hoof of a goat. A tradition has been related in Musnad Ahmad, Nasai and Ibn Majah from Hadrat Aishah, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: O Aishah, abstain from the sins which are looked upon as trivial, for they too will be enquired about by Allah. Musnad Ahmad contains a tradition from Abdullah bin Masud, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Beware of minor sins, for they will gather together on man so much so that they will kill him. (For the distinction between the grave and the trivial offences, see E.N. 53 of Surah An-Nisa and E.N. 32 of Surah An-Najm).





Al-Adiat الْعَدِيَّت

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah has been so entitled after the word *al-adiat* with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

Whether it is a Makki or a Madani Surah is disputed. Abdullah bin Masud, Jabir, Hasan Basri, Ikrimah, and Ata say that it is Makki. Anas bin Malik, and Qatadah say that it is Madani; and from Ibn Abbas two views have been reported, first that it is a Makki Surah, and second that it is Madani. But the subject matter of the Surah and its style clearly indicate that it is not only Makki but was revealed in the earlier stage of Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its object is to make the people realize how evil man becomes when he denies the Hereafter, or becomes heedless of it, and also to warn them that in the Hereafter not only their visible and apparent deeds but even the secrets hidden in their hearts too will be subjected to scrutiny.

For this purpose the general chaos and confusion prevailing in Arabia, with which the whole country was in turmoil,

has been presented as an argument. Bloodshed, looting and plunder raged on every side. Tribes were subjecting tribes to raids, and no one could have peaceful sleep at night from fear that some enemy tribe might raid his settlement early in the morning. Every Arab was fully conscious of this state of affairs and realized that it was wrong. Although the plundered bemoaned his miserable, helpless state and the plunderer rejoiced, yet when the plunderer himself was plundered, he too realized how abject was the condition in which the whole nation was involved. Referring to this very state of affairs, it has been said: Unaware of the second life after death and his accountability before God in it, man has become ungrateful to his Lord and Sustainer. He is using the powers and abilities given by God for perpetrating tyranny and pillage; blinded by the love of worldly wealth he tries to obtain it by every means, however impure and filthy, and his own state itself testifies that by abusing the powers bestowed by his Lord he is being ungrateful to Him. He would never have behaved so, had he known the time when the dead will be raised from the graves, and when the intentions and motives with which he had done all sorts of deeds in the world, will be exposed and brought out before everyone to see. At that time the Lord and Sustainer of men shall be well informed of what one had done and what punishment or reward one deserved.

1. By the (horses) who run
with panting breath.*¹

وَالْعَدِيَّتِ ضَبْحًا

*¹ There is no indication in the words of the verse to show whether those who run imply the horses; only the word

wal-adiyat (by, those who run) has been used. That is why the commentators have disputed as to what is implied by those who run. One section of the companions and their immediate successors has been to think that it implies the horses; another section says that it implies the camels. But since the peculiar sound called *dabh* is produced only by the panting, snorting horses, and the following verses also in which mention has been made of striking sparks and raiding a settlement early at dawn and raising clouds of dust, apply only to the horses, most scholars are of the opinion that horses are meant. Ibn Jarir says: Of the two views this view is preferable that by “those who run” horses are implied, for the camel does not breathe hard in running, it is the horse which does so, and Allah has said: By those runners which pant and breathe hard in running. Imam Razi says: The words of these verses proclaim that horses are meant, for the sound of *dabh* (panting breath) is only produced by the horses, and the act of striking sparks of fire with the hoofs too is associated with the horses, and, likewise, mounting of a raid early at dawn is easier by means of the horses than by other animals.

2. Then strike sparks (with their hoofs).^{*2}

فَالْمُورِيَّتِ قَدَّحًا

*2 Strike sparks: indicates that the horses run in the dead of night, for the sparks struck by their hoofs become conspicuous only at night.

3. Then charge suddenly in the morning.^{*3}

فَالْمُغِيرَاتِ صُبْحًا

*3 The practice among the Arabs was that when they had

to mount a raid on a settlement, they marched out in the night so as to take the enemy by surprise; then they would launch a sudden attack early in the morning so that everything became visible in the light of day, and at the same time it did not become so bright that the victim could notice their movement from a distance and be ready to meet the offensive.

4. Then raise up (clouds of) dust in doing so.

فَأَثَرْنَ بِهِ نَقْعًا

5. Then penetrate thereby into the midst (of enemy) collectively.

فَوَسَطْنَ بِهِ جَمْعًا

6. Indeed, man is ungrateful to his Lord.*4

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُودٌ

*4 This is for which an oath has been sworn by the horses, which run with panting breath and dash off sparks at night, then raising dust rush to assault a settlement at dawn and penetrate into the enemy host. It is astonishing to note that a large number of the commentators have taken these horses to imply the horses of the Muslim fighters and the enemy host to imply the host of disbelievers, whereas the oath has been sworn to impress the point that man is highly ungrateful to his Lord. Now, obviously, in the course of Jihad for the sake of Allah, the rushing forth of the fighters' horses and their assaulting a host of disbelievers all of a sudden, does not at all support the point that man is ungrateful to his Lord, nor the following sentences, viz. man himself is a witness to it, and he loves the worldly wealth with all his heart, apply to the people who go out to

fight in the cause of Allah. Therefore, one will have to admit that the oaths sworn in the first five verses of this Surah, refer, in fact, to the general bloodshed, looting and plunder prevalent in Arabia at that time. In the pre-Islamic days of ignorance the night was a very dreadful thing: in it the people of every tribe and settlement apprehended the danger of a sudden attack by some unknown enemy, and when the light of day appeared they would heave a sigh of relief that the night had passed in peace. The tribes did not fight only retaliatory wars but different tribes also raided others in order to deprive them of their worldly goods and herds and to capture their women and children to be made slaves. This kind of tyranny and plunder was carried out mostly by means of the horses, which Allah is presenting here as an argument for the fact that man is ungrateful to his Lord. That is the powers which man is employing for fighting, shedding blood and plundering had not been given him by God for this purpose. Therefore this indeed is sheer ingratitude that the resources granted by Allah and the power given by Him should be used for causing chaos and corruption to spread in the earth, which Allah abhors.

7. And indeed, he himself is a witness to it.*5

وَأِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ لَشَهِيدٌ

*5 That is his own conscience and his own deeds are a witness to it; then there are many disbelievers also who by their own tongue express their ingratitude openly, for they do not even believe that God exists to say nothing of acknowledging His blessings for which they may have to render gratitude to Him.

8. And indeed, he loves the worldly wealth with all his heart.*6

وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ

*6 Literally He is most ardent in the love of *khair*. But the word *khair* is not only used for goodness and virtue in Arabic but also for worldly wealth. In Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 180, *khair* has been used in the meaning of worldly wealth. The context itself shows where *khair* has been used in the sense of goodness and where in that of worldly goods. The context of this verse clearly shows that here *khair* means worldly wealth and not virtue and goodness. For about the man who is ungrateful to his Lord and who by his conduct is himself testifying to his ingratitude it cannot be said that he is very ardent in the love of goodness and virtue.

9. Does he not know, when that which is in the graves shall be brought out.*7

أَفَلَا يَعْلَمُ إِذَا بُعِثَ مَا فِي الْقُبُورِ

*7 That is, the dead men will be raised back as living men from whatever state and wherever they would be lying buried in the earth.

10. And that which is in the breasts shall be made manifest.*8

وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ

*8 That is all the intentions, aims and objects, ideas and thoughts and the motives behind acts and deeds that lie hidden in the hearts will be exposed and examined in order to sort out the good from the evil. In other words judgment

will not be passed only on the apparent and superficial as to what a man practically did but the secrets hidden in the hearts will also be brought out to see what were the intentions and motives under which a man did what he did. If man only considers this, he cannot help admitting that real and complete justice cannot be done anywhere except in the court of God. Secular laws of the world also admit in principle that a person should not be punished merely on the basis of his apparent act but his motive for so acting also should be seen and examined. But no court of the world has the means by which it may accurately ascertain the motive and intention. This can be done only by God: He alone can examine the underlying motives behind every apparent act of man as well as take the decision as to what reward or punishment he deserves. Then, as is evident from the words of the verse, this judgment will not be passed merely on the basis of the knowledge which Allah already has about the intentions and motives of the hearts, but on Resurrection Day these secrets will be exposed and brought out openly before the people and after a thorough scrutiny in the court it will be shown what was the good in it and what was the evil. That is why the words *hussila ma fis-sudur* have been used. *Tahsil* means to bring out something in the open, and to sort out different things from one another. Thus, the use of *tahsil* concerning hidden secrets of the hearts contains both the meanings: to expose them and to sort out the good from the evil. This same theme has been expressed in Surah At-Tariq, thus: The Day the hidden secrets are held to scrutiny. (verse 9).

11. Surely, their Lord on that Day shall be well informed of them.*9

إِنَّ رَبَّهُمْ بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾

***9** That is, He will be knowing well who is who, and what punishment or reward he deserves.



القَارِعَة Al-Qariah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from its first word *al-qariah*. This is not only a name but also the title of its subject matter, for the Surah is devoted to Resurrection.

Period of Revelation

There is no dispute about its being a Makki Surah. Its contents show that this is one of the earlier Surahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is Resurrection and the Hereafter. At the outset, the people have been aroused and alarmed, saying: The Great Disaster! What is the Great Disaster? And what do you know what the Great Disaster is? Thus, after preparing the listeners for the news of the dreadful calamity, Resurrection has been depicted before them in two sentences, saying that on that Day people will be running about in confusion and bewilderment just like so many scattered moths around a light, and the mountains uprooted, will lose their cohesion and will fly about like carded wool. Then, it has been said that when Allah's court

is established in the Hereafter and the people are called upon to account for their deeds, the basis of judgment will be the weight of good deeds. The people whose good deeds are found to be heavier than their evil deeds, will be blessed with bliss and happiness, and the people whose good deeds are found to be lighter than their evil deeds, will be cast into the deep pit full of burning fire.

1. The striking calamity.*¹

الْقَارِعَةُ

*1 *Qariah* literally means the striking one. *Qar* is to strike one thing upon another so severely as to produce a noise. In view of this literal meaning, the word *qariah* is used for a dreadful disaster and a great calamity. At another place in the Quran this word has been used for a great affliction befalling a nation. In Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 31, it has been said: As for the disbelievers, because of their misdeeds, one affliction or the other does not cease to visit them every now and then. But, here the word *al-Qariah* has been for the Resurrection and in Surah Al-Haaqqah too the Resurrection has been described by this very epithet (verse 4). One should remember that here the whole Hereafter, from the first stage of Resurrection to the last stage of judgment and meting out of rewards and punishments is being depicted together.

2. What is the striking calamity.

مَا الْقَارِعَةُ

3. And what do you know what is the striking calamity.

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ

4. The Day when people shall be like scattered moths.

يَوْمَ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ
الْمَبْثُوثِ ﴿٤﴾

5. And the mountains shall be like carded wool.*²

وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ
الْمَنْفُوشِ ﴿٥﴾

*² This will be the first stage of Resurrection, when in consequence of the great disaster the whole of the present order of the world will be overthrown; the people will then be running about in confusion and bewilderment like so many scattered moths around a light; and the mountains will be flying about like carded wool of different colors. The mountains have been compared to wool of different colors because of the existence of a variety of colors in them

6. Then,*³ he whose scales are heavy.

فَأَمَّا مَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ ﴿٦﴾

*³ From here begins description of the second stage of Resurrection when after having been resurrected men will appear in the court of God.

7. Shall be in a state of bliss.

فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ ﴿٧﴾

8. And, he whose scales are light.*⁴

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ ﴿٨﴾

*⁴ The word *mawazin* in the original can be plural of *mauzun* as well as, of *mizan*. In the first case, *mawazin* would imply the deeds which might have some weight in the

sight of Allah and be, thus, worthy of appreciation. In the second case, *mawazin* would imply scales of a balance. In the first case, the meaning of the *mawazin's* being heavier or lighter is that the good deeds will be heavy or light as against the evil deeds, for in the sight of Allah only good deeds have any weight and worth. In the second case. the meaning of the *mawazin's* being heavy is that the scale of the good deeds will be heavier than the scale of evil deeds, in Allah Almighty's Balance of Justice, and their being light means that the scale of good deeds will be lighter than the scale of evil deeds. Besides, in Arabic idiom the word *mizan* is also used for weight (*wazan*); accordingly, the weight's being heavy or light implies the good deeds being heavy or light. In any case, whether *mawazin* is taken in the meaning of *mauzun* or of *mizan*, or of *wazan*, the intention remains the same, which is that the basis of judgment in the divine court will be whether the provision of the deeds that a man has brought is weighty or weightless, or whether his good deeds are heavier than his evil deeds or lighter. This theme has occurred at several places in the Quran which explains the full meaning. In Surah Al-Aaraf it has been said: On that Day the weight will be identical with the truth: accordingly, those whose scales, will be heavy will alone come out successful; and those whose scales are light will be the ones who will have incurred loss upon themselves. (verses 8-9). In Surah Al-Kahf, it was said: O Prophet, say to them: Should we tell you who are the most un-successful people and miserable failures in regard to their deeds? They are those whose all endeavors in the worldly life had

gone astray from the right way, but they were under the delusion that everything they were doing, was rightly directed. These are the people who rejected the revelations of their Lord and did not believe that they would ever go before Him. Therefore, all their deeds were lost, for We will assign no weight to them on the Day of Resurrection. (verses 103-105). In Surah Al-Anbiya: On the Day of Resurrection, We will set up just and accurate balances so that no one will be wronged in the least in any way; even if it be an act equal in weight to a grain of mustard seed, We will bring it forth (to be weighed) and We suffice for reckoning. (verse 47). These verses show that kufr and denial of the truth is in itself such a stupendous evil that it will certainly lower the scale of evils, and there will be no good act of the disbelievers, which may have any weight in the scale of good deeds so that its scale of goodness may become heavy. However, in the scales of the believer there will be the weight of faith as well as the weight of the good deeds which he performed in the world. On the other hand, every evil done by him will be placed in the scale of evil deeds and then it will be seen whether his scale of the good deeds is heavier or his scale of the evil deeds.

9. So his refuge shall be the deep pit (of Hell).^{*5}

فَأُمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ

*5 The words in the original are: *ummu hu hawiyah*: his mother will be *hawiyah*. *Hawiyah* is from *hawa*, which means to fall from a height to a depth, and *hawiyah* is the deep pit into which something falls. Hell has been called *Hawiyah* because it will be very deep and the culprits will

be thrown into it from the height. As for the words, his mother will be *Hawiyah*, they mean: Just as the mother's lap is the child's abode, so Hell will be the culprits' only abode in the Hereafter.

10. And what do you know what it is.

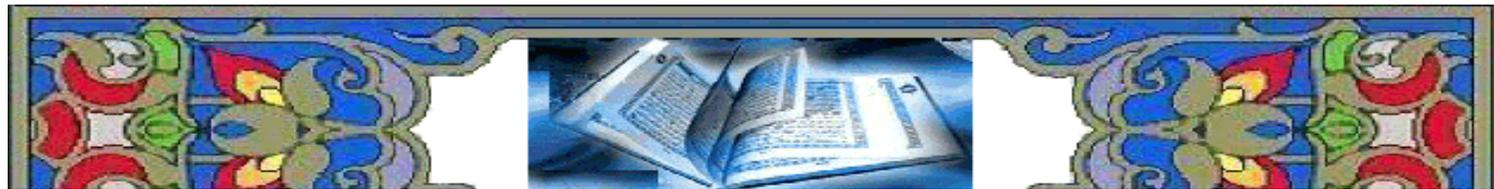
وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا هِيَ

11. A raging Fire!^{*6}

نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ

*6 That is, it will not merely be a deep pit but will also be full of raging fire.





التَّكَاثُرُ At-Takathur

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah taken its name from the word *at-takathur* in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Abu Hayyan and Shaukani say that this Surah, according to all commentators, is Makki, and the same is the well known view according to Iman Suyuti. However, there are some traditions, on the basis of which it is considered a Madani Surah, and they are as follows:

Ibn Abi Hatim has cited Abu Buraidah as saying that this Surah was sent down concerning the two tribes, Bani Harithah and Bani al-Harth, of the Ansar. The two tribes had first recounted the glories and illustrious deeds of their living men; then they had gone to the grave yard and bragged of the glorious deeds of their dead. Thereupon the divine revelation *Alhakum at takathur* came down. But, if the practice of the companions and their successors concerning the occasions of revelation, is kept in view, this tradition is no argument to prove that Surah *At Takathur* was sent down on that very occasion, but it shows that this

Surah fully applied to the act of the two tribes.

Imam Bukhari and Ibn Jarir have cited this view of Ubayy bin Kaab: We took the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying: If the son of Adam had two valleys full of wealth, he would long for a third valley; the son of Adam's belly cannot be filled but by earth, to be from the Quran until *Alhakum at takathur* was sent down.

This *Hadith* has been regarded as an argument for Surah *At-Takathur* to be a Madani Surah on the ground that Ubayy had become a Muslim in Madinah. But Ubayy's this statement does not indicate in what sense the companions regarded this saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as belonging to the Quran. If it means that they regarded it as a verse of the Quran, it cannot be acceptable, for a great majority of the companions consisted of the men who were well aware of each and every word of the Quran; they could not have the misunderstanding that the Hadith was a verse of the Quran. And if its belonging to the Quran is taken to mean its being derived from the Quran, the tradition can also mean that when the companions who entered Islam in Madinah, heard this Surah for the first time from the Prophet (peace be upon him), they thought that it had been revealed just then, and then about the Prophet's (peace be upon him) above saying they formed the idea that it was derived from this very Surah.

Ibn Jarir, Tirmidhi, Ibn al Mundhir and other traditionists have related this view of Ali: We were in doubt about the torment of the grave until *Alhakum at takathur* was sent down. This view has been regarded as an argument for

Surah *At-Takathur* to be Madani on the ground that the torment of the grave was first mentioned at Al-Madinah; no mention of it was ever made at Makkah. But this is wrong. In the Makki Surahs of the Quran, the torment of the grave has been mentioned at many places so clearly that there can be no room for any such doubt; for example, see Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 93; Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 28; Surah Al-Muminun, Ayats 99-100; Surah Al-Momin, Ayats 45-46, which are all Makki Surahs. Therefore, if anything is proved by Ali's saying, it is that Surah *At-Takathur* had been revealed before the revelation of the above mentioned Makki Surahs and its revelation had removed the companions doubt about the torment of the grave.

That is why, in spite of these traditions, a great majority of the commentators agree that this Surah is Makki. In our opinion this is not only a Makki Surah but in view of its contents and style it is one of the earlier Surahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

In it the people have been warned of the evil consequences of world worship because of which they spend their lives in acquiring more and more of worldly wealth, material benefits and pleasures, and position and power, till death, and in vying with one another and bragging and boasting about their acquisitions. This one pursuit has so occupied them that they are left with no time or opportunity for pursuing the higher things in life. After warning the people of its evil end they have been told as if to say: These blessings which you are amassing and enjoying

thoughtlessly are not mere blessings but are also a means of your trial. For each one of these blessings and comforts you will surely be called to account in the Hereafter.

1. The mutual rivalry for (worldly) increase diverts you.*1

أَلْهَكُمُ التَّكَاثُرُ

*1 The words *alhakum at-takathur* of the original are too vast in meaning to be fully explained in a passage. *Alhakum* is from *lahv* which originally means heedlessness, but in Arabic this word is used for every occupation which engrosses man so completely that he becomes heedless of the more important things in life.

When the word *alhakum* is made from this root, it will mean that man has become so obsessed with some occupation that he has lost sight of everything more important than it. He is preoccupied with it, is wholly lost in pursuit of it and this obsession has rendered him heedless of everything else in life.

Takathur is from *kathrat*, which has three meanings:

- (1) That man should strive to gain more and more of everything.
- (2) That the people should vie with one another for gaining more and more.
- (3) That they should brag and boast of possessing greater abundance of things than others.

Therefore, *alhakum at-takathur* would mean: *Takathur* (greed for more and more) has so occupied you that its pursuit has made you heedless of every higher thing in life. In this sentence it has not been indicated as to abundance of

what is meant in *takathur*, heedlessness of what is implied in *alhakum*, and who are the addressees of *alhakum*. In the absence of such an explanation, the words become applicable in their most general and extensive meaning. Thus, *takathur* does not remain restricted in meaning and application but applies to all the gains and benefits, pleasures and comforts, the passion for acquiring more and more means of power and authority, vying with others in pursuit of these and bragging and boasting of their abundance. Likewise, the addressees of *alhakum* also do not remain limited but the people of all ages, in their individual as well as collective capacity, become its addressees. It gives the meaning that the passion for acquiring more and more of the worldly wealth, vying with others in pursuit of it and bragging and boasting of its possession has affected individuals as well as societies. Likewise, since in *alhakum at-takathur* it has not been pointed out as to which people are engrossed in acquisitiveness and of what they are rendered heedless, it has also become very extensive in meaning. It means that the passion for piling up more and more has made the people heedless of everything more important than it. They have become heedless of God, of the Hereafter, of the moral bounds and moral responsibilities, of the rights of others and of their own obligations to render those rights. They are only after raising the standard of living and do not bother even if the standard of humanity be falling. They want to acquire more and more of wealth no matter how and by what means it is acquired. They desire to have more and more

means of comfort and physical enjoyment and, overwhelmed by this greed, they have become wholly insensitive as to the ultimate end of this way of living. They are engaged in a race with others to acquire more and more of power, more and more of forces, more and more of weapons, and they have no idea that all this is a means of filling God's earth with tyranny and wickedness and of destroying humanity itself. In short, *takathur* has many forms, which have engrossed individuals as well as societies so completely that they have become heedless of everything beyond the world, its benefits and pleasures.

2. Until you reach the graves.*2

حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ ﴿٢﴾

*2 That is, you spend your whole life in the same craze and endeavor, until the time comes when you must die and leave the world.

3. Nay, Soon you shall know.*3

كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣﴾

*3 That is, you are under the delusion that the abundance of the worldly goods and surpassing others in it is real progress and success, whereas the opposite is the case. Soon you will know its evil end and you will realize that it was a stupendous error in which you remained involved throughout your life. Soon may mean the Hereafter. That is, for the Being Whose sight comprehends all ages, from eternity to eternity, a few thousand years or a few hundred thousand years can only be a short span of the eternal time. Soon it can also mean death, for death is not very far away from any man, and soon after death man will come to know

whether the occupations which engaged him throughout life were a means of good fortune and success for him, or of misfortune and failure.

4. Then nay, you shall soon know.

ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾

5. Nay, if you knew with a sure knowledge.

كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٥﴾

6. You shall surely see Hell.

لَتَرُونَ الْجَحِيمَ ﴿٦﴾

7. Then you shall see it with the eye of certainty.

ثُمَّ لَتَرُونَهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٧﴾

8. Then, you shall surely be asked that Day about the blessings.^{*4}

ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٨﴾

^{*4} “Then” in this sentence does not mean that accountability will be held after the culprits have been cast into Hell, but it means: Then We give you the news that you will be questioned about these comforts of life, and obviously this questioning will be held at the time of accountability in the divine court. Its main argument is that in several *Ahadith* it has been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that the believers and the disbelievers, both will have to account for the blessings granted by Allah. However, the people who did not show ingratitude but spent their lives as grateful servants of Allah, will come out successful from the accountability, and those who proved thankless to Allah for His blessings and committed ingratitude by word or by deed, or by both; will emerge as

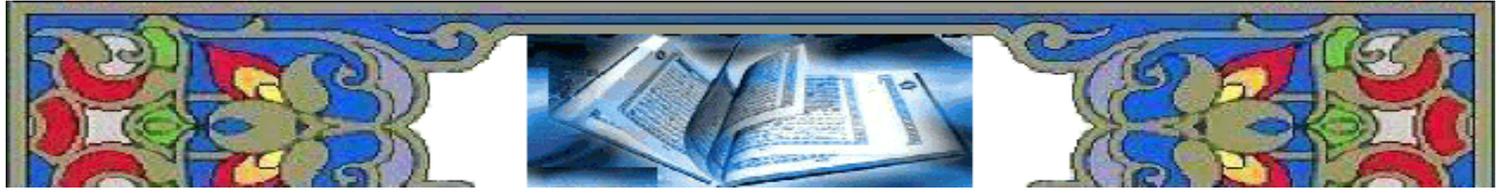
failures.

Jabir bin Abdullah says: The Prophet (peace be upon him) once visited us and we served him with fresh dates and gave him cool water to drink. Thereupon he said: These are of the blessings about which you will be questioned. (Musnad Ahmad, Nasai, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah, Abd bin Humaid, Baihaqi in *Ash-Shuab*).

Abu Hurairah has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) once asked Abu Bakr and Umar to accompany him to the place of Abul-Haitham bin at-Taihan Ansari. Thus, he took them to the oasis of Ibn at-Taihan. The latter brought a bunch of dates and placed it before them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Why didn't you pluck the dates yourself? He said: I thought you would yourselves select and eat dates of your choice. So, they ate the dates and drank cool water. At the end, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: By Him in Whose hand is my life: this is of the blessings about which you will be questioned on the Resurrection Day, the cool shade, the cool dates, the cool water. (This tradition has been narrated in different ways by Muslim, Ibn Majah, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Jarir, Abu Yala and others, on the authority of Abu Hurairah. In some of which the name of the Ansari companion has been mentioned and in some he has been referred to as a person from among the Ansar. This incident has been related with several details by Ibn Abi Hatim from Umar and by Imam Ahmad from Abu Asib, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) freed slave. Ibn Hibban and Ibn Marduyah have related a tradition from

Abdullah bin Abbas, which shows that an almost similar thing had happened in the house of Abu Ayyub Ansari. These *Ahadith* make it explicit that not only the disbelievers but the righteous believers too will be questioned. As for the blessings which Allah has bestowed on man, they are unlimited and countless. There are many blessings of which man is not even conscious. The Quran says: If you try to count the blessings of Allah, you will not be able to calculate them. (Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 34). Countless of them are the blessings which Allah has granted directly to man, and a large number of these are the blessings which man is granted through his own skill and endeavor. About the blessings that accrue to man in consequence of his own labor and skill, he will have to render an account as to how he acquired them and in what ways he spent them. In respect of the blessings directly bestowed by Allah, he will have to give an account as to how he used them. And in respect of all the blessings, on the whole, he will have to tell whether he had acknowledged that those blessings had been granted by Allah and whether he had expressed gratitude for them to Allah with his heart, and by word and deed, or whether he thought he had received all that accidentally, or as a gift from many gods, or whether he held the belief that although those were the blessings of One God, in their bestowal many other beings also had a part, and for that very reason he had taken them as his gods and worshipped and thanked them as such.





Al-Asr الْعَصْر

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word *al-asr* occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Although Mujahid, Qatadah and Muqatil regard it as a Madani Surah, yet a great majority of the commentators opine that it is Makki; its subject matter also testifies that it must have been sent down in the earlier stage at Makkah, when the message of Islam was being presented in brief but highly impressive sentences so that the listeners who heard them once could not forget them even if they wanted to, for they were automatically committed to memory.

Theme and Subject Matter

This Surah is a matchless specimen of comprehensiveness and brevity. A whole world of meaning has been compressed into its few brief words, which is too vast in content to be fully expressed even in a book. In it, in a clear and plain way it has been stated what is the way to true success for man and what is the way to ruin and destruction for him. Imam Shafi has very rightly said that

if the people only considered this Surah well, it alone would suffice them for their guidance. How important this Surah was in the sight of the companions can be judged from the tradition cited from Abdullah bin Hisn ad-Darimi Abu Madinah, according to which whenever any two of them met they would not part company until they had recited Surah Al-Asr to each other. (Tabarani).

1. By the Time.

وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾

2. Man is surely in loss.

إِنَّا لِلْإِنْسَانِ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾

3. Except those who believed and did righteous deeds, and advised each other to truth, and advised each other to patience.*¹

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿٣﴾

*¹ In this Surah an oath has been sworn by the Time to impress the point that man is in sheer loss and only those people are an exception from the loss who are characterized by four qualities:

- (1) Faith.
- (2) Righteous deeds.
- (3) Exhorting one another to truth.
- (4) Exhorting one another to patience.

Let us consider each of these parts separately in order to fully understand the meanings.

As for the oath, we have explained several times above that Allah has not sworn an oath by any of the created objects on account of its glory or its excellence and wonderful

qualities but for the reason that it testifies to the truth which is meant to be established. Therefore, the oath by Time signifies that Time is witness to the truth that man is in sheer loss except for the people who possess the four qualities.

The word time is used for the past as well as for the passing time in which the present, in fact, does not signify any long stretch of time. Every moment, when it has passed, becomes past, and every moment of the future, when it is passing, becomes present, and when it has passed, becomes past. Here, since the oath has been sworn by time absolute, both kinds of time are included in its meaning. The oath by the past time means that human history testifies that the people who were without these qualities, eventually incurred loss, and in order to understand the significance of the oath by the passing time, one should understand that the time which is now passing is, in fact, the time which has been given to every single individual and every single nation to work in the world. Its example is of the time which is allotted to a candidate for answering his question-paper in the examination hall. The speed with which this time is passing can be estimated from the movement of the second-hand in the watch. Even a second is a considerable amount of time, for during this very second light travels 186,000 miles, and in the Kingdom of God there may as well be many things which move even faster than light, but are not yet known to man. However, if the speed of the passing time be regarded the same as of the movement of the second-hand, and we consider that whatever act, good or

bad, we perform and whatever occupation we pursue, takes place in the limited span of age that we have been given for work in the world, we feel that our real wealth is this very time, which is passing so quickly. Imam Razi has cited a scholar as saying: I understood the meaning of Surah Al-Asr from an ice-seller, who was calling aloud for the attention of the people repeatedly in the bazar: Have mercy on the one whose wealth is melting away! Hearing what he was crying I said to myself: this then is the meaning of *Wal-asri innal-insana lafi khusrin*. The age-limit that man has been allotted is passing quickly like the melting away of ice. If it is wasted, or spent in wrong pursuits, it will be sheer loss to man. Thus, swearing an oath by the Time what has been said in this Surah, means that the fast passing Time is witness that devoid of these four qualities in whatever occupation and work man is spending his limited span of life, he is engaged in bad bargains. Only such people are engaged in good bargains, who work in the world, characterized by the four qualities. It would be just like calling attention of the candidate, who was spending the time allotted for solving the question-paper in some other pursuit, to the wall clock in the examination hall, to tell him that the passing time bore witness that he was causing loss to himself; the candidate benefiting by the Time was he who was using every moment of the allotted time in solving the paper.

Though the word man has been used in the singular, in the following sentences those people have been made an exception from it, who are characterized by the four

qualities. Therefore, one will have to admit that here the word man has been used as a collective noun, denoting a class, and it applies equally to individuals, groups, nations, and entire mankind. Thus, the general statement that whoever is devoid of the above four qualities is in loss, would be proved in any case whether it is a person who is devoid of these, or a nation, or all men of the world. It will be just like giving the verdict that poison is fatal for man; it will mean that poison is fatal in any case whether it is taken by an individual, or a nation, or all the people of the world. Poison's being fatal is an unchangeable truth; it does not make any difference whether one man has taken it, or a nation has decided to take it, or all the people of the world collectively have agreed to take poison. Precisely in the same way this truth by itself is unchangeable that man's being devoid of the above four qualities brings him loss. The general rule is not at all affected even if one man is devoid of these, or a nation, or all the people of the world agree that they would exhort one another to disbelief, immorality, falsehood and servitude to the self.

Now, let us see in what sense has the Quran used the word *khusr* (loss). Lexically, *khusr* is an antonym of *nafa* (profit); in trade this word is used in the case when loss results from one bargain as well as in the case when the whole business is running in loss, and also in the case when man loses all his capital and becomes bankrupt. The Quran has made this word a special term of its own and uses it as an antonym of *falah* (true success). And just as its concept of *falah* is not merely synonymous with worldly prosperity but

comprehends man's true success from the world till the Hereafter, so its concept of *khusr* (loss) is also not merely synonymous with worldly failure or distress but comprehends man's real failure and disappointment from the world till the Hereafter. We have explained the Quranic concept of both *falah* and *khusran* at several places before which need not be repeated here. (For this please see E.N. 9 of Surah Al-Aaraf; E.N. 30 of Surah Al-Anfal; E.N. 23 of Surah Yunus; E.N. 102 of Surah Bani Israil; E.N. 17 of Surah Al-Hajj; E Ns 1, 2, 11, 50 of Surah Al-Muminoon; E.N. 4 of Surah Luqman; E.N. 34 of Surah Az-Zumar). Besides, one should also understand that although according to the Quran true success is man's success in the Hereafter and real loss his failure there, yet in this world too what the people describe as success is not, in fact, real success but its end in this world itself is failure, and what they regard as loss is not, in fact, loss but a means of true success even in this world. This truth has been stated by the Quran at several places and we have explained it everywhere accordingly. (Please see E.N. 99 of Surah An-Nahl; E.N. 53 of Surah Maryam; E.N. 105 of Surah TaHa; E.Ns 3-5 of Surah Al-Lail). Thus, when the Quran states conclusively and absolutely that man is certainly in loss, it implies loss both in this world and in the Hereafter. And when it says that only such people are secure from this loss, who are characterized by the four qualities, it implies their being secure from loss and attaining true success both here and in the Hereafter.

Now, let us consider the four qualities on the existence of

which depends man's being secure from loss and failure. Of these the first quality is *Iman* (Faith). Although this word at some places in the Quran has been used in the meaning of only verbal affirmation of Faith (e.g. in Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 137; Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 54; Surah Al-Anfal, Ayats 20, 27; Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 38; Surah As-Saff, Ayat 2), it has primarily been used in the meaning of believing sincerely and faithfully, and in the Arabic language this word has this very meaning. Lexically, *amanu lahu* means *saddaqa-hu wa tamada alai-hi*: affirmed him and put faith in him, and *amana bi-hi* means *aiqana bi-hi*: had full faith in him. The Faith which the Quran regards as true Faith has been explained in the following verses:

In fact, true believers are those who believed in Allah and His Messenger, then entertained no doubt. (Surah Al-Hujurat, Ayat 15).

Those who said: Allah is our Lord, and then stood steadfast by it. (Surah HaMim As-Sajdah, Ayat 30).

True believers are those whose hearts tremble with awe, whenever Allah is mentioned to them. (Surah Al-Anfaal, Ayat 2).

Those who have believed adore Allah most ardently. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 165).

Nay, (O Prophet), by your Lord, they can never become believers until they accept you as judge for the decision of the disputes between them, and then surrender to your decision with entire submission without the least resentment in their hearts. (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 65).

The following verse is even more explicit as regards the

distinction between verbal affirmation of Faith and true Faith; it says that what is actually desirable is true Faith and not mere verbal affirmation of the Faith:

O you who profess to have believed, believe sincerely in Allah and His Messenger. (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 136).

As for the question, what has one to believe in, in order to have true faith? This has also been answered and explained in the Quran most explicitly. First, it implies that one has to believe in Allah, not merely in His Being but in the sense that He alone is God; no one else is an associate in His Godhead. He alone is worthy that man should worship, serve and obey Him. He alone can make or mar destinies; man should invoke Him alone and have trust in Him alone. He alone can enjoin things and forbid things; man is under obligation to obey Him and refrain from what he forbids. He sees everything and hears everything; not to speak of any act of man, even his motives and intentions with which he has done an act, are not hidden from Him. Secondly, one has to believe in the Messenger, in the sense that he is a guide and leader appointed by Allah: whatever he has taught, is from Allah, is based upon the truth and has to be acknowledged and accepted. This belief in Apostleship also includes faith in the angels, the Prophets, the divine Books and in the Quran itself, for this forms part of the teachings which the Messenger of Allah has given. Thirdly, one has to believe in the Hereafter, in the sense that man's present life is not his first and last life, but after death man has to be resurrected, to render an account to God of the deeds done in the present life, and has to be rewarded for the good

deeds and punished for the evil deeds accordingly. This Faith provides a firm basis for morality and character, upon which can be built the edifice of a pure life, whereas the truth is that without such Faith, the life of man, however beautiful and pleasing outwardly, is like a ship without an anchor, which is at the mercy of the waves wherever they may take it.

After Faith the second quality required to save man from loss is to perform righteous deeds (*salihah*). *Salihat* comprehends all kinds of virtuous and good deeds. However, according to the Quran, no act can be a good act unless it is based on Faith and it is performed in obedience to the guidance given by Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him). That is why in the Quran exhortation to perform good deeds is preceded everywhere by Faith, and in this Surah too it has been mentioned after the Faith. Nowhere in the Quran has a deed without Faith been called a good deed, nor any reward promised for a deed performed without Faith. On the contrary, this also is a fact that only that Faith is reliable and beneficial, the sincerity of which is proved by man's own act and deed, otherwise Faith without righteous deeds would be a false claim refuted by the man himself when in spite of this claim he follows a way opposed to the way taught by Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him). The relationship between Faith and righteous deed is of the seed and the tree. Unless the seed is sown in the soil no tree can grow out of it. But if the seed is in the soil and no tree is growing out of it, it would mean that the seed is lost in the soil. On this very

basis whatever good news has been given in the Quran, has been given to the people who believe and do good deeds, and the same has been reiterated in this Surah. What man requires to do after the Faith in order to remain secure from loss is to perform righteous deeds. In other words, mere Faith without righteous deeds cannot save man from loss.

The above two qualities are such as must be possessed by every single individual. Then, the Surah mentions two further qualities, which a man must have in order to be saved from loss. They are that the people who believe and do good deeds must exhort one another to truth and to patience. This means that in the first place, a believing and righteous people should not live as individuals but should create a believing and righteous society by their combination. Second, that every individual of this society must feel his responsibility not to let the society become degenerate. Thus, all its members are duty bound to exhort one another to truth and to patience.

Truth is the antonym of falsehood, and generally it is used in , two meanings:

(1) A correct and right thing which is in accordance with justice and truth, whether it relates to belief and faith or to mundane affairs.

(2) The right which is obligatory on man to render, whether it is the right of God, the right of man, or the right of one's own self. Thus, to exhort one another to truth means that the society of the believers should not be so insensitive that falsehood may thrive and things against justice and truth

be done in it, and the people be watching everything indifferently. On the contrary, it should be a living, sensitive society so that whenever and wherever falsehood appears, the upholders of the Truth should rise up against it, and no member of the society rest content with only himself adhering to truth, righteousness, justice and rendering the rights of others, but should exhort others also to adopt the same way of life. This is the spirit that can ensure security of a society against moral degeneration and decay. If a society becomes devoid of this spirit, it cannot remain secure from loss, and eventually even those people are also affected by the loss who might in their own way be adhering to the truth, but were insensitive to violation of the truth in their society. The same has been stated in Surah Al-Maidah, thus: Those who adopted the way of disbelief among the children of Israel were cursed by the tongue of David and of Jesus, son of Mary, because they had grown rebellious and become transgressors: they would not forbid one another to do the wrong deeds they committed. (verses 78-79). Then the same idea has been expressed in Surah Al-Aaraf, thus: When the children of Israel totally forgot the teachings (of observing the Sabbath), We seized with a severe scourge all those who were transgressors, and We saved those who used to forbid evil (verse 165); and in Surah Al-Anfal, thus: And guard against that mischief which will not bring punishment in particular to the mischief-makers alone from among you. (verse 25). That is why to enjoin what is good and to forbid what is evil, has been enjoined on the Muslim community

as a duty (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 104) and the community which performs this duty has been declared to be the best community (Surah Aal-Imran, Ayat 110).

Besides exhorting to the truth, the other thing which has been declared as a necessary condition for keeping the believers and their society secure from loss is that the members of the society should enjoin patience upon one another. That is, they should enjoin upon one another to bear with fortitude and steadfastness the difficulties, hardships, trials, losses and deprivations which befall the one who adheres to the truth and supports it. Each one of them should encourage the other to bear up against adversity steadfastly. (For further explanation, see E.N. 16 of Surah Ad-Dahr; E.N. 14 of Surah Al-Balad).



Al-Humazah الْهُمَزَة

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word *humazah* occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

All commentators agree that it is a Makki Surah; a study of its subject matter and style shows that this is one of the early Surahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

In it some of the evils prevalent among the materialistic hoarders of wealth in the pre-Islamic days have been condemned. Every Arab knew that they actually existed in their society; they regarded them as evils and nobody thought they were good. After calling attention to this kind of ugly character, the ultimate end in the Hereafter of the people having this kind of character has been stated. Both these things (i.e. the character and his fate in the Hereafter) have been depicted in a way which makes the listener reach the conclusion that such a man deserves to meet such an end. And since in the world, people of such character do not suffer any punishment, but seem to be thriving instead,

the occurrence of the Hereafter becomes absolutely inevitable.

If this Surah is read in the sequence of the Surahs beginning with *Az-Zilzal*, one can fully understand how the fundamental beliefs of Islam and its teachings were impressed on the peoples' minds in the earlier stage in Makkah. In Surah *Az-Zilzal*, it was said that in the Hereafter man's full record will be placed before him and not an atom's weight of good or evil done by him in the world will have been left unrecorded. In Surah *Al-Adiyat*, attention was drawn to the plunder and loot, bloodshed and vandalism, prevailing in Arabia before Islam; then making the people realize, that the way the powers given by God were being abused, was indeed an expression of sheer ingratitude to Him. They were told that the matter would not end up in the world, but in the second life after death not only their deeds but their intentions and motives too would be examined, and their Lord knows well which of them deserves what reward or punishment. In Surah *Al-Qariah*, after depicting Resurrection, the people were warned that in the Hereafter a man's good or evil end will be dependent on whether the scale of his good deeds was heavier, or the scale of his evil deeds was heavier. In Surah *At-Takathur* the people were taken to task for the materialistic mentality because of which they remained occupied in seeking increase in worldly benefits, pleasures, comforts and position, and in vying with one another for abundance of everything until death overtook them. Then, warning them of the evil consequences of their

heedlessness, they were told that the world was not an open table of food for them to pick and choose whatever they pleased, but for every single blessing that they were enjoying in the world, they would have to render an account to their Lord and Sustainer as to how they obtained it and how they used it. In Surah *Al-Asr* it was declared that each member, each group and each community of mankind, even the entire world of humanity, was in manifest loss, if its members were devoid of Faith and righteous deeds and of the practice of exhorting others to truth and patience. Immediately after this comes Surah *Al-Humazah* in which after presenting a specimen of leadership of the pre-Islamic age of ignorance, the people have been asked the question: What should such a character deserve if not loss and perdition?

1. Woe to every slanderer,
backbiter.*¹

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ

*¹ The words used in the original are *humazat il-lumazah*. In Arabic *hamz* and *lamz* are so close in meaning that they are sometimes used as synonyms and sometimes with a little difference in the shade of meaning. But this difference is not definite and clear, for the meaning given to *hamz* by some Arabic speaking people themselves is given to *lamz* by other Arabic speaking peoples. On the contrary, the meaning given to *lamz* by some people is given to *hamz* by others. Here, since both the words appear together and the words *humazat il-lumazah* have been used, they give the meaning that it has become a practice with the slanderer

that he insults and holds others in contempt habitually. He raises his finger and winks at one man, finds fault with the lineage and person of another, taunts one in the face and backbites another; creates differences between friends and stirs up divisions between brothers; calls the people names and satirizes and defames them.

2. Who gathers wealth and counts it over and over again.*2

الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ

*2 This second sentence after the first sentence by itself gives the meaning that he slanders others because of his pride of wealth. The words *jama a malan* for collecting money suggest the abundance of wealth; then the words counting it over and over again depict the person's miserliness and his selfish hoarding of wealth.

3. He thinks that his wealth will remain with him for ever.*3

يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ

*3 Another meaning also can be: He thinks that his wealth will make him immortal. That is, he is so engrossed in amassing wealth and counting it over and over again that he has forgotten death and he never bothers to consider that a time will come when he will have to depart from the world empty-handed, leaving everything behind.

4. Nay, never! He will be cast*4 into the crushing place.*5

كَلَّا لَيُنْبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ

*4 The word in the original is *la yunbadhanna*. *Nabdh* in

Arabic is used for throwing away a thing regarding it as worthless and mean. This by itself indicates that because of his wealth he thinks that he is a great man but on the Day Of Resurrection he will be hurled into Hell as a mean and contemptible object.

*5 The word *hutamah* in the original is from *hatm*, which means to smash, crush and break into pieces. Hell has been described by this epithet because it will crush and break to pieces whatever is thrown into it because of its depth and its fire.

5. And what do you know what the crushing place is.

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحُطَمَةُ

6. The Fire of Allah,^{*6} kindled brightly.

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمَوْقَدَةُ

*6 Nowhere else in the Quran has the fire of Hell been called the fire of Allah. Here, its ascription to Allah not only expresses its dreadfulness but it also shows how the wrath and contempt of Allah envelops those who become proud and arrogant with the worldly wealth. That is why Allah has described that fire as His own Fire into which they will be hurled.

7. Which shall rise up to the hearts.^{*7}

الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ

*7 *Tattaliu* is from *ittalaa*, which means to climb and mount to the top, and also to be aware and informed. *Afidah* is plural of *fuwad*, which means the heart. But this word is not used for the organ which throbs in the breast, but for the seat of man's understanding and consciousness, his

feelings and desires, beliefs and thoughts, motives and intentions, Thus, one meaning of the rising of the fire to the hearts is that this fire will reach the place which is the centre of man's evil thoughts, false beliefs, impure desires and feelings, and wicked motives and intentions. The second meaning is that the Fire of Allah will not be blind like the fire of the world, which burns up the deserving and the non-deserving alike, but it will reach the heart of every culprit and discover the nature of his crime and then punish him according to his guilt.

8. Indeed, it will be covered down on them.*8

إِنهَا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّوَصَّدَةٌ

*8 That is, after the culprits have been thrown into it, Hell will be closed in upon them without leaving any slit or opening anywhere, in order to choke and suffocate them.

9. (In a way that they shall be (enclosed) by tall columns.*9

فِي عَمَدٍ مُمَدَّدَةٍ

*9 *Fi amad-im-mumaddahah* can have several meanings:
(1) That the gates of Hell will be closed and tall columns will be erected on them.
(2) That the culprits will be tied to the tall columns.
(3) According to Ibn Abbas, the flames of the fire shall be rising high like tall columns.



آلْفِيل Al-Feel

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah derives its name from the word *ashabil feel* in the very first verse.

Period of Revelation

This is unanimously a Makki Surah; and if it is studied against its historical background it appears that it must have been sent down in the very early stage at Makkah.

Historical Background

As we have explained in E. N. 4 of Surah *Al-Buruj*, in retaliation for the persecution of the followers of the Prophet Jesus Christ (peace be on him) in Najran by the Jewish ruler Dhu-Nuwas of Yemen, the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia invaded Yemen and put an end to the Himyarite rule there, and in 525 A. D. this whole land passed under Abyssinian control. This happened, in fact, through collaboration between the Byzantine empire of Constantinople and the Abyssinian kingdom, for the Abyssinians at that time had no naval fleet. The fleet was provided by Byzantium and Abyssinia sent 70,000 of its troops by it across the Red Sea to Yemen. At the outset one

should understand that all this did not happen under the religious zeal but there were also economic and political factors working behind it, and probably these were the real motive, and retaliation for the Christian blood was just an excuse. Since the time the Byzantine empire had occupied Egypt and Syria, it had been trying to gain control over the trade going on between East Africa, India, Indonesia, etc., and the Byzantine dominions, from the Arabs, who had been controlling it for centuries, so as to earn maximum profits by eliminating the intermediary Arab merchants. For this purpose, in 24 or 25 B. C., Caesar Augustus sent a large army under the Roman general, Aelius Gallus, which landed on the western coast of Arabia, in order to intercept and occupy the sea route between southern Arabia and Syria. But the campaign failed to achieve its objective on account of the extreme geographical conditions of Arabia. After this, the Byzantines brought their fleet into the Red Sea and put an end to the Arab trade which they carried out by sea, with the result that they were left only with the land route. To capture this very land route they conspired with the Abyssinian Christians and aiding them with their fleet helped them to occupy Yemen.

The Arab historians statements about the Abyssinian army that invaded Yemen are different. Hafiz Ibn Kathir says that it was led by two commanders, Aryat and Abrahah, and according to Muhammad bin Ishaq, its commander was Aryat, and Abrahah was included in it. Both agree that Aryat and Abrahah fell, Aryat was killed in the encounter, and Abrahah took possession of the country; then somehow

he persuaded the Abyssinian king to appoint him his viceroy over Yemen. On the contrary, the Greek and Syrian historians state that when after the conquest of Yemen, the Abyssinians started putting to death the Yamanite chiefs, who had put up resistance, one of the chiefs, named As-Sumayfi Ashwa (whom the Greek historians call Esymphaeus) yielded to the Abyssinians and promising to pay tribute obtained the Abyssinian king's warrant to be governor over Yemen. But the Abyssinian army revolted against him and made Abrahah governor in his place. This man was the slave of a Greek merchant of the Abyssinian seaport of Adolis, who by clever diplomacy had come to wield great influence in the Abyssinian army occupying Yemen. The troops sent by the Negus to punish him either warned him or were defeated by him. Subsequently, after the death of the king, his successor was reconciled to accept him as his vice regent of Yemen. (The Greek historians write him as Abrames and the Syrian historians as Abraham. Abrahah perhaps is an Abyssinian variant of Abraham, for its Arabic version is Ibrahim).

This man through passage of time became an independent ruler of Yemen. He acknowledged the sovereignty of the Negus only in name and described himself as his deputy. The influence he wielded can be judged from the fact that after the restoration of the dam of Maarib in 543 A. D. he celebrated the event by holding a grand feast, which was attended by the ambassadors of the Byzantine emperor, king of Iran, king of Hirah, and king of Ghassan. Its full details are given in the inscription that Abrahah installed

on the dam. This inscription is extant and Glaser has published it. (For further details, see E. N. 37 of the commentary of Surah Saba).

After stabilizing his rule in Yemen Abrahah turned his attention to the objective which from the very beginning of this campaign had been before the Byzantine empire and its allies, the Abyssinian Christians, i.e. to spread Christianity in Arabia, on the one hand, and to capture the trade that was carried out through the Arabs between the eastern lands and the Byzantine dominions, on the other. The need for this increased because the Byzantine struggle for power against the Sasanian empire of Iran had blocked all the routes of the Byzantine trade with the East.

To achieve this objective, Abrahah built in Sana, the capital of Yemen, a magnificent cathedral, called by the Arabian historians al-Qalis, al-Qullais, or al-Qulais, this word being an Arabic version of the Greek word Ekklesia, church. According, to Muhammad bin Ishaq, after having completed the building, he wrote to the Negus, saying: I shall not rest until I have diverted the Arabs pilgrimage to it. Ibn Kathir writes that he openly declared his intention in Yemen and got it publicly announced. He, in fact, wanted to provoke the Arabs into doing something which should provide him with an excuse to attack Makkah and destroy the Kabah. Muhammad bin Ishaq says that an Arab, enraged at this public proclamation somehow went into the cathedral and defiled it. Ibn Kathir says this was done by a Quraishite and according to Muqatil bin Suleman, some young men of the Quraish had set fire to the cathedral.

Either might have happened, for Abrahah's proclamation was certainly provocative and in the ancient pre-Islamic age it cannot be impossible that an Arab, or a Quraishite youth, might have been enraged and might have defiled the cathedral, or set fire to it. But it may well also be that Abrahah himself got this done secretly by his own agent so as to have an excuse for invading Makkah and thus achieving both his objectives by destroying the Quraish and intimidating the Arabs. In any case, whatever happened, when the report reached Abrahah that the devotees of the Kabah had thus defiled his cathedral, he swore that he would not rest until he had destroyed the Kaabah.

So, in 570 or 571 A. D. he took 60,000 troops and 13 elephants (according to another tradition, 9 elephants) and set off for Makkah. On the way, first a Yamanite chief, Dhu Nafr by name, mustering an army of the Arabs, resisted him but was defeated and taken prisoner. Then in the country of Khathaam he was opposed by Nufail bin Habib al-Khathaam, with his tribe, but he too was defeated and taken prisoner, and in order to save his life he accepted to serve him as guide in the Arab country. When he reached near Taaif, Bani Thaqif felt that they would not be able to resist such a big force and feeling the danger lest he should destroy the temple of their deity Lat, too; their chief, Masud, came out to Abrahah with his men, and he told him that their temple was not the temple he had come to destroy. The temple He sought was in Makkah, and they would send with him a man to guide him there. Abrahah accepted the offer, and Bani Thaqif sent Abu Righal as

guide with him. When they reached al-Mughammas (or al-Mughammis), a place about 3 miles short of Makkah, Abu Righal died, and the Arabs stoned his grave and the practice survives to this day. They cursed the Bani Thaqif too, for in order to save the temple of Lat they had cooperated with the invaders of the House of Allah.

According to Muhammad bin Ishaq, from al-Mughammas Abrahah sent forward his vanguard and they brought him the plunder of the people of Tihamah and Quraish, which included two hundred camels of Abdul Muttalib, the grandfather of the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him). Then, he sent an envoy of his to Makkah with the message that he had not come to fight the people of Makkah but only to destroy the House (i. e. the Kabah). If they offered no resistance, there would be no cause for bloodshed. Abrahah also instructed his envoy that if the people of Makkah wanted to negotiate, he should return with their leading chief to him. The leading chief of Makkah at that time was Abdul Muttalib. The envoy went to him and delivered Abrahah's message. Abdul Muttalib replied: We have no power to fight Abrahah. This is Allah's House. If He wills He will save His House. The envoy asked him to go with him to Abrahah. He agreed and accompanied him to the king. Now Abdul Muttalib was such a dignified and handsome man that when Abrahah saw him he was much impressed; he got off his throne and sat beside him on the carpet. Then he asked him what he wanted. Abdul Muttalib replied that he wanted the king to return his camels which he had taken. Abrahah said: I was much impressed when I

saw you but your reply has brought you down in my eyes: you only demand your camels but you say nothing about this House which is your sanctuary and the sanctuary of your forefathers. He replied: I am the owner of my camels and am requesting you to return them. As for the House, it has its own Owner: He will defend it. When Abrahah said that He would not be able to defend it against him, Abdul Muttalib said that that rested between Him and him. With this Abdul Muttalib left Abrahah and he restored to him his camels.

Ibn Abbas's tradition is different. It does not mention the demand for the camels at all. According to the traditions related from him by Abd bin Humaid, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah, Hakim, Abu Nuaim and Baihaqi, he states that when Abrahah reached As-Sifah (a place situated between Arafat and Taif in the mountains near the sacred bounds of Makkah), Abdul Muttalib went to him and said: There was no need for you to come so far. You should have ordered us and we would have brought before you whatever you needed. He said: I hear that this House is the House of peace: I have come to destroy its peace. Thereupon, Abdul Muttalib said: This is Allah's House. He has not allowed anyone so far to dominate it. Abrahah replied: We will not return until we have destroyed it. Abdul Muttalib said: You may take whatever you like from us and return. Abrahah refused to budge and ordered his troops to advance, leaving Abdul Muttalib behind.

Leaving the two traditions as they are, one thing which becomes evident is that the tribes living in and around

Makkah did not have the power to fight such a big force and save the Kabah. Therefore, obviously, the Quraish did not try to put up any resistance. The Quraish on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench (Ahzab) had hardly been able to muster a strength numbering ten to twelve thousand men in spite of the alliance with the pagan and Jewish tribes; they could not have resisted an army 60,000 strong.

Muhammad bin Ishaq says that after returning from the camp of Abrahah Abdul Muttalib ordered the Quraish to withdraw from the city and go to the mountains along with their families for fear of a general massacre. Then he went to the Kabah along with some chiefs of the Quraish and taking hold of the iron ring of the door, prayed to Allah Almighty to protect His House and its keepers. There were at that time 360 idols in and around the Kabah, but on that critical moment they forgot them and implored only Allah for help. Their supplications which have been reported in the books of history do not contain any name but of Allah, the One. Ibn Hisham in his *Life of the Prophet* has cited some verses of Abdul Muttalib, which are to the following effect:

O God, a man protects his house, so protect Your House; Let not their cross and their craft tomorrow overcome Your craft.

If You will to leave them and our *qiblah* to themselves, You may do as You please.

Suhail in *Raud al-Unuf* has also cited this verse in this connection:

Help today Your devotees against the devotees of the cross and its worshipers.

Ibn Jarir has also cited Abdul Muttalib's these verses, which he had recited in his supplication;

O my Lord, I do not cherish any hope from anyone against them except You. O my Lord, protect Your House from them. The enemy of this House is Your enemy. Stop them from destroying Your settlement.

After making these supplications, Abdul Muttalib and his companions also went off to the mountains. Next morning Abrahah prepared to enter Makkah, but his special elephant, Mahmud, which was in the forefront, knelt down. It was beaten with iron bars, goaded, even scarified, but it would not get up. When they made it face south, north, or east, it would immediately start off, but as soon as they directed it towards Makkah, it knelt down. In the meantime swarms of birds appeared carrying stones in their beaks and claws and showered these on the troops. Whoever was hit would start disintegrating. According to Muhammad bin Ishaq and Ikrimah, this was smallpox, which was seen in Arabia for the first time in that year. Ibn Abbas says that whoever was struck by a pebble, would start scratching his body resulting in breaking of the skin and falling off of the flesh. In another tradition Ibn Abbas says that the flesh and blood flowed like water and bones in the body became visible. The same thing happened with Abrahah too. His flesh fell in pieces and there arose sores on his body emitting pus and blood. In confusion they withdrew and fled towards Yemen. Nufail bin Habib,

whom they had brought as guide from the country of Khatham, was searched out and asked to guide them back to Yemen, but he refused and said:

Now where can one flee when God pursues? The split nose (Abraham) is the conquered; not the conqueror.

As they withdrew they were continually falling by the way and dying. Ata bin Yasar says that all the troops did not perish at the spot; some perished there and others perished by the wayside as they withdrew. Abraham died in the country of Khatham.

This event took place at Muhassir by the Muhassab valley, between Muzdalifah and Mina. According to the Sahih of Muslim and Abu Daud, in the description of the Prophet's (peace be on him) farewell pilgrimage that Imam Jafar as-Sadiq has related from his father, Imam Muhammad Baqir, and he from Jabir bin Abdullah, he says that when the Prophet (peace be on him) proceeded from Muzdalifah to Mina, he increased his speed in the valley of Muhassir. Imam Nawawi has explained it saying that the incident of the people of the elephant had occurred there; therefore, the pilgrims have been enjoined to pass by quickly, for Muhassir is a tormented place. Imam Malik in Muatta has related that the Prophet (peace be on him) said that the whole of Muzdalifah is a fit place for staying but one should not stay in the valley of Muhassir.

In the verses of Nufail bin Habib, which Ibn Ishaq has cited, he describes this event as an eye witness:

Would that you had seen, O Rudaina, but you would not see, What we saw by the valley of Muhassab.

I praised God when I saw the birds. And I feared lest the stones should fall upon us. Everyone was asking for Nufail as though I owned the Abyssinians a debt.

This was such a momentous event that it soon spread throughout Arabia and many poets made it the subject of their laudatory poems. In these poems one thing is quite evident that everyone regarded it as a manifestation of Allah Almighty's miraculous power, and no one, even by allusion, said that the idols which were worshiped in the Kabah, had anything to do with it. For example, Abdullah ibn Az-Zibara says:

The sixty thousand returned not home,
Nor did their sick man (Abraham) survive on return.
Aad and Jurham were there before them,
And there is Allah, above the servants, Who sustains it.

Abu Qais bin Aslat says:

Rise and worship your Lord and anoint the Corners of the House of Allah between the Mountains of Makkah and Mina. When the help of the Owner of the Throne reached you, His armies repulsed them so that they were lying in dust, pelted with stones.

Not only this, but according to Umm Hani and Zubair bin al-Awwam, the Prophet (peace be on him) said: The Quraish did not worship anyone but Allah, the Only and One, for ten years (and according to others, for seven years). Umm Hani's tradition has been related by Imam Bukhari in his History and by Tabarani, Hakim, Ibn Marduyah and Baihaqi in their collections of *Ahadith*. Zubair's statement has been related by Tabarani, Ibn

Marduyah and Ibn Asakir, and this is further confirmed by the *mursal* tradition of Saeed bin al Musayyab, which Khatib Baghdadi has recorded in his *History*.

The Arabs describe the year in which this event took place as Aam al-Feel (the year of the elephants), and in the same year the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) was born. The traditionists and historians almost unanimously state that the event of the people of the elephant had occurred in Muharram and the Prophet (peace be on him) was born in Rabi al-Awwal. A majority of them states that he took birth 50 days after the event of the elephant.

Theme and Substance

If Surah al-Feel is studied in the light of the historical details as given above, one can fully understand why in this Surah only Allah's inflicting His punishment on the people of the elephant has been referred and described so briefly. It was an event of recent occurrence, and everyone in Makkah and Arabia was fully aware of it. The Arabs believed that the Kabah had been protected in this invasion not by any god or goddess but by Allah Almighty Himself. Then Allah alone had been invoked by the Quraish chiefs for help, and for quite a few years the people of Quraish having been impressed by this event, had worshiped none but Allah. Therefore, there was no need to mention the details in Surah al-Feel, but only a reference to it was enough so that the people of Quraish, in particular, and the people of Arabia, in general, should consider well in their hearts the message that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) was giving. For the only message that he gave was

that they should worship and serve none but Allah, the Only and One. Then, they should also consider that if they used force to suppress this invitation to the truth, they would only be inviting the wrath of God, Who had so completely routed and destroyed the people of the elephants.

1. Have you not seen^{*1} how your Lord dealt with the people of the elephant.^{*2}

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ
الْفِيلِ

^{*1} Though the address apparently is directed to the Prophet (peace be on him), its real addressees are not only the Quraish but all the people of Arabia, who were well aware of the event. At many places in the Quran the words *alam tara* (have you not seen) have been used, and they are meant not to address the Prophet (peace be on him) but the people in general. (For example, see Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 19; Surah Al-Hajj, Ayats 18, 65; Surah An-Noor, Ayat 43; Surah Luqman, Ayats 29, 31; Surah Fatir, Ayat 27; Surah Az-Zumar, Ayat 21). Then, the word seeing has been used here to signify that in and around Makkah and in the vast country of Arabia, from Makkah to Yaman, there were many such people still living, who had witnessed with their own eyes the event of the destruction of the people of the elephant, for it had occurred only about forty to forty-five years earlier, and the people of Arabia had continually heard it described by the eye-witnesses themselves so that they had become so certain of it as though they had seen it with their own eyes.

*2 Here, Allah has not given any detail as to who were the people of the elephant, wherefrom they had come and what was the object of their march, for all these things were well known among the people.

2. Did He not cause their plan^{*3} to end in vain?^{*4}

أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضْلِيلٍ

*3 The word *kayd* is used for a secret plan meant to harm somebody. The question is what was secret in this case? Sixty thousand troops together with several elephants had openly come from Yaman to Makkah, and they had kept no secret that they had come to destroy the Kabah. Therefore, there was nothing secret about this plan. However, what was secret was the motive of the Abyssinians. They by destroying the Kabah, crushing down the Quraish and intimidating the Arabians, wanted to take control of the trade route that led from south Arabia to Syria and Egypt. This motive they kept hidden, and instead proclaimed their intent that they wanted to destroy the Kaabah, the principal House of Arab worship, in retaliation for the pollution of their cathedral by the Arabs.

*4 Literally, *fi-tadlil* means: led their plan astray, but idiomatically leading a plan astray means bringing it to nought and rendering it fruitless. At one place in the Quran, it has been said: But the disbelievers' plot (*kayd*) ended in vain. (Surah Al-Momin, Ayat 25), At another: And that Allah does not lead to success the plan (*kayd*) of deceivers. (Surah Yousuf, Ayat 52). The Arabians described Imra ul-Qais by the epithet of *al-malik ad-dalil* (the king who lost and wasted), for he had lost the kingdom

left by his father.

3. And sent down on them swarms of birds.*5

وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ

*5 *Ababil* means many separate and scattered groups whether of men or other creatures, which come from different sides successively. Ikrimah and Qatadah say that these swarms of birds had come from the Red Sea side. Saeed bin Jubair and Ikrimah say that such birds had neither been seen before nor ever after; these were neither birds of Najd, nor of Hijaz, nor of Timamah (the land between Hijaz and the Red Sea). Ibn Abbas says that their beaks were like those of birds and claws like the dog's paw. Ikrimah has stated that their heads were like the heads of the birds of prey, and almost all the reporters agree that each bird carried a stone in its beak and two stones in its claws. Some people of Makkah had these stones preserved with them for a long time. Thus, Abu Nuaim has related a statement of Naufal bin Abi Muawiyah, saying that he had seen the stones which had been thrown on the people of the elephant; they equaled a small pea seed in size and were dark red in color. According to Ibn Abbas's tradition that Abu Nuaim has related, they were equal to a pine kernel, and according to Ibn Marduyah, equal to a goat's dropping. Obviously, all the stones might not be equal but differing in size to some extent.

4. Which pelted them with stones of baked clay.*6

تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ

*6 Literally, *bi hijarat-im-min sijjil* means stones of *sijjil* type. Ibn Abbas says that *sijjil* is the Arabic version of the

Persian *sang* and *gil*, and it implies the stones made from clay and become hard when baked. The Quran also confirms the same. In Surah Houd, Ayat 82 and Surah Al-Hijr, Ayat 74, it has been said that stones of baked clay (*sijjin*) were rained on the people of Lot, and about the same stones in Surah Adh-Dharyyat, Ayat 33, it has been said that they were the stones made from clay (*hijarat-im min tin*).

Hamid-ad-Din Farahi, who in the present age has done valuable work on the research and determination of the meaning and content of the Quran regards the people of Makkah and other Arabians as the subject of *tarmihim* in this verse, who are the addressees of *alam tara*. About the birds he says that they were not casting stones but had come to eat the dead bodies of the people of the elephant. A resume of the arguments he has given for this interpretation is that it is not credible that Abdul Muttalib should have gone before Abrahah and demanded his camels instead of pleading for the Kabah, and this also is not credible that the people of Quraish and the other Arabs who had come for Hajj, did not resist the invaders and leaving the Kaabah at their mercy had gone off to the mountains. Therefore, what actually happened was that the Arabs pelted the army of Abrahah with stones, and Allah by sending a stormy wind charged with stones, destroyed it completely; then the birds were sent to eat the dead bodies of the soldiers. But, as we have already explained in the Introduction, the tradition does not only say that Abdul Muttalib had gone to demand his camels but it says that he

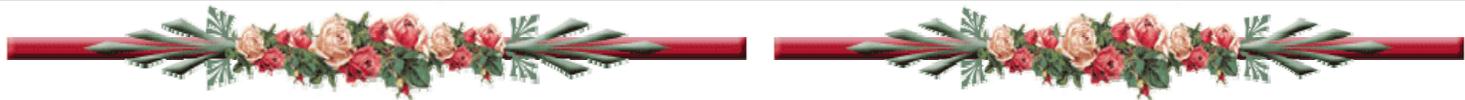
did not demand the camels at all but tried to dissuade Abrahah from attacking the Kabah. We have already explained that according to all reliable traditions, Abrahah's army had come in Muharram when the pilgrims had gone back and also it was beyond the power of Quraish and other Arab tribes living in the surrounding areas to resist and fight an army 60,000 strong. They had hardly been able to muster a force ten to twelve thousand strong on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench (Ahzab) with the help of the Arab pagans and Jewish tribes then how could they have mustered courage to encounter an army, 60,000 strong? However, even if all these arguments are rejected and the sequence of the verses of Surah Al-Feel only is kept in view, this interpretation is seen to go against it. If it were so that the stones were cast by the Arabs and the people of the elephant were rendered as chaff, and then the birds came to eat their dead bodies, the order would be this: You were pelting them with stones of baked clay, then Allah rendered them as chaff eaten up, and then Allah sent upon them swarms of birds. But here we see that first Allah has made mention of sending swarms of birds; this is immediately followed by *tarmihim bi-hijarat-im min-sijil* (which were pelting them with stones of baked clay); and then at the end it is said that Allah made them as straw eaten up.

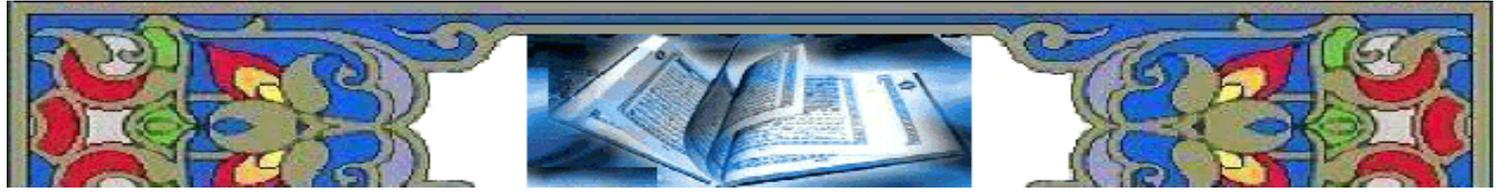
5. Then He rendered them like straw eaten up by cattle.*7

فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ

*7 The word *asf* as used in the original has already

occurred in verse 12 of Surah Ar-Rahman: *dhul-asf war-raihan*: and corn with husk as well as grain. This shows that *asf* means the outer covering of seeds, which the farmer throws away after the grain has been separated from it. Then the animals eat it, and some of it falls down in the chewing and some is trampled under the hoofs.





قُرَيْشٍ Quraish

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah has been so entitled after the word *Quraish* in the very first verse.

Period of Revelation

Although Dahhak and Kalbi regard it as a Madani Surah, yet a great majority of the commentators agree that it is Makki, and a manifest evidence of this are the words *Rabba hadh-al-Bait* (Lord of this House) of this Surah itself. Had it been revealed at Madinah, the words this House for the Kabah could not be relevant. Moreover, its subject matter so closely relates to that of Surah Al-Feel that probably it was revealed immediately after it, without any other Surah intervening between them. On the basis of this very relevance, some of the early scholars regard the two Surahs as one entity. This view is strengthened by the traditions which say that in the Quran copy belonging to Ubayy bin Kaab these two were written as one Surah, i.e. without the insertion of the *Bismillah* between them. Furthermore, Umar had once recited the two Surahs as one in the Prayer. But this view is not acceptable because in the Quran copy

which Uthman had written down officially by the cooperation of a large number of the companions and sent to the centers of Islamic lands, the *Bismillah* was written between these two Surahs, and since then these two have been written as separate Surahs in all the copies of the Quran everywhere in the world. Moreover, the style of the two Surahs is so different that they manifestly appear as two separate Surahs.

Historical Background

To understand this Surah it is essential that one should keep the historical background relevant to the contents of this Surah and of Surah Al-Feel in view.

The tribe of Quraish was scattered throughout Hijaz until the time of Qusayy bin Kilab, the ancestor of the Prophet (peace be upon him). First of all, Qusayy gathered it in Makkah and this tribe was able to gain authority over the Kabah. On that very basis Qusayy was called *mujammi* (uniter, assembler) by his people. This man by his sagacity and wisdom founded a city state in Makkah and made excellent arrangements for the welfare of the pilgrims coming from all over Arabia, with the result that the Quraish were able to gain great influence among the Arabian tribes and lands. After Qusayy the offices of the state of Makkah were divided between his sons, Abdi Manaf and Abd adDar, but of the two Abdi Manaf gained greater fame even during his father's lifetime and was held in high esteem throughout Arabia. Abdi Manaf had four sons: Hashim, Abdi Shams, Al-Muttalib, and Naufal. Of these Hashim, father of Abdul Muttalib and grandfather of

the Prophet (peace be upon him), first conceived the idea to take part in the trade that passed between the eastern countries and Syria and Egypt through Arabia, and also to purchase the necessities of life for the Arabians so that the tribes living by the trade route bought these from them and the merchants living in the interior of the country were attracted to the market of Makkah. This was the time when the Sasanian kingdom of Iran had captured the international trade that was carried out between the northern lands and the eastern countries and Byzantine empire through the Persian Gulf. This had boosted up the trade activity on the trade route leading from southern Arabia to Syria and Egypt along the Red Sea coast. As against the other Arabian caravans, the Quraish had the advantage that the tribes on the route held them in high esteem on account of their being keepers of the Kaabah. They stood indebted to them for the great generosity with which the Quraish treated them in the Hajj season. That is why the Quraish felt no fear that their caravans would be robbed or harmed anywhere on the way. The tribes on the way did not even charge them the heavy transit taxes that they demanded from the other caravans. Hashim taking advantage of this prepared the trade scheme and made his three brothers partners in it. Thus, Hashim obtained trade privileges from the Ghassanide king of Syria, Abdi Shams from the Negus, Al-Muttalib from the Yamanite nobles and Naufal from the governments of Iraq and Iran, and their trade began to flourish. That is how the four brothers became famous as traders and began to be called *ashab al-*

ilaf (generators of love and affection) on account of their friendly relations with the tribes and states of the surrounding lands.

Because of their business relations with Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Yaman and Abyssinia, the Quraish came across such opportunities and their direct contact with the culture and civilization of different countries so enhanced the level of their knowledge and wisdom that no tribe in Arabia could match and equal them. As regards to wealth and worldly goods they became the most affluent tribe and Makkah became the most important commercial center of the Arabian peninsula. Another great advantage that accrued from these international relations was that they brought from Iraq tile script which later was used for writing down the Quran. No other Arabian tribe could boast of so many literate people as Quraish. For these very reasons the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Quraish are the leaders of men. (Musnad Ahmad, Marwiyat Amr bin alAas). And according to a tradition from Ali in Baihaqi, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: First the leadership of the Arabians was in the hands of the people of Himyar, then Allah withdrew it from them and gave it to Quraish.

The Quraish were thus prospering and flourishing when the event of Abrahah's invasion of Makkah took place. Had Abrahah at that time succeeded in taking this holy City and destroying the Kabah, the glory and renown of not only the Quraish but of the Kabah itself would have faded away. The belief of the pre-Islamic Arabia that the House indeed was Allah's House would have been shattered, and the high

esteem in which Quraish were held for being keepers of the House throughout the country would have been tarnished. Then, after the Abyssinian advance to Makkah, the Byzantium also would have taken the initiative to gain control over the trade route between Syria and Makkah, and the Quraish would have been reduced to a plight worse than that in which they were involved before Qusayy bin Kilab. But when Allah showed this manifestation of His power that the swarms of birds destroyed 60,000 Abyssinian troops brought by Abrahah by pelting them, with stones, and from Makkah to Yaman they went on falling and dying by the wayside, the faith of the Arabs that the Kabah indeed was Allah's House increased manifold, and the glory and renown of Quraish too was enhanced considerably throughout the country. Now the Arabs were convinced that they were under Allah's special favor; therefore, they visited every part of Arabia fearlessly and passed through every land with their trade caravans unharmed. No one could dare touch them with an evil intention. Not to speak of touching them, even if they had a non-Quraishite under their protection, he too was allowed to pass unharmed.

Theme and Substance

As all this was well known in the time of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) appointment to Prophethood, there was no need to mention them. That is why in the four brief sentences of this Surah, Quraish were simply asked to consider: When you acknowledge this House (i.e. the Kabah) to be Allah's House, and not of the idols, and when

you know well that it is Allah alone Who has granted you peace by virtue of this House, made your trade and commerce flourish and saving you from destitution favored you with prosperity, you should then worship and serve Him alone.

1. For the accustomed security of the Quraish.*¹

لَا يَلْفِ قُرَيْشٍ

*1 The word *ilaf*, as used in the original is from *alf* which means to be habituated and accustomed to be reunited after breaking up, and to adopt something as a habit. About the *lam* that is prefixed to *ilaf*, some Arabists have expressed the opinion that it is to express surprise and wonder. Thus, *Li-ilaf-i Quraish-in* means: How surprising is the conduct of Quraish! It is only by virtue of Allah's bounty that they are reunited after their dispersion and have become accustomed to the trade journeys which have brought them their prosperity, and yet from Allah's worship and service they are turning away. This is the opinion of Akhflash, Kisai and Farra, and holding this opinion as preferable Ibn Jarir writes: When the Arabs mention something after this *lam*, the same thing itself is regarded as sufficient to show that the attitude and conduct a person has adopted in spite of it, is surprising and amazing. On the contrary, Khalil bin Ahmad, Sibawaih and Zamakhshari say that this is the *lam* of *talil* and it relates to the following sentence: *Fa-ya budu Rabba hadh al-Bait*, which means: Allah's blessings on the Quraish are countless. But if for no other blessing, they should worship Allah at least for this blessing that by His bounty they

became accustomed to the trade journeys, for this by itself is indeed a great favor of Allah to them.

2. (That is) accustomed to their journeys in the winter and the summer.*2

إِلَيْهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ



*2 That is, the trade journeys. In summer the Quraish travelled northward to Syria and Palestine, for they are cool lands, and in winter southward to Yaman, etc. for they are warm.

3. So they should worship the Lord of this House.*3

فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ

*3 This House: the Holy Kabah. The sentence means that the Quraish have attained to this blessing only by virtue of the House of Allah. They themselves acknowledge that the 360 idols, which they worship, are not its lord, but Allah alone is its Lord. He alone saved them from the invasion of the army of elephants. Him alone they had invoked for help against Abrahah's army. It was His House the keeping of which enhanced their rank and position in Arabia, for before that they were dispersed and commanded no position whatever. Like the common Arab tribes, they too were scattered factions of a race. But when they rallied round this House in Makkah and began to serve it, they became, honorable throughout Arabia, and their trade caravans began to visit every part of the country fearlessly. Therefore, whatever they have achieved, it has been possible only by the help of the Lord of this House; therefore, they should worship Him alone.

4. Who has fed them against hunger*⁴ and made them secure against fear.*⁵

الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ
وَأَمَّنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ

*4 The allusion implies that before the Quraish came to Makkah, they were a scattered people in Arabia and living miserable lives. After their gathering together in Makkah they began to prosper, and the Prophet Abraham's (peace be upon him) prayer for them was literally fulfilled when he had prayed: Lord, I have settled some of my descendents in a barren valley near Thy sacred House. Lord, I have done this in the hope that they will establish *salat* there. So turn the hearts of the people towards them, and provide fruits for their food. (Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 37).

*5 Secure against fear: Secure from the fear from which no one anywhere in Arabia was safe. There was no settlement anywhere in the country the people of which could sleep peacefully at night, for they feared an attack any time from any quarter by some unknown enemy. No one could step out of the bounds of his tribe for fear of life or of being taken prisoner and made a slave. No caravan could travel safely from fear of attack, or without bribing influential chiefs of the tribes on the way for safe conduct. But the Quraish were immune from every danger; they had no fear of an attack from an enemy. Their caravans, small or big, freely passed on the trade routes everywhere in the country. As soon as it became known about a certain caravan that it belonged to the keepers of the Kabah, no one could dare touch it with an evil intention, so much so

that even if a single Quraishite was passing on the way, he was allowed to pass unharmed and untouched as soon as the word *hara-mi* or *ana min hara-millah*” was heard from him.





Al-Maun

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah has been so designated after the word *al-maun* occurring at the end of the last verse.

Period of Revelation

Ibn Marduyah has cited Ibn Abbas as saying that this Surah is Makki, and the same also is the view of Ata and Jabir. But Abu Hayyan in *Al-Bahr al-Muhit* has cited Ibn Abbas, Qatadah and Dahhak as saying that this Surah was revealed at Al-Madinah. In our opinion there is an internal piece of evidence in the Surah itself which points to its being a Madani revelation. It holds out a threat of destruction to those praying ones who are unmindful of their Prayers and who pray only to be seen. This kind of hypocrites were found only at Al-Madinah, for it was there that Islam and the Muslims gained such strength that many people were compelled to believe from expedience, had to visit the Mosque, join the congregational Prayer and prayed only to be seen of others, so as to be counted among Muslims.

Contrary to this, at Makkah conditions were altogether different. No one had to pray to be seen. There it was

difficult even for the believers to pray in congregation; they prayed secretly and if a person prayed openly he did so only at the risk of his life. This kind of hypocrites found in Makkah did not comprise those who believed and Prayed to be seen but those who in their hearts had known, and acknowledged the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) to be on the true path, but were avoiding to accept Islam in order to maintain their position of leadership and authority, or were not prepared to take the risk of being afflicted with the kind of hardships with which they found the believers afflicted in the society around them. This condition of the hypocrites at Makkah has been described in verse 10-11 of Surah Al-Ankabut. (For explanation, see E.Ns 13 to 16 of Surah Al-Ankabut).

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is to point out what kind of morals a man develops when he refuses to believe in the Hereafter. In verses 2-3 the condition of the disbelievers who openly believe the Hereafter has been described, and in the last four verses the state of those hypocrites who apparently are Muslims but have no idea of the Hereafter, its judgment, and the meting out of rewards and punishments accordingly has been described. On the whole, the object of depicting the attitude and conduct of two kinds of people is to impress the point that man cannot develop a strong, stable and pure character in himself unless he believes in the Hereafter.

1. Have you seen him^{*1} who
denies the rewards and

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْأَدِينِ

punishments^{*2} of the
Hereafter.^{*3}



***1** The words “have you seen”, apparently, are directed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), but the Quranic style is that on such occasions it generally addresses every intelligent and thinking person. And seeing means seeing with the eyes, for what has been described in the succeeding verses can be seen by every seer with his eyes, as well as knowing, understanding and considering something deeply. If the word *araaita* is taken in the second meaning, the verse would mean: Do you know the kind of man who belies the rewards and punishments. Or: Have you considered the state of the person who belies the Judgment?

***2** The word *ad-din* as Quranic term is used for the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter as well as for the religion of Islam. But the theme that follows is more relevant to the first meaning, although the second meaning is also not out of the context. Ibn Abbas has preferred the second meaning, while a majority of the commentators have preferred the first. In case the first meaning is taken, the theme of the Surah would mean that denial of the Hereafter produces such and such a character in man. In case the second meaning is taken, the object of the Surah would be to highlight the moral importance of Islam, to stress that Islam aims at producing an altogether different character in its adherents from that found in its deniers.

***3** The style shows that the object of asking this question at the outset is not to ask whether he has seen the person or

not, but to invite the listener to consider as to what kind of character is produced in man when he denies the judgment of the Hereafter, and to urge him to know the kind of the people who belie this creed so that he tries to understand the moral significance of belief in the Hereafter.

2. He it is^{*4} who drives away the orphan.^{*5}

فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدُعُّ الْيَتِيمَ

*4 The letter *fa* in the sentence *fa-dhalika-alladhi* expresses the meaning of a whole sentence, which is to this effect: If you do not know, then know that it is indeed he who drives away the orphan. Or, it gives the meaning: Because of his this very denial of the Hereafter he is the kind of man who drives away the orphan.

*5 The sentence *yadu ul yatim* as used in the original, has several meanings:

(1) That he deprives the orphan of his rights and evicting him from his father's heritage thrusts him away.

(2) That if an orphan comes to ask him for help, he repulses him instead of showing him any compassion, and if he still persists in his entreaties in the hope for mercy, he drives him away and out of sight.

(3) That he ill-treats the orphan. For example, if in his own house there is a closely related orphan, it is the orphans lot to serve the whole house, to receive rebuffs and suffer humiliation for trivial things. Besides, this sentence also contains the meaning that the person does not behave unjustly and tyrannically only occasionally but this is his habit and settled practice. He does not have the feeling that it is an evil which he must give up, but he persists in it with

full satisfaction, thinking that the orphan is a helpless, powerless creature; therefore, there is no harm if his rights are taken away wrongfully, or he is made the target of tyranny and injustice, or he is repulsed and driven away whenever he asks for help.

In this connection, Qadi Abul Hasan al-Mawardi has related a strange incident in his *Aalam an-Nubuwwat*. Abu Jahl was the testator of an orphan. The child one day came to him in the condition that he had no shred of a garment on his body and he implored him to be given something out of his father's heritage. But the cruel man paid no attention to him and the poor child had to go back disappointed. The Quraish chiefs said to him out of fun: Go to Muhammad (peace be upon him) and put your complaint before him. He will recommend your case before Abu Jahl and get you your property. The child not knowing any background of the nature of relationship between Abu Jahl and the Prophet (peace be upon him) and not understanding the motive of the mischief-mongers, went straight to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and apprised him of his misfortune. The Prophet (peace be upon him) immediately arose and accompanied the child to the house of Abu Jahl, his bitterest enemy. Abu Jahl received him well and when the latter told him to restore to the child his right, he yielded and brought out whatever he owed to him. The Quraish chiefs were watching all this earnestly in the hope that an interesting altercation would take place between them. But when they saw what actually happened they were astounded and went to Abu Jahl and taunted him saying

that he too perhaps had abandoned his religion. He said: By God, I have not abandoned my religion, but I so felt that on the right and left of Muhammad (peace be upon him) there was a spear which would enter my body if I acted against what he desired. This incident not only shows what was the attitude and conduct of the principal chiefs of the most civilized and noble tribe of Arabia towards the orphans and other helpless people in those days but it also shows what sublime character the Prophet (peace be upon him) possessed and what impact it had even on his bitterest enemies. A similar incident we have already related in E.N. 5 of Surah Al-Anbiya, which points to the great moral superiority of the Prophet (peace be upon him) because of which the disbelieving Quraish branded him as a sorcerer.

3. And does not encourage^{*6} the feeding of the poor.^{*7}

وَلَا يَحْضُرُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ



**6 La yahuddu* means that the person neither persuades his own self, nor tells the people of his household, to provide the poor man with his food, nor does he urge others to recognize the rights of the poor and needy people of society who are starving and do something to satisfy their hunger. Here, by giving only two conspicuous examples, Allah has pointed out what kind of evils are produced in the people who deny the Hereafter. The real object is not to point out only these two evils that the people drive away the orphans and do not urge giving away the food of the poor as a result of the denial of the Hereafter. But of the countless evils which are thus produced, two evils have been presented as

an example, which every noble and sound-natured person will regard as hateful. Besides, another thing meant to be impressed is that if this very man had believed that he would have to go before God to render an account of his deeds, he would not have committed such evils as to deprive the orphan of his rights, tyrannize him, repulse him, neither feed the poor man himself nor urge others to give him his food. The characteristics of the believers in the Hereafter which have been described in Surah Al-Asr and Surah Al-Balad are that they exhort one another to mercy, and they exhort one another to the truth and to render the rights of others.

*7 The words used are to *taam-il-miskin* and not *itam-il-miskin*. If *itam-il-miskin* were the words, the meaning would be that he does not urge (others) to feed the poor. But *taam -il-miskin* means that he does not urge (others) to give away the food of the poor. In other words, the food that is given to the poor man is not the food of the giver but of the poor man himself; it is his right which is enjoined on the giver, and the giver is not doing him any favor but rendering him his right. This same thing had been said in Surah Adh-Dhariyat: And in their possessions is a due share of him who asks and of him who is needy. (verse 19).

4. Then woe unto those who pray.*8

فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُصَلِّينَ

*8 The *fa* in *fa-wail-ul -lil-musallin* signifies that such was the condition of the open deniers of the Hereafter. One may then consider the condition of the hypocrites who are included among the praying ones (i.e. Muslims). Since,

despite being Muslims they regard the Hereafter as a falsehood, one may note what path of ruin they are following. Though *musallin* means the praying ones, in view of the context in which this word has been used and the characteristics of these people that follow, this word, in fact, does not have the meaning of the praying ones but of the people of *salat*, i.e. of those included among Muslims.

5. Who are careless of their Prayer.*⁹

الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ



*⁹ The words used are *an-salat-i him sahun* and not *fi salat-i-him ahun*. In case the words *fi salat-i him* had been used, the meaning would be that they forget in the course of their Prayer. But forgetting in the course of the Prayer is no sin in the eyes of the *Shariah*, nothing to say of its being hypocrisy, nor is it a fault or anything blameworthy. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself sometimes forgot in the Prayer and to compensate for it he prescribed the method of *sajdah sahv*. On the contrary, *an salat-i-him sahun* means that they are neglectful of their Prayer. Whether they perform the Prayer, or do not perform it, it is of little importance to them. They are not regular at the Prayers. When they perform it, they do not observe the prescribed times, but offer it carelessly at the eleventh hour. Or, when they rise up for the Prayer, they rise up and perform it with an unwilling heart, as if it were a calamity imposed on them. They play with their garments, yawn and betray absence of every trace of Allah's remembrance in their hearts. Throughout the Prayer they show no feeling at

all that they are performing the Prayer, nor of what they are reciting; their minds wander and they perform articles of the Prayer without due attention; they somehow perform a semblance of the Prayer and try to be rid of it as soon as possible. And there are many people who would perform the Prayer only when they must, otherwise the Prayer has no place in their lives. The Prayer time comes but they show no concern that it is the Prayer time; they hear the call to the Prayer but do not understand what the caller is calling to, whom he is calling and for what purpose. These in fact are the signs of absence of faith in the Hereafter. The claimants to Islam believe thus only because they do not believe that they would be rewarded for performing the Prayer, nor have the faith that they would be punished for not performing it. On this very basis, Anas bin Malik and Ata bin Dinar say: Thanks to God that he said *an salat-i-him* and not *fi salat-i-him*. That is, we do forget in the course of the Prayer but we are not forgetful and neglectful of it; therefore, we shall not be counted among the hypocrites.

The Quran at another place has described this state of the hypocrites, thus: They come to offer their Prayer but reluctantly, and they spend in the way of Allah with unwilling hearts. (Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 54). The Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah has said: This is the Prayer of the hypocrite; this is the Prayer of the hypocrite; this is the Prayer of the hypocrite! He watches the sun at the *Asr* time until when it reaches between the two horns of Satan (i.e. when the time of sunset

approaches), he gets up and performs the Prayer carelessly, in which he remembers Allah but little. (Bukhari, Muslim, Musnad Ahmad). Musab bin Saad has related from his father, Saad bin Abi Waqqas: When I asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the people who are neglectful of their Prayer, he said: These are the people who perform their Prayers when the prescribed time for it has passed. (Ibn Jarir, Abu Yala, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn abi Hatim, Tabarani in *Ausat*; Ibn Marduyah, Baihaqi in *As-Sunan*). This tradition has been related as a statement of Saad himself also as a *mauquf hadith* and its *sanad* is stronger. Its being a *marfu* narration of the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been regarded as weak by Baihaqi and Hakim). Another tradition from Musab is that he asked his father: Have you considered this verse? Does it mean giving up the Prayer, or wandering of one's attention in the course of the Prayer, who among us has not his attention divided. He replied: No, it implies wasting the prescribed time of the Prayer and performing it when its time has elapsed. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Abu Yala, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah, Baihaqi in *As-Sunan*).

Here, one should understand that coming of other thoughts in the mind in the course of the Prayer is one thing and being unmindful of the Prayer and thinking other things during it quite another. The first state is a natural human weakness. Thoughts do interfere without intention, and as soon as a believer feels that his attention is wandering from the Prayer, he gathers it and brings it back to the Prayer. The other state is of being neglectful of the Prayer, for in it

man only goes through an exercise of the Prayer mechanically, he has no intention of the remembrance of God in his heart. From the commencement of the Prayer till its completion his heart is not turned towards God even for a moment, and he remains engrossed in the thoughts with which he entered the Prayer.

6. Those who (do good) to be seen.*10

الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ

*10 This can be an independent sentence as well as one relating to the preceding sentence. In the first case, it would mean that they do not perform any act of goodness with a pure intention for the sake of God, but whatever they do, they do to be seen of others so that they are praised, are considered righteous, their good act is publicized and its advantage and benefit accrues to them here in the world. In the second case, the meaning would be that they pray to be seen. The commentators generally have preferred the second meaning, for at first sight it appears that it relates to the preceding sentence. Ibn Abbas says: It implies the hypocrites who prayed to be seen. They performed the Prayer if there was somebody to see them, but did not perform it if there was nobody to see them. In another tradition his words are to the effect: If they were alone they did not pray; but if there were others, they prayed. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim , Ibn Marduyah, Baihaqi , in *Ash-Shuab*). In the Quran the hypocrites have been described thus: When they rise up for the salat, they go reluctantly to it, merely to be seen of people and they remember Allah but little. (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 142).

7. And withhold small kindnesses^{*11} (from the people).

وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ

*11 The word used is *maun*. The view held by Ali, Ibn Umar, Saeed bin Jubair, Qatadah, Hasan Basri, Muhammad bin Hanafiyyah, Dahhak, Ibn Zaid, Ikrimah, Mujahid, Ata and Zuhri is that it implies the *zakat* while Ibn Abbas, Ibn Masud, Ibrahim Nakhai, Abu Malik and many other scholars have expressed the opinion that it implies items of common use; for example, cooking-pot, bucket, hatchet, balance, salt, water, fire, flint (now its successor, the match-stick), etc. which the people generally borrow from each other. A statement of Saeed bin Jubair and Mujahid also supports it. Another view of Ali also is that it implies the *zakat* as well as the little courtesies and kindnesses of daily life. Ibn Abi Hatim has related from Ikrimah that *maun* of the highest form is *zakat* and of the lowest lending of a sieve, bucket, or needle to a borrower. Abdullah bin Masud says: We, the companions of Muhammad (peace be upon him), used to say, and according to other traditions, in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), used to say that *maun* implies lending of the cooking pot, hatchet, bucket, balance, and such other things. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Abu Daud, Nasai, Bazzar, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Tabarani in *Al-Ausat*, Ibn Marduyah, Baihaqi in *As-Sunan*). Saad bin Iyad without specifying any names has related almost the same view from the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which shows that he had heard this from

several companions. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Shaibah). Dailami, Ibn Asakir, and Abu Nuaim have related a tradition from Abu Hurairah in which he says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) explained this verse saying that it implies the hatchet, bucket and other such things. If this tradition is genuine, it probably did not come to the notice of other scholars; otherwise it was not possible that other people should have given any other commentary of this verse. *Maun* in fact is a small, little thing useful to the people. Accordingly, *zakat* also is *maun*, for it is a little amount out of much wealth, which one has to give away in order to help the poor, and the other small items of common use are also *maun* as mentioned by Abdullah Ibn Masud and the scholars who share his viewpoint. The majority of the commentators say that *maun* applies to all those small things which the neighbors usually ask each other for, and asking for these is not in any way blameworthy, for the rich and the poor, all stand in need of these at one time or another. However, to show stinginess in lending these is regarded as mean behavior morally. Generally these things by themselves last and the neighbor returns them in the original form after he has used them. It would also be *maun* if a neighbor asks the other for a bed or bedding items on the arrival of guests, or asks the neighbor's permission to have loaves baked in his oven, or wants to leave some valuables in the neighbor's custody when going out of his house for some days. Thus, the verse means to impress that denial of the Hereafter renders a man so narrow-minded and niggardly that he is not even prepared to make a most

minor sacrifice for the sake of others.





الْكَوْثَرِ Al-Kauthar

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah has been so designated after the word *al-kauthar* occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Ibn Marduyah has cited Abdullah bin Abbas, Abdullah bin az-Zubair and Aishah as saying that this Surah is Makki. Kalbi and Muqatil also regard it as Makki, and the same is the view held by the majority of commentators. But Hasan Basri, Ikrimah, Mujahid and Qatadah regard it as Madani. Imam Suyuti in *Al-Itqan* has confirmed this same view, and Imam Nawawi in his commentary of the *Sahih* of Muslim has also preferred the same. The reason for this assumption is the tradition which traditionists of the rank of Imam Ahmad, Muslim, Abu Daud, Nasai, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah, Baihaqi and others have related from Anas bin Malik, saying: The Prophet was among us. In the meantime he dozed; then he raised his head, smiling, according to some traditions, the people asked what was he smiling for, according to others, he himself told them that a Surah had just been revealed to

him. Then, with *Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim*, he recited Surah *Al-Kauthar*; then he asked the people whether they knew what *Kauthar* was? When they said that Allah and his Messenger had the best knowledge, he said; It is a river which my Lord has granted me in Paradise. (The details follow under *Kauthar*). The basis of the reasoning from this tradition for this Surah's being Madani is that Anas belonged to Al-Madinah, and his saying that this Surah was revealed in his presence is a proof that it was Madani.

But, in the first place, from this same Anas, Imam Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi and Ibn Jarir have related the traditions which say that this river of Paradise (*Al-Kauthar*) had been shown to the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the occasion of the *miraj* (ascension) and everyone knows that *miraj* had taken place at Makkah before the *hijrah*. Secondly, when during the *miraj* the Prophet (peace be upon him) had not only been informed of this gift of Allah Almighty but also shown it, there was no reason why Surah *Al-Kauthar* should have been revealed at Al-Madinah to give him the good news of it. Thirdly, if in an assembly of the companions the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself had given the news of the revelation of Surah *Al-Kauthar* which Anas has mentioned in his tradition, and it meant that that Surah had been revealed for the first time then, it was not possible that well-informed companions like Aishah, Abdullah bin Abbas and Abdullah bin Zubair should have declared this Surah to be a Makki revelation and most of the commentators also should have regarded it as Makki. If the matter is considered carefully,

there appears to be a flaw in the tradition from Anas in that it does not say what the subject was under discussion in the assembly in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave the news about Surah *Al-Kauthar*. It is possible that at that time the Prophet (peace be upon him) was explaining something. In the meantime he was informed by revelation that that point was further explained by Surah *Al-Kauthar*, and he mentioned the same thing, saying that that Surah was revealed to him just then. Such incidents did take place on several occasions, on the basis of which the commentators have opined about certain verses that they were revealed twice. This second revelation, in fact, meant that the verse had been revealed earlier, but on some later occasion the Prophet's (peace be upon him) attention was invited to it by revelation for the second time. In such traditions, the mention of the revelation of a certain verse is not enough to decide whether it was revealed at Makkah or Al-Madinah, and when precisely it was revealed.

Had this tradition of Anas not been there to cause doubt, the whole content of the Surah *Al-Kauthar* by itself bears evidence that it was revealed at Makkah, and in the period when the Prophet was passing through extremely discouraging conditions.

Historical Background

Before this in Surahs *Ad-Duha* and *Alam Nashrah* we have seen that when in the earlier phase of Prophethood the Prophet (peace be upon him) was passing through the most trying conditions when the whole nation had turned hostile, there was resistance and opposition from every side, and

the Prophet (peace be upon him) and a handful of his companions did not see any remote chance of success, Allah in order to console and encourage him at that time had sent down several verses. In Surah *Ad-Duha* it was said: And surely the later period (i.e. every later period) is better for you than the former period, and soon your Lord shall give you so much that you shall be well pleased. In Surah *Alam Nashrah*: And We exalted your renown for you. That is, though the enemies are trying to defame you throughout the land, We, on the contrary, have arranged to exalt your name and fame. And: The fact is that along with every hardship there is also ease. That is, you should not be disheartened by the severity of conditions at this time; this period of hardships will soon pass, and the period of success and victory will follow.

Such were the conditions in which Allah by sending down Surah *Al-Kauthar* consoled the Prophet (peace be upon him) as well as foretold the destruction of his opponents. The disbelieving Quraish said: Muhammad (peace be upon him) is cut off from his community and reduced to a powerless and helpless individual. According to Ikrimah when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was appointed a Prophet, and he began to call the people to Islam, the Quraish said: "Muhammad (peace be upon him) is cut off from his people as a tree is cut off from its root, which might fall to the ground any moment. (Ibn Jarir). Muhammad bin Ishaq says: Whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) was mentioned before Aas bin Wail as-Sehmi, the chief of Makkah, he used to say: Let him alone for he is

only a childless man (*abtar*) with no male offspring. When he dies, there will be no one to remember him. Shamir bin Atiyyah says that Uqbah bin Abi Muait, also used to say similar things about the Prophet (peace be upon him). (Ibn Jarir). According to Ibn Abbas, once Kaab bin Ashraf (the Jewish chief of Al-Madinah) came to Makkah and the Quraish chiefs said to him: Just see this boy, who is cut off from his people; he thinks he is superior to us, whereas we manage the Hajj, look after the Kabah and water the pilgrims. (Bazzar). Concerning this very incident Ikrimah reports that the Quraish had used the words *as-sunbur al-munbatir min qaumi-hi* (a weak, helpless and childless man who is cut off from his people) for the Prophet (peace be upon him), (Ibn Jarir). Ibn Saad and Ibn Asakir have related that Abdullah bin Abbas said; The eldest son of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was Qasim; next to him was Zainab, next to her Abdullah and next to him three daughters, viz. Umm Kulthum, Fatimah and Ruqayyah. Of them first Qasim died and then Abdullah. Thereupon Aas bin Wail said: His line has come to an end; now he is abtar (i.e. cut of from root). Some traditions add that Aas said Muhammad is *abtar*; he has no son to succeed him. When he dies, his memory will perish and you will be rid of him. The tradition from Ibn Abbas, which Abd bin Humaid has related, shows that Abu Jahl had also said similar words on the death of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) son, Abdullah. Ibn Abi Hatim has related on the authority of Shamir bin Atiyyah that the same kind of meanness was shown by Uqbah bin Abi Muait by rejoicing at this

bereavement of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Ata says that when the second son of the Prophet (peace be upon him) died, his own uncle, Abu Lahab (whose house was next to his) hastened to the pagans and gave them the good news: *Batira Muhammadun al-lail*: Muhammad has become childless this night, or he is cut off from root.

Such were the disturbing conditions under which Surah *Al-Kauthar* was revealed. The Quraish were angry with him because he worshiped and served only Allah and repudiated their idolatry publicly. For this very reason he was deprived of the rank, esteem and honor that he enjoyed among his people before Prophethood and was now as cut off from his community. The handful of his companions were also helpless, poor people who were being persecuted and tyrannized. Furthermore, he was bereaved by the death of two sons, one after the other, whereat the near relatives and the people of his clan, brotherhood and neighborhood were rejoicing and uttering such words as were disheartening and disturbing for a noble person who had treated even his enemies most kindly. At this Allah just in one sentence of this brief Surah gave him the good news, better news than which has never been given to any man in the world, besides the decision that it will be his opponents who will be cut off from their root and not he.

1. Indeed, We have granted you (O Muhammad) *AlKauthar*.^{*1}

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَكَ الْكَوْثَرَ

*1 The full meaning of the word *kauthar*, as used here, cannot perhaps be expressed in one word in any language

of the world. This is an intensive form of the noun *kathrat* which literally means abundance, but the context in which it has been used does not give the meaning of mere abundance but abundance of good, of spiritual benefits and blessings, and of such abundance which is unbounded and limitless, and it does not imply any one good or benefit or blessing but abundance of countless benefits and blessings. Have a look again at the background of this Surah given in the Introduction. The enemies thought that Muhammad (peace be upon him) had been completely ruined: he was cut off from the community and had become utterly helpless and powerless; his trade was ruined; his male children who could perpetuate his name were dead; the message that he presented was such that except for a handful of the people no one in entire Arabia, not to speak of Makkah, was prepared to listen to it. Therefore, failure and disappointment would be his lot as long as he lived and there would be no one in posterity to remember him when he died. Under such conditions when Allah said: We have granted you the *Kauthar*, this by itself gave the meaning: Your foolish opponents think that you are ruined and deprived of the good things that you enjoyed before Prophethood, but the fact is that We have favored you with unbounded good and countless blessings. This included the matchless moral qualities which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was blessed with; this included the great blessings of Prophethood and the Quran, the knowledge and wisdom that were granted to him; this included the blessing of *Tauhid* and also of such a system of life whose

simple and intelligible, rational and natural, and comprehensive principles had the potential to spread throughout the world and of continuing to spread for ever afterwards. This also included the blessing of the exaltation of renown because of which the Prophet's (peace be upon him) blessed name continues to be exalted throughout the world since 1400 years and will continue to be so exalted till Resurrection. This also included the blessing that by his preaching eventually such a world-wide community came into being, which became the standard-bearer of truth in the world forever, which can claim to have produced the greatest number of the pious, virtuous and noble character people in any one nation, and which even when corrupted and deprived has the highest good in it as against every other nation of the world. This also included the blessing that the Prophet (peace be upon him) during his very lifetime witnessed his invitation and message attaining to the highest success and the preparation of a community which had the power to dominate the world. This also included the blessing that although on his being deprived of the male offspring the enemies thought he would be lost to posterity, yet Allah not only blessed him with the spiritual offspring in the form of Muslims, who will continue to exalt his name in the world till Resurrection but also granted him from his one daughter, Fatimah, the natural progeny, who have spread throughout world and whose only mark of distinction and pride is that they trace their descent from him.

These are the blessings which the people have seen and

witnessed as to how abundantly Allah has blessed His Prophet (peace be upon him) within the world. In addition, *Kauthar* also implies two other great blessings which Allah will bestow on him in the Hereafter. We had no means of knowing these; therefore the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself gave us news of them, and told us that *Kauthar* also implied them. First, the Fountain of *Kauthar*, which he will be granted on the Resurrection Day in the Plain of Assembly; second, the River *Kauthar*, which he will be granted in Paradise. About both such a large number of the *Ahadith* have been reported from him through such a large number of the reporters that there remains no doubt about their authenticity.

What the Prophet (peace be upon him) said about the Fountain of *Kauthar* is as follows:

(1) This Fountain will be granted to him on the Resurrection Day when there will be the cry of *al-ataash, al-ataash* (thirst, thirst!) on every side. The Prophet's (peace be upon him) community will gather together before him at it and will be watered thereby. He himself will be the first to arrive at it and will be occupying the central position. He has said: This is a Fountain at which my Ummah will assemble on the Resurrection Day. (Muslim: *Kitab as-Salat* Abu Daud: *Kitab as-Sunnah*). I shall have arrived at the Fountain before you. (Bukhari: *Kitab ar-Riqaq* and *Kitab al-Fitan*; Muslim: *Kitab al-Fidail* and *Kitab at-Taharah*; Ibn Majah: *Kitab al Manasik* and *Kitab az-Zuhd*. Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyyat* Abdullah bin Masud, Abdullah bin Abbas, Abu Hurairah). I shall be there before you and shall

bear witness on you, and by God, I am seeing my Fountain even at this time. (Bukhari: *Kitab al-jana-iz Kitab al-Maghazi, Kitab ar-Riqaq*). Addressing an assembly of the *Ansar*, the Prophet (peace be upon him) once said: After me you will meet with selfishness and nepotism, endure it patiently until you meet me at the Fountain. (Bukhari: *Kitab Manaqib al-Ansar* and *Kitab al-Maghazi*; Muslim: *Kitab al-Iman*; Tirmidhi: *Kitab al-Fitan*). I shall be near the middle of the Fountain on the Resurrection Day. (Muslim: *Kitab al-Fadail*). Abu Barzah Aslami was asked: Have you heard something about the Fountain from the Prophet (peace be upon him). He replied: Not once, or twice, or thrice, or four or five times, but over and over again. May Allah deprive of its water the one who belies it. (Abu Daud: *Kitab as-Sunnah*). Ubaidullah bin Ziyad thought that the traditions about the Fountain were false; so much so that he belied all the traditions reported by Abu Barzah Aslami, Bara bin Aazib and Aaidh bin Amr. At last, Abu Sabrah brought out a writing which he had written down after hearing it from Abdullah bin Amr bin alAas, and it contained this saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): Beware! Your place of meeting me will be my Fountain. (Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyyat Abdullah bin Amr bin alAas*).

(2) Different dimensions of the Fountain have been given in different traditions, but according to a large number of the traditions it will extend from Aylah (the present Israeli seaport of Ilat) to Sana'a of Yaman, or from Aylah to Adan, or from Amman to Adan in length, and from Aylah

to Juhfah (a place between Jeddah and Rabigh) in breadth. (Bukhari: *Kitab ar-Riqaq*; Abu Daud at Tayalisi: Hadith No. 995; Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyyat* Abu Bakr Siddiq and Abdullah bin Umar; Muslim: *Kitab at-Taharah* and *Kitab al-Fadail*; Tirmidhi *Abwab Sifat al-Qiyamah*; Ibn Majah: *Kitab az-Zuhd*). From this it appears that on the Resurrection Day the present Red Sea itself will be turned into the Fountain of *Kauthar*. And the correct knowledge is only with Allah.

(3) About this Fountain the Prophet (peace be upon him) has told us that water will be supplied to it from the River *Kauthar* of Paradise (which is being mentioned below). Two channels from Paradise will flow into it and supply water to it. (Muslim: *Kitab al-Fadail*). According to another tradition: A canal from the River *Kauthar* of Paradise will be opened towards this Fountain. (Musnad Ahmad; *Marwiyyat* Abdullah bin Masud).

(4) According to the description of it given by the Prophet (peace be upon him) its water will be whiter than milk (according to other traditions whiter than silver, and according to still others, whiter than snow), cooler than snow, sweeter than honey; the earth of its bed will be more fragrant than musk; the water jugs set at it will be as numerous as the stars in the sky; the one who drinks from it would never thirst; and the one who is deprived of it will never have his thirst satisfied. These things with a little variation in wording have been reported in numerous *Ahadith* (Bukhari: *Kitab ar-Riqaq*; Muslim: *Kitab at-Taharah* and *Kitab al-Fadail*; Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyyat*

Ibn Masud, Ibn Umar, Abdullah bin Amr bin alAas; Tirmidhi: *Abwab Sifat al-Qiyanmah*: Ibn Majah: *Kitab az-Zuhd*; Abu Daud: Tayalisi, *Ahadith* No. 995, 2135).

(5) Concerning it the Prophet (peace be upon him) warned the people of his time again and again, saying: After me those from among you who would effect changes in my way, will be removed from the Fountain and will be disallowed to approach it. I shall say: they are my companions, but it will be said: Don't you know what they did after you? Then I too shall discard them and tell them to keep away. This subject has been expressed in many traditions. (Bukhari: *Kitab ar-Riqaq*, *Kitab al-Fitan*; Muslim: *Kitab at-Tahara* and *Kitab al-Fadail* Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyyat* Ibn Masud, Abu Hurairah; Ibn Majah: *Kitab al-Manasik*. The *Hadith* which Ibn Majah has related in this connection contains very pathetic words. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Beware! I shall have arrived at the Fountain before you and shall pride myself by your means upon the greater numbers of my *Ummah* as against other *ummahas*. Do not at that time cause my face to be blackened. Beware! I shall have some people released, and some people shall be separated from me. I shall say: O my Lord, they are my companions. He will reply: Don't you know what innovations they introduced after you? According to Ibn Majah, these words were said by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his Sermon at Arafat.

(6) Likewise, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has also warned the Muslims coming after him till Resurrection,

saying: Whoever from among you will swerve from my way and effect changes in it, will be removed from the Fountain. I shall say: O Lord, they belong to me, they are the people of my *Ummah*. In response it will be said: Don't you know what changes they effected after you and then turned back on their heels? Then I shall also turn them away and shall not allow them to approach the Fountain. Many traditions on this subject are found in the Hadith. (Bukhari: *Kitab al-Musaqat, Kitab ar-Riqaq, Kitab al-Fitan*; Muslim: *Kitab at-Taharah. Katab as-Salat, Kitab al-Fadail*; Ibn Majah: *Kitab az-Zuhd*; Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyyat Ibn Abbas*).

Traditions about this Fountain have been related by more than 50 companions, and the earlier scholars generally have taken it to mean the Fountain of *Kauthar*. Imam Bukhari has named the last chapter of his *Kitab ar-Riqaq* as *Babun fil hawd wa qual-Allahu inna a tainak al-Kauthar*, and in a tradition from Anas there is the explanation that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said about *Kauthar*: It is a Fountain at which my *Ummah* shall alight.

The River *Kauthar* which the Prophet (peace be upon him) shall be granted in Paradise, also has been mentioned in a large number of the traditions of *Hadith*. Many traditions have been related on the authority of Anas in which he says, and in some he explains that he is reporting the exact words of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself, that on the occasion of miraj; the Prophet (peace be upon him) was taken round Paradise and shown a river on the banks of which there were vaults of pearls or precious stones carved from within; the earth of its bed was of the strong-scented

musk. He asked Gabriel, or the angel who took him round, what it was? He replied that it was the River *Kauthar*, which Allah had granted him. (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Abu Daud Tayalisi, Ibn Jarir) Again, according to Anas, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked (or a person asked him): What is the *Kauthar*? He replied; It is a River which Allah has granted me in Paradise. Its earth is musk: its water is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey. (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarir; according to another tradition of Musnad Ahmad, describing the merits of the River *Kauthar* the Prophet said that at its bottom there are pearls instead of pebbles. Ibn Umar says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The *Kauthar* is a river in Paradise the banks of which are golden; it flows on pearls and diamonds (i.e. its bed has diamonds instead of pebbles); its earth smells sweeter than musk; its water is whiter than milk (or snow), cooler than snow and sweeter than honey.” (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Ibn Abi Hatim, Darimi, Abu Daud Tayalisi, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah, Ibn Abi Shaibah). Usamah bin Zaid says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) once went to visit Usamah; he was not at home; his wife entertained him and during the conversation said My husband has told me that you have been granted a river in Paradise, which is called the *Kauthar*. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Yes, and its bed is of rubies and corals and emeralds and pearls. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Marduyah. Though the sanad of this tradition is weak, the presence of a large number of traditions dealing with this

subject strengthens it). Besides these *marfu* traditions, a great many sayings of the companions and their successors have been related in the *Hadith* to the effect that the *Kauthar* implies a river in Paradise. These traditions describe its qualities as have been mentioned above. For instance, the sayings of Abdullah bin Umar, Abdullah bin Abbas, Anas bin Malik, Aishah, Mujahid and Abul Aliyah are found in Musnad Ahmad, Bukhari, Tirmidhi, Nasai; and the books of Ibn Marduyah, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Shaibah and other traditionists.

2. So pray to your Lord and sacrifice.*²

فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحَرْ

*² Different commentaries of it have been reported from different scholars. Some of them take the Prayer to mean the five times obligatory Prayer (*salat*); some take it to imply the Prayer of Id al-Adha, and some say that it implies the Prayer itself. Likewise, the meaning of *wanhar* and sacrifice according to some illustrious scholars, is to place the right hand over the left hand and to fold them on the chest in the Prayer; some say that it implies raising both hands with *Allahu Akbar* at the commencement of the Prayer; some say that it implies raising both hands at the commencement of the Prayer, at bowing for *Ruku* and after rising from *Ruku*; and some say that it means performing the Id al-Adha Prayer and then offering the animal sacrifice. But if the context in which this command has been enjoined, is considered, its meaning clearly seems to be: O Prophet, when your Lord has granted you so many and so splendid blessings, then you should perform the

Prayer only for His sake and offer sacrifice only for His sake. This command was given in the environment when not only the pagans of Quraish but the pagans of entire Arabia and the world worshipped their self-made gods and offered sacrifices at their shrines. Therefore, the intention of the command is: Contrary to the polytheistic practice, you should remain steadfast to your creed: your Prayer is only for Allah and your sacrifice is also for Him alone, as it has been said at another place: Declare, O Prophet, my salat and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah, Lord of the universe, Who has no partner with Him. This is what I have been enjoined, and I am the first to surrender to Him. (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 162-163). This same meaning has been explained of it by Ibn Abbas. Ata, Mujahid, Ikrimah, Hasan Basri, Qatadah, Muhammad bin Kaab al-Qurzi, Dahhak, Rabi bin Anas, Ata al-Khurasani and many other major commentators. (Ibn Jarir). However, this by itself is correct that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) enforced by Allah's command the practice of the Id al-Adha Prayer and the offering of animal sacrifice at Al-Madinah, he himself gave the first place to the Prayer (*salat*) and the second to the sacrifice, as commanded in the verses: *Inna salati wa nusuki* and *fa-salli li-Rabbika wanhar*, and also enjoined on the Muslims to do the same, i.e. they should first perform the Prayer and then offer the sacrifice. This is neither the explanation of this verse nor the occasion of its revelation but a deduction made by the Prophet (peace be upon him) from these verses and his deduction of injunctions is also a kind of divine

inspiration.

3. Indeed, your enemy^{*3} is the one cut off (from the root).^{*4}

إِنَّ شَانِيكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ

*3 The word *shani* as used, in the original is derived from *shaan*, which means the hatred and spite because of which a person may start ill-treating another. At another place in the Quran it has been said: (And O Muslims,) the enmity of any people should not so provoke you as to turn you away from justice. (Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 8). Thus, *shani aka* implies every such person who blinded by his enmity of the Prophet (peace be upon him) should bring false accusations against him, slander and defame him and vent his personal spite against him by taunting and scoffing at him in every possible way.

*4 *Huwal abtar*: He himself is *abtar*, i.e. though he calls you *abtar*, he in fact himself is *abtar*. Some explanations of *abtar* have already been given in the Introduction to the Surah. It is derived from *batar* which means to cut off, but idiomatically it is used in a comprehensive meaning. In the *Hadith*, the *rakah* of the Prayer which is not coupled with another *rakah* is called *butaira*, i.e. the lonely *rakah*. According to another *Hadith*, every piece of work, which is in any way important, is *abtar* if it is started without the glorification and praise of Allah implying that it is cut off from the root; it has no stability; and it is doomed to failure. A man who fails to achieve his object is *abtar* as also the one who is deprived of all means and resources. A person who is left with no hope of any good and success in

life is also *abtar*. A person who has been cut off from his family, brotherhood, associates and helpers is also *abtar*. The word *abtar* is also used for the man who has no male child, or whose male child or children have died, for after him there remains no one to remember him and he is lost to posterity after death. In almost all these meanings the disbelieving Quraish called the Prophet (peace be upon him) *abtar*. At this, Allah said: O Prophet, not you but your enemies are *abtar*. This was not merely a reprisal, but a prophecy out of the most important prophecies of the Quran, which literally proved true. When it was made, the people regarded the Prophet (peace be upon him) as *abtar*, and no one could imagine how the big chiefs of the Quraish would become *abtar*, who were famous not only in Makkah but throughout Arabia, who were successful in life, rich in worldly wealth and children, who had their associates and helpers everywhere in the country, who enjoyed intimate relations with all the Arabian tribes, being monopolists in trade and managers of Hajj. But not long afterwards the conditions altogether changed. There was a time when on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench (A.H. 5) the Quraish had invaded Al-Madinah with the help of many Arabian and Jewish tribes, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) being besieged had to resist the enemy by digging a trench around the city. After only three years, in A.H. 8, when he attacked Makkah, the Quraish had no helper and they had to surrender helplessly. After this within a year or so the whole Arabia came under his control, deputations of tribes from all over the country began to visit him to take

the oaths of allegiance and his enemies were left utterly helpless and resource-less. Then they were so lost to posterity that even if their children survived, none of them today knows that he is a descendent of Abu Jahl, Abu Lahab, Aas bin Wail, or Uqbah bin Abi Muait, the enemies of Islam, and even if he knows it, he is not prepared to claim that his ancestors were those people. On the contrary, blessings are being invoked on the children of the Prophet (peace be upon him) throughout the world; millions and millions of Muslims take pride in bearing relationship to him; hundreds of thousands of people regard it as a mark of honor and prestige to have descended not only from him but from his family and even the families of his companions. Thus, some one is a Sayyid, another an Alavi, and Abbasi, a Hashmi, a Siddiqi, a Faruqi, an Uthmani, a Zubairi, or an Ansari, but no one is an Abu Jahli or Abu Lahabi. History has proved that not the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) but his enemies were, and are, *abtar*.





Al-Kafiroon

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word *al-kafiroon* occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Abdullah bin Masud, Hasan Basri and Ikrimah, say that this Surah is Makki, while Abdullah bin Zubair says that it is Madani. Two different views have been reported from Abdullah bin Abbas and Qatadah, first that it is Makki, and second that it is Madani. However, according to the majority of commentators, it is a Makki Surah, and the subject matter itself points to its being a Makki revelation.

Historical Background

There was a time in Makkah when although a storm of opposition had arisen in the pagan society of Quraish against the message of Islam preached by the Prophet (peace be upon him), yet the Quraish chiefs had not yet lost hope that they would reach some sort of a compromise with him. Therefore, from time to time they would visit him with different proposals of compromise so that he may accept one of them and the dispute between them would be

brought to an end. In this connection, different traditions have been related in the *Hadith*.

According to Abdullah bin Abbas, the Quraish proposed to the Prophet (peace be upon him): We shall give you so much of wealth that you will become the richest man of Makkah. We shall give you whichever woman you like in marriage. We are prepared to follow and obey you as our leader, only on the condition that you will not speak ill of our gods. If you do not agree to this, we present another proposal which is to your as well as to our advantage. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked what it was, they said that if he would worship their gods, Lat and Uzza, for a year, they would worship his God for the same span of time. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Wait awhile; let me see what my Lord commands in this regard.

Thereupon the revelation came down: *Qul ya-ayyuhal-kafirun...* and: *Qul afa-ghair Allahi...* (Surah Az-Zumar, Ayat 64): Say to them: ignorant people, do you bid me to worship others than Allah? (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Tabarani). According to another tradition from Ibn Abbas, the Quraish said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): O Muhammad, if you kiss our gods, the idols, we shall worship your God. Thereupon, this Surah was sent down. (Abd bin Humaid).

Saa'id bin Mina (the freed slave of Abul Bakhtari) has related that Walid bin Mughirah, Aas bin Wail, Aswad bin al-Muttalib and Umayyah bin Khalaf met the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said to him: O Muhammad (peace be upon him), let us agree that we would worship your God

and you would worship our gods, and we would make you a partner in all our works. If what you have brought was better than what we possess, we would be partners in it with you, and have our share in it, and if what we possess is better than what you have brought, you would be partner in it with us and have your share of it. At this Allah sent down: *Qul ya-ayyuhal-kafirun* (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Hisham has also related this incident in the *Sirah*).

Wahb bin Munabbih has related that the people of Quraish said to Allah's Messenger: If you like we would enter your faith for a year and you would enter our faith for a year. (Abd bin Humaid, Ibn Abi Hatim).

These traditions show that the Quraish had proposed such things to the Prophet (peace be upon him) not once, in one sitting, but at different times and on different occasions; and there was need that they should be given a definite, decisive reply so that their hope that he would come to terms with them on the principle of give and take was frustrated forever.

Theme and Subject Matter

If the Surah is read with this background in mind, one finds that it was not revealed to preach religious tolerance as some people of today seem to think, but it was revealed in order to exonerate the Muslims from the disbelievers religion, their rites of worship, and their gods, and to express their total disgust and unconcern with them and to tell them that Islam and *kufir* (unbelief) had nothing in common and there was no possibility of their being combined and mixed into one entity. Although it was

addressed in the beginning to the disbelieving Quraish in response to their proposals of compromise, yet it is not confined to them only, but having made it a part of the Quran, Allah gave the Muslims the eternal teaching that they should exonerate themselves by word and deed from the creed of *kufir* wherever and in whatever form it be, and should declare without any reservation that they cannot make any compromise with the disbelievers in the matter of faith. That is why this Surah continued to be recited when the people to whom it was addressed as a rejoinder, had died and been forgotten, and those Muslims also continued to recite it who were disbelievers at the time it was revealed, and the Muslims still recite it centuries after they have passed away, for expression of disgust with and dissociation from *kufir* and its rites is a perpetual demand of faith.

As for the esteem in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) held this Surah, it can be judged from the following few *ahadith*:

Abdullah bin Umar has related that on many an occasion he heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) recite Surahs *Qul Ya- ayyuhal- kafirun* and *Qul Huwu-Allahu ahad* in the two *rakahs* before the Fajr obligatory Prayer and in the two *rakahs* after the Maghrib obligatory Prayer. Several traditions on this subject with a little variation in wording have been related by Imam Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibban, Ibn Marduyah from Ibn Umar.

Khabbab says: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to me: when you lie down in bed to sleep, recite *Qul ya- ayyuhal kafirun*, and this was the Prophet's own practice

also; when he lay down to sleep, he recited this Surah. (Bazzar, Tabarani, Ibn Marduyah).

According to Ibn Abbas, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to the people: Should I tell you the word which will protect you from polytheism? It is that you should recite *Qul ya-ayyuhal kafirun* when you go to bed. (Abu Yala, Tabarani).

Anas says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Muadh bin Jabal: Recite *Qul ya-ayyuhal-kafirun* at the time you go to bed, for this is immunity from polytheism. (Baihaqi in *Ash-Shuab*).

Both Fardah bin Naufal and Abdur Rahman bin Naufal have stated that their father, Naufal bin Muawiyah al-Ashjai, said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): Teach me something which I may recite at the time I go to bed. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Recite *Qul ya-ayyuhal kafirun* to the end and then sleep, for this is immunity from polytheism. (Musnad Ahmad, Aba Daud, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Hakim, Ibn Marduyah, Baihaqi in *Ash-Shuab*). A similar request was made by Jabalah bin Harithah, brother of Zaid bin Harithah, to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and to him also he gave the same reply. (Musnad Ahmad, Tabarani).

1. Say: "O disbelievers."^{*1}

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ

*1 A few points in this verse are particularly noteworthy: (1) Although the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been commanded to tell this to the disbelievers plainly, the theme that follows makes it explicit that every believer should tell

the disbelievers plainly what has been said in the following verses; so much so that the person who has just believed and repented of *kufir* is also bound to express similarly his disgust with and disapproval of the creed and rites of worship and gods of *kufir*. Thus, though the first addressee of the word *qul* (say) is the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself, the command is not restricted to him alone but it reaches every believer through him.

(2) The word *kafir* is no abuse, which might have been used for the addressees of this verse, but it implies the one who refuses to believe or is an unbeliever. As against it the word *mumin* is used for the believer. Therefore, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying, by Allah's command, O disbelievers... in fact, means: O you, who have refused to believe in my apostleship and in the teachings brought by me. Likewise, when a believer uses this word, it will imply those who do not believe in the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

(3) The word used is *O kafirs* and not *O mushriks*; therefore, the addressees are not only the *mushriks* but all those people who do not acknowledge Muhammad (peace be upon him) as Allah's Messenger and the teachings and guidance brought by him as the teaching and guidance given by Allah Himself, whether they be Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians or the disbelievers, polytheists and pagans of the entire world. There is no reason why this address be restricted to the pagans of Quraish or of Arabia only.

(4) To address the deniers with the word *O kafirs* is just like addressing certain people as O enemies, or O opponents.

Such an address is not, in fact, directed to the person of the addressee but it is made on the basis of their characteristic of enmity and opposition, and lasts only until they are so characterized. If one of them gives up enmity and opposition, or turns a friend and supporter, he no longer remains the addressee of this word. Likewise, the address of *O kafirs* to the people also is in view of their characteristic of *kufr* and not their person. This address would be perpetual for him who continues to be a *kafir* till death, but the one who believes will no longer be its addressee.

(5) Many scholars from among the commentators have expressed the opinion that in this Surah the address of O disbelievers applied only to a few persons of Quraish, who were visiting the Prophet (peace be upon him) with proposals of compromise regarding religion and about whom Allah had informed His Messenger (peace be upon him) that they would not believe. They have formed this opinion for two reasons. First, that it is followed by *La a budu ma ta budun*: I do not worship him or those whom you worship. They say that this does not apply to the Jews and Christians, for they worship Allah. Second, that this is also followed by: *wala antum abiduna ma aabud*: Nor are you worshippers of Him Whom I worship. Their reasoning is that this statement does not apply to the people who at the revelation of this Surah were disbelievers but later believed. Both these arguments are incorrect. As for these verses, their explanation that follows will show that they do not bear the meaning which has been understood from them. Here, to point out the error of the reasoning it would be

enough to say that if the addressees of this Surah were only these people, why then does this Surah still continue to be recited when they are dead and gone from the world long long ago? And what was the need of making this Surah a part of the Quran permanently so that the Muslims should continue to read it for ever afterwards?

2. I do not worship that which you worship.*²

لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ

*² This includes all those deities whom the disbelievers and the polytheists have been, and are still, worshipping everywhere in the world, whether they are the angels, the jinn, prophets, saints, spirits of the living or dead men, or the sun, the moon, stars, animals, trees, rivers, idols and imaginary gods and goddesses. One may say that the pagans of Arabia also acknowledged Allah as a deity and the other pagans of the world also have never dis-acknowledged Allah as a deity till today. As for the followers of the earlier scriptures, they also acknowledge Allah alone as the real deity. How then can it be correct to exonerate oneself from the worship of all the deities of all those people, without exception, when Allah too is included among them? The answer is that if Allah is worshipped along with others regarding Him as a deity among other deities, the believer in *Tauhid* will inevitably express his immunity from this worship, for in his sight Allah is not a deity out of a collection of deities, but He alone is the real deity, and the worship of the collection of deities is no worship of Allah, although worship of Allah is also included in it. The Quran has clearly stated that Allah's worship is

only that which does not have any tinge of the worship of another and in which man makes his worship exclusively Allah's. And the only command they were given, was to worship Allah, making their religion sincerely His, turning all their attention towards Him. (Surah Al-Bayyinah, Ayat 5). This subject has been explained at many places in the Quran forcefully; for example, see Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 145-146; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 29; Surah Az-Zumar, Ayats 2, 3, 11, 14, 15; Surah Al-Mumin, Ayat 14, 64-66. It has been further explained in a *Hadith Qudsi* (i.e. divine word revealed through the mouth of the Prophet) in which the messenger of Allah says: Allah says, I am Self-Sufficient of the association of every associate most of all. Whoever performed an act in which he also associated another with Me, I am free of it, and the entire act is for him who was associated. (Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Majah). Thus, acknowledging Allah as one of the two, three or many gods and serving and worshipping others along with Him is, in fact, the real *kufur*, declaration of immunity from which is the object of this Surah.

3. Nor are you worshippers of that which I worship.*³

وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ

*³ The words used are: *ma abudu*. The word *ma* in Arabic, is generally used for lifeless or unintelligent things, and the word *mun* for intelligent and rational beings. The question arises why has *ma abudu* been used here instead of *man abudu*? The commentators generally give four answers to it:

(1) That *ma* here is in the meaning of *mun*.

(2) That *ma* here is in the meaning of *alladhi* (i.e. which or who).

(3) That in both the sentences *ma* is in the meaning of a noun of action (*masdar*) and it means: I do not perform the kind of worship that you perform, i.e. polytheistic worship, and you do not perform the kind of worship that I perform, i.e. worship of One God.

(4) That since in the first sentence *ma tabuduna* has been used, in the second *ma abudu* has been used to keep the style; in both places there is only the uniformity of the word, there is no uniformity of meaning; instances of this are found elsewhere also in the Quran. For example, in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 194, it has been said: Therefore, if anyone transgresses a prohibition by attacking you, you may do likewise. Obviously, to transgress likewise in retaliation is no transgression, but the word transgression (in retaliation) has been used only for the sake of uniformity in style. In Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 67, it has been said: They forgot Allah, so Allah forgot them. Whereas Allah does not forget. What is meant to be said is that Allah ignored them. The word *nisyan* in respect of Allah has been used corresponding to their *nisyan* (forgetfulness) only to keep the uniformity of the study. Although all these four interpretations are correct in their own way, and there is room in Arabic to take all these meanings, yet none of these explains the real object for which *ma abudu* has been used instead of *mun abudu*. As a matter of fact, when *mun* is used for a person in Arabic, it is meant to say or ask something about his person, and

when *ma* is used, it is meant to ask or express something about his characteristics and traits. This can be explained in English by the questions: who is he, and what is he, about a person. When it is asked, who is he, the object is to know something about his person. But when it is asked, what is he, the object is to know whether, for example, he belongs to the army, and if so, what is his rank, or whether he belongs to some teaching organization, and if so, whether he is a lecturer in it, or a reader, or a professor, what science or art subject he teaches, what are his qualifications, etc. Thus, if in this verse, it was said: *La antum abiduna mun abud*, it would mean: You are not worshippers of the being whom I worship, and in response, the disbelievers and the polytheists could have said that they too believed in the Being of Allah and also worshipped Him. But when it was said: *La antum abiduna ma abud*, it meant: You are not worshippers of the deity who has the attributes of the deity whom I worship. And this is the real point on the basis of which the religion of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is absolutely distinguished from the religions of all kinds of disbelievers, besides the deniers of God, for his God is utterly different from the God of all of them. The God of some of them is such that He stood in need of rest on the seventh day after having created the world in six days, Who is not God of the universe but God of Israel, Who stands in a special relationship to the people of one particular race, which is not shared by other men, Who wrestles with the Prophet Jacob and cannot throw him, Who has also a son, named

Ezra. The God of some others is father of an only son, called Jesus Christ, and He causes His son to be crucified in order to make him an atonement for the sins of others. The God of some has wife and children, but begets only daughters. The God of some assumes human form and shape and living in a human body on the earth works like men. The God of some is merely an Essence, or Cause of causes, or the First Cause, Who after giving the system of the universe the initial push is sitting aside unconcerned, the universe is working by itself according to some relentless laws, and now He and man have nothing to do with each other. In short, even the unbelievers who acknowledge God do not, in fact, acknowledge the God, Who is the Creator, Master, Disposer, Administrator and Ruler of the entire universe, Who has not only set the system of the universe but is running and controlling it by Himself every moment, Who is above every defect, fault, weakness and error, Who is free from every similitude, every physical limitation, every likeness, Who is Self-Sufficient of every companion and associate, Who has no partner in His Being, attributes, powers and entitlement to worship, Who is far too Holy that He should have children, or should take some one for a son, or should have an exclusive relationship with a community or race, Who is directly related to each individual creature of His as its Providence, Sustainer and Guardian, Who hears the prayers and answers them, Who alone possesses all the powers to give life and death, to cause profit and loss, and to make and mar destinies, Who not only sustains His

creatures but also guides each according to its nature and need, Who is not only our God Whom we worship but also enjoins commands and prohibitions through His Prophets and His Books, which we have to obey, before Whom we are accountable for our deeds, Who will resurrect us after death, call us to account and reward and punish us accordingly. No one in the world except for Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his followers are worshipping the God with these attributes. If at all some others also are worshipping God, they are not worshipping the real and true God but the God who is their self-invented, imaginary God.

4. Nor am I a worshipper of that which you worship.

وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُمْ

5. Nor are you worshippers of that which I worship.*4

وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَّا أَعْبُدُ

*4 A section of the commentators is of the view that both these sentences are a repetition of the theme of the first two sentences and the repetition is meant to strengthen the statement in the first two sentences. But many commentators do not regard it as a repetition. They say that a new theme has been expressed in these which is different from the theme of the first two sentences. In our opinion they are correct in so far as there is no repetition in these sentences, for in these only “nor are you worshippers of Him Whom I worship” has been repeated, and this repetition also is not in the sense in which this sentence was used first. But after negating the repetition the meanings that this section of the commentators has given of these two

sentences are very different from each other. There is no occasion here to take up and discuss each of the meanings given by the commentators. Avoiding details we shall only discuss the meaning which is correct in our opinion. In the first sentence, it has been said: "Nor am I a worshipper of those whom you have worshipped." Its theme is absolutely different from the theme of verse 2, in which it was said: "I do not worship those whom you warship," These two things widely differ in two aspects. First, that although there is denial, and a forceful denial, in saying that "I do not, or shall not, do such and such a thing," yet there is much greater force in saying that "I am not a doer of such and such a thing," for it means: "It is such an evil thing that nothing to say of committing it; it is not possible that I would even think of it, or have intention of doing it." Second, that the sentence "whom you worship" applies to only those gods whom the disbelievers are worshipping now. On the contrary, the sentence "whom you have worshipped" applies to all those gods whom the disbelievers and their forefathers have been worshipping in the past. Now, it is a well known fact that the gods of the polytheists and disbelievers have always been changing and their number increasing and decreasing. In different ages different groups of them have been worshipping different gods, and the gods of all the disbelievers have never always been the same everywhere. Therefore, the verse means: I exonerate myself not only from your gods of today but also from the gods of your forefathers, and I am not a person who would even think of worshipping such gods.

As for the second sentence, although its words in verse 5 are the same as in verse 3, yet its meaning at the two places is different. In verse 3, it follows this sentence: “I do not worship those whom you worship.” Therefore, it means: “Nor are you worshippers of the God having the attributes of the One God Whom I worship.” And in verse 5, it follows this sentence: “Nor am I a worshipper of those whom you have worshipped.” Therefore, it means: “Nor does it seem you would become worshippers of the One God Whom I worship.” Or, in other words, “It is not possible that I should become a worshipper of each of those gods whom you and your forefathers have worshipped, and on account of your aversion to adopting worship of One God, instead of many gods, it cannot be expected that you would desist from this wrong worship and will become worshipper of Him Whom I worship.

6. For you is your religion,
and for me is my religion.*5

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ ﴿٦﴾

*5 That is, my religion is entirely distinct and separate from your religion. I am not a worshipper of your gods and you are not worshippers of my God. I cannot worship your gods and you are not prepared to worship my God, Therefore, you and I can never follow and walk one and the same path together. This is not a message of tolerance to the disbelievers, but a declaration of immunity, disgust with and dissociation from them as long as they are disbelievers. Its object is to disappoint them absolutely and finally that in the matter of religion the party of Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) and his followers would ever come to

terms with them. This same declaration of immunity and expression of disgust has been made in the Makki Surahs revealed after this Surah successively. Thus, in Surah Yunus, it was said: If these people deny you, say to them: I am responsible for my deeds and you are responsible for yours: you are not accountable for what I do, and I am not accountable for what you do. (verse 41). Then further on in the same Surah it was said: O Prophet, say: O mankind, if you are still in doubt concerning my faith, know that I do not worship those whom you worship beside Allah, but I worship that Allah alone, Who has the power to cause your death. (verse 104). In Surah Ash-Shuara it was said: If they disobey you, tell them: I am not responsible for what you do. (verse 216). In Surah Saba it was said: Say to them: you will not be questioned for the errors we have committed, nor shall we be answerable for what you are doing. Say, our Lord will gather us together, then He will judge between us rightly. (verses 25-26). In Surah az-Zumar: Tell them plainly: O my people, do whatever you will, so shall I. Soon you shall come to know as to whom comes the disgraceful torment and who gets the enduring punishment. (verses 39-40). Then the same lesson was taught in Al-Madinah to all the Muslims: There is indeed an excellent example for you in Abraham and his companions when they said to their people plainly: We have nothing to do with you and your gods, whom you worship beside God; we have renounced you and there has arisen between us and you enmity and hatred for ever, until you believe in Allah, the One. (Surah Al-Mumtahinah, Ayat 4). These continuous explanations of

the Quran do not leave any room whatever for the doubt that the verse *Lakum dinu kum wa liya din* does not mean: You may go on following your religion and allow me to follow mine, but it is the kind of declaration made in Surah Az-Zumar, Ayat 14: O Prophet, say to them: I shall serve Allah alone, making my religion sincerely His. As for you, you may serve whomever you please beside Him. (verse 14). From this verse Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Shafei have deduced that *kufr* (unbelief), as a whole, is one community, however discordant and different from each other be the religions of the unbelievers; therefore, a Jew can inherit a Christian, and a Christian a Jew, and likewise the unbeliever of one religion can inherit the unbeliever of another religion, if there exists between them a relationship by descent or marriage, or some other connection, which necessitates the passage of inheritance of one to another. On the contrary, Imam Malik, Imam Auzai and Imam Ahmad hold the view that the followers of one religion cannot inherit the followers of another religion. They deduce this from the *Hadith* which has been related on the authority of Hadrat Abdullah bin Amr bin alAas, saying that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: The people of two different communities cannot inherit each other. (Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud, Ibn Majah, Daraqutni). A *Hadith* with almost the same content has been related by Tirmidhi from Jabir, by Ibn Hibban from Abdullah bin Umar, and by Bazzar from Abu Hurairah. Dealing with this legal problem comprehensively, the well known Hanafi Imam; Shamsul-Aimmah Sarakhsi, writes: The unbelievers can

inherit each other mutually for all those reasons for which the Muslims inherit each other mutually, and they can also inherit each other in certain other cases in which the Muslims do not inherit each other. The fact is that Allah recognizes only two ways of life, the religion of truth and the religion of falsehood; that is why He has declared: *Lakum dinu-kum wa liya din*. And He has classified the people also into two groups, one group will go to Paradise and this consists of the believers, and the second group will go to Hell and this consists of the disbelievers collectively. And He has declared the two groups only as the potential opponents of each other: These are the two parties who have disputed about their Lord. (Surah Al-Hajj, Ayat 19). That is, one group comprises all the disbelievers collectively and they are opposed to the believers. We do not admit that they are separate and distinct communities according to their beliefs, but as against the Muslims they all form one community. For the Muslims affirm faith in the apostleship of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and in the Quran and they (disbelievers) refuse to affirm faith. For this very reason they have been declared to be unbelievers and are one community as opposed to the Muslims. The *Hadith, La yata-warith ahl millatain*, points to the same thing as explained above. For the Prophet (peace be upon him) has explained the word *millatain* (two communities) by his saying: *La yarithul Muslim al-kafir wa lal-kafir al-Muslim*: The Muslim cannot inherit the disbeliever, nor the disbeliever can inherit the Muslim. (*AlMabsut* vol. 30, pp. 30-32). The *Hadith* cited here by Imam Sarakhsi has been

related by Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai, Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Abu Daud on the authority of Usamah bin Zaid.





النَّصْر An-Nasr

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word *nasr* occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Abdullah bin Abbas states that this is the last Surah of the Quran to be revealed, i.e. no complete Surah was sent down to the Prophet after it. (Muslim, Nasai, Tabarani, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Ibn Marduyah).

According to Abdullah bin Umar, this Surah was sent down on the occasion of the farewell pilgrimage in the middle of the *tashriq* days at Mina, and after it the Prophet (peace be upon him) rode his she camel and gave his well known sermon. (Tirmidhi, Bazzar, Baihaqi, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Abd bin Humaid, Abu Yala, Ibn Marduyah). Baihaqi in *Kitab al-Hajj* has related from the tradition of Sarra bint-Nabhan the sermon which the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave on this occasion. She says:

At the farewell pilgrimage I heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say: O people, do you know what day is it. They said: Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) have the best knowledge. He said: This is the middle day of the

Tashriq days. Then he said: Do you know what place is it. They said: Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge. He said: This is *Masharil-Haram*. Then he said: I do not know, I might not meet you here again. Beware, your bloods and your honors are forbidden, until you appear before your Lord, and He questions you about your deeds. Listen: let the one who is near convey it to him who is far away. Listen: have I conveyed the message to you? Then, when we returned to Al-Madinah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away not many days after that.

If both these traditions are read together, it appears that there was an interval of three months and some days between the revelation of Surah An-Nasr and the Prophet's (peace be upon him) death, for historically the same was the interval between the farewell pilgrimage and the passing away of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Ibn Abbas says that when this Surah was revealed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that he had been informed of his death and his time had approached. (Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah). In the other traditions related from Abdullah bin Abbas, it has been stated that at the revelation of this Surah the Prophet understood (peace be upon him) that he had been informed of his departure from the world. (Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarir, Tabarani, Nasai, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Marduyah).

Mother of the believers, Umm Habibah, says that when this Surah was revealed the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that he would leave the world that year. Hearing this

Fatimah wept. Thereat he said: From among my family you will be the first to join me. Hearing this she laughed. (Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Marduyah). A tradition containing almost the same theme has been related by Baihaqi from Ibn Abbas.

Ibn Abbas says: Umar used to invite me to sit in his assembly along with some of the important elderly companions who had fought at Badr. This was not liked by some of them. They complained that they also had sons who were like the boy. Why then was he in particular invited to sit in the assembly. (Imam Bukhari and Ibn Jarir have pointed out that such a thing was said by Abdur Rahman bin Auf). Umar said that the boy enjoyed the position and distinction because of his knowledge. Then one day he invited the companions of Badr and also called me to sit with them. I understood that he had invited me to the assembly to prove his contention. During the conversation Umar asked the companions of Badr: What do you say about *Idha jaa nasrullahi wal-fath*. Some said: In it we have been enjoined to praise Allah and ask for His forgiveness when His succor comes and we attain victory. Some others said that it implied the conquest of cities and forts. Some kept quiet. Then Umar said: Ibn Abbas, do you also say the same. I said no. He asked: What then is your view. I submitted that it implied the last hour of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him); in it he was informed that when Allah's succor came and victory was attained, it would be a sign that his hour had come; therefore, he should praise Allah and ask for His forgiveness. Thereat Umar said: I

know naught but what you have said.

In another tradition there is the addition that, Umar said to the companions: How can you blame me when you yourselves have seen why I invite this boy to join the assembly. (Bukhari, Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Marduyah, Baghawi, Baihaqi, Ibn al-Mundhir).

Theme and Subject Matter

As is shown by the above traditions, Allah in this Surah had informed His Messenger (peace be upon him) that when Islam attained complete victory in Arabia and the people started entering Allah's religion in great numbers, it would mean that the mission for which he had been sent to the world, had been fulfilled. Then, he was enjoined to busy himself in praising and glorifying Allah by Whose bounty he had been able to accomplish such a great task, and should implore Him to forgive whatever failings and frailties he might have shown in the performance of the service. Here, by a little consideration one can easily see the great difference that there is between a Prophet and a common worldly leader. If a worldly leader in his own lifetime is able to bring about a revolution, which has the aim and objective of his struggle, this would be an occasion for exultation for him. But here we witness quite another phenomenon. The Messenger of Allah in a brief space of 23 years revolutionized an entire nation as regards to its beliefs, thoughts, customs, morals, civilization, ways of living, economy, politics and fighting ability, and raising it from ignorance and barbarism enabled it to conquer the world and become leader of nations; yet when he had

accomplished this unique task, he was not enjoined to celebrate it but to glorify and praise Allah and to pray for His forgiveness, and he busied himself humbly in the implementation of that command.

Aishah says: The Messenger (peace be upon him) often used to recite *Subhanak-Allahumma wa bi-hamdika astaghfiruka wa atubu ilaika* (according to some other traditions, *Subhan Allahi wa bi hamdi-hi as-taghfirullahi wa atubu ilaihi*) before his death. I asked: O Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, what are these words that you have started reciting now. He replied: A sign has been appointed for me so that when I see it, I should recite these words, and it is: *Idha jaa nasrullahi wal-fathu.*” (Musnad Ahmad, Muslim, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah).

In some other traditions on the same subject Aishah has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) often recited the following words in his *ruku* and *sajdah*: *Subhanak-Allahumma wa-bi hamdika, Allahumma-aghfirli*. This was the interpretation of the Quran (i.e. of Surah An-Nasr) that he had made. (Bukhari, Muslim Abu Daud, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Ibn Jarir).

Umm Salamah says that the Prophet (peace be upon him), during his last days, very often recited the following words sitting and standing, going out of the house and coming back to it: *Subhan Allahi wa-bi hamdi-hi*. One day I asked: Why do you recite these words so often, O Messenger of Allah. He replied: I have been enjoined to do so. Then he recited this Surah. (Ibn Jarir).

According to Abdullah bin Masud, when this Surah was revealed, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) frequently began to recite the words *Subhanak-Allahumma wa bi-hamdika, Allahumm-aghfirli, subhanaka Rabbana wa bi-hamdika, Allahumm-aghfirli, innaka anta at-Tawwab al-Ghafur*. (Ibn Jarir, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Abi Hatim).

Ibn Abbas has stated that after the revelation of this Surah the Messenger (peace be upon him) began to labor hard so intensively and devotedly for the Hereafter as he had never done before. (Nasai, Tabarani, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Marduyah).

1. When Allah's help comes and victory (is attained).^{*1}

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ

^{*1} Victory here does not imply victory in any one particular campaign but the decisive victory after which there remained no power in the land to resist and oppose Islam, and it became evident that Islam alone would hold sway in Arabia. Some commentators have taken this to imply the conquest of Makkah. But the conquest of Makkah took place in A.H. 8, and this Surah was revealed towards the end of A.H. 10, as is shown by the traditions related on the authority of Abdullah bin Umar and Sarra bint Nabhan, which we have cited in the Introduction. Besides, the statement of Abdullah bin Abbas that this is the last Surah of the Quran to be revealed also goes against this commentary. For if the victory implied the conquest of Makkah, the whole of Surah at-Taubah was revealed after it then it could not be the last Surah. There is no doubt that the conquest of Makkah was decisive in that it broke the

power of the Arabian pagans, yet even after this, they showed clear signs of resistance. The battles of Taaif and Hunain were fought after it, and it took Islam about two years to attain complete control over Arabia

2. And you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes. *2

وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي
دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا

*2 “And you see... in multitudes”: When the time for the people to enter Islam in ones and twos comes to an end, and when whole tribes and people belonging to large tracts start entering it in crowds of their own free will and without offering battle or resistance. This happened from the beginning of A.H. 9, because of which that year has been described as the year of deputations. Deputations from every part of Arabia started coming before the Messenger (peace be upon him), entering Islam and taking the oath of allegiance to him, until when he went for the farewell pilgrimage to Makkah, in A.H. 10, the whole of Arabia had become Muslim, and not a single polytheist remained anywhere in the country.

3. Then glorify your Lord with His praise, *3 and pray for His forgiveness. *4 Indeed, He is ever inclined to accept repentance.

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَأَسْتَغْفِرْهُ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا

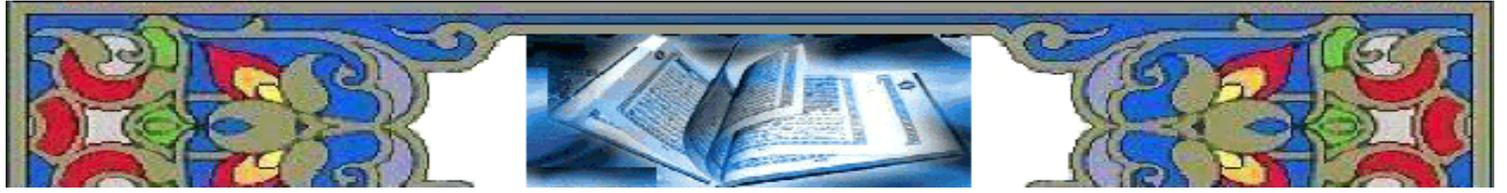
*3 *Hamd* implies praising and hallowing Allah Almighty as well as thanking and paying obeisance to Him; *tasbih* means to regard Allah as pure and free from every blemish

and weakness. The Holy Prophet was enjoined to do *hamd* and *tasbih* of Allah when he witnessed this manifestation of His power. Here, *hamd* means that in respect of his great success he should never entertain even a tinge of the idea that it was the result of any excellence of his own, but he should attribute it to Allah's favor and mercy, thank Him alone for it, and acknowledge with the heart and tongue that praise and gratitude for the victory and success belonged to Him alone. And *tasbih* means that he should regard Allah as pure and free from the limitation that exaltation of His word stood in need of his effort and endeavor, or was dependent on it. On the contrary, his heart should be filled with the faith that the success of his effort and struggle was dependent upon Allah's support and succor. He could take this service from any of His servants He pleased. And this was His favor that He had taken this service from him, and made His religion meet success through him. Besides, there is an aspect of wonder also in pronouncing the *tasbih*, i.e. *Subhan Allah*. When a wonderful incident takes place, one exclaims *subhan Allah*, thereby implying that only by Allah's power such a wonderful thing had happened; otherwise no power of the world could have caused it to happen.

*4 "Pray for His forgiveness": Pray to your Lord to overlook; and pardon whatever error or weakness you might have shown inadvertently in the performance of the service that He had entrusted to you. This is the etiquette that Islam has taught to man. A man might have performed the highest possible service to Allah's religion, might have

offered countless sacrifices in its cause, and might have exerted himself extremely hard in carrying out the rites of His worship, yet he should never entertain the thought that he has fulfilled the right his Lord had on him wholly. Rather he should always think that he has not been able to fulfill what was required of him, and he should implore Allah, saying: Lord, overlook and forgive whatever weakness I might have shown in rendering Your right, and accept the little service that I have been able to perform. When such an etiquette was taught to the Messenger (peace be upon him), none in the world conceivably has toiled and struggled so hard in the cause of Allah as he did, how can another person regard his work as superb and be involved in the misunderstanding that he has fulfilled the right Allah had imposed on him. Allah's right, in fact, is so supreme that no creature can ever fulfill and render it truly and fully. Allah in this command has taught Muslims an eternal lesson: Do not regard any of your worship, devotion or religious service as something superb; even if you have spent your entire life in the cause of Allah, you should always think that you could not do all that was required of you by your Lord. Likewise, when you attain some victory, you should not regard it as a result of some excellence in yourselves but as a result of only Allah's bounty and favor. Then bowing humbly before your Lord, you should praise and glorify Him, and should repent and beg for His forgiveness instead of boasting and bragging of your success and victory.





Al-Lahab أَلَّهَبُ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word *Lahab* in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Although the commentators have not disputed its being a Makki Surah, yet it is difficult to determine in which phase of the life at Makkah precisely it was revealed. However, in view of Abu Lahab's role and conduct against the Prophet's (peace be upon him) message of truth, it can be assumed that it must have been revealed in the period when he had transgressed all limits in his mad hostility to him, and his attitude was becoming a serious obstruction in the progress of Islam. It may well have been revealed in the period when the Quraish had boycotted the Prophet (peace be upon him) together with the people of his clan and besieged them in Shiab Abi Talib, and Abu Lahab was the only person to join with the enemies against his own relatives. The basis of this assumption is that Abu Lahab was the Prophet's uncle, and public condemnation of the uncle by the tongue of the nephew could not be proper until the extreme excesses

committed by the uncle had become visible to everyone. If the Surah had been revealed before this, in the very beginning, the people would have regarded it as morally discourteous that the nephew should so condemn the uncle.

Background

This is the only place in the Quran where a person from among the enemies of Islam has been condemned by name, whereas in Makkah as well as in Madinah, after the migration, there were many people who were in no way less inimical to Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) than Abu Lahab. The question is, what was the special trait of the character of this person, which became the basis of this condemnation by name. To understand that it is necessary that one should understand the Arabian society of that time and the role that Abu Lahab played in it.

In ancient days since there prevailed chaos and confusion, bloodshed and plunder throughout Arabia, and the condition for centuries was that a person could have no guarantee of the protection of life, honor and property except with the help and support of his clansmen and blood relations, therefore *silah rehmi* (good treatment of the kindred) was esteemed most highly among the moral values of the Arabian society and breaking off of connections with the kindred was regarded as a great sin. Under, the influence of the same Arabian tradition when the Prophet (peace be upon him) began to preach the message of Islam, the other clans of Quraish and their chiefs resisted and opposed him tooth and nail, but the Bani Hashim and the

Bani al-Muttalib (children of al-Muttalib, brother of Hashim) not only did not oppose him but continued to support him openly, although most of them had not yet believed in his Prophethood. The other clans of Quraish themselves regarded this support by the blood relations of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as perfectly in accordance with the moral traditions of Arabia. That is why they never taunted the Bani Hashim and the Bani al-Muttalib in that they had abandoned their ancestral faith by supporting a person who was preaching a new faith. They knew and believed that they could in no case hand over an individual of their clan to his enemies, and their support and aid of a clansman was perfectly natural in the sight of the Quraish and the people of Arabia.

This moral principle, which the Arabs even in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, regarded as worthy of respect and inviolable was broken only by one man in his enmity of Islam, and that was Abu Lahab, son of Abdul Muttalib. He was an uncle of the Prophet (peace be upon him), whose father and he were sons of the same father. In Arabia, an uncle represented the father especially when the nephew was fatherless. The uncle was expected to look after the nephew as one of his own children. But this man in his hostility to Islam and love of *kufr* trampled all the Arab traditions under foot.

The traditionists have related from Ibn Abbas with several chains of transmitters the tradition that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was commanded to present the message of Islam openly, and he was instructed in the

Quran to warn first of all his nearest kinsfolk of the punishment of God, he ascended the Mount, Safa one morning and called out aloud: *Ya sabahah* (O, the calamity of the morning!). This alarm in Arabia was raised by the person who noticed early at dawn an enemy tribe advancing against his tribe. When the Messenger (peace be upon him) made this call, the people inquired as to who had made the call. They were told that it was Muhammad (peace be upon him). There the people of all the clans of Quraish rushed out. Everyone who could come, did come. He who could not, sent another one for himself. When the People had assembled, the Messenger (peace be upon him) calling out each clan by name, viz. O Bani Hashim, O Bani Abdul Muttalib, O Bani Fihri, O Bani so and so, said: If I were to tell you that behind the hill there was an enemy host ready to fall upon you, would you believe me. The people responded with one voice, saying that they never had so far experienced a lie from him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Then I warn you that you are heading for a torment. Thereupon, before anyone else could speak, Abu Lahab, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) uncle, said: May you perish! Did you summon us for this. Another tradition adds that he picked up a stone to throw at the Prophet (peace be upon him). (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarir, and others).

According to Ibn Zaid, one day Abu Lahab asked the Prophet (peace be upon him): If I were to accept your religion, what would I get. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: You would get what the other believers would

get. He said: Is there no preference or distinction for me. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: What else do you want. Thereupon he said: May this religion perish in which I and all other people should be equal and alike! (Ibn Jarir). In Makkah Abu Lahab was the next door neighbor of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Their houses were separated by a wall. Besides him, Hakam bin Aas (Father of Marwan), Uqbah bin Abi Muait, Adi bin Hamra and Ibn al-Asda il-Hudhali also were his neighbors. These people did not allow him to have peace even in his own house. Sometimes when he was performing the Prayer, they would place the goat's stomach on him; sometimes when food was being cooked in the courtyard, they would throw filth at the cooking pot. The Prophet (peace be upon him) would come out and say: O Bani Abdi Manaf, what kind of neighborliness is it. Abu Lahab's wife, Umm Jamil (Abu Sufyan's sister), had made it a practice to cast thorns at his door in the night so that when he or his children came out of the house at dawn, they should run thorns in the foot. (Baihaqi, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Asakir, Ibn Hisham).

Before the proclamation of Prophethood, two of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) daughters were married to two of Abu Lahab's sons, Utbah and Utaibah. After his call when the Prophet (peace be upon him) began to invite the people to Islam, Abu Lahab said to both his sons: I would forbid myself seeing and meeting you until you divorced the daughters of Muhammad (peace be upon him). So both of them divorced their wives. Utaibah in particular became so nasty in his spitefulness that one day he came before the

Prophet and said: I repudiate *An-najmi idha hawa* and *Alladhi dana fatadalla* and then he spat at him, but his spit did not fall on him. The Prophet prayed: O God, subject him to the power of a dog from among Your dogs. Afterwards, Utaibah accompanied his father in his journey to Syria. During the journey the caravan halted at a place which, according to local people, was visited by wild beasts at night. Abu Lahab told his companions, the Quraish: Make full arrangements for the protection of my son, for I fear the curse invoked by Muhammad (peace be upon him) on him. Accordingly, the people made their camels sit all around Utaibah and went to sleep. At night a tiger came which crossed the circle of the camels and devoured Utaibah tearing him to pieces. (Ibn Abdul Barr: *Al-Istiab*; Ibn Hajar: *Al-Isabah*; Abu Nuaim al-Isfahani: *Dalail an-Nubuwwat*; As-Suhaili: *Raud al-Unuf*). Here there is a difference of opinion. Some reporters say that the divorce took place after the Prophet's proclamation of Prophethood and some say that it took place after the revelation of *Tabbat yada Abi Lahab*. There is also a difference of opinion about whether Abu Lahab's this son was Utbah or Utaibah. But this much is confirmed that after the conquest of Makkah, Utbah embraced Islam and took the oath of allegiance at the Prophet's hand. Therefore, the correct view is that it was Utaibah.

Abu Lahab's wickedness can be judged from the fact that when after the death of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) son Qasim, his second son, Abdullah, also died. This man instead of joining with his nephew in his bereavement,

hastened to the Quraish chiefs joyfully to give them the news that Muhammad (peace be upon him) had become childless that night. This we have already related in the commentary of Surah Al-Kauthar.

Wherever the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to preach his message of Islam, this man followed him and forbade the people to listen to him. Rabiah bin Abbad ad-Dili has related: I was a young boy when I accompanied my father to the fare of Dhul-Majaz. There I saw the Holy Messenger (peace be upon him) who was exhorting the people, saying: O people, say: there is no deity but Allah, you will attain success. Following behind him I saw a man, who was telling the people, this fellow is a liar: he has gone astray from his ancestral faith. I asked; who is he? The people replied: He is his uncle, Abu Lahab. (Musnad Ahmad, Baihaqi).

Another tradition from Rabiah is to the effect: I saw that the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to the halting place of each tribe and said: O children of so and so, I have been appointed Allah's Messenger to you. I exhort you to worship only Allah and to associate none with Him. So, affirm faith in me and join me so that I may fulfill the mission for which I have been sent. Following close behind him there was a man who was saying: O children of so and so, he is leading you astray from Lat and Uzza and inviting you to the religion of error and innovation which he has brought. Do not at all listen to what he says and do not follow him. I asked my father: who is he? He replied: he is his uncle, Abu Lahab. (Musnad Ahmad, Tabarani).

Tariq bin Abdullah al-Muharibi's tradition is similar. He

says: I saw in the fare of Dhul-Majaz that the Messenger (peace be upon him) was exhorting the people, saying: O people, say *La ilaha ill-Allah*, you will attain success, and behind him there was a man who was casting stones at him, until his heels bled, and he was telling the people: Do not listen to him, he is a liar. I asked the people who he was. They said he was his uncle, Abu Lahab. (Tirmidhi).

In the 7th year of Prophethood, when all the clans of Quraish boycotted the Bani Hashim and the Bani al-Muttalib socially and economically, and both these clans remaining steadfast to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) support, were besieged in Shib Abi Talib, Abu Lahab was the only person, who sided with the disbelieving Quraish against his own clan. This boycott continued for three years, so much so that the Bani Hashim and the Bani al-Muttalib began to starve. This, however, did not move Abu Lahab. When a trade caravan came to Makkah and a besieged person from Shib Abi Talib approached it to buy some article of food, Abu Lahab would shout out to the merchants to demand a forbidding price, telling them that he would make up for any loss that they incurred. Thus, they would demand exorbitant rates and the poor customer had to return empty handed to his starving children. Then Abu Lahab would purchase the same articles from them at the market rates. (Ibn Saad, Ibn Hisham).

On account of these very misdeeds this man was condemned in this Surah by name, and there was a special need for it. When the Prophet's (peace be upon him) own uncle followed and opposed him before the Arabs who came for

Hajj from outside Makkah, or gathered together in the fairs held at different places, they regarded it as against the established traditions of Arabia that an uncle should run down his nephew without a reason, should pelt stones at him and bring false accusations against him publicly. They were, therefore, influenced by what Abu Lahab said and were involved in doubt about the Prophet (peace be upon him). But when this, Surah was revealed, and Abu Lahab, filled with rage, started uttering nonsense, the people realized that what he said in opposition to the Prophet (peace be upon him) was not at all reliable, for he said all that in his mad hostility to his nephew.

Besides, when his uncle was condemned by name, the people's expectation that the Messenger (peace be upon him) could treat some relative leniently in the matter of religion was frustrated forever. When the Messenger's (peace be upon him) own uncle was taken to task publicly, the people understood that there was no room for preference or partiality in their faith. A non-relative could become a near and dear one if he believed, and a near relation a non-relative if he disbelieved. Thus, there is no place for the ties of blood in religion.

1. May the hands of Abu Lahab be ruined, and ruined is he.*¹

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ

*¹ His real name was Abd al-Uzza, and he was called Abu Lahab on account of his glowing, ruddy complexion. Lahab means the flame of fire, and Abu Lahab the one with a flaming, fiery face. His being mentioned here by his

nickname (*Kunyat*), instead of his real name, has several reasons. First, that he was better known by his nickname than by his real name; second, that the Quran did not approve that he should be mentioned by his polytheistic name Abd al Uzza (slave of Uzza); third, that his *kunyat* goes well with the fate that has been described of him in this Surah. Some commentators have translated *tabbat yada Abi Lahab* to mean: May the hands of Abu Lahab be broken, and *tabba* to mean: may he perish or he perished. But this, in fact, was not a curse which was invoked on him, but a prophecy in which an event taking place in the future, has been described in the past tense, to suggest that its occurrence in the future is certain and inevitable. In fact, at last the same thing happened as had been foretold in this Surah a few years earlier. Breaking of the hands obviously does not imply breaking of the physical hands, but a person's utterly failing in his aim and object for which he has exerted his utmost. And Abu Lahab indeed had exerted his utmost to defeat and frustrate the message of Islam presented by the Prophet (peace be upon him). But hardly seven or eight years after the revelation of this Surah most of the big chiefs of Quraish, who were a party with Abu Lahab in his hostility to Islam, were killed in the Battle of Badr. When the news of the defeat reached Makkah, he was so shocked that he could not survive for more than seven days. His death occurred in a pitiable state. He became afflicted with malignant pustule and the people of his house left him to himself, fearing contagion. No one came near his body for three days after his death,

until the body decomposed and began to stink. At last, when the people began to taunt his sons, according to one tradition, they hired some black people, who lifted his body and buried it. According to another tradition, they got a pit dug out and threw his body into it by pushing it with wood, and covered it up with earth and stones. His utter failure became manifest when the religion which he had tried his utmost to impede and thwart, was accepted by his own children. First of all, his daughter, Darrah, migrated from Makkah to Madinah and embraced Islam; then on the conquest of Makkah, both his sons, Utbah and Muattab, came before the Prophet (peace be upon him) through the mediation of Abbas, believed and took oath of allegiance to him.

2. His wealth will not avail him and that which he earned.*2

مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ



*2 Abu Lahab was a stingy, materialistic man. Ibn Jarir has stated that once in the pre-Islamic days he was accused of having stolen two golden deer from the treasury of the Kabah. Though later the deer were recovered from another person, the fact that he was accused of stealing indicates the opinion the people of Makkah held of him. About his riches Qadi Rashid bin Zubair writes in his *Adh-Dhakhir wat-Tuhaf*: He was one of the four richest men of the Quraish, who owned one *qintar* (about 260 oz) of gold each. His love of wealth can be judged from the fact that when on the occasion of the battle of Badr the fate of his religion was

going to be decided forever, and all the Quraish chiefs had personally gone to fight, he sent Aas bin Hisham to fight on his own behalf, telling him: This is in lieu of the debt of four thousand dirhams that you owe to me. Thus, he contrived a plan to realize his debt, for Aas had become bankrupt and there was no hope of the recovery of the debt from him. Some commentators have taken *maa kasaba* in the meaning of the earning, i.e. the benefits that accrued to him from his wealth were his *kasab* (earning), and some other commentators have taken it to imply children, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) has said that a man's son also is his *kasab* (earning). (Abu Daud, Ibn Abi Hatim). Both these meanings fully correspond to the fate met by Abu Lahab. For when he was afflicted with the malignant pustule, his wealth availed him nothing, and his children also left him alone to die a miserable, wretched death. They did not even bury him honorably. Thus, within a few years the people witnessed how the prophecy which had been made in this Surah about Abu Lahab was literally fulfilled.

3. He shall (enter to) burn into a blazing Fire.

سَيَصَلَّىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ هَبٍ ﴿٣﴾

4. And his wife,^{*3} the carrier of slander (or wood thorns).^{*4}

وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ﴿٤﴾

^{*3} Her name was Arwa and her nickname (*kunyat*) Umm Jamil. She was sister of Abu Sufyan and was no less bitter than her husband, Abu Lahab, in her enmity to the Messenger (peace be upon him). Abu Bakr's daughter Asma has related that when this Surah was revealed, and

Umm Jamil heard it, she was filled with rage and went out in search of the Prophet (peace be upon him). She carried a handful of stones and she was crying some verses of her own, satirizing the Prophet (peace be upon him). She came to the Kabah, where the Prophet (peace be upon him) was sitting with Abu Bakr. The latter said: O Messenger of Allah, there she comes and I fear lest she should utter something derogatory to you. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: She will not see me. The same thing happened. She could not see the Prophet (peace be upon him) although he was there. She said to Abu Bakr: I hear that your companion has satirized me. Abu Bakr replied: No, by the Lord of this house, he has not satirized you. Hearing this she went off. (Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Hisham; Bazzar has related an incident on the authority of Abdullah bin Abbas also, which closely resembles this). What Abu Bakr meant was that she had not been satirized by the Prophet (peace be upon him), but by Allah Himself.

*4 The words in the original are *hammalat al-hatab*, which literally mean: carrier of the wood. The commentators have given several meanings of it. Abdullah bin Abbas, Ibn Zaid, Dahhak and Rabi bin Anas say: She used to strew thorns at the Prophet's (peace be upon him) door in the night; therefore, she has been described as carrier of the wood. Qatadah, Ikrimah, Hasan Basri, Mujahid and Sufyan Thauri say: She used to carry evil tales and slander from one person to another in order to create hatred between them; therefore, she has been called the bearer of wood idiomatically. Saaid bin Jubair says: The one who is loading

himself with the burden of sin is described idiomatically in Arabic as: *Fulan-un Yahtatibu ala zahri bi* (so and so is loading wood on his back); therefore, *hummalat al-hatab* means: The one who carries the burden of sin. Another meaning which the commentators have also given is: she will do this in the Hereafter, i.e. she will bring and supply wood to the fire in which Abu Lahab would be burning.

5. Around her neck will be a rope of palm-fiber.*5

فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّنْ مَّسَدٍ

*5 The word used for her neck is *jeed*, which in Arabic means a neck decorated with an ornament. Saeed bin al-Musayyab, Hasan Basri and Qatadah say that she wore a valuable necklace and used to say: By Lat and Uzza, I will sell away this necklace and spend the price to satisfy my enmity against Muhammad (peace be upon him). That is why the word *jeed* has been used here ironically, thereby implying that in Hell she would have a rope of palm-fiber round her neck instead of that necklace upon which she prides herself so arrogantly. Another example of this ironical style is found at several places in the Quran in the sentence: *Bashshir-hum bi-adhab-in alima* "Give them the good news of a painful torment.

The words *habl-um min-masad* have been used for the rope which will be put round her neck, i.e. it will be a rope of the *masad* kind. Different meanings of this have been given by the lexicographers and commentators. According to some, *masad* means a tightly twisted rope; others say that *masad* is the rope made from palm-fiber; still others say that it means the rope made from rush, or camel-skin, or camel-

hair. Still another view is that it implies a cable made by twisted iron strands together.



الأخلاق Al-Ikhlās

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

Al-Ikhlās is not merely the name of this Surah but also the title of its contents, for it deals exclusively with *Tauhid*. The other Surahs of the Quran generally have been designated after a word occurring in them, but in this Surah the word *Ikhlās* has occurred nowhere. It has been given this name in view of its meaning and subject matter. Whoever understands it and believes in its teaching, will get rid of *shirk* (polytheism) completely.

Period of Revelation

Whether it is a Makki or a Madani Surah is disputed, and the difference of opinion has been caused by the traditions which have been related concerning the occasion of its revelation.

1. Abdullah bin Masud has reported that the Quraish said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): Tell us of the ancestry of your Lord. Thereupon this Surah was revealed. (Tabarani).
2. Abul Aliyah has related on the authority of Ubayy bin Kaab that the polytheists said to the Prophet (peace be upon

him): Tell us of your Lord's ancestry. Thereupon Allah sent down this Surah. (Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Jarir, Tirmidhi, Bukhari in *At-Tarikh*, Ibn al-Mundhir, Hakim, Baihaqi). Tirmidhi has related a tradition on the same theme from Abul Aliyah, which does not contain any reference to Ubayy bin Kaab, and has declared it to be more authentic.

3. Jabir bin Abdullah has stated that a bedouin (according to other traditions, some people) said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): Tell us of your Lord's ancestry. Thereupon Allah sent down this Surah. (Abu Yala, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Tabarani in *Al-Ausat*, Baihaqi, Abu Nuaim in *Al-Hilyah*).

4. Ikrimah has related a tradition from Ibn Abbas, saying that a group of the Jews, including Kaab bin Ashraf, Huyayy bin Akhtab and others, came before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: O Muhammad (peace be upon him), tell us of the attributes of your Lord, who has sent you as a Prophet. Thereupon Allah sent down this Surah. (Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Adi, Baihaqi in *Al-Asma was-Sifat*).

In addition to these, some other traditions have also been cited by Ibn Taimiyyah in his commentary of Surah Al-Ikhlās, which are as follows:

5. Anas has stated that some Jews of Khaiber came before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: O Abul Qasim, Allah created the angels from light, Adam from rotten clay, Iblis from the flame of fire, the sky from smoke, and the earth from the foam of water. Now tell us about your Lord

(what is He made of). The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not give any reply to this question. Then Gabriel came and he said: O Muhammad, say to them: *Huwa Allahu ahad*.

6. Amir bin atTufail said to the Prophet: O Muhammad, what do you call us to. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: To Allah. Amir said, Then, tell us what is He made of, whether of gold, silver or iron Thereupon this Surah was sent down.

7. Dahhak, Qatadah and Muqatil have stated that some Jewish rabbis came before the Prophet (peace be upon him), and said: O Muhammad, tell us what is your Lord like, so that we may believe in you. Allah in the Torah has sent down His description. Kindly tell us what is He made of, what is His sex, whether He is made of gold, copper, brass, iron, or silver, and whether He eats and drinks. Also tell us from whom He has inherited the world, and who will inherit it after Him. Thereupon Allah sent down this Surah.

8. Ibn Abbas has reported that a deputation of the Christians of Najran along with seven priests visited the Prophet (peace be upon him), and said: O Muhammad, tell us what is your Lord like and of what substance He is made. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: My Lord is not made from any substance. He is unique and exalted above everything. Thereupon Allah sent down this Surah.

These traditions show that different people on different occasions had questioned the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the essence and nature of the God to whose service and worship he invited the people, and on every occasion he

recited by Allah's command this very Surah in response. First of all, the pagans of Quraish asked him this question in Makkah, and in reply this Surah was sent down. Then, at Madinah, sometimes the Christians, and sometimes the other people of Arabia, asked him questions of this nature, and every time Allah inspired him to recite this very Surah in answer to them. In each of these traditions, it has been said that this Surah was revealed on this or that occasion. From this one should not form the impression that all these traditions are mutually contradictory. The fact is that whenever there existed with the Prophet (peace be upon him) a verse or a Surah previously revealed in respect of a particular question or matter, and later the same question was presented before him, Allah inspired him to recite the same verse or Surah to the people as it contained the answer to their question. The reporters of *Hadith* describe the same thing, saying: When such and such a question or matter was presented before the Prophet (peace be upon him), such and such a verse or Surah was revealed. This has also been described as repetition of revelation, i.e. the revelation of a verse or Surah several times.

Thus, the fact is that this Surah is Makki, rather in view of its subject matter a Surah revealed in the earlier period at Makkah, when detailed verses of the Quran dealing with the essence and attributes of Allah Almighty had not yet been revealed, and the people, hearing the Prophet's (peace be upon him) invitation to Allah, wanted to know what was his Lord like to whose worship and service he was calling them. Another proof of this Surah's being one of the earlier

Surahs to be revealed is that when in Makkah Umayyah bin Khalaf, the master of Bilal, made him lie down on burning sand and placed a heavy stone on his chest, Bilal used to cry *Ahad, Ahad!* This word was derived from this very Surah.

Theme and Subject Matter

A little consideration of the traditions regarding the occasion of the revelation of this Surah shows what were the religious concepts of the world at the time the Prophet (peace be upon him) began to preach the message of *Tauhid*. The idolatrous polytheists were worshiping gods made of wood, stone, gold, silver and other substances. These gods had a form, shape and body. The gods and goddesses were descended from each other. No goddess was without a husband and no god without a wife. They stood in need of food and drink and their devotees arranged these for them. A large number of the polytheists believed that God assumed human form and there were some people who descended from Him. Although the Christians claimed to believe in One God, yet their God also had at least a son, and besides the Father and Son, the Holy Ghost also had the honor of being an associate in Godhead: so much so that God had a mother and a mother-in-law too. The Jews also claimed to believe in One God, but their God too was not without physical, material and other human qualities and characteristics. He went for a stroll, appeared in human form, wrestled with a servant of His, and was father of a son, Ezra. Besides these religious communities, the Zoroastrians were fire worshipers, and the Sabeans star worshipers. Under such conditions when the people were

invited to believe in Allah, the One Who has no associate, it was inevitable that questions arose in the minds as to what kind of a God it was, Who was one and Only Lord and invitation to believe in Whom was being given at the expense of all other gods and deities. It is a miracle of the Quran that in a few words briefly it answered all the questions and presented such a clear concept of the Being of Allah as destroyed all polytheistic concepts, without leaving any room for the ascription of any of the human qualities to His Being.

Merit and Importance

That is why the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) held this Surah in great esteem, and he made the Muslims realize its importance in different ways so that they recited it frequently and disseminated it among the people. For it states the foremost and fundamental doctrine of Islam (viz. *Tauhid*) in four such brief sentences as are immediately impressed on human memory and can be read and recited easily. There are a great number of the traditions of *Hadith*, which show that the Prophet (peace be upon him) on different occasions and in different ways told the people that this Surah is equivalent to one-third the Quran. Several *ahadith* on this subject have been related in Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud; Nasai, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Musnad Ahmad, Tabarani and other books, on the authority of Abu Said Khudri, Abu Hurairah, Abu Ayyub Ansari, Abu ad-Darda, Muadh bin Jabal, Jabir bin Abdullah, Ubayy bin Kab, Umm Kulthum bint Uqbah bin Abi Muait, Ibn Umar, Ibn Masud, Qatadah bin an-Numan, Anas bin Malik, and

Abu Masud.

The commentators have given many explanations of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying. But in our opinion it simply means that the religion presented by the Quran is based on three doctrines: *Tauhid*, Prophethood and the Hereafter. This Surah teaches *Tauhid*, pure and undefiled. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarded it as equal to one-third of the Quran.

A tradition on the authority of Aishah has been related in Bukhari, Muslim and other collections of the *Ahadith*, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent a man as leader of an expedition. During the journey he concluded his recitation of the Quran in every Prayer with *Qul Huwa-Allahu ahad*. On their return his companions mentioned this before the Prophet (peace be upon him). He said: Ask him why he did so. When the man was asked, he replied: In this Surah the attributes of the Merciful God have been stated; therefore, I love to recite it again and again. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) heard this reply, he said to the people: Inform him that Allah holds him in great love and esteem.

A similar incident has been related in Bukhari, on the authority of Anas. He says: A man from among the Ansar led the Prayers in the Quba Mosque. His practice was that in every rakah he first recited this Surah and then would join another Surah to it. The people objected to it and said to him: Don't you think that Surah Ikhlas is by itself enough. Why do you join another Surah to it. You should either recite only this surah, or should leave it and recite

some other Surah. He said: I cannot leave it, I would rather give up leadership in the Prayer, if you so desired. The people did not approve that another man be appointed leader instead of him. At last, the matter was brought before the Prophet (peace be upon him). He asked the man, What prevents you from conceding what your companions desire. What makes you recite this particular Surah in every *rakah*. The man replied: I have great love for it. The Prophet remarked: Your this love for this Surah has earned you entry into Paradise.

1. Say: ^{*1} "He is Allah, ^{*2} the One. ^{*3}

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

^{*1} The first addressee of this command is the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself for it was he who was asked: Who is your Lord and what is He like. Again it was he who was commanded to answer the question in the following words. But after him every believer is its addressee. He too should say what the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been commanded to say.

^{*2} That is, my Lord to Whom you want to be introduced is none but Allah. This is the first answer to the questions, and it means: I have not introduced a new lord who I want you to worship beside all other gods, but it is the same Being you know by the name of Allah. Allah was not an unfamiliar word for the Arabs. They had been using this very word for the Creator of the universe since the earliest times, and they did not apply this word to any of their other gods. For the other gods they used the word *ilah*. Then their beliefs about Allah had become fully manifest at the time

Abraha invaded Makkah. At that time there existed 360 idols of gods (*ilahs*) in and around the Kabah, but the polytheists forsaking all of them had invoked only Allah for protection. In other words, they knew in their hearts that no *ilah* could help them on that critical occasion except Allah. The Kabah was also called *Bait-Allah* by them and not *Bait-ilahs* after their self-made gods. At many places in the Quran the polytheistic Arabian belief about Allah has been expressed, thus:

In Surah *Az-Zukhruf* it has been said: If you ask them who created them, they will surely say, Allah. (verse 87).

In Surah *Al-Ankabuut*: If you ask them, who has created the earth and the heavens and who has subjected the moon and the sun. They will surely say: Allah. And if you ask them, who sent down rainwater from the sky and thereby raised the dead earth back to life. They will surely say: Allah. (verses 61-63).

In Surah *Al-Muminun*: Say to them, tell me, if you know, whose is the earth and all who dwell in it. They will say, Allah's. Say to them: To whom do the seven heavens and the Glorious Throne belong. They will say: To Allah. Say to them: Tell me, if you know, whose is the sovereignty over everything. And who is that Being who gives protection while none else can give protection against Him. They will surely reply: This power belongs to Allah. (verses 84-89).

In Surah *Younus*: Ask them: Who provides for you from the heavens and the earth. Who has power over the faculties of hearing and sight. Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living. Who directs the system

of the universe. They will surely reply: Allah. (verse 31).

Again in Surah Yunus at another place: When you set sails in ships, rejoicing over a fair breeze, then all of a sudden a strong wind begins to rage against the passengers and waves begin to surge upon them from every side and they realize that they have been encircled by the tempest. At that time they pray to Allah with sincere faith, saying: If you deliver us from this peril, we will become Your grateful servants. But when He delivers them, the same people begin to rebel on the earth against the truth. (verses 22-23).

The same thing has been reiterated in Surah Bani Israil, thus: When a misfortune befalls you on the sea, all of those whom you invoke for help fail you but He (is there to help you), yet when He brings you safe to land, you turn away from Him. (verse 67).

Keeping these verses in view, let us consider that when the people asked: Who is your Lord and what is He like to Whom service and worship you call us. The answer given was *Huwa Allah*: He is Allah. This answer by itself gives the meaning: My Lord is He whom you yourself acknowledge as your own as well as the whole world's Creator, its Master, Sustainer and Administrator, and He whom you invoke for help at critical times beside all other deities, and I invite you to His service alone. This answer comprehends all the perfect and excellent attributes of Allah. Therefore, it is not at all conceivable that the Creator of the universe, its Administrator and Disposer of its affairs, Sustainer of all the creatures living in it, and the Helper of the servants in times of hardship, would not be living, hearing and seeing,

that He would not be an All-Powerful, All-Knowing, All-Wise, All-Merciful and All-Kind Sovereign.

*3 The scholars have explained the sentence *Huwa-Allahu Ahad* syntactically, but in our opinion its explanation which perfectly corresponds to the context is that *Huwa* is the subject and *Allahu* its predicate, and *Ahad-un* its second predicate. According to this parsing the sentence means: He (about Whom you are questioning me) is Allah, is One and only one. Another meaning can also be, and according to language rules it is not wrong either: He is Allah, the One. Here, the first thing to be understood is the unusual use of *ahad* in this sentence. Usually this word is either used in the possessive case as *yaum ul-ahad* (first day of the week), or to indicate total negative as *Ma jaa a-ni ahad-un* (No one has come to me), or in common questions like *Hal indaka ahad-un* (Is there anyone with you), or in conditional clauses like *Injaa-ka ahad-un* (If someone comes to you), or in counting as *ahad, ithnan, ahad ashar* (one, two, eleven). Apart from these uses, there is no precedent in the pre-Quranic Arabic that the mere word *ahad* might have been used as an adjective for a person or thing. After the revelation of the Quran this word has been used only for the Being of Allah, and for no one else. This extraordinary use by itself shows that being single, unique and matchless is a fundamental attribute of Allah; no one else in the world is qualified with this quality: He is One, He has no equal. Then, keeping in view the questions that the polytheists and the followers of earlier scriptures asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about his Lord, let us see how they were answered with

ahad-un after *Huwa-Allah*.

First, it means: He alone is the Sustainer: no one else has any share or part in providence and since He alone can be the *Ilah* (Deity) Who is Master and Sustainer, therefore, no one else is His associate in Divinity either.

Secondly, it also means He alone is the Creator of the universe: no one else is His associate in this work of creation. He alone is the Master of the universe, the Disposer and Administrator of its system, the Sustainer of His creatures, Helper and Rescuer in times of hardship; no one else has any share or part whatever in the works of Godhead, which as you yourselves acknowledge, are works of Allah.

Thirdly, since they had also asked the questions: Of what is your Lord made? What is His ancestry? What is his sex? From whom has He inherited the world and who will inherit it after Him? All these questions have been answered with one word *ahad* for Allah. It means:

(1) He alone has been, and will be, God forever; neither was there a God before Him, nor will there be any after Him.

(2) There is no race of gods to which He may belong as a member: He is God, One and Single, and none is homogeneous with Him.

(3) His being is not merely One (*wahid* but *ahad*, in which there is no tinge of plurality in any way: He is not a compound being, which may be analyzable or divisible, which may have a form and shape, which may be residing somewhere, or may contain or include something, which may have a color, which may have some limbs, which may

have a direction, and which may be variable or changeable in any way. Free from every kind of plurality He alone is a Being who is *Ahad* in every aspect. (Here, one should fully understand that the word *wahid* is used in Arabic just like the word one in English. A collection consisting of great pluralities is collectively called *wahid* or one, as one man, one nation, one country, one world, even one universe, and every separate part of a collection is also called one. But the word *Ahad* is not used for anyone except Allah. That is why wherever in the Quran the word *wahid* has been used for Allah, He has been called *Ilah wahid* (one Deity), or *Allah-ulWahid-al-Qahhar* (One Allah Who is Omnipotent), and nowhere just *wahid*, for this word is also used for the things which contain pluralities of different kinds in their being. On the contrary, for Allah and only for Allah the word *Ahad* has been used absolutely, for He alone is the Being Who exists without any plurality in any way, Whose Oneness is perfect in every way.

2. Allah, the Self
Sufficient.*4

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ

*4 The word used in the original is *samad* of which the root is *smd*. A look at the derivatives in Arabic from this root will show how comprehensive and vast this word is in meaning. (Lexical discussion of the meanings of the derivatives is omitted).

On the basis of these lexical meanings the explanations of the word *as-Samad* in the verse *Allah-us-Samad*, which have been reported from the companions, their immediate successors and the later scholars are given below:

Ali Ikrimah and Kab Ahbar: *Samad* is he who has no superior.

Abdullah bin Masud, Abdullah bin Abbas and Abu Wail Shaiq bin Salamah: The chieftain whose chieftaincy is perfect and of the most extraordinary kind.

Another view of Ibn Abbas: Samad is he to whom the people turn when afflicted with a calamity. Still another view of his: The chieftain who in his chieftaincy, in his nobility and glory, in his clemency and forbearance, in his knowledge and wisdom is perfect.

Abu Hurairah: He who is independent of all and all others are dependent upon him.

Other views of Ikrimah: He from whom nothing ever has come out, nor normally comes out, who neither eats nor drinks. Views containing the same meaning have been related from Shabi and Muhammad bin Kab al-Kurazi also.

Suddi: The one to whom the people turn for obtaining the things they need and for help in hardships.

Saeed bin Jubair: He who is perfect in all his attributes and works.

Rabi bin Jubair: He who is immune from every calamity.

Muqatil bin Hayyan: He who is faultless.

Ibn Kaysan: He who is exclusive in his attributes.

Hasan Basri and Qatadah: He who is ever-living and immortal.

Similar views have been related from Mujahid, Mamar and Murrat alHamadani also.

Murrat al-Hamadani's another view is: He who decides

whatever he wills and does whatever he wills, without there being anyone to revise his judgment and decision. Ibrahim Nakhai: He to whom the people turn for fulfillment of their desires. Abu Bakr al-Anbari: There is no difference of opinion among the lexicographers that *samad* is the chief who has no superior and to whom the people turn for fulfillment of their desires and needs and in connection with other affairs. Similar to this is the view of Az-Zajjaj, who says *Samad* is he in whom leadership has been perfected, and to whom one turns for fulfillment of his needs and desires.

Now, let us consider why *Allahu-Ahad* has been said in the first sentence and why *Allah-us-Samad* in this sentence. About the word *ahad* we have explained above that it is exclusively used for Allah, and for none else. That is why it has been used as *ahad*, in the indefinite sense. But since the word *samad* is used for creatures also, *Allall-us-Samad* has been said instead of *Allah Samad*, which signifies that real and true *Samad* is Allah alone. If a creature is *samad* in one sense, it may not be *samad* in some other sense, for it is mortal, not immortal; it is analyzable and divisible, is compound, its parts can scatter away any time; some creatures are dependent upon it, and upon others it is dependent; its chieftaincy is relative and not absolute; it is superior to certain things and certain other things are superior to it; it can fulfill some desires of some creatures but it is not in the power of any creature to fulfill all the desires of all the creatures, On the contrary, Allah is perfect in His attributes of *Samad* in every respect; the whole world

is dependent upon Him in its needs, but He is not dependent upon anyone; everything in the world turns to Him, consciously or unconsciously, for its survival and for fulfillment of the needs of everyone; He is Immortal and Ever-living; He sustains others and is not sustained by anyone; He is Single and Unique, not compound so as to be analyzable and divisible; His sovereignty prevails over entire universe and He is Supreme in every sense. Therefore, He is not only *Samad* but *As-Samad*, i.e. the Only and One Being Who is wholly and perfectly qualified with the attribute of *samad* in the true sense.

Then, since He is *As-Samad*, it is necessary that He should be Unique, One and Only, for such a being can only be One, which is not dependent upon anyone and upon whom everyone else may be dependent; two or more beings cannot be self-sufficient and fulfillers of the needs of all. Furthermore, His being *As-samad* also requires that He alone should be the Deity, none else, for no sensible person would worship and serve the one who had no power and authority to fulfill the needs of others.

3. He begets not, nor was He begotten.*5

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ

*5 The polytheists in every age have adopted the concept that like men, gods also belong to a species, which has many members and they also get married, beget and are begotten. They did not even regard Allah, Lord of the universe, as supreme and above this concept of ignorance, and even proposed children for Him. Thus, the Arabian belief as stated in the Quran was that they regarded the angels as

daughters of Allah. The Prophetic communities too could not remain immune from this creed of paganism. They too adopted the creed of holding one saintly person or another as son of God. Two kinds of concepts have always been mixed up in these debasing superstitions. Some people thought that those whom they regarded as Allah's children, were descended from him in the natural way and some others claimed that the one whom they called son of God, had been adopted by Allah Himself as a son. Although they could not dare call anyone as, God forbid, father of God, obviously human mind cannot remain immune against such a concept that God too should be regarded as a son of somebody when it is conceived that He is not free from sex and procreation and that He too, like man, is the kind of being which begets children and needs to adopt a son in case it is childless, That is why one of the questions asked of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was: What is the ancestry of Allah, and another was: From whom has He inherited the world and who will inherit it after Him.

If these assumptions of ignorance are analyzed, it becomes obvious that they logically necessitate the assumption of some other things as well.

First, that God should not be One, but there should be a species of Gods, and its members should be associates in the attributes, acts and powers of Divinity. This not only follows from assuming God begetting children but also from assuming that He has adopted someone as a son, for the adopted son of somebody can inevitably be of his own kind. And when, God forbid, he is of the same kind as God, it

cannot be denied that he too possesses attributes of Godhead.

Second, that the children cannot be conceived unless the male and the female combine and some substance from the father and the mother unites to take the shape of child. Therefore, the assumption that God begets children necessitates that He should, God forbid, be a material and physical entity, should have a wife of His own species, and some substance also should issue from His body.

Third, that wherever there is sex and procreation, it is there because individuals are mortal and for the survival of their species it is inevitable that they should beget children to perpetuate the race. Thus, the assumption that God begets children also necessitates that He should, God forbid, Himself be mortal, and immortality should belong to the species of Gods, not to God Himself. Furthermore, it also necessitates that like all mortal individuals, God also, God forbid, should have a beginning and an end. For the individuals of the species whose survival depends upon sex and procreation neither exist since eternity nor will exist till eternity.

Fourth, that the object of adopting some one as a son is that a childless person needs a helper in his lifetime and an heir after his death. Therefore, the supposition that Allah has adopted a son inevitably amounts to ascribing all those weaknesses to His sublime Being which characterize mortal man.

Although all these assumptions are destroyed as soon as Allah is called and described as *Ahad* and *As-Samad*, yet

when it is said: Neither has He an offspring nor is He the offspring of another, there remains no room for any ambiguity in this regard. Then, since these concepts are the most potent factors of polytheism with regard to Divine Being, Allah has refuted them clearly and absolutely not only in Surah *Al-Ikhlās* but has also reiterated this theme at different places in different ways so that the people may understand the truth fully. For example let us consider the following verses:

Allah is only One Deity: He is far too exalted that He should have a son: whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth belongs to Him. (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 171).

Note it well: they, in fact, invent a falsehood when they say, Allah has children. They are utter liars. (Surah As-Saaffat, Ayats 151-152).

They have invented a blood-relationship between Allah and the angels, whereas the angels know well that these people will be brought up (as culprits). (Surah As-Saaffat, Ayat 158).

These people have made some of His servants to be part of Him. The fact is that man is manifestly ungrateful. (Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayat 15).

Yet the people have set up the Jinn as partners with Allah, whereas He is their Creator; they have also invented for Him sons and daughters without having any knowledge, whereas He is absolutely free from and exalted far above the things they say. He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth: how should He have a son, when He has no consort? He has created each and every thing. (Surah Al-

Anaam, Ayats 100-101).

They say: the Merciful has offspring. Glory be to Allah! They (whom they describe as His offspring) are His mere servants who have been honored. (Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 26).

They remarked: Allah has taken a son to himself. Allah is All-pure: He is Self Sufficient. He is the Owner of everything that is in the heavens and the earth. Have you any authority for what you say? What, do you ascribe to Allah that of which you have no knowledge. (Surah Yunus, Ayat 68).

And (O Prophet) say: Praise is for Allah who has begotten no son nor has any partner in His Kingdom nor is helpless to need any supporter. (Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 111).

Allah has no offspring, and there is no other deity as a partner with Him. (Surah Al-Muminun, Ayat 91).

In these verses the belief of the people who ascribe real as adopted children to Allah, has been refuted from every aspect, and its being a false belief has also been proved by argument. These and many other Quranic verses of the same theme further explain Surah Al-Ikhlās.

4. And none is equal with Him in rank.*⁶

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

*⁶ The word *kufu* as used in the original means an example, a similar thing, the one equal in rank and position. In the matter of marriage, *kufu* means that the boy and the girl should match each other socially. Thus, the verse means that there is no one in the entire universe, nor ever was, nor ever can be, who is similar to Allah, or equal in rank with

Him, or resembling Him in His attributes, works and powers in any degree whatever.





أَلْفَلَقِ Al-Falaq

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

**The following introduction is for both
Surah Al-Falaq (113) and Surah An-Naas (114)**

Although these two Surahs of the Quran are separate entities and are also written in the Mushaf under separate names, yet they are so deeply related mutually and their contents so closely resemble each other's that they have been designated by a common name *Muawwidhatayn* (the two Surahs in which refuge with Allah has been sought). Imam Baihaqi in *Dalail an-Nubuwwat* has written that these Surahs were revealed together, that is why the combined name of both is *Muawwidhatayn*. We are writing the same one Introduction to both, for they discuss and deal with just the same matters and topics. However, they will be explained and commented on separately below.

Period of Revelation

Hasan Basri, Ikrimah, Ata and Jabir bin Zaid say that these Surahs are Makki. A tradition from Abdullah bin Abbas also supports the same view. However, according to another tradition from him, it is Madani and the same view is also held by Abdullah bin Zubair and Qatadah. One of

the traditions which strengthens this second view is the Hadith which Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nasai and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal have related on the authority of Uqbah bin Aamir. He says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) one day said to him: Do you know what kind of verses have been revealed to me tonight. These matchless verses are *Audhu-bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Audhu-bi-Rabbin-nass*. This Hadith is used as an argument for these Surahs to be Madani because Uqbah bin Amir had become a Muslim in Madinah after the hijrah, as related by Abu Daud and Nasai on the basis of his own statement. Other traditions which have lent strength to this view are those related by Ibn Saad, Muhiyy-us-Sunnah Baghawi, Imam Nasafi, Imam Baihaqi, Hafiz Ibn Hajar, Hafiz Badruddin Ayni, Abd bin Humaid and others to the effect that these Surahs were revealed when the Jews had worked magic on the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Madinah and he had fallen ill under its effect. Ibn Saad has related on the authority of Waqidi that this happened in A.H. 7. On this very basis Sufyan bin Uyainah also also described these Surah as Madani.

But as we have explained in the Introduction to Surah Al-Ikhlâs, when it is said about a certain Surah or verse that it was revealed on this or that particular occasion, it does not necessarily mean that it was revealed for the first time on that very occasion. Rather it sometimes so happened that a Surah or a verse had previously been revealed, then on the occurrence or appearance of a particular incident or situation, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) attention was

drawn to it by Allah for the second time, or even again and again. In our opinion the same was also the case with the *Muawwidhatayn*. The subject matter of these Surahs is explicit that these were sent down at Makkah in the first instance when opposition to the Prophet there had grown very intense. Later, when at Madinah storms of opposition were raised by the hypocrites, Jews and polytheists, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was instructed to recite these very Surahs, as has been mentioned in the above cited tradition from Uqbah bin Amir. After this, when magic was worked on him, and his illness grew intense, Gabriel came and instructed him by Allah's command to recite these very Surahs. Therefore, in our opinion, the view held by the commentators who describe both these Surahs as Makki is more reliable. Regarding them as connected exclusively with the incident of magic is difficult, for this incident related only one verse (verse 4), the remaining verses of Surah al-Falaq and the whole of Surah An-Nass have nothing to do with it directly.

Theme and Subject Matter

The conditions under which these two Surahs were sent down in Makkah were as follows. As soon as the Prophet (peace be upon him) began to preach the message of Islam, it seemed as though he had provoked all classes of the people around him. As his message spread the opposition of the disbelieving Quraish also became more and more intense. As long as they had any hope that they would be able to prevent him from preaching his message by throwing some temptation in his way, or striking some

bargain with him, their hostility did not become very active. But when the Prophet (peace be upon him) disappointed them completely that he would not effect any kind of compromise with them in the matter of faith, and in Surah Al-Kafirun they were plainly told: I do not worship those whom you worship nor are you worshipers of Him Whom I worship. For you is your religion and for me is mine, the hostility touched its extreme limits. More particularly, the families whose members (men or women, boys or girls) had accepted Islam were burning with rage from within against the Prophet (peace be upon him). They were cursing him, holding secret consultations to kill him quietly in the dark of the night so that the Bani Hashim could not discover the murderer and take revenge; magic and charms were being worked on him so as to cause his death, or make him fall ill, or become mad; satans from among the men and the jinn spread on every side so as to whisper one or another evil into the hearts of the people against him and the Quran brought by him so that they became suspicious of him and fled him. There were many people who were burning with jealousy against him, for they could not tolerate that a man from another family or clan than their own should flourish and become prominent. For instance, the reason why Abu Jahl was crossing every limit in his hostility to him has been explained by himself: We and the Bani Abdi Manaf, to which the Prophet (peace be upon him) belonged, were rivals of each other: they fed others, we too fed others; they provided conveyances to the people, we too did the same; they gave donations, we too

gave donations, so much so that when they and we have become equal in honor and nobility, they now proclaim that they have a Prophet who is inspired from the heaven; how can we compete with them in this field? By God, we will never acknowledge him, nor affirm faith in him. (Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 337-338).

Such were the conditions when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was commanded to tell the people: I seek refuge with the Lord of the dawn, from the evil of everything that He has created, and from the evil of the darkness of night and from the evil of magicians, men and women, and from the evil of the envious, and to tell them: I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, and the Deity of mankind, from the evil of the whisperer, who returns over and over again, who whispers (evil) into the hearts of men, whether he be from among the jinn or men. This is similar to what the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had been told to say when Pharaoh had expressed his design before his full court to kill him: I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord against every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning. (Surah Al-Momin, Ayat 27). And: I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord lest you should assail me. (Surah Ad-Dukhan, Ayat 20).

On both occasions these illustrious Prophets of Allah were confronted with well-equipped, resourceful and powerful enemies. On both occasions they stood firm on their message of truth against their strong opponents, whereas they had no material power on the strength of which they could fight them, and on both occasions they utterly

disregarded the threats and dangerous plans and hostile devices of the enemy, saying: We have taken refuge with the Lord of the universe against you. Obviously, such firmness and steadfastness can be shown only by the person who has the conviction that the power of His Lord is the supreme power, that all powers of the world are insignificant against Him, and that no one can harm the one who has taken His refuge. Only such a one can say: I will not give up preaching the word of truth. I care the least for what you may say or do, for I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord and Lord of the universe.

**Question whether Muawwidhatayn
are, or are not, Quranic.**

The above discussion is enough to help one understand fully the theme and content of the two Surahs, but since three points in the books of Hadith and commentary concerning these Surahs have been discussed, which are likely to create doubts in the minds, it is necessary to clear them also here.

First, whether it is absolutely established that these two Surahs are the Quranic Surahs, or whether there is some doubt in this regard. This question arose because in the traditions related from an illustrious companion like Abdullah bin Masud, it has been said that he did not regard these two Surahs as the Surahs of the Quran and had eliminated these from his copy of the Mushaf. Imam Ahmad, Bazzar, Tabarani, Ibn Marduyah, Abu Yala, Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Hanbal, Humaydi, Abu Nuaim, Ibn Hibban and other traditionists have related this from

Abdullah bin Masud with different chains of transmitters and mostly on sound authority. According to these traditions, he not only eliminated these Surahs from the Mushaf but it has also been reported that he used to say: Do not mix up with the Quran that which is not of the Quran. These two Surahs are not included in the Quran. This was only a command enjoined on the Prophet (peace be upon him) for seeking God's refuge. In some traditions there is also the addition that he did not recite these Surahs in the Prayer.

On the basis of these traditions the opponents of Islam had an opportunity to raise doubts about the Quran, saying that this Book, God forbid, is not free from corruption. For when, according to a companion of the rank of Abdullah bin Masud, these two Surahs are an annexation to the Quran, many other additions and subtractions also might have been made in it. To rid the Quran of this blame Qadi Abu Bakr Al-Baqillani, Qadi Iyad and others took the stand that Ibn Masud was not in fact a denier of the *Muawwidhatayn* being Quranic but only refused to write them in the Mushaf. For, according to him, only that which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had allowed, should be written in the Mushaf, and Ibn Masud did not receive the information that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had allowed this. But this stand is not correct, for according to sound evidence, it is confirmed that Ibn Masud had denied that these were Surahs of the Quran. Some other scholars, for instance, Imam Nawawi, Imam Ibn Hazm and Imam Fakhruddin Razi, regard this as a pure lie and falsehood

that Ibn Masud had asserted any such thing. But to reject genuine historical facts without sound evidence is unscientific.

Now, the question is: How can the blame that attaches to the Quran because of these traditions of Ibn Masud be correctly refuted? This question has several answers which we shall give below in sequence:

1. Hafiz Bazzar after relating these traditions of Ibn Masud in his Musnad, has written that he is solitary and isolated in his this opinion; no one from among the companions has supported this view.

2. The copies of the Quran which the third Caliph, Uthman had gotten compiled by the consensus of the companions and which he had sent from the Islamic Caliphate officially to the centers of the world of Islam contained both these Surahs.

3. The Mushaf which, since the sacred time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) till today, has the seal of consensus of the entire world of Islam, contains both these Surahs. The solitary opinion of only Abdullah bin Masud, in spite of his high rank, has no weight against this great consensus.

4. It is confirmed by sound and reliable ahadith from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he not only recited these Surahs in the Prayer himself but also instructed others to recite them, and taught them to the people as the Surahs of the Quran. Consider, for instance, the following ahadith:

We have cited on the authority of Muslim, Ahmad, Tirmidhi and Nasai the tradition of Uqbah bin Amir that the Prophet told him about Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-

Nass, saying that those verses had been revealed to him that night. A tradition in Nasai from Uqbah bin Amir is to the effect that the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited both these Surahs in the Morning Prayer. Imam Ahmad on sound authority has related in his Musnad the tradition from a companion that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: When you perform the Prayer, recite both these Surahs in it.

In Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud and Nasai this tradition of Uqbah bin Amir has been related: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: Should I not teach you two such Surahs as are among the best Surahs that the people recite? He said: Do teach me, O Messenger of Allah. Thereupon the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) taught him the *Muawwidhatayn*. Then the Prayer began and the Prophet (peace be upon him) also recited the same two Surahs in it. When after the Prayer the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed by him, he said to him: O Uqbah, how did you like it. Then he instructed him to the effect: When you go to bed, and when you get up from bed, recite these Surahs.

In Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi and Nasai there is a tradition from Uqbah bin Amir, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) exhorted him to recite the *Muawwidhat* (i.e. *Qul Huwa Allahu ahad* and the *Muawwidhatayn*) after every Prayer.

Nasai, Ibn Marduyah and Hakim have also related this tradition from Uqbah bin Amir: Once the Prophet (peace be upon him) was riding on a conveyance and I was walking along with him with my hand placed on his sacred

foot. I said: Kindly teach me Surah Houd or Surah Yousuf. He replied: In the sight of Allah there is nothing more beneficial for the servant than *Qul audhu bi-Rabbil-falaq*.

A tradition from Abdullah bin Abid al-Juhani has been related by Nasai, Baihaqi and Ibn Sad, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: Ibn Abid, should I not tell you what are the best things out of the means by which the seekers of refuge have sought refuge with Allah. I submitted: Do teach me, O Messenger of Allah. He replied: *Qul audhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Qul a-udhu-bi-Rabbin-nass*, both these Surahs.

Ibn Marduyah had related from Umm Salamah: The Surahs best liked by Allah are: *Qul audhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Qul audhu bi-Rabbin-nass*.

Here, the question arises: what caused Abdullah bin Masud the misunderstanding that these two are not Surahs of the Quran? We get the answer to it when we combine two traditions: First, that Abdullah bin Masud asserted that this was only a command which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was given to teach him the method of seeking refuge with Allah; Second, the tradition which Imam Bukhari has related in his Sahih, Imam Ahmad in his Musnad, Hafiz Abu Bakr alHumaidi in his Musnad, Abu Nuaim in his Al-Mustakhraj and Nasai in his Sunan, with different chains of transmitters, on the authority of Zirr bin Hubaish, with a slight variation in wording from Ubayy bin Kaab, who held a distinguished place among the companions on the basis of his knowledge of the Quran. Zirr bin Hubaish states: I said to Ubayy: Your brother, Abdullah bin Masud,

says these things. What do you say about this view? He replied: I had questioned the Prophet (peace be upon him) about this. He said to me: I was told to say *qul*, so I said *qul*. Therefore, we too say the same as the Prophet said.

In the tradition related by Imam Ahmad, Ubayy's words are to the effect: I bear witness that the Prophet (peace be upon him) told me that Gabriel had told him to say: *Qul audhu bi-Rabbil-falaq*; therefore, he recited likewise, and Gabriel asked him to say: *Qul audhu bi-Rabbin-nass*; therefore he too said likewise. Hence, we too say as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said. A little consideration of these two traditions will show that the word *qul* (say) in the two Surahs caused Abdullah bin Masud the misunderstanding that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been commanded to say: *Audhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Audhu bi-Rabbin-naas*. But he did not feel any need to question the Prophet (peace be upon him) about it. In the mind of Ubbay bin Kab also a question arose about this and he put it before the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Since Gabriel had said *qul*, so I too say *qul*. Let us put it like this. If somebody is commanded and asked: Say, I seek refuge, he will not carry out the command, saying: Say, I seek refuge, but he will drop the word say and say: I seek refuge. On the contrary, if the messenger of a superior officer conveys to somebody the message in these words: Say, I seek refuge, and this command is given to him not only for his own person but to be conveyed to others, he will convey the words of the message verbatim to the people, and will not

have the permission to drop anything from the text of the message. Thus, the fact that these two Surahs begin with the word *qul* is a clear proof that it is divine word, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was bound to convey verbatim. It was not merely a command given to him for his person. Besides these two Surahs, there are 330 other verses in the Quran which begin with the word *qul* (say). The presence of *qul* in all these is a proof that it is divine word, which was obligatory for the Prophet (peace be upon him) to convey verbatim; otherwise if *qul* everywhere had meant a command, the Prophet would have dropped it and said only that which he was commanded to say, and it would not have been recorded in the Quran, but, on the contrary, he would have remained content with saying only what he was commanded to say.

Here, if one considers this, one can understand fully how unreasonable it is to regard the companions as infallible and to make the clamor that a companion has been defamed as soon as one hears a saying or doing of his being described as wrong. Here, one can clearly see what a blunder happened to be committed by an illustrious companion like Abdullah bin Masud about two Surahs of the Quran. If such an error could be committed by an eminent companion like him, others also might commit an error. We can examine it in the scientific way, and describe it as wrong if a thing said or done by a companion is proved to be wrong. But wicked indeed would be the person who went beyond describing a wrong act as wrong and started reproving and finding fault with the companions of the

Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah. Concerning the *Muawwidhatayn* the commentators and traditionists have described the opinion of Ibn Masud as wrong, but no one has dared to say that by denying these two Surahs of the Quran, he had, God forbid, become a disbeliever.

Question of Holy Prophet's being affected by Magic

The second thing that has arisen in respect of these two Surahs is that, according to traditions, magic had been worked on the Prophet (peace be upon him), and he had fallen ill under its effect, and Gabriel had instructed him to repeat these Surahs to remove the charm. This has been objected to by many rationalists of both ancient and modern times. They say that if these traditions are accepted, the whole Shariah becomes doubtful. For if the Prophet (peace be upon him) could be charmed, and according to these traditions he was charmed, one cannot say what the Prophet (peace be upon him) might have been made to say and do under the influence of magic by his opponents, and what in his teaching may be divine and what the result of magic. Not only this: they also allege that if this is accepted as true, it might well be that the Prophet (peace be upon him) might have been prompted to make the claim to Prophethood through magic and the Prophet (peace be upon him) by misunderstanding might have thought that an angel had come to him. They also argue that these traditions clash with the Quran. The Quran mentions the accusation of the disbelievers who said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was bewitched (Bani Israil, Ayat 47), but these traditions confirm the accusation

of the disbelievers that the Prophet had actually been charmed and bewitched.

For a proper investigation of this question it is necessary that one should first see whether it is established by authentic historical evidence that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had actually been affected by magic, and if so, what it was and to what extent. Then it should be seen whether the objections raised against what is established historically do actually apply to it or not.

The Muslim scholars of the earlier period were truly honest and upright in that they did not try to corrupt history or conceal facts according to their own ideas, concepts and assumptions. They conveyed intact to the later generations whatever was confirmed historically, and did not at all care how the material supplied by them could be used by the one who was bent upon drawing perverse conclusions from the facts. Now, if something stands confirmed by authentic and historical means, it is neither right for an honest and right-minded person that he should deny history on the ground that in case he accepted it, it would lead to these evil results according to his thinking, nor it is right that he should add to and stretch beyond its genuine limits by conjecture and speculation whatever is established historically. Instead, he should accept history as history and then see what is actually proved by it and what is not.

As far as the historical aspect is concerned, the incident of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) being affected by magic is absolutely confirmed, and if it can be refuted by scientific criticism, then no historical event of the world can be

proved right and genuine. It has been related by Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Imam Ahmad, Abdur Razzaq, Humaidi, Baihaqi, Tabarani, Ibn Sad, Ibn Mardayah, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Hakim, Abd bin Humaid and other traditionists on the authority of Aishah, Zaid bin Arqam and Abdullah bin Abbas, through so many different and numerous channels that forgery is out of the question. Although each tradition by itself is an isolated report (khabar wahid), we give it below as a connected event from the details provided by the traditions.

After the peace treaty of Hudaibiyah when the Prophet (peace be upon him) returned to Al-Madinah, a deputation of the Jews of Khaibar visited Al-Madinah in Muharram, A.H. 7 and met a famous magician, Labid bin Asam, who belonged to the Ansar tribe of Bani Zurayq. They said to him: You know how Muhammad (peace be upon him) has treated us. We have tried our best to bewitch him but have not succeeded. Now we have come to you because you are a more skilled magician. Here are three gold coins, accept these and cast a powerful magic spell on Muhammad. In those days the Prophet (peace be upon him) had a Jewish boy as his attendant. Through him they obtained a piece of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) comb with some hair stuck to it. Magic was worked on the same hair and the teeth of the comb. According to some traditions, magic was worked by Labid bin Asam himself, according to others, his sisters were more skilled than him and he got the spell cast through them. Whatever be the case, Labid placed this spell in the spathe of a male date-tree and hid it under a

stone at the bottom of Dharwan or Dhi Arwan, the well of Bani Zurayq. The spell took one whole year to have effect upon the Prophet (peace be upon him). In the latter half of the year the Prophet (peace be upon him) started feeling as if he was unwell. The last forty days became hard on him, of which the last three days were even harder. But its maximum effect on him was that he was melting away from within. He thought he had done a thing whereas, in fact, he had not done it: he thought he had visited his wives whereas he had not visited them; and sometimes he would doubt having seen something whereas, in fact, he had not seen it. All these effects were confined to his own person; so much so that the other people could not notice what state he was passing through. As for his being a Prophet (peace be upon him), no change occurred in the performance of his duties.

There is no tradition to say that he might have forgotten some verses of the Quran in those days, or might have recited a verse wrongly, or a change might have occurred in the assemblies and in his counsels and sermons, or he might have presented a discourse as revelation which may not have been revealed to him, or he might have missed a Prayer and thought that he had performed it. God forbid, if any such thing had happened, it would have caused a clamor and the whole of Arabia would have known that a magician had overpowered the one whom no power had been able to overpower. But the Prophet's (peace be upon him) position as a Prophet remained wholly unaffected by it. Only in his personal life he remained worried on account

of it. At last, one day when he was in the house of Aishah, he prayed to Allah to be restored to full health. In the meantime he fell asleep or drowsed and on waking he said to Aishah: My Lord has told me what I had asked of Him. Aishah asked what it was. He replied: Two men (i.e. two angels in human guise) came to me. One sat near my head and the other near my feet. The first asked: what has happened to him? The other replied: Magic has been worked on him. The first asked: who has worked it? He replied: Labid bin Asam. He asked: In what is it contained? He replied: In the comb and hair covered in the spathe of a male date-tree. He asked: where is it? He replied: under a stone at the bottom of Dhi Arwan (or Dharwan), the well of Bani Zurayq. He asked: what should be done about it? He replied: the well should be emptied and it should be taken out from under the stone. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then sent Ali, Ammar bin Yasir and Zubair: They were also joined by Jubair bin Iyas az-Zurqi (from Bani Zurayq). Later the Prophet also arrived at the well along with some companions. The water was taken out and the spathe recovered. There they found that beside the comb and hair there was a cord with eleven knots on it and a wax image with needles pricked into it. Gabriel came and told him to repeat the *Muawwidhatayn*. As he repeated verse after verse, a knot was loosened and a needle taken out every time, till on finishing the last words all the knots were loosened and all the needles removed, and he was entirely freed from the charm. After this he called Labid and questioned him. He confessed his guilt and the Prophet

(peace be upon him) let him go, for he never avenged himself on anyone for any harm done to his person. He even declined to talk about it to others, saying that Allah had restored him to health; therefore he did not like that he should incite the people against anyone.

This is the story of the magic worked on the Prophet (peace be upon him). There is nothing in it which might run counter to his office of Prophethood. In his personal capacity if any injury could be inflicted on him as it happened in the Battle of Uhud, if he could fall from his horse and be hurt as is confirmed by the Hadith, if he could be stung by a scorpion as has been mentioned in some traditions and none of these negates the protection promised him by Allah in his capacity as a Prophet (peace be upon him), he could also fall ill under the influence of magic in his personal capacity. That a Prophet (peace be upon him) can be affected by magic is also confirmed by the Quran. In Surah Al-Aaraf it has been said about the magicians of Pharaoh that when they confronted the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), they bewitched the eyes of thousands of people who had assembled to witness the encounter (verse 116). In Surah TaHa it has been said that not only the common people but the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) too felt that the cords and staffs that they cast were running towards them like so many snakes, and this filled Moses' (peace be upon him) heart with fear. Thereupon Allah revealed to him: Don't fear for you will come out victorious. Cast down your staff. (verses 66-69). As for the objection that this then confirms the accusation of

the disbelievers of Makkah that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was a bewitched man, its answer is that the disbelievers did not call him a bewitched man in the sense that he had fallen ill under that effect of magic cast by somebody, but in the sense that some magician has, God forbid, made him mad, and he had made claim to Prophethood and was telling the people tales of Hell and Heaven in his same madness. Now, obviously this objection does not at all apply to a matter about which history confirms that the magic spell had affected only the person of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and not the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him), which remained wholly unaffected by it.

In this connection, another thing worthy of mention is that the people who regard magic as a kind of superstition hold this view only because the effect of magic cannot be explained scientifically. But there are many things in the world which one experiences and observes but one cannot explain scientifically how they happen. If we cannot give any such explanation it does not become necessary that we should deny the thing itself which we cannot explain. Magic, in fact, is a psychological phenomenon which can affect the body through the mind just as physical things affect the mind through the body. Fear, for instance, is a psychological phenomenon, but it affects the body: the hair stand on end and the body shudders. Magic does not; in fact, change the reality, but under its influence man's mind and senses start feeling as if reality had changed. The staffs and the cords that the magicians had thrown towards the

Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), had not actually become snakes, but the eyes of the multitude of people were so bewitched that everybody felt they were snakes; even the senses of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) could not remain unaffected by the magic spell. Likewise, in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 102, it has been said that in Babylon people learned such magic from Harut and Marut as could cause division between husband and wife. This too was a psychological phenomenon. Obviously, if the people did not find it efficacious by experience they could not become its customers. No doubt, it is correct that just like the bullet of the rifle and the bomb from the aircraft, magic too cannot have effect without Allah's permission, but it would be mere stubbornness to deny a thing which has been experienced and observed by man for thousands for years.

Question of Reciting Charms and Amulets in Islam

The third thing that arises in connection with these Surahs is whether recitation of charms and amulets has any place in Islam, and whether such recitation is by itself efficacious or not. This question arises for in many ahadith it has been reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) at the time of going to bed every night, especially during illness, used to recite the *Muawwidhatayn* (or according to other reports, the *Muawwidhat*, i.e. *Qul Huwa-Allahu Ahad* and the *Muawwidhatayn*) thrice, blow in his hands and then rub the hands on his body from head to foot as far as his hands could reach. During his last illness when it was not longer possible for him to so do, Aishah recited these Surahs herself or by his command blew on his hands in view of

their being blessed and rubbed them on his body. Traditions on this subject have been related in Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Abu Daud and Muatta of Imam Malik through authentic channels on the authority of Aishah herself beside whom no one could be better acquainted with the domestic life of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

In this regard, one should first understand its religious aspect. In the Hadith a lengthy tradition has been related on the authority of Abdullah bin Abbas, at the end of which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: The people of my Ummah to enter Paradise without reckoning will be those who neither turn to treatment by branding, nor to enchanting, nor take omens, but have trust in their Lord. (Muslim). According to a tradition reported on the authority of Mughirah bin Shubah, the Prophet said: He who got himself treated by branding, or enchanting, became independent of trust in Allah. (Tirmidhi). Abdullah bin Masud has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) disapproved of ten things one of which was recitation of charms and amulets except by means of the *Muawwidhatayn* or *Muawwidhat*. (Abu Daud, Ahmad, Nasai, Ibn Hibban, Hakim). Some ahadith also show that in the beginning the Prophet (peace be upon him) had altogether forbidden recitation of charms and amulets, but later he allowed it on the condition that it should not smack of polytheism, but one should recite and blow by means of the holy names of Allah, or the words of the Quran. The words used should be understandable and one

should know that there is nothing sinful in it, and one should not wholly rely on the recitation of charms but on Allah's will to make it beneficial. After the explanation of the religious aspect, let us now see what the Hadith says in this regard.

Tabarani in *As-Saghir* has related a tradition on the authority of Ali, saying: Once the Prophet (peace be upon him) was stung by a scorpion during the Prayer. When the Prayer was over, he remarked: God's curse be on the scorpion: it neither spares a praying one, nor any other. Then he called for water and salt, and started rubbing the place where the scorpion had stung with salt water and reciting *Qul ya ayyuhal-kafirun*, *Qul Huwa Allahu ahad*, *Qul audhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Qul audhu bi-Rabbin-nass*, along with it.

Ibn Abbas has also related a tradition to the effect: The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite this invocation over Hasan and Husain: *Uidhu kuma bi-kalimat Allahit-tamati min kulli shaitan-in wa hammati-wa min kulli ayt-in-lam nati*: I give you in the refuge of Allah's blameless words, from every devil and troublesome thing, and from every evil look. (Bukhari, Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah).

A tradition has been related in Muslim, Muwatta, Tabarani and Hakim about Uthman bin alAas athThaqafi, with a little variation in wording, to the effect that he complained to the Prophet (peace be upon him), saying: Since I have become a Muslim, I feel a pain in my body, which is killing me. The Prophet said: Place your right hand on the place

where you feel the pain, then recite *Bismillah* thrice, and *Audhu billahi wa qudratihi min sharri ma ajidu wa uhadhiru* (I seek refuge with Allah and with His power from the evil that I find and that I fear) seven times, and rub your hand. In Muwatta there is the addition: Uthman bin Abi alAas said: After that my pain disappeared and now I teach the same formula to the people of my house.

Musnad Ahmad and Tahavi contain this tradition from Talq bin Ali: I was stung by a scorpion in the presence of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) recited something and blew over me and rubbed his hand on the affected place.

Muslim contains a tradition from Abu Saeed Khudri, which says: Once when the Prophet (peace be upon him) fell ill, Gabriel came and asked: O Muhammad, are you ill? The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered in the affirmative. Gabriel said: I blow on you in the name of Allah from everything which troubles you and from the evil of every soul and the evil look of every envier. May Allah restore you to health. I blow on you in His name. A similar tradition has been related in Musnad Ahmad on the authority of Ubadah bin asSamit, which says: The Prophet (peace be upon him) was unwell. I went to visit him and found him in great trouble. When I re-visited him in the evening I found him quite well. When I asked how he had become well so soon, he said: Gabriel came and blew over me with some words. Then he recited words similar to those reported in the above Hadith. A tradition similar to this has also been related on the authority of Aishah in

Muslim and Musnad Ahmad.

Imam Ahmad in his Musnad has related this tradition from Hafsah, mother of the Faithful: One day the Prophet (peace be upon him) visited me in the house and a woman, named Shifa, was sitting with me. She used to blow on the people to cure them of blisters. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to her: Teach Hafsah also the formula. Imam Ahmad, Abu Daud and Nasai have related this tradition from Shifa bint Abdullah herself, saying: The Holy Prophet said to me: Just as you have taught Hafsah reading and writing, so teach her blowing to cure blisters as well.

In Muslim there is a tradition from Auf bin Malik al-Ashjal to the effect: We used to practice blowing to cure diseases. We asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) for his opinion in this regard. He said: Let me know the words with which you blow over the people. There is no harm in blowing unless it smacks of polytheism.

Muslim, Musnad Ahmad and Ibn Majah contain a tradition from Hadrat Jabir bin Abdullah, saying: The Prophet (peace be upon him) had forbidden us blowing to cure disease. Then the people of the clan of Amr bin Hazm came and they said: We had a formula with which we used to blow on the people to cure them of scorpion's sting (or snake-bite). But you have forbidden us the practice. Then they recited before him the words which they made use of. Thereupon the Prophet said: I do not see any harm in it, so let the one who can do good to his brother, do him good. Another tradition from Jabir bin Abdullah in Muslim is: The family of Hazm had a formula to cure snake-bite and

the Prophet (peace be upon him) permitted them to practise it. This is also supported by the tradition from Aishah, which is contained in Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, and Ibn Majah: The Prophet (peace be upon him) granted permission to a family of the Ansar for blowing to cure the evil effects of biting by every poisonous creature. Traditions resembling these have also been related from Anas in Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Muslim and Ibn Majah, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave permission for blowing to cure the bite by poisonous creatures, the disease of blisters and the effects of the evil look.

Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Hakim have related this tradition on the authority of Umair, freed slave of Abi al-Laham: In the pre-Islamic days I had a formula with which I used to blow over the people. I recited it before the Prophet (peace be upon him), whereupon he told me to drop out such and such words from it, and permitted me to blow with the rest of it.

According to Muwatta, Abu Bakr went to the house of his daughter, Aishah, and found that she was unwell and a Jewish woman was blowing over her. Thereupon he said to her: Blow over her by means of the Book of Allah. This shows that if the people of the Book practice blowing by means of the verses of the Torah and the Gospel, it is also permitted.

As for the question whether blowing for curing disease is efficacious also, or not, its answer is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) not only did not forbid anybody to have

recourse to cure and medical treatment but himself stated that Allah has created a cure for every disease and exhorted his followers to use cures. He himself told the people the remedies for certain diseases, as can be seen in the Hadith in the Kitab at-Tib (Book of Cures). But the cure can be beneficial and useful only by Allah's command and permission, otherwise if the cure and medical treatment were beneficial in every case, no one would have died in hospitals. Now, if beside the cure and medical treatment, Allah's Word and His beautiful names are also made use of, or Allah is turned to and invoked for help by means of His Word, Names and Attributes in a place where no medical aid is available, it would not be against reason except for the materialists. However, it is not right to disregard intentionally a cure or treatment where it is available, and recourse had only to enchanting and reciting of charms, and the people should start a regular practice of granting amulets as a means of earning their livelihood.

Many people in this regard argue from Abu Saeed Khudri's tradition which has been related in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud and Ibn Majah, and it is also supported by a tradition related in Bukhari on the authority of Ibn Abbas. According to it the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent some of his companions including Abu Saeed Khudri on an expedition. They halted on the way at the settlement of an Arabian tribe and demanded hospitality from the people, but they refused to extend any hospitality. In the meantime the chief of the tribe was stung by a scorpion and the people came to the

travelers to ask if they had any medicine or formula by which their chief could be cured. Abu Saeed said: Yes, we do have, but since you have refused us hospitality, we would not treat him unless you promised us to give us something. They promised to give them a flock of goats (according to some traditions, 30 goats), and Abu Saeed went and started reciting Surah Al-Fatihah and rubbing his saliva on the affected place. Consequently, the chief felt relieved of the effect of the poison and the people of the tribe gave them the goats as promised. But the companions said to one another: Let us not make any use of the goats until we have asked the Prophet about it, for they were not sure whether it was permissible to accept any reward for what they had done. So they came before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and related what had happened. The Prophet smiled and said: How did you know that Surah Al-Fatihah could also be used for curing such troubles. Take the goats and allocate my share also in it.

But before one used this Hadith for permission to adopt a regular profession of granting amulets and reciting charms, one should keep in view the conditions under which Abu Saeed Khudri had recourse to it, and the Prophet not only held it as permissible but also said that a share for him also should be allocated so that there remained no doubt in the minds of the companions that such a thing was permissible. The conditions in Arabia in those days were, as they still are, that settlements were situated hundreds of miles apart, there were not hotels and restaurants where a traveler could buy food when he reached one of these after several

days journey. Under such conditions it was considered a moral duty that when a traveler reached a settlement the people of the place should extend hospitality to him. Refusal on their part in many cases meant death for the travelers, and this was looked upon as highly blameworthy among the Arabs. That is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) allowed as permissible the act of his companions. Since the people of the tribe had refused them hospitality, they too refused to treat their chief, and became ready to treat him only on the condition that they should promise to give them something in return. Then, when one of them with trust in God recited Surah Al-Fatihah over the chief and he became well, the people gave the promised wages and the Prophet allowed that the wages be accepted as lawful and pure. In Bukhari the tradition related on the authority of Abdullah bin Abbas about this incident contains the Prophet's (peace be upon him) words to the effect: Instead that you should have acted otherwise, it was better that you recited the Book of Allah and accepted the wages for it. He said this in order to impress the truth that Allah's Word is superior to every other kind of enchanting and practice of secret arts. Furthermore, the message was also incidentally conveyed to the Arabian tribe and its people made aware of the blessings of the Word that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had brought from Allah. This incident cannot be cited as a precedent for the people who run clinic in the cities and towns for the practice of secret arts and have adopted it as a regular profession for earning livelihood. No precedent of it is found in the life and

practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or his companions, their followers and the earlier Imams.

Relation between Surah Al-Fatihah and the Muawwidhatayn

The last thing which is note worthy with regard to the *Muawwidhatayn* is the relation between the beginning and the end of the Quran. Although the Quran has not been arranged chronologically, the Prophet (peace be upon him) arranged in the present order the verses and Surahs revealed during 23 years on different occasions to meet different needs and situations not by himself but by the command of Allah Who revealed them. According to this order, the Quran opens with the Surah Al-Fatihah and ends with the Muawwidhatayn. Now, let us have a look at the two. In the beginning, after praising and glorifying Allah, Who is Lord of the worlds, Kind, Merciful and Master of the Judgment Day, the servants submits: Lord, You alone I worship and to You along I turn for help, and the most urgent help that I need from You is to be guided to the Straight Way. In answer, he is given by Allah the whole Quran to show him the straight way, which is concluded thus: Man prays to Allah, Who is Lord of dawn, Lord of men, King of men, Deity of men, saying: I seek refuge only with You for protection from every evil and mischief of every creature, and in particular, from the evil whisperings of devils, be they from among men or jinn, for they are the greatest obstacle in following the straight way. The relation that the beginning bears with the end, cannot remain hidden from anyone who has understanding and

insight.

1. Say: ^{*1} I seek refuge ^{*2} with the Lord of the daybreak. ^{*3}

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ﴿١﴾

^{*1} As *qul* (say) is a part of the message which was conveyed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) by revelation for preaching his prophetic message, its first addressee is the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself but after him every believer is also its addressee.

^{*2} The act of seeking refuge necessarily consists of three parts:

(1) The act of seeking refuge itself.

(2) The seeker of refuge.

(3) He whose refuge is sought. Seeking refuge implies feeling fear of something and seeking protection of another, or taking cover of it, or clinging to it, or going under its shelter for safety. The seeker after refuge in any case is the person, who feels that he cannot by himself resist and fight the thing that he fears, but stands in need of refuge with another for protection. Then the one whose refuge is sought must necessarily be a person or being about whom the seeker after refuge believes that he or it alone can protect him from the calamity. Now, one kind of refuge is that which is obtained according to natural laws in the physical world from a perceptible material object or person or power, for example, taking shelter in a fort for protection against the enemy's attack, or taking cover in a trench or behind a heap of earth, or wall, for protection against a shower of bullets, or taking refuge with a man or government, for protection from a powerful tyrant or

taking refuge in the shade of a tree or building for protection from the sun. Contrary to this, the other kind of refuge is that which is sought in a supernatural Being from every kind of danger and every kind of material, moral or spiritual harm and injury on the basis of the belief that that Being is ruler over the physical world and can protect in supersensory ways the one who seeks His refuge. This second kind of refuge is the one that is implied not only in Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Nass but wherever in the Quran and the Hadith mention has been made of seeking refuge with Allah, it implies this particular kind of refuge, and it is a necessary corollary of the doctrine of Tauhid that this kind of refuge should be sought from no one but Allah. The polytheists sought this kind of protection, and seek even today, from other beings than Allah, e.g. the jinn, or gods and goddesses. The materialists also turn for this to material means and resources, for they do not believe in any supernatural power. But the believer only turns to Allah and seeks refuge only with Him, against all such calamities and misfortunes to ward off which he feels he has no power. For example, about the polytheists it has been said in the Quran: And that from among men some people used to seek refuge with some people from among the jinn (Surah Al-Jinn, Ayat 16). And explaining it in E.N. 47 of Surah Al-Jinn we have cited Abdullah bin Abbas's tradition that when the polytheistic Arabs had to pass a night in an uninhabited valley, they would call out, saying: We seek refuge of the lord of this valley (i.e. of the jinn who is ruler and master of this valley). Contrary to this, about

Pharaoh it has been said: When he witnessed the great signs presented by the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), he showed arrogance on account of his might. (Surah Adh-Dhariyat, Ayat 39). As for the attitude and conduct of the God-worshippers the Quran says that they seek Allah's refuge for protection against the evil of everything that they fear, whether it is material or moral or spiritual. Thus, about Mary it has been said that when God's angel appeared before her suddenly in human guise (when she did not know that he was an angel), she cried out: I seek the merciful God's refuge from you, if you are a pious man. (Surah Maryam, Ayat 18). When the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) made an improper petition to Allah, and was rebuked by Allah in response, he immediately submitted: My Lord, I seek Your protection lest I should ask of You anything of which I have no knowledge. (Surah Hud, Ayat 47) When the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) commanded the children of Israel to sacrifice a cow, and they said that perhaps he was having a jest with them, he replied: I crave Allah's protection from behaving like ignorant people. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 67). The same is the case with all the acts of seeking refuge which have been reported in respect of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the books of Hadith. For instance, consider the following prayers that the Prophet (peace be upon him) made: Aishah has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray, saying: O God, I seek Your refuge from the evil of the works which I did and from the evil of the works which I did not do. (i.e. if I have done a wrong, I seek

refuge from its evil results, and if I have not done a work which I should have done, I seek refuge from the loss that I have incurred, or from that I should do what I should not do). (Muslim). Ibn Umar has reported that one of the supplications of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was to the effect: O God, I seek Your refuge from being deprived of a blessing that You have bestowed on me and from being deprived of the well-being that You have granted me and I seek refuge lest Your wrath should descend on me suddenly, and I seek refuge from every kind of Your displeasure. (Muslim). Zaid bin Arqam has reported that the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah used to pray: O God, I seek Your refuge from the knowledge which is not beneficial, from the heart which does not fear You, from the soul which is never satisfied, and from the prayer which is not answered. (Muslim). Abu Hurairah has reported that the Messenger (peace be upon him) used to pray: O God, I seek Your refuge from hunger, for it is a most evil thing with which one may have to pass a night, and I seek Your refuge from dishonesty, for it is sheer evil-mindedness. (Abu Daud). Anas has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray: O God, I seek Your refuge from leprosy and madness and all evil diseases. (Abu Daud). Aishah has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray in these words: O God, I seek Your refuge from the mischief of the fire and from the evil of affluence and poverty. (Tirmidhi, Abu Daud). Shakal bin Humaid requested the Prophet (peace be upon him) to teach him some prayer. He told him to say: O God, I seek Your refuge

from the evil of my hearing, from the evil of my sight, from the evil of my tongue, from the evil of my heart, and from the evil of my lust, (Tirmidhi, Abu Daud).

Atlas bin Malik has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say: O God, I seek Your refuge from helplessness, indolence, cowardice, old age and stinginess, and I seek Your refuge from the torment of the grave and from the mischief of life and death, (and according to a tradition in Muslim also) from the burden of debt and that the people should overpower me. (Bukhari, Muslim).

Khawla bint Hukaym Sulamiyyah says that she heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying that the one who halts at a new stage (during the journey) and says: I seek refuge in the blameless words of Allah from the evil of the creatures, will not be caused any harm until he departs from that stage. (Muslim). We have related these few prayers of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from the Hadith, which show that the believer should seek Allah's refuge from every danger and evil and not the refuge of anyone else, nor he should become self sufficient of Allah and place reliance only on himself.

*3 The word used in the original is *Rabbil-Falaq*. *Falaq* actually means to split and to pierce through. A great majority of the commentators have taken it to mean bringing out the light of dawn by splitting the darkness of night, for in Arabic *falaq-as-subh* is often used for the breaking of dawn, and also in the Quran the words *Faliq-ul-isbah* (He Who causes the dawn to appear by splitting the darkness of night) have been used for Allah. (Surah Al-

Anaam, Ayat 96). Another meaning of *falaq* is also to create or to bring into being, for everything created in the world appears by splitting something. All vegetation sprouts by splitting open the seed and the soil; all animals come out either from the womb of mother or by breaking open the egg, or some other obstruction. All springs gush out by splitting open the rock or soil. The day appears by piercing through the curtain of the night. The drops of rain pierce through the clouds and fall on the earth. In short, everything in the world comes into being as a result of breaking and splitting another thing; so much so that the earth and the heavens also in the beginning were one mass, then they were broken and parted. (Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 30). Thus, according to this meaning the word *falaq* is common to all creations. Now, if the first meaning is adopted, the verse would mean: I seek refuge with the Lord of rising dawn, and according to the second meaning, it would mean: I seek refuge with the Lord of all creation. Here the attribute of *Rabb* has been used for Allah instead of His proper Name, for Allah's attribute of being *Rabb*, i.e. Master, Sustainer and Provider, is more relevant to seeking and taking of His refuge. Then, if *Rabb-ul-falaq* implies Lord of the rising dawn, seeking His refuge would mean: I seek refuge with the Lord Who brings out the bright daylight from the darkness of night so that He may likewise bring well-being for me from all kinds of physical and psychical dangers. If it is taken to mean *Rabb al-khalaq* the meaning would be: I seek refuge with the Lord of all creation, so that He may protect me from the evil of His

creation.

2. From the evil of that which He created.*4

مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ

*4 In other words: I seek His refuge from the evil of all creatures. A few things in this sentence deserve consideration.

First, that the creation of evil has not been attributed to Allah, but the creation of creatures has been attributed to Allah and of evil to the creatures. That is, it has not been said: I seek refuge from the evils that Allah has created, but that: I seek refuge from the evil of the things He has created. This shows that Allah has not created any creature for the sake of evil, but all His work is for the sake of good and a special purpose. However, from the qualities that He has created in the creatures to fulfill the purpose of their creation, sometimes evil appears from some kinds of creatures in most cases.

Second, that even if this one sentence was given and no mention made of seeking Allah's refuge separately from the evils of some particular kinds of creatures in the following sentences, this one sentence alone would have sufficed to express the intent, for in it Allah's refuge has been sought from the evil of all creatures. After this general prayer for refuge making mention of seeking refuge from some particular evils by itself gives this meaning: Though I seek Allah's refuge from the evil of everything created by Allah, I stand in great need of Allah's refuge from the particular evils that have been mentioned in the remaining verses of Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Nass.

Third, that the most suitable and effective prayer for seeking refuge from the evil of the creatures is that refuge should be sought with their Creator, for He is in any case dominant over His creatures and is aware of their evils, which we know, as well as of those which we do not know. Hence, His refuge is the refuge of the supreme Ruler Whom no power can fight and oppose, and with His refuge we can protect ourselves from every evil of every creature, whether we are aware of it or not. Moreover, this contains the prayer for refuge not only from the evils of the world but also from every evil of the Hereafter.

Fourth, that the word *sharr* (evil) is used for loss, injury, trouble and affliction as well as for the means which cause losses and injuries and afflictions; for example, hunger, disease, injury in accident or war, being burnt by fire, being stung or bitten by a scorpion or snake, being involved in the grief of children's death and similar other evils which are evils in the first sense, for they are by themselves troubles and afflictions. Contrary to this, unbelief, polytheism and every kind of sin and wickedness, for instance, are evils in the second sense, for they cause loss and affliction, although apparently they do not cause any trouble at the moment, rather some sins give pleasure and bring profit. Thus, seeking refuge from evil comprehends both these meanings.

Fifth, that seeking refuge from evil also contains two other meanings. First, that man is praying to his God to protect him from the evil that has already taken place; second, that man is praying to his God to protect him from the evil that

has not yet taken place.

3. And from the evil of the darkness when it spreads.*5

وَمِن شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ

*5 After seeking Allah's refuge generally from the evil of the creatures, now prayer is being taught for seeking refuge from the evil of some special creatures in particular. The word *ghasiq* in the verse literally means dark. Thus, at another place in the Quran it has been said: Establish the salat from the declining of the sun to the darkness of the night, *ila-ghasaq-il-lail*. (Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 78), and *waqab* means to enter or to overspread. Prayer has been taught to seek refuge in particular from the evil of the darkness of night, for most of the crimes and acts of wickedness are committed at night, harmful animals also come out at night, and the night was a very dreadful thing in the time chaos prevailed in Arabia when these verses were revealed. Raiders came out in the dark of night and plundered and destroyed settlements. The people who were thinking of putting the Prophet (peace be upon him) to death, also made their secret plans at night, so that the murder could not be detected. Therefore, command was given to seek Allah's refuge from the evils and calamities which descend at night. Here, the subtle relation that exists between seeking refuge from the evil of the dark night with the Lord of breaking dawn cannot remain hidden from anybody having insight and understanding. A difficulty is confronted in the explanation of this verse in view of several authentic traditions. Aishah has reported: Once

during a moon-lit night, the Prophet (peace be upon him) took hold of my hand and pointing to the moon said: Seek Allah's refuge, for this is *al ghasiq idha waqab*. (Tirmidhi, Ahmad, Nasai, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Hakim, Ibn Marduyah). To explain this some scholars said that *idha waqab* here means *idha khasaf*, i.e. when the moon is eclipsed. But in no tradition has it been mentioned that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) pointed to the moon, it was in eclipse. In the Arabic lexicon also *idha waqab* cannot mean *idha khasaf*. In our opinion the correct explanation of this Hadith is that since the moon rises in the night (in the daytime it does not shine even if it is there in the sky), what the Prophet (peace be upon him) meant was this: Seek God's refuge from the night, the time when it (the moon) appears, for the light of the moon is not as helpful for the one who resists as for the one who attacks, and not as helpful for the victim of the crime as for the culprit. On this very basis the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: When the sun has set, devils spread on every side. Therefore, gather your children together in the house and keep your animals tied down until the darkness of night disappears.

4. And from the evil of the blowers (men or women) into knots.*⁶

وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ



*⁶ The word *uqad* in *naffathat fil-uqad* is plural of *uqdah*, which means a knot that is tied on a string or piece of thread. *Nafath* means to blow. *Naffathat* is plural of

naffathah, which may mean the men who blow much, and if taken as a feminine gender, women who blow much; it may as well relate to *nufus* (human beings) or to *jamaats* (groups of men), for both *nafas* and *jamaat* are grammatically feminine. Blowing upon knots, according to most, rather all, commentators imply magic, for the magicians usually tie knots on a string or thread and blow upon them as they do so. Thus, the verse means: I seek refuge with the Lord of rising dawn from the evil of magicians, male and female. This meaning is also supported by the traditions which show that when magic was worked on the Prophet (peace be upon him), Gabriel had come and taught him to recite the *Muawwidhatayn*, and in the *Muawwidhatayn* this is the only sentence which relates directly to magic. Abu Muslim Isfahani and Zamakhshari have also given another meaning of *naffathat fil-uqad*, which is that it implies the deceitfulness of women and their influencing men's resolutions, views and ideas and this has been compared to a magic spell, for in the love of women man starts behaving as if he was under a spell. Though this explanation is interesting, it runs counter to the commentary given by the earlier scholars; and it also does not correspond to the conditions in which the *Muawwidhatayn* were sent down as we have shown in the Introduction. About magic one should know that in it since help is sought of the satans and evil spirits or stars to influence the other person evilly, it has been called *kufur* (unbelief) in the Quran: Solomon was not involved in *kufur* but the satans who taught magic to the people. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 102). But even if it does

not contain any word of *kufr*, or any polytheistic element, it is forbidden and unlawful and the Prophet (peace be upon him) has counted it among the seven heinous sins which ruin the Hereafter of man. In Bukhari and Muslim a tradition has been related from Abu Hurairah, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Avoid seven deadly sins: associating another with Allah, magic, killing a soul unjustly which Allah has forbidden, devouring interest, eating the orphan's property, fleeing from the enemy in the battlefield, and slandering simple and chaste Muslim women with un-chastity.

5. And from the evil of an envious one when he envies.*7

وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ

*7 *Hasad* means that a person should feel unhappy at the better fortune, superiority or good quality that Allah has granted to another, and should wish that it should be taken away from the other person and given to him, or at least the other one should be deprived of it. However, *hasad* does not mean that a person should wish that he too should be blessed with the bounty that the other one has been blessed with. Here, Allah's refuge has been sought from the evil of the jealous one when he feels jealous, and takes a practical step with word or deed to satisfy his heart. For until he takes a practical step, his being unhappy may by itself be bad but it is not an evil for the other person so that he may seek refuge from it. When such an evil appears from a jealous person the best thing would be to seek Allah's refuge from it. Besides this, there are a few other things

which are also helpful for obtaining immunity from the evil of the jealous person. First, that one should have trust in Allah and the faith that unless Allah so wills no one can harm him in any way. Second, that one should have patience over what the jealous person says and does and should not start behaving impatiently so as to be degraded morally to the level of the jealous person. Third, that one should in any case maintain dignity and practice piety even if the jealous person behaves frivolously, being fearless of God and shameless of the people. Fourth, that one should free his mind of every thought about the jealous person and should disregard him altogether, for making him a subject of one's thought is a prelude to being influenced by him. Fifth, that one should do the jealous person a good turn as and when one can, not to speak of treating him evilly, no matter whether this good behavior mitigates his jealousy or not. Sixth, that one should understand rightly and remain steadfast to the doctrine of Tauhid for the heart which enshrines Tauhid, cannot be affected by anyone else's fear except the fear of Allah.





النَّاس An-Naas

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

**The following introduction is for both
Surah Al-Falaq (113) and Surah An-Naas (114)**

Although these two Surahs of the Quran are separate entities and are also written in the Mushaf under separate names, yet they are so deeply related mutually and their contents so closely resemble each other's that they have been designated by a common name *Muawwidhatayn* (the two Surahs in which refuge with Allah has been sought). Imam Baihaqi in *Dalail an-Nubuwwat* has written that these Surahs were revealed together, that is why the combined name of both is *Muawwidhatayn*. We are writing the same one Introduction to both, for they discuss and deal with just the same matters and topics. However, they will be explained and commented on separately below.

Period of Revelation

Hasan Basri, Ikrimah, Ata and Jabir bin Zaid say that these Surahs are Makki. A tradition from Abdullah bin Abbas also supports the same view. However, according to another tradition from him, it is Madani and the same view is also held by Abdullah bin Zubair and Qatadah. One of

the traditions which strengthens this second view is the Hadith which Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nasai and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal have related on the authority of Uqbah bin Aamir. He says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) one day said to him: Do you know what kind of verses have been revealed to me tonight. These matchless verses are *Audhu-bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Audhu-bi-Rabbin-naas*. This Hadith is used as an argument for these Surahs to be Madani because Uqbah bin Amir had become a Muslim in Madinah after the hijrah, as related by Abu Daud and Nasai on the basis of his own statement. Other traditions which have lent strength to this view are those related by Ibn Saad, Muhiyy-us-Sunnah Baghawi, Imam Nasafi, Imam Baihaqi, Hafiz Ibn Hajar, Hafiz Badruddin Ayni, Abd bin Humaid and others to the effect that these Surahs were revealed when the Jews had worked magic on the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Madinah and he had fallen ill under its effect. Ibn Saad has related on the authority of Waqidi that this happened in A.H. 7. On this very basis Sufyan bin Uyainah also also described these Surah as Madani.

But as we have explained in the Introduction to Surah Al-Ikhlās, when it is said about a certain Surah or verse that it was revealed on this or that particular occasion, it does not necessarily mean that it was revealed for the first time on that very occasion. Rather it sometimes so happened that a Surah or a verse had previously been revealed, then on the occurrence or appearance of a particular incident or situation, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) attention was

drawn to it by Allah for the second time, or even again and again. In our opinion the same was also the case with the *Muawwidhatayn*. The subject matter of these Surahs is explicit that these were sent down at Makkah in the first instance when opposition to the Prophet there had grown very intense. Later, when at Madinah storms of opposition were raised by the hypocrites, Jews and polytheists, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was instructed to recite these very Surahs, as has been mentioned in the above cited tradition from Uqbah bin Amir. After this, when magic was worked on him, and his illness grew intense, Gabriel came and instructed him by Allah's command to recite these very Surahs. Therefore, in our opinion, the view held by the commentators who describe both these Surahs as Makki is more reliable. Regarding them as connected exclusively with the incident of magic is difficult, for this incident related only one verse (verse 4), the remaining verses of Surah al-Falaq and the whole of Surah An-Naas have nothing to do with it directly.

Theme and Subject Matter

The conditions under which these two Surahs were sent down in Makkah were as follows. As soon as the Prophet (peace be upon him) began to preach the message of Islam, it seemed as though he had provoked all classes of the people around him. As his message spread the opposition of the disbelieving Quraish also became more and more intense. As long as they had any hope that they would be able to prevent him from preaching his message by throwing some temptation in his way, or striking some

bargain with him, their hostility did not become very active. But when the Prophet (peace be upon him) disappointed them completely that he would not effect any kind of compromise with them in the matter of faith, and in Surah Al-Kafirun they were plainly told: I do not worship those whom you worship nor are you worshipers of Him Whom I worship. For you is your religion and for me is mine, the hostility touched its extreme limits. More particularly, the families whose members (men or women, boys or girls) had accepted Islam were burning with rage from within against the Prophet (peace be upon him). They were cursing him, holding secret consultations to kill him quietly in the dark of the night so that the Bani Hashim could not discover the murderer and take revenge; magic and charms were being worked on him so as to cause his death, or make him fall ill, or become mad; satans from among the men and the jinn spread on every side so as to whisper one or another evil into the hearts of the people against him and the Quran brought by him so that they became suspicious of him and fled him. There were many people who were burning with jealousy against him, for they could not tolerate that a man from another family or clan than their own should flourish and become prominent. For instance, the reason why Abu Jahl was crossing every limit in his hostility to him has been explained by himself: We and the Bani Abdi Manaf, to which the Prophet (peace be upon him) belonged, were rivals of each other: they fed others, we too fed others; they provided conveyances to the people, we too did the same; they gave donations, we too gave donations, so much so that

when they and we have become equal in honor and nobility, they now proclaim that they have a Prophet who is inspired from the heaven; how can we compete with them in this field? By God, we will never acknowledge him, nor affirm faith in him. (Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 337-338).

Such were the conditions when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was commanded to tell the people: I seek refuge with the Lord of the dawn, from the evil of everything that He has created, and from the evil of the darkness of night and from the evil of magicians, men and women, and from the evil of the envious, and to tell them: I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, and the Deity of mankind, from the evil of the whisperer, who returns over and over again, who whispers (evil) into the hearts of men, whether he be from among the jinn or men. This is similar to what the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had been told to say when Pharaoh had expressed his design before his full court to kill him: I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord against every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning. (Surah Al-Momin, Ayat 27). And: I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord lest you should assail me. (Surah Ad-Dukhan, Ayat 20).

On both occasions these illustrious Prophets of Allah were confronted with well-equipped, resourceful and powerful enemies. On both occasions they stood firm on their message of truth against their strong opponents, whereas they had no material power on the strength of which they could fight them, and on both occasions they utterly disregarded the threats and dangerous plans and hostile

devices of the enemy, saying: We have taken refuge with the Lord of the universe against you. Obviously, such firmness and steadfastness can be shown only by the person who has the conviction that the power of His Lord is the supreme power, that all powers of the world are insignificant against Him, and that no one can harm the one who has taken His refuge. Only such a one can say: I will not give up preaching the word of truth. I care the least for what you may say or do, for I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord and Lord of the universe.

**Question whether Muawwidhatayn
are, or are not, Quranic.**

The above discussion is enough to help one understand fully the theme and content of the two Surahs, but since three points in the books of Hadith and commentary concerning these Surahs have been discussed, which are likely to create doubts in the minds, it is necessary to clear them also here.

First, whether it is absolutely established that these two Surahs are the Quranic Surahs, or whether there is some doubt in this regard. This question arose because in the traditions related from an illustrious companion like Abdullah bin Masud, it has been said that he did not regard these two Surahs as the Surahs of the Quran and had eliminated these from his copy of the Mushaf. Imam Ahmad, Bazzar, Tabarani, Ibn Marduyah, Abu Yala, Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Hanbal, Humaydi, Abu Nuaim, Ibn Hibban and other traditionists have related this from Abdullah bin Masud with different chains of transmitters

and mostly on sound authority. According to these traditions, he not only eliminated these Surahs from the Mushaf but it has also been reported that he used to say: Do not mix up with the Quran that which is not of the Quran. These two Surahs are not included in the Quran. This was only a command enjoined on the Prophet (peace be upon him) for seeking God's refuge. In some traditions there is also the addition that he did not recite these Surahs in the Prayer.

On the basis of these traditions the opponents of Islam had an opportunity to raise doubts about the Quran, saying that this Book, God forbid, is not free from corruption. For when, according to a companion of the rank of Abdullah bin Masud, these two Surahs are an annexation to the Quran, many other additions and subtractions also might have been made in it. To rid the Quran of this blame Qadi Abu Bakr Al-Baqillani, Qadi Iyad and others took the stand that Ibn Masud was not in fact a denier of the *Muawwidhatayn* being Quranic but only refused to write them in the Mushaf. For, according to him, only that which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had allowed, should be written in the Mushaf, and Ibn Masud did not receive the information that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had allowed this. But this stand is not correct, for according to sound evidence, it is confirmed that Ibn Masud had denied that these were Surahs of the Quran. Some other scholars, for instance, Imam Nawawi, Imam Ibn Hazm and Imam Fakhruddin Razi, regard this as a pure lie and falsehood that Ibn Masud had asserted any such thing. But to reject

genuine historical facts without sound evidence is unscientific.

Now, the question is: How can the blame that attaches to the Quran because of these traditions of Ibn Masud be correctly refuted? This question has several answers which we shall give below in sequence:

1. Hafiz Bazzar after relating these traditions of Ibn Masud in his Musnad, has written that he is solitary and isolated in his this opinion; no one from among the companions has supported this view.

2. The copies of the Quran which the third Caliph, Uthman had gotten compiled by the consensus of the companions and which he had sent from the Islamic Caliphate officially to the centers of the world of Islam contained both these Surahs.

3. The Mushaf which, since the sacred time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) till today, has the seal of consensus of the entire world of Islam, contains both these Surahs. The solitary opinion of only Abdullah bin Masud, in spite of his high rank, has no weight against this great consensus.

4. It is confirmed by sound and reliable ahadith from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he not only recited these Surahs in the Prayer himself but also instructed others to recite them, and taught them to the people as the Surahs of the Quran. Consider, for instance, the following ahadith:

We have cited on the authority of Muslim, Ahmad, Tirmidhi and Nasai the tradition of Uqbah bin Amir that the Prophet told him about Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Naas, saying that those verses had been revealed to him

that night. A tradition in Nasai from Uqbah bin Amir is to the effect that the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited both these Surahs in the Morning Prayer. Imam Ahmad on sound authority has related in his Musnad the tradition from a companion that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: When you perform the Prayer, recite both these Surahs in it.

In Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud and Nasai this tradition of Uqbah bin Amir has been related: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: Should I not teach you two such Surahs as are among the best Surahs that the people recite? He said: Do teach me, O Messenger of Allah. Thereupon the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) taught him the *Muawwidhatayn*. Then the Prayer began and the Prophet (peace be upon him) also recited the same two Surahs in it. When after the Prayer the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed by him, he said to him: O Uqbah, how did you like it. Then he instructed him to the effect: When you go to bed, and when you get up from bed, recite these Surahs.

In Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi and Nasai there is a tradition from Uqbah bin Amir, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) exhorted him to recite the *Muawwidhat* (i.e. *Qul Huwa Allahu ahad* and the *Muawwidhatayn*) after every Prayer.

Nasai, Ibn Marduyah and Hakim have also related this tradition from Uqbah bin Amir: Once the Prophet (peace be upon him) was riding on a conveyance and I was walking along with him with my hand placed on his sacred foot. I said: Kindly teach me Surah Houd or Surah Yousuf.

He replied: In the sight of Allah there is nothing more beneficial for the servant than *Qul audhu bi-Rabbil-falaq*.

A tradition from Abdullah bin Abid al-Juhani has been related by Nasai, Baihaqi and Ibn Sad, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: Ibn Abid, should I not tell you what are the best things out of the means by which the seekers of refuge have sought refuge with Allah. I submitted: Do teach me, O Messenger of Allah. He replied: *Qul audhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Qul a-udhu-bi-Rabbin-naas*, both these Surahs.

Ibn Marduyah had related from Umm Salamah: The Surahs best liked by Allah are: *Qul audhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Qul audhu bi-Rabbin-naas*.

Here, the question arises: what caused Abdullah bin Masud the misunderstanding that these two are not Surahs of the Quran? We get the answer to it when we combine two traditions: First, that Abdullah bin Masud asserted that this was only a command which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was given to teach him the method of seeking refuge with Allah; Second, the tradition which Imam Bukhari has related in his Sahih, Imam Ahmad in his Musnad, Hafiz Abu Bakr alHumaidi in his Musnad, Abu Nuaim in his Al-Mustakhraj and Nasai in his Sunan, with different chains of transmitters, on the authority of Zirr bin Hubaish, with a slight variation in wording from Ubayy bin Kaab, who held a distinguished place among the companions on the basis of his knowledge of the Quran. Zirr bin Hubaish states: I said to Ubayy: Your brother, Abdullah bin Masud, says these things. What do you say about this view? He

replied: I had questioned the Prophet (peace be upon him) about this. He said to me: I was told to say *qul*, so I said *qul*. Therefore, we too say the same as the Prophet said.

In the tradition related by Imam Ahmad, Ubayy's words are to the effect: I bear witness that the Prophet (peace be upon him) told me that Gabriel had told him to say: *Qul audhu bi-Rabbil-falaq*; therefore, he recited likewise, and Gabriel asked him to say: *Qul audhu bi-Rabbin-naas*; therefore he too said likewise. Hence, we too say as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said. A little consideration of these two traditions will show that the word *qul* (say) in the two Surahs caused Abdullah bin Masud the misunderstanding that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been commanded to say: *Audhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Audhu bi-Rabbin-naas*. But he did not feel any need to question the Prophet (peace be upon him) about it. In the mind of Ubbay bin Kab also a question arose about this and he put it before the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Since Gabriel had said *qul*, so I too say *qul*. Let us put it like this. If somebody is commanded and asked: Say, I seek refuge, he will not carry out the command, saying: Say, I seek refuge, but he will drop the word say and say: I seek refuge. On the contrary, if the messenger of a superior officer conveys to somebody the message in these words: Say, I seek refuge, and this command is given to him not only for his own person but to be conveyed to others, he will convey the words of the message verbatim to the people, and will not have the permission to drop anything from the text of the

message. Thus, the fact that these two Surahs begin with the word *qul* is a clear proof that it is divine word, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was bound to convey verbatim. It was not merely a command given to him for his person. Besides these two Surahs, there are 330 other verses in the Quran which begin with the word *qul* (say). The presence of *qul* in all these is a proof that it is divine word, which was obligatory for the Prophet (peace be upon him) to convey verbatim; otherwise if *qul* everywhere had meant a command, the Prophet would have dropped it and said only that which he was commanded to say, and it would not have been recorded in the Quran, but, on the contrary, he would have remained content with saying only what he was commanded to say.

Here, if one considers this, one can understand fully how unreasonable it is to regard the companions as infallible and to make the clamor that a companion has been defamed as soon as one hears a saying or doing of his being described as wrong. Here, one can clearly see what a blunder happened to be committed by an illustrious companion like Abdullah bin Masud about two Surahs of the Quran. If such an error could be committed by an eminent companion like him, others also might commit an error. We can examine it in the scientific way, and describe it as wrong if a thing said or done by a companion is proved to be wrong. But wicked indeed would be the person who went beyond describing a wrong act as wrong and started reproving and finding fault with the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah. Concerning the

Muawwidhatayn the commentators and traditionists have described the opinion of Ibn Masud as wrong, but no one has dared to say that by denying these two Surahs of the Quran, he had, God forbid, become a disbeliever.

Question of Holy Prophet's being affected by Magic

The second thing that has arisen in respect of these two Surahs is that, according to traditions, magic had been worked on the Prophet (peace be upon him), and he had fallen ill under its effect, and Gabriel had instructed him to repeat these Surahs to remove the charm. This has been objected to by many rationalists of both ancient and modern times. They say that if these traditions are accepted, the whole Shariah becomes doubtful. For if the Prophet (peace be upon him) could be charmed, and according to these traditions he was charmed, one cannot say what the Prophet (peace be upon him) might have been made to say and do under the influence of magic by his opponents, and what in his teaching may be divine and what the result of magic. Not only this: they also allege that if this is accepted as true, it might well be that the Prophet (peace be upon him) might have been prompted to make the claim to Prophethood through magic and the Prophet (peace be upon him) by misunderstanding might have thought that an angel had come to him. They also argue that these traditions clash with the Quran. The Quran mentions the accusation of the disbelievers who said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was bewitched (Bani Israil, Ayat 47), but these traditions confirm the accusation of the disbelievers that the Prophet had actually been

charmed and bewitched.

For a proper investigation of this question it is necessary that one should first see whether it is established by authentic historical evidence that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had actually been affected by magic, and if so, what it was and to what extent. Then it should be seen whether the objections raised against what is established historically do actually apply to it or not.

The Muslim scholars of the earlier period were truly honest and upright in that they did not try to corrupt history or conceal facts according to their own ideas, concepts and assumptions. They conveyed intact to the later generations whatever was confirmed historically, and did not at all care how the material supplied by them could be used by the one who was bent upon drawing perverse conclusions from the facts. Now, if something stands confirmed by authentic and historical means, it is neither right for an honest and right-minded person that he should deny history on the ground that in case he accepted it, it would lead to these evil results according to his thinking, nor it is right that he should add to and stretch beyond its genuine limits by conjecture and speculation whatever is established historically. Instead, he should accept history as history and then see what is actually proved by it and what is not.

As far as the historical aspect is concerned, the incident of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) being affected by magic is absolutely confirmed, and if it can be refuted by scientific criticism, then no historical event of the world can be proved right and genuine. It has been related by Bukhari,

Muslim, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Imam Ahmad, Abdur Razzaq, Humaidi, Baihaqi, Tabarani, Ibn Sad, Ibn Mardayah, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Hakim, Abd bin Humaid and other traditionists on the authority of Aishah, Zaid bin Arqam and Abdullah bin Abbas, through so many different and numerous channels that forgery is out of the question. Although each tradition by itself is an isolated report (khabar wahid), we give it below as a connected event from the details provided by the traditions.

After the peace treaty of Hudaibiyah when the Prophet (peace be upon him) returned to Al-Madinah, a deputation of the Jews of Khaibar visited Al-Madinah in Muharram, A.H. 7 and met a famous magician, Labid bin Asam, who belonged to the Ansar tribe of Bani Zurayq. They said to him: You know how Muhammad (peace be upon him) has treated us. We have tried our best to bewitch him but have not succeeded. Now we have come to you because you are a more skilled magician. Here are three gold coins, accept these and cast a powerful magic spell on Muhammad. In those days the Prophet (peace be upon him) had a Jewish boy as his attendant. Through him they obtained a piece of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) comb with some hair stuck to it. Magic was worked on the same hair and the teeth of the comb. According to some traditions, magic was worked by Labid bin Asam himself, according to others, his sisters were more skilled than him and he got the spell cast through them. Whatever be the case, Labid placed this spell in the spathe of a male date-tree and hid it under a stone at the bottom of Dharwan or Dhi Arwan, the well of Bani

Zurayq. The spell took one whole year to have effect upon the Prophet (peace be upon him). In the latter half of the year the Prophet (peace be upon him) started feeling as if he was unwell. The last forty days became hard on him, of which the last three days were even harder. But its maximum effect on him was that he was melting away from within. He thought he had done a thing whereas, in fact, he had not done it: he thought he had visited his wives whereas he had not visited them; and sometimes he would doubt having seen something whereas, in fact, he had not seen it. All these effects were confined to his own person; so much so that the other people could not notice what state he was passing through. As for his being a Prophet (peace be upon him), no change occurred in the performance of his duties.

There is no tradition to say that he might have forgotten some verses of the Quran in those days, or might have recited a verse wrongly, or a change might have occurred in the assemblies and in his counsels and sermons, or he might have presented a discourse as revelation which may not have been revealed to him, or he might have missed a Prayer and thought that he had performed it. God forbid, if any such thing had happened, it would have caused a clamor and the whole of Arabia would have known that a magician had overpowered the one whom no power had been able to overpower. But the Prophet's (peace be upon him) position as a Prophet remained wholly unaffected by it. Only in his personal life he remained worried on account of it. At last, one day when he was in the house of Aishah,

he prayed to Allah to be restored to full health. In the meantime he fell asleep or drowsed and on waking he said to Aishah: My Lord has told me what I had asked of Him. Aishah asked what it was. He replied: Two men (i.e. two angels in human guise) came to me. One sat near my head and the other near my feet. The first asked: what has happened to him? The other replied: Magic has been worked on him. The first asked: who has worked it? He replied: Labid bin Asam. He asked: In what is it contained? He replied: In the comb and hair covered in the spathe of a male date-tree. He asked: where is it? He replied: under a stone at the bottom of Dhi Arwan (or Dharwan), the well of Bani Zurayq. He asked: what should be done about it? He replied: the well should be emptied and it should be taken out from under the stone. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then sent Ali, Ammar bin Yasir and Zubair: They were also joined by Jubair bin Iyas az-Zurqi (from Bani Zurayq). Later the Prophet also arrived at the well along with some companions. The water was taken out and the spathe recovered. There they found that beside the comb and hair there was a cord with eleven knots on it and a wax image with needles pricked into it. Gabriel came and told him to repeat the *Muawwidhatayn*. As he repeated verse after verse, a knot was loosened and a needle taken out every time, till on finishing the last words all the knots were loosened and all the needles removed, and he was entirely freed from the charm. After this he called Labid and questioned him. He confessed his guilt and the Prophet (peace be upon him) let him go, for he never avenged

himself on anyone for any harm done to his person. He even declined to talk about it to others, saying that Allah had restored him to health; therefore he did not like that he should incite the people against anyone.

This is the story of the magic worked on the Prophet (peace be upon him). There is nothing in it which might run counter to his office of Prophethood. In his personal capacity if any injury could be inflicted on him as it happened in the Battle of Uhud, if he could fall from his horse and be hurt as is confirmed by the Hadith, if he could be stung by a scorpion as has been mentioned in some traditions and none of these negates the protection promised him by Allah in his capacity as a Prophet (peace be upon him), he could also fall ill under the influence of magic in his personal capacity. That a Prophet (peace be upon him) can be affected by magic is also confirmed by the Quran. In Surah Al-Aaraf it has been said about the magicians of Pharaoh that when they confronted the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), they bewitched the eyes of thousands of people who had assembled to witness the encounter (verse 116). In Surah TaHa it has been said that not only the common people but the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) too felt that the cords and staffs that they cast were running towards them like so many snakes, and this filled Moses' (peace be upon him) heart with fear. Thereupon Allah revealed to him: Don't fear for you will come out victorious. Cast down your staff. (verses 66-69). As for the objection that this then confirms the accusation of the disbelievers of Makkah that the Prophet (peace be upon

him) was a bewitched man, its answer is that the disbelievers did not call him a bewitched man in the sense that he had fallen ill under that effect of magic cast by somebody, but in the sense that some magician has, God forbid, made him mad, and he had made claim to Prophethood and was telling the people tales of Hell and Heaven in his same madness. Now, obviously this objection does not at all apply to a matter about which history confirms that the magic spell had affected only the person of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and not the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him), which remained wholly unaffected by it.

In this connection, another thing worthy of mention is that the people who regard magic as a kind of superstition hold this view only because the effect of magic cannot be explained scientifically. But there are many things in the world which one experiences and observes but one cannot explain scientifically how they happen. If we cannot give any such explanation it does not become necessary that we should deny the thing itself which we cannot explain. Magic, in fact, is a psychological phenomenon which can affect the body through the mind just as physical things affect the mind through the body. Fear, for instance, is a psychological phenomenon, but it affects the body: the hair stand on end and the body shudders. Magic does not; in fact, change the reality, but under its influence man's mind and senses start feeling as if reality had changed. The staffs and the cords that the magicians had thrown towards the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), had not actually

become snakes, but the eyes of the multitude of people were so bewitched that everybody felt they were snakes; even the senses of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) could not remain unaffected by the magic spell. Likewise, in Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 102, it has been said that in Babylon people learned such magic from Harut and Marut as could cause division between husband and wife. This too was a psychological phenomenon. Obviously, if the people did not find it efficacious by experience they could not become its customers. No doubt, it is correct that just like the bullet of the rifle and the bomb from the aircraft, magic too cannot have effect without Allah's permission, but it would be mere stubbornness to deny a thing which has been experienced and observed by man for thousands for years.

Question of Reciting Charms and Amulets in Islam

The third thing that arises in connection with these Surahs is whether recitation of charms and amulets has any place in Islam, and whether such recitation is by itself efficacious or not. This question arises for in many ahadith it has been reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) at the time of going to bed every night, especially during illness, used to recite the *Muawwidhatayn* (or according to other reports, the *Muawwidhat*, i.e. *Qul Huwa-Allahu Ahad* and the *Muawwidhatayn*) thrice, blow in his hands and then rub the hands on his body from head to foot as far as his hands could reach. During his last illness when it was not longer possible for him to so do, Aishah recited these Surahs herself or by his command blew on his hands in view of their being blessed and rubbed them on his body.

Traditions on this subject have been related in Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Abu Daud and Muatta of Imam Malik through authentic channels on the authority of Aishah herself beside whom no one could be better acquainted with the domestic life of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

In this regard, one should first understand its religious aspect. In the Hadith a lengthy tradition has been related on the authority of Abdullah bin Abbas, at the end of which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: The people of my Ummah to enter Paradise without reckoning will be those who neither turn to treatment by branding, nor to enchanting, nor take omens, but have trust in their Lord. (Muslim). According to a tradition reported on the authority of Mughirah bin Shubah, the Prophet said: He who got himself treated by branding, or enchanting, became independent of trust in Allah. (Tirmidhi). Abdullah bin Masud has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) disapproved of ten things one of which was recitation of charms and amulets except by means of the *Muawwidhatayn* or *Muawwidhat*. (Abu Daud, Ahmad, Nasai, Ibn Hibban, Hakim). Some ahadith also show that in the beginning the Prophet (peace be upon him) had altogether forbidden recitation of charms and amulets, but later he allowed it on the condition that it should not smack of polytheism, but one should recite and blow by means of the holy names of Allah, or the words of the Quran. The words used should be understandable and one should know that there is nothing sinful in it, and one

should not wholly rely on the recitation of charms but on Allah's will to make it beneficial. After the explanation of the religious aspect, let us now see what the Hadith says in this regard.

Tabarani in *As-Saghir* has related a tradition on the authority of Ali, saying: Once the Prophet (peace be upon him) was stung by a scorpion during the Prayer. When the Prayer was over, he remarked: God's curse be on the scorpion: it neither spares a praying one, nor any other. Then he called for water and salt, and started rubbing the place where the scorpion had stung with salt water and reciting *Qul ya ayyuhal-kafirun*, *Qul Huwa Allahu ahad*, *Qul audhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Qul audhu bi-Rabbin-naas*, along with it.

Ibn Abbas has also related a tradition to the effect: The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite this invocation over Hasan and Husain: *Uidhu kuma bi-kalimat Allahit-tamati min kulli shaitan-in wa hammati-wa min kulli ayt-in-lam nati*: I give you in the refuge of Allah's blameless words, from every devil and troublesome thing, and from every evil look. (Bukhari, Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah).

A tradition has been related in Muslim, Muwatta, Tabarani and Hakim about Uthman bin alAas athThaqafi, with a little variation in wording, to the effect that he complained to the Prophet (peace be upon him), saying: Since I have become a Muslim, I feel a pain in my body, which is killing me. The Prophet said: Place your right hand on the place where you feel the pain, then recite *Bismillah* thrice, and

Audhu billahi wa qudratihi min sharri ma ajidu wa uhadhiru
(I seek refuge with Allah and with His power from the evil that I find and that I fear) seven times, and rub your hand. In Muwatta there is the addition: Uthman bin Abi alAas said: After that my pain disappeared and now I teach the same formula to the people of my house.

Musnad Ahmad and Tahavi contain this tradition from Talq bin Ali: I was stung by a scorpion in the presence of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) recited something and blew over me and rubbed his hand on the affected place.

Muslim contains a tradition from Abu Saeed Khudri, which says: Once when the Prophet (peace be upon him) fell ill, Gabriel came and asked: O Muhammad, are you ill? The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered in the affirmative. Gabriel said: I blow on you in the name of Allah from everything which troubles you and from the evil of every soul and the evil look of every envier. May Allah restore you to health. I blow on you in His name. A similar tradition has been related in Musnad Ahmad on the authority of Ubadah bin asSamit, which says: The Prophet (peace be upon him) was unwell. I went to visit him and found him in great trouble. When I re-visited him in the evening I found him quite well. When I asked how he had become well so soon, he said: Gabriel came and blew over me with some words. Then he recited words similar to those reported in the above Hadith. A tradition similar to this has also been related on the authority of Aishah in Muslim and Musnad Ahmad.

Imam Ahmad in his Musnad has related this tradition from Hafsah, mother of the Faithful: One day the Prophet (peace be upon him) visited me in the house and a woman, named Shifa, was sitting with me. She used to blow on the people to cure them of blisters. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to her: Teach Hafsah also the formula. Imam Ahmad, Abu Daud and Nasai have related this tradition from Shifa bint Abdullah herself, saying: The Holy Prophet said to me: Just as you have taught Hafsah reading and writing, so teach her blowing to cure blisters as well.

In Muslim there is a tradition from Auf bin Malik al-Ashjal to the effect: We used to practice blowing to cure diseases. We asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) for his opinion in this regard. He said: Let me know the words with which you blow over the people. There is no harm in blowing unless it smacks of polytheism.

Muslim, Musnad Ahmad and Ibn Majah contain a tradition from Hadrat Jabir bin Abdullah, saying: The Prophet (peace be upon him) had forbidden us blowing to cure disease. Then the people of the clan of Amr bin Hazm came and they said: We had a formula with which we used to blow on the people to cure them of scorpion's sting (or snake-bite). But you have forbidden us the practice. Then they recited before him the words which they made use of. Thereupon the Prophet said: I do not see any harm in it, so let the one who can do good to his brother, do him good. Another tradition from Jabir bin Abdullah in Muslim is: The family of Hazm had a formula to cure snake-bite and the Prophet (peace be upon him) permitted them to practise

it. This is also supported by the tradition from Aishah, which is contained in Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, and Ibn Majah: The Prophet (peace be upon him) granted permission to a family of the Ansar for blowing to cure the evil effects of biting by every poisonous creature. Traditions resembling these have also been related from Anas in Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Muslim and Ibn Majah, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave permission for blowing to cure the bite by poisonous creatures, the disease of blisters and the effects of the evil look.

Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Hakim have related this tradition on the authority of Umair, freed slave of Abi al-Laham: In the pre-Islamic days I had a formula with which I used to blow over the people. I recited it before the Prophet (peace be upon him), whereupon he told me to drop out such and such words from it, and permitted me to blow with the rest of it.

According to Muwatta, Abu Bakr went to the house of his daughter, Aishah, and found that she was unwell and a Jewish woman was blowing over her. Thereupon he said to her: Blow over her by means of the Book of Allah. This shows that if the people of the Book practice blowing by means of the verses of the Torah and the Gospel, it is also permitted.

As for the question whether blowing for curing disease is efficacious also, or not, its answer is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) not only did not forbid anybody to have recourse to cure and medical treatment but himself stated that Allah has created a cure for every disease and

exhorted his followers to use cures. He himself told the people the remedies for certain diseases, as can be seen in the Hadith in the Kitab at-Tib (Book of Cures). But the cure can be beneficial and useful only by Allah's command and permission, otherwise if the cure and medical treatment were beneficial in every case, no one would have died in hospitals. Now, if beside the cure and medical treatment, Allah's Word and His beautiful names are also made use of, or Allah is turned to and invoked for help by means of His Word, Names and Attributes in a place where no medical aid is available, it would not be against reason except for the materialists. However, it is not right to disregard intentionally a cure or treatment where it is available, and recourse had only to enchanting and reciting of charms, and the people should start a regular practice of granting amulets as a means of earning their livelihood.

Many people in this regard argue from Abu Saeed Khudri's tradition which has been related in Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud and Ibn Majah, and it is also supported by a tradition related in Bukhari on the authority of Ibn Abbas. According to it the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent some of his companions including Abu Saeed Khudri on an expedition. They halted on the way at the settlement of an Arabian tribe and demanded hospitality from the people, but they refused to extend any hospitality. In the meantime the chief of the tribe was stung by a scorpion and the people came to the travelers to ask if they had any medicine or formula by which their chief could be cured. Abu Saeed said: Yes, we

do have, but since you have refused us hospitality, we would not treat him unless you promised us to give us something. They promised to give them a flock of goats (according to some traditions, 30 goats), and Abu Saeed went and started reciting Surah Al-Fatihah and rubbing his saliva on the affected place. Consequently, the chief felt relieved of the effect of the poison and the people of the tribe gave them the goats as promised. But the companions said to one another: Let us not make any use of the goats until we have asked the Prophet about it, for they were not sure whether it was permissible to accept any reward for what they had done. So they came before the Prophet (peace be upon him) and related what had happened. The Prophet smiled and said: How did you know that Surah Al-Fatihah could also be used for curing such troubles. Take the goats and allocate my share also in it.

But before one used this Hadith for permission to adopt a regular profession of granting amulets and reciting charms, one should keep in view the conditions under which Abu Saeed Khudri had recourse to it, and the Prophet not only held it as permissible but also said that a share for him also should be allocated so that there remained no doubt in the minds of the companions that such a thing was permissible. The conditions in Arabia in those days were, as they still are, that settlements were situated hundreds of miles apart, there were not hotels and restaurants where a traveler could buy food when he reached one of these after several days journey. Under such conditions it was considered a moral duty that when a traveler reached a settlement the

people of the place should extend hospitality to him. Refusal on their part in many cases meant death for the travelers, and this was looked upon as highly blameworthy among the Arabs. That is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) allowed as permissible the act of his companions. Since the people of the tribe had refused them hospitality, they too refused to treat their chief, and became ready to treat him only on the condition that they should promise to give them something in return. Then, when one of them with trust in God recited Surah Al-Fatihah over the chief and he became well, the people gave the promised wages and the Prophet allowed that the wages be accepted as lawful and pure. In Bukhari the tradition related on the authority of Abdullah bin Abbas about this incident contains the Prophet's (peace be upon him) words to the effect: Instead that you should have acted otherwise, it was better that you recited the Book of Allah and accepted the wages for it. He said this in order to impress the truth that Allah's Word is superior to every other kind of enchanting and practice of secret arts. Furthermore, the message was also incidentally conveyed to the Arabian tribe and its people made aware of the blessings of the Word that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had brought from Allah. This incident cannot be cited as a precedent for the people who run clinic in the cities and towns for the practice of secret arts and have adopted it as a regular profession for earning livelihood. No precedent of it is found in the life and practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or his companions, their followers and the earlier Imams.

Relation between Surah Al-Fatihah and the Muawwidhatayn

The last thing which is note worthy with regard to the *Muawwidhatayn* is the relation between the beginning and the end of the Quran. Although the Quran has not been arranged chronologically, the Prophet (peace be upon him) arranged in the present order the verses and Surahs revealed during 23 years on different occasions to meet different needs and situations not by himself but by the command of Allah Who revealed them. According to this order, the Quran opens with the Surah Al-Fatihah and ends with the Muawwidhatayn. Now, let us have a look at the two. In the beginning, after praising and glorifying Allah, Who is Lord of the worlds, Kind, Merciful and Master of the Judgment Day, the servants submits: Lord, You alone I worship and to You along I turn for help, and the most urgent help that I need from You is to be guided to the Straight Way. In answer, he is given by Allah the whole Quran to show him the straight way, which is concluded thus: Man prays to Allah, Who is Lord of dawn, Lord of men, King of men, Deity of men, saying: I seek refuge only with You for protection from every evil and mischief of every creature, and in particular, from the evil whisperings of devils, be they from among men or jinn, for they are the greatest obstacle in following the straight way. The relation that the beginning bears with the end, cannot remain hidden from anyone who has understanding and insight.

1. Say: "I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind.

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ

2. The King of mankind.

مَلِكِ النَّاسِ

3. The God of mankind.*1

إِلَهِ النَّاسِ

*1 Here also, as in Surah Al-Falaq, instead of saying *Audhu-billahi* (I seek Allah's refuge), a prayer has been taught to seek Allah's refuge by reference to His three attributes: First, that He is *Rabb-in-naas*, i.e. Sustainer, Provider; second, that He is *Malik-in-naas*, i.e. Master of all mankind; third, that He is *Ilah-in-naas*, i.e. real Deity of all mankind. Here, one should clearly understand that the word *ilah* has been used in two meanings in the Quran: first for the thing or person who is practically being worshipped although it or he is not entitled to worship; second, for Him Who is entitled to worship, Who is in fact the Deity whether the people worship Him or not, wherever this word is used for Allah; it has been used in the second meaning. Seeking refuge by means of these three attributes means: I seek refuge with that God, Who being the Sustainer, King and Deity of men, has full power over them, can fully protect them and can really save them from the evil, to save myself and others from which I am seeking His refuge. Not only this; since He alone is Sustainer, King and Deity, therefore, there is no one beside Him with Whom I may seek refuge and he may give real refuge.

4. From the evil of the whisperer, who returns over and over again.*2

مِن شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ



*2 The word *waswas* in *waswas-il-khannas* means the one who whispers over and over again, and *waswasa* means to whisper into someone's heart an evil suggestion over and over again in such a way or ways that the one who is being inspired may not feel that the whisperer is whispering an evil suggestion into his heart. *Waswasah* by itself suggests repetition just as *zalzalah* contains the meaning of repetitive movement. Since man is not tempted by just one attempt but effort has to be made over and over again to seduce and tempt him, such an attempt is called *waswasah* and the tempter *waswas*. As for the word *khannas*, it is derived from *khunus*, which means to hide after appearing and to retreat after coming into view. Since *khannas* is the intensive form, it would imply the one who behaves thus very frequently. Now, obviously the whisperer has to approach man for whispering again and again, and besides, when he is also described as *khannas*, the combination of the two words by itself gives the meaning that after whispering once he retreats and then again returns over and over again to repeat the act of whispering. In other words, when once he fails in his attempt to whisper evil, he withdraws, then he again returns to make the second and the third and the next attempt over and over again. After understanding the meaning of *waswas-il-khannas*, let us consider what is meant by seeking refuge from its evil. Its one meaning is that the seeker after refuge himself seeks God's refuge from its evil, i.e. from the evil lest it should whisper some evil suggestion into his own heart. The second meaning is that the caller to Truth seeks God's refuge from

the evil of the one who whispers evil suggestions into the hearts of the people against himself. It is not in his own power to approach all the people in whose hearts evil suggestions are being whispered against himself individually and remove the misunderstandings of every person. It is also not right and proper for him that he should give up his mission of inviting others to Allah and should devote all his time and energy to removing the misunderstanding created by the whisperer and to answering their accusations. It is also below his dignity that he should stoop to the level of his opponents. Therefore, Allah has instructed the caller to truth to seek only His refuge from the evil of the wicked people, and then to attend single-mindedly to his work of invitation and mission. For it is not for him to deal with them but for Allah, who is Sustainer of men, King of men, God of men. Here, one should also understand that an evil suggestion is the starting point of evil act. When it affects a careless or heedless person, it creates in him a desire for evil. Then, further whisperings change the evil desire into an evil intention and evil purpose. When the evil suggestion grows in intensity, the intention becomes a resolution, which then culminates in the evil act. Therefore, the meaning of seeking God's refuge from the evil of the whisperer is that Allah should nip the evil in the bud. If seen from another aspect, the order of the evil of the whisperers seems to be this: first they incite one to open unbelief, polytheism, or rebellion against Allah and His Messenger, and enmity of the righteous (godly) people. If they fail in this and a person

does enter Allah's religion, they misguide him to some innovation. If they fail in this too, they tempt him to sin. If they do not succeed even in this, they inspire the man with the suggestion that there is no *haram* in indulging in minor sins, so that if he starts committing these freely, he is overburdened with sin. If one escapes from this too, in the last resort they try that one should keep the true religion confined to oneself, and should do nothing to make it prevail, but if a person defeats all these plans, the whole party of the devils from among men and jinn makes a common front against him and incites and stirs up the people and makes them shower him with invective and accusation and slander, and defames him as widely as it can. Then, Satan comes to the believer and excites him to anger, saying: It is cowardly of you to have borne all this insult: arise and clash with your opponents. This is the last and final device with Satan by which he tries to thwart the struggle of the caller to truth and entangle him in difficulties and obstructions. If he succeeds in escaping from this too, Satan becomes powerless before him. About this same thing it has been said in the Quran: If Satan ever excites you to anger, seek refuge with Allah. (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 200; Surah HaMim As-Sajdah, Ayat 36). Say: Lord, I seek refuge with You from the promptings of satans. (Surah Al-Mominun, Ayat 97). The fact is that if ever an evil suggestion from Satan so much as touches those who are God-fearing people, they immediately get alerted and clearly see the right course they should adopt. (Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 201). And on this very basis about the

people who escape from this last attack of Satan Allah says: None can attain to this rank except those who are men of great good fortune. (Surah HaMim As-Sajdah, Ayat 35). In this connection, another thing should also be kept in mind, and it is this: Evil suggestion is not whispered into the heart of man only from outside by the satans from among men and jinn, but also by the self of man from within. His own wrong theories misguide his intellect, his own unlawful motives and desires lead his power of discrimination, will and power of judgment astray, and it is not only the satans from outside but within man his satan of the self also beguiles him. This same thing has been expressed in the Quran, thus: And We know the evil suggestions arising from his self. (Surah Qaaf, Ayat 16). On this very basis, the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his well-known Sermon said: We seek Allah's refuge from the evils of our self.

5. Who whispers (evil) into the hearts of mankind.

الَّذِي يُوسَّوْسُ فِي صُدُورِ
النَّاسِ

6. From among the jinn or mankind.*³

مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ

*³ According to some scholars, these words mean that the whisperer whispers evil into the hearts of two kinds of people: the jinn and the men. If this meaning is admitted, the word *naas* would apply to both jinn and men. They say that this can be so, for when the word *rijal* (men) in the Quran has been used for the jinn, as in Surah Al-Jinn, Ayat

6, and when *nafar* can be used for the group of jinn, as in Surah A1-Ahqaf, Ayat 29, men and jinn both can be included metaphorically in the word *naas* also. But this view is wrong because the words *naas*, *ins* and *insan* are even lexically contrary in meaning to the word jinn. The actual meaning of jinn is hidden creation and jinn is called jinn because he is hidden from man's eye. On the contrary, the words *naas* and *ins* are spoken for *insan* (man) only on the basis that he is manifest and visible and perceptible. In Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 29, the word *anasa* has been used in the meaning of raa, i.e. the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) saw a fire in the direction of Toor. In Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 6, the word *anastum* has been used in the meaning of *ahsastum* or *raaytum* (i.e. if you perceive or see that the orphans have become capable). Therefore, *naas* cannot apply to jinn lexically, and the correct meaning of the verse is: From the evil of the whisperer who whispers evil into the hearts of men, whether he be from among the jinn or from the men themselves. In other words, whispering of evil is done by devils from among jinn as well as by devils from among men and the prayer in this Surah has been taught to seek refuge from the evil of both. This meaning is supported by the Quran as well as by the Hadith. The Quran says: And so it has always been that We set against every Prophet enemies from among devils of men and devils of jinn, who have been inspiring one another with charming things to delude the minds. (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 112).

And in the Hadith, Imam Ahmad, Nasai, and Ibn Hibban

have related on the authority of Abu Dharr a tradition, saying: I sat before the Prophet (peace be upon him), who was in the Mosque. He said: Abu Dharr, have you performed the Prayer? I replied in the negative. He said: Arise and perform the Prayer. So, I performed the Prayer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: O Abu Dharr, seek Allah's refuge from the devils of men and the devils of jinn. I asked, are there devils among men also? O Messenger of Allah! He replied: Yes.

